



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 **Friday 29 November 2013.**

Present:

Board members and observers:

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
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College
Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency
David Simms, Lafarge Tarmac

Also present:

Barbara Cooper, Kent County Council
Neil Davies, Medway Council
Terry Fuller, Homes and Communities Agency
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
Graham Harris, Dartford Council
Katharine Harvey, South East Local Enterprise Partnership
David Hughes, Gravesham 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
Paul Whittlesea, Department for Communities and Local Government

Apologies:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Leader, Medway Council
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Robert Goodman, Lend Lease
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Leader Dartford Borough Council

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

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

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

2. The draft Board Minutes were agreed. On matters arising, David Liston-Jones advised the Board:
 - Paragraph 5: The first action point had been dealt with - Board members' comments had been reflected in the draft Growth Plan. On the second action point, TGKP would continue to liaise with Ross Gill to see whether KCC research and evaluation team could assist in identifying causes of high female unemployment rates. On the third action point, the business breakfast had been held.
 - Paragraph 11: Marketing of North Kent - no action as yet, this would be brought back to the Board in due course.
 - Paragraph 14: the first meeting of the Thames Gateway Local Nature partnership would be taking place on 4 December.

Report back on outcome of TGSG focus group meeting with Kris Hopkins on 26 November

3. David Liston-Jones said this item was also covered in the Chief Executive's Report. He reported back on the outcome of the focus group meeting with Kris Hopkins. The Minister had given a brief response on some of the ideas in the proposed stimulus package. He said there was no flexibility possible on the local authority borrowing (debt cap). On 'Incentives to reduce land banking' he wanted to see the evidence of land banking, the Department had not seen any evidence that it was taking place. On a couple of the proposals – 'Investment to stimulate the private rented sector' and 'Support for smaller developers' he would be able to say more in a month's time.
4. The Minister had said he was keen to see what could be done on a small number of strategic sites in the Gateway, where he could assist, and work with partners to get delivery happening faster. He asked local partners to come forward with suggestions as to which sites those should be. In the case of North Kent, Queenborough and Rushenden was suggested in the focus group discussion as a possible candidate.
5. Terry Fuller, who had been present at the focus group, then outlined to the Board a possible new model to develop housing for sale at lower costs for purchasers. Such an approach could speed-up delivery on sites in the Gateway. The HCA land at Queenborough and Rushenden (Q and R) might be used to pilot the approach. This innovative model would require Treasury consent before it could proceed.
6. The Board's views were sought on the idea, and whether Q and R should be put forward as one of the sites in response to the Minister's request at the focus group. Abdool Kara said that from a Swale Borough Council point of view they would support, in principle, adopting Q and R as a pilot for this approach, subject to further examination of the detail of the proposal with the HCA.
7. In discussion a number of points were made, including:

- there would be opportunities to build-in skills training/apprenticeships as part of the proposal;
 - Q and R would be a good candidate for developing this model, but it was not a 'stalled site', nor would it deliver new housing in the very short term;
 - there were a number of different innovative housing delivery models being explored, such as the Kier Kent Initiative being taken forward by Kent County Council and Kier;
 - key to this and similar approaches on publicly owned land would be the Government's willingness to waive or defer taking a receipt for the land;
 - there was a risk that this model could lead to product substitution rather than a broadening of the market;
 - there was support for putting Q and R forward to the Minister, other possible sites in North Kent included Ebbsfleet, Springhead and Strood Waterfront.
8. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the Board were content for the proposal to be worked up in more detail, and, in the context of the Minister's request at the focus group, for Q and R to be put forward as one site in North Kent. The next step would be for HCA and Swale Borough Council officers to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Action: Terry Fuller/Naisha Polaine to discuss Q and R proposal with Abdool Kara and colleagues.

Item 3: North Kent input into Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and South East LEP plans – paper TGKP(13)15 Richard Longman.

9. Richard introduced his paper, which updated the Board on the revision of the TGK Growth Plan and its relationship to the Kent and Medway "Unlocking the Potential" strategy and the LEP Strategic Economic Plan.
10. Katharine Harvey briefed the Board on the preparation of the Strategic Economic Plan. She emphasised that this was a competitive process, and we were in competition with other LEPs. We needed to be able to convince Government that it should invest in our area, and that we were putting forward schemes that would deliver on jobs, growth and homes. Barbara Cooper and Ross Gill then updated the Board on the development of the new Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and on the drafting of the Unlocking the Potential document.
11. Following a brief discussion, the **recommendations in paragraph 13 of Richard's paper were agreed.** The Board:
- a. noted the progress and state of play on each of the strands of activity;
 - b. agreed that the TGK Growth Plan should remain in draft pending the initial feedback from Government on the LEP's draft Strategic Economic Plan;
 - c. agreed that a report and final draft Growth Plan should be considered by the Board at its next meeting on 18 February 2014;
 - d. authorised the Chairs of the TGKP Board and Officers' Group and the TGKP Chief Executive, in consultation with the Officers' Group, to make

any interim submissions to the LEP and KMEP regarding TGKP's investment priorities for North Kent.

Item 4: TGKP Future Funding – paper TGKP(13)16

12. David Liston-Jones introduced his paper, which considered TGKP's future funding requirements. David said that since 2011-12 TGKP has been funded primarily through annual contributions from the individual local authorities, with additional contributions from the Environment Agency and the DCLG Transition Fund. Local authority contributions have remained at the same level for 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14.
13. All local authorities were under increased financial pressures. Also, TGKP had built up a significant reserve over recent years, partly due to the activities/consultancies budget not being fully utilised. KCC had informed the Partnership it would need to reduce its contribution to TGKP in 2014-15 and in subsequent years. Furthermore, the Environment Agency had said that it would not be providing a funding contribution in 2014-15 due to budget restrictions.
14. David Liston-Jones said that the Officers' Group had considered the levels of funding needed for next year. A 'core operating budget' of around £230,000 was required to keep TGKP operating with a team of three. The level of funding proposed by the Officers' Group would be sufficient to meet this core operating cost. However, funding at this level would not provide for any significant discretionary spending on projects, events, studies etc. This would need to be funded from the reserve and, once spent, would not be replenished at the level of new funding proposed. It was estimated there would be around £182,000 available for discretionary spending, over and above the minimum reserve that was retained to be available in the event the Partnership had to be wound up (6 months operating costs plus wind-up costs - estimated at £155,000).
15. Following discussion, the Board agreed to the recommendation in paragraph 19 of the paper, namely that local authorities be requested to set their contributions to TGKP for 2014/2015 and, subject to review in 12 months time, for future years at the levels shown below:

Dartford:	£28,000
Gravesham:	£28,000
Swale:	£28,000
Medway:	£56,000
Kent:	£90,000*
<u>Total</u>	<u>£230,000</u>

*In discussion KCC agreed to round-up its contribution from the £89,600 shown in the paper to £90,000.

Item 5: Chief Executive's Report – paper TGKP(13)17

16. David Liston-Jones introduced his paper. The first item, on the Thames Gateway Strategic Group, had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The second item in

the paper was to inform the Board about TGKP's funding support for a transitional project to promote the Kent and Medway CORE (Centre for Offshore Renewable Energy). The third item was to seek Board Members' views on future agenda items for 2014.

Action: Board members to let David know of any issues they would wish to see included on a future Board agenda.

Item 6: Updates from Board members – verbal updates

17. Mark Dance drew the Board's attention to the possibility of introducing an equity shares option as part of the TIGER scheme. Taking an equity share was already an option available under the Expansion East Kent scheme, and the scope for including a similar option in TIGER had been raised at the TGKP Business Breakfast. Mark said that the issue would be discussed at the forthcoming TIGER Strategic Board on 6 December.

Item 7: Budget Report – Paper TGKP(13)18

18. David advised that this report was for information. The Board noted the position on income and expenditure for 2013/2014.

Item 8: AOB

19. David asked the Officers' Group members attending whether they felt it was necessary to hold the Officers' Group meeting scheduled for 4 December, as it was less than a week away from today's Board meeting. **It was agreed to cancel the meeting.**

20. Due to personal reasons, Graham Pendlebury had requested his tour of North Kent be rescheduled for the New Year. **Action: New date to be confirmed.**

21. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

**Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
December 2013**