

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 13.30 on Wednesday 16 March at
the North Kent Community Centre

Board Members Present:

Michael Cassidy CBE (Chairman)
David Holt (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr John Cubitt (Gravesham Borough Council)
Louise Hardy
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE (Dartford Borough Council)
Bob Lane OBE
David Lock CBE
Katie Perrior (*attended Part II discussions only*)
Paul Spooner

Apologies:

Cllr Mark Dance (Kent County Council)

In Attendance:

Tracey Coleman	EDC Chief Planning Officer
Steve Pritchard	EDC Director of Land and Regeneration
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Finance Director and Interim Accounting Officer
Louise Wyman	EDC Strategy Director
Mark Templeton	EDC Head of Communications and Engagement
Ruth Collins	DCLG Sponsor Team
Jo Key	DCLG Sponsor Team
Sarah Williamson	DCLG Sponsor Team
James Richardson	Board Secretary

Note: Several EDC Officers attended to present Part II items

PART ONE

Item 1

01.03.16 The Chair opened Part One of the meeting, welcoming members of the public.

Apologies

02.03.16 The Chair confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillor Mark Dance and that Katie Perrior would be arriving for Part II of the meeting.

Declarations of interest

03.03.16 The Chair reminded Board members to raise any potential conflicts in relation to specific issues under discussion, and of their responsibility not to participate in the discussion or determination of any matter in which they had an interest. No declarations were made.

Part 1 Minutes of the 24 February 2016 Board Meeting

04.03.16 The Part I minutes were approved.

Board Actions

05.03.16 James Richardson confirmed that all actions from previous Board meetings were complete or due to be considered as agenda items, as set out in the Board Action Log.

Item 2 Chief Planning Officer's Report

2(a) Planning Service Transition

06.03.16 Tracey Coleman provided a verbal update on the final stages of the EDC's transition to taking on the full planning service. Tracey confirmed that data transfer between Gravesham and Dartford's planning IT systems to the EDC was underway, and testing was scheduled for Friday 18 March. EDC staff now had laptops with access to the new IT system and existing staff had received training. Go live for the new system was scheduled for Monday 21 March at which point the EDC would deliver all planning work in house. Tracey confirmed that the EDC was confident that go live would go ahead as planned.

07.03.16 Tracey added that the Planning Portal's upgrade would be established for 29 March, and the EDC has been working with its partners to plan for this. On provision of a public interface, Tracey confirmed that EDC planning officers would be available each day from 21 March at the Springhead Community Centre. A schedule of times had been published on the EDC website.

08.03.16 David Holt asked whether the EDC would be sending a planning weekly list. Tracey confirmed that this would commence from 21 March and agreed to include Board members in the circulation.

09.03.16 The Board **NOTED** the update and welcomed the progress that was being made.

2(b) Housing Delivery Programme (Paper 016/017)

10.03.16 Tracey Coleman presented Paper 016/017 that provided an update on housing delivery across the EDC area. She said that since the last Board meeting the EDC team had met with a number of active developers including David Wilson Homes, Circle, New Crest, Taylor Wimpey and Redrow Homes. The EDC had also been working with the HCA and Tarmac on development of the Northfleet Embankment schemes and with Camland on a Section 73 application.

11.03.16 Tracey reported that the third EDC Planning Committee was meeting that evening and that it would be considering an application for a new primary school at the Eastern Quarry. David Wilson Homes would also be presenting that evening ahead of an application due to be considered at the April Committee.

12.03.16 Tracey highlighted the issue of coastal special protection that potentially affected the Northfleet Embankment and confirmed that EDC officers had met with Natural England to progress this matter. Tracey confirmed that this matter was being taken account of in the masterplanning work.

13.03.16 David Holt welcomed the housing data that had been supplied but felt that more work was needed to enable the Board to properly track progress. He suggested that a stronger graphical representation of the data was required, including a link to the overall housing trajectory once agreed. Louise Hardy requested the development of an enhanced 'dashboard' view of key data, and Bob Lane asked for more data around actual vs projected starts, actual vs projected completions and key milestones. Tracey Coleman introduced Kirsty Bowskill as the EDC's new Development Monitoring Officer and confirmed that Kirsty would be working to improve the report in line with the Board's suggestions.

14.03.16 The Board discussed the local housing market, the current optimism across the Garden City, and considered whether this might drive some developers to hold back development to take advantage of higher prices in the future. Paul Spooner said that this was a risk but in his experience the key was to create and drive competition in the market, generating a mix of development types and also ensuring access to the market for smaller developers alongside established national firms.

15.03.16 The Board **NOTED** the content of the report and **SUPPORTED** its continued development, with updates to be brought to the Board monthly.

Actions:

03-01	Housing delivery programme report to provide a stronger graphical representation of the data so that performance can be tracked against plan, making a link to the overall EDC trajectory once agreed (Tracey Coleman)
03-02	Housing delivery programme report to provide a stronger 'dashboard' view of key data, including actual vs projected starts, actual vs projected completions and key milestones (Tracey Coleman)

Item 3 Chief Executive's Report

Communications and Engagement Update (Paper 016/018)

16.03.16 Mark Templeton updated the Board on the EDC's communications and engagement activity. Mark outlined the proposed public engagement programme for Stage 2 of the masterplanning work, including a series of public events and a stakeholder workshop on 4 May. Cllr Kite reiterated the importance of communicating across the widest possible set of stakeholders, including all local residents. Mark Templeton confirmed that the programme would seek to achieve this, including innovative use of social media alongside other methods. Mark added that he would be discussing proposals in more detail with the Communications sub-group, including Cllr Kite.

17.03.16 David Lock raised his concern that the Board had not yet seen the draft Implementation Framework, and requested that the Board consider this in detail as soon as possible. Paul Spooner confirmed that the framework would be presented to the Board in April.

18.03.16 Mark Templeton reported that DCLG had approved a request for funding to improve the EDC website to make it more engaging and more interactive, alongside an increase in the quality of the content. The new website would be live around the time of the April Board.

19.03.16 Mark Templeton proposed that Part I items from future Board meetings should be streamed live using social media including facebook and twitter. The Board agreed that this would increase the transparency of the EDC's work and agreed to trial this at a future meeting.

20.03.16 Mark Templeton confirmed that work was underway to start a joint marketing campaign with home builders, local authorities and other partners to market the Garden City as a location, including plans for the Commercial Centre. Mark agreed to involve the Communications sub-group in this work and keep the Board updated.

21.03.16 The Board **AGREED** to the programme of stakeholder engagement activity on the implementation framework, **AGREED** to a trial on future live streaming of the EDC Board and **NOTED** communications and engagement progress.

Actions:

03-03	Progress the programme of Implementation Framework engagement events, including opportunities for the widest possible group of stakeholders to participate (Mark Templeton)
03-04	Trial live streaming of Part I of a future EDC Board Meeting (Mark Templeton)

Item 4 Strategy Director's Report

Healthy New Towns Update (Paper 016/019)

22.03.16 Louise Wyman presented Paper 016/019 updating the Board on the success of Ebbsfleet in being awarded 'Healthy New Town' status. The EDC had been a key partner in the local CCG's bid, and the Garden City had beaten off competition from 116 bidders to be designated as one of ten healthy new towns nationwide. On next steps, Louise confirmed that a designated officer from NHS England would be working with the EDC and its partners, and there was the possibility of funding to support local initiatives.

23.03.16 Board members congratulated EDC officers on the successful bid and agreed that this was a real opportunity. David Holt said that it was important to quickly develop a strategy and action plan to drive this work forward and identify the opportunities, clarifying who the EDC and partners should engage with to capitalise on this. Paul Spooner agreed, and confirmed that Lorna Hughes would be taking this work forward for the EDC. Bob Lane suggested that the organisations who operate in the market for provision of accessible properties would probably be less able to compete for land, and so the EDC would need to identify these partners and work closely with them in support.

24.03.16 Paul Spooner highlighted recent engagement with Kent Neurosciences who were considering locating to the Garden City with a Primary Treatment Centre, a University and 'Neurovillage'. EDC officers had brokered a series of meetings between the organisation and local landowners to progress this interest.

25.03.16 The Board **NOTED** the EDC's success in securing Healthy New Town status and **NOTED** Kent Neurosciences' interest in locating to the Garden City.

Actions:

03-05	Create and keep up to date an action plan showing clearly how the EDC will maximise opportunities from the Healthy New Towns initiative (Paul Spooner)
03-06	Continue discussions with Kent Neurosciences Group in parallel with Masterplanning work (Paul Spooner)

Item 5 Finance Director's Report

Finance and Operations Report (Paper 016 / 020)

26.03.16 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 016/020 that provided an update on the EDC budget, workforce, premises and other operational issues as at 29 February 2016. He reported that the Corporation still expected to underspend in the current financial year, and this would be in the region of £220,000, primarily due to underspend on premises, training, IT, telephony, employer's pension and travel budgets. As a result of the likely underspend the EDC was working with DCLG to see if any spend currently planned for 2016/17 could be brought forward.

27.03.16 Gerard Whiteman reported that DCLG had indicated the EDC's likely revenue budget for 2016/17. This included a slight increase compared to the current year to take account of having staff in post for the full year, but that overall the revenue budget was more challenging than 2015/16.

28.03.16 Gerard added that there had been good recent progress on recruitment, with all planning roles now offered to candidates, and roles offered and accepted in project management and as the CEO's executive assistant. Two procurement exercises were now drawing to a successful conclusion, those for legal advisors for EDC planning and land & development matters.

29.03.16 Gerard alerted the Board to an annex to his paper that provided more detail on the Infrastructure and Projects Authority's proposed 'Project Assessment Review' of the Ebbsfleet project in May. Gerard also confirmed that Louise Hardy would be stepping down from the EDC Planning Committee with immediate effect.

30.03.16 David Holt asked about the 20% decrease in non-pay casts for the 2016/17. Gerard clarified that this was primarily because the EDC's first year had included two consultancy studies that had now completed or were nearing completion and that would not carry on far into 2016/17 - the utilities study and the masterplan.

31.03.16 The Board **NOTED** Gerard's update

Item 6 Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public

32.03.16 Paul Spooner summarised the responses to questions submitted by the public. A copy of the questions and responses are published at the end of these minutes.

The Chair declared the public part of the meeting as closed, thanking those members of the public present for their attendance. He declared that Part Two of the meeting concerning matters solely of commercial or personal confidentiality and for which the public was excluded would commence.

PART TWO

Items 7 – 11 (33.03.16 to 66.03.16) were dealt with as Part II items

Item 12

Any Other Business

67.03.16 The Chairman thanked Louise Wyman for her work as the EDC's Director of Strategy. Louise had been working with the EDC on secondment from the HCA and had been involved since before the EDC was established, initially in an advisory role. The Chairman thanked Louise for her input, and particular for guiding the masterplan, on her efforts to engage positively across a wide range of stakeholders and for her role in helping Ebbsfleet to be awarded 'Healthy New Town' status.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

68.03.16 The next meeting of the Board will be held on 20 April at the North Kent Community Centre.

Chairman's signature:

Michael Cassidy

Date:

20 April 2016

Public Questions and EDC Response

EDC Board 16 March 2016

The following questions and responses can also be found on the Corporation's website at www.ebbsfleetdc.org.uk.

Questions are reproduced as received.

Relating to Item 2a and 2b: Chief Planning Officer's Report

- 1. Will EDC be sending out Weekly Planning Lists for their area or will they continue to be on DBC & GBC lists? Will decisions, including those taken under delegated powers be promptly available online?**

Response

The EDC will produce its own weekly list. The EDC will advise on delegated matters online through the EDC website.

- 2. Can the Board update on the delivery of a more direct footpath linking the Castle Hill estate to Ebbsfleet? It has already been approved by DBC (ref 15/00357/CDNA) but the development has been stalled by Land Securities for over a year. The reliance on the current unreliable bus does not seem to fit in with the plans for a connected development with good walking links and it is an expense commuters who live in Castle Hill could do without on top of the £4200 train fare. The current walk from the development is longer than the train into London and many people drive to the station because of it.**

Response

Although the footpath in question was not a requirement of the Outline Planning Consent, the EDC has approved an application by Camland Developments to provide this much needed facility for residents. The EDC fully recognises the importance of direct and attractive routes for walking, cycling and public transport.

The EDC has sought an update from Camland Developments. They have confirmed that they are working with the land owners and High Speed 1 to get the necessary legal agreements in place in order to start on site in around four weeks' time.

Relating to Item 3: Comms and Engagement Update

- 3. What is EDC response to the Lower Thames Crossing consultation?**

Response

The EDC Board is currently considering its response to the consultation and this will be submitted by the 24 March consultation deadline.

Relating to Item 5:

Finance, Programme and Operations Report

- 4. At the 16 September Board a year-end underspend of £422,527 was forecast and the Corporation were considering options for positively using this. Can you update?**

Response

The current financial position of the EDC is as outlined in Paper 016 / 020. This continues to indicate an outturn underspend for 2015/16, although at a lower figure than forecast in September.

The EDC remains committed to supporting projects which benefit local communities. We are working with the local authorities to utilise their existing grant funding mechanisms with a view to funding these types of projects. Any funding of this type will be subject to DCLG approval.