

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 14:00 on Wednesday 19 September 2018 at
North Kent Community Centre

Board Members Present:

Michael Cassidy CBE (Chairman)
David Holt (Deputy Chairman)
Louise Hardy
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE (Dartford Borough Council)
Bob Lane OBE
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

Apologies: Cllr Mark Dance; Sandra Fryer; David Lock CBE; Cllr David Turner

In Attendance:

Julia Gregory	EDC Director of Projects
Mark Pullin	EDC Chief Planning Officer
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Finance Director
Mark Templeton	EDC Head of Communications
Colin Lovegrove	MHCLG Policy Team
Denise Johnson	Board Secretariat
James Richardson	Board Secretariat

PART ONE

Item 1

1.1 The Chairman opened Part One of the meeting, reminding attendees that this public part of the meeting was being broadcast live.

Apologies

1.2 Apologies received and noted as per above.

Declarations of Interest

1.3 The Chairman reminded Board members to raise any potential conflicts of interest 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.

1.4 Cllr Kite put on record his role as Leader of Dartford Borough Council in advance of the discussion as part of Agenda Item 3 on Local Development Plans.

Part 1 Minutes of the 18 July 2018 Board Meeting

1.5 The Part I minutes were approved.

Board Actions

1.6 The Chairman noted that all actions from previous Board meetings were complete, in progress, or due to be considered as agenda items, as set out in the Board Action Log.

1.7 Ian Piper reported delay to completing one action, 03-05 (concerning the number of jobs at the Swanscombe Peninsula). He said that the EDC was still awaiting this information from the site owners and that he hoped to report the findings to the October Board.

Item 2 **Chief Executive's Report**

2(a) Interim CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 018/069)

2.1 Ian Piper presented Paper 018/069, updating on the EDC's progress since the July Board meeting. Ian's report covered stakeholder and community engagement, an update on the updated EDC Corporate Plan, EDC progress on the Central Area, Swanscombe Peninsula, and Grove Road regeneration, and the Landscape Design Challenge.

2.2 Ian reported that a significant milestone had been reached since the last Board meeting with the completion of the 1,000th home in the EDC planning area. He said that as of the Board reporting date, this figure has risen to 1,167 new homes. He added that the pace in house building was increasing and the EDC was on target to deliver its annual target for new home completions.

2.3 Ian moved on to Stakeholder Engagement. He reported that Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England had visited Ebbsfleet on Monday 17 September. The Chairman added that he had also been present and that it had been a very successful visit, with Sir Nicholas having been very encouraged by what had been happening in the Garden City. He said that it had been evident that the Arts Council see place-making as a key part of culture and arts, and that this featured in the Council's 10 year strategy. The Chairman further commented that the Arts' Council was funding two posts within the Healthy New Town Programme Team – a secondee from KCC and also a consultant to help develop an Arts and Culture strategy. Ian added that he was planning to bring a specific item on this strategy to the October Board meeting.

2.4 Ian updated the Board on a number of governance matters; the Minister had now approved the re-appointment of Mark Dance as a Board Member, and also the re-appointment of the two independent members of the Planning Committee. Ian added that the Minister had also now approved the EDC's updated Corporate Plan for the period 2016-2021, including new key performance indicators and targets. The updated Plan would be published soon along with a summary of the EDC's 2018-19 Business Plan.

2.5 Finally, Ian reported on the completion of the Landscape Design Challenge competition and explained the purpose of the competition had been about creating interest and excitement in the Garden City project. He also explained the link between landscape and health and wellbeing, and the process adopted to judge the competition. There had been five shortlisted finalists which had been judged by a Panel of senior figures from the housing, regeneration and landscape sectors including the EDC Chairman. Ian provided Board members and members of the public present with an image of the winning design – entitled HALO by Bradley Murphy Design. The Chair said that there had been a very high standard of entries, and that the panel had been very engaged in the judging process. This had included a secret ballot and the final design had attracted a unanimous agreement from the judges. The Chair extended his thanks to Kevin McGeough for his work on the competition and the successful outcome.

2.6 The Board **NOTED** the update.

2(b) Communications Update (Paper 018/070)

2.7 Mark Templeton presented paper 018/070, updating the Board on the EDC's communications activity in the past 2 months. He reported that media coverage of the Garden City had been dominated by coverage of the Healthy New Town Landscape Design Challenge, with online views of more than 400 million, including Fox News, Arab News, the Mail Online and the Daily Mirror. The story had also been covered by local press and key trade publications. Mark added that that Ebbsfleet Garden City had also been mentioned in articles relating to MHCLG's new garden communities programme, and the success of the Healthy New Town fitness app was the subject of a Radio 4 World at One programme, featuring an interview with Kevin McGeough and an independent university professor who had supported this work.

2.8 Mark presented a new dashboard which had been produced in response to a Board member request at the July meeting. This covered sentiment of news stories and social media. In the reporting period there had been only one negative story that mentioned the Garden City and this had been in respect of a news article about a letter sent from Dartford Borough Council to Gravesham Borough Council on the green belt. On the EDC website, Mark observed that whilst there had been a slight drop in viewing figures, this could be linked to holidays and such peaks and troughs in website coverage were common.

2.9 The Board **NOTED** the update and welcomed the addition of the new dashboard.

Item 3 Chief Planning Officer's Report

Planning and Housing Delivery Programme (Paper 018/071)

3.1 Mark Pullin presented Paper 018/071 providing an update on planning and housing delivery across the EDC area. Mark started by explaining the EDC's on-going work with Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils regarding their Local Development Plan consultations. Michael Cassidy asked about the section outlining Dartford's policies relating to encouraging a modal shift enhanced through public transport and asked if this would mean a squeeze on the use of cars in Ebbsfleet. Mark explained that it was usual for planners to look at large sites such as Ebbsfleet separate to the local authority policies, and that this was how the EDC and the Councils were tackling the Ebbsfleet project. The Board discussed this matter further, and it was agreed that Mark would bring back to the Board any specific parking issues that he felt the Board should be asked to provide a view on.

3.2 Cllr Kite asked about the EDC's responses to the consultations, and queried whether the Board should see these. Mark explained that as this was an early stage of the consultation process he had not brought matters to the Board, but that he intended to as the consultation process progressed. Cllr Kite asked that Mark make clear in responses whether the response was being given as an Officer response or an EDC Board response.

3.3 Mark provided an update on the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet Junctions scheme and how Highways England had advised that the scheme delivery process had changed. Since the site area had significantly reduced the works would now be carried out under the 1980 Highways Act instead of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process; the Agency felt this would be a faster process. A revised plan was awaited from Highways England and a further update would be provided when further information is received.

3.3 In introducing Annexes A-E, Mark gave updates on work progression on each of the strategic sites. He explained that there were continued discussions on the central and western villages in the Eastern Quarry, and that there had been ongoing discussions on a wide range of matters including street hierarchy and open space. He reported that

development at Ebbsfleet Green was progressing well, and that at Northfleet Riverside, Berkeley Homes were making good progress with their modular housing factory. The Northfleet East S106 was taking longer than expected to resolve and comments were awaited from KCC on this.

3.4 Mark summarised Annex G regarding the heritage assets across the Garden City, an update requested by Board at a previous meeting. Mark explained that much of the opportunity surrounding heritage rested with the landowners; he also outlined the obligations of the current developers and some of the future known opportunities. Cllr Kite raised the issues of the Northfleet East Bear Pit and Alkerden Farm, and asked whether the EDC should consider developing its own local approach to heritage rather than always using the KCC approach. He asked whether the EDC might be more proactive on heritage matters. Mark gave assurances that EDC officers always looked closely at heritage matters in considering planning applications, and that this included assets that had not been designated by KCC. In the case of Alkerden Farm, Mark reported that the developer had not engaged on pre-app discussion with the EDC otherwise the EDC would have been able to anticipate the issues that arose earlier in the process.

3.5 Moving on to Ebbsfleet Housing Delivery, Mark summarised Annex F explaining that since July there had been 128 starts and 183 completions. He informed the Board that he would report to the October Board as part of a mid-year review on housing starts and housing completions, so that the Board could understand the pipeline. Bob Lane questioned the housing numbers and whether starts were to programme. He asked if it was time to worry about the market or was this perhaps a quirk in the programme. Mark gave assurances that the EDC was on programme for housing delivery in the year, and that the Board would receive further information on the forward plan as part of the mid-year review. Bob reiterated his previous request for more information on house price sales. Ian Piper said that sales prices and volumes would be a key issue for discussion at the upcoming Board and developers annual meeting.

3.6 The Board **NOTED** the planning and housing delivery update.

01-09	EDC to provide greater analysis of the pipeline of housing starts and completions, alongside key future milestones for housing delivery as part of the mid-year review of housing delivery Action: Mark Pullin
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Item 4 Finance Director's Report

Finance and Operations Report (Paper 018/072)

4.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 018/072, reporting on the EDC's budget, workforce and other operational issues for the period to the end of August 2018 and the 2018/19 year-to-date/forecast outturn position.

4.2 Gerard reported on the 2018/19 capital and operational budgets and summarised the operational detail provided at Annex A.

4.3 Gerard explained that there are currently a number of planned vacancies in the EDC organogram which had resulting in savings against the pay budget. He added that the underspend on those vacancies was being utilised to fund external project management support on a call-down basis.

4.4 With regard to the 2018/19 Capital Budget forecast expenditure of £40m, Gerard explained that full spend would be dependent on the timing of projects currently in development.

4.5 The Board **NOTED** the finance and operations update.

Item 5

Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public

5.1 The Chairman confirmed that a number of public questions had been received, and that these questions and the responses were available on the EDC's website.

The Chairman 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.