

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 13:00 on Wednesday 20 May by video conference

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

Apologies:

MHCLG Sponsor Team

In Attendance:

Julia Gregory	EDC Projects Director
Mark Pullin	EDC Chief Planning Officer
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Finance Director
Kevin McGeough	EDC Head of Strategy and Placemaking
Mark Templeton	EDC Head of Communications
Denise Johnson	Board Secretariat
James Richardson	Board Secretariat

PART ONE

Item 1

1.1 Board members were welcomed to the meeting, which was taking place by video conference as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Board members noted that Part I of the meeting was being recorded and that the video would be published on the EDC's website after the meeting. The Board also noted that Part I papers had been made available on the Corporation's website.

Apologies

1.2 There were apologies from the MHCLG Sponsor Team.

Declarations of Interest

1.3 No declarations of interests were raised. It was noted that whilst Cllr Mike Whiting and Cllr John Burden's appointments were progressing through the required Government approvals process, both were still awaiting final approval.

Part I Minutes of the 22 April 2020 Board Meeting

1.4 The Part I minutes were approved.

Board Actions

1.5 Ian Piper referred to the action relating to Ebbsfleet Green School. He said that despite the EDC making further representations, the EDC was not aware of any changes to the proposal for the school to now run from Strood for its first year of operation. Otherwise 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 020/043)

2.1 The CEO's report was Paper 020/043. Ian Piper introduced this paper, which provided an update on the EDC's operations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also information on the progress of the Corporation's strategic priorities. He confirmed that EDC staff were continuing to work from home whilst this was the current Government advice. On development, Ian said that housebuilders were now back on site, although they were all taking a cautious approach and only progressing construction when social distancing allowed. He also reported that construction of the Springhead Bridge has started again, and that very good progress was being made on the procurement of the consultant team to support the next stage of development at Ebbsfleet Central.

2.2 The Chair invited comments and questions from Board members, and started by asking further questions about the approach being taken by housebuilders across the various development sites. Ian said that most were focussing on finishing units that were already under construction. He said that there was some optimism amongst developers in terms of reservation numbers. Louise asked about forward projections of completions. Ian said that he did not yet have this information, but that he would be covering this with housebuilders as he continued follow up conversations with each organisation. He added that housebuilders had started to talk about social distancing enabling delivery of only around 25% of the normal completion rate, and committed to updating Board with more information next month.

2.3 Cllr Kite asked about the progress of the Berkeley Factory. Mark Pullin said that he did not yet have a firm opening date from Berkeley, but that he understood work on the final fit out of the factory was now underway again.

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

2(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 020/044)

2.5 The Ebbsfleet Living update was Paper 020/044, summarising the community building activity which had taken place in the month prior to Board. The paper focussed on how the community of Ebbsfleet was responding to the pandemic and the lockdown, and on some of the community initiatives that had taken place and that were underway.

2.6 The Chair invited comments or questions. Louise asked if Kevin could provide more information about how the new and old communities in the area were coping with the lockdown. Kevin provided a summary of some of the initiatives, and said that to investigate this further his team would be issuing an online 'lockdown' survey to local residents later that week. Cllr Kite said that he was not picking up on any issues of discord from either the existing or new communities, and also referred to the important role that the Community Board could begin to play as the community emerged from the lockdown.

2.7 David Holt asked if it would be possible for the EDC to bring a recovery plan to the next meeting focussed on community building, setting out the EDC's plans to support the community to recover from the lockdown, including events and initiatives, and reflecting what was possible under social distancing rules. Sandra supported this, and also said that it would be useful to see whether there were any differences in how different postcodes respond to the lockdown survey.

2.8 Finally, Bob Lane asked about how the EDC could gather intelligence from local partners on the local employment impact of the pandemic. Kevin noted that this would be important, and also referred briefly to the work the EDC was already planning on inclusive growth in the Garden City area.

2.9 The Board **NOTED** the update.

01-05	EDC to bring an Ebbsfleet Living community building recovery plan to the next Board meeting setting out the EDC's plans to support the community to recover from the lockdown, including events and initiatives, and reflecting what was possible under social distancing rules Action: Kevin McGeough
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2(c) Communications Update (Paper 020/045)

2.10 The Communications Update was Paper 020/045. The paper provided an update to Board on media coverage in the past month, and on website and social media activity.

2.11 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 3 Chief Planning Officer's Report

Planning and Housing Delivery Report (Paper 020/046)

3.1 The Planning Report was Paper 020/046. The paper covered the Planning Committee meeting in April, expected future planning applications, an update on strategic sites and an update on housing delivery.

3.2 The Chair asked for comments or questions. Sandra Fryer said that the Planning Committee in April took place virtually using video conferencing, and that it had worked well. Cllr Burden asked if there was any news on the appointment of the GBC representative to the Planning Committee. Ian said that this was also still awaiting formal Government approval and that he was continuing to press MHCLG for this.

3.3 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 4 **Finance Director's Report**

Finance and Operations Report (Paper 020/047)

4.1 The monthly Finance and Operations Report was Paper 020/047. This covered an update on the EDC budget, workforce and other operational issues, along with an update on the progress of the 19/20 outturn and audit. It was noted that the forecast 19/20 outturn position (subject to confirmation by the auditors) was Capital (CDEL) expenditure of £55.5m and revenue (RDEL) of £5.66m

4.2 The Chair invited comments or questions and started by asking about the EDC's requirement for insurance. It was noted in the report that the Office of National Statistics classification change of the Corporation had meant that the EDC has had to acquire insurance for the first time as previously this was covered by Central Governments self-insure procedure. Gerard said that the EDC was seeking clarification of the various types and level of insurance required as some categories of insurance e.g. professional indemnity may not be required given the nature of the EDC's activities. Formal advice was expected on this soon.

4.3 David Holt remarked that the 19/20 forecast outturn capital and revenue expenditure was a good outcome for the Corporation and said that the Board recognised the efforts that had been made to achieve this.

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 a video of Part I of the meeting would be made available on the EDC's website following the meeting, and that the Part I minutes of the meeting would be made available once agreed by Board at the June 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 020/048)

The Board received an update on commercially confidential matters from the CEO, including on the EDC's draft Business Plan for 2020/21, the emerging impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on development, Garden City stewardship, the Ebbsfleet Green school and land assembly in the Grove Road area. The Board noted the update and endorsed the terms of the acquisition of two sites in the Grove Road area.

Item 8 EDC Staff Survey 2020 (Paper 020/049)

The Board received the results of the EDC 2020 Staff Survey and the actions arising from it. The Board noted the update.

Item 9 Investment Programme Report (Paper 020/050)

The Board received an update on the EDC investment programme, including a summary of project progress and also a report on health and safety matters. The Board noted the update.

Item 10 Investment Programme: Fastrack Extension Garrick Street Bus Hub Business Case (Paper 020/051)

The Board received the Full Business Case for the Fastrack Extension Garrick Street Bus Hub project. The Board **APPROVED** a Capital Grant of £215,000 towards the Fastrack Garrick Street Bus Hub in Gravesend.

Item 11 Ebbsfleet Garden City Sustainable Travel Strategy (Paper 020/052)

The Board received the final draft Sustainable Travel Strategy for the Garden City, including the results of the recent public consultation exercise. The Board **APPROVED** the publication of the Strategy once it was finalised, and **APPROVED** delegation of any further revisions to Sandra Fryer as Chair of the Planning Committee in the event that any further changes were required following receipt of formal response from GBC and DBC.

Item 12 Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 (Paper 020/053)

The Board received the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20. The Board noted the item.

Chairman's signature:

Date: