

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2009, 6.30pm
Civic Centre, Harlow

Board members present:

Stephen Castle	Essex County Council	John Keddie	Independent Director
Steve Cox	EEDA	John Spence	Chair
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	Mark Wilkinson	Harlow Council
Steve Hammond	Independent Director		

Apologies:

Simon Bishop	Homes & Communities Agency	Chris Millington	Harlow Council
Richard Inman	GO-East Observer	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council	Jackie Sully	Independent Director
Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council		

Others present:

Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive	Louisa Martland	Office/Project Manager
Dianne Cooper	Harlow Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Daniel Grindey	Essex County Council	Richard Waterhouse	Essex County Council
Malcolm Morley	Harlow Council		

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Following interviews last week HRL have now appointed a replacement for Mike Seager who left HRL at the end of his secondment from CLG. Judith Barker will be joining the team on 1 June 2009 as Planning and Infrastructure Programme Manager. Judith previously worked for Countryside Properties, Advantage West Midlands and as a planner with King Sturge. Her main priorities will be the Design Guide, Master Planning and transport issues.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

All agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a true record.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

Waterspace Strategy – Following British Waterways' presentation at the last Board meeting, Andrew Bramidge and Cath Shaw put forward a proposal for a Waterspace Strategy to the GAF III Programme of Development Partnership Board. This was well received and the Partnership Board agreed to allocate funding to this project. A meeting will now be held with British Waterways to scope out the work. Based on a similar study that took place in Bishop's Stortford it is estimated that the work will take 3-4 months to complete.

Harlow Town Station – Representation has been made to English Heritage, Railway Heritage Trust, National Express and Network Rail regarding funds to improve Harlow Town Station. The Railway Heritage Trust has indicated that they would be amenable to an application for grant funding. We have yet to receive a response from English Heritage or Network Rail. National Express has agreed to have a meeting to discuss adaptations/improvements to the existing car park.

Action: Andrew Bramidge to follow up with English Heritage.

5. Employment Land Utilisation

The draft report for the second stage of work undertaken by GVA Grimley has now been completed. It is an intervention strategy that gives suggestions for options for future growth. Four employment sites in Harlow were studied – Templefields, The Pinnacles, the land north of Nortel and the railway station.

The Board were asked to consider where future employment sites should be; what constraints there are at each site; what type of industry they would like to see and the ongoing sustainability of industry in the neighbourhoods.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Competitive advantage should be considered. For a potential inward investor the current employment land is not attractive.
- We need to look at Harlow as it will be in the future, not just as it is now. What will happen to the economy, education, aspiration and attainment?
- There is no particular loyalty to Harlow's current employment sites. Currently all employment land sites are poorly located as there is limited expansion possibilities and transportation issues. Major areas of employment land need to be placed where there is good access.
- Business as well as employee access is essential. Connectivity is key. Staff leisure time when on site, access to town centre, housing and education should be considered. This can be achieved in part by running shuttle buses etc.
- We should take maximum advantage of the motorway, airport and proximity to central London. However, Stansted airport could be very different in the future if it is not part of BAA.
- There is nothing particularly wrong with the current sites. The existing building stock is appropriate for industrial activity. However, is this environment right to bring in new types of employment? What we have got is ok for now, in the medium term more could be made of employment sites. In the future we should strive to be bold and new.
- We should start to focus on attracting light industry, precision engineering and office-based industry. The current poor quality office accommodation in the town centre does not attract "head offices". Service industry isn't and shouldn't be the only way forward for the town.
- We need business units of varying size.
- Small businesses should be considered differently. There is the opportunity for good quality small business space in the neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood shopping centres suit light industry and local people working close to where they live.
- We waste about 1/3 of Harlow's water frontage on industrial sheds. This area could be turned over to high quality waterfront housing.
- We should look at what we can learn from other places such as Reading and Stockley Park in Uxbridge. GSK have 3 sites at Stockley Park. The key to its success is its proximity to the motorway – but there is nothing else there apart from employment sites. Edinburgh and south Manchester were also identified as quality business environments close to airports.
- In earlier times the trend was to work in the centre of a town and to live on the periphery but this has now swapped.
- Harlow North will bring new housing and new industrial sites to Harlow.
- The argument was put forward that to achieve the desired type and quality of employment land there would need to be reconfiguration of the north eastern side of Templefields, a direct road from the Pinnacles to the A414 and to utilise the land around the Nortel site – with a new road leading to a new M11 junction.
- In four years time the town will be able to offer new, bigger sites. Development of internal sites can be started at any time. Development of the Nortel site is in the existing Local Plan so this can begin at any time.

To conclude:

Access to existing and new industrial sites is crucial. The infrastructure to support future development needs to be put in place alongside early identification of competitive land. There is a place for good quality business space in the neighbourhood centres. Long-term, a large scale business park needs to

be created to win high grade companies. These options should be fed into the transport modelling system.

Action: Andrew Bramidge to bring back the findings of the housing and employment options study.

6. Transport – Winning the funding battle

HRL and Harlow Council (HDC) have been working with Essex County Council (ECC) to produce an Annual Report and Business Plan for the Harlow Stansted Gateway Transportation Board. The document also provides a rationale for further investment in Harlow.

