

**Notes of a meeting of the
Ashford Strategic Delivery Board
Friday 22nd January 2016 at 10.00am**

Present:

Board Members

Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Chairman) - Leader ABC
Rt Hon Damian Green MP
Cllr Graham Galpin – Portfolio Holder for Town Centres Focus & Business Dynamics, ABC
Cllr Mike Bennett – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development & Enforcement, ABC
Cllr Mark Dance - Cabinet Member for Economic Development, KCC
Cllr Matthew Balfour – Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. KCC
Mark Lumsdon-Taylor – Hadlow Group
Paul Harwood – Highways Agency

Non Board Members

John Bunnett, ABC
Tracey Kerly, ABC
Richard Alderton, ABC
Paul McKenner, ABC
Lois Jarrett, ABC
Simon Cole, ABC
Christina Fuller, ABC
Andrew Osborne, ABC
Kirsty Hogarth, ABC
Stephen Gasche, KCC
David Smith, KCC
Rosie Reid, ABC

Apologies

Jon Linstrum, Arts Council
Chris Moore, HCA

Item	Notes	Action
1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed all attendees and explained that this would be John Bunnett (JB)'s last Board meeting as he was leaving the Council to take on a new role in the private sector. The Chair thanked JB for his hard work and said he would be sorely missed. The Cabinet had decided that now was not the time to recruit a new Chief Executive and had agreed to appoint Tracey Kerly (TK) as Interim Chief	

	Executive from 19 th February for 2 years. The Chair welcomed TK and said that she had established an excellent reputation in Kent and nationally by running one of the most successful and innovative Housing services in the country.	
2.	<p>Junction 10a – M20</p> <p>Paul Harwood gave a presentation which covered the outline of the proposed Junction 10a scheme. He explained that the new scheme was needed to relieve the congestion that would exist once all the building had been undertaken for which planning consent had already been given. The presentation covered features of the proposed design, scheme objectives, consultation process, Development Consent Order stages and timeframe.</p> <p>The Chairman emphasised the need to address the issue of forward funding as this could pose a problem, and it was agreed that Damian Green would write to ministers in DCLG & DfT to draw their attention to this issue. The Board noted that consultation had taken place on possible reform of S106 and CIL Regulations. KCC and ABC had submitted suggestions with supporting evidence, and had cited Junction 10a as an example of the restrictions in existence in the Regulations. Feedback from the DCLG consultation was unlikely to be made available until early summer. Richard Alderton said that Highways England would need to demonstrate the deliverability of the scheme as part of the DCO submission, the timing of which would be relevant to the progress of the new Draft Local Plan.</p>	Damian Green
3.	<p>Ashford Station/Spurs</p> <p>Stephen Gasche (SG) and Andrew Osborne (AO) gave a joint presentation. AO explained that the project had changed in scope with a new option now preferred for the spurs, which would be cheaper and easier to deliver. Indicative cost would be available in March, and that a delivery team within Network Rail was now in place to take implement this project. Any potential gap in funding identified would require further bids to the South East LEP for funding. The Board stressed the importance of taking this project forward quickly to re-signal Ashford International Station. The following actions were agreed for local partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby project partners for the earliest implementation of the new signalling to secure International Services at Ashford International.; • Lobby the SE LEP regarding the potential 	Damian Green / Gerry Clarkson / Paul Carter

	<p>requirement for further funding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Eurostar for improved services from Ashford International. 	
4.	<p>Project Updates</p> <p>a) <u>Ashford College</u></p> <p>Mark Lumsdon-Taylor introduced this topic. He said that the sale of the Jemmett Road site and Heads of Terms had been agreed with the developer. It was hoped to conclude the deal mid-February. Major demolitions had been completed and a contractor had been appointed for Phase 1. It was anticipated that Phase 1 and Phase 1a would be completed by April 2017.</p> <p>The Board noted a disconnection between what the Council was trying to achieve in terms of enabling development, and what KCC Property Services were doing to increase their capital receipts. It was felt that further conversations were needed outside of the meeting to ensure that partners were not holding each other to ransom and that the Council would not miss out on delivering projects to regenerate the town and galvanise business rates.</p> <p>b) <u>Elwick Place</u></p> <p>Paul McKenner (PMcK) advised that the Council had acquired land at Elwick Road and had submitted a planning application for the commercial element. The application was approved by Planning Committee in December 2015 with the Section 106 duly signed. The agreement with the hotel operator was finalised and signed, and agreements with most of the eateries were nearing conclusion. It was hoped that agreement with the cinema operator was also nearing completion.</p> <p>c) <u>Commercial Quarter</u></p> <p>Paul McKenner reported that solid interest had been shown by investors at the MIPIM conference last year, and the first building on the Commercial Quarter would shortly be underway. The Heads of Terms were due to be signed in mid-February. A planning application would be submitted including some car parking on site, with a larger number of spaces provided nearby. The Council would continue to promote the rest of the Commercial Quarter space. At the moment the Council was in discussions to transform one of the corn store buildings into a digital hub.</p>	

<p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p>	<p><u>Designer Outlet Expansion</u></p> <p>Lois Jarrett advised that the developers had submitted a planning application which had gone to Planning Committee in September 2015, it had been agreed, subject to completion of a S106 agreement. Negotiations were going well, despite the fact that there were some complicated clauses, and it was hoped that the agreement would be signed end January/early February. The Council was working with Javelin to analyse Ashford's shopping offer, and Javelin had indicated that they believed Ashford could rise up the shopping rankings in the next 5 – 10 years. Although there was no specific commencement date yet for building work, occupation on site was due in 2017 as predicted.</p> <p><u>Jasmin Vardimon</u></p> <p>Christina Fuller (CF) introduced this item. She had been working with Jasmin Vardimon to see how their offer in Ashford could be strengthened. Negotiations were currently underway to refurbish an existing building in the town, which would be vital to the delivery of the business plan. CF met with the Arts Council earlier in the week, and was now awaiting the announcement of the funding round in June. She would bring a further presentation to the Board at the next meeting in April.</p> <p><u>Chilmington Green</u></p> <p>Lois Jarrett advised that S106 negotiations were nearing a conclusion and Heads of Terms had been agreed with the exception of some minor issues. It was hoped that development would commence during September 2016. John Bunnett congratulated KCC Highways officers for the excellent work they had done on the proposed A28 improvements.</p> <p><u>Other Sites</u></p> <p>The Chair advised that the Highways England freight management proposals were currently open to consultation, and that as far as the Council was concerned, the most favourable proposal was option 1. He said that the Council was currently undertaking its enforcement role, but still required fundamental guidance and powers from the Government, including a physical means to prevent illegal parking. Damian Green and Matthew Balfour to discuss further.</p>	<p>Damian Green/ Matthew</p>
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		Balfour
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair thanked all for attending and said he considered the Board was working well. He suggested that Hugh Edwards, Project Director of Network Rail, should be invited to attend a future Board meeting.</p> <p>Mark Lumsdon-Taylor reported that an event was being set up on the Big 8 by Finn Kelcey. This had become an annual event, chaired by Damian Green. Richard Alderton would be attending to update on the Big 8 projects.</p>	

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