

GEDCCC District Visits Programme

Highlights of the visit to Ebbsfleet Garden City and the key economic development and regeneration issues and priorities:

A map and information pack were provided to all Members attending the visit.

Ebbsfleet Station

Presentation given by Ian Piper, Chief Executive of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation setting the background to development in and formation of Ebbsfleet Garden City. Additional information was provided by Mark Pullin, Chief Planning Officer. The presentation covered:

- Outline consent granted to Eastern Quarry (2007) and Ebbsfleet (2002)
- Designation of London Resort as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in 2014.
- Formation of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation in 2015. It's remit, to bring forward development and forward fund critical infrastructure. Specific reference was made to Springhead Bridge and the forward funding of utilities infrastructure.
- Implementation Framework produced by EDC in 2016. This was the basis of the model being viewed by Members.
- Issue of "Lift & Shift" that needs to be resolved for development to proceed within the Ebbsfleet Central area.

Note: This is essentially the area covered by the Ebbsfleet outline consent. The term applies to the removal of existing surface car parking around Ebbsfleet International station and its replacement to allow development around the station. The replacement of the surface level parking is governed by a legal contract completed at the time of the development of Ebbsfleet station.)

In the course of the presentation Members raised the following matters:

- i). **EDC control over London Resort.** Ian Piper acknowledged that the EDC has no control over the promoter, London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH), in relation to the submission of its Development Consent Order (DCO). NSIP status was granted under the 2008 Planning Act and timescales are set by this with determination by Secretary of State.

Note: This is not strictly true. Although the EDC is not classed as a local authority it will have an important role to play in the pre-Application and Examination stages of the NSIP process. Also, if the EDC is still in existence when a DCO has been granted it will the enforcing authority of any conditions included in the DCO.
- ii). **Extent of EDC "Red Line" boundary.** This was described by Mark Pullin.

Note: A plan of the red line boundary is shown below.
- iii). **EDC's ambition for Crossrail Extension.** EDC has supported the extension of Crossrail to Northfleet station and the Implementation Framework sets of a corridor linking Northfleet and Ebbsfleet stations. This was likened to the link

between the Stratford stations by the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire MP, on a recent visit.

- iv). **Location of employment.** Large volume of B1a office development within outline consents that was unlikely to come forward. EDC is focusing main areas of employment around Ebbsfleet station and Northfleet Riverside. This would be a wider mix of employment floorspace.
- v). **Danger of Garden City becoming dormitory housing for London.** EDC cannot ignore the fact that the new housing delivered within the Garden City would be a draw to those looking to move out of London.
- vi). **Historic issues associated with high density/high rise development.** With lessons learnt from the past, EDC is looking to produce better quality public realm within development. EDC has already adopted an Urban Design Framework to improve quality. In response to a follow-up question that the scale of development proposed is at odds with Garden City concept Ian Piper stated that the EDC was attempting to define the concept of a Garden City for the 21st century taking some of the best ideas such as access to parks and open spaces from the original Garden City ideals.
- vii). **Viability.** This is no longer an issue for the Eastern Quarry site and including Ebbsfleet Green. Ebbsfleet Central is a different case and will need a significant level of public subsidy to cover structural costs to bring forward the site for development.

Note: There was no mention of viability for the Northfleet Riverside but this is still an underlying issue for both the Northfleet Embankment East and West sites.

- viii). **Capacity of A2 Bean Junction.** Reference was made to the proposals being delivered by Highways England for both the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions to improve capacity. Highways England has, because of the uncertainty, not included the London Resort proposals arguing that this development would require a significantly different approach particularly for the A2 Ebbsfleet junction.
- ix). **Access to River Thames.** EDC is opening access to the river where it can through the plans for development that have/are coming forward. However, it is also restricted by the need to protect the commercial interests of existing businesses along the river frontage. In response to a follow-up question on the need for parking to support the development of “river bus services”, Ian Piper stressed the improvements planned for Fastrack services.