It has been identified that there will be further opportunities through the Department for Transport for funding from 2014 through their programme Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS). The next 2-3 months will provide us with the opportunity to identify and put forward regional projects for consideration and decision in 2011-12. HRL and HDC want to put forward the case for Junction 7a on the M11 and an A414 link road. A paper was tabled at the meeting which gave further detail to the structure of the argument for further funding for the Harlow area.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Steve Cox declared an interest as he is on the DaSTS steering group.
- ECC is keen to support the initiative and thinks it stands a good chance of securing funding.
- The question “why Harlow” needs to be answered. We need to recognise the competitive situation that we are in and emphasise the benefits which will be delivered to the area through this investment.
- We need to be able to demonstrate what our wider vision is, not just our need for additional transport infrastructure. A lobbying strategy needs to be put in place. We need to engage with other agencies and authorities prior to the next Transport Board meeting. Further to this we need to show how these improvements create strategic links to the whole region and give a sense to the government for what the investment in our projects will mean nationally.
- At the moment the document is not a compelling business case. It shows how we will spend the money if we get it, but we should also show the implications and what we will do if we don't get the money. We need to highlight more the benefits of undertaking the works, linking to each of the statements that have been made. The facts are robust but they need contextualisation.
- Employer and business surveys undertaken by HDC are being analysed at the moment. The findings can be used to support the case.
- If we create a new junction on the M11 this then creates a new business opportunity – a business park?

Action: Build in a section about the vision for Harlow and a second section about the non-transport related activities that we are currently undertaking

Action: Stephen Castle and Richard Waterhouse to update Cllr Norman Hume and Paul Bird on the outcome of the discussion.

7. Business Plan – Responding to Harlow Council challenges

Andrew Bramidge has compiled the challenges set for Harlow Renaissance by Harlow Council. Following which a discussion has taken place to establish which roles were for HRL and which for HDC.

There were six main challenges set:

1. *How can we secure University provision, and take full advantage of it to benefit Harlow's existing residents and businesses, reinforce and extend Harlow's sphere of influence in the wider sub-region, and attract new people and businesses to the town?*

2. *How can we exploit our location to become a genuine gateway to Europe and encourage business growth and inward investment? Central to this is likely to be the need to secure infrastructure fit for the twenty-first century.*
3. *How can we establish the range and quality of housing and related infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future residents, and support our aspirations?*
4. *How can we build on our art and design heritage to develop a cultural offer worthy of a city, to benefit existing and new communities and ensure that our neighbours see Harlow as an asset?*
5. *What is the role and function of our green spaces in this transformed Harlow?*
6. *How can we establish Harlow as a retail destination that is attractive to residents, workers, investors and our neighbours alike?*

The challenges will be tackled over the next two years and broad endorsement from the Board on these was sought.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- The areas covered look fine, however is the programme of work deliverable as there is a lot to achieve.
- The role of other agencies to support HRL in its work needs to be considered.
- How to fund these challenges needs to be addressed – how to attract and optimise as this is the enabler in all the points.
- We need to think about what is the outcome of delivering all the challenges. What difference will it make, how will we know if we have been successful?

Action: Andrew Bramidge to compile milestones of what is realistically achievable.

8. Branding Action Plan

The action plan presented to the Board follows the adoption of the Branding Strategy at the last Board meeting. The action plan has a particular focus on the next 12 months and links with the inward investment opportunities that we want to achieve.

There are five objectives for delivery:

1. *To raise the profile of Harlow with regional and national strategic policy shapers and organisations*
2. *To raise awareness of Harlow's facilities and opportunities within the town to both an internal and regional audience.*
3. *To define and position the town's "distinctiveness".*
4. *To define the meaning of Culture within the Harlow offer.*
5. *To engage young people with the history of Harlow and their role in its continued development.*

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Is there a need to work out what the financial objective is for each outcome?
- This is money well spent as developing the image of Harlow is key to its future.
- This work can be used to magnify the work already being done by developers such as Newhall.
- We need to choose partners to work with us on this project because it can't be achieved alone.
- At a macro level what do we aim to achieve?
- If you're asking for an investment in £s does there need to be an answer in £s?
- We won't be able to deliver tangible benefits in £s
- Perhaps 2-3 issues could be tackled each year. These need to be prioritised.

Conclusion:

The board agreed to the thrust of activities subject to a clear business case, prioritising and consideration of how we can demonstrate that changes has been made.

9. Review of 2008/09

A paper was presented for information.

10. Chief Executive's Report

Town Centre – The legal agreement is now complete and all partners have agreed to the document. The aim is to have the agreement complete and signed by next Tuesday (12 May).

Stockland are now working on materials for the public consultation process which will start in June 2009. Empty shop units will be used to house an exhibition and the process will conclude at the annual town show in September.

Action: HRL to share with the Board as soon as possible the plans for launching the consultation process.

Anglia Ruskin University – A positive discussion was held yesterday for bringing in a course offer to Harlow within the next 12 months. This will probably include short courses, guest lectures and events held at Harlow Enterprise Hub. HDC and HRL are now working together to create one interface with ARU.

Enterprise Advisory Group - The first meeting of the group took place last week. Useful discussion was had. The group will be convening again in June. We are looking to bring in additional members, particularly representation from the SME sector in Harlow.

Action: Board members to help identify possible SME members for the Enterprise Advisory Group.

11. Rolling Agenda

A paper was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. In light of the new business plan and the challenges set by HDC the Rolling Agenda will be reviewed.

Action: HRL to review and re-circulate the rolling agenda.

12. Any other businesses

It was felt that it might be useful for the Board to go on another study trip.

Action: Andrew Bramidge and Nicholas Falk to compile a list of possible locations.

Dianne Cooper advised that Harlow Council has submitted three projects for the Local Authority Building Control Awards. Two projects were shortlisted in the initial rounds – Harlow Enterprise Hub and Newhall and Newhall was then successful in being shortlisted for the National Awards.

13. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 1 July 2009, Committee Rooms 2a&b, Civic Centre, Harlow; 6.30pm

Approved by the Board of Directors

Chairman:

Date: