

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Acting Head of Planning Policy and
Economic Development

REPORT NUMBER **E291**

TO: **STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

DATE OF MEETING **9 March 2006**

HAVEN GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP BID FOR ‘GROWTH POINT’ STATUS

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Council is a member of the Haven Gateway Partnership, and has been asked to support the partnership’s bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for ‘Growth Point’ status. The major housing and economic growth associated with this status will take place outside of Babergh, mainly in Ipswich and Colchester. It is likely that there would be direct and non-direct financial benefits to Babergh if the Partnership secures this status and that is why ‘Growth Point’ Status is being sought.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee notes that the Haven Gateway Partnership bid to ODPM for ‘Growth Point’ status is about to be formally submitted (by end of March 2006) and continues to support this bid.

2.2 That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Council’s appointed member representative on the Partnership Board to submit the joint bid to ODPM for ‘Growth Point’ status

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 These are generally positive for Babergh. There are no direct costs associated with seeking growth point status. However, it is likely that the granting of Growth Point status will result in direct receipt of funding for the sub-region, possibly including schemes within Babergh. However, the majority of the funding is likely to be targeted at those areas facing the greatest localised pressures of housing and employment growth.

3.2 A further benefit is that the area may be better placed to obtain funding from other sources, such as the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) if Growth Point status is achieved.

4. KEY INFORMATION

4.1 Background information on the Haven Gateway Partnership is attached at Appendix A. At its meeting on 28 April 2005 the Strategy Committee agreed to support a joint bid from the Haven Gateway Partnership to the ODPM for Growth Point status. The relevant meeting minute is attached as Appendix B. Paper E14 from the former Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development sets out the basis and benefits of, and reasons for, this bid. Officers have researched this matter carefully to ensure that any implications of this proposal are analysed and understood.

4.2 Whilst this approach has already been agreed, it was thought prudent to update members of the current position (bid submission imminent), note the new information provided on the important caveats attached as conditions to Babergh’s support and therefore ask that support be reconfirmed. The background information setting out the detailed basis / justification for the bid has not yet

been finalised. Hence the request for delegation of authority to the Corporate Director and appointed member representative. The detailed bid submission is being redrafted at present and will be completed for a HG Board meeting on 23rd March 2006. However, this is essentially a business case for the bid and the most important points to consider are the principal reasons why the bid is to be pursued and the implications for Babergh.

4.3 For the benefit of Members and to assist in reaching the heart of this matter, the reasons why this bid is being promoted are as follows:

- The Government's thinking and the emerging East of England Plan now places much more emphasis on both the regional and sub regional planning approaches. Working collaboratively as a sub regional partnership offers significant potential benefits within this context and it is believed that the relatively new Haven Gateway sub region is finding favour through GO East as the local agency of ODPM;
- The Haven Gateway is to accommodate a level of growth similar to that allocated to the Government's identified Growth Areas elsewhere;
- With this in mind, there is a strong case to argue that the area will need significant supporting infrastructure to ensure that this growth can be delivered without undue environmental impacts (particularly overburdening of existing infrastructure);
- As stated previously (section 3) the granting of Growth Point status might well be the key to accessing other sources of funding, such as that from EEDA.

4.4 The amount of funding which would be available is uncertain, but designation would also be likely to increase the prospect of support from others, such as the East of England Development Agency. The status would raise the profile of the region and would be a marketing tool to attract investors and employers. The status would also bring access to specialist advice such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Partnerships. Consideration would need to be given to how the Partnership should be best structured to deliver the Sub-Region's objectives. A new delivery vehicle might be required.

4.5 The growth is likely to be seen from the ODPM viewpoint as defined growth points within the area e.g. Ipswich and Colchester, rather than blanket coverage. Indeed, from Babergh's viewpoint, this would be a condition of the bid. The benefits would be the extra funding, support and influence that the status would command. It is clearly the case that Ipswich and Colchester Councils are willing to accept the great majority of the sub regional growth being concentrated within their areas. Babergh, conversely, has recently reaffirmed its opposition to any suggestion of higher levels of growth being allocated to the district at the examination in public for the East of England Plan.

4.6 At this point it is important to consider whether the caveats / safeguards attached to Babergh's expression of support last year for the bid have been met. In relation to these the following information is provided:

- (a) Non acceptance of higher levels of growth in Babergh during this or future reviews of the regional spatial strategy (RSS14). The growth figures for the constituent districts of the HG area are set out at Appendix C. As will be seen, the figures proposed for Babergh are low compared with the other districts, particularly Ipswich and Colchester. Further, although these figures have recently been analysed by the Panel at the East of England Plan Examination in Public and are not yet adopted Plan figures, Babergh recently argued vehemently against any increase in these figures. It should also be noted that Babergh's currently proposed figures actually represent a decrease of some 24.6%. In the Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 Babergh's housing allocation was 6,900 (all of Babergh) for 1996-2016, whereas the new RSS allocates Babergh a draft figure of 5,200 (all of Babergh).

- (b) Appropriate protection of the environment. This is considered to have been addressed partly through the scale of growth figures above; and by the fact that infrastructure is being sought by the Regional Assembly and many others to support the Plan's overall growth and by the HG Partnership as part of its bid. Babergh will also have control over where the growth goes, provided it is successful in adopting its Local Plan. Babergh will also control the developments through the established development control process.
- (c) Access to jobs and services in Ipswich and Colchester being effectively maintained for Babergh residents. Babergh residents, particularly those in eastern Babergh as its part of the HG area, are well located to access these jobs and services. New services are not proposed as part of the RSS or sub regional growth agenda. In the case of Ipswich it is intended that employment growth will include commercial / employment development at sites like the British Sugar factory sites, Sproughton and IP8, Pinewood. Suffolk Innovation Park (off A12, Martlesham) and Felixstowe (substantial port development planned) are less easily accessed but not remote.

4.7 The Partnership is proposing a number of individual bids to ODPM for funds to deliver specific projects in the HG area. This money is potentially significant, with a pot of £40 million to be available, although it is anticipated that perhaps 5 areas may be granted Growth Point / Area status. On this basis perhaps some £8 million (or more) might be available for the HG sub region. The Partnership has worked jointly on a package of bids and these are currently being finalised. However, because the vast majority of sub regional growth is to be concentrated in Ipswich and Colchester, and the localised nature of the development issues that these towns will face, justification for project bid funds are clearly much greater there than they would be in the rural districts like Babergh. It must be borne in mind that the criteria for successful infrastructure project bids concentrate on initiatives that will unlock potential for, or speed up the delivery of, housing / employment growth.

4.8 Meanwhile, if Growth Point status is granted, it is understood that there will be further bidding rounds for funds in future years that Babergh might look towards. In this context, future rounds could be extremely useful for securing the funds to achieve a proper river ferry service to link Shotley, Harwich and Felixstowe in particular. Although not finalised at the time of drafting this Committee report, further detail on the individual bids to be proposed will be provided to Members for the Strategy Committee meeting if they wish to see this information.

5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Background information on the Haven Gateway Partnership

Appendix B: Meeting minute of Paper E14 (agreed at Strategy Committee meeting 28th April 2005)

Appendix C: Draft East of England Plan (RSS 14) housing and employment growth figures for the districts of the Haven Gateway sub region

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None

CONTACT: Rich Cooke

DIRECT LINE: 01473 825775

Acting Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development

Haven Gateway Partnership: Background

The Haven Gateway Partnership is a sub-regional economic partnership whose area includes all of Tendring DC, Colchester BC and Ipswich BC, the eastern part of Babergh DC and southern area of Suffolk Coastal DC areas.

The purpose of the Partnership is to be the mechanism through which partner organisations can work together to promote the economic opportunities and secure the future prosperity of this major gateway to the East of England.

The Partnership has, during 2005/06, been developing a case for designation as a 'Growth Point' in the form of a business case submission document. In addition, the HG Planning Group is working jointly on a 'non-statutory' regeneration framework, to be completed by April 2006. This document not only helps to underpin the case for Growth Point designation but will also be used to implement the sub regional planning policies that are agreed as part of the East of England Plan when adopted later in 2006. The framework will help inform the Local Development Documents that the Local Authority partners are required to produce.

Strategy committee on 28th April 2005 (Paper E14) resolved to support the growth status bid application, subject to: support not being seen as acceptance of higher levels of growth in Babergh; appropriate environmental protection; access to jobs in Ipswich in Colchester being maintained for Babergh residents; and that the Haven Gateway Partnership should stress the importance of these provisos to the ODPM in its bid.

Since this meeting, the ODPM has delayed the submission date and requested further information from the potential bidders for Growth Point status. The HGP has undertaken further research, and a final version of the bid is currently being drafted for submission to ODPM by 31st March deadline. The Haven Gateway Partnership will be holding a special Partnership Board meeting on 23rd March to formally approve the submission, and they have asked individual partners to endorse the bid prior to this meeting. It is understood that subject to final member agreement within each authority, all local authority partners in the HG Partnership are likely to back this joint bid.

Extract from Strategy Committee Minutes for meeting held 28th April 2005

28th April 2005 - Minutes

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 28TH APRIL 2005

PRESENT: Mr N A Ridley – Chairman

Mrs E F Bates Mr C M Spence
Mr N A Bennett Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mr M P Booth Mr L H Young
Mrs S P Clarke

The following Members were unable to be present:- Mr A C Bavington, Mr D J Read and Mr H N Todd.

1 SUBSTITUTES

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5 a substitute was in attendance as follows:-

Mrs E F Bates (substituting for Mr D J Read)

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Mr N A Bennett be elected Vice-Chairman of the Strategy Committee for the ensuing year.

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12 HAVEN GATEWAY BID FOR GROWTH AREA STATUS

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report (Paper E14) asking the Committee to support a bid for the establishment of growth area status of the Haven Gateway Sub-Region, subject to certain key provisos. Members generally accepted the recommendation, but were concerned that the importance of the provisos should be emphasised when pursuing the bid.

RESOLVED

(1) That a bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to establish the growth area status of the Haven Gateway Sub-Region be supported, subject to:-

- (a) it being clear that this support should not necessarily be seen as acceptance of higher levels of growth in Babergh in this or future reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategy.**

- (b) there being appropriate protection of the environment.**
 - (c) access to jobs and services in Ipswich and Colchester being effectively maintained for Babergh residents.**
- (2) That the Haven Gateway Partnership be asked to stress the importance of the provisos set out in (a) to (c) to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister when making the bid.**

**Housing and Employment Growth Figures for the Haven Gateway sub region
(from Draft East of England Plan – RSS 14)**

The below employment targets are set in the draft East of England Plan. These job numbers are for the Haven Gateway parts of these districts only:

- Ipswich 18,000
- Colchester 14,200
- Suffolk Coastal 8,000
- Tendring 8,100
- Babergh 3,400

(Policy HG1: Economic Development)

Policy HG3 of the draft East of England Plan states that Local Development Documents will provide for a total of 50,840 net additional dwellings up to 2021, distributed as follows:

Local Authority Area	Net Additional Dwellings
Babergh	2,000 (inc. 600 on edge of Ipswich)
Colchester	17,100
Ipswich	15,400
Mid Suffolk	790 (on edge of Ipswich)
Suffolk Coastal	7,050 (inc. 3,320 on edge of Ipswich)
Tendring	8,500

NB Mid Suffolk district only has 5 (rural) parishes in the Haven Gateway area