

**PART I MINUTES**  
**of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)**  
**held at 1pm on Wednesday 24 July 2024**  
**taking place at the Observatory, Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet**

**Board Members Present:**

Simon Dudley (Chair)  
Simon Blanchflower CBE  
Cllr John Burden (from Item 2b)  
Neil Cameron KC  
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE (except for Item 10a)  
Fred Maroudas  
Valerie Owen OBE  
Nick Shattock  
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Derek Murphy

**In Attendance:**

Richard Garvey	Boardroom Apprentice Programme
Lucy Wilkins	MHCLG Duty Director, Urban Policy
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 1 only)
Kevin McGeough	EDC Head of Strategy and Placemaking (Part 1 only)
James Richardson	EDC Head of HR & Corporate Affairs
Denise Johnson	EDC Board Secretariat
Elizabeth Roach	EDC Board Secretariat

**PART ONE**

**Item 1**

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting, which was taking place at the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation'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 EDC's website after the meeting. The Board also noted that Part I papers had been made available on the Corporation's website.

**Apologies**

1.3 Apologies were noted from Cllr Derek Murphy.

## **Declarations of Interest**

1.4 The Chair asked for declarations. Declarations are recorded in full on the Register of Interests that is available from the EDC website, including the standing declarations of Planning Committee members. Fred Maroudas declared that he had been appointed to a new role as Director of Corporate Finance at Thames Water. He said that it was not a board role and that he had no involvement in Thames Water customer facing matters.

## **Part 1 Minutes of the 8 May 2024 Meeting**

1.5 The Board agreed the Part I minutes of the May 2024 Board meeting

1.6 The Chair welcomed Lucy Wilkins from MHCLG to the meeting.

## **Item 2      Chief Executive's Reports**

### **2(a) CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 024/044)**

2.1 Ian Piper's Part I CEO report was Paper 024/044. Ian started by asking for the Board's approval to the amended EDC Board Terms of Reference and Standing Orders, which was given as an annex to his paper showing tracked changes and also a clean copy version. Ian said that the proposed changes were minor amendments, and said that under the existing document any changes would need to be supported by at least two thirds of members present at the meeting.

2.2 Ian moved on to the Quarter 1 2024/25 Performance Report. He said that all business plan key actions and KPIs were on track apart from one – the action related to the Strategic Outline Case for investment in the Waste Water Treatment Works. He said this was shown as 'amber' as Southern Water had put their upgrade works on hold. On the KPIs, Ian said that these were tracking well and specifically on KPI1 – housing delivery – said that there had been a positive number of completions in the first quarter reported.

2.3 The Chair asked for questions and comments, and started by asking if the recent change of Government had affected Southern Water's approach to the works. Ian said he was not aware of any change in approach, but that he would follow up with Southern Water. Paul Abrahams said that he had requested a guide on costs from Southern Water to progress on the odour control part of the design and that an update was due within a month. Neil Cameron asked whether Southern Water's decision to move the capacity enhancement project into the next five year period would affect development in Ebbsfleet. Paul replied that as long as agreement is reached with Southern Water by April 2025 it should not impact the area and that he would continue to liaise with the organisation on this risk. Fred Maroudas asked which areas could be affected if there were further delays to the project. Paul said there could be potential implications to Ebbsfleet Central. Ian added that Southern Water has a statutory obligation to meet current demand and they are expected to address any problems which may arise in the future.

2.4 Richard Garvey asked if there was any scope to ask for political support on this matter. The Chair asked if the local MPs have been contacted; Ian said that letters had been sent to both proposing meetings to discuss the garden city project, although meetings had not yet been scheduled.

2.5 Nick Shattock said that the current issue was that of odour control, which the Board had previously been informed could be managed at Ebbsfleet Central. Jen Hunt said that the Ebbsfleet Central Infrastructure Design Team were holding in-depth conversations with Southern Water and monitoring the situation closely.

2.6 The Chair asked the Board if they were happy with the recommendation to approve the proposed changes to the Board Terms of Reference and Standing Orders. All members voted for the changes by a show of hands as required by the existing Board ToR and Standing Orders document.

2.7 The Board **NOTED** the report and **APPROVED** the changes to the Board Terms of References and Standing Orders.

<b>01-05</b>	Updated EDC Board Terms of Reference and Standing Orders to be adopted with immediate effect. <b>Action: Ian Piper</b>
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## 2(b) Investment Criteria for Social Infrastructure (Paper 024/045)

2.8 Cllr Burden joined the meeting during this item. Ian introduced paper 024/045 and explained that it resulted from a discussion held at June's Special Board meeting where he was asked to develop a set of criteria from which the Board would be able to judge investments in social infrastructure. Ian briefly summarised the content of his paper, starting with the object of EDC as an urban development corporation and its role outside of the urban development area, explaining the relationship with statutory service provision and finally proposing a set of investment criteria. Ian thanked Neil Cameron for having reviewed parts of the paper. He added that not all proposals would fall precisely within the stated criteria and may therefore require a judgement call in the decision making process.

2.9 The Chair asked the Board for any questions or comments. Valerie referred to the challenge of how the Corporation could manage inclusion when some historic planning conditions did not match the standards set by the criteria, and also the ambition within the garden city for standards of design that are higher than national standards. Simon Blanchflower talked about the need for clear criteria, but also criteria that offered sufficient latitude so that a wide range of schemes could be judged against them. He said that this balance was important, and that he felt the proposed criteria did a good job of this.

2.10 Cllr Kite said that he was supportive, but wanted to make the point that the nature of the boundary of Ebbsfleet garden city was fundamental to making the concept of the garden city work, and that it was important that the Ebbsfleet project looked beyond the urban development area so it bought benefits beyond the 'red line'. He added that it was important to recognise that all projects will be in either Dartford or Gravesham, and that there could be slightly different nuances between the two authorities.

2.11 The Board **APPROVED** the investment criteria as set out in the report.

## **2(c) Communications and Marketing Report (Paper 024/046)**

2.12 Caroline Doidge presented Paper 024/046, providing an update on communications and marketing activity since the May Board meeting. Caroline summarised some of the key points from her paper, starting by confirming that The Yard Creative (TYC), working in partnership with SEC Newgate, had been appointed as the supplier for the Ebbsfleet Central Brand & Visioning project. An inception meeting had taken place and the Board would be kept updated on progress.

2.13 Caroline moved on to report that the C2 interim bus service serving Whitecliffe and Gravesend had successfully launched on 6 July in partnership with KCC and the service provider Go Coach. The permanent Fastrack service provider, Go Ahead was expected to be in place by November 2024 and will take over the C2 service at that point. Caroline said that feedback on the temporary service was being monitored to ensure the service fits the needs of residents.

2.14 The Chair invited questions from the Board. Simon Blanchflower asked about the frequency of the C2 service. Caroline said the buses operate every half an hour, every day, starting at 5.30am and that the route travelled from Whitecliffe to Ebbsfleet Int'l and Garrick Street in Gravesend. She said that feedback from a member of the public had suggested that timings be aligned with Ebbsfleet Int'l train times and this has been passed on to Go Coach.

2.15 Valerie Owen asked if AI could be used in any way to direct people to EDC when searching on the internet. Caroline explained Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and explained its role in improving browser use. Valerie also asked if the practice of using single photos on social media had greater impact than using other methods; Caroline said that single photos did have their place but better engagement was shown to be achieved when a variety of content is offered, including text and video.

2.16 Nick Shattock asked for more detail on the branding and visioning procurement process, particularly in relation to the challenges presented by creating the employment hub scenario. Caroline responded that a high number of good quality submissions were received and EDC teams worked collectively to identify bidders with proven examples. Bidders were asked to demonstrate how they would present all the different stakeholder opportunities for investment in business/residential/employment over the whole of the Ebbsfleet Central site. Nick emphasised the need to be ready for a big campaign to encourage businesses to locate to Ebbsfleet Central; JH agreed and said this is why this process had started early in the development life cycle. She said that more information would go to both Investment Panel and Board for further scrutiny over the coming six months.

2.17 The Board **NOTED** the update.

## **Item 3      Director of Planning and Place's Part I Reports**

### **3(a) Planning, Design and Delivery Report (Paper 024/047)**

3.1 Mark Pullin presented Paper 024/030, giving an update on planning, design and delivery across Ebbsfleet. Mark started by referring to the employment site at Northfleet Embankment East, explaining that this was subject to a unilateral undertaking for developer contributions, and that since the report had been circulated this approval had been issued. Mark provided more background to the housing completion figure for Q1, and then referred to the Planning Committee's resolution to approve the Ebbsfleet Central East outline planning application.

3.2 Mark moved on to reference further applications under consideration or discussion, and said that a meeting of the Planning Committee was planned for late August as there had been good progress recently on various long standing applications. Mark advised that the Planning Committee would be meeting later that day to receive informal presentations on the next phase of residential development in Ashmere and also the proposal for the partial redevelopment of the Manor Way Industrial Estate in Swanscombe.

3.2 The Chair remarked on the positive news about the Ebbsfleet Central East application and asked for comments on Mark's report. Neil Cameron referred to the dashboard and specifically the 'units started but not completed' and asked if there was any cause for concern in terms of starts on site coming forward. Mark outlined the various recent starts, and said that he was not aware of any reserved matters that had been approved but not yet started.

3.4 Cllr Kite asked about the new Government and whether the desire to increase the number of new homes built each year across the country might impact on development at Ebbsfleet in terms of the capacity of the industry to deliver and whether housebuilders would move capacity to other areas. The Board discussed this, and Ian remarked that volume housebuilders tended to work on a regional basis and also that Ebbsfleet continued to be a fast selling area. Board noted that supply issues might be more of a risk if housebuilding were to increase.

3.5 Cllr Kite moved on to ask about the Corporation's cost claim for DCO costs in relation to the Swanscombe Peninsula. Mark said that as far as he was aware, the liability for these costs was not linked to the proposed sale of Swanscombe Development LLP. Finally, in response to a question from Nick Shattock, Mark Pullin provided more information about the statutory consultation from National Grid referred to in section 4.5 of his report.

3.6 The Board **NOTED** the update.

### **3(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 024/048)**

3.7 Kevin McGeough presented Paper 024/048, reporting on community building activities since the last Board meeting in May. He referenced the recent Innovate UK work with Imperial College and advised that the Community Board had adopted the Action Plan and members were taking the lead to move this forward.

3.8 Kevin moved on to highlight the Fusion Festival, the first of two collaborative events this financial year with Cohesion+. The event had attracted over 1600 residents and residents were able to enjoy a wide and varied programme of events. The EDC had a stand which included a bike repair station, face painting and screen printing. Kevin said that this event also provided an opportunity to speak with residents about what they would like to see happening in the garden city, and that this feedback would be used to refresh the Ebbsfleet Culture Strategy. In closing, Kevin referred to the "film festival" recorded by residents.

3.9 Simon Blanchflower said that he was encouraged by the work EDC was doing with Clarion and Vistry to drive social value, and in particular the project to assist homeless young people into work and the programme with North Kent College.

3.10 The Board **NOTED** the update.

## **Item 4**      **Director of Corporate Services' Reports**

### **4(a) Q1 Finance, Programme and Operations Report (Paper 024/049)**

4.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 024/049 that provided the Q1 budget position and that reported on workforce and operational issues. Gerard confirmed that EDC was on target to spend all of the RDEL budget for the year. He added that although there had been a slow start on CDEL spend the forecast outturn for the full year 2024/25 remained as £26m. Gerard moved on to provide an update on recruitment and advised that the headcount as at 30 June 2024 was 55.77 FTE.

4.2 The Chair asked for comments. Neil Cameron referred to the budget and asked about the forecast variance of £45,000 in relation to ICT spend. Gerard explained that this related to the work to incorporate the planning 'ldox' system onto EDC laptops supplied by MHCLG. This was a long running project and at present EDC planning staff were required to use two laptops. The solution had taken much longer than hoped due to the security requirements of MHCLG laptops. Gerard said that although the £45,000 variance was still an estimate, there was high confidence in this forecast number. Neil requested that Board be kept informed on further progress on this IT project and the costs.

4.3 The Board **NOTED** the report.

### **4(b) Asset Management – Northfleet Embankment East Flint Wall (Paper 024/050)**

4.4 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 024/050 that was requesting approval for CDEL funding of up to £235,000 to facilitate the repair of the flint wall at the Northfleet East Embankment site. The report set out the reasons for the repairs being required and set out a 'do nothing' and 'do minimum' option.

4.5 Cllr Kite initiated a discussion on this spend, asking about whether the repairs were based on a legal requirement or whether it was about 'doing the right thing'. Gerard explained that it was a mix of both, on health and safety grounds a physical barrier was required and while the simpler solution would be to erect a fence, the survey work had confirmed that it was possible to repair the flint wall using traditional flint and lime construction methods and that Gravesham Council had requested that the wall be repaired. Gerard referred to the challenging nature of the site, and also the need to install new access points (for future maintenance activities).

4.6 In response to further Board discussion, Gerard explained the context, confirming EDC's status as landlord. Gerard said that the wall was at the top of a high cliff. Board said that it would have been helpful to receive pictures and more information about the scale of the wall. (The wall needing repair is 107metres long). Gerard noted that some of the cost was to do with vegetation clearance and installing new access points. It was decided that it would be incongruous to replace the wall with fencing, and that this was likely to lead to criticism from local residents. Valerie Owen said that in the event of an accident the wall would provide a more secure barrier.

4.7 The Board **APPROVED** up to £235,000 of CDEL funding (ex VAT) to carry out the works as outlined in the report.

**Item 5**      **Development, Infrastructure & Enabling Works Part I Update (Paper 024/051)**

5.1 Jen Hunt and Paul Abrahams presented Paper 024/049, with both giving summaries and updates on their projects. The updates covered various matters in the papers, including the latest on the Strategic Outline Case for the Grove Road project; this had been approved by the Board in January although approval from MHCLG was still awaited. Board noted that the full planning application for Northfleet Embankment East has achieved a resolution to grant from the Planning Committee, and that discussions with KCC regarding the adoption of the Springhead Bridge was now reaching the final stage. On this project, the identified minor remedial works were ready to be instructed and the Corporation would be pressing for immediate adoption once these have been reviewed and agreed.

5.2 With regard to the Electricity Supply Infrastructure, the contract variation with UKPN was close to completion with UKPN having commenced Phase 2 of the 33kV cable routing connecting Ebbsfleet Grid to the 2 proposed primary substations. Updating on the Fastrack bus service, Paul Abrahams said that works were completed in time for the Fastrack C2 service to be operational for the Fusion festival on 6 July. He also advised that KCC were targeting submission of a planning application for the new tunnel in July, and that KCC had appointed consultants to review previously prepared designs.

5.3 Jen Hunt referred to Ebbsfleet Central East and the resolution to grant received at the Planning Committee on 15 July. She added that work on the Phase 1 element of the project continues.

5.4 The Board **NOTED** the report.

**Item 6**      **Responses to Written Questions from Members of the Public**

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

6.2 It was noted that a video of Part I of the meeting would be made available on the 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 July 2024 Board Meeting Part II Agenda Items and Decisions**

### **Item 7**

The Board approved the Part II minutes of the May 2024 Board meeting and the minutes of the June 2024 Special Board meeting.

### **Item 8**      **CEO's Commercial/Confidential Update (Paper 024/052)**

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

### **Item 9**      **Sale of Swanscombe Peninsula LLP (Paper 024/053)**

The Board considered options for responding to the sale of Swanscombe Development LLP and ENDORSED a preferred way forward.

### **Item 10**      **Social Infrastructure Investment Decisions**

#### **10(a) Ebbsfleet Academy Physical Improvements (Paper 024/054)**

The Board APPROVED expenditure of £153,000 CDEL for the provision of outdoor canopies at Ebbsfleet Academy (Secondary School) provided by way of a capital grant to Leigh Academies Trust. This will increase the total approval on the project to £685,000 comprising £675,000 of capital to cover the new pre-school facility at Cherry Orchard (previously approved) and the canopies at Ebbsfleet Academy, plus £10,000 RDEL for project monitoring costs. For the avoidance of doubt, the sums requested includes the cost of any irrecoverable VAT incurred, but excludes any recoverable VAT

#### **10(b) Craylands School Daily Mile Running Track (Paper 024/055)**

The Board APPROVED expenditure of £36,400 CDEL for the provision of a running track at The Craylands School provided by way of a capital grant. For the avoidance of doubt, the sums requested includes the cost of any irrecoverable VAT incurred, but excludes any recoverable VAT.

### **Item 11**      **Ebbsfleet Central Stage 2 – Phase 1: Project Update and Financial Approval (Paper 024/056)**

The Board APPROVED an increase in the project approval for the Ebbsfleet Central Stage 2 Phase 1 project to £10.823m (ex VAT) CDEL and to note that the approval of MHCLG is now required.

### **Item 12**      **Waste Management Facility Position Paper (Paper 024/057)**

The Board AGREED a preferred way forward for the project. The Board APPROVED an increase in expenditure approval on the Waste Management project of £93,500 of RDEL, taking the total approval on the project to £213,500, and to ask officers to prepare a Full Business Case in respect of the request from KCC to forward fund the capital costs of a new WTS. For the avoidance of doubt, the sums requested includes the cost of any irrecoverable VAT incurred, but excludes any recoverable VAT.

### **Item 13**      **Northfleet Embankment East Update (Paper 024/058)**

The Board APPROVED the preferred way forward for the Northfleet Embankment East project, whereby EDC take forward the project directly with a two stage pre-construction / design process; and APPROVED that the first stage of the two stage pre-construction / design process is initiated (within the current overall project spend approval) and that a further update is provided to Board once the pre-construction de-risking activities have been concluded.

### **Item 14**      **Part II Development Reports**

#### **14(a) Development – Part II General Report (Paper 024/059)**

The Board NOTED the report.

**14(b) Development – Part II Planning Report (Paper 024/060)**

The Board NOTED the report.