

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 9:30am on Wednesday 7 May 2025
taking place at the Observatory, Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet

Board Members Present:

Simon Dudley (Chair)
Simon Blanchflower CBE
Cllr John Burden
Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE
Fred Maroudas (except Items 2(b) to end of Part I of the meeting)
Valerie Owen OBE
Nick Shattock
Ian Piper (EDC CEO)

Apologies:

Neil Cameron KC
Paul Abrahams EDC Director of Infrastructure & Enabling Works

In Attendance:

Parbej Ali	Boardroom Apprentice Programme
Jen Hunt	EDC Director of Development (except for Item 12)
Mark Pullin	EDC Director of Planning & Place (except for Item 12)
Gerard Whiteman	EDC Director of Corporate Services (except for Item 12)
Caroline Alexander	EDC Head of Marketing and Communications (except for Item 12)
Kevin McGeough	EDC Head of Strategy and Placemaking (Part I only)
James Richardson	EDC Head of HR & Corporate Affairs
Elizabeth Roach	EDC Board Secretariat (except for Item 12)

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 had been received from Neil Cameron and Paul Abrahams.

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 5 March 2025 Meeting

1.5 The Board agreed the Part I minutes of the 5 March 2025 Board meeting.

Actions Log

1.6 The Board reviewed the Actions Log. There were two open actions. The Board agreed to close Action 03-02 concerning the 2025/26 Business Plan as the final draft had been submitted to MHCLG for approval. Work was still ongoing concerning landowner responsibilities along the River Ebbsfleet.

Item 2 Chief Executive's Reports

2(a) CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 025/025)

2.1 Ian Piper's Part I CEO report was Paper 025/025, covering health, safety and wellbeing, the Government Spending Review, the 2025/26 business plan, the next corporate plan and also the Corporation reaching ten years since it was established.

2.2 Ian briefly summarised the contents of his report, focussing initially on the progress that had made during the past decade and on the work that was still to do. Ian then thanked Derek Murphy who had been the Kent County Council nominated representative on the EDC Board for several years up until the recent local elections. He said that Derek had been very supportive Board member, most notably on a number of matters with the County Council.

2.3 The Chair said that EDC Board would soon have a new KCC nominated representative member. He suggested that Ian write to the new administration when the Council leadership was known to seek details of the new nominee.

2.4 The Board **NOTED** the report. Fred Maroudas temporarily left the meeting at this point.

01-03	EDC CEO to write to the new KCC leadership seeking confirmation of the Council's new nominated representative on the EDC Board. Action: Ian Piper
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2(b) Corporate Plan 2021-25 Review and Lessons Learned/Reflections (Paper 025/026)

2.5 Ian Piper presented Paper 025/026 that reported on the Corporation's progress in delivering the ambitions set out in the 2021-25 corporate plan. The report also set out a series of lessons learned and reflections from the EDC Board and Executive Team, each of which was being taken account of as officers developed the next corporate plan.

2.6 Ian said that overall progress had been very good, with the Corporation meeting many of the ambitions set out in the plan and also delivering a very strong set of KPI results. Ian said that there had been some areas where the ambition of the plan had not been met, and that the report was open about these. Particular highlights that Ian mentioned including housing delivery, with almost 5,000 new homes now being completed, the work on legacy and the establishment of the Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust, and also the positive impact on employment opportunities since 2021. Ian then talked the Board through the lessons learned and reflections set out in the document.

2.7 The Chair asked for comments. Simon Blanchflower welcomed the document, and said that it could be a useful exercise to report against each of the lessons learned and show how these were being taken account of in the next corporate plan. He asked if the report would be published. Ian said that as the Board paper and report was being discussed in Part I of the meeting the document had already been published, but that he would also like to publish a summarised version for the website. Ian said that he would also look at Simon's suggestion of reporting against each of the lessons learned.

