



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 **Thursday 30 May 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
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council
Neil Davies, Medway 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
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Eike Ndiweni-Muller, Department for Transport
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
Robert Goodman, Bluewater/Lend Lease

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. Apologies were noted. The Chairman welcomed Richard Longman back to TGKP as Katharine Harvey's successor.

Item 2: Minutes of the TGKP Board Meeting held on 1 March 2013 and Matters Arising

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

- Paragraph 2: Further to TGKP's letter of support, the Board was informed that the bid for the Medway University Technical College had been successful.
- Paragraph 8: Actioned and on the agenda.
- Paragraph 9: Actioned. A bid was submitted to the South East LEP as agreed. However, no funds were available at present to support new local Enterprise Zones. David said the LEP was encouraging bidders to continue to work up their proposals so that they were in a position to respond quickly if funds became available.

Item 3 – Consultation on Lower Thames Crossing Options - paper TGKP(13)4 – Eike Ndiweni-Muller, Department for Transport

3. The Chair welcomed Eike Ndiweni-Muller to the meeting. Eike outlined the arrangements for the consultation. She explained that as part of the process there would be a series of public consultation events, including one at Bluewater. DfT officials were also attending a range of meetings with local stakeholders and partnerships. The consultation closed on 16 July and a Government decision was expected in the Autumn.

4. In discussion a number of points were made:

- In response to a question, Eike confirmed that the Government's decision would not be driven by cost factors alone; there were a range of factors that would be taken into account and the consultation was seeking views on the relative weight to be attached to the different factors.
- Eike confirmed that the Department was not considering further options beyond the three being consulted on. The 2009 Parsons Brinkerhoff study had considered two additional locations further east but had concluded that these would do little to alleviate congestion at the existing crossing and would deliver fewer wider benefits. It had recommended that these options should not be progressed further.
- Members queried why the Benefits Cost Ratio (BCR) ranges were so much wider for Option A than for Options B or C. Eike said that the range reflected the differences between the costs and benefits of the three engineering options – bridge, bored tunnel or immersed tunnel. As you went further east down the estuary the impact on the BCR of the different engineering options became less.
- Board members expressed serious concern that the inclusion of Option B was jeopardising investment in the Paramount Park project at the Swanscombe Peninsula. The promoters of the project had stated that their proposals for a major leisure resort were not compatible with Option B. The promoters were also arguing that the Government's decision to include this location as one of the options was putting foreign investment in the project at risk. Members stressed that, if it went ahead, Paramount Park would produce huge economic

benefits for North Kent and the wider region with forecasts of 27,000 new jobs being created. The Government was risking giving out mixed messages. It was vital that this option be rejected from consideration as soon as possible to remove the uncertainty. In response Eike said that at present all that was being consulted on was a broad location, rather than a precise route, so at this stage the precise impact was not known. The Department was aware of the Paramount Park proposals and was in dialogue with the promoters of the scheme.

- David Simms said that his company, Lafarge Tarmac, felt aggrieved that the Department had not held discussions with them prior to the consultation as much of the route for Option B passed over their land. He echoed other Board members' views that Option B would jeopardise the Paramount Park proposals. Eike said that prior to the consultation there had been discussions had been primarily with local authorities and with bodies such as the LEP to draw upon local knowledge. The consultation was an opportunity to discuss with other interests. Once a decision on a broad location had been made, there would be further consultation on the detailed route to be adopted.
 - Members argued that it was imperative that there was no further slippage in the implementation date of Autumn 2014 for the introduction of free flow tolling on the existing crossing.
 - It was argued that the benefits of the Paramount Park project should be taken into account when assessing the wider economic impacts of the other options.
5. The Chairman invited the Board to consider the three questions in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the paper TGKP(13)4. In response to the first question, **the Board agreed** that TGKP should submit a response to the consultation. It was recognised that it would be unlikely that the Partnership could agree on a preferred location, but a response should be made focusing on the points on which there was agreement and in particular on the Board's opposition to Option B. On the second question, on whether a special Board meeting should be arranged in order to discuss the response, **it was decided** to make a judgement on that after a draft response had been prepared. Finally, on the third question, **the Board agreed** that the TGKP response should be submitted direct to Government.
6. The Chairman thanked Eike for attending the meeting and for responding to Board members' questions.
7. **Action: David Liston-Jones to prepare a draft TGKP response, taking into account Board members' views.**

Item 4: Delivering Growth in North Kent – paper TGKP(13)5 – Richard Longman

8. Richard introduced his paper Delivering Growth in North Kent. The Board had agreed at its last meeting to come back to the issue of a North Kent 'growth deal' in the light of the Budget Statement, the Government's response to Lord Heseltine's report and the Core Package for City Deals being developed by the Cabinet Office. Richard said that the likelihood of North Kent being able to negotiate it's own separate deal with Government was slim. More realistic was the scope for inclusion of a distinctive North Kent dimension or contribution to a local growth deal drawn up at a wider geography. The paper discussed what the focus

of this North Kent contribution to a wider growth deal might be and set out some possible key priorities.

9. Following a brief discussion **the Board agreed** that it did not wish to draw up a separate North Kent growth deal. Instead **the Board agreed** that a refresh of the Partnership's economic priorities should be carried out to take account of developments since the TGKP Growth Plan was prepared a year ago. In this way the Partnership was well placed to ensure that its priorities were properly reflected in any wider growth plan drawn up at the Kent and Medway and/or the South East LEP level.
10. **ACTION: Richard Longman and David Liston-Jones to work on a refresh of the Partnerships economic and investment priorities in consultation with partners and to report back to the Board, via the Officers' Group.**

Item 5: Key Development Sites exercise for TGSG – update by David Liston-Jones and Richard Longman

11. David Liston-Jones and Richard Longman updated the meeting on the Key Development Sites exercise which was being carried out on behalf of the Thames Gateway Strategic Group for it's meeting on 11 June. Richard had coordinated the preparation of a detailed report with input from Kent County Council, the HCA and individual authorities. David and Barbara Cooper would be presenting the information to TGSG at the meeting on 11 June.
12. The report categorised progress on the key sites (over 100 homes, or over 50 jobs) in the Gateway using a RAG rating to indicate where good progress was being made, where there was delay or where sites were stalled. Five sites were highlighted where there were issues we wished to draw to the Thames Gateway Minister's attention and where Government assistance was being requested to remove obstacles to delivery.
13. In discussion it was argued that given concerns over the stance taken by Natural England at sites such as Lodge Hill it was important for DEFRA to be present at TGSG discussions. On a separate point it was argued that, given the wide circulation of TGSG papers it was important to check that there was no issues of commercial confidentiality in the information contained in the report.
14. **ACTION: David Liston-Jones to raise issue of DEFRA attendance at TGSG with the TGSG secretariat.**
15. **ACTION: David Liston-Jones and Richard Longman to check, prior to circulating the report, with local authorities and HCA that there were no issues of commercial confidentiality.**

Item 6: Updates on current issues from members

16. The Chairman invited members to update the Board on current issues.

- Naisha Polaine advised the Board on the latest position on the arrangements for the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF). An announcement was anticipated shortly. Rob Bennett declared an interest as his company was part of one of the Panel Surveyors, appointed to assess bids.
- David Simms updated the Board of the benefits being realised through the operation of the new rail link into Northfleet. Five trains a day were bringing spoil into the site, thus avoiding the need for many hundreds of lorry movements. There was strong interest from companies in the use of the rail link and the deep wharfage opportunities. This was a good news story that was happening almost unnoticed.
- David Hughes reported that the proposals for the development of the Heritage Quarter in Gravesend had reached an important stage. The Council had resolved to grant planning permission for the proposals subject to conditions, including the finalising of the Section 106 agreement.
- Jeremy Kite reported that planning permission had been granted for the expansion of Bluewater, which was expected to lead to the creation of 2,200 jobs.

Item 7: Budget report – paper TGKP(13)6

17. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report. Following a brief discussion **the Board noted** the position on income and expenditure for 2012/2013, **approved the setting of an initial budget** of £276,000 for 2013/2014, and **tasked the Officers Group to review the position on the level of the Partnership's reserves in October and to put proposals to the Board.**
18. **ACTION: Officers' Group to prepare proposals on use of the Partnership's reserves for consideration by the Board at its November meeting.**

Item 8: Chief Executive's Report – paper TGKP(13)7

19. David Liston-Jones introduced his report. He invited comments, either at the meeting or by email afterwards, on the draft outline Work Plan for 2013/2014 and also Members' views on the ideas in the report for future Board agenda items. David also advised the Board on the agenda for the Thames Gateway Strategic Group meeting on 11 June.

Item 9: AOB

20. Barbara Cooper raised the issue of the Centre for London's review of the Thames Gateway. David Liston-Jones informed the Board that he had attended a meeting held by Centre for London earlier this month, chaired by Lord Adonis and attended by Lord Heseltine, and also by a number of urban regeneration specialists who would be contributing essays as part of the review. TGKP had not so far been invited to contribute. Following a brief discussion **it was agreed** that the Partnership would not seek to make any specific input into the review, but would await the review's publication and consider whether to respond at that time.
21. Mark Dance reported that the first North Kent TIGER Approvals Panel had now taken place. It had been a positive and constructive meeting. Some additional

private sector panel members were to be appointed and these nominations would be brought back to the TIGER Strategic Board for approval.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm.

**Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
June 2013**