

**PART I MINUTES**  
**of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)**  
**held at 1:30pm on Wednesday 20 November 2024**  
**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 (except for part of Item 9 and all of Item 10)  
Fred Maroudas  
Cllr Derek Murphy (except for Items 9 and 10)  
Valerie Owen OBE  
Nick Shattock  
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

**Apologies:**

None

**In Attendance:**

Richard Garvey	Boardroom Apprentice Programme
Lucy Wilkins	MHCLG Deputy Director, Urban Policy
Paul Abrahams	EDC Director of Infrastructure & Enabling Works
Jen Hunt	EDC Director of Development
Mark Pullin	EDC Director of Planning & Place
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Director of Corporate Services
Caroline Doidge	EDC Head of Marketing and Communications
Kevin McGeough	EDC Head of Strategy and Placemaking (Part 1 only)
Simon Harrison	EDC Head of Design (Part 1 only)
Graham Russell	EDC Consultant, Amion (Item 9 only)
Ruth Bryan	EDC Head of Development – Ebbsfleet Central (Item 9 only)
James Richardson	EDC Head of HR & Corporate Affairs
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 No apologies were given.

## **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. No additional declarations were made.

## **Part 1 Minutes of the 25 September 2024 Meeting**

1.5 The Board agreed the Part I minutes of the 25 September 2024 Board meeting

1.6 The Chair concluded the opening part of the meeting by thanking Richard Garvey for his contribution to the Board through 2024 as the EDC's second Boardroom Apprentice. Richard thanked the Chair and EDC Board Members for their support over the year, and said that he had enjoyed and learnt from the opportunity to attend Board meetings, Board strategy sessions and Committee meetings throughout the year.

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

### **2(a) CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 024/074)**

2.1 Ian Piper's Part I CEO report was Paper 024/074. Ian briefly summarised the content, starting with the Spending Review process where he confirmed that EDC had not yet received confirmation of 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets, although this was expected before Christmas. He added that the process for the longer-term SR process was not yet clear, although this was expected to conclude in the Spring. Moving on to the preparation of the next EDC corporate plan, Ian said that the Board had provided valuable input at the October strategy day and that drafting of the plan was now underway. Ian summarised the Q2 performance report at Annex A of his report, reporting that performance across business plan priorities and KPI targets was generally very good, and concluded by thanking Richard Garvey for his participation throughout 2024 as EDC's second Boardroom Apprentice.

2.2 The Chair asked for comments from Board members. Cllr Burden asked about KPI 8, public transport connections, and queried how this was measured. Cllr Burden also highlighted the wider issue of frequency of bus services. Mark Pullin said that the KPI measurement related to the proximity of homes delivered in the reporting year to a connection e.g. a bus stop. Ian responded to the issue of frequency, saying that whilst this depended on decisions by the local transport authority, residents across Ebbsfleet would see improvements now that the new Fastrack route E had started into Whitecliffe. Mark said that a review of existing KPIs was underway as part of the work to develop the new corporate plan, and that a new measure was being considered in place of KPI 8.

2.3 Neil Cameron said that when considering a future transport KPI, EDC might consider the PTAL measure on accessibility used in London. Neil also asked about the wording within the performance annex on Fastrack that stated 'the Fastrack secondary route to Bluewater via Hedge Place roundabout is scheduled to complete by November 2025, subject to housing developer progress on S106 obligations'. Mark Pullin confirmed that progress on this priority was not subject to housing completions.

2.4 Simon Blanchflower said that performance was very positive, and asked whether any of the 'Green' priority assessments were in danger of dropping to 'Amber'. Ian said that some of the priorities still needed focus to deliver by the end of the year, but that he was not concerned about any specific priorities. Simon then asked about the Residents' Satisfaction Survey and whether EDC was on target to collect the number of responses it wanted. Kevin McGeough said that this year's survey was limited to new neighbourhoods, and that the target was 1,200. He said that it looked unlikely EDC would achieve this stretching target,

but he was confident that c.1,000 would be received, meaning a similar response level from new neighbourhoods to the 2023 survey.

2.5 The Chair summarised by saying that the performance report was very positive, and that where there were 'red' priorities these were for the right reason – because EDC plans were being adapted to deliver the priorities in a better way, for example through better value for money solutions.

2.6 The Board **NOTED** the report.

## **2(b) Communications and Marketing Report (Paper 024/075)**

2.7 Caroline Doidge presented Paper 024/075, providing an update on communications and marketing activity since the September Board meeting. Caroline started by updating the Board on a previous action where she had been tasked with monitoring activity and performance of the Green Map website page. She said that web developers were currently building analytics to report on this and she would continue to update the Board on activity. She added that the team was looking at ways to amplify the map and target interest groups so as to encourage local people to populate the map, which would be a focus for the Spring.

2.8 Caroline said that she and the Ebbsfleet Central team were continuing to work with the Yard Creative on brand and visioning and Board members had been invited to an online workshop on 9 January 2025. She said the workshop would centre around the work done to date and present the initial brand pillar concepts. Moving on, Caroline said that there had been a recent social media push encouraging residents to complete the Resident Satisfaction Survey, utilising paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram.

2.9 Finally Caroline reported that various press releases had been published over the reporting period, including articles on funding contributions towards Leigh Academy and Cherry Orchard schools, the commencement of works on the Ebbsfleet Green community buildings, and the Planning Committee approvals of the Alkerden Community Hub and the major urban park. Caroline said she was continuing to work with local news outlets on the further promotion of good news stories, and Construction News would visit Ebbsfleet in December with regard to a feature piece on EDC's work to date.

2.10 The Chair invited questions and comments. Valerie Owen noted the 24,000 hits on the Fastrack service article emphasising how vital the service is to residents. Nick Shattock noted the positive LinkedIn performance and asked about the balance across various social media channels. Caroline explained that each platform fulfils a different role and explained the different uses. Nick moved on to ask about engagement with different organisations using social media, giving the example of architects and contractors; Caroline confirmed that interaction with these groups via social media is managed internally and said that re-posting and collaboration on shared projects is valuable in spreading awareness. The Chair added that he had found LinkedIn to be valuable for the Corporation when reaching out to industry practitioners and influencers.

2.11 The Board **NOTED** the report.

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

#### **3(a) Planning, Design and Delivery Report (Paper 024/76)**

3.1 Mark Pullin presented Paper 024/076, giving an update on planning, design and delivery across Ebbsfleet. On development sites, Mark reported that pre-application discussions continued on the Ebbsfleet Central Area Masterplan and Area Design Code for EC2, and said that the Design Forum would meet in December. At Eastern Quarry, the reserved matters for the third phase at Ashmere had been received. Mark added that when the S73 application had been received on the day of the last Board meeting he had stated that he expected the proposed increase in the number of dwellings to be 350; the application had now been reviewed and it was 325. Mark also said that Bellway had now submitted revised plans for the Fastrack route at Grove Road which would provide faster connections across Northfleet Riverside.

3.2 On housing delivery, Mark reported that following some recent site visits the completions total for the year so far stood at 538. He said the Planning Committee had been very busy with a high number of applications and many decisions made, including the approval of the use of a sustainable design assessment tool. Finally, Mark reported that recruitment processes are underway for the two independent Planning Committee members.

3.3 The Chair asked Mark for his view on year-end final completion numbers and whether the 620 target would be exceeded. Mark said that the numbers were on track to meet the 620 figure, and the Q3 report in January would provide greater insights as to whether the increase in numbers was due to homes being built earlier than expected or whether they were additional builds.

3.4 The Chair invited comments from the Board. Neil Cameron asked if the increase in completion numbers since the last Board meeting was due to homes actually being completed or whether this was because better data had been received. Mark said that it appeared as though it was due to apartment blocks being completed. Simon Blanchflower referred to section 3.3 of the report, and asked about the site owned by Shepherd Neame in Castle Hill and whether the owner was planning to bring the site forward. Mark said that Shepherd Neame was considering options for the site; they wished to retain a mixed use and the EDC team was working with them to bring a revised scheme forward. He added that the Planning Committee and residents are still keen to see a public house on the site.

3.5 Cllr Burden said that whilst the provision of primary schools had been good, he would like an update on secondary school and SEN provision. Mark said that provision for secondary and SEN schools are either delivered via developer contributions to existing schools or met by on-site delivery, and he had not heard of any extra requirements. Mark said that strategic conversations were held with developers and KCC and he had recently heard that a location in Sevenoaks Borough had been identified for SEN provision. Cllr Burden said that although funding is always needed, land is key for future school provision.

3.6 Referring to the dashboard, Valerie Owen asked about the red RAG status on 'Maintain Design Quality during implementation' and what more EDC could do. Mark said that an action plan, agreed by the Planning Committee, was in place, and that a scheme involving site visits at each build stage was being piloted. He said the EDC team continued to receive changes in design and materials from developers and he would look at specifics in advance of compiling the dashboard for the next Board meeting in January. Ian Piper added that as there had been a market downturn, there had been an increase in developers looking to reduce costs by asking for design and material changes.

3.7 Nick Shattock referred to the S73 at Eastern Quarry, and asked whether this had included a request for a material reduction in office floor space. Mark confirmed that the request was for a significant reduction.

