

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 November 2009, 6.30pm
Civic Centre, Harlow

Board members present:

Steve Cox	EEDA	John Keddie	Independent Director
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	Naisha Polaine	Homes & Communities Agency
Richard Inman	GO-East Observer	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council	John Spence	Chair
Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council	Jackie Sully	Independent Director
John Jowers	Essex County Council	Mark Wilkinson	Harlow Council

Apologies:

Steve Hammond	Independent Director	Chris Millington	Harlow Council
Paul Hersey	GO-East Observer		

Others present:

Nicola Bowland	Communications Manager	Louisa Martland	Office/Project Manager
Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive		
Dianne Cooper	Harlow Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Daniel Grindey	Essex County Council	David Sprunt	Essex County Council
Bryan Raine	Essex County Council		

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed Naisha Polaine to the Board. In addition to the apologies noted above Malcolm Morley, Harlow Council sent his apologies.

David Sprunt from Essex County Council was also welcomed to the Board. He was present to help facilitate the discussion around the A414.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

John Spence declared that he is now Vice Chair of the Essex Economic Board. Cllr John Jowers declared that he is a member of the Regional Planning Panel and the Urban Commission. The Board agreed to take these as standing declarations.

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

No additional matters were raised.

5. The state of the sub-region and bringing forward delivery of housing and economic growth

This item was brought to the Board to stimulate discussion ahead of the January Board meeting where there will be an item on the Local Development Framework (LDF) looking at the vision and direction of this document prior to public consultation in March. The paper presented to the Board raised some of the issues that are facing Harlow at the moment. Despite the economic position Harlow Renaissance will continue to focus on two core areas – business/jobs and housing development. Direction from the Board was sought about actions we can still take forward.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- We need to maintain the desired full mix of housing options in our developments (including executive and social housing) and not water this aspiration down as it will contradict other aspirations to bring Anglia Ruskin University to Harlow and create a regional shopping centre.
- Different funding mechanisms need to be looked at to enable people to enter the housing market, including deferred payment models.
- There is still interest from developers to build in this region – we have to make sure we're part of this.
- It would be useful to show performance statistics relating to housing delivery at the January meeting.
- The HCA currently have a number of short-intermediate length products that are enabling people to still enter the housing market. These include: Home Buy Direct and Rent to Home Buy. It is expected that the range of products will be simplified in due course.
- Currently in the region there is a growth of public-public partnerships (between the HCA and local authorities) which is likely to be the funding model of the future.
- Harlow Council is currently out to the market with a portfolio of small sites across the town. There has been interest from private developers who are looking to embark on joint venture arrangements to enable work to start.
- Essex County Council are currently working on a number of 'hope value' sites e.g. West Hanningfield. There is an aspiration to link the funding for these projects to the Bank of Essex.
- There is a difference between affordable and social housing. Harlow needs a mix of 'affordable-affordable' housing and not just 'affordable-social' housing.
- Essex County Council is currently producing a Rural Design Guide supplement to complement the Urban Design Guide.
- We need to think of 'greater Harlow' and not just the political boundaries when we are considering developments.
- The Essex Economic Board is working with Essex County Council to create a small list of County-wide priorities.
- We need to work with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that change happens throughout the region.
- Newhall want to build more private housing and reduce the number of affordable units. Harlow Council is working with them to try and secure sources of funding to achieve this.
- A clear vision for Harlow is vital if we want to secure investment in the town. Employment underpins growth.
- Any development within the town needs to be spearheaded by Harlow people for them to feel engaged. We need to create a cohesive community.
- John Spence, Malcolm Morley and Stockland are meeting with Sir Bob Kerlake on 1st December to talk about the Town Centre development and securing HCA support in its implementation.

Going forward, key actions for Harlow Renaissance:

1. Progress the work on Town Centre North
2. Convene a dialogue with developers about financial modelling
3. Lead a fact-based discussion with maps and statistics
4. Help identify potential development sites

6. Response to CLG consultation on GAF funding cuts

Harlow Renaissance is seeking endorsement from the Board to its response to CLG in relation to the funding cuts being made to the GAF III programme. It is proposed that the letter will strongly state the damage the funding cut will have on the regeneration of Harlow. The GAF III Programme of Development (POD) Partnership Board has supported this suggested method of action. The Board agreed to the proposal.

7. A414 – Delivering the business case

The Board paper set out the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) process and also how we could move forward. It was hoped that funding from the Department of Transport would be available to help fund some of the feasibility work, however, this is not the case since the studies will be at too high a level.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- We should go back to the GAF III POD Partnership Board to ask for more funds for transport projects.
 - *As this is a local partnership each partner has a different view about their top priority. Discussions took place at the last meeting about re-arranging funds to replenish the transport fund.*

- There are currently doubts whether all the feasibility work can be completed due to a potential lack of funding from 2010.
- We need to start to consider how to finance the transport infrastructure work.
- Funding is important, but we need to prove the case for development first as there may be another option which delivers most of what a northern by-pass would do.
- A re-evaluation of existing studies should take place. A foundation of solid data is vital to securing funding.
- A map should be produced which shows how/where Harlow is going to grow.
- Are there any other ways of delivering this work?
- How do we accelerate our knowledge whilst still following the correct processes?
- Transport infrastructure should follow the growth in housing.

Action: Andrew Bramidge and Cath Shaw to look at re-allocating POD money.

Action: Harlow Renaissance to work with Essex County Council to establish the correct process for moving this work forward.

8. Town Centre North – progress, risks and delivery

The town centre masterplan was launched in July. Since then the team have been working through the comments/feedback. Several exhibitions of the scheme have taken place including at the EEDA Board meeting, for Members and Senior Officers at Essex County Council and at the Harlow Town Show.

The Board paper highlights the identified risks to the project. We are seeking the Board's view on whether all risks have been captured and if so how to identify the right way to mitigate against the risk. It is felt that the likelihood of the identified risks happening is 'medium', but that the impact on the programme if they did would be 'high'. The Board felt all risks had been successfully identified.

EEDA has pledged financial support to help assist the scheme through to planning.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Getting support for the scheme is critical.
 - *Thanks were extended to Essex County Council for hosting the scheme exhibition as it gave people outside Harlow the opportunity to understand the impact this scheme will have on the region.*
- Very important to get immunity from listing.
 - *A productive meeting was held recently with Harlow Civic Society and discussions with CABE will take place shortly.*
 - *Montagu Evans – Stockland's planning advisors – have put together a detailed Heritage Appraisal.*
- Are Stockland ensuring that the scheme is financially viable in the current climate?
 - *Stockland are doing work on a weekly basis to ensure the scheme is financially viable.*
- Has funding been secured for a new theatre? Creative designs/uses should be looked at for this venue to open it up to a wider audience – conference centre linked to the airport, links to education. An iconic building should be created – either in its architecture or its use.
 - *The theatre development has been treated as a separate scheme throughout the design process. Stockland are currently working up alternative uses for West Square if it is felt that either funding cannot be obtained for the theatre, or if a better location is found. The Theatre Group is currently conducting a site review.*
 - *The Marlow Theatre in Canterbury attracted £40m funding.*

A rolling risk schedule and work plan will be brought to the Board at each meeting.

Action: Cath Shaw and Andrew Bramidge to liaise to conclude decision with Theatre Group.

9. Inward Investment Campaign

Following the Board meeting in September discussions have taken place with Invest Essex and East of England International to agree the ways in which a campaign could be implemented and how we can work in partnership to deliver this.

Key points from the Board discussion about the proposed campaign:

- There is a good degree of engagement set out in the campaign – when do we start!

- The campaign has everything we would want to see – it reaches out.
- Good quality testimonials are essential. There is a company that has just re-located to Harlow from Thaxted and another company that has recently moved from Tottenham.

The Board agreed to the direction of travel and the proposals for the campaign.

Action: Andrew Bramidge to discuss the brochure with John Keddie prior to it going to print.

10. Chief Executive’s Report

Anglia Ruskin University: This project is currently on track for a campus to open in Harlow. EEDA have proposed £3.8m worth of funding which is going to their Board for final consideration next week. – John Spence, Andrew Bramidge, Cllr Eddie Johnson, Malcolm Morley and representatives from ARU will be attending the meeting with EEDA.

In order to secure this funding it will be vital to demonstrate:

- The strength of the local commitment and support
- If delays happen who will pick up the extra costs that will be incurred
- That the project management arrangements are strong/robust
- That the money from EEDA can be spent within the time period (this year and next)

Priority Estates: A successful workshop was held recently with Harlow Council administration members looking at the vision and core principles for the Priority Estates project. A further workshop will be held in December looking at the various options for the estates. Further workshops will then take place with all Councillors before plans are made public. This item will be brought back to the Board before any public consultation.

11. Rolling Agenda

A revised rolling agenda will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting. In January, British Waterways will be presenting their interim paper for the Water Strategy. The Board agreed that it would be useful to invite representatives from our adjoining Councils to this meeting.

The proposed change to the May 2010 Board meeting date was confirmed. Meeting dates for 2010 will be circulated with the minutes.

Action: John Spence to write and invite neighbouring local authorities to the January Board meeting.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

13. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 6th January – 6.30pm

Approved by the Board of Directors

Chairman:

Date: