



## To the Members of the Borough Council

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7.00 pm.

Yours faithfully

T W Mortimer  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

### Agenda

Page  
Nos.

1. Apologies
2. To consider whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of Exempt or Confidential Information.
3. **Declarations of Interest (see “Advice to Members” overleaf)**
  - (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011 relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares a DPI in relation to any item will need to leave the Council Chamber for the whole of that item, and will not be able to speak or take part (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

- (b) Other Significant Interests (OSI) under the Kent Code of Conduct as adopted by the Council on 19 July 2012, relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares an OSI in relation to any item will need to leave the Council Chamber before the debate and vote on that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted). However, prior to leaving, the Member may address the Committee in the same way that a member of the public may do so.

- (c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests not required to be declared under (a) or (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:
- membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
  - where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
  - where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer etc, but not his/her financial position

[Note: an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc; OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc, would both probably constitute an OSI].

**Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:**

- (a) Government Guidance on DPI is available in DCLG's Guide for Councillors, at  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf)
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, and a copy can be found with the papers for that Meeting.
- (c) If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or OSI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

4. To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013
5. Election of the Leader of the Council until the Annual General Meeting in 2015
6. To note the names and number of Members to be appointed by the Leader to the Cabinet
7. To note the name of the Deputy Leader of the Council appointed by the Leader
8. To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader or other Members of the Cabinet
9. To receive any petitions
10. To receive any questions from, and provide answers to, the public (being resident of the Borough), which in the opinion of the Mayor are relevant to the business of the Meeting

- |     |   |       |
|-----|---|-------|
| 11. | To receive, consider and adopt the recommendations set out in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2013 | 1-9   |
| 12. | To receive the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on the 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2013  | 10-17 |
| 13. | Changes to Committee Membership – Labour Group  | 18    |
| 14. | To consider Motions of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 11  |       |
| 15. | Questions by Members of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 10   |       |

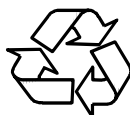
NOTE:- If debate on any item included within this Agenda gives rise to the need to exclude the press and public due to the likelihood of Exempt or Confidential information being disclosed the following resolution may be proposed and seconded and if carried, the press and public will be requested to leave the meeting for the duration of the debate.

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item as it is likely that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to the appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act

KRF/VS  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2013

---

Queries concerning this agenda? Please contact Keith Fearon:  
Telephone: 01233 330564 Email: [keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk)  
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: [www.ashford.gov.uk/committees](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/committees)



# Ashford Borough Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **21<sup>st</sup> February 2013**

## Present:

His Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr R K Davidson (Chairman);

Cllrs. Aaby, Adley, Apps, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Chilton, Clarkson, Claughton, Clokie, Davey, Davison, Mrs Dyer, Feacey, French, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Hodgkinson, Howard, Mrs Hutchinson, Link, Marriott, Mrs Martin, Mortimer, Robey, Shorter, Sims, Smith, Taylor, Wedgbury, Yeo.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting: -

1. The Reverend Alan Dinnie said prayers.
2. The Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development) advised that earlier that afternoon the Head of Legal & Democratic Services had received a letter from the Leader of the Council which read as follows: -

“In view of my current medical condition, I feel that I am unable at the present time, to carry out my duties as Leader of the Council. I have therefore taken the decision to temporarily step back as Leader of the Council until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 in order to aid my recovery from a serious operation. I am not resigning from my post as Leader but under Article 7.06 of the Constitution, the Deputy Leader (Councillor Clarkson), will until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, act as the Leader of the Council. I have full confidence in my Deputy and the Cabinet to oversee the running of the Council in my absence and they will be keeping me informed of key decisions and issues that arise. I look forward to returning to lead the Council at the beginning of April. Yours sincerely, Peter Wood, Leader of the Council.”

The Acting Leader of the Council said he was sure the entire Council would wish to send their best wishes to the Leader for a swift and full recovery and would look forward to welcoming him back to the Council Chamber as the Leader of the Authority.

## Apologies:

Cllrs. Clark, Mrs Heyes, Michael, Wood.

## Also Present:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Head of Environmental Services, Head of Planning and Development, Finance Manager, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Senior Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer.

### 333 Exempt or Confidential Items

The Mayor asked whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of Exempt or Confidential information. There were none.

### 334 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bennett	Announced an 'Other Interest' as the Council's Member Champion for Twinning	338
Hicks	Announced an 'Other Interest' as the Council's appointed representative on the Ashford Leisure Trust	338
Mrs Hutchinson	Announced an 'Other Interest' in relation to the Tenterden Leisure Centre Trust	338
Smith	Announced an 'Other Interest' as the Council's appointed representative on the SWAN Centre Site Management Committee	338
Wedgbury	Announced an 'Other Interest' as a Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council who managed Kingsnorth Recreation Centre.	338

### 335 Minutes

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Relf, a local resident spoke on the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012. He said under Minute No. 275 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were mentioned and he asked how many houses had been licensed as HMOs in postcode TN26 0JB.

Councillor Hicks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services, said that the Officers had investigated this and no HMOs had been found in the whole of the TN26 postcode. This was a rural area and normally HMOs were in the urban areas.

#### Resolved:

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 be approved and confirmed as correct records.**

## 336 Announcements

### (a) The Mayor's Quiz

The Mayor said he was holding a 'Mega Charity Quiz Night' on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March at the Stour Centre at 7pm. One could bring one's own food and drink and it was £3 per person for teams of up to 8 people. He knew the Labour Group had already reserved a table and it was hoped that other Members may be able to support this event. The event was being sponsored by an Ashford company and was being run by Ashford Sings so there would be a choir performing before the quiz as well. It should be a good night all round and he hoped to see some colleagues there.

### (b) The Acting Leader

The Acting Leader said he would like to take this opportunity to update colleagues on a number of recent developments and touch on one or two other matters. Members would be aware of discussions at last week's Cabinet Meeting regarding the option to increase Council Tax and tonight's recommendations to endorse the Cabinet's proposals. He considered Councillors should all be very proud of Ashford having the lowest Council Tax in Kent, in fact amongst the lowest in the Country, and Council Tax levels had been frozen for the last two years. As a result of sound financial management ABC had been able to keep the Council Tax low whilst providing value for money services aligned to resident's priorities as set out in the Council's Five Year Business Plan. This prudent approach had led to the Government giving the Council greater flexibility in the setting of Council Tax for the year 2013/14. This was because Ashford was one of the 25% of District Councils with the lowest Council Tax in the Country. Given the current economic backdrop this was quite an achievement, especially when ABC received just 11 pence from every £1 of Council Tax levied. The right balance needed to be struck and even if the Council agreed the increase this evening Ashford would still have the lowest Council Tax in Kent.

On other matters, the Council had recently launched its new look website to make accessing information and services from the Council easier. The way people accessed such information was shifting and it was clear that many people wanted information about Council services and answers to their questions in less traditional ways. There had been some very positive feedback so far with people telling the Council that the new website looked very good and was simple to navigate. For those who did not have access to a computer, the Council had also launched a new assisted self-help service where people could be talked through how to use the on-line services at the Gateway.

Plans for new recycling services were progressing well and from this summer every household would have a much more comprehensive recycling collection service. In addition the Council would have also launched a garden recycling service in tandem with the recycling approach where residents could opt to have their garden waste collected fortnightly for just £30 per year. Take up of the option had already begun and the Council were pleased with that.

The Acting Leader said he would also like to update on progress on just two of the major approved developments. Firstly the John Lewis Partnership had informed the Council that they were due to start work on site for their new Ashford store within the

next few months and they planned to open by Christmas 2013. Secondly, the redevelopment of Charter House into 234 homes and apartments was due to start next month thus transforming a key existing town centre building.

The question of water supplies came up from time to time, and the Acting Leader said he thought Members might be interested to know that South East Water had been making a capital investment in renewing the water mains in Ashford. In the last three financial years they had spent nearly £3m on renewals and they had renewed some 19.5km of mains which was impressive and it was useful to get that kind of overview.

Turning to a sad but significant part of Ashford's history, on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1943 Ashford was bombed during World War II and 51 residents were sadly killed and some 71 injured. It was the largest loss of life in a single day in Kent. To mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this tragic event a service of remembrance would be held in the Memorial Gardens on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March and the Mayor would attend.

**(c) Paul Jackson – Head of Environmental Services**

Councillor Cloughton, Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, said that this was likely to be the last Full Council Meeting attended by Paul Jackson. He had given this Council long and very distinguished service as the Head of Environmental Services and Councillor Cloughton was sure that he spoke for all colleagues in wishing him the very best for a long retirement. Members applauded.

### **337 Cabinet – 10<sup>th</sup> January and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

The report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which had been tabled clarified the procedure for consideration of the Cabinet minutes.

**(a) Cabinet – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Relf, a local resident said he wished to speak on Minute No. 288. He said that in reading the reports he noticed that two Council employees were going to the Chilmington Caravan Site to help residents to claim their benefits. He asked if this service was going to be expanded to help the more vulnerable people in the Borough with regard to benefits and the new bedroom tax etc. Completing the forms was sometimes quite tedious. Another question he wished to raise was that in an article in the Kentish Express Councillor Mrs Blanford had referred to new policy and guidance guidelines for the Site and that these were drawn up to tackle anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, rubbish dumping, noise, violence and inadequate supervision of children. Bearing in mind that the local community was aware of what went on at the Site and the adjoining property, there was absolutely nothing shown for this particular area in Kent Police's statistics of crime and anti-social behaviour for the last two years. He had spoken to Ann Barnes, the new Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, who had assured him that all anti-social behaviour was a crime, and had referred the matter to the Police, so he hoped for answers on that point from them. Even the arson attack on the shower block on site had been given a crime reference number by Kent Police, but had been changed to have occurred at the Stour Centre a couple of miles away. Could the Portfolio Holder tell him if this was a collaboration between the Council, Police, Fire Brigade,

Environmental Agencies etc. to paint a completely different picture to reality, particularly in light of the planning application for the Chilmington area? Thirdly, Mr Relf said he had heard Mr Pike, Planning Inspector, might possibly do a site visit to Chilmington soon and he would like to know if a contingency plan and risk assessment had been made, bearing in mind that firearms officers had informed him that on occasions they were needed to escort officers who visited the Site.

Councillor Hicks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services, said that there were no arrangements for regular visits from Benefits Advisors to that particular Site. The only regular staff visits to the Site were from Officers with management responsibilities for the Site. These visits were to ensure that licence conditions issued to each plot holder were upheld and included maximisation of income from rent. There were no arrangements for regular visits from Benefits Advisors or other staff, however if a resident needed access to those services they were signposted to the relevant agencies who could assist with this. This was consistent with the approach taken in dealing with enquiries from anyone within the Borough. In relation to benefits advice specifically, the Council worked with voluntary agencies such as the Welfare Advice Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau who provided advisory services for the benefit of the whole of the Borough. Information was also available on the Council's website about benefit changes and about where the Borough's residents would be able to obtain advice. With regard to the second point, Councillor Hicks said she objected strongly to the insinuation that there was such collaboration between the Council and other agencies. This administration was transparent in its dealings with all other agencies. The Council was not responsible for how the Police and Fire Brigade recorded matters reported to them, but the agencies did work closely across the whole Borough to manage the impacts of anti-social behaviour. The Council had been clear about the challenges on this particular Site and had put in place measures that had significantly reduced large or dangerous fires on site. There were relatively few incidents on site, but the policies referred to had been produced to respond effectively to such problems if and when they arose. This work directly aimed to manage any problems which may arise from the Site for the benefit of those who lived peacefully there and for the local community. She said she would be very interested to hear the reply from Ann Barnes when Mr Relf received a reply. On the third point, Councillor Hicks said that the Planning Inspector had already visited the area of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan, which did not include the Chilmington Gypsy Site, as part of the public examination process. The Inspector visited both accompanied and unaccompanied. For the accompanied visit he was joined by a Council Officer, two representatives from the development team and two objectors, but this did not include a visit to the Gypsy Site. The Planning Inspectorate was an independent body and quite capable of making their own assessments. Councillor Mrs Blanford, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, said she had made a number of visits to the Chilmington Gypsy Site and she had never needed an armed escort.

Councillor Davison said that as Members may know he had been asking for a debate on Phase 2 of the refurbishment project for the Stour Centre. To bring Members up to date, this had originally been planned to happen at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, but when the Agenda had been published it only mentioned the matters of Biomass and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and not the refurbishment. He was pleased to have now received the assurance of the Acting Leader that a debate on refurbishment could take place at the 26<sup>th</sup> March Committee meeting.



**Resolved:**

**That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 286, 289 and 290.**

**(ii) Minute Nos. 286, 289 and 290 be approved and adopted.**

**(b) Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

An Errata sheet outlining amendments to Minute Number 315 was tabled.

Councillor Chilton advised that he spoke against the Wye Free School at the Cabinet Meeting and on that basis he could not support these Minutes.

**Resolved:**

**That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 311 and 315 (iii), and noting that Resolution (iv) should be amended by the substitution of the word “is” for “was” in the second line.**

**(ii) Minute No. 315 (iii) be amended to read as a recommendation to Full Council and by inserting the following words at the end of the sentence “and to draw the necessary finance (£155,930) from reserves”.**

**(iii) the recommendations in Minute No. 311 be deferred for consideration as part of the agenda item dealing with the Council Tax resolutions and General Fund budget.**

## **338 Council Tax 2013/14 Resolutions and General Fund Budget and Minute Number 311**

Prior to moving the budget the Acting Leader drew attention to the amended Council Tax resolutions that had been tabled.

The Acting Leader of the Council moved

“That the budget recommendations as set out in Minute No. 311 of the Cabinet and the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2013/14, including the alterations set out on the tabled paper, be approved”

This was seconded.

The Mayor then invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report on that Committee’s scrutiny of the Cabinet’s initial budget proposals. Councillor Adby said he would like to thank Councillor Galpin, Officers and Members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for the work they had undertaken. The Overview

& Scrutiny Committee believed that the budget was achievable. There were quite clearly a number of risk areas identified but overall they had been satisfied that the budget was as good as it could be in these difficult circumstances. During the process Officers were able to answer all of the questions raised by the Task Group which also benefitted from the attendance of some of the Portfolio Holders concerned. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee hoped that all Portfolio Holders would be encouraged to attend future Budget Scrutiny meetings dealing with their relevant areas. Overall, Overview & Scrutiny felt that the budget for 2013/14 was achievable subject to the agreed budget monitoring reports being completed every three months.

**Resolved:**

**That (i) the Budget for 2013/14 as recommended by the Cabinet in Minute No. 311 be approved.**

**(ii) the formal Council Tax resolutions set out below be approved.**

1. It be noted that on **06 December 2012** the Cabinet calculated
  - (a) the Council Tax Base 2013/14 for the whole Council area as **41,180.00** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")] and,
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached **Table A**
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2013/14 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£5,989,630 (Tables F and G)**
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2013/14 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a)  $\pounds$  84,763,444 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - (b) (77,758,089) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) 7,005,355 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
  - (d) 170.12 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).(**Table C**)

- (e) 1,015,725 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached **Table B**).
- (f) 145.45 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates. (**Tables D & E**)

**DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK**

**Table A**

**Part of the Council's area (i.e. tax base for parished areas – Band D equivalent properties).**

PARISH	LOCAL TAX BASE	PARISH	LOCAL TAX BASE
Aldington & Bonnington	536.50	Little Chart	115.90
Appledore	309.70	Mersham and Sevington	607.80
Bethersden	654.10	Molash	103.00
Biddenden	1,052.95	Newenden	98.00
Bilsington	144.20	Orlestone	508.10
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,030.65	Pluckley	445.40
Brabourne	572.80	Rolvenden	643.25
Brook	144.90	Ruckinge	320.40
Challock	406.90	Shadoxhurst	479.50
Charing	1,149.85	Smarden	596.50
Chilham	694.20	Smeeth	348.40
Crundale (PM)	90.80	Stanhope	688.00
Egerton	492.40	Stone	197.60
Godmersham	176.60	Tenterden (TC)	3,381.05
Great Chart with Singleton	2,308.10	Warehorne	171.70
Hastingleigh	110.10	Westwell	303.10
High Halden	656.70	Wittersham	501.90
Hothfield	260.95	Woodchurch	805.30
Kenardington	99.30	Wye with Hinxhill	974.45
Kingsnorth	3,993.80		

**DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK**

**Table B**

PARISH	Parish Precept	PARISH	Parish Precept
Aldington & Bonnington	17,500	Little Chart	5,500
Appledore	20,500	Mersham and Sevington	11,660
Bethersden	18,490	Molash	3,850
Biddenden	43,400	Newenden	4,730
Bilsington	3,000	Orlestone	12,310
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	15,422	Pluckley	24,000
Brabourne	13,930	Rolvenden	19,455
Brook	4,780	Ruckinge	9,000
Challock	14,400	Shadoxhurst	11,440
Charing	64,926	Smarden	25,100
Chilham	23,807	Smeeth	8,440
Crundale (PM)	200	Stanhope	9,750
Egerton	14,510	Stone	4,000
Godmersham	3,980	Tenterden (TC)	304,650
Great Chart with Singleton	68,180	Warehorne	2,800
Hastingleigh	2,830	Westwell	14,604
High Halden	16,607	Wittersham	18,800
Hothfield	9,500	Woodchurch	20,000
Kenardington	3,900	Wye with Hinxhill	53,924
Kingsnorth	91,850		

**DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK**

Table C

## BILLING AUTHORITY PART OF COUNCIL TAX 2013/2014

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	118.72	138.50	158.29	178.07	217.64	257.21	296.79	356.14
Appledore	141.10	164.61	188.13	211.64	258.67	305.70	352.74	423.28
Bethersden	115.82	135.12	154.42	173.72	212.32	250.94	289.54	347.44
Biddenden	124.45	145.19	165.93	186.67	228.15	269.63	311.12	373.34
Bilsington	110.83	129.31	147.78	166.25	203.19	240.13	277.09	332.50
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	106.94	124.77	142.59	160.41	196.05	231.70	267.35	320.82
Brabourne	113.18	132.05	150.91	169.77	207.49	245.22	282.95	339.54
Brook	118.96	138.79	158.61	178.44	218.09	257.74	297.40	356.88
Challock	120.56	140.66	160.75	180.84	221.02	261.21	301.40	361.68
Charing	134.61	157.04	179.48	201.91	246.78	291.64	336.52	403.82
Chilham	119.83	139.80	159.77	179.74	219.68	259.62	299.57	359.48
Crundale (PM)	98.44	114.84	131.25	147.65	180.46	213.27	246.09	295.30
Egerton	116.62	136.05	155.49	174.92	213.79	252.66	291.54	349.84
Godmersham	112.00	130.66	149.33	167.99	205.32	242.65	279.99	335.98
Great Chart with Singleton	116.66	136.11	155.55	174.99	213.89	252.76	291.65	349.98
Hastingleigh	114.10	133.12	152.13	171.15	209.18	247.21	285.25	342.30
High Halden	113.83	132.80	151.77	170.74	208.68	246.62	284.57	341.48
Hothfield	121.24	141.45	161.65	181.86	222.27	262.68	303.10	363.72
Kenardington	123.15	143.67	164.20	184.72	225.77	266.81	307.87	369.44
Kingsnorth	112.30	131.02	149.73	168.45	205.88	243.31	280.75	336.90
Little Chart	128.60	150.04	171.47	192.90	235.77	278.63	321.50	385.80
Mersham and Sevington	109.76	128.05	146.34	164.63	201.21	237.79	274.39	329.26
Molash	121.89	142.20	162.52	182.83	223.46	264.08	304.72	365.66
Newenden	129.15	150.67	172.20	193.72	236.77	279.81	322.87	387.44
Orlestone	113.12	131.98	150.83	169.68	207.38	245.09	282.80	339.36
Pluckley	132.89	155.04	177.18	199.33	243.62	287.92	332.22	398.66
Rolvenden	117.13	136.65	156.17	175.69	214.73	253.77	292.82	351.38
Ruckinge	115.70	134.98	154.26	173.54	212.10	250.66	289.24	347.08
Shadoxhurst	112.88	131.69	150.50	169.31	206.93	244.55	282.19	338.62
Smarden	125.02	145.86	166.69	187.53	229.20	270.87	312.55	375.06
Smeeth	113.12	131.98	150.83	169.68	207.38	245.09	282.80	339.36
Stanhope	106.42	124.15	141.89	159.62	195.09	230.56	266.04	319.24
Stone	110.46	128.87	147.28	165.69	202.51	239.33	276.15	331.38
Tenterden (TC)	157.04	183.22	209.39	235.56	287.90	340.25	392.60	471.12
Warehorne	107.84	125.82	143.79	161.76	197.70	233.65	269.60	323.52
Westwell	129.09	150.60	172.12	193.63	236.66	279.68	322.72	387.26
Wittersham	121.94	142.27	162.59	182.91	223.55	264.20	304.85	365.82
Woodchurch	113.53	132.45	151.37	170.29	208.13	245.97	283.82	340.58
Wye with Hinxhill	133.86	156.17	178.48	200.79	245.41	290.03	334.65	401.58
Unparished Area	96.97	113.13	129.29	145.45	177.77	210.09	242.42	290.90

**Table D**

**TOTAL COUNCIL TAX 2013/2014**

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	956.85	1,116.32	1,275.80	1,435.27	1,754.22	2,073.17	2,392.12	2,870.54
Appledore	979.23	1,142.43	1,305.64	1,468.84	1,795.25	2,121.66	2,448.07	2,937.68
Bethersden	953.95	1,112.94	1,271.93	1,430.92	1,748.90	2,066.88	2,384.87	2,861.84
Biddenden	962.58	1,123.01	1,283.44	1,443.87	1,764.73	2,085.59	2,406.45	2,887.74
Bilsington	948.97	1,107.13	1,265.29	1,423.45	1,739.77	2,056.09	2,372.42	2,846.90
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	945.07	1,102.59	1,260.10	1,417.61	1,732.63	2,047.66	2,362.68	2,835.22
Brabourne	951.31	1,109.87	1,268.42	1,426.97	1,744.07	2,061.18	2,378.28	2,853.94
Brook	957.09	1,116.61	1,276.12	1,435.64	1,754.67	2,073.70	2,392.73	2,871.28
Challock	958.69	1,118.48	1,278.26	1,438.04	1,757.60	2,077.17	2,396.73	2,876.08
Charing	972.74	1,134.86	1,296.99	1,459.11	1,783.36	2,107.60	2,431.85	2,918.22
Chilham	957.96	1,117.62	1,277.28	1,436.94	1,756.26	2,075.58	2,394.90	2,873.88
Crundale (PM)	936.57	1,092.66	1,248.76	1,404.85	1,717.04	2,029.23	2,341.42	2,809.70
Egerton	954.75	1,113.87	1,273.00	1,432.12	1,750.37	2,068.62	2,386.87	2,864.24
Godmersham	950.13	1,108.48	1,266.84	1,425.19	1,741.90	2,058.61	2,375.32	2,850.38
Great Chart with Singleton	954.79	1,113.93	1,273.06	1,432.19	1,750.45	2,068.72	2,386.98	2,864.38
Hastingleigh	952.23	1,110.94	1,269.64	1,428.35	1,745.76	2,063.17	2,380.58	2,856.70
High Halden	951.96	1,110.62	1,269.28	1,427.94	1,745.26	2,062.58	2,379.90	2,855.88
Hothfield	959.37	1,119.27	1,279.16	1,439.06	1,758.85	2,078.64	2,398.43	2,878.12
Kenardington	961.28	1,121.49	1,281.71	1,441.92	1,762.35	2,082.77	2,403.20	2,883.84
Kingsnorth	950.43	1,108.84	1,267.24	1,425.65	1,742.46	2,059.27	2,376.08	2,851.30
Little Chart	966.73	1,127.86	1,288.98	1,450.10	1,772.34	2,094.59	2,416.83	2,900.20
Mersham and Sevington	947.89	1,105.87	1,263.85	1,421.83	1,737.79	2,053.75	2,369.72	2,843.66
Molash	960.02	1,120.02	1,280.03	1,440.03	1,760.04	2,080.04	2,400.05	2,880.06
Newenden	967.28	1,128.49	1,289.71	1,450.92	1,773.35	2,095.77	2,418.20	2,901.84
Orlestone	951.25	1,109.80	1,268.34	1,426.88	1,743.96	2,061.05	2,378.13	2,853.76
Pluckley	971.02	1,132.86	1,294.69	1,456.53	1,780.20	2,103.88	2,427.55	2,913.06
Rolvenden	955.26	1,114.47	1,273.68	1,432.89	1,751.31	2,069.73	2,388.15	2,865.78
Ruckinge	953.83	1,112.80	1,271.77	1,430.74	1,748.68	2,066.62	2,384.57	2,861.48
Shadoxhurst	951.01	1,109.51	1,268.01	1,426.51	1,743.51	2,060.51	2,377.52	2,853.02
Smarden	963.15	1,123.68	1,284.20	1,444.73	1,765.78	2,086.83	2,407.88	2,889.46
Smeeth	951.25	1,109.80	1,268.34	1,426.88	1,743.96	2,061.05	2,378.13	2,853.76
Stanhope	944.55	1,101.97	1,259.40	1,416.82	1,731.67	2,046.52	2,361.37	2,833.64
Stone	948.59	1,106.69	1,264.79	1,422.89	1,739.09	2,055.29	2,371.48	2,845.78
Tenterden (TC)	995.17	1,161.04	1,326.90	1,492.76	1,824.48	2,156.21	2,487.93	2,985.52
Warehorne	945.97	1,103.64	1,261.30	1,418.96	1,734.28	2,049.61	2,364.93	2,837.92
Westwell	967.22	1,128.42	1,289.63	1,450.83	1,773.24	2,095.64	2,418.05	2,901.66
Wittersham	960.07	1,120.09	1,280.10	1,440.11	1,760.13	2,080.16	2,400.18	2,880.22
Woodchurch	951.66	1,110.27	1,268.88	1,427.49	1,744.71	2,061.93	2,379.15	2,854.98
Wye with Hinxhill	971.99	1,133.99	1,295.99	1,457.99	1,781.99	2,105.99	2,429.98	2,915.98
Unparished Area	935.10	1,090.95	1,246.80	1,402.65	1,714.35	2,026.05	2,337.75	2,805.30

Table E

## Council Tax Schedule 2013/14

Precepting Authority	VALUATION BANDS							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ashford Borough Council	96.97	113.13	129.29	145.45	177.77	210.09	242.42	290.90
Kent County Council	698.52	814.94	931.36	1,047.78	1,280.62	1,513.46	1,746.30	2,095.56
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	94.31	110.03	125.75	141.47	172.91	204.35	235.78	282.94
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority	45.30	52.85	60.40	67.95	83.05	98.15	113.25	135.90

**DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK**



**Table F**

<b>CALCULATION OF THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND COUNCIL TAX AT BAND D</b>		
	£	£
Gross Expenditure - General Fund	56,683,000	
Gross Expenditure - HRA	27,064,719	
Parish Precepts	<u>1,015,725</u>	84,763,444
Less Gross Income		(69,958,319)
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>		<u>14,805,125</u>
Add Deficit Distribution from Collection Fund	-	
New Homes Bonus	(1,313,000)	
Less Formula Grant Allocation which includes Council Tax freeze grant 2011/12 (for 5 years)	<u>(6,486,770)</u>	<u>(7,799,770)</u>
<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>		7,005,355
Less Parish Precepts		(1,015,725)
<b>Council Tax Requirement</b>		<u>5,989,630</u>
Council Tax Base		41,180.00
Band 'D' Council Tax		145.45
Average including Parishes		170.12

**DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK**

Table G

## REVENUE BUDGET

## SUMMARY

ACTUALS 2011/12 £	ESTIMATE 2012/13 £	PROJECTED OUTTURN 2012/13 £	DETAIL	ESTIMATE 2013/14 £
1,018,295	1,762,850	1,903,090	<b>Corporate Core</b>	1,639,060
1,208,470	1,209,430	1,287,990	<b>Legal and Democratic Services</b>	1,250,300
1,236,267	744,800	1,372,570	<b>Planning</b>	1,462,340
1,841,363	2,088,610	2,096,110	<b>Financial Services</b>	2,189,360
428,848	249,620	280,500	<b>ICT</b>	234,150
1,436,091	338,040	458,680	<b>Customers Homes and Property</b>	376,430
6,278,082	6,323,750	6,145,990	<b>Environmental Services</b>	5,492,910
( 725,974)	2,223,370	2,614,970	<b>Cultural Services</b>	2,848,970
<b>12,721,442</b>	<b>14,940,470</b>	<b>16,159,900</b>	<b>SERVICE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>15,493,520</b>
572,577	( 1,697,290)	( 2,098,840)	Capital Charges	( 1,905,520)
( 684,309)	( 474,500)	( 472,500)	Net Interest	( 319,450)
72,220	66,520	66,520	Concurrent Functions Grant	60,520
235,840	265,370	241,000	Drainage Board Levies	235,210
-	-	-	Business Rates Yield	118,150
-	-	-	Contingency	
-	-	-	Budget Contingency	100,000
342,870	35,660	( 159,850)	Contribution to/(from) balances	15,070
<b>13,260,640</b>	<b>13,136,230</b>	<b>13,736,230</b>	<b>ABC BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>13,797,500</b>
816,056	844,243	844,243	Total Parish Precepts	1,015,725
<b>14,076,696</b>	<b>13,980,473</b>	<b>14,580,473</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>14,813,225</b>
( 6,860,790)	( 5,941,780)	( 5,941,780)	<b>INCOME</b> Government Grant	( 3,778,800)
( 21,100)	( 713,000)	( 1,313,000)	Retained Business Rates	( 2,707,970)
-	-	-	New Homes Bonus	( 1,313,000)
( 816,056)	( 844,243)	( 844,243)	Parish Support (net of Preceptors contribution)	( 8,100)
			Parish Precepts	(1,015,725)
<b>6,378,750</b>	<b>6,481,450</b>	<b>6,481,450</b>	<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>5,989,630</b>

### **339 Licensing and Health and Safety Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 be approved and adopted.**

### **340 Programme of Meetings 2013/14 and 2014/15**

Councillor Wedgbury asked if Officers could give consideration to ensuring that Full Council meetings did not occur during the school half term holidays where possible.

**Resolved:**

**That the Programme of Meetings for 2013/14 and 2014/15 as appended to these Minutes be adopted.**

### **341 Notices of Motion**

(a) Councillor Yeo moved the following motion: -

“From April the iniquitous bedroom tax enacted by the Coalition Government will begin to destroy the lives of Ashford Borough Council housing tenants. Given the urgency of the situation for residents in all our Wards, we call on the Council to explain clearly how they will utilise the discretionary housing payment in respect of tenants who are in specially adapted or purpose built dwellings, to ensure that they do not suffer financially or have to lose their home”.

In support of the motion Councillor Yeo said that she never thought she would be having to make a speech like this, asking that people not be penalised simply for being in a house that the Council thought was suitable for them. The problem was not that residents were living in a house that was too big, the problem was that not enough Council housing of the requisite size had been built to fulfil the needs of our tenants. The aim of this legislation was to reduce the welfare bill and the easiest way to do this was to stop vast sums of money going into the pockets of private landlords. The aim of the bill surely could not be to punish people for being disabled and needing two bedrooms for one couple, or to punish parents for encouraging their children to go to university, or even punish parents for keeping a bedroom for a child fighting for our country so that those brave warriors had a bedroom to call home when they were on leave. Over 500 Ashford Borough Council housing tenants would be adversely affected. The effect of the Welfare Reform Bill would be to destroy people’s quality of life, not only by being fined for surplus rooms, but also having to pay Council Tax for the first time. Some of these people would be able to work the extra time the Government mentioned to offset some of these costs, but these people would be a very small percentage, the majority on fixed incomes would have no option but to cut back. But cut back on what? The first luxury to be cut back on would be food. Those on benefits could not afford the best food but they could just about get by on their payments now. In the future they would not be able to buy the necessary food and it would be cut in quality and quantity. The risks of malnutrition were high and whilst this may reduce the housing bill it would increase the pressure

on the National Health Service which was already creaking at the imposition of top down reorganisation. This was why on Good Friday the Labour Group would be fasting to raise money for the Trussell Trust and Ashford Food Bank, so that those who were unable to pay the fines and eat would be able to have a good Easter. There were of course other people who were going to suffer immensely with the imposition of the social size criteria and one of those groups was the Council's front line staff, already stretched with no room left for more pressure. They would be dealing with angry, desperate and frightened families and desperate people behaved in desperate ways. She said she would like to take the time to thank the staff for attempting to deal with these people with the care and compassion that they usually embody, despite the Government's Dickensian attempt to turn social housing into the tenements of the early 1960s, with echoes of *Cathy Come Home* and more recently with the graphic depiction of overcrowding in the BBC series *Call the Midwife*. *Call the Midwife* was set in the east end of London and many from the east end moved to Ashford in the 1960s to the development we now know as Stanhope – wonderfully spacious houses with a promise of a new life. Now that dream of a new life was evaporating. Stanhope stood as the area with the highest indices of social deprivation in Ashford. 44% of the children living in poverty in Ashford lived in Stanhope. This was only going to get worse with the imposition of the bedroom tax. She considered this was real lives being destroyed by this Government. Councillor Yeo said they called on the administration here to lay out quite clearly to all how they were going to administer the £300m put by in the Discretionary Housing Payment Account as mentioned by Pensions Minister Steve Webb on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme on the 11<sup>th</sup> February. Mind you, as Iain Duncan Smith on Sunday did not know if the elderly were exempt from this housing cull, she would understand if Steve Webb had got that one wrong too. If he was wrong she asked to be told and she would contact his office. They needed to know if the disabled were going to be punished or if they were going to have to divorce so that one could be the carer and no longer the spouse and therefore qualify for another bedroom. All this motion was asking for was that the guidelines be made crystal clear to residents. What would happen if, through no fault of their own, people were unable to move because the Council did not have the housing stock? Would the Cabinet punish Ashford Borough Council residents because they themselves failed to have adequate housing stock?

The motion was seconded by Councillor Adby.

In support of the motion Councillor Adby said that personally speaking he looked forward to having a debate on this issue at Cabinet. Anyone that had seen the news today would have realised that Iain Duncan Smith had made a special announcement about properties that had been purpose built for disabled people and those that had been changed to accommodate people with disabilities. He therefore looked forward to the debate.

The Acting Leader said in response, this was not the place to propose such a motion. This Council had a network of Committees and this matter could have been referred to them long before today. This administration had to behave in a responsible and balanced way and if they were to examine this motion properly they must do so in an effective Committee. He considered that Party politics, scoring of points and scaremongering should form no part of this Authority and they took pride in behaving responsibly. The Council had one of the best Housing Authorities in the country, let alone in Kent. These were hard times and they did not need

scaremongering and frightening of people who were vulnerable. He therefore moved that the motion stand referred to Cabinet for proper consideration.

Councillor Bartlett said he would like to second the proposal to refer the matter to Cabinet. He also wanted to add that the position was nowhere near as bleak as suggested. A number of housing associations and Councils who provided social housing were reacting very positively to the 'bedroom tax' as it had come to be known. Two stories had emerged in the press in the last two days which he was sure colleagues would be familiar with. Firstly, a group of social housing providers in the West Midlands had got together to work to relocate tenants from inappropriate housing to appropriate housing in order to reduce the burden on them. Also another social housing organisation had reclassified a number of their houses to ensure that their tenants were not hit by the burden of this tax. He was confident that the Cabinet would understand those issues and seek advice from a number of industry experts to understand how the impact could be minimised on Ashford's residents.

**Resolved:**

**That the motion stands referred to the Cabinet.**

(b) Councillor Chilton moved the following motion: -

"To call on Council to ensure that over the course of the next financial year, Council works to ensure that all members of staff are paid the living wage which will support the Coalition Government in pursuit of reducing the benefit bill. Furthermore we call on Council to encourage all its partners, and local service providers and businesses to pay their staff the living wage".

In support of the motion Councillor Chilton said that it was important to state at the outset that this motion had absolutely no implications for the 2013/14 budget and the proposals put forward at this meeting. He thought it would be useful to provide some information on the living wage. This was the lowest hourly rate by which one could sustain basic financial needs and live without the fear and blight of poverty. In Greater London the rate was £8.55 per hour and outside London £7.45 per hour. The living wage was set independently and updated annually and was calculated by the Centre for Research and Social Policy according to the basic cost of living in the UK. The living wage was supported by individuals across the political divide. Recently London Mayor Boris Johnson said of the living wage, "paying the London living wage was not only morally right but makes good business sense too". He clearly recognised that Keynesian economic theory worked and a living wage respected workers, treated them fairly and increased morale. The living wage incentivised work, enhanced productivity and increased loyalty. The living wage was strongly supported by the Leader of the Opposition Ed Miliband and the Prime Minister David Cameron. A living wage would place more money into people's hands and more money provided individuals and families with greater spending power enabling them to support local businesses and trade. If Council were to actively encourage businesses, service providers and partners to pay a living wage he had no doubt that we would see more growth and the quality of life for residents would increase as well. A living wage would also support the Coalition Government's policy of reducing the benefit bill. Tax credits were essentially a subsidised wage. If the wages of the workers were increased the benefit bill could be reduced. If Council did support this motion it would also have an opportunity to seek the Living Wage

Employer Accreditation Scheme which would permit the Council to use the Living Wage Licence as a demonstration of its commitment to being an ethical employer, as well as other benefits. An independent study in East London found that two thirds of employers reported a significant impact on recruitment and retention within their organisation after implementing the living wage. 70% of employers felt the living wage had increased consumer awareness of their organisation's commitment to being an ethical employer. Similarly, the study concluded that in terms of the business benefits of implementing the living wage policy in London, more than 80% of employees believed that the living wage had increased the quality of work of their staff, whilst absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%. A living wage policy enacted and encouraged by this Council would go one way in mitigating the stark contrasts between rich and poor in some communities in Ashford. Councillor Chilton said he was placing this motion in front of Council for two simple reasons. Firstly he believed the Council should be encouraging employers, starting with itself, to ensure that workers had a better quality of life and he considered that nobody should live below the poverty line. He believed the living wage would meet that ambition. Secondly, he said that he, like many in this Chamber and beyond, believed that work should pay. The motion was deliberately flexible in that it provided the Council an entire year to bring forward proposals to implement the living wage. He realised such a move would take time to implement and he was happy to accept that. If Members wanted to speak on this matter he hoped that they would do so in a positive manner. In conclusion Councillor Chilton said this motion provided an opportunity for Members from all sides to continue to work together to develop the organisation and support staff. It was also an opportunity to send a message to the wider community that Ashford Borough Council believed in ethical living standards for all and believed that work should always pay.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Yeo.

The Acting Leader said in response to the motion firstly, this Authority highly valued all of its staff. He thanked Councillor Chilton for the motion. In February 2012 the Council agreed a pay policy statement in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. The statement set out the Council's policies towards remuneration of Chief Officers and lower paid employees. The Cabinet also agreed to review that policy statement annually and a paper was currently under preparation for consideration by Cabinet and by the Council thereafter. The Wednesbury judgment made it very clear that Members needed to be given the relevant facts and information and be advised to ignore irrelevant information in order to be able to arrive at sound judgments. Cabinet was always happy to receive ideas and suggestions for improving the pay policy and he considered it more appropriate for the ideas in the motion for the living wage to be considered as part of that pay policy review by Cabinet and not debated tonight completely out of context. He therefore moved that the motion stand referred to Cabinet. This was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

**Resolved:**

**That the motion stands referred to the Cabinet.**

## **342 Questions by Members of which Notice had been Given**

### **(a) Question from Councillor Mortimer to Councillor Clarkson, Acting Leader of the Council.**

“The Portfolio Holder will be aware that the proposed development at Sevington involving the construction of a gigantic distribution warehouse and a new motorway junction, has been the subject of interest and concern to the residents of east, north and south Ashford. To counter these concerns, the developers lay great importance on the 1500 – 2000 jobs that will be provided which will give a considerable boost to the economy of Ashford, if true. Can the Portfolio Holder please inform Members on the basis of this claim of 1500 – 2000 jobs and what evidence there is to substantiate this?”

### **Reply by Councillor Clarkson**

“The promoters of this site have only so far produced an estimated job creation number of 1500- 2000 jobs. Any detailed estimate of job creation arising from their proposals will of course depend on the final amount of floor space provided and the mix between distribution and other employment and therefore such figures will be needed to support the planning application when it is made. Our understanding is that the application may be made in the spring so until that time we would really be speculating. We cannot start testing and examining things before they come before us formally. To do so would be an utter waste of our Officers time.”

### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Mortimer**

“I thank the Portfolio Holder for his comments and in response I would just like to say that if the developer turns out to have produced inaccurate information, would that company be disbarred from bidding for any contracts that there are and will ABC refuse to do business with them? I say this because the 1500 – 2000 jobs mentioned is actually in the consultation document published by the developer that has gone out for public consultation. It isn't a figure that has just been talked about, it has been put in writing by the developer.”

### **Reply by Councillor Clarkson**

“I do understand the point being made by the Councillor but irrespective of that we cannot really do anything until that planning application is before us. With viability proposals put forward by developers, we test them via independent experts and we would obviously look at any claim being made as to job numbers and we would test that very vigorously. As to punitive measures against any individuals, I think that it is for us to look at the planning application thoroughly and effectively and come to right conclusions then, and we cannot prevent an applicant putting in further planning applications.”

### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Bartlett**

“Whilst the developer has not been absolutely clear on who the occupier will be the developer has given some hint as to who it might be and it’s a company called Amazon. A report into Amazon’s similar depot in Rugeley in the West Midlands showed, linking to an earlier question, that they very proudly say they do not pay the minimum wage, they pay 1p over the minimum wage so they can proudly say they do not pay the minimum wage. They also don’t ‘employ’ anybody, they don’t like that term. What they do is hire contractors through a company based in London called Randstad and that company ensures that Amazon have no obligations as an employer. My question is, whether this is the type of employer that we want to encourage to our town?”

### **Reply by Councillor Clarkson**

“Again, I can only say that those matters will be looked at when we receive a formal application. To become involved with external agencies before that would be folly in the extreme, but when we get a firm application in, we will examine that very carefully.”

---

(DS)

MINS:CXXX1308

---

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard  
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: [danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk)  
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: [www.ashford.gov.uk/committees](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/committees)



Appendix 1

**DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2013 - MAY 2014**

Meetings are usually held at the Civic Centre and start at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated

**MAY 2013**

W 1  
Th 2 **KCC Elections**  
F 3  
  
M 6 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 7 Selection & CR  
W 8  
Th 9 Cabinet  
F 10  
  
M 13  
Tu 14  
W 15 Planning Council  
Th 16  
F 17  
  
M 20  
Tu 21 O&S  
W 22  
Th 23  
F 24  
  
M 27 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 28  
W 29  
Th 30  
F 31

**JUNE 2013**

M 3  
Tu 4  
W 5 JCC 2.30pm  
Th 6  
F 7  
  
M 10  
Tu 11 Joint Transportation  
W 12  
Th 13 Cabinet  
F 14  
  
M 17  
Tu 18  
W 19 Planning  
Th 20  
F 21  
  
M 24  
T 25 O&S  
W 26  
Th 27 Audit  
F 28

**JULY 2013**

M 1  
Tu 2 Standards  
W 3  
Th 4  
F 5  
  
M 8  
Tu 9  
W 10  
Th 11 Cabinet

F 12  
  
M 15  
Tu 16  
W 17 Planning Council  
Th 18  
F 19  
  
M 22  
Tu 23 O&S  
W 24  
Th 25  
F 26  
  
M 29  
T 30  
W 31

**AUGUST 2013**

Th 1 JCC 2.30pm  
F 2  
  
M 5  
Tu 6  
W 7  
Th 8 Cabinet  
F 9  
  
M 12  
Tu 13  
W 14 Planning  
Th 15  
F 16  
  
M 19  
Tu 20 O&S  
W 21  
Th 22  
F 23  
  
M 26 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 27  
W 28  
Th 29  
F 30

**SEPTEMBER 2013**

M 2  
Tu 3  
W 4  
Th 5  
F 6  
  
M 9  
Tu 10 Joint Transportation  
W 11  
Th 12 Cabinet  
F 13  
  
M 16  
Tu 17  
W 18 Planning  
Th 19  
F 20  
  
M 23  
Tu 24 O&S

W 25  
Th 26 Audit  
F 27  
  
M 30

**OCTOBER 2013**

Tu 1  
W 2  
Th 3 JCC 2.30pm  
F 4  
  
M 7  
Tu 8  
W 9  
Th 10 Cabinet  
F 11  
  
M 14  
Tu 15  
W 16 Planning Council  
Th 17  
F 18  
  
M 21  
Tu 22 O&S  
W 23  
Th 24  
F 25  
  
M 28  
Tu 29  
W 30  
Th 31

**NOVEMBER 2013**

F 1  
  
M 4  
Tu 5 Standards  
W 6  
Th 7 Cabinet  
F 8  
  
M 11  
Tu 12  
W 13  
Th 14  
F 15  
  
M 18  
Tu 19  
W 20 Planning  
Th 21  
F 22  
  
M 25  
Tu 26 O&S  
W 27  
Th 28  
F 29

**DECEMBER 2013**

M 2  
Tu 3 Audit  
W 4  
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm, Cabinet  
F 6  
  
M 9  
Tu 10 Joint Transportation  
W 11  
Th 12 Council  
F 13

M 16  
Tu 17 O&S  
W 18 Planning  
Th 19  
F 20

M 23  
Tu 24  
W 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY**  
Th 26 **BOXING DAY**  
F 27

M 30  
Tu 31

**JANUARY 2014**

W 1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**  
Th 2  
F 3

M 6  
Tu 7  
W 8  
Th 9 Cabinet  
F 10

M 13  
Tu 14  
W 15 Planning  
Th 16  
F 17

M 20 Licensing & H&S 10am  
Tu 21  
W 22  
Th 23  
F 24

M 27  
Tu 28 O&S  
W 29  
Th 30  
F 31

**FEBRUARY 2014**

M 3  
Tu 4  
W 5  
Th 6 JCC 2.30pm  
F 7

M 10  
Tu 11  
W 12  
Th 13 Cabinet  
F 14

M 17  
Tu 18  
W 19 Planning  
Th 20 Council (C Tax)  
F 21

M 24  
Tu 25 O&S  
W 26  
Th 27  
F 28

**MARCH 2014**

M 3  
Tu 4 Audit  
W 5  
Th 6  
F 7

M 10  
Tu 11 Joint Transportation  
W 12  
Th 13 Cabinet  
F 14

M 17  
Tu 18  
W 19 Planning  
Th 20  
F 21

M 24  
Tu 25 O&S  
W 26  
Th 27  
F 28

M 31

**APRIL 2014**

Tu 1  
W 2  
Th 3 JCC 2.30pm  
F 4

M 7  
Tu 8  
W 9  
Th 10 Cabinet  
F 11

M 14  
Tu 15  
W 16 Planning  
Th 17  
F 18 **GOOD FRIDAY**

**EASTER MONDAY**

M 21  
Tu 22  
W 23  
Th 24 Council  
F 25

M 28  
T 29 O&S  
W 30

**MAY 2014**

Th 1 **European Elections**  
F 2

M 5 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 6 Selection & CR  
W 7  
Th 8 Cabinet  
F 9

M 12  
Tu 13  
W 14 Planning  
Th 15 Council  
F 16

M 19  
Tu 20 O&S  
W 21  
Th 22  
F 23

M 26 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 27  
W 28  
Th 29  
F 30

KEY	
O&S	- Overview and Scrutiny
JCC	- Joint Consultative Committee

 School Holidays

Appendix 2

**DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2014 - MAY 2015**

Meetings are usually held at the Civic Centre and start at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated

<b>MAY 2014</b>	F 11	W 24
Th 1	M 14	Th 25 Audit
F 2	Tu 15	F 26
M 5 <b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	W 16 Planning Council	M 29
Tu 6 Selection & CR	Th 17 Planning Council	Tu 30
W 7	F 18	<b>OCTOBER 2014</b>
Th 8 Cabinet	M 21	W 1
F 9	Tu 22 O&S	Th 2 JCC 2.30pm
M 12	W 23	F 3
Tu 13	Th 24	M 6
W 14 Planning Council	F 25	Tu 7
Th 15	M 28	W 8
F 16	T 29	Th 9 Cabinet
M 19	W 30	F 10
Tu 20 O&S	Th 31	M 13
W 21	<b>AUGUST 2014</b>	Tu 14
Th 22	F 1	W 15 Planning Council
F 23	M 4	Th 16 Planning Council
M 26 <b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	Tu 5	F 17
Tu 27	W 6	M 20
W 28	Th 7 JCC 2.30pm	Tu 21
Th 29	F 8	W 22
F 30	M 11	Th 23
<b>JUNE 2014</b>	Tu 12	F 24
M 2	W 13	M 27
Tu 3	Th 14 Cabinet	Tu 28 O&S
W 4	F 15	W 29
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm	M 18	Th 30
F 6	Tu 19 O&S	F 31
M 9	W 20 Planning	<b>NOVEMBER 2014</b>
Tu 10 Joint Transportation	Th 21	M 3
W 11	F 22	Tu 4 Standards
Th 12 Cabinet	M 25 <b>BANK HOLIDAY</b>	W 5
F 13	Tu 26	Th 6
M 16	W 27	F 7
Tu 17	Th 28	M 10
W 18 Planning	F 29	Tu 11
Th 19	<b>SEPTEMBER 2014</b>	W 12
F 20	M 1	Th 13 Cabinet
M 23	Tu 2	F 14
T 24 O&S	W 3	M 17
W 25	Th 4	Tu 18
Th 26 Audit	F 5	W 19 Planning
F 27	M 8	Th 20
M 30	Tu 9 Joint Transportation	F 21
<b>JULY 2014</b>	W 10	M 24
Tu 1 Standards	Th 11 Cabinet	Tu 25 O&S
W 2	F 12	W 26
Th 3	M 15	Th 27
F 4	Tu 16	F 28
M 7	W 17 Planning	
Tu 8	Th 18	
W 9	F 19	
Th 10 Cabinet	M 22	
	Tu 23 O&S	

**DECEMBER 2014**

M 1  
Tu 2 Audit  
W 3  
Th 4 JCC 2.30pm, Cabinet  
F 5  
  
M 8  
Tu 9 Joint Transportation  
W 10  
Th 11 Council  
F 12

M 15  
Tu 16 O&S  
W 17 Planning  
Th 18  
F 19

M 22  
Tu 23  
W 24  
Th 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY**  
F 26 **BOXING DAY**

M 29  
Tu 30  
W 31

**JANUARY 2015**

Th 1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**  
F 2

M 5  
Tu 6  
W 7  
Th 8 Cabinet  
F 10

M 12  
Tu 13  
W 14 Planning  
Th 15  
F 16

M 19 Licensing & H&S 10am  
Tu 20  
W 21  
Th 22  
F 23

M 26  
Tu 27 O&S  
W 28  
Th 29  
F 30

**FEBRUARY 2015**

M 2  
Tu 3  
W 4 Planning  
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm  
F 6

M 9  
Tu 10  
W 11  
Th 12 Cabinet  
F 13

M 16  
Tu 17  
W 18  
Th 19 Council (C Tax)  
F 20

M 23  
Tu 24 O&S  
W 25  
Th 26  
F 27

**MARCH 2015**

M 2  
Tu 3 Audit  
W 4 Planning  
Th 5  
F 6

M 9  
Tu 10 Joint Transportation  
W 11  
Th 12 Cabinet  
F 13

M 16  
Tu 17  
W 18  
Th 19  
F 20

M 23  
Tu 24 O&S  
W 25  
Th 26  
F 27

M 30  
Tu 31

**APRIL 2015**

W 1 Planning  
Th 2 JCC 2.30pm  
F 3 **GOOD FRIDAY**

M 6 **EASTER MONDAY**  
Tu 7  
W 8  
Th 9 Cabinet  
F 10

M 13  
Tu 14  
W 15  
Th 16 Council  
F 17

M 20  
Tu 21  
W 22  
Th 23  
F 24

M 27  
T 28 O&S  
W 29 Planning  
Th 30

**MAY 2015**

F 1  
  
M 4 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 5  
W 6  
Th 7 ABC Elections  
F 8

M 11  
Tu 12  
W 13  
Th 14  
F 15

M 18  
Tu 19  
W 20  
Th 21 Selection & CR  
F 22

M 25 **BANK HOLIDAY**  
Tu 26  
W 27  
Th 28 Council  
F 29

KEY	
O&S	- Overview and Scrutiny
JCC	- Joint Consultative Committee

 School Holidays

## **Cabinet**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **14<sup>th</sup> March 2013**.

### **Present:**

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Claughton, Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Shorter.

### **Apologies:**

Cllrs. Robey, Taylor.

### **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Bennett, Britcher, Burgess, Chilton, Clokie, Davison, Galpin, Michael, Mortimer, Wedgbury, Yeo

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Head of Personnel and Development, Revenues and Benefits Manager, Cultural Projects Manager, Policy and Performance Officer, Communications and Marketing Manager, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting:-

1. Members stood in silence in respect of Councillor Peter Wood who had recently passed away.
2. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Britcher to the meeting and said he hoped she enjoyed her term of office.
3. The Chairman advised that Councillor Shorter was standing in for Councillor Taylor and explained that although he would speak he would not vote as he was not a Cabinet Member.

## **380 Declarations of Interest**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
Mrs Blanford	Announced an "Other Interest" as a large area of her Ward fell within the proposed Chilmington Green Area Action Plan and she also knew a number of people who lived in that area.	392

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
Britcher	Announced an "Other Interest" as she knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389
Chilton	Announced an "Other Interest" as he knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389
Claughton	Announced an "Other Interest" as he knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389
Clokie	Announced an "Other Interest" as he knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389
Davison	Announced an "Other Interest" as he knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust	385, 389
	Announced an "Other Interest" as he was the Ward Member for Weald South and part of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan area was within that Ward. He also knew a number of people who lived in that area.	392
Galpin	Announced an "Other Interest" as he knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389
Hicks	Announced an "Other Interest" as she lived near to the Chilmington Green area and was the Ward Member for part of the area.	392
Howard	Announced an "Other Interest" as he was a member of the Ashford Town Bowling Clubs.	387
Shorter	Announced an "Other Interest" as a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council and as a tenant farmer of land elsewhere in the Borough.	392
Yeo	Announced an "Other Interest" as she knew the Chairman of the Ashford Leisure Trust.	385, 389

## **381 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **382 Joint Transportation Board - 19<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be approved and adopted.**

## **383 Announcements**

**Councillors Hodgkinson and Taylor**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing said that both Councillors Hodgkinson and Taylor had had short spells in hospital but were now at home recovering. He said he was sure that all Members hoped that both Members would be back soon.

## **384 Notice of Motions Referred from the Council Meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013**

Set out within the agenda were the two Motions which had been referred from Council held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013. Accompanying the Motion regarding Welfare Reform Changes was a note explaining the steps the Council was taking to deal with this particular issue. In terms of the Motion about the Living Wage, the report "Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review" later on the agenda had made reference to this issue.

The Chairman said that the issues within the Motions had been discussed at the Group Leader meeting earlier that week and explained that they would both be subject to further work and a report back to Cabinet in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing referred to the Council document produced on Welfare Reform and explained that it set out in a clear and understandable way details of the changes and the steps the Council was taking to manage the Welfare Reform changes.

In response to a question from a Member, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services advised that the Communications Team had already issued a press release setting out the statistics as to how the Welfare Reform changes affected the residents of the Borough.

A Member also advised that Opposition Group Leaders had discussed this issue and said that they intended to encourage their Members to contact the affected residents direct to offer assistance. The Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing advised that Officers had already visited all those directly affected by the changes.

**Resolved:**

**That the Motions referred from Council be subject to further work and a report back to Cabinet be submitted in due course.**

### **385 Stour and Civic Centres: Review of Either Biomass Boilers or Combined Heat and Power (CHP) for Heat Provision to the Buildings**

The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that following site visits to three biomass facilities to view their operations, the Committee had on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013 considered a report which reviewed the provision of either Biomass Boilers or Combined Head and Power (CHP) for heat provision within the Stour and Civic Centres. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered that CHP was the most effective, efficient and economic heating method for the two buildings. However, they had expressed the view that they wished to have Biomass Boilers seriously considered for other suitable applications in the Borough especially where there was more likelihood that the provision of the wood fuel could be from a local supplier.

The Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Environment both advised that the exercise had ascertained that the biomass option on this occasion did not give the best value for local taxpayers. In response to a comment, the Chairman said that he gave his assurance that the use of biomass on other schemes would be looked at on an individual basis.

**Resolved:**

- That (i) the Cabinet decision on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 to proceed with the Stour Centre Essential Repairs and proposed Invest to Save Project (including the choice of a CHP plant for heat and power supply to the buildings, based principally on the significant saving) be confirmed.**
- (ii) consideration be given to using biomass boilers for other suitable and less sensitive buildings.**

### **386 Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write-Off Schedule**

The report proposed the formal write-off of 149 debts totalling £350,038.54. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service Write-Off Policy. The existing bad debt provisions already more than covered the sums involved.

Tabled at the meeting was a note which explained that recommendation 3 of the report was to be withdrawn.



**Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the action that accounts totalling £34,810.90 had been written off under the Delegated Powers (Financial Regulations 11.1) be noted.**
  - (ii) the write-offs listed in the exempt appendices totalling £315,227.64 be approved.**

### **387 Discretionary Rate Relief – Recommended Policy, Post Public Consultation**

The report advised that following Cabinet's approval of a draft scheme in December 2012, the Council had sought the views specifically of groups currently receiving Discretionary Rate Relief as well as making the consultation available for all residents to comment upon. The consultation took place between Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January and Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013. The report asked the Cabinet to recommend to Council changes arising from the consultation exercise and as suggested by the Cabinet Task Group on Discretionary Rate Relief.

The Lead Member for Procurement and IT explained that this was a significant report and contained a lot of detail. He believed the correct process had been followed by the Council and said that he fully supported the recommendations within the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Youth and Sport whilst welcoming the report, considered there were handling issues in terms of the possible effect the new Policy would have on some sports clubs in the Borough. The Chairman said that in the current economic circumstances the Cabinet had no intention of penalising smaller clubs as he considered that the contribution made by the voluntary sector was very much relied upon.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, the Policy and Performance Officer explained that the Impact Assessment had been completed by Officers and had not been drawn from the direct questioning of the organisation or the public.

**Recommended:**

**That**

- (i) the responses received to the Discretionary Rate Relief Consultation (including Annex 1 of the report) be noted.**
- (ii) the following amendments to the proposed policy (as considered by Cabinet in December 2012), and as suggested by the Cabinet Task Group on Discretionary Rate Relief (formerly the Efficiency, Governance and Accountability Mini PAG) in response to the consultation (Annex 3 of the report) be agreed:**

- a) that, for the 20% discretionary 'top up', there should be a minimum banding of support for those organisations which are awarded discretionary rate relief, set at 5%. This would only be in cases where there is some connection to the Council's strategic objectives, and 0% discretionary relief can be applied to those organisations outside the Council's priorities. Thereafter, relief will be awarded in 5% increments up to full 20% top-up.
  - b) for unregistered charities, the council will provide information and signposting – but no financial contribution - to CASE Kent's advice on registering as a charity, if registering is the wish of the organisation concerned.
  - c) the simplified 'Sports Clubs Matrix' as suggested by the Cabinet Task Group, is adopted in place of the matrix in the previous draft (Appendix 1 of the report).
  - d) a review of the policy's implementation should happen after the first year, and at that time a formal review of the time period for the next complete review of the policy should be agreed.
  - e) to extend the role of the Cabinet Discretionary Rate Relief Task Group (in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders) to consider Officers' recommendations from the reapplication review (to be done in three tranches over the next eight months) and take consideration of overall outcomes before then making suggestions to Cabinet at the end of the review of reliefs to individual organisations as part of the 2014-2015 budget cycle.
  - f) further, that the Cabinet Task Group considers how an appeals process (through widening the scope of the Appeals Committee) might operate, particularly on more sensitive cases, and report suggestions to Cabinet as part of the first review.
  - g) the Cabinet Task Group receives a specific paper on Leisure Trusts at their next meeting, and that suggestions from that Task Group on this be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.
- (iii) Subject to the changes recommended in (ii) above, the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

### **388 Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review**

The report advised that the requirement to have a Pay Policy Statement had been introduced the previous year as part of the Localism Act 2011. Members were required to review the Council's Policy Statement on an annual basis.

A Member thanked the Cabinet for the inclusion of comments set out in paragraphs 11 to 13 regarding the Living Wage.

**Recommended:**

**That the reviewed Pay Policy Statement be adopted.**

### **389 Courtside and Pitchside Community Facilities: Proposed Transfer**

The report updated the Cabinet of progress on transferring the Courtside and Pitchside facilities, as per the Five Year Business Plan, to other partners. The report suggested a set of recommendations for the transfer.

Tabled at the meeting was a set of revised recommendations.

In response to a comment from a Member, the Cultural Projects Manager advised that negotiations with partners were taking place with a view to agreeing a lease for a period of longer than 10 years.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services advised that she was the Borough Council's representative on the Ashford Leisure Trust and she confirmed that the Trust were supportive of the proposals as outlined within the report.

**Resolved:**

- That (i) the appropriate Heads of Service with the Head of Cultural and Project Services, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Youth and Sport and in consultation with the Ward Member, be authorised to approve the favoured option of transferring the management of the facilities to Ashford Leisure Trust.**
- (ii) authority be given to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Head of Cultural and Project Services to execute and complete all necessary documentation to give effect to the recommendation in (i) above.**

### **390 Localism in Singleton – Proposal to Declare the Ashford Community Woodland as a Local Nature Reserve**

The report presented a proposal by the Ashford Community Woodland Steering Group to formally declare the Ashford Community Woodland as a Local Nature Reserve.

The Portfolio Holder said he welcomed the report and explained that currently the site was managed on a voluntary basis and he believed the Group were very committed and had managed the site since 2000. He considered that the site offered an important recreational facility for residents within the area.

A Member who was the Chairman of the Nature Conservation Forum said that the Forum had been involved and were fully in support of the proposal.

**Resolved:**

- That (i) the proposal to declare the Ashford Community Woodland as a Local Nature Reserve be approved.**
- (ii) the Head of Cultural and Project Services be authorised to submit the proposals to Natural England for further comment prior to formal declaration.**

### **391 Application for an Exemption to Proposed Permitted Development Rights Changes**

The report requested the Cabinet to endorse the Council's application to the DCLG for an exemption from the proposed introduction of permitted development rights for the change of use from B1 (a) offices to C3 residential. The area proposed for the exemption covered the Commercial Quarter and its adjoining office buildings namely International House, Kent House, Templar House and Stourside Place.

In response to a question, the Head of Planning and Development advised that the consultation process had ended and that Local Authorities had been invited to make a case for exemption from the proposed changes. He explained that the application might not be successful. In response to a further question as to whether the provision applied to academic buildings, the Head of Planning and Development advised that the change only applied for Offices in terms of conversion to residential accommodation.

The Lead Member for Economic Development said he wished to congratulate the Economic Development Officer for pulling together the report so quickly.

**Resolved:**

**That the case attached to the report for a proposed exemption therein for permitted development from B1 (a) offices to C3 residential covering the Commercial Quarter and adjoining buildings be endorsed.**

### **392 Chilmington Green Task Group**

**Resolved:**

**That the notes of the Meeting of the Chilmington Green Task Group held on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be received and noted.**

### **393 Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken**

The report set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet of Ashford Borough Council.

**Resolved:**

**That the latest Schedule of Key Decisions as set out within the report be received and noted.**

---

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1311.doc

---

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Keith Fearon:  
Telephone: 01233 330564 Email: [keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk)  
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: [www.ashford.gov.uk/committees](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/committees)

## Audit Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **5<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

### Present:

Cllr. Clokie (Chairman);  
Cllr. Link (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Michael, Smith, Wright, Yeo.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Marriott, Taylor.

### Also Present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Internal Audit Partnership, Investigation & Visiting Manager, Principal Accountant, Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

Andy Mack - Grant Thornton.

## 350 Minutes

### Resolved:

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## 351 Future of the Fraud Investigation Team

The report followed on from previous reports and explained that various options for the future of the fraud investigation team had now been considered. It set out the background to the need to consider options and explained that the preferred option for the future was for the Council to retain a fraud investigation service, and for this to stand alone as a service within the Council so that its scope could widen to other service areas. This approach was supported by Management Team. The proposal, if supported by the Committee and the Cabinet would need more work on the scope and the financial issues, although reasonable assumptions were made in the report.

The Chairman opened the item up to questions/comments and the following responses were given: -

- The Council could choose not to opt in to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS). The only obligation was to investigate Housing Benefit Fraud all the time that sat with the Council.

- 60/70% of the current workload was already around Tenancy Fraud so the recently approved Bill would make investigation easier by providing the new powers but would make little difference to the way the team was currently working. As the only one of the four MKIP Authorities with its own housing stock, Ashford would require a wider brief from its fraud team than the others.
- Issues of funding and costs were proposed to be looked at further in future reports should the principles in this report be agreed. For the purposes of this report certain assumptions had had to be made and it would be necessary to take a few months to see how the welfare reform system panned out before proper conclusions could be drawn. It was right to be cautious at this stage.
- The suggestion in the report was that an in-house fraud investigation service would report to the Section 151 Officer. The main desire of fraud investigation was to protect the Council's income streams and whilst there was a role for Internal Audit to look at corporate/internal fraud, levels at Ashford were low.
- There were possibilities for the Council in various areas/departments around growing a market place outside of the Council, but this was very much a longer term goal.

**Resolved:**

- That (i) the conclusions from the options review into the future of the Fraud Investigation Team be noted, and the preferred option for the Council to retain a corporate fraud investigation service be supported, with the intention of making the change from April 2014.**
- (ii) subject to the above, it be agreed that Officers prepare a final proposal to include the scope in more detail, along with a further assessment of the financial impacts for consideration by this Committee, before consideration by the Cabinet in due course (as the proposal has structural and financial implications).**

## **352 External Audit Plan**

Mr Mack introduced the first of four reports from the Council's external auditor. It set out the programme of work for the coming year in the three key audit areas (the accounts, value for money and grant certification). He was also pleased to advise that this year's proposed fee reflected a 40% reduction, though this depended on a number of factors being adhered to by the Council.

In response to questions about the Council's preparedness for meeting the demands of the fee assumption, the Deputy Chief Executive said he thought Management Team and Officers were up for the challenge. The Finance team was prepared, Officers had a good dialogue with External Auditors and understood their needs and approach, errors had been contained to an absolute minimum and some additional dedicated expertise had been brought in to assist with the close down of this years

accounts. He was confident the necessary paperwork and supporting certification could be delivered. A Member echoed these sentiments and said that the Finance section had demonstrated a dramatic improvement in recent years and he knew that they understood the expectations placed on them by External Audit.

In terms of the Audit Plan itself the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- In terms of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) the External Auditors did check the 'nuts and bolts' accounting and the value for money angle. The Chairman said he was concerned about some of the borrowing that was taking place, how many years it would take to pay that back and how it was scrutinised. This was something to perhaps discuss further outside of the meeting.
- Previously identified material weaknesses on journal entry controls had been responded to by the Finance Manager by way of a proposal to introduce a bi-monthly review of material journals and extracting and reviewing a report from the system.
- With regard to fraud risks associated with employee remuneration, Internal Audit undertook an annual payroll audit and the results of that work were shared with External Auditors.

**Resolved:**

**That the External Audit Plan be received and noted.**

### **353 External Audit Update**

Mr Mack explained that this report brought the Committee up to date on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's External Auditors. The report also drew attention to emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to the Council and a number of challenge questions in respect of those emerging issues which the Committee may wish to consider. Grant Thornton's reports 'Towards a Tipping Point?' and 'Improving Council Governance' (which was handed out to Members), would provide useful further reading. The Chairman said he had attended a recent seminar run at Grant Thornton's offices and he had found it extremely useful. One of the key questions he had taken away from the day was "to what extent can you accept the assurances you are being given?" and considered that should be in the forefront of the Committee's mind going forward.

The Chairman said that the challenge questions under the emerging issues and developments section of the report were key and, along with the two national reports from Grant Thornton, should probably form the basis of some standalone work. It was agreed that as this report had only just been released, the Committee should hold an additional informal session some time in April 2013 to discuss these matters. This would be held on a Friday afternoon some time after the Easter holidays, date TBC. Members were encouraged to keep hold of their papers.



**Resolved:**

**That the External Audit Update be received and noted.**

### **354 Certification of Grant Claims Annual Report**

The report summarised Grant Thornton's overall assessment of the Council's management arrangements in respect of the certification process for 2011/12 and drew attention to significant matters in relation to individual claims.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

### **355 Assurance from Those Charged with Governance**

The report advised of the need for the Council's External Auditors to annually refresh their understanding of how the Committee gains assurance over management processes and arrangements. The Committee was therefore asked to respond to questions on how it oversaw management processes in a variety of specific areas and gained assurance on those matters. A Member wondered if this document should be discussed at the informal April session, along with options for further training/briefings etc. The original deadline for the response was the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, but Mr Mack said he would be happy to extend that until after the informal session if that is what Members wanted.

A Member asked about the Council's whistleblowing policy in relation to fraud and said he would like to know a little more about it as such policies did have a tendency to be 'put on a shelf' and forgotten about. The Deputy Chief Executive said the Council had a policy that had been used occasionally in the past, but no reports had been made in the last year. The Council wanted to refresh this policy and keep it 'live' and re-issue it to staff, reminding them of their rights under whistleblowing. It was expected that a revised whistleblowing policy would come to the next meeting of this Committee in June. In terms of external whistleblowing (on tenancy/benefit fraud etc), the Investigation & Visiting Manager said that this was encouraged and advertised by way of a hotline number and dedicated email address.

The Chairman said he had some ongoing apprehension about the companies the Council was proposing to set up, in relation to them being a going concern. The Deputy Chief Executive said this consideration would be fundamental in the creation of any company. It was beholden on the Directors to have a sustainable structure in place and for the Council to be asking those questions. In terms of the auditing of transactions between such companies, there would be governance arrangements in place around the structures and how the companies related to each other and because they were to be set up by the Council they would be consolidated within the overall accounts and be subject to the Council's own audit requirements.

**Resolved:**

**That a response on the necessary areas of assurance from the Chairman of this Committee be produced and provided to Grant Thornton.**

## **356 Presentation of Financial Statements**

The report advised that the Council was required to follow statutory guidance for the publication of its accounts and each year that guidance was reviewed and updated. The report looked at the impact of those updates on the Council's accounts for 2012/13. In addition, the report reviewed the lessons learnt from the accounts process for 2011/12. The Council had completed a review of its accounting policies that would be used for the production of the statement of accounts.

The Chairman said that in line with his earlier comments regarding scrutiny of the HRA he wondered if it was possible for there to be an audit review of HRA spend. He had concerns over the Farrow Court project for example where it seemed that the principle had been agreed without knowing where the money was going to come from. The Deputy Chief Executive said that this was not quite the case as whatever the HRA account wanted to do, had to fit within the overall HRA budget cap. In terms of the capital investment in Farrow Court, the principle had been agreed, but there was a need for a dedicated project group to work up the scheme and it would need to be signed off by the Leader and Deputy Chief Executive to ensure it was within the agreed affordability envelope. With regard to transparency/monitoring, such projects would be covered within the regular Budget Monitoring Reports and it would be important for Audit Committee Members to keep an eye on those. The role of an Audit Committee Member was to satisfy themselves that the risks associated with such projects were properly controlled and that the financial implications were being reported honestly and accurately, whereas the 'nuts and bolts' of projects would be discussed and agreed elsewhere. The Chairman said he accepted those comments, but there was concern that some Members could only get involved in such discussion after the event and when it was too late to pick up concerns.

In response to a question the Principal Accountant advised of the arrangements for revaluing the Council's assets, land and buildings. This was based on a five year rolling programme with major changes being picked up in a year end review each year and then adjusted.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted and the accounting policies for the 2012/13 accounts, as at Appendix A of the report, be approved.**

## **357 Strategic Risk Review**

The Head of Internal Audit Partnership introduced the report which informed Members of the current position regarding the Authority's strategic risks. A revised paragraph 10 to the report was tabled.

The Committee ran through the Management Action Plans for the risks one by one and the following comments were made: -

**Risk 1a – Economic Growth**

The proposal was to reduce this from a score of 5/3 (High/Severe) to 4/3 (Significant/Severe) but the Committee was not comfortable with this idea. The Chairman said he thought there could be a decline in average earnings if the Sevington Distribution Centre proposal went ahead as this could skew the overall figures. The Committee recommended that this score be left at 5/3.

**Risk 1b – Mix and Quality of Housing**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 4/3 (Significant/Severe).

**Risk 2 – Volatile Income Streams**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 6/3 (Very High/Severe).

**Risk 3a – Community Demands/Expectations**

The Committee expressed some concern that community demands and expectations were rising, in particular with regard to new developments coming on board. The Committee recommended that the score should be raised from a 3/2 (Low/Medium) to a 4/2 (Significant/Medium) in terms of the potential reputation risk to the Council. The Committee also considered that the Chilmington Green development and surrounding issues should be drawn out as a standalone risk within the register.

**Risk 3b – Consequences of Universal Credit**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 4/3 (Significant/Severe).

**Risk 4 – Opportunities for Localism**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 3/3 (Low/Severe).

**Risk 5 – Workforce Planning**

In response to a question the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council had a Leadership Succession Planning Programme in place to develop the Council's future Managers. This approach would continue to be developed. It was agreed to leave the score at 4/3 (Significant/Severe).

**Risk 6 – Members Skills, Capacity and Experience**

The proposal was to reduce this from a score of 3/2 (Low/Medium) to 2/2 (Very Low/Medium) but the Committee was not comfortable with this idea. Members said that at a time where there was to be a new Leader, potential new Cabinet Members and a number of recently elected Members, there were issues over skills, capacity and experience. A Member who was also Chairman of the Member Training Panel said that there was still an issue in getting Members to attend training/briefing sessions and whilst the Panel would be attempting to address this, it had been difficult to get the message across. Members agreed to discuss the particular issue of training/briefings for this Committee at its informal session in April. The Committee recommended that the score for Risk 6 be left at 3/2.

**Risk 7 – Business Plan**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 4/3 (Significant/Severe).

**Risk 8 - Housing**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 4/3 (Significant/Severe).

**Risk 9 – Infrastructure**

Noted and agreed to leave score at 6/3 (Very High/Severe).

**Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the Strategic Risk Management Action Plans be received and noted.**
  - (ii) the Committee is satisfied with the action being taken to manage the Council's Strategic Risks.**
  - (iii) the risk scores be set as outlined above.**

**358 Annual Governance Statement – Progress on Remediating Highlighted Significant Areas of Governance**

The report was the latest update explaining progress against the one area for continued work in the Annual Governance Statement agreed at the September meeting of the Committee. The highlighted matter was a continuation of work to improve the Council's partnership governance arrangements following a review of the principles of good partnership governance during 2012.

**Resolved:**

**That the progress made in improving the Council's governance arrangements, with emphasis on the publishing of information related to the Ashford Locality Board be noted.**

**359 Internal Audit Operational Plan 2013/14**

The report set out the one-year Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2013/14 and asked the Committee to review and approve the Plan.

In response to a question about to what extent Internal and External Audit overlapped, the Head of Internal Audit Partnership said that the role was quite different. External Audit primarily focussed on the accounts and public assurance/accountability and whilst they did get involved in other things, they did not look at systems, operational controls and if the Council was achieving the stated objective of Members, in the same way Internal Audit did. Internal Audit did work with External Auditors and they needed to have faith in the work of Internal Auditors to provide assurance. Going back to previous conversations, without the work of Internal Audit it was likely that the External Audit fees would go up because they would have to do more of the background work.

**Resolved:**

**That the contents of the one year Internal Audit Operational Plan (as shown at Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.**

### **360 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**

The report provided a summary of the new standards for the provision of Internal Audit within public sector organisations in the United Kingdom. The standards would be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The Committee was asked to note the new standards and the action that would be taken to implement them for the Mid Kent Audit Partnership, which included Ashford Borough Council. The Head of Internal Audit Partnership said that most of the points in the report were already happening at Ashford, but he intended to submit a 'matters arising' report on this to the next meeting of the Committee in June.

**Resolved:**

**That the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the action that will be taken to implement them for the Mid Kent Audit Partnership, which includes Ashford Borough Council, be noted.**

### **361 Audit Committee – Future Work Programme**

**Resolved:**

**It was agreed that the potential development areas outlined in the report be discussed further at the informal session in April along with the possibilities for further training opportunities and restoring the pre-Committee briefing sessions.**

### **362 Report Tracker and Future Meetings**

**Resolved:**

**That subject to the additional items discussed during the Meeting, and any changes arising from the informal session in April, the report be received and noted.**

## **Council – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

### **Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

#### **Changes to Committee Membership – Labour Group**

##### **Labour Group**

1. Following the By-Election for the Beaver Ward on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and the subsequent election of Councillor Jill Britcher to the vacant seat, the Leader of the Labour Group has taken the opportunity to review that Group's membership of the Council's various Committees, Groups and Panels and wishes to appoint Councillor Britcher to the Committees/Panels set out below:-

<b>Appeals Committee</b>	(vacant following ex Councillor Rutters resignation)
<b>Appointments Committee</b>	(vacant following ex Councillor Rutters resignation)
<b>Environment Task Group</b>	(Replaces Councillor Adley)
<b>Joint Consultative Committee</b>	(Replaces Councillor Adley)
<b>Nature Conservation Forum</b>	(Replaces Councillor Adley)
<b>Parish Council Review and Polling District Review Task Group</b>	(vacant following ex Councillor Rutters resignation)

##### **Recommended**

That Council agree to the proposed change in membership of the various Committees, Groups and Panels as set out in this report.

T W Mortimer  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services