3.8 Board **NOTED** the paper.

<b>01-07</b>	Future secondary and SEN school needs and provision to be discussed with KCC. <b>Action: Mark Pullin</b>
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### **3(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 024/077)**

3.9 Kevin McGeough presented Paper 024/77 which reported on community building activities since the last Board meeting in September 2024. Kevin drew Board members' attention to the paper copies of the published version of the Social Value Impact report which had been provided for Board members. Kevin also highlighted how EDC had been highly commended at the National Social Value Awards in October.

3.10 Kevin moved on to report on EDC's recent welcome events at Ashmere, Ebbsfleet Cross and Harbour Village. He said that the recent tree giveaway event had benefitted from a very good turnout, with Provender Nurseries providing over 150 trees to be planted in Ebbsfleet residents' gardens. The Chair commended the team's good work.

3.11 The Board **NOTED** the report.

### **3(c) Green Infrastructure Strategy (Paper 024/078)**

3.12 Simon Harrison, EDC Head of Design introduced Paper 024/078 concerning EDC's Green Infrastructure Strategy, a final draft version of which was included as an annex to the report. Simon explained that the Strategy was a key part of the vision for the garden city and that EDC had benefited from the previous work by Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils, where their planning policies designating 30% of the land area in the masterplan as open space. Simon said that EDC's Implementation Framework had built on this to connect green spaces and pull actions together into a document that Natural England was keen to see developed and published as a public record of ambitions for green infrastructure.

3.13 The Chair asked how the document would be promoted and made available to residents. Simon explained that it would be on the EDC website, and said there were ongoing monthly meetings with Caroline Doidge to work on the comms plan for the Environmental Sustainability Programme. The Chair asked that the strategy be given prominence on the website with clear signposting to enable easy access for the community and stakeholders.

3.14 Cllr Burden asked about the amount of reed growth at the River Ebbsfleet by the Springhead Bridge; he said that he was concerned that it was being choked by the reeds and that this would be detrimental to the environment. He asked what was being done to look after the river. Simon replied that the Corporation's environmental programme was currently looking at habitats across Ebbsfleet and opportunities to work with landowners and communities to enhance those. He said the programme would include community engagement and the green map would provide a digital record showing the tasks that are needed for the long term management of green areas. Cllr Burden said that although it was important to have a strategy, action and funding are now needed. Simon clarified that the strategy included a series of actions that were already being implemented.

3.15 Nick Shattock asked if EDC was removing the reeds from the river and Jen Hunt explained that EDC is working with the Environment Agency and Natural England on all EDC projects that involve the River Ebbsfleet and that are within EDC's ownership. She added that there were other landowners along the river and the strategy would help to frame what their management plans can do to complement EDC's. The Chair asked if there were obligations in place for any party to repair river damage; Jen said she would look into this. Ian Piper said that the habitat management plan would seek to identify other owners along the river and Simon added that there will also be a need to check if previous landscaping developer obligations had been fulfilled.

3.16 Simon Blanchflower asked if EDC had engaged with organisations such as Kent Wildlife Trust or voluntary groups already established in Kent and also whether the new Corporate Plan would show the linkages between various EDC strategies. Simon Harrison outlined the previous work EDC had completed with the Wildlife Trust and how this linked to the new Strategy. On the Corporate Plan, Ian Piper said he would ensure that environmental policies and strategies were reflected in it. The Chair asked how local environmental volunteering could be encouraged. Simon said he would consider this option further and that he hoped the green map would encourage landowners and volunteers to become involved with the local environment.

3.17 Valerie Owen asked for clarification on monitoring and reporting on the Strategy, saying that she was aware that environmental benefits were reported through the Environmental Sustainability programme but felt that the impact of the Strategy had a wider impact, including towards healthy living. Ian Piper referred to the Outcomes Framework that was now being refreshed and that would capture long-term wider benefits.

3.18 The Board **NOTED** the report.

<b>02-07</b>	Landowner responsibilities along the River Ebbsfleet to be investigated. <b>Action: Jen Hunt</b>
<b>03-07</b>	CEO to ensure EDC environmental policies and strategies are reflected in the next Corporate Plan <b>Action: Ian Piper</b>

**Item 4**      **Finance, Operations and Programme Report (Paper 024/079)**

4.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 024/079, providing the quarterly update on finance, operations and programme matters. Gerard summarised the contents of his paper, saying that EDC's forecast revenue spend for the year was £7.4m, comprising £6m of MHCLG funding and £1.4m of receipts. CDEL spend for the year was forecast to be £17.3m, the majority relating to three projects – Ebbsfleet Central, Ebbsfleet Green community buildings and investment in electricity infrastructure.

4.2 Gerard moved on to the various Annexes in his paper. Gerard said that the ARAC terms of reference, standing financial instructions, updated procurement policy, updated risk management strategy and updated acceptable use of IT policy had all been reviewed by ARAC in September and were now being presented to the Board for approval.

4.3 The Chair invited comments. Fred Maroudas asked whether Gerard was confident EDC would spend the full £17.3m CDEL given much of this would fall in the final part of the year. Gerard said that the bulk of the spend would be on the three projects he had highlighted, and that it was currently expected this level of spend would be achieved.

4.4 Valeire Owen asked about the use of EDC debit cards. Gerard Whiteman said that only a small number of staff had debit cards, and the use of these was heavily restricted. He said that EDC always preferred invoices for payments, and that debit cards were used almost exclusively for smaller purchases where this method was the only way of spending.

4.5 Valerie moved on to ask about the new limit of £50,000 for works purchases whereby only one written quote was required. The Board discussed this in some detail. Fred Maroudas said that the ARAC had looked at this matter, and said that the Committee was content as this would be monitored by the Committee. Ian Piper said that it was unlikely there would be very many examples of works spend under this level. He said that the procurement regulations threshold for works was £5.3m, compared to the threshold for goods and services of £213,000, and so the level needed to be considered within this context. Nick Shattock ask how procuring managers could demonstrate value for money through a single written quote. Ian Piper said that this would typically be through benchmarking, evidence of previous similar purchases and also evidence of having spoken with other suppliers.

4.6 The Chair asked about the current limit in the procurement policy, where only one quote is required. Ian said that it was a £15,000 limit that applies for goods and services and works currently. Fred Maroudas provided further information on the discussions the ARAC had had on this matter, and how ARAC would be able to call this matter in for further review if the Committee saw any patterns of spend that caused it any concerns. Simon Blanchflower, an ARAC member, said that he supported the £50,000 level and that he did not expect there to be much works spend under this threshold. Neil Cameron suggested that Gerard report back to Board in the future on any works spend under this level so that Board could review it. It was agreed that Gerard should report back in 6 months time.

4.7 The Board **NOTED** the report and **APPROVED**:

- the ARAC Terms of Reference;
- the Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs);
- the Procurement Policy;
- the Risk Management Strategy; and
- the Acceptable IT Use Policy

<b>04-07</b>	Board to receive a report at the May 2025 Board meeting on any works spend under £50,000. <b>Action: Gerard Whiteman</b>
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**Item 5**      **Development, Infrastructure & Enabling Works Part I Update (Paper 024/080)**

5.1 Jen Hunt and Paul Abrahams' report was Paper 024/080, covering development, infrastructure and enabling works projects. Jen started by summarising progress of development projects. On Ebbsfleet Central, she said that work on Phase 1 of the project had continued, with RIBA Stage 2 design completing at the end of September, and a public consultation on the Area Masterplan and Design Code now underway. She said that the Outline Business Case for the project was being considered in Part II of the Board meeting. Jen also reported the positive progress at Ebbsfleet Green, with work on site at both community buildings, and both expected to be open by Spring 2026 at the latest.

5.2 Paul Abrahams provided updates on infrastructure and enabling works. On Springhead Bridge he said that the procurement for the remedial works had almost completed, and the works were expected to take place in the half-term of February 2025. On Fastrack, Paul confirmed that Go-Ahead had taken over the operation on 10 November, and that 28 state of the art electric vehicles would be in operation by Spring 2025. On the Fastrack Bean tunnel project, Paul reported that KCC had commenced contractor procurement, and that whilst the planning application had slipped back, determination was targeted by KCC for December,

5.3 The Chair asked for comments, Valerie Owen said that EGCT representatives had recently visited the Ebbsfleet Green community building sites and had been very encouraged to see work underway on site. Nick asked about Network Rail permissions for UKPN works and how much of a risk this was for the project. Paul said that this was a large risk in terms of potential cost and time escalations, but that EDC was working closely with all parties to mitigate the risk.

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 November 2024 Board Meeting Part II Agenda Items and Decisions**

### **Item 7**

The Board approved the Part II minutes of the September 2024 Board meeting.

### **Item 8 CEO's Commercial/Confidential Update (Paper 024/081)**

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

### **Item 9 Ebbsfleet Central Stage 2 Phase 1 Outline Business Case (Paper 024/082)**

The Board received the outline business case for the Ebbsfleet Central Stage 2 Phase 1 project. The Board APPROVED the OBC and noted that approval of MHCLG and HMT was now required. The Board also APPROVED the additional £12,406,711 (excluding VAT) required to take the project through to the Full Business Case, taking the total approval on the project to £21,947,317 CDEL, and noted that approval of MHCLG was now required.

### **Item 10 Development – Part II General Report (Paper 024/083)**

The Board received an update on commercial confidential matters connected to development projects. The Board NOTED the update.