

**PART 1 MINUTES [DRAFT FOR AGREEMENT BY THE BOARD]**  
**of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)**  
**held at 13:00 on Wednesday 15 February 2017 at**  
**the North Kent Community Centre**

**Board Members Present:**

Michael Cassidy CBE (Chairman)  
David Holt (Deputy Chairman)  
Louise Hardy  
David Lock CBE  
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE (Dartford Borough Council)  
Cllr Mark Dance (Kent County Council)  
Paul Spooner

**Apologies:** Bob Lane OBE, Cllr John Cubitt (Gravesham Borough Council)

**In Attendance:**

Cllr David Turner	Gravesham Borough Council
Julia Gregory	EDC Director of Projects
Simon Newsholme	EDC Development Director
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Finance Director
Mark Pullin	EDC Acting Chief Planning Officer
Mark Templeton	EDC Head of Communications
Beth Sedgwick	DCLG Policy Team
Colin Lovegrove	DCLG Policy Team
Nina Shuttlewood	Board Secretary

**PART ONE**

**Item 1**

1.1 The Chair opened Part One of the meeting and welcomed Cllr David Turner who attended in Cllr Cubitt's absence.

**Apologies**

1.2 The Chair noted that Councillor John Cubitt and Bob Lane had sent apologies.

**Declarations of interest**

1.3 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 14 December 2016 Board Meeting**

1.4 The Part I minutes were approved.

**Board Actions**

1.5 The Chair 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 Interim Chief Executive's Report**

### **2(a) Strategic Report (Paper 017/001)**

2.1 Paul presented Paper 017/001 which provided a public update on the interim CEO's assessment of the EDC's strategic priorities.

2.2 Paul reported the following highlights this month:

- i. Developers had indicated they were on course to deliver 540 starts on site within the red line area. They had also indicated they were on track for 160 completions within the red line this year
- ii. Latest projections from developers of both new and existing schemes indicate that at least 4,300 homes will be completed within the Garden City; this is against our target of 5,100
- iii. The market remained buoyant with developers reporting an increase in sales in January with particular interest from local residents wanting to make use of Help to Buy
- iv. Masterplanners had been appointed at Grove Road
- v. Work had started on the first new Green Corridor which would link Castle Hill to the International Station and would mean a walk of less than 10 minutes between the two
- vi. As agreed at December Board a letter had been sent to Highways England regarding the Lower Thames Crossing. It was agreed this letter would be made available on the EDC website
- vii. The emerging view from Gravesham Borough Council was that an extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet would meet Gravesham's needs. It was noted that the issue of turning the trains at a terminal at Ebbsfleet could impact significantly on the Central Area. The Chair reported that at the other end of Crossrail a shuttle service would run between Maidenhead and Reading; consideration could be given to a similar service between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet
- viii. The Healthy New Town programme business plan had been submitted. If confirmation of funding for 17/18 was given it would generate confidence and allow for better integration of the programme with EDC programmes
- ix. Paul noted that Andy Larkin had joined the EDC finance team and that Adrian Pigott would be joining in April as the Transport and Infrastructure project manager.
- x. Paul noted his thanks to Nick Fenton for his work on utilities and specifically electricity. Nick's contract had ended but he would continue to work with the EDC in other capacities.

2.3 Cllr Turner noted that Gravesham Borough Council had just undertaken a detailed assessment which would dovetail with the Healthy New Towns programme. He suggested Kevin McGeough might find it useful to speak to the officers that had done the work.

2.4 David Lock asked if there was evidence of a move back to leasehold by developers. Paul reported that Persimmon had previously insisted on leasehold but had now changed their policy. None of the other volume house builders are proposing leasehold houses.

2.5 The Board **NOTED** the update.

**Actions:**

<b>01.01</b>	EDC letter to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the Lower Thames Crossing to be made public. <b>Action: Paul Spooner</b>
<b>02.01</b>	Healthy New Towns programme to engage with Gravesham Borough Council on the detailed assessment recently undertaken. <b>Action: Kevin McGeough</b>

**2(b) Communications and Engagement Update (Paper 017/002)**

2.6 Mark Templeton presented Paper 017/002, updating the Board on the EDC's latest communications activity.

2.7 There had been a significant number of media articles, TV and radio broadcasts about the Garden City; an example was a press release issued during the last Planning Committee meeting which made the local news that night.

2.8 Newsletter: An email newsletter would be produced to give both the public and stakeholders bite-size updates on the progress being made. In the first two weeks 500 people had signed up to receive the newsletter.

2.9 Information Centre: work was underway on the model and touch screen and remained on track for an April opening.

2.10 Signage Design: Two options for signage design had been put forward and the Board would be asked to indicate their preferred option in Part 2 of the meeting.

2.11 Website & Social Media: This continued to be well used. Over 4000 individuals visited the website in January with more than 14,000 pages viewed. Social media posts reached more than 150,000 accounts.

