
Approved minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting
held in the Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, from 3.00pm to 4.30pm on
Tuesday 18 November 2014.

Board Members and Observers Present:

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader, Swale Borough Council
Cllr John Burden, Leader, Gravesham Borough Council
Mark Dance, Cabinet Member, Kent County Council
Neil Davies, Medway Council
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency
James Speck, Kent Science Park

Also present:

Barbara Cooper, Kent County Council
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Iain McNab, Business Innovation and Skills
Pete Raine, Swale Borough Council
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

Apologies:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Leader, Medway Council
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
David Godfrey, South East LEP
Robert Goodman, Lend Lease
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Leader Dartford Borough Council
Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency
David Simms, Lafarge Tarmac

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. Attendees and apologies, as per the AGM, were noted.

2. Minutes of Board Meeting on 25 September 2014 and Matters Arising

2.1. The minutes of the 25 September Board Meeting were agreed. David Liston-Jones updated the meeting on Matters Arising:

- Page 2, paragraph 3.3 – actioned. The Chairman had invited Land Securities Group PLC to become a Board member and the company had accepted, with Robert Goodman as their representative. TGKP’s Constitution had been amended following the Board’s agreement to permit 6 Private Sector Board members.
- Page 4, paragraph 4.5 – actioned. The draft response to the consultation on the proposed Ebbsfleet Development Corporation had been revised, approved by the Chairman and forwarded to DCLG by their deadline of 6 October. A copy of the final version had been circulated to Board members.
- Page 5, paragraph 5.9 – actioned. David reported that he, Ross Gill and Richard Longman had met to develop ideas for potential local demonstration projects (possible topics included business support, Assisted Areas status and access to finance). There had as yet been no substantive discussions with the What Works Centre. **Action: David Liston-Jones to update the Board once there was further progress to report.**
- Page 5, paragraph 6.4 – the HCA update item was on today’s agenda, and a paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
- Page 6, paragraph 7.4 – actioned. The meeting of local authority officers had been held on 29 September to agree North Kent priorities for Round 2 Local Growth Fund.
- Page 7, paragraph 8.1 – No comments had been received from Board members on the Action Plan annex, so the TGKP team was proceeding on the basis that members were generally content with the content of the Action Plan.
- Page 7, paragraph 13 – The Chairman had written to Penny Mordaunt MP inviting her to visit North Kent. No written reply had yet been received from the Minister, although she had said at the TGSG meeting held on 27 October that she wished to visit all three Thames Gateway areas. David said he was liaising with DCLG officials on the draft programme and on possible dates. The follow-up to the TGSG meeting was covered in the Chief Executive’s report.

3. Item 3 – Backing the Strategic Opportunities for North Kent – paper TGKP(14)21

- 3.1. David L-J said this item was designed to give the Board a chance to discuss how the Partnership could start to plan for the huge opportunities for North Kent offered by the Garden City and the London Paramount proposals. These developments would transform the economy of the area and, as the Chairman had said in his Annual Report, the challenge was how to ensure that North Kent residents and businesses were able to benefit fully from these future opportunities. Construction of the leisure resort was due to start in two years time, with the opening planned for Easter 2020.
- 3.2. David said his paper posed a number of questions for debate including on timing eg what actions could we be taking now, on the nature of the job and supply chain opportunities, on the infrastructure issues and on the

role of the Partnership. The Board's views were sought on whether the Board would wish the Officers' Group and the TGKP team to pursue any specific areas of work, and on whether it wished to hold a special meeting, or event, early next year to allow a more in depth consideration of the issues, and if so what form that event might take.

3.3. In discussion the following points were made:

- the Partnership needed to be on the 'front foot' in planning for these opportunities. We needed more information. For example, we needed to know what categories of jobs would be created so that we could begin to plan for the necessary training, and we needed to know the nature of the supply chain that would be required so that we could support local businesses. Linked to that we needed to know more about what services and products our local businesses could provide;
- the focus was inevitably on the two local authority areas directly affected – Dartford and Gravesham - but it was also important to consider the opportunities and the impacts over a much wider area;
- a strategic piece of work needed to be done to map out the requirements in terms of jobs, housing, HE/FE etc.;
- we also needed to consider how we could retain in North Kent the construction workers recruited to build the leisure resort so that they continued to work in this area, rather than move to other areas, once the construction period was over in 2019.
- a concerted effort by all partners was needed to achieve high quality design – would we be proud of the quality of the new developments? Was there a role here for TGKP? In this context it was reported that the Officers' Group had separately asked the TGKP team to do some initial scoping work on the mechanisms that were available to encourage good design on developments.
- a question was raised as to why the proposed leisure resort had been named 'London Paramount'. It was suggested that this was because the resort would be seeking to attract visitors from many countries and 'London' was instantly familiar and recognised world-wide in a way that more local place names were not;
- it was argued that the precise job requirements would be unlikely to become known until about a year before the resort opened. In terms of curriculum planning it took longer than that to get new training courses designed and accredited. However, it was possible to make considered judgements of the types of skills that would be required. Foreign language skills would clearly be important and there would be specific skills requirements eg the Water Park would require trained life-guards. There would also be more general training needed in the kinds of behaviours and attitudes that would be important for employees working at the resort;
- the public transport links to the Garden City and London Paramount were crucial; there was a very strong case for extending Crossrail to Ebbsfleet and Gravesend;
- London Paramount would lead to the requirement for more high-speed trains and high-speed services on HS1. The increased frequency of

services that would result would bring significant benefits in terms of connectivity to the rest of the County. It was also argued that the fare structure of the High Speed services needed to be reviewed;

- the Garden City and London Paramount proposals had implications for the London and Essex parts of the Thames Gateway, as well as for North Kent. It would therefore be a topic of interest across the whole Gateway and should be a key issue for discussion at the Thames Gateway Strategic Group;
- we also needed to consider the potential impact of London Paramount on existing local businesses and on the operation of existing local services. For example, recruitment of large numbers of local people to London Paramount with particular skills and qualifications, eg electricians, could lead to a shortage of those skills in other parts of North Kent;
- we should look at the example of Euro Disney as a guide to the skills and services that would be required. It was suggested that research on this may well have already have been carried out and be available.

3.4. **Summing up, the Chairman said** that it was clear from the debate that there was support for a strategic piece of work to be done to map out the requirements, including timelines, in terms of skills, education, supply chain, infrastructure etc. It was just two years to the planned start for construction at London Paramount, and that time would pass very quickly. However, more work needed to be done to identify what actions the Partnership might take. **It was agreed** that the Officers' Group be tasked with considering these issues further in the light of the points made by Board members, and to come forward to the next Board meeting with initial proposals, including on whether or not to hold a special Board meeting or event.

3.5. **Action: TGK Officers' Group to develop initial proposals for consideration at the 24 February 2015 Board meeting.**

4. **Item 4: Local Growth Fund and Developing the Project Pipeline – paper TGKP(14)22**

4.1. Barbara Cooper introduced Ross Gill's paper in his absence. She described the process that had been gone through - to a very tight timetable - to identify and then prioritise bids for the second round of the Local Growth Fund (LGF), and explained how the issue had been dealt with by the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership. Ross' paper discussed the challenges of coming forward with good quality projects with robust business cases. The paper recommended that the Officers' Group be asked to undertake a programme of work to develop a stronger project pipeline for North Kent.

4.2. A table setting out the latest Proposed Prioritisation Schedule for Kent and Medway projects was tabled. The schedule had been revised to reflect the discussion at the KMEP meeting on 10 November. Projects had been grouped into 5 packages with the schemes considered by KMEP to be strategic priorities of national importance given priority. The

total bid for all projects listed came to £50.3million. However, the total bid from Kent and Medway that could go forward was likely to be around £35million.

- 4.3. The basis on which the revised schedule had been drawn up was discussed. Andrew Bowles argued strongly that a project of such high importance as M2 Junction 5a should not be shown near the bottom of the list of priorities. Barbara Cooper said that the prioritisation of schemes in the schedule reflected in part the degree of certainty on deliverability of the projects, and the M2 Junction 5a scheme required a decision by Government to be flexible on its policy against single purpose motorway junctions before the project could go ahead. However, Cllr. Bowles argued that this was a key project on which many representations had been made to Ministers, and that to include a project of this importance at the bottom of the list of the priorities gave a highly misleading impression.
- 4.4. There followed a general discussion. Points made included:
- given its status as part of the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for growth, North Kent would be expected to feature strongly in any list of projects from Kent and Medway submitted to the Local Growth Fund. But North Kent did not seem to be doing as well as other areas in terms of numbers of projects scoring as a high priority. This could perhaps be because projects submitted and/or their business cases were not strong enough;
 - it was pointed out that North Kent would benefit from the £200million announced by the Government to support infrastructure expenditure for the Ebbsfleet Garden City. However, it was argued that this did not have any bearing on the treatment of LGF bids from North Kent which should be considered on their own merits;
 - in developing the project pipeline we should be looking at a wider range of projects than in the first round of LGF, which was very heavily focused on transport schemes. Other areas could include business support, innovation, and further education;
 - we did not yet know how much funding would be made available for LGF Round 2. The amount available nationally was likely to be confirmed in the Autumn Statement.
 - more needed to be done to ensure that TGKP and North Kent's case was clearly put to the South East LEP; at present we did not seem to have much influence at the LEP level;
 - the TGKP team was very willing to give support to local authority colleagues in the preparation of business cases.
- 4.5. Summing up the discussion, **the Chairman said it was agreed** that more work needed to be done on the project pipeline. We should be looking to broaden the range of projects being developed. And we should be seeking to improve the quality of the business cases. **The recommendation in Ross' paper** that the Officers' Group be asked to develop a programme of work to develop a stronger project pipeline **was agreed.**

- 4.6. **Action: Officers' Group to draw up plans for developing a stronger project pipeline, and report back to the Board in due course.**
5. **Item 5 – CORE Project – paper TGKP(14)23**
- 5.1. Richard Longman said that his paper reported on the outputs and outcomes from the transitional CORE project that TGKP had led and funded. The paper sought the Board's views on TGKP's ongoing involvement with the CORE and the Offshore Wind sector. It was proposed that TGKP should adopt a more reactive rather than pro-active role on CORE, which was now being taken forward at the SELEP level. It was still important to be involved as there was significant potential investment to play for. But it may now be appropriate for one of the other key industry sectors to benefit from TGKP support. The paper also proposed phasing out use of the 'Medway Superhub' brand and instead focusing on promoting opportunities in the 'Medway-Swale Arc' Assisted Area.
- 5.2. Following a brief discussion the **recommendations in Richard's paper**, including the approach to TGKP's ongoing involvement in the CORE set out in paragraph 10, and the proposal to phase out the use of the term Medway Superhub, **were agreed.**
6. **Item 6 – Updates on current issues from members, including HCA update**
- 6.1. **HCA Update:** Naisha Polaine had circulated a report to the Board, which provided an update on the various HCA programmes available to local authorities, registered providers and developers. The paper indicated where bids had been received from the Thames Gateway Kent area. Naisha said that, as this was the first report of this kind HCA had produced for the Board, she would be keen to receive feedback from members on both the content and the format of the report. **Action: Board members to send any comments on content and format of the update report to Naisha Polaine.**
- 6.2. The Partnership was asked to note that from Tuesday 18 November, all HCA documentation would be accessed from GOV.UK/hca.
- 6.3. Naisha raised a particular issue in relation to the Builders' Finance Fund where it had proved a challenge to engage SMEs. She said she would welcome any assistance the Board could give in reaching out to SMEs. The Fund provided development finance at commercial rates but lent over a longer period than was the case with bank lending. Continuous Market Engagement had opened on 30 September.
- 6.4. Naisha advised the Board that a website link now existed for SMEs to put in a bid. Cllr John Burden requested that he be sent the link. **Action: Naisha to send David Liston-Jones the website link for circulation to Board members.**

- 6.5. Summing up a brief discussion the Chairman said the Partnership had a role in helping to promote schemes such as the Builders Finance Fund. It was agreed that the fund be highlighted at the next TGKP Business breakfast. **Action: Builders Finance Fund info to be promoted at 10 December Business Breakfast.**
- 6.6. **Other updates:** Members gave brief verbal updates on other current issues and developments including: Sittingbourne Town Centre redevelopment, the Heritage Quarter in Gravesend and the Peel Ports development at Gillingham.
7. **Item 7 – TGKP Budget Report and funding for 2015/2016 – paper TGKP(14)24**
- 7.1. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report. The first part of the report set out the position on income and expenditure for 2014/2015. The detailed breakdown was shown in the schedule attached to the paper. The second part of the report discussed proposals for funding for the Partnership in 2015/2016. At its November meeting, the Officers' Group had agreed to recommend to the Board that local authority contributions to TGKP should be kept at their current levels for 2015/2016.
- 7.2. Salary costs for 2015/2016 would be lower than for this year as David informed the Board that he intended to move to part-time working from 1 April (4 days a week). Maintaining contributions at their present levels would produce an income for the year of £230,000. This would be sufficient to cover the partnership's core costs and, as a result of the reduced salary costs and other cost savings, would also allow for a small amount of project activity/consultancy. Any more substantial project spend would need to be funded from the accumulated reserve.
- 7.3. Following a brief discussion, **Andrew Bowles proposed** that funding contributions requested from local authorities for 2015/2016 should remain at the same level as for the current year (ie as set out in paragraph 8 of the report). This was **seconded by Mark Dance and agreed by the Board. The Chairman said** this was clearly **subject to the review of the Partnership** agreed during the AGM and to be carried out after the General Election.
8. **Item 8 – Chief Executive's Report - paper TGKP(14)25**
- 8.1. David Liston-Jones introduced the Chief Executive's Report. This covered two items not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 8.2. The first item related to the **Thames Gateway Strategic Group**. David said there had been a positive meeting of TGSG on 27 October with the new Thames Gateway Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP. She had said she was keen to play an active role in resolving issues and obstacles to delivery in the Gateway, and had asked for an Actions Grid to be

prepared summarising the specific interventions we were seeking from her. She said she wanted to meet with a smaller group of TGSG members to discuss the grid once it had been prepared. David said that we needed to agree what the representation should be from North Kent at that smaller group meeting.

8.3. The Minister had also indicated that she wished to visit the Thames Gateway areas, including North Kent, and that she planned to convene a meeting of Thames Gateway MPs.

8.4. In a brief discussion the following points were made:

- the Minister had been clear at the TGSG meeting that her focus was on what could be achieved over the next 20 weeks or so;
- it was important to respond positively to the Minister's offer of support. We needed to send a strong signal to this Government and to an incoming administration of the importance of the Thames Gateway remaining as a priority growth area for Government;
- it was also important that representatives were chosen to attend the smaller meeting with the Minister who would properly represent the interests of North Kent. Mark Dance was suggested, as was Rodney Chambers;

8.5. **The Board agreed** that Mark Dance and Rodney Chambers should be North Kent's representatives at the smaller group meeting of TGSG members when that meeting was convened.

8.6. David said the second item of his report was to alert members to the **TGKP Winter Business Breakfast** meeting that was taking place on 10 December, and to encourage Board members to attend.

9. Item 9 – AOB

9.1 None. The meeting closed at 4.25pm.

**Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
November 2014**