

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (TGKP) response to Ebbsfleet Development Corporation Consultation

Consultation question 1:

Do you agree with the proposal to create a Development Corporation at Ebbsfleet, Kent? (Yes / No / Don't know)

Please add any comments you wish to make...

TGKP Response – Yes

Additional comments:

TGKP reaffirms its support for the creation of a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet and agrees with the proposal to create a Development Corporation.

Consultation question 2:

Are you satisfied with the proposed boundary of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, as set out in Annex A? (Yes, I am satisfied / I am broadly satisfied but I have some comments or concerns / No, I am not satisfied / Don't Know).

Please express any comments / concerns you wish to make...

Consultation question 3:

Do you think there are any areas which should be added into the area of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation? (Yes / No / Don't know).

If yes, please provide details of the area(s) you would wish to see added in...

Consultation question 4:

Do you think there are any areas which should be taken out of the area of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation? (Yes / No / Don't know)

If yes, please provide details of the area(s) you would wish to see taken out...

TGKP Response – Yes (to Q2))

Additional comments:

TGKP is satisfied with the proposed boundary of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, and does not think there are any areas that should be added in or taken out.

Consultation question 5:

Do you agree with the proposals to give the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation the planning powers as set out in the consultation document? (This does not include plan making powers) (Yes / No / Don't know)

Please add any comments you wish to make...

TGKP Response – Yes***Additional comments:***

It will be important for the Development Corporation to have sufficient resources and systems in place by the date its planning powers take effect, so as to ensure continuity and an efficient service, which will be essential to establishing a good reputation.

Consultation question 6:

Do you agree with the proposal for the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to have 11 Board members? (Yes / No / Don't know)

Please add any comments you wish to make ...

TGKP Response – Yes***Additional comments:***

Ebbsfleet is the number one priority for the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership, and has been for many years. It is a transformational project for the Kent part of the Thames Gateway, and its successful completion will have a huge beneficial impact across North Kent in terms of jobs, homes and in increasing the attractiveness and profile of the area for investment. That potential benefit has only increased with the prospect of a world-class leisure resort being developed at Swanscombe Peninsula..

It will, however, potentially have other implications which could lead to, for example, additional pressures on already stretched transport infrastructure elsewhere in North Kent.

So the Partnership believes it is vital that the Government recognises that the decisions taken by the Development Corporation Board will have a significant impact far beyond the boundaries of the UDC itself.

TGKP is keen, therefore, to ensure the interests of North Kent are properly taken into account in the deliberations of the UDC Board. The Partnership very much welcomes the fact that the Leaders of the three local authorities directly involved – Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils, and Kent County Council will have places on the Board.

But it will also be important to ensure that the wider interests of the whole of North

Kent, including those of the Medway and Swale areas, are taken into account. We recognise that the Government will be seeking to recruit to the Board talented individuals with specific expertise and experience, so as to ensure that the Board has all the necessary skills at its disposal.

However, we would urge the Government, when it comes to advertise the Board appointments, to encourage applications from those from the local area with the necessary skills. We would also suggest that a knowledge and understanding of the North Kent area, its opportunities and its challenges, its residents and its business community, should be included in the criteria for selecting Board members. In that way it should be possible to recruit some Board members who have both the specific financial, regeneration, legal or other specialist skills required, and a knowledge and understanding of the needs, challenges and opportunities of the North Kent area.

The Partnership welcomes the Department's decision to set up a wider stakeholder group – the Ebbsfleet Garden City Delivery Board – and that TGKP has been invited to attend that group. However, we understand that group will only continue until the UDC is established, and thereafter it will be for the development corporation to decide what form of stakeholder group is put in place. Furthermore the existence of such a stakeholder group does not, in the Partnership's view, diminish the argument for there being a North Kent voice on the UDC Board itself.

Additional Comments

Q25. Please provide any other comments that you would like to make on the proposal to form a Development Corporation at Ebbsfleet.

TGKP Response

The consultation document makes clear that this consultation is about the setting up of the development corporation, and is not about the Garden City development itself. Nevertheless, the Partnership believes that it is important to establish from the outset the principles that will underpin the Development Corporation's approach to its task of creating the Garden City.

The Partnership would wish to emphasise a number of principles, some of which mirror those set out by the Town and Country Planning Association for a Garden City.

We wish to highlight the importance of:

- there being an *economic focus* to the Garden City – jobs as well as homes. In addition, the Garden City should not be solely dependent upon the proposed London Paramount development as the source of employment or commercial activity – important though that is - there should also be more diverse opportunities in keeping with sustainable development principles;
- ensuring that existing *local communities, residents and businesses*, are fully involved in drawing up the plans for the

Garden City and are able to *benefit fully from the opportunities* offered;

- taking into account the wider impact that the creation of the Garden City will have across North Kent, and that (as stated earlier) decisions taken by the Development Corporation will have a significant impact beyond its boundaries;
- ensuring that masterplanning and development proposals incorporate *comprehensive infrastructure and facilities*, and conform with the approved Local Plans
- mixed tenure *homes* and housing types being made available that are *affordable for local people*
- creating *generous green space* linked to the wider natural environment;
- a strong *cultural and leisure offer*;
- achieving *high quality in design and construction* of both the new homes and commercial buildings and the public realm. The Garden City should be an exemplar of high-quality which can be a spur to the quality of developments across North Kent and beyond;
- *sustainability and high environmental standards* being at the heart of the corporation's approach, including integrated and accessible low-carbon transport systems; and
- creating a *Garden City for the 21st Century with the necessary digital infrastructure designed-in from the outset*, future proofed as far as possible to take account of the way new technologies are changing the way we live our lives.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
October 2014