2.12 The Board **NOTED** the update.

**Item 3: Housing White Paper (paper 017/003)**

3.1 Paul introduced the paper by clarifying that it was a Part 1 paper and not Part 2 as some copies of the paper suggested. He explained that the White Paper did not sit alone, there were a number of consultations that sat behind it. There were four policy areas within the White Paper:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places
- Building homes faster
- Diversify the housing market
- Helping people now

3.2 Planning for the right homes in the right places: significant emphasis on local plans, signalling the government's priority to ensure enough houses would be built to meet local demand in the right area. More land would be made available for homes in the right places, by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating

estates, releasing more small and medium-sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow and making it easier to build new settlements.

- 3.3 In discussion it was noted that:
- i. the new measures needed to be integrated with existing programmes
  - ii. applications needed to be balanced with other needs across local authorities
  - iii. caution noted on the phrase 'estate regeneration' as previously this had meant a focus on low income families who had often been left in smaller accommodation as a result of the regeneration.

3.4 Building homes faster: measures would place quite stringent tests on local authorities and would provide significant risk to local authorities not delivering the necessary housing. Local authorities would be able to increase planning fees by 20% from July 2017 if they committed to invest the additional fee income in the planning department. The government would consider allowing an increase of a further 20% for those authorities who were delivering the homes their communities needed. The Homes and Communities Agency would be renamed Homes England.

3.5 Diversify the housing market: Housing Associations to be supported to build more and backing to be given to small and medium-sized builders to grow.

3.6 Helping people now: Continued support to people seeking to buy their own home through Help to Buy and Starter Homes but with a re-focus of the latter to first time buyers with an income of less than £80,000 (£90,000 in London).

- 3.7 In discussion the following points were noted:
- i. Housing delivery focused on improving areas rather than substituting existing homes
  - ii. There would be more detail of the measures announced in due course. The Housing Infrastructure Fund was now a capital grant fund and DCLG welcomed EDC and local authority partner input to the workshops that would be run to design the detail of the grant
  - iii. Government interest in off-site build appeared to be increasing. Paul reported that two developers were willing to consider off-site construction; he would report back in due course
  - iv. David Lock noted that he had worked with DCLG on the White Paper in his role with the Town and Country Planning Association. He noted the issue of developers not always progressing swiftly once planning permission had been granted and the government's quite robust language on this within the White Paper.

3.8 The Board **NOTED** the update.

**Actions:**

<b>03.01</b>	EDC and LA reps to be invited to DCLG led workshops designing the details of the grant based Housing Infrastructure Fund. <b>Action: Beth Sedgwick</b>
<b>04.01</b>	Report back to Board in due course regarding developer appetite for off-site build. <b>Action: Paul Spooner</b>

## **Item 4 Acting Chief Planning Officer's Report**

### **Planning and Housing Delivery Programme (Paper 017/004)**

4.1 Mark Pullin presented paper 017/004 which provided an update on planning and housing delivery across the EDC area. Included with the paper was the EDC's regular planning and housing performance dashboard.

4.2 Planning Committee was held in January. At the meeting all 3 schemes which were reported were approved in line with the recommendations.

- i. Outline application for the residential led mixed use scheme at Northfleet Embankment West; up to 532 homes with accompanying open space and facilities as well as 46,000sqm of commercial floor space.
- ii. The Garden City's first pub/restaurant and hotel at Ebbsfleet Green, which Marstons are looking to open by the end of the calendar year;
- iii. A revised scheme of 23 dwellings within Springhead Park.

4.3 Northfleet East site: since the publication of the board paper, the outline application for the commercial development has been submitted and consultation would be underway by the end of the week. This application sought consent for 21,500 m2 of commercial floorspace for office and industrial development.

4.4 Development continued at Ebbsfleet Green. We have received the revised plans for phase 2A relating to 197 dwellings within Redrow's regency range, which would be the fourth housing product delivered at the site after Abode, Heritage and some bespoke apartments. The first pre-application meeting has been held with Redrow on the village centre where they were looking to deliver around 120 apartments, a community centre and open space.

4.5 At the last Board, officials were asked to collect information on the numbers of house sales as part of the Help to Buy scheme. This was outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report. The table in paragraph 3.2 outlined the forecast completions by developer for this year (2016-17) and the current sales numbers. We will continue to engage with the house builders on this data particularly on the help to buy initiative.

4.6 David Holt noted that he had expected to see more houses sold than built and questioned whether we understood why not all completions had been sold. Paul noted that the numbers were starting to catch up but that reservations were not shown in the table in Mark's paper. It was agreed that a short narrative regarding reservations would be added to the paper in future.

4.7 The Board **NOTED** Mark's update.

#### **Actions:**

<b>05.01</b>	Short narrative on the number of reservations made to be added to the Planning Report. <b>Action: Mark Pullin</b>
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## **Item 5 Finance Director's Report**

### **Finance and Operations Report (Paper 017/005)**

5.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 017/005 which provided an update on the EDC budget, workforce, and other operational issues for the month of January 2017.

5.2 Gerard noted the latest forecast of capital programme spend for 16/17 was £8.5million, the majority of this would be paid to UKPN but was dependent on agreement being finalised between EDC and UKPN by the end of March.

5.3 Gerard noted that recruitment to the vacant Board member position was underway and that agreement had been sought from the Secretary of State for Cllr Turner to act join the Board as a full member until Cllr Cubitt returned.

5.4 The Board **NOTED** Gerard's update.

## **Item 6 Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public**

6.1 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 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.**

## Public Questions and EDC Response

### EDC Board 15 February 2017

The following questions and responses can also be found on the Corporation's website at [www.ebbsfleetdc.org.uk](http://www.ebbsfleetdc.org.uk)

#### Relating to Item 2a) Interim CEO's Strategic Report

**Q1 Highways England (HE) commenced 6 weeks' consultation on Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements on 18-Jan-17. They say "there is one option for each junction that meets the scheme objectives". We are shocked that it needs the demolition of 11 homes and removal of the 'Spirits Rest' Horse Sanctuary in Bean. On hearing this, we asked Mark Pullin (the staff member who visited the location on 9-Mar-16) and Paul Spooner, "If this Option were pursued, what assistance would EDC give to finding alternative accommodation?" Those affected are all within the Ebbsfleet Garden City boundary. What is the answer?**

**Answer:** The scheme being developed by Highways England does include the compulsory purchase of the properties referred to. Compensation rights can include the value of the property, costs of acquiring and moving to a new property, cover of the costs of professional advice regarding compensation. Whilst this responsibility rests with Highways England, the EDC is fully engaged with Highways England in the development of the scheme.

**Q2 Highways England say, "There is no explicit funding for the A2 Bean & Ebbsfleet scheme ...", but that "the A2 Bean & Ebbsfleet junction improvements form part of a tranche of Schemes committed subject to other contribution"... "The RIS Investment Plan: list of commitments identifies that the scheme is expected to require central government funding of £50m to £100m". Also, it is "advised that a developer contribution element totalling £45m is available for the scheme" and "will be made available in 2020 ...".**

**"The sources have been notified as the STIP (Strategic Transport Infrastructure Programme) fund and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. The former source will provide £25m while the balance of £20m will come from future S106 contributions. These will be collected and underwritten by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation as a Planning Authority". Do you agree?**

**Answer:** The EDC is working with Highways England on the detailed costs and funding of A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements and the respective S106 contributions. The EDC are investigating how the scheme may be forward funded to guarantee its delivery and we will be reporting to Board on this shortly.

**Q3 The cost of the three short listed 'Bean with Ebbsfleet' Options is given as £145m, £143m and £125m. "The budget for the scheme was agreed with DfT and the local authorities as £126.1m. Are EDC a party to this budget limit?**

**Answer:** Highways England has made EDC aware of the budget position for the scheme and as said above we are working with Highways England to ensure the scheme can proceed.

**Q4 Are EDC aware of the following limitations of the HE design: -**

- a) Congestion on the A2 arising from forecast development in the A2 study area and surrounding areas is outside of its remit?**
- b) It is not designed to address seasonal peaks?**
- c) The Garden City Access is not the responsibility of HE?**
- d) Necessary St Clements Way widening is beyond available budget?**
- e) If Paramount proceeds, the current proposals need to be assessed?**
- f) Traffic Forecasts assume a Lower Thames Crossing E of Gravesend?**

**Answer:** The EDC is aware of all of the above and recognises the responsibilities of Highways England and the other relevant highway authorities. We are working with Highways England, Kent County Council and the local authorities to ensure that these issues are addressed in the transport planning of the whole Garden City area.

Relating to Item 2b) Communications

**Q5 The answer to Q6 to the 15-Jun-16 Board, said Press Notices would be on the Website. Are they?**

**Answer:** All press notices publicising planning applications since March 2016 have now been added to the planning public access section of the EDC website. In future such notices will be added shortly after publication.

Relating to Item 4 Acting Chief Planning Officer's Report

**Q6 The answer to Q5 to the December Board was, "The consideration of this planning application along with all other planning application submissions is a matter for the EDC Planning Committee and not for this Board". The Planning Committee has met only 6 times in public in the last 15 months. Shouldn't the Planning Application statistics be published?**

**Answer:** We intend to report planning application statistics for the period April – December 2016 at the next planning committee in March. In future statistics will be reported to planning committee quarterly and Board on an annual basis.

Relating to Item 5 Finance Director's Report

**Q7 When the Board met on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the capital programme forecast outturn for 16/17 was £11m, compared to £39.1m Project Budget. What might the anticipated (£28.1m?) underspend be transferred to?**

**Answer:** As the Board papers have stated, the EDC has reviewed its five year programme of investment (based on the government funding available to the EDC) and submitted a revised expenditure profile to the DCLG and HMT for their consideration. Discussions regarding the revised spend profile and the total investment over the remainder of the Spending Review period (to 2020 / 21) between the EDC, the DCLG and HMT are nearing a conclusion. The revised spend profile is structured on the existing five “pillars” in order to deliver the Garden City and focuses on specific projects that can be delivered at pace and that demonstrate value for money. Once agreement with HMT has been reached, then the revised profile will be made public.