2.8 Valerie Owen asked about housing diversification, and the plans for facilitating greater diversification at Ebbsfleet Central. Ian said that the Corporation did not have advanced plans yet for the EC housing mix, but that the outline planning application included 35% affordable, and that the analysis assumed a good proportion of build to rent properties, along with more specialist units as part of the proposed Health and Wellbeing Hub. Valerie said that it was important to hold on to this as an aspiration for the new corporate plan.

2.9 Nick Shattock asked how Ian was working with the Thames Estuary Growth Board. Ian said that there were discussions ongoing on how the Growth Board could work with EDC on inward investment, and that the organisation had dedicated resource on this. The Board acknowledged that the Growth Board did not have a capital budget so the focus was about attracting investment from other sources. Cllr Kite said that he was a member of the Growth Board in an ambassadorial role, and that the organisation had an impressive team. He said that he was encouraged that the team was looking at innovative opportunities for growth.

2.10 The Chair summarised by saying that performance over the past 4 years had been very good, and that as well as good housing completion numbers and a positive affordable homes mix, it was very encouraging to see how the community was growing and forming.

2.11 The Board **NOTED** the report.

02-03	Summarised version of the corporate plan 2021-25 review document to be prepared and published. Action: Ian Piper
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2(c) 2024/25 End of Year Performance Report (Paper 025/027)

2.12 Ian Piper presented Paper 025/027, the end of year performance report on the key actions and KPI targets set out in the annual business plan. Ian summarised the performance, confirming that the Corporation had met 23 of the 28 'key actions' and also 8 of the 11 KPI targets.

2.13 Simon Blanchflower said that the performance was positive, and that it provided a firm base for EDC to now move forward on. Cllr Kite said that he was most encouraged by how the new community was emerging. He said that he was also very pleased by the progress the Community Board was making and the increasing leadership role it was taking.

2.14 The Board **NOTED** the report.

2(d) Communications and Marketing Report (Paper 025/028)

2.15 Caroline Alexander presented Paper 025/028, providing an update on communications and marketing activity since the March Board meeting. Caroline highlighted the recent work to promote the Residents Satisfaction Survey results across social media, and the success of the Wildlife Walks around Castle Hill lakes with tickets selling out within 24 hours. She said that the Corporation had recently been represented at the Building New Communities Conference, with Simon Harrison (EDC Head of Design and Sustainability) taking part on the Health, Happiness and Exemplary Design panel. Moving on to Ebbsfleet Central, Caroline said that she had been working on key messaging, looking at strategic opportunities to promote the project and EDC as a whole. In relation to recent press opportunities, she reported that EDC had featured in Construction News Magazine and that the Telegraph would be interviewing Ian Piper the following week.

2.16 The Chair asked if there had been any communications on the recent introduction of Fastrack electric buses. Caroline confirmed communications had started now that the local elections had completed, and more publicity was scheduled for the following week.

2.17 The Board **NOTED** the report.

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

3(a) Planning, Design and Delivery Report (Paper 025/029)

3.1 Mark Pullin presented Paper 025/029 that provided an update on planning, design and delivery across Ebbsfleet. Mark said that a meeting with Dartford Borough Council had been held the day before the meeting on the Ebbsfleet Central East S106 Agreement and that progress was being made. He said that conversations with a new developer at Ashmere had commenced and a public consultation on the Abacus Corner site was taking place that day in Northfleet. Mark confirmed there had been 22 housing completions in the past month and that higher numbers were forecast for June, mainly due to development at Harbour Village. Mark said he and Ian Piper had recently met with Vistry regarding the sales of apartments and affordable housing at Ashmere, and that one developer on a different site had been unable to secure a registered provider for their affordable housing.

3.2 Mark confirmed that two new members of the Planning Committee had been appointed by the Secretary of State following a recruitment process. Mark thanked Penny Marsh who had served on the Planning Committee for almost ten years, and also thanked James McInroy from KCC who had stepped down following the county elections. Mark moved on to refer to the housing mix data in his report, and that this demonstrated a good split between market and affordable housing. Mark also drew attention to the Packaged Living build to rent product at Alkerden Phase 5B which would be released imminently.

3.3 Mark completed his update by referring to a 'duty to cooperate' meeting that he had had the previous day with Gravesham Borough Council. GBC had informed Mark that the Council would be consulting on their Local Plan during the Summer. On the housing dashboard, Mark said more data on the cumulative delivery of open space was expected for the next Board, and he also flagged an issue of a downward trend of valid applications and revised plans not being received in a timely manner.

3.4 The Chair presented Neil Cameron's questions in his absence. Neil had asked about paragraph 2.3 of the report and whether the low number of starts was of concern. Neil also referred to paragraph 2.6 and asked if the featuring of a cascade mechanism would result in a reduction in affordable housing. On the low number of starts, Mark said that the previous reporting period had been short and the number of homes under construction was stable so he was not concerned. On the cascade mechanism, Mark pointed out that there were only two permissions with the mechanism in place and it had yet to be used. He agreed that it would be a risk if used, in that housing delivery numbers could reduce or levels between shared ownership and affordable housing could change. Mark said that he would continue to monitor the situation closely.

3.5 Nick Shattock asked if there had there been any feedback to indicate that shared ownership was a problem in Ebbsfleet. Mark replied that the low apartment sales at Ashmere were market housing and at Ebbsfleet Cross they were a mix. He also confirmed that he had not had any requests from developers to vary the tenure on shared ownership apartments. Valerie Owen asked if, as a Board, it would be possible to commission some research into understanding current housing sales. Mark said that developers were regularly asked about this, and the Chair remarked that these are commercial business decisions made by private sector operators and so obtaining the data would not be straightforward. Ian Piper added that research would be required to assess demand for the Ebbsfleet Central project but agreed with the Chair on the need to do a more general exercise.

3.6 Simon Blanchflower asked if any progress had been made on the Ebbsfleet Central S106 Agreements with the three local councils. Mark reported that they were being progressed with lawyers. Cllr Kite highlighted the government's target of 1.5 million homes by the end of the parliament, and how this may result in the government giving a firmer direction to developers to build, potentially drawing developers away from Ebbsfleet.

3.7 The Board **NOTED** the paper.

3(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 025/030)

3.8 Kevin McGeough presented Paper 025/30 which reported on community building activities since the last Board meeting in March. Kevin highlighted that the Ebbsfleet Community Board now had twenty resident members and a number of sub groups had been developed to work up ideas. He said that the fourth round of the Community Fund administered by EGCT had closed at the end of February and thirty eight awards had been made since April 2023 totalling £35k. He said that recent Easter events had been delivered directly by members of the community with small amounts of seed funding which was a positive trend, and that the Salvation Army had now raised the full funding required for the mobile community space vehicle and that it had been ordered.

3.9 Kevin reported that the inclusive growth initiative had been successful and by the end of 2024/25 the education outreach programme had included 2,000 pupils in 12 schools in the Dartford and Gravesham areas, and the employability programme had resulted in nine people moving directly into employment. He added that a new career service had been launched by a local company called Young Mambos and the full 24 slots had already been taken up.

3.10 The Chair invited comments. Simon Blanchflower asked if a location for the equipment designed by the young person's design group had been found. Kevin said that a preferred location had been identified, although some health & safety issues needed to be resolved. Simon also asked if Cycle UK's grant application had been successful and Kevin confirmed that it had.

3.11 Valerie Owen referred to the success of the employability programme and asked if EDC could do more given the potential impact it could have; Kevin said that an agreement had been signed for another series of courses next year, specifically targeted at older people. The Chair said that the Edible Ebbsfleet planting box at Ebbsfleet International Station appeared to need some attention. Kevin explained that due to staffing changes at the station the box was not being looked after and it would be moved to a new location shortly.

3.12 The Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 4 Director of Corporate Services' Report (Paper 025/031)

4.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 025/031 that informed the Board of EDC's 2024/25 outturn position and the indicative budget for 2025/26. He said that formal approval of EDC's 2025/26 allocation from MHCLG was expected shortly, and that the indicative budget presented in the report was in line with the expected allocation. Gerard said that the 2024/25 outturn for RDEL gross spend had been £7.3m (subject to audit) against a budget of £7.5m, and that CDEL spend had been £14.4m (subject to audit).

4.2 Gerard then drew the Board's attention to paragraph 11 in the report updating on 'works' procurements since November 2024 below the £50k threshold where only one quote was required. This information was being provided as Board requested an update following the new threshold that had been agreed in 2024. Gerard confirmed that there had been no works contracts let at £50k or less since the threshold was agreed. Ian Piper asked Board members for confirmation that they were now satisfied that the threshold should remain at £50k. Board members confirmed they were content.

4.3 The Chair asked if MHCLG had given verbal comfort on the requested £28m CDEL budget for 2025/26. Ian Piper confirmed that although a formal delegation letter had not yet been received, confirmation had been given in writing via email from the sponsor Director at MHCLG.

4.4 On EDC asset management matters, John Burden remarked that he had observed some young people trying to gain access to Blue Lake. Ian said that a member of EDC staff had reported the same issue and Gerard confirmed that the security company was on high alert during the current period of warm weather. He said that a dog unit could be deployed if required. The Chair asked if there was appropriate signage at Blue Lake to highlight the dangers. Gerard confirmed that signage was present, although it had been tampered with in the past, in which case the signage was replaced as quickly as possible.

4.5 The Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 5 **Directors of Development, Infrastructure & Enabling Works Part I Update (Paper 025/031)**

5.1 Jen Hunt and Paul Abrahams' report was Paper 025/031, covering development, infrastructure and enabling works projects. Jen asked the Board to note that the Ebbsfleet Central infrastructure scope of works within the Outline Business Case was being reviewed to ensure that it could be delivered in phases or as a whole. She added that the process to procure contractors for the scheme had now started with some early market engagement inviting expressions of interest. Jen also flagged the good progress on the building of the two community buildings at Weldon.

5.2 Nick Shattock referred to the consultants working on the Northfleet Embankment East project and asked if they had been given a savings target as part of their brief. Jen explained that they had been asked to undertake a comprehensive review of all the information as it was felt that the original cost plan was too high but that a target had not been provided by EDC. She said that they had been asked to ensure that EDC had a full suite of site-investigate and ground condition information to ensure the updated cost analysis which would be undertaken would then be based on detailed information and give assurance on numbers. Ian Piper confirmed that the consultants had not been appointed to undertake a value engineering exercise but to undertake further due diligence on the site to try and eliminate the high provisional sums which the previous contractor had, understandably, included.

5.3 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 May 2025 Board Meeting Part II Agenda Items and Decisions

Item 7

The Board approved the Part II minutes of the March 2025 Board meeting.

Item 8 **CEO's Commercial/Confidential Update (Paper 025/033)**

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

Item 9 **Corporate Plan 2025-30 Update (Paper 025/034)**

The Board received a report on the ongoing work to prepare the EDC Corporate Plan for 2025-30. The Board NOTED the report.

Item 10 **Swanscombe Peninsula – SSSI Options (Paper 025/035)**

The Board received a report on the Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI. The Board APPROVED the recommendation in the paper regarding the proposed approach to working with Natural England in respect of the SSSI designation as it affects EDC land.

Item 11 **Development – Part II General Report (Paper 025/036)**

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

Item 12 **Director Remuneration (Paper 025/037)**

The Board received a report on Director remuneration. The Board APPROVED the proposed changes to director remuneration as agreed by the Remuneration Committee.