

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 March 2010, 6.30pm
Civic Centre, Harlow

Board members present:

Steve Cox	EEDA	John Jowers	Essex County Council
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	John Keddie	Independent Director
Steve Hammond	Independent Director	Naisha Polaine	Homes & Communities Agency
Paul Hersey	GO-East Observer	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council	John Spence	Chair
Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council		

Apologies:

Jackie Sully	Independent Director	Mark Wilkinson	Harlow Council
Chris Millington	Harlow Council		

Others present:

Jude Barker	Programme Manager	Louisa Martland	Office/Project Manager
Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive		
James Clifton	British Waterways	Bryan Raine	Essex County Council
Dianne Cooper	Harlow Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Chris Fluskey	Harlow Education Consortium	David Sprunt	Essex County Council
Daniel Grindey	Essex County Council	Gary Thorogood-Page	Lathams
Malcolm Morley	Harlow Council		

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chairman welcomed Chris Fluskey from Harlow Education Consortium (HEC), James Clifton from British Waterways and Gary Thorogood-Page from Lathams to the meeting. Apologies as noted above.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

John Spence declared that he is now on the Board of Anglia Ruskin University. The Board agreed to take this as a standing declaration.

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

Audit - Following the note sent to the Board in lieu of the January meeting Price Bailey have now been appointed as the company's Auditors. A meeting was held to agree the timings of this year's audit, and this will be formally agreed at the next Audit Committee, taking place on Friday 5 March. It is likely that the audit will be completed by mid May.

5. Future schools structure – establishing a School's Trust in Harlow

Chris Fluskey, Director of Harlow Education Consortium, laid out the plans for the creation of the Harlow Education Trust. It was recognised that this would need to gain more members to maximise effectiveness and Chris may come back to Harlow Renaissance after the Trust has been legally created to help with private sector recruitment. Members of the Board were concerned to ensure that the Trust would enhance the educational offering in Harlow; Chris could not guarantee this but believed it would support such improvement.

6. Transport – M11 Junction 7a Feasibility Study

There is now an opportunity through Growth Areas Funds (GAF III) to commission a feasibility study. During the last regional funding allocation priority was given to public transport schemes and those that could clearly demonstrate how much they would cost to deliver. We need to be able to demonstrate not only need, but also cost certainty with regards to deliverability and cost.

The Board were asked for their comments on whether the right range of activities was being proposed and whether conducting a feasibility study when no funding has been secured to deliver the works was the right course of action.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Schemes where feasibility studies have already been conducted seem to secure funding more easily.
- This is an expensive scheme (even without work on a Harlow bypass being included).
- Other funding pots including CIF and GAF may be available in the future to deliver this project.
- It is possible that the study could be delivered in elements.
- The Board were generally supportive of the scheme, but more sceptical about the cost and scope of the works.
- The broader benefits of the scheme should also be looked at within the study, including the wider economic benefits.
- The A12 in Colchester is an example of where having feasibility studies already in place helped to push the scheme forward much more easily.
- Could another contractor be commissioned to undertake the work?
- Is the Highways Agency in agreement with the proposals?
 - Initial discussions have taken place with the Highways Agency.
- To make the proposal more attractive would it be possible to look at how adding an additional junction would improve public transport links – e.g. rail or high-speed bus link to the airport?

Summary - Broadly, the Board support the proposed works subject to accounting issues, although would wish to ensure that the maximum amount of liaison with stakeholders takes place.

Action - Andrew Bramidge and David Sprunt to consider the scope of the brief, looking especially at the wider economic benefit and the cost.

HRL to liaise with HDC and ECC to look at what flexibilities there were in the local accounting frameworks to resolve the difficulty of only having capital funding available to deliver what appeared to be a revenue project.

7. Waterspace Strategy – emerging thinking

James Clifton from British Waterways and Gary Thorogood-Page, Lathams, gave a presentation outlining their initial proposals for a Waterspace Strategy, which they will be undertaking in three stages: a baseline analysis; concept proposals and then a draft strategy. Six key areas for intervention have been identified:

- Roydon;
- Parndon Mill,
- Harlow Station/Burnt Mill Lock;
- Latton Lock;
- Harlow Lock and
- Harlow North (synergy).

Next steps:

- Finalise baseline and consultation
- Refine concept proposals and develop themes
- Test findings
- Develop proposals and action plan

Key points from the Board discussion:

- The interface between the river and the town should be looked at in a way that is not reliant on Harlow North.
- How can the flood plains near to the station be looked at in a completely different way – i.e. what opportunities do they present, rather than barriers?
- If access points to the river are not significantly improved then the changes that are made will make little or no impact to Harlow residents and visitors.
- Ideas for the river need to be imaginative and break away from existing boundaries – including water-side housing.

Summary – The Board urged British Waterway to focus on: how to gain immediate wins including connectivity; whether anything more radical could be done to the area and to look at what opportunities might exist around waterside housing.

Action – Andrew Bramidge to write to the British Waterways Board expanding on the above conclusions and requesting that these elements be included in their final report.

Action – British Waterways to be invited back to the May meeting with their final report, and to be present for Land Securities session.

8. Draft Business Plan 2010/11

The draft Business Plan presented to the Board is an update from the two year Business Plan agreed last year, looking at the deliverables for the next financial year. Harlow Renaissance is seeking agreement to the key deliverables from the Board. Three financial projections have been put forward in respect of EEDA funding – that funding remains the same, that there is a reduction in funding of 10% and a reduction in funding of 20%. HRL is confident that the key deliverables will not be affected if there is a reduction in the core funding since the other funding contributors have all confirmed their funding contributions at current levels.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- The vision should include an aspiration to develop a model for renewal through community participation.

Summary - The Board were happy to approve the Business Plan for 2010/11.

9. EEDA evaluation of Local Delivery Vehicles

The evaluation had been circulated and the Chairman congratulated the Executive Team on their achievement. While all LDVs had been evaluated positively, Harlow Renaissance emerged as the best value for money with lowest cost and highest funds attracted.

On behalf of EEDA Steve Cox said that the report had been very positive about the contributions of LDVs to the region. It would now be considered by the EEDA Board and be used to help inform future potential funding.

10. Chief Executive's Report

Local Development Framework – Following a discussion with the Property Advisory Group, Harlow Renaissance will host an event bringing in external expertise to support Harlow's LDF process. This is likely to take place after the elections and probably in June, in advance of the main summer holiday period.

PCT – If the PCT, following their review, decide that they no longer wish to provide a health centre in Prentice Place then a re-allocation of that space will take place. This should not affect the planning application process, but could in fact deliver more housing.

Rail – It was agreed that the company should respond to the DfT consultation and make a comment in support of longer franchise periods and also to seek assurances about the maintenance of the current level of service to Harlow stations as a minimum.

Business Event – The company will be launching its inward investment package at an event on 13th April targeted at business intermediaries such as property agents, accountants and lawyers.

11. Rolling Agenda

A revised rolling agenda will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

13. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 12 May 2010.

Approved by the Board of Directors

Chairman:

Date: