

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 13:30 on Wednesday 19 June 2019
at the North Kent Community Centre, Eastgate
141 Springhead Parkway, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8AD

Board Members Present:

Michael Cassidy CBE (Chairman)

David Holt (Deputy Chairman)

Sandra Fryer

Louise Hardy

Bob Lane OBE

Cllr John Burden (*attending as the Gravesham Borough Council nominated representative, awaiting Secretary of State confirmation*)

Cllr Mark Dance

Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

In Attendance:

Mark Pullin EDC Chief Planning Officer

Gerard Whiteman EDC Finance Director

Colin Lovegrove MHCLG Policy Team

Denise Johnson Board Secretariat

Kevin McGeough Head of Strategy and Placemaking (for Part I of the agenda)

Jennifer Hunt EDC Projects Team (in Julia Gregory's absence)

PART ONE

Item 1

1.1 The Chair opened Part One of the meeting and welcomed Cllr John Burden as the new Gravesham Borough Council nominee Board member. It was noted that Cllr Burden's appointment to the Board was still awaiting Secretary of State confirmation. The Chair also reported that Cllr Lauren Sullivan from GBC had been nominated by the Council as the GBC representative to the EDC Planning Committee.

Apologies

1.2 Apologies were noted from Board members Cllr Jeremy Kite. Apologies were also noted from Julia Gregory, Projects Director.

Declarations of Interest

1.3 The Chair 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.

Part 1 Minutes of the 15 May 2019 Board Meeting

1.4 The Part I minutes were approved.

Board Actions

1.5 The Chair noted that all Part I 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.

Item 2 Chief Executive's Report

2(a) CEO's Strategic Reports (Paper 019/040)

2.1 Ian Piper presented Paper 019/040, updating on the EDC's progress since the May Board meeting. Ian gave an update on the SR process and explained that in March advice had been that subject to an orderly exit from Europe, the Spending Review (SR) would be expected to commence in Summer 2019 and to be for a 4 year period; he said that was now unlikely but still not confirmed. He said that the Ministry had started an internal review, the EDC had submitted information as requested, and he would provide a further update at the July Board.

2.2 Moving to housing completions, Ian advised that these were slightly above the required trajectory with 47 homes completed in the last month bringing the total so far this year to 113.

2.3 Ian advised that he had met with two of the new Ebbsfleet ward Councillors, and it was evident that they had been making themselves known to local residents. The EDC would liaise with them over issues being raised.

2.4 Ian said that a further confidential update on the Central Area and Swanscombe Peninsula would be provided under Part II of the agenda. He advised that he had met with partners and also with Dr Abdulla from LRCH, who had informed him that there were new members to their Advisory Board and that further announcements regarding Resort content would soon be issued.

2.5 Referring to the Springhead Bridge, Ian drew Board attention to the photos at Annex A of his Paper showing the construction progress, which was continuing to programme. Since the main risk areas to the project had been in the ground works, progress was now expected to continue at a good pace.

2.6 The Board **NOTED** Ian's update.

2(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 019/041)

2.7 Kevin McGeough introduced Paper 019/041 updating Board on the community building activities and events during May 2019. He highlighted two workshops held during April and May with Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services in Northfleet. As with the 'Chalk and Cheese' project, these had been funded by NHS England Healthy New Towns and encouraged participants to join in with processes new to them. He advised that since the NHS direct funding had now finished alternative funding options were being considered.

2.8 Kevin said that during the past month a number of Year 7 students from Ebbsfleet Academy had been welcomed by EDC to their offices at The Observatory. During the visit, students had been given a better understanding of their local area and had been engaged in a workshop to help design a park for the Garden City. He said that this kind of involvement would continue with local young people to gain insights on their aspirations for future spaces in the Garden City.

2.9 Kevin advised on the EDC partnership success with KCC Library Services regarding an Arts Council grant; in this area, funds would be used towards Hive House in Northfleet to encourage arts and creativity with parents and children in their formative years.

2.10 The Community Investment Fund (CIF) would be supporting Cambria Sea Scouts in Greenhithe to refurbish a recently acquired new boat and Kevin said that it was hoped that their upcoming Summer Regatta and local promotion will increase their capacity to introduce more local people to leisure opportunities on the River Thames.

2.11 Regarding forthcoming events, Kevin said that the EDC was planning two neighbourhood 'street party' style events to be developed alongside local community champions. It was being planned to encourage and promote social cohesion between neighbourhoods and existing communities. The edible garden at St Peter & St Paul's church in Swanscombe opens on 30 June and it was hoped that EDC could be involved in Northfleet's Carnival on 6 July.

2.12 The Chair asked about the feature of healthy eating around Ebbsfleet International Station. Kevin said the station had become involved as part of the 'healthy workplace' initiative of Edible Ebbsfleet and that staff were encouraged to develop and maintain the planters during their breaks. He added that pots of herbs had been added to the planters with the produce free to the public. In answering Sandra Fryer's question on budget, Kevin replied that this had been in the region of £1,500 through providing the required materials.

2.13 The Board **NOTED** the update.

2(c) Healthy New Town: Programme Review (Paper 019/042)

2.14 Kevin presented the Review from the Healthy New Town (HNT) Programme and advised that the opinion given as a result of the audit was substantial (green) with no recommendations. Positive comments were made on how the programme was being embedded into the Garden City development.

2.15 Kevin proceeded to show a full length film which would be uploaded to the EDC website. He advised that it was hoped to continue to chart the progress of development with an on-going film. Mark Templeton added that a shorter version of the film was also available on the website. Chair congratulated Kevin at the end of the film.

2.16 Sandra asked about the HNT Developers' Network and Kevin advised that HNT was being developed as a "brand" and that HomesPlus had been taken up by the NHS. He explained that other regions/developers wanted to join the network – and that Clarion and Redrow were keen to work with us on Edible Gardens. He said that lessons learned from the programme would be produced shortly. Sandra clarified that this was not just about healthy homes; Mark Pullin explained that Clarion and Countrywide were using HomesPlus as their benchmark.

2.17 The Chair asked about Blue Lake and Ian advised that there would be a pre-board session next month on this and the wider area around Thames Way. Cllr Dance commented on modern growing techniques which might be adopted. Bob Lane asked about an Ebbsfleet Park Run – Kevin answered that it there soon would be, adding that it was important to encourage local people to organise such events. He added that the BetterPoints App continued in popularity with above the national average of people continuing to use an App.

2(d) Communications Update (Paper 019/043)

2.18 Introducing Paper 019/043, Mark Templeton commenced with an update on drone filming at the Springhead Bridge development. He explained that the two minute film was now on the EDC website. He also advised that it was planned to create drone footage of the continued housing development across the area and it was hoped that the video should be uploaded to the website by the time of the next Board meeting.

2.19 Mark informed the Board that a new blogger, a resident of Castle Hill, had been introduced to the EDC website. Lydia Elder had moved to the area around a year ago and will write about her life and experiences in the Garden City. The blog entitled “Life in Ebbsfleet Garden City” would be promoted by Lydia across her large social media following.

2.20 Mark said that the EDC in conjunction with Kent County Council was currently undertaking a consultation on public realm which is online and asking for views on the draft version of the public realm study. He explained that a number of short videos had been created to help people better understand what the consultation is about and in the first two weeks they attracted many thousands of views via the EDC YouTube channel and website. He advised that the consultation ran until 17 June. Moving to the Ebbsfleet Garden City Magazine, Mark advised that the magazine would be distributed via the Information Centre, was available in full on the EDC website and that he had brought copies for Board.

2.21 On Social Media, Mark said that last month posts had reached an audience of more than 110,000, adding the most popular being about the public realm consultation – videos on Facebook alone had been seen by more than 4,000 people. He added that these were followed by posts promoting new residents’ guides, produced by the Planning Department, available on the EDC website.

2.22 Mark informed Board that 4,119 individuals had visited the website, looking at 14,458 pages, with the most popular being the planning page. Pages continued to be popular in the USA, looked at by nearly 700 people across the country. Mark drew attention to Annex B of his Paper with a graph of website users from May 2016-May 2019.

2.23 Finally on media and live streaming, Mark explained that there were 12 media articles in the last month which had featured Ebbsfleet Garden City, including a piece in the Mail Online, trade press and local media. He added that last month’s Board was seen by more than 1,200 people – the highest audience since streaming started 3 years ago.

2.24 The Chair referred to the Ebbsfleet Magazine and in particular the Henley Camland advert regarding their Whitecliffe Scheme. Sandra said that she understood this to be a part of Ebbsfleet, and Ian believed this to be Henley Camland creating an identity brand. Discussion continued on the merits, costs and potential complication in requesting the adjustment of address/postcode registration to ensure that ‘Ebbsfleet’ featured in a postcode/sat nav search. Mark Pullin pointed out that it was common practice for developers to adopt their own name to a parcel of land when creating a brand name.

2.25 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 3 **Chief Planning Officer’s Report**

Planning and Housing Delivery Programme (Paper 019/044)

3.1 Mark Pullin introduced his Paper 019/044 and gave an update on the Planning Committee which would be meeting formally that evening to consider the condition discharge applications for the combined area masterplans and design codes for Alkerden and Ashmere, central and western villages at Eastern Quarry. He explained that it was unusual to report planning conditions to Committee but that the structure of the planning permission means that this stage of the approval process includes key fundamental issues around the vision for villages, the narrative for the built form, street designs and parking numbers. He reminded Board that these areas cover land that could accommodate 4,600 homes, 2 primary schools, a secondary school, shops, leisure facilities and the major urban park. As such it had been

deemed only right that Committee consider the details in public; Mark said that he intended to provide more detail at next month's Board.

3.2 Mark advised that since there had not been a formal meeting recently, his report included the activity report and S106 report and a longer than usual delegated items list and directed Board to section 2.2.

3.3 Moving to section 3 regarding Plan Making and Guidance, Mark explained the updates on guidance and planning policy, and advised that a meeting was scheduled with developers for 20 June on the Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment (DERNA).

3.4 Mark said that sections 4 and 5 of his Paper referred to items covered by the Marine and Coastal Act 2009 and the newly designated Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) indicated on the map at Appendix G. He explained the presence of the tentacled lagoon worm in the mudflats in a section of the River Thames on the western side of the Swanscombe Peninsula. Therefore, the Environment Agency would be consulted on any proposals which may affect the status and this would need to be considered with future development schemes. Mark continued, explaining updates on the England Coast Path as Natural England has submitted proposals for the stretch of the route through the Garden City, which are out to consultation. Some routes relate to existing pathways but some, particularly around the Peninsula, are new.

3.5 In summarising sections 6 and 7 of his Paper, Mark advised of recent meetings where developers were briefed on the draft Public Realm Strategy (PRS), updates on planned projects and developers feedback and in section 7, he advised that if Committee approval was given that evening, it was expected that the reserved matters for the education campus at Eastern Quarry would be submitted in the next month. This would include a primary and secondary school, community sports hall and dual use sports pitches. Mark said that they were waiting for more information from Camland on the Alkerden Barn submission. He said that of interest was the continued increase in applications and enquiries for development/alteration on existing employment sites on Swanscombe Peninsula.

3.6 In conclusion, Mark gave an update on housing numbers with 43 starts and 47 completions this month with the annual figures so far of 89 starts and 113 completions. He drew attention to the dashboard, in particular the 'started not completed' graph against the month on month numbers and advised that a quarter 1 update would be reported next month.

3.7 Discussion ensued on the immediate take-up of homes and the strength of the "Help to Buy" market, together with the applications from existing Swanscombe Peninsula owners – although small scale, this demonstrated that despite the doubt, people are prepared to invest and Ian added that at a meeting with owners 9 months previously there was an impression that there was strong demand in the region.

3.8 Mark Dance referred to the MPZ and any existing wharfs and asked if there might be any problems with ships/boats berthing. Mark Pullin said that he would look in more detail.

3.9 Sandra wished to thank Mark and his team for bringing the above applications to the Planning Committee meeting and that it would be important to issue a press release. The Chair concurred.

3.10 The Board **NOTED** the update.

01-06	More detailed investigation of the MPZ report and consultation process to assess implications to the Garden City. Action: Mark Pullin
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Item 4 **Finance Director's Report**

Finance and Operations Report (Paper 019/045)

4.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 019/045, updating the Board on budgetary, workforce and other operational issues for the month of May 2019.

4.2 Gerard drew attention to the detail of the Operational Budget for 2019/20 at Annex A of his Paper. He advised that the budget had not yet been formalised by MHCLG.

4.3 Gerard continued by explaining the income generated from Planning Fees, estimated at £75k for 2019/20, may exceed the budget; as at end May 2019, the actual Planning Fee receipts were £11k.

4.4 Referencing the Pay budget, Gerard advised that current planned vacancies in the organisation's organogram had resulted in ongoing savings against the Pay budget. The underspend, specifically in the Projects Team was mainly being utilised for funding external Project Management resources.

4.5 On the 2019/20 Capital Budget, Gerard said that the original forecast position was a capital spending requirement of up to £66m for the year. He said that the EDC's overall capital programme of investment was organised around 5 sub-programmes (pillars) focusing on specific projects.

4.6 Expanding on the Staffing Structure and Recruitment, Gerard advised that a Major Projects Development Manager had been appointed, with an expected start date of mid-August. Finally, Gerard said that having procured specialist consultants to facilitate the recruitment of two new Board members, MHCLG hoped the appointments would be finalised by Autumn 2019.

4.7 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 5

Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public

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

The Chair declared the public part of the meeting closed. 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.

Chairman's signature:

Date: