



Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the **Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting** held in the Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, from 2.30pm to 4.30pm on **Wednesday 2 October 2013.**

Board Members and Observers Present:

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council
Mark Dance, Kent County Council
Robert Goodman, Bluewater/Lend Lease
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College

Also present:

Kevin Burbidge, Gravesham Borough Council
Barbara Cooper, Kent County Council
Neil Davies, Medway Council
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

Apologies:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich
Cllr John Burden, Gravesham Borough Council
Rehman Chishti MP
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency
David Simms, Lafarge Tarmac

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. Apologies were noted.

Item 2: Minutes of the TGKP Board Meeting held on 30 May 2013 and Matters Arising

2. The draft Board Minutes were agreed. On matters arising, David Liston-Jones advised the Board:

- Paragraph 7: Actioned. A draft response to the Lower Thames Crossing consultation had been circulated, approved, and subsequently submitted. A Government decision was expected in the Autumn.
- Paragraph 10: On the agenda.
- Paragraphs 11-13: Barbara Cooper and Jeremy Kite updated the Board on the Key Development Sites exercise. Following the TGSG meeting in June there had been a useful focus group discussion in September with Brandon Lewis, the Thames Gateway Minister. That discussion had concluded that more needed to be done on the supply side to boost delivery, and out of the meeting had come the proposal that a Thames Gateway stimulus package be developed. Barbara Cooper advised she had convened a meeting with officers to work-up the proposal for the next full TGSG meeting. It would be important for the stimulus package proposals to be fed into the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan.
- Paragraph 14: The issue of inviting a DEFRA Minister to a TGSG meeting had been followed up by DCLG.
- Paragraph 15: Actioned.
- Paragraph 18: The Officers' Group were to consider proposals for the Partnership's budget which would be brought to the 29 November TGKP Board meeting.

Item 3: North Kent's Priorities for Growth – presentation by Richard Longman.

3. The Chairman invited Richard Longman to give his presentation, which covered:

- *Context and Timetable*: Richard outlined the respective timetables for the South East LEP Strategic Economic Plan and for the refresh of the TGKP Growth plan, and the need to feed in our priorities to the LEP plan at the right time.
- *The Approach/process*: A review of the evidence base had been produced and circulated. A draft of the Growth Plan itself would be circulated to officers shortly for comment. A second draft would then be prepared and used in consultation with stakeholders. Once the Plan was finalised there would then be a suite of summary documents produced for different audiences.
- *Priorities slide 1*: there was a need to increase skills levels at NVQ4+ and HE participation. One specific issue identified in the evidence review was that female employment rates in North Kent were well below national averages, with no clear indication as to why that should be the case. On business support there were priorities around mapping the support available, access to finance, and making more of the 'innovation corridor'. In terms of growing key sectors there were priorities around increasing investment in innovation and R&D, growing knowledge intensive businesses and the opportunities in the low carbon global market.

- *Priorities – slide 2:* Richard outlined some of the priorities for infrastructure funding – were these the right ones? Also which were the priority locations for investment?
- *Targets, ambition and uncertainties:* The target for new homes was 52,000 for 2006 to 2026, but local plans were currently aiming for around 44,000. The jobs target of 58,000 for 2006 to 2026, set before the recession, now looked challenging. But the Paramount Park project was a potential game changer with the prospect of creating 27,000 jobs.
- *Making NK priorities LEP priorities:* It was important to ensure North Kent priorities, including measures in any Thames Gateway stimulus package, were reflected in Kent and Medway's 'Unlocking the Potential' and in the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and European SIF strategy.

4. The Chairman then invited views from members on three main areas: 'priorities', 'targets and ambition' and on 'process'. Board members were generally content with the broad thrust of the content of the presentation. The following points were made:

- there was a wide-ranging debate on ensuring that we took full advantage of the huge opportunity offered by the potential of the Paramount Park project, in particular the supply-chain opportunities and the need to ensure the right training mechanisms were in place, as had been done at the time of the Bluewater development;
- in terms of the evidence review, it was argued that more information needed to be obtained on the reasons why North Kent was performing differently to other areas. The issue raised on low female employment rates was important, but without knowing more about the causes of the low rate in North Kent it was difficult to devise remedial actions. Barbara Cooper and Ross Gill undertook to speak to KCC Research & Evaluation (Pete Keeling) to see whether they could offer insight on this issue;
- on transport infrastructure priorities, members referred to the Homes and Roads package, M2 Junction 5 and 5A, and also M2 Junction 7 which although outside the Thames Gateway, was vital to the operation of the M2. Other infrastructure priorities that should be covered included Broadband and the lack of FE provision in Swale;
- in terms of priority locations, in addition to the list covered in the slide, it was suggested that Queenborough and Rushenden and Lodge Hill be added;
- the importance of investment in schools should be included, given that income from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) would not be sufficient;
- in terms of targets it was important to be positive and keep our jobs ambition;
- business engagement in developing the Plan was vital: this should be done through a variety of routes including the Chamber, business breakfasts, and the North Kent B2B. In addition, **it was agreed that another North Kent business breakfast should be arranged**, along similar lines to the event held in 2012 at the Bridgewood Manor. This should be a combined event, partly to seek views on the Growth Plan and partly to publicise the TIGER fund.
- in terms of other uncertainties, in addition to those listed, members referred to the tariff for Offshore Wind, and to the impact of welfare reforms.

5. **Summing up, the Chairman** thanked Richard for his presentation and Board members for their contributions to a very full and useful debate. The comments

would be reflected in the draft Growth Plan. There was a consensus that the Plan needed to be positive and embrace fully the opportunity presented by the Paramount Park proposals. Engaging business in the preparation of the Plan was vital and a further business breakfast should be arranged.

Action: Richard Longman to reflect Board members' comments in the draft of the Growth Plan.

Action: Barbara Cooper/Ross Gill to investigate whether the KCC research and evaluation team could assist in identifying causes of high female unemployment rates.

Action: TGKP team, in consultation with the TIGER programme team, to arrange a North Kent business breakfast event.

Item 4: Updating the Partnership's Constitution – paper TGKP(13)8

6. David Liston-Jones introduced this item. A draft updated Constitution had been circulated to members for their comment and agreement in July. One suggested amendment had been received, which had been incorporated into the draft version circulated as an Annex to the paper for this meeting. Otherwise all those who responded had been content with the draft.
7. **The Chairman sought the Board's agreement to the revisions to the Constitution. The Board confirmed that it was content** for the changes indicated in the final draft, circulated as an Annex to paper TGKP(13)8, to be incorporated into the Partnership's constitution.

Item 5: A North Kent marketing campaign – paper TGKP(13)9

8. David Liston-Jones introduced this paper, which put forward proposals for a marketing campaign for North Kent. Since the demise of the Central Government funded InvestThamesGateway marketing in 2011, there had been no specific marketing of North Kent or of the wider Thames Gateway. Other areas of the country, including East Kent, had launched high-profile marketing campaigns. There was a risk that if our voice was not heard, North Kent could lose out on future investment.
9. The paper proposed 3 options, ranging from a minimum option where we would rely on making best use of existing marketing effort, to a limited-funded option (around £50,000 to £80,000 over two years), and finally to a fully-funded campaign (at a cost of £200,000 to £250,000 over two years) along the lines of the 'Grow For It' campaign in East Kent. A Perceptions Audit for the 'Grow For It' campaign was tabled, which indicated the positive impact that campaign was having.
10. In discussion the following points were made:
 - it was argued that if a campaign such as this was to be undertaken it had to be done properly, and that would be expensive. A campaign set at £50,000 over two years would have little impact;
 - the 'Grow For It' campaign was clearly having an impact, the answer might be to roll that campaign out Kent wide;

- we should wait until the new Kent and Medway partnership structure had been established under the federated LEP model. One of the issues that new partnership would need to address at an early stage was how best to market the whole of Kent and Medway.

11. Summing up this discussion, **the Chairman said that it was agreed the issue of whether or not to have a marketing campaign for North Kent should be deferred** until the new Kent and Medway partnership structures had come into operation, and had had a chance to consider marketing issues. The Board would return to take a view on the implications for North Kent at that point.

Action: Marketing of North Kent to be brought back to the Board for consideration at the appropriate time.

Item 6: Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership (TGLNP) – paper TGKP(13)10

12. David Liston-Jones introduced this item, as Martin Hall, Director of Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway, was unable to attend today's meeting due to being abroad on EU project business. David explained that following suggestions from the Officers' Group, Martin had held one-to-one meetings with Local Authority Leaders to explain the role, purpose and governance of the LNP. This report was intended to feedback on the results of those discussions.
13. The paper was partly for information, but was also to seek the Board's broad endorsement to the proposals and, specifically, to seek a nomination from the TGKP Board to sit on the LNP Board, which was likely to meet twice per year. David explained that the LNP had no dedicated resource and relied heavily on GGKM and some equivalent support from Essex. In that context, David said that the Board should be aware that the future funding for GGKM beyond 2013/2014 was uncertain, and this could therefore have a bearing on the future support for the operation of the Thames Gateway LNP.
14. In discussion, no objections were raised to the proposals set out in the paper, although some members voiced doubts about the necessity for setting up a new group, given that there were already a number of other Kent-wide nature/environmental groups in operation. However, following a brief debate there was a consensus that it was better to be involved in the LNP than not. **In terms of a TGKP Board nomination, it was agreed that Cllr Andrew Bowles would be the TGKP Board representative on the LNP for the first two meetings, with the position to be reviewed after those meetings had taken place. It was further agreed that Cllr Jeremy Kite would be Cllr Bowles' alternate and would substitute for him should he be unable to attend.**

Item 7: Updates on current issues from members – verbal updates

15. Cllr Rodney Chambers reported that planning consent had been granted for the £650m Waterside Peel Development, and development should start shortly. He updated the Board on the latest position on the discussions with Government on the Lodge Hill proposals. Finally he informed the Board that the proposals for the construction of a new station at Rochester had been given planning approval.

16. Kevin Burbidge updated the Board on progress on Gravesham Borough Council's Local Plan.
17. Cllr Jeremy Kite reported that a funding agreement had been signed that day for the University Technical College in their area. He also informed the Board that the town centre TESCO planning application had been approved.
18. Cllr Andrew Bowles reported on progress on the Sittingbourne Town Centre redevelopment proposals, where a meeting with partners had taken place the day before.

Item 8: Chief Executive's Report – paper TGKP(13)11

19. David Liston-Jones introduced his report, which was mainly for information. Board members were invited to note:
 - the proposals for potential new Assisted Areas in North Kent that had been submitted to BIS via the South East LEP and the Partnership's letter of support;
 - the items for discussion at the next TGSG meeting; and
 - the proposed arrangements for the North Kent B2B on 17 October. Further to the information in the paper, David reported that discussions were taking place with the TIGER programme team about the possibility of presenting promotional cheques to the first batch of successful TIGER applicants at the event.

Item 9: Budget Report - paper TGKP(13)12

20. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report and asked the Board to note the position on income and expenditure for 2013-14 set out in the report. The Board was also invited to note that there would be a substantive discussion on the Partnership's financial position at the 29 November Board meeting.

Item 10: AOB

21. No other business, the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

**Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
October 2013**