Note: An alignment for Fastrack is safeguarded along Northfleet Riverside that would connect the new and existing communities to the river in addition to new cycle and pedestrian routes through proposed residential developments.

- x). **Level of Affordable Housing.** This varies across the different development sites but the EDC is aiming for 30% affordable housing provision across the Garden City.

The Tour

On the coach tour around the Garden City starting from Ebbsfleet International station and finishing at Eastgate Community Centre the following were highlighted by the EDC:

- Former landfill site to the west of Ebbsfleet station that will become the Central Park of the Garden City.
- Structure constructed over the HS1 route in preparation for planned development that has become tagged “the bridge to nowhere”.
- Alignment of the proposed access road to London Resort that would run along the western boundary of HS1.
- The under-utilised asset known as Blue Lake on the north side of the A226 Thames Way.
- The Wastewater Treatment Works on the south side of the A226 Thames Way opposite Blue Lake. The EDC is in discussion with Southern Water regarding the expansion of this facility to provide additional capacity for planned development.
- The existing Northfleet Urban Country Park situated to the north of the A226 Thames Way between Springhead Road and Vale Road.
- Berkeley Homes factory for modular housing fabrication on the commercial part of the Northfleet Embankment East site. The southern part of this commercial area is still owned by Homes England.
- The residential part of Northfleet Embankment East site to be developed by Keepmoat. Specific features of the site highlighted included the WT Henley building to be converted for community use; historic Bear Pit to be identified by a landscape feature within the development; provision of a 2FE primary school; contribution towards the expansion of secondary school provision in the area and caves in the cliff face to the south of the site.
- A review of the capacity of the A226 Thames Way with KCC to evaluate whether it needs to be made a dual-carriageway.

Note: It was not clear whether the EDC was referring to the whole of the A226 Thames Way or the section to the west of Springhead Road. There remains a proposal for the latter to be dualled and developer contributions have already been secured towards this. Dualling the section to the east of Springhead Road could only be achieved through the loss of the existing bus lanes for Fastrack as widening is limited by the cliffs that formed the original railway cutting.

- Progress of the Redrow site at Ebbsfleet Green.
- Progress of the Castle Hill development in Eastern Quarry including the new 2FE primary school already provided and adjacent community centre; the village centre under construction; pedestrian/cycle links with the existing Swanscombe community and the Alkerden Farm site which includes a listed structure due to be re-built and the demolition of surrounding buildings to open up the site.
- Ian Piper stated that having Henley Camland in the role of master developer was, in his experience, a better option than having to deal with a consortium of housing developers.

In response to a question about the presence of solar panels on a number of houses in Castle Hill it was stated that developers were required to meet energy efficiency standards for housing and some developers achieved this through the provision of solar panels. Redrow used this quite extensively on its Ebbsfleet Green site.

Members also asked about the average density of house building across the Ebbsfleet Garden City but were not given a definitive answer by the EDC. The EDC did state that one third of the Eastern Quarry site is to be open space.

The EDC is pushing high-speed broadband provision, national space requirements and national standards for accessible housing across all residential developments.

Eastgate Community Centre

The EDC provided presentations and took questions on the following three topics during a working lunch at the Eastgate Community Centre.

1. Stewardship

Current Government requirement for Garden Settlement bids is a long-term strategy for the management of public assets. The presentation highlighted:

- The fractured nature of the existing management arrangements (6 different development sites each with separate plans either in place or due to be set up).
- EDC's proposal for a Charitable Trust (Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust) with trading subsidiaries and a Guardianship Group with wider representation that would advise the Trust.
- A financial model that would generate the estimated income of £2.3m per annum needed to operate the Trust coming from a combination of estate rent charge, external grants, trading activity and income derived from commercial assets.
- An asset endowment of £45-50m is needed to achieve sufficient income generation the acquisition of commercial assets initially being funded by the EDC.
- The EDC has conducted asset mapping of both the EDC and wider impact area identifying existing community facilities (community centres, halls, parks, open spaces, etc.)
- More active management of facilities. A comparison was made between Eastgate and Castle Hill community centres, the former being more actively managed.
- EDC is looking to reduce/manage risks.

In the course of the presentation Members raised the following matters:

- i). **Number of Successful Trusts** – Most of the trusts set up through the Garden City or subsequent programmes have been successful but there was no clear figure given on the number. Reliability on a succession of volunteers was mentioned and two examples in Swale were given one a success and the other a failure with the conclusion that it could be hit or miss.

- ii). **Why not Establish a Parish Council?** Reluctance of both Borough Councils to set up new parish councils. Problem of a single parish council spreading across two Districts.

2. Delivery of Community Facilities

The number of schools to be delivered within the Garden City were identified as:

Eastern Quarry: 8FE Secondary and 3 x 2FE Primary

Ebbsfleet: 1 x 2FE Primary, 2 x 1FE Primary, Expansion of Existing Secondary

Ebbsfleet Green: 1 x 2FE Primary

Northfleet Embankment East: 1 x 2FE Primary, Expansion of Existing Secondary

Northfleet Embankment West: Expansion of Existing Primary

In response to how the cost of providing these schools was covered the EDC stated that this was either through direct provision or developer contributions. It was suggested to the Chair of the GEDCCC that a breakdown of the recent paper on s106 contributions should be undertaken to provide a better understanding of the funding of school provision in the Garden City.

The EDC stated that any development coming forward within Ebbsfleet Central would result in a complete review of the community infrastructure needed.

A review of the outputs from the Education Strategy, commissioned by the EDC, would be undertaken including an analysis by KCC.

The EDC were asked about its opinion on London Resort. Ian Piper stated that there were concerns about the timescale suggested by LRCH for the submission of the DCO and further doubts about the financial model and visitor numbers especially considering that there was no major branding for the resort in place or suggested.

3. Healthy New Towns (HNT) Programme

The programme was run by the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as one of 10 pilot schemes across the country. KCC has been actively involved via Roger Gough's presence on the Steering Group and further involvement by KCC's ASC, Public Health and EPE divisions.

The programme looks to re-establish links between health and housing that were traditionally combined under one Minister. The presentation on the EDC as a Healthy New Town is attached as Appendix 2.

The baseline study showed that the area was one of the worst performing in the country for social care provision, health and access to open spaces. In the case of the latter there were existing open spaces (such as Blue Lake and former landfill site) that were locked and inaccessible. Trackers used during the HNT programme showed where people were exercising and more importantly where they were not.

FSC has suggested that the Garden City could have the aspiration to be an area where care was provided ostensibly within the home obviating the need for care home provision. This was questioned in terms of its practicality and the EDC was asked about its plans to meet potential demand. In response the EDC pointed out that care homes would be provided but these were not people's first choice. The provision of

inter-generational housing was seen as a priority and the EDC is looking to acquire sites where they could provide specialist housing that the market will not deliver.

The Health, Education and Innovation Quarter (HEiQ) within Ebbsfleet Central would be a major boost to health provision in the Garden City. The EDC was currently modelling the scale of provision to be provided by this facility. Evidence has shown that smaller, separate GP practices/health centres are not what people want.

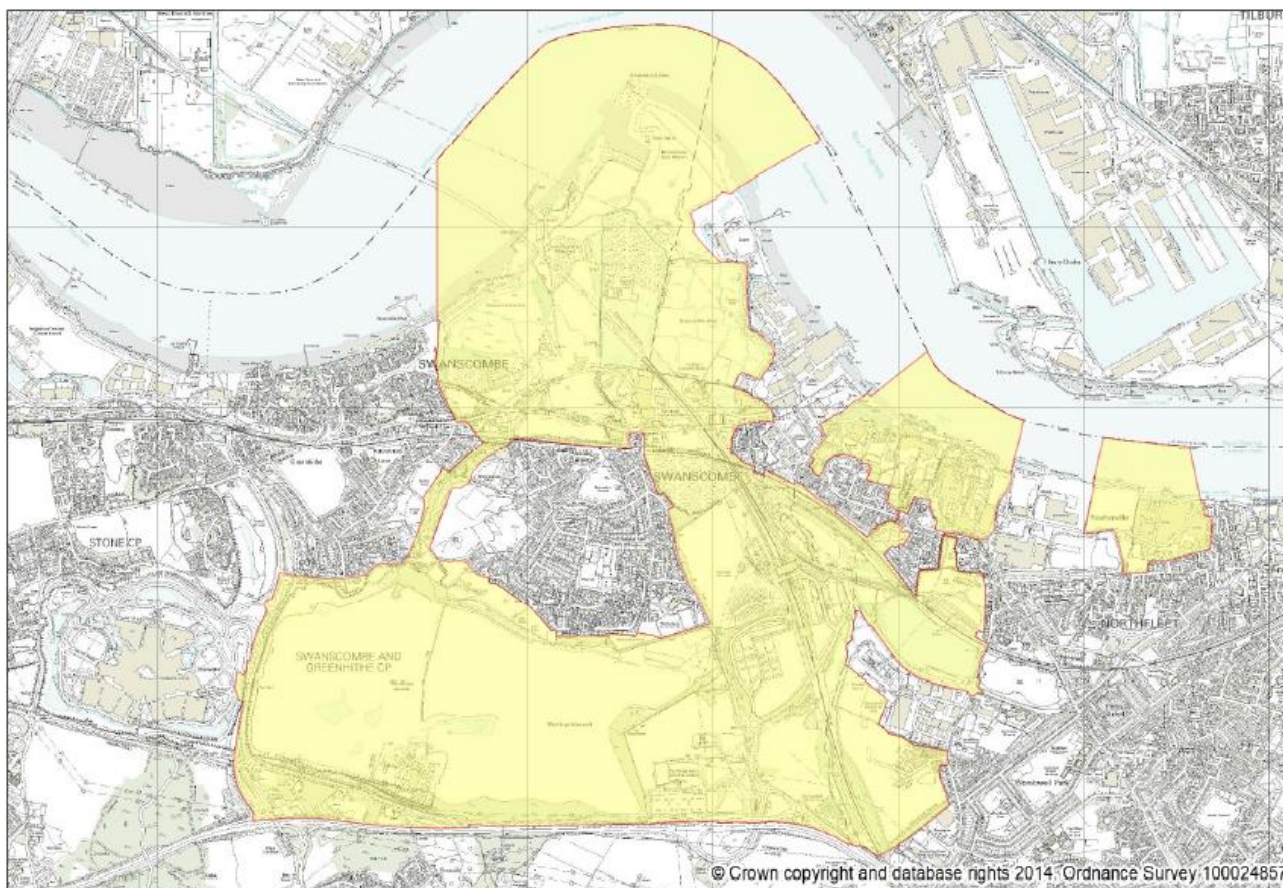
Note: This is at odds with other information received such as the demand for a GP practice on The Bridge development site by residents and the development of a new Health Centre at Horns Cross.

The HNT programme has been successful in bringing together the existing Swanscombe community with the new community at Castle Hill through the variety of events that have been organised and initiatives established and which are to be maintained after the programme has ceased.

The question of air pollution was raised, and the EDC were asked how it would contend with this. In reply the EDC said their principal focus was on reducing car journeys and increasing public transport use. Essential to this was establishing travel patterns early in the development.

Note: There are two declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) adjacent to the Garden City, the A2 Corridor and the A2 Bean Junction. Outside this the Garden City has a relative low level of air pollution at present principally due to the lack of development and this will inevitably increase. The transport strategy for the area is predicated on their being a substantial shift in transport mode towards public transport to limit congestion and hence air pollution.

The EDC did not know if the electricity supply companies had taken into account the impact of an increase in electric car charging in the assessment of future capacity for the Garden City.



EDC Area