

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 13:00 on Wednesday 18 March by conference call

Board Members Present:

Michael Cassidy CBE (Chairman)
Cllr John Burden (*attending as the Gravesham Borough Council nominated representative, awaiting Secretary of State confirmation*)
Sandra Fryer
Louise Hardy
David Holt
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE
Bob Lane OBE
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

Apologies:

Cllr Mike Whiting (*attending as the Kent County Council nominated representative, awaiting Secretary of State confirmation*)

In Attendance:

Julia Gregory	EDC Projects Director
Mark Pullin	EDC Chief Planning Officer
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Finance Director
Mark Templeton	EDC Head of Communications
Paul Boughen	EDC Community Building Manager (Part I only)
Jen Hunt	EDC Head of Ebbsfleet Central
Denise Johnson	Board Secretariat
James Richardson	Board Secretariat
Colin Lovegrove	MHCLG Sponsor Team

PART ONE

Item 1

1.1 The Chair opened the conference call by advising that due to the coronavirus outbreak the meeting was taking place entirely by conference call. He said that whilst it was not possible to hold Part I in public this month, Part I papers had been made available on the Corporation's website.

Apologies

1.2 There were apologies from Cllr Mike Whiting.

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. The Chair advised that Cllr Mike Whiting and Cllr John Burden's appointments were both still awaiting formal Ministerial approval.

Part I Minutes of the 19 February 2020 Board Meeting

1.4 The Part I minutes were approved.

Board Actions

1.5 There were no matters to raise in respect of Part I actions open from previous Board meetings. Actions 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 Report Updates (Paper 020/021)

2.1 The CEO's report was Paper 020/021 providing an update on the impact of the coronavirus on the EDC's operations, a summary of the current position on rail refranchising and rails fare calculations following a recent Board action on this matter, and updates on Ebbsfleet Central, Grove Road and asset management.

2.2 The Chair asked Board members for comments or questions. Ian provided a further update on the EDC's operational response to the coronavirus outbreak. He said that as events had been fast moving regular guidance had been issued to staff. Whilst the office was still open for staff who wanted to use it, most staff were now working from home, there were no face to face meetings with external stakeholders or partners taking place, and staff had been asked to avoid any work travel. Ian said that the EDC's IT included effective videoconferencing functionality, and as many staff already worked from home occasionally they were able to conduct most of their work remotely. Ian added that he wanted to ensure staff were supported from a health and wellbeing perspective, as working from home for a prolonged period time had the potential to cause feelings of isolation. Sandra briefly mentioned the EDC Planning Committee, and said she was waiting to see how local authorities would be handling their Committees during these unprecedented times. The next EDC Planning Committee was scheduled for 15 April.

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

2(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 020/022)

2.4 The Ebbsfleet Living update was Paper 020/022, summarising the community building activity which had taken place in the month prior to Board. The paper reported that the first meeting of the Ebbsfleet Garden City Community Board had taken place on 18 February, and provided updates on community activity delivered by the EDC, activity funded by the EDC through the Creative Ideas Fund and Community Investment Fund and partnership activity. The paper also provided a forward look of future activities.

2.5 The Chair invited comments or questions. Sandra asked whether a decision had been taken on the proposed Springhead Bridge opening event. Paul Boughen confirmed that the event would not be taking place as planned, and that this had been communicated to those involved. The current plan was to attempt to hold an event nearer to the Summer depending on how the coronavirus outbreak progressed. Bob Lane asked whether the virus would impact on the Bridge completion; Ian Piper said that at present the Bridge work remained on track for opening in April.

2.6 The Board **NOTED** the update.

2(c) Communications Update (Paper 020/023)

2.7 The Communications Update was Paper 020/023. The paper provided an update to Board on media coverage in the past month, and on website and social media activity.

2.8 No questions or comments were raised by Board members on the Paper.

2.10 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 3 Chief Planning Officer's Report

Planning and Housing Delivery Report (Paper 020/024)

3.1 The Planning Report was Paper 020/024. The paper provided a Planning Committee update following the Committee meeting in February, the future programme for Planning Committee, a Local Plans update, information on the draft South East Inshore Marine Plan, and on a range of other planning matters.

3.2 The Chair asked for comments or questions. Bob Lane asked whether the current outbreak was impacting on housing delivery. Mark Pullin reported that he did not expect the outbreak to affect the EDC meeting the current year's housing target, but that some developers were already reporting that there could be a slowdown in delivery next year.

3.3 David Holt asked about the starts but not yet completed numbers in Annex F; Mark Pullin confirmed the EDC was currently reporting 627 in this category. David asked whether this meant that a large proportion of the target units to be 2020/21 were essentially guaranteed to be completed. Mark said that whilst there was a strong pipeline, he needed to now look in detail at the latest developer forecasts for the year. Ian said that there would be an issue if developers started to slow the pace of delivery due to market conditions, and theoretically some units could be left with just their foundations completed for some time.

3.4 Sandra asked whether the EDC could expect to see the outcome of the KCC Select Committee on affordable housing. Mark said that the EDC had fed into this and that he would report back to Board on any significant findings. Sandra also asked about the status of the planning application and delivery date of the permanent Ebbsfleet Green school. Mark said that the application for the temporary building had been received, and the application for the permanent structure was expected later this week. The permanent school building was expected to be delivered ready for opening in September 2021.

3.5 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 4 Finance Director's Report

Finance and Operations Report (Paper 020/025)

4.1 The monthly Finance and Operations Report was Paper 020/025. This covered the 2019/20 operational budget position, the latest position on the capital budget, where the forecast outturn for the year was now c.£55m, and an update on staffing, recruitment, and EDC Board vacancies.

4.2 The Chair invited comments or questions. Sandra Fryer asked whether the EDC had to spend any planning fee income for 2019/20 by the end of the current financial year. Gerard said that when the EDC had been classified by the ONS as 'Central Government',

the income would have had to be spent in the current year. However, now that the ONS classification of the EDC had changed it was not clear that this would be the case and it might be that the income could be carried into the next year. Gerard was seeking further clarification.

4.3 Bob Lane asked about the EDC's headcount restrictions. Gerard said that this restriction had been lifted by MHCLG some time ago, and the requirement of the EDC and its Accounting Officer was now that the EDC needed to be sure it could live within its budget rather than manage within a specific headcount limit.

4.4 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.

5.2 It was noted that the Part I minutes of the meeting would be made available on the Corporation's website once agreed by Board at the April meeting.

Summary of Part II Agenda Items and Decisions

Item 6

The Board approved the Part II minutes of the previous month's Board meeting.

Item 7 CEO'S Commercial/Confidential Update (Paper 020/026)

The Board received an update on commercially confidential matters from the CEO, including the Swanscombe Peninsula, Grove Road land assembly and the Thames Way Development Area. The Board noted the update.

Item 8 EDC Classification (Paper 020/027)

The Board received a report on the impact of the change in the ONS classification of the EDC from 'Central Government' to 'Local Government'. The Board noted the report.

Item 9 Investment Programme (Paper 020/028)

The Board received an update on the EDC Investment Programme and on project progress from the Projects Director. This included a discussion of waste water in the Garden City. The Board noted the update. The Board also agreed the Blue Lake Cliff stabilisation business case and funding of £377,500.

Item 10 Ebbsfleet Central Update (Paper 020/029)

The Board received its regular quarterly update on the Ebbsfleet Central Project, including progress on forming a consultant team and an update on the plan for masterplanning of the site. The Board noted the update.

Item 11 Lower Thames Crossing Draft Consultation Response (Paper 020/030)

The Board considered and commented on the Corporation's draft response to the latest statutory consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing. The Board agreed that the Chair would sign off the final response – reflecting Board comments – when it had been finalised.

Item 12 Garden City Stewardship (Paper 020/031)

The Board received an update on the proposal to implement long term stewardship arrangements for maintenance of the Garden City, including discussing comments from HMT on the EDC's current full business case proposal for the establishment and funding of a new Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust and the EDC's work to now prepare an updated business case. The Board noted the update.

Chairman's signature:

Date: