

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 1pm on Wednesday 18 October 2023
taking place at the Observatory, Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet

Board Members Present:

Simon Dudley (Chair)
Simon Blanchflower CBE
Cllr John Burden
Neil Cameron KC
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE
Fred Maroudas
Cllr Derek Murphy
Valerie Owen OBE
Nick Shattock
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

Apologies:

None

In Attendance:

Izzy Grigg	Board Apprentice Programme
Paul Abrahams	EDC Director of Infrastructure & Enabling Works
Jen Hunt	EDC Director of Development
Mark Pullin	EDC Director of Planning and Place
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Director of Corporate Services
Caroline Doidge	EDC Head of Marketing and Communications (Part I only)
Denise Johnson	EDC Board Secretariat
Kevin McGeough	EDC Head of Strategy and Placemaking (Part I only)
James Richardson	EDC Head of HR and Corporate Affairs

PART ONE

Item 1

1.1 Board members were welcomed to the meeting, which was taking place at the EDC's offices in Ebbsfleet.

1.2 Board members noted that Part I of the meeting was being recorded and that the video and transcript would be published on the EDC's website after the meeting had concluded. The Board also noted that Part I papers had been made available on the Corporation's website.

Apologies

1.3 No apologies were received.

Declarations of Interest

1.4 The Chair asked for declarations of interests and drew attention to the standing declarations of EDC Planning Committee members. No additional declarations were made. It was noted that the full register of Board interests was accessible at the EDC website.

Part I Minutes of the 13 September 2023 Board Meeting

1.5 The Board approved the Part I minutes of the September 2023 Board meeting.

Board Actions

1.6 The Board noted the Action Log. The Chair noted that there was one action that remained open.

Item 2 Chief Executive's Reports

2 CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 023/088)

2.1 Ian Piper's Part I CEO report was Paper 023/088. The paper reported on health, safety and wellbeing, mid-year performance against business plan priorities and KPIs, and Board / Planning Committee appointments. The paper also proposed the criteria that would be used to determine whether a Board item would fall into Part I or Part II of the meeting following a recommendation from the 2023 Board Effectiveness Review.

2.2 On performance, Ian said that all priorities in the business plan were currently on track to be delivered by the end of the year and that there was good progress generally against the KPI targets for the year. Picking up on some highlights, he said that housing completions were running at more than 50% of the target for the year, that the electricity business case had been submitted to DLUHC and was now making its way through the Government approval process, and that the Northfleet Embankment East planning application had been submitted.

2.3 The Chair asked for comments on the mid-year performance report. Valerie Owen said that she was impressed by the new website which had recently been launched. The Chair asked about the Residents' Satisfaction Survey, and specifically who this was targeted at. Kevin McGeough said that it was open to residents within the EDC urban development area and also those residing in the three Wards that surrounded the area. Ian drew the Board's attention to the public question asking whether the EDC should include a RAG rating against KPI progress. He said that he and officers would consider this, but that as KPI targets were annual targets it was not straightforward to assign a RAG rating to progress.

2.4 The Board moved on to discuss the criteria for Part I and Part II Board items. Ian said the proposed criteria were at section 3.3 of his report. Ian said that since the paper had been circulated he and officers had decided that the wording of the final bullet point 'the issue to be discussed related to enforcement action' was not clear, and this had also been raised as a Board public question. Neil Cameron provided his view on this matter as Chair of the Planning Committee, and Mark Pullin provided his thinking. It was noted that any enforcement action would need to be made public, and that in general any decision to take such action should be taken in public. The role of the Planning Committee was also noted. It was agreed that Mark and Neil would agree a new form of words outside of the meeting.

2.5 The Board finished its discussion of Ian’s paper by noting that there was continued delay to DLUHC confirming the appointment to the Planning Committee of the new DBC and GBC representatives. Ian also reported to the Board that the KCC representative had decided to step down and so a KCC appointment was also required. At this time Neil Cameron provided an update to the Board on the recruitment of a new independent member of the Planning Committee, and informed the Board this appointment would also required approval from DLUHC and the Secretary of State. The Board noted that Mark Pullin had been liaising with DLUHC officials for several months, and reflected on the need for appointments to be confirmed soon given the important applications the Committee would soon be asked to consider. The Board agreed that as there had not yet been any decision from DLUHC the Chair should write to the Housing Minister setting out the reasons why EDC required the appointments to be made as soon as possible.

2.6 The Board **NOTED** the report and, subject to Neil Cameron and Mark Pullin agreeing an updated form of words relating to enforcement action, **AGREED** the criteria for items/papers to be considered in Part I and Part II of Board meetings.

01-07	Mark Pullin to liaise with Neil Cameron to agree wording for the criteria for Part I and Part II Board items relating to planning enforcement Action: Mark Pullin
02-07	EDC Chair to write to the Housing Minister requesting that appointments to the EDC Planning Committee are progressed as soon as possible Action: Mark Pullin

Item 3 **Director of Corporate Services’ Report**

3 **Finance, Operations and Report (Paper 023/071)**

3.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 023/089, which provided an update on 2023/24 budgetary matters, workforce issues and other operational matters as at the end of September 2023. Gerard said that EDC was forecasting that it would spend all of its RDEL allocation for the year, comprising £6m DLUHC funding plus an additional c.£1m of receipts. On CDEL spend, Gerard said that £8m was forecasted to be spent, and so through the Supplementary Budget process EDC was discussing with DLUHC the possibility of re-profiling the unutilised 23/24 capital (c £15m) to future years. Gerard finished his update by briefly highlighting the sections of his report on health and safety and resourcing.

3.2 Valerie Owen said that the CDEL position represented significant slippage, noting that at the mid-year stage EDC had spent little over £1m of the £8m projected for the year. Ian Piper said that it was common in public bodies for capital spend to increase towards the end of the year, and that EDC had displayed this characteristic in the past. He said that the main reason for the slippage was due to the delays in the Corporation being allocated its budget, and that DLUHC had been made aware during the period of delay that there was likely to be an impact on EDC achieving its spend targets.

3.3 Turning to Annex A, Simon Blanchflower asked about the overspend of £73,000 for the year against ICT. Gerard confirmed this related to the costs of the planning IT system that the Board had agreed at the last meeting, and also spend on the new website. Simon also asked about progress of recruitment, and said that whilst there appeared to be positive progress he was interested in whether there were any roles EDC had struggled to recruit to. Ian Piper said that the Corporation had managed to recruit to most of its vacancies over the year, and for many roles EDC had received a good number of applicants. He said there had been a number of roles where recruitment had been more difficult, including the Asset &

Facilities Manager role. Having failed to recruit to this role on several occasions an alternative interim solution had been put into place.

3.4 The Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 4 **Director of Development's Report**

4 **Development Report (Paper 023/090)**

4.1 Jen Hunt presented her Paper 023/090 that provided a Part I update on development projects including Ebbsfleet Central, the Thames Way Development Project, Grove Road and also Northfleet Embankment East.

4.2 On Ebbsfleet Central, Jen informed the Board that the project team was at the mid-point of the procurement process for the design team roles, and that this process would be completed by early December. Referring to the Thames Way Development Area Blue Lake project and Grove Road, Jen explained that Board feedback was being fed into the work to develop updated strategic outline cases.

4.4 Updating on Northfleet Embankment East, Jen said that the planning application had been submitted in respect of the proposed commercial floorspace and that, working together with Paul Abrahams, the project team was making good progress.

4.5 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 5 **Director of Infrastructure & Enabling Works' Report**

5 **Infrastructure and Enabling Report (Paper 023/091)**

5.1 Paul Abrahams introduced Paper 023/091 that provided an update on infrastructure projects including the Springhead Bridge, waste water, electricity supply infrastructure, waste management and Fastrack.

5.2 Paul said that work continued with KCC regarding adoption of the Springhead Bridge following the issue of an EDC report demonstrating KCC's design approval. He explained that once the Principal Inspection (which was being commissioned) had been completed, each of KCC's requests will have been fulfilled and sign-off was awaited, a contractual obligation for KCC. In consideration of the above, Paul was hopeful KCC would finally agree to the adoption of Springhead Bridge by the end of the year. Board members asked for a recap to explain the current situation and Paul provided this, including summarising the issues around the lighting. Cllr Murphy agreed to speak to his colleagues at KCC in order to progress the adoption.

5.3 Paul moved on to update on the Waste Water Treatment Works at Northfleet and said that EDC was in the process of appointing specialist advisors to interrogate the costs provided by Southern Water. He said that EDC was seeking specialist advice to support the work and costs of odour control. Moving on to electricity supply infrastructure and Fastrack, Paul said that the dialogue continued with UKPN, and that the next stage of Fastrack was a KCC Cabinet discussion on 15 November where DfT funding would hopefully be accepted by KCC for T&Cs to then be agreed with DfT by the end of the year.

5.4 The Board discussion focussed on Fastrack, with the Chair raising the issue of recent media interest in Ebbsfleet following the Labour Party conference where new towns had been a talking point. Neil Cameron asked for an indication of timescales on the project, reiterating the point he had made at previous Board meetings about the importance of

Fastrack network extending into Whitecliffe and providing connections. Paul said that if the acceptance of DfT funding was concluded by the end of the year, KCC would then need to appoint their contractor, and that they have stated this would take approximately 6 months. KCC have indicated the tunnel construction would take around 18 months. Therefore, January 2026 would be the earliest for the new tunnel to open. On the matter of the service running into Whitecliffe, Paul said that there had been several recent meetings and the current expectation was implementation in November 2024. Neil said that in his view it was important for this to happen as soon as possible so that new resident behaviours in terms of car usage did not become entrenched. Ian Piper mentioned that the ArrivaClick service was providing a bus service into Whitecliffe, but noted the importance of Fastrack.

5.5 The Board **NOTED** the update.

Item 6 **Director of Planning and Place's Report**

6 **Ebbsfleet Public Art Strategy (Paper 023/092)**

6.1 Kevin McGeough introduced Paper 023/092 that provided the Board with the draft Ebbsfleet Public Art Strategy. Kevin said that the development of the strategy had been overseen by EDC's Cultural Development Manager, Laura Baily, and referred to the Board discussion of public art in July 2022 where the Board had requested that a Public Art Strategy be prepared. Kevin said that the strategy provided an opportunity to demonstrate good practice and enable engagement with local residents and stakeholders on Ebbsfleet public art.

6.2 The Chair thanked Kevin and Laura for their work and asked for comments. Neil Cameron asked about the proposal for an Ebbsfleet 'curator', and specifically who the employer would be. Kevin said that EDC was looking further at this opportunity, and that the preferred funding would be through a central pot of money. Kevin added that EDC had recently recruited a new Cultural Development Manager to job share with Laura, and that the new staff member could be involved in curation. Other options were to follow a similar model to that of the Ebbsfleet Design Forum Chair.

6.3 Discussion continued around the obligation to observe the principles of public art, including whether the art was permanent or transient and the legacy of art, which might also include regular, annual events. Cllr Kite asked about the Ebbsfleet Art Panel, and the reference to 'stakeholder, local residents and young people', seeking clarification of where young people involved would be drawn from. Kevin referenced the existing Young Persons' Placemaking Group, which he said was drawn from local people and had been very active.

6.4 Nick Shattock highlighted the potential for Ebbsfleet public art to be themed, and Simon Blanchflower interrogated public art still to be delivered through S106 Agreements. Kevin explained that three proposed themes are set out in the strategy. The Chair referred to management of the artwork including how to prevent/deal with vandalism, and Board members queried whether this should be given greater prominence in the document. The Board raised the importance of narrative, and the possibility of a 'trail' of public art, including QR codes for more detailed information. Finally, Cllr Kite raised the terminology 'to-morrow' and its relevance to Ebenezer Howard, and the need for the public presentation of this term to be clear in the document.

6.5 The Board **APPROVED** the publication of "Looking Forward To-Morrow, a New Public Art Strategy for Ebbsfleet".

03-07	EDC to finalise the Public Art Strategy and publish. Action: Kevin McGeough
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Item 7 **Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public**

7.1 The Chair referred to the EDC Board responses to public questions that had been received, and confirmed that responses would now be published on the EDC’s website.

7.2 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 online once agreed by Board at the next meeting.

Any Other Business

The Chair declared the public part of the meeting closed. Part Two of the meeting concerning matters solely of commercial or personal confidentiality and for which the public was excluded would now commence.

Summary of October 2023 Board Meeting Part II Agenda Items and Decisions

Item 8

The Board approved the Part II minutes of the September 2023 Board meeting.

Item 9 **CEO’s Part II Report (Paper 023/093)**

The Board received a report on commercial and confidential matters from the CEO. The Board NOTED the report.

Item 10 **Part II Development Report – General Update (Paper 023/094)**

The Board received a report on commercial and confidential issues relating to EDC development projects. The Board NOTED the report and APPROVED

- The position set out in the report regarding the direction of travel for Blue Lake, noting that a SOC will be brought forward (via Investment Panel) in due course on this basis;
- The position set out in the report regarding the preferred option for Grove Road South, noting that a SOC will be brought forward (via Investment Panel) in due course on this basis; and,
- That EDC continues conversations with Henley Camland on Alkerden Hub which include the principle of the Corporation investing to meet the ‘extra over’ costs to deliver a ‘fit for purpose’ facility.

Item 11 **Part II Development Planning Update (Paper 023/094)**

The Board received a report on planning matters connected with EDC development projects. Board NOTED the update.

Chair’s signature:

Date: