

PART I MINUTES
of the Board meeting of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)
held at 1pm on Wednesday 9 July 2025
taking place at the Observatory, Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet

Board Members Present:

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

Apologies:

Cllr Jeremy Kite MBE

In Attendance:

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

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 Cllr Kite.

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 7 May 2025 Meeting

1.5 The Board agreed the Part I minutes of the 7 May 2025 Board meeting.

Actions Log

1.6 The Board reviewed the Actions Log. There were two open actions, one concerning the infographic for the 2021-25 corporate plan performance review, and one concerning the work the Board had requested on staff retention. Ian confirmed that both were in hand.

1.7 Before moving on to the main agenda, the Chair said that as his term was due to end on 20 July he expected this Board meeting to be his last as EDC Chair. He put on record his thanks for the support he and the garden city project had received during his time as Chair since 2021, mentioning EDC staff, the Board, the Leaders of Dartford and Gravesham borough councils, Kent County Council, EDC partners and MHCLG.

1.8 He said that he was very pleased with the progress that had been made during his term, with the 5,000th home due to be completed imminently, and said that he was particularly proud of the resident satisfaction survey results which had consistently demonstrated that people were very positive about life in Ebbsfleet. He thanked Homes England and Henley Camland and the role both were playing in the Alkerden Education Campus, and said that the two new community buildings at Weldon were really taking shape. Finally, he remarked that Ebbsfleet Central was a huge opportunity and in his view exactly the sort of site that Government needed to develop during a housing crisis.

Item 2 Chief Executive's Reports

2(a) CEO's Strategic Report (Paper 025/038)

2.1 Ian Piper's Part I CEO report was Paper 025/038, covering health, safety and wellbeing, EDC funding, corporate/business planning, Q1 performance and also the 2025 Board effectiveness review.

2.2 Ian started by thanking Simon Dudley as EDC Chair for his strong and supportive leadership since 2021. Ian said that Simon had always been very approachable and there to support him and the wider EDC team. Ian also thanked Fred Maroudas whose term as a Non-Executive Director was also coming to an end. Ian thanked Fred for his work with the Board and for his role as the chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Ian said that Nick Shattock had agreed to become the interim chair of ARAC until such time as MHCLG appointed a new chair and committee membership was reviewed. The Board agreed to Nick taking on the role of interim chair of ARAC.

2.3 Ian summarised the highlights from his report. He said that EDC had received formal confirmation of the 2025/26 RDEL and CDEL budget, alongside the annual delegation letter from MHCLG. The delegation letter had included an increase in EDC's CDEL delegation from £10m per project to £30m, with REDEL remaining at £0.5m. Ian said there had not yet been confirmation of EDC's budget for 2026/27 onwards. Ian confirmed that as the 2025/26 budget was now confirmed the annual business plan had been published.

2.4 Ian moved on to report on some of the highlights from the Q1 performance report, and also drew the Board's attention to the results of the annual Board effectiveness survey which were at Annex B of his paper. On performance, he said that an apartment block of c.70 units at Cable Wharf had been delayed until 2026/27, and this was likely to impact on the annual housing completions target.

2.5 The Chair asked for comments and started by asking about the Cable Wharf apartment block delay. Ian said that there were signs of lessening demand for apartments across the area, and that this reflected a wider issue beyond Ebbsfleet. Mark Pullin confirmed that construction of the apartments had started, but the developer had decided to slow the build because of the market conditions. The Chair said that he understood this to be reflective of the national picture, and that in his view this was likely to be due to the stamp duty changes and also the lack of an equity loan scheme. Neil Cameron said that he was very pleased that the Fastrack buses would soon be going all the way through Whitecliffe to Bluewater, and that it would be very good to see buses using the dedicated route.

2.6 Simon Dudley said that the Board effectiveness review results were positive. He noted that the weakest response was to the question about action and responsiveness of the sponsor department, and said that sponsor support was crucial given the complexity of the projects EDC was delivering.

2.7 The Board **NOTED** the report. The Board **AGREED** that Nick Shattock will chair the ARAC in an interim capacity after Fred Maroudas' term as a Board member finishes.

2(b) Communications and Marketing Report (Paper 025/039)

2.8 Caroline Alexander presented Paper 025/039, providing an update on communications and marketing activity since the May Board meeting. Caroline drew out some of the highlights, starting with the recent Ebbsfleet Central Early Market Engagement webinar where positive feedback had been received and over 170 companies had signed up to attend or receive the information pack. Caroline said that several community led events had taken place across the neighbourhoods over the summer period so far including bike repair and ride sessions and also the 'Curious Gardens' event run by Blueprint Arts at Cable Wharf. On social media, Caroline referenced EDC strong Facebook content reach as well as the high number of views of the Alkerden school drone footage. Finally, Caroline highlighted EDC's recent publication of a guide on service charges for local residents.

2.9 The Chair asked for comments or questions. Simon Blanchflower asked if a good blend of contractors had responded to the Ebbsfleet Central Early Market Engagement opportunity and Jen Hunt confirmed that she was pleased with the reach and diversity. Valerie Owen asked if the recent downturn in housing sales was reflected in the volume of social media interactions, and whether EDC could do more. Caroline said that the Corporation's role was tailored to supporting resident life once homeowners move to the area, rather than influencing housing sales. Caroline highlighted a method of supporting new homeowners via the recent publication of a guide on service charges for local residents.

2.10 On service charges, Simon Blanchflower asked if EDC could do anything to hold management companies to account. Cllr Burden said that in his view service charges were a significant issue for many local residents within Ebbsfleet and surrounding communities and that a lack of power to change their management company was frustrating residents. The Board had wide ranging discussion on the issue of service charges. On management companies, Ian said that he had recently met with Ward councillors and Jim Dickson MP to discuss this issue and correspondence had been sent specifically to Taylor Wimpey. Ian Piper explained that when EDC was established many of the management companies had already been set up and the Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust had been formed as the Board's strategy for helping to manage this issue.

2.11 The Board asked whether it would now be a good time for EDC to collect the latest information on service charges across Ebbsfleet so that the Board could review this. Ian said that Mark Patchett of EGCT had previously conducted a detailed exercise on this, and that EGCT was currently supporting residents who were experiencing issues. Ian said that this matter had been raised with the Government's New Town Task Force, with an important lesson being that stewardship vehicles should be set up wherever possible at the outset of new town development.

2.12 Ian reminded the Board of the rationale for establishing EGCT in the first place, which was to be a long term stewardship vehicle for the larger areas of open space and as many of the community buildings as possible. He reminded the Board that the Business Case for establishing the Trust explored a wide range of options, and that it acknowledged that it was very unlikely to be able to get control of all the pre-existing management companies.

2.13 Nick Shattock asked how EDC might help current residents, and whether EGCT could be a potential vehicle. Valerie Owen cautioned on EGCT's resource capacity and also the risk appetite of the Trust. The Chair suggested that it would be helpful and timely for the overall picture of management companies and the level of service charges in Ebbsfleet to be produced so that the Board could consider this.

2.14 Nick Shattock asked if, following the recent negative Telegraph article, any lessons had been learnt. Caroline said that any future engagement with the media would focus on promoting EDC's successes and future opportunities would be sought from technical and industry. Caroline added that LinkedIn had been used to promote positive stories to re-shape the Telegraph's narrative and Simon Dudley suggested more video content, as opposed to written news coverage, going forward. Nick Shattock added that in his view the best way to advertise was via television news articles rather than printed stories. John Burden asked if there had been any contact with key influencers in government and Ian Piper said Jim Dickson MP had visited Ebbsfleet several times, and regular catch up meetings were taking place with him.

2.15 The Board **NOTED** the report.

01-04	Ian Piper to liaise with EGCT to prepare an overview of Ebbsfleet's management companies and the service charge regime in operation across the various garden city developments. Action: Ian Piper
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Item 3 **Director of Planning and Place's Part I Reports**

3(a) Planning, Design and Delivery Report (Paper 025/040)

3.1 Mark Pullin presented Paper 025/040 that provided an update on planning, design and delivery across Ebbsfleet. Mark started by highlighting the recent approval of the sports pavilion at the Alkerden Education Campus, and also reported a slight delay to the delivery of Cable Wharf Primary School at Northfleet Riverside to Spring 2026. Mark said that a full planning application had now been submitted for 68 homes and one retail unit at Abacus Corner and approval had been granted for change of use at the Berkeley Modular Facility.

3.2 Moving on to the sale of the two parcels of land at Northfleet Embankment West, Mark informed the Board that the sale had fallen through. Mark added that the planning team had visited the Ebbsfleet Green allotments and confirmed that Redrow had addressed various outstanding matters and EDC/EGCT would be reviewing what is still outstanding before EGCT take over the facility. Mark said that he and Ian Piper had recently had a good meeting with the new owners of the Swanscombe Development LLP, Land Logical, and then finished his update by referencing good housing delivery numbers since the last Board meeting, the positive Planning Committee training, the Planning Reform briefing paper and the Infrastructure Funding statement.

3.3 The Chair invited questions and Simon Blanchflower asked for an update on the Castle Hill pub site. Mark said the planning permission had expired and the landowner was now considering a commercial/mixed use scheme.

3.4 The Board **NOTED** the paper.

3(b) Ebbsfleet Living (Paper 025/041)

3.5 Kevin McGeough presented Paper 025/041 which reported on community building activities since the last Board meeting in May. Kevin drew out highlights, including that the Ashmere development had been shortlisted by the Housing Design Awards panel and that they had visited in May. He said that the new heritage programme funded by Cable Wharf S106 monies was progressing well in Northfleet, and also flagged the upsurge in physical activity with five parallel projects taking place over the coming months.

3.6 The Chair invited questions and comments. Neil Cameron commended the work of the Planning and Design team, as well as the developers, in relation to the Housing Design Awards shortlisting.

3.7 The Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 4 Development, Infrastructure & Enabling Works Part I Update (Paper 025/042)

4.1 Jen Hunt and Paul Abrahams' report was Paper 025/042, covering development, infrastructure and enabling works projects. Paul started by updating the Board on the completed Springhead Bridge remedial works; he said that KCC had issued both S278 and S38 certificates and that a further site visit with a KCC Structures Inspector would be arranged shortly as one of the final stages before KCC could formally adopt the structure

4.2 Paul highlighted some recent vandalism to the bridge abutments which had delayed proceedings. Moving on to the Fastrack Bean Tunnel project, Paul said that the legal agreement discussions were progressing. Jen Hunt then provided her update, drawing the Board's attention to the Ebbsfleet Central contractor procurement early market engagement and also the good progress on the two Ebbsfleet Green community buildings.

4.3 The Chair invited comments and Valerie Owen commended the two new community buildings at Ebbsfleet Green. The Chair asked Paul when Springhead Bridge was likely to be adopted by KCC and Paul said he hoped by the end of 2025.

4.4 The Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 5 **Director of Corporate Services Finance, Programme and Operations Report (Paper 025/043)**

5.1 Gerard Whiteman presented Paper 025/043 that provided the quarterly update on finance, operations and the Corporation's capital programme. Gerard started by confirming that EDC had now had its RDEL budget confirmed for the year 2025/26, and as a result he was seeking approval from the Board for the £7.5m gross revenue budget for the year. On CDEL, Gerard said that the forecast spend for the year had been reduced to £20.17m.

5.2 Gerard moved on to highlight a recent increase in trespass incidents on EDC-owned sites. He then referred to the scheme of delegations review at Annex B of his report, the proposed changes to the EDC staff special leave policy and equality policy at Annex C, and the updated Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy at Annex D, all of which he was asking the Board to approve.

- 5.3 The Board **NOTED** the report and AGREED:
- the 25/26 revenue budget;
 - the updated Scheme of Delegations document;
 - the updated Special Leave Policy;
 - the updated Equality Policy; and
 - the updated Counter Fraud Policy.

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

6.1 The Chair said that no public questions had been received for the Board's response for this meeting.

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 2025 Board Meeting Part II Agenda Items and Decisions

Item 7

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

Item 8 **CEO's Commercial/Confidential Update (Paper 025/044)**

The Board received the CEO's Part II report on commercially confidential matters. The Board NOTED the report.

Item 9 **Investment Approval – Ebbsfleet Central Stage 1 – Funding Approval (Paper 025/045)**

The Board received a report on the Ebbsfleet Central Stage 1 project. The Board APPROVED the additional £75,000 capital expenditure on the Ebbsfleet Central Stage 1 project and the revised project approval total of £39,765,245 (RDEL: £436,136 and CDEL: £39,329,109). The Board NOTED note that MHCLG have confirmed that their approval is not required.

Item 10 **Investment Approval – Fastrack Tunnels Additional RDEL (Paper 025/046)**

The Board received a report on the Fastrack Tunnels project and APPROVED an increase in RDEL expenditure for the Fastrack Bean Tunnel project of £93,500 for additional legal fees in order to finalise updates to the Funding Agreements. This would take the total approval amounts on the project to: CDEL - £9m plus RDEL - £495,000.

Item 11 **Development – Part II General Report (Paper 025/047)**

The Board received a report providing an update on commercially confidential matters relating to development projects. The Board NOTED the update.

Item 12 **EDC Staff Pay Award (Paper 025/048)**

The Board received a paper on the EDC staff pay award and performance award. The Board APPROVED the 2025/26 staff pay award (cost of living) increase proposals and performance related pay proposal based upon 2024/25 corporate performance as set out in Board Paper 025/048.