

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **13th March 2014**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Cloughton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Robey, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Marriott, Michael.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bennett, Burgess, Chilton, Clokie, Davison, Mortimer, Sims, Smith, Wedgbury, Yeo.

Chief Executive, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Head of Communications and Technology, Finance Manager, Housing Improvement Manager, Policy Manager, Cultural Projects Manager, Sports Facilities Manager, Assistant Communications Officer, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

356 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Clarkson	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 8 as he was an ex-National Service conscript and Member of the Honorary Artillery Company in London	361
Hicks	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 10 as she had been appointed by the Council to the Ashford Leisure Trust. She made a statement and then left the meeting and took no part in the further discussion or voting thereon.	363
	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 as she lived near the Chilmington Green area and was the Ward Member for part of the area.	362

Mortimer Made a “Voluntary Announcement” in respect of 361
Agenda Item No. 8 as he was retired Armed
Forces personnel.

357 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th February 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

358 Leader’s Announcements

The Leader said he wished congratulate Councillor Noel Ovenden upon his election in the Wye By-election held on the 6th March 2014.

359 Tenants’ Panel Report into Tenants’ Own Improvements

The Tenants’ Panel Report set out the findings of the Council’s Tenants’ Panel Scrutiny Role into how the Housing Service dealt with tenant’s own improvements to their own homes and made a number of recommendations for how the service might better deal with such tenant improvements in the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services advised that this report was the first formal piece of work carried out by the new Tenants’ Panel and for that reason she was keen that Members were made aware of their work and the context in which they were undertaking their scrutiny. She explained that the Housing Service needed to be seen as supportive of the scrutiny role the Panel were now expected to perform. The Portfolio Holder then explained that as part of the HCA’s regulatory framework, all registered providers of housing were measured over a range of factors including tenant involvement and empowerment. The Panel could make recommendations as to how the service could improve and the report essentially called for better advice to tenants before any works commenced and highlighted the fact that there could be consequences for those carrying out unauthorised works. The Panel’s detailed recommendations were set out on pages 12 and 13 of the Agenda.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the contents of the Tenant’s Panel Report be noted.**
 - (ii) the recommendations in the report to the Head of Community and Housing be endorsed and support be offered to the Panel with their future involvement in helping improve the housing service.**

360 Establishing a Locally Defined Village “Envelope” for Challock

The report advised that adopted Planning Policy limited new housing in Challock to sites within the built-up confines of the village as defined in the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD. As part of this exercise, Challock Parish Council had facilitated a review of the village with the aim of identifying a locally defined village envelope which could be used to help inform future planning decisions for minor new housing developments in the village.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development advised that the planning review undertaken by Councillor Clarkson had made a recommendation that a pilot project be undertaken to consider the issue of village envelopes. He explained that there had always been a definition of what would constitute development within a village envelope but this was not shown as a line on a map. In terms of the Challock proposals, he explained that this had been a long process and had involved a large group of local people which he believed demonstrated localism in action. He said that he wished to thank the local people and the Clerk of Challock Parish Council for the work they had undertaken upon the village pilot. He explained that an update report would be presented to the Cabinet in the summer of 2015.

A Member suggested that the word “appropriate” in the first recommendation should be deleted as in his view it was open to misinterpretation.

In response the Policy Manager said that the use of the word “appropriate” was entirely appropriate in the circumstances and stressed that in any event Officers and the Planning Committee had to treat each planning application on its own merits.

The Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control said the exercise demonstrated a real opportunity to develop a tool kit which could be used by other settlements or villages which would enable the process to be undertaken more quickly.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the conclusions of the pilot exercise be noted and it be agreed that that the local defined village envelope boundary contained in the report be given appropriate weight in reaching decisions on planning applications for new dwellings in Challock, as set out in the report.**
 - (ii) Challock Parish Council and the Members of the village envelope working group be thanked for their efforts in bringing this pilot study to a conclusion.**
 - (iii) the outcomes of the implementation of the use of the locally defined village envelope boundary in decision making be the subject of an update report to the Cabinet in summer 2015.**

361 Adoption of Armed Forces Community Covenant

The report introduced the Armed Forces Covenant and set out the arrangements to be put in place for Ashford Borough Council to introduce a Covenant for the Borough of Ashford.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services referred to comments made at the weekend by the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament which highlighted the plight of some soldiers returning home from Afghanistan. She said that Ashford was not able to influence the Queen's Speech, but what Ashford could do was acknowledge that Local Authorities and their partners had an important role to play with integration and support. The Armed Forces were an integral part of the nation and an inspiration to all and it was therefore imperative that local government did all it could to support them. She explained that the report set out the process by which the Council would commission this Covenant which would be signed in May when the Freedom of the Borough/March Past took place and Officers would be engaging with all organisations that offered services to ex-Armed Servicemen to ensure that Ashford's assistance and guidance was kept up to date.

The Deputy Leader said that he was sure that all were proud of the Armed Forces and he believed that this report was particularly relevant given that events associated with the commemoration of the outbreak of World War I which were due to take place later in the year. This Covenant would acknowledge support to be given to service personnel and veterans, and their families.

The Portfolio Holder for the Young and Elderly said that there was a lot of support for the initiative within the community and residents and groups would have opportunities to show their support to the Covenant by signing an electronic document which would sit alongside the Covenant. He considered an important role the Council could play would be for signposting assistance in terms of housing, education and to also help returning service personnel to re-integrate into the community.

A Member welcomed the proposed "light touch" in taking this forward and referred to the significant amount of work currently undertaken by the Ministry of Defence and Charities on service and ex-service personnel's behalf. He said there was a need to be aware of the target audience and to be sensitive to them.

The Leader explained that he had been in correspondence with the Cabinet Office who had indicated that LIBOR fines of £100m would be allocated to charities on the basis of £90m for Armed Forces Charities and £10m for Emergency Service Charities which he thought was a fitting way of using the fines.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and the Environment explained that as part of the commemorations of the start of World War I she had been working with representatives from REME and the Royal British Legion and advised that the REME had offered to remove and refurbish the Tank at their own expense, which was currently placed on the roundabout in Chart Road. Thereafter the TCAT Team would ensure that the roundabout was kept in a good condition.

Recommended:

- That (i) the Borough Council adopt the Armed Forces Community Covenant.**
- (ii) the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive sign the Covenant on behalf of the Ashford Borough Council.**

362 Priority Projects

The report sought the Cabinet's endorsement of the inclusion of two more projects on the list of Council priorities, as monitored by the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board. These were the Ashford International Station and Chilmington Green.

The Chairman considered it was appropriate to add both schemes to the list and in terms of the station, he advised that out of 2,563, Ashford Station was 134th in terms of the number of passengers who used it to access rail services. The total footfall was in the region of 3.3m, which he considered was a very significant figure. He believed the station would become even busier on a demand led basis and also following the introduction of other services from Europe.

In response to a question the Chairman advised that the Department of Transport were currently deliberating in terms of the solution to the signalling system issue, which he hoped would be resolved in the next eighteen months or so.

In terms of the proposals to add Chilmington Green, a Member, who was one of the Ward Members for the Chilmington Green area, explained that at a recent meeting he had attended with Shadoxhurst Parish Council, it was believed that in the region of 85% of residents in that area were opposed to the Chilmington Green development.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet endorse the inclusion of the Ashford International Station and Chilmington Green projects as part of the priority programme of projects listed as integral to the growth and economic development of the Borough.

363 Leisure Management Procurement Proposals

The report dealt with the current and future management services and lease of the Stour Centre and Julie Rose Stadium as currently managed by Ashford Leisure Trust on behalf of the Council. The report also explained the current challenges faced by the Council and the market context in which the current management arrangements and performance of the Trust had been considered.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and the Environment explained that the Council were proposing significant changes to the older part of the Stour Centre, in association with the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company, which made preparing a new procurement specification difficult at the present point in time. Ashford Leisure Trust

was operationally very successful and the Portfolio Holder said it seemed sensible to offer an extension to them.

The Portfolio for Housing and Customer Services advised that she was the Council's representative on the Ashford Leisure Trust and she would declare an interest and leave the meeting after she had made a statement in her role as Trustee.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services advised that her interest was non-pecuniary as ALT was a Charitable Trust Company set up at the instigation of the Council. All Trustees (herself included) were unpaid by the Trust and invariably they did not claim expenses. She said she did attend all ALT meetings and therefore she was aware of the Trust's position. She explained that all Trustees of any Charitable Trust were under a legal obligation to protect the interests of the Trust, including its assets. Easily the most valuable of those assets (apart from its loyal and hardworking staff), was the Lease ALT entered into in good faith with the Council for the Stour Centre in 2009. She said that probably the main reason that a lease was such a valuable asset to the Trust was because no steps were required or taken at the time by the Council to remove the statutory business tenancy protection of the Landlord and Tenants Act 1954 as amended. The lease which lasted until 2030 with 5 year break clauses therefore had the full protection of that Act and the Courts. She said that she had indicated that each ALT Trustee was under a personal statutory duty to ensure that this protection remained and to keep it in place, by legal means if necessary, because it had very significant asset value to ALT as a Charitable Trust.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services said that Trustees believed that they were under a personal statutory duty to maintain that protection, along with 5 year break clauses for the integrity of the whole of ALT's business. She said she now believed she had discharged what she believed to be her responsibility as the Council's representative on the Ashford Leisure Trust to explain the true position as she understood it. She advised that she would now leave the meeting, but said that before a final decision was reached she would urge the Council to await the final FMG report and to take detailed independent advice on all of the points she had mentioned. She said it was a fact that the Council had saved literally millions of pounds by its wise creation of ALT and it would be a serious error to put future savings, staff and operations at risk without considering the consequences very carefully indeed.

A Member referred to the Conningbrook Country Park and Lakes Project and said that he had expressed concerns previously that if ALT took over the management of the facilities, whether they had the appropriate level of knowledge and experience in dealing with water sports. He understood that one additional member of staff did have experience and he stressed that it was important to get the management of the facilities right. The Chairman advised that Cabinet was being asked to consider a further 3 year lease of the Julie Rose Stadium with the Trust and to negotiate amendments to the Stour Centre lease to provide for a variation of a break clause to 31st March 2017.

In response to comments made earlier in the meeting regarding the experience needed in terms of managing the water sports facilities the Head of Cultural and

Project Services expressed his gratitude to Councillor Davison for the significant help and advice he had given on water sports. He explained that he had spoken to all regional water sports organisations and in particular he said he believed Ashford had the best canoe club in all of Kent. He also explained that Ashford Leisure Trust had been working for two years on the proposed water sports facilities, and he said that personally he had managed three water sport facilities in the past. He hoped that access to the site would be available for sporting organisations from the 31st May 2014.

A Member said that it was important to highlight for schools what future water sports facilities would be available.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the support of the Stour Centre Regeneration Member Steering Group for the recommendation to negotiate a variation to the Stour Centre lease, and a three year lease of the Julie Rose Stadium operating arrangements as set out within the report be noted.**
- (ii) **the appropriate Heads of Service be authorised to agree the Terms and Conditions of:-**
- (a) **the variation of the lease of the Stour Centre;**
 - (b) **a three year lease of the Julie Rose Stadium;**
 - (c) **contract and service specifications in conjunction with relevant Portfolio Holders, and**
 - (d) **execute and complete all necessary negotiations and documentation to give effect to the recommendations.**
- (iii) **the appropriate Heads of Service prepare a further report to Cabinet setting out a procurement process timetable and Heads of Terms for Management of appropriate leisure facilities to enable the Council to consider commercial tender and investment proposals in the future.**

364 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on the 30th January 2014 be received and noted.

365 Tenterden 1 Task Group

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Tenterden 1 Task Group held on the 10th February 2014 be received and noted.

366 Planning Task Group

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Planning Task Group held on the 12th February 2014 be received and noted.

367 Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken

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

Resolved:

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

(KRF/VS)
MINS: CAXX1411

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Keith Fearon:
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Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th April 2014**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Cloughton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Mrs Blanford, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Robey, Shorter

Apologies:

Cllrs. Chilton, Howard

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bennett, Britcher, Burgess, Clokie, Davey, Davison, Michael, Mortimer, Ovenden, Smith

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Communities and Housing, Policy Manager, Personnel Officer, Policy and Performance Officer, Senior Communications Officer, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

390 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th March 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

391 Joint Transportation Board – 11th March 2014

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 11th March 2014 be received and noted.

392 Amendments to the Council's Community Right to Challenge Procedure and Officer Delegations

The report sought approval to implement amendments to the Council's policy and procedure for responding to expressions of interest submitted pursuant to the Community Right to Challenge to tie in more closely with contractual time frames and offer increased flexibility when responding.

Recommended:

The amendments to the Council's Community Right to Challenge policy and procedure as set out below be approved:-

For multi-year contracted services of two years or more

- (i) The time frame during which Ashford Borough Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest will be a one month period ending 18 months before the date of the end of the contract (ignoring any extension to the contract granted under its terms).**
- (ii) The maximum time within which Ashford Borough Council will make a decision on whether to accept or reject an Expression of Interest and notify the part that has submitted that Expression of Interest will be six months from the date of the end of the one month period during which the Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest.**
- (iii) The minimum and maximum period of time before any relevant procurement exercise begins will be from the date of the acceptance of an Expression of Interest to the date of the end of the contract (including any extension to the contract granted under its terms).**
- (iv) That the decision on whether to accept, reject or modify an Expression of Interest should be delegated to the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder**

For contracted services where the contract term is between 10 months and one day and two years

- (v) The time frame during which Ashford Borough Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest will be a one month period ending nine months before the date of the end of the contract. (ignoring any extension to the contract granted under its terms).**
- (vi) The maximum time within which Ashford Borough Council will make a decision on whether to accept or reject an Expression of Interest and notify the party that has submitted that Expression of Interest will be six months from the date of the end of the one month period during which the Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest.**
- (vii) The minimum and maximum period of time before any relevant procurement exercise begins will be from the date of the acceptance of an Expression of Interest to the date of the end of the contract (including any extension to the contract granted under its terms).**
- (viii) That the decision on whether to accept, reject or modify an Expression of Interest should be delegated to the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder.**

For non-contracted services and contracts of ten months or less

- (ix) The time frame during which Ashford Borough Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest will be a one month period for the month of June every five years beginning 1 June 2019.
- (x) The maximum time within which Ashford Borough Council will make a decision on whether to accept or reject an Expression of Interest and notify the party that has submitted that Expression of Interest will be three months from the date of the end of the one month period during which the Council will accept the submission of an Expression of Interest.
- (xi) The minimum and maximum period of time before any relevant procurement exercise begins will be from the date of acceptance of an Expression of Interest to 12 months thereafter.
- (xii) That the decision on whether to accept, reject or modify an Expression of Interest should be delegated to the relevant Head of Service, in consultation with the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

General

- (xiii) To delegate authority to the Head of Community and Housing to prepare, publish (including publication on the Council's website) and maintain the Council's Contracts Register which will include details of the time frames when expressions of interest may be submitted in relation to a service covered by a Council contracts. This will ensure that those thinking of using the Right to Challenge know when they can submit an expression of interest.
- (xiv) To delegate authority to the relevant Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to refuse to consider and Expression of Interest submitted outside of the Council's published time frames for the acceptance of the submission of an Expression of Interest.
- (xv) To amend the terms of reference of the Appeals Committee so as to exclude appeals in relation to the rejection of expressions of interest. This is because there is no requirement in the Localism Act to offer any right of appeal.

393 Pay Policy Statement - Annual Review of Ashford Living Wage and Review of Discretionary Compensation Policy

The report provided Members with an updated Pay Policy Statement for approval in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, together with an updated Discretionary Compensation Policy which would apply the provisions of the supplementary guidance on "Openness and Accountability in Local Pay" 2013. The report also recommended that the rate for the Ashford Living Wage Allowance which

would meet the Council's commitment for this to be better than the National Living Wage rate.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the guidance stipulated that severance packages totalling over £100,000 had to be approved by Full Council but for situations which fell below this figure, the report proposed arrangements by which the Chief Executive would be granted delegated authority to agree settlement levels subject to the concurrence of the Leader based on the recommendation of the Portfolio Holder. He also explained that the Joint Consultative Committee had been content with the proposals set out within the report.

The Chairman said that despite the fact that staff numbers had reduced over recent years, he considered that Ashford had staff who worked very hard and with a great deal of commitment. He also said it was important to look after the lower end of the pay scale and he was pleased that the Council was able to pay higher than the National Living Wage Rate.

Recommended

- That
- (i) the provisions of the supplementary guidance on “Openness and Accountability in Local Pay” 2013 in respect of referring severance packages of £100,000 or more to Full Council for their approval be accepted.**
 - (ii) the increase of the Ashford Living Wage Allowance to £7.80 per hour with effect from 1st April 2014 for all employees in receipt of an hourly rate less than this be agreed.**
 - (iii) the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix A to the report be approved.**
 - (iv) the Discretionary Compensation Policy attached at Appendix B to the report be approved.**

394 Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18

The report provided an outline of the forthcoming funding programme administered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for 2015-18 and detailed a proposed bid to continue the Council's successful house building programme through this period to deliver a further 106 homes.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services explained that the Housing Department had the opportunity to bid for further funding from the HCA and this report was asking for permission to pursue that funding. She advised that some discussion had already taken place with the HCA and she believed that the Council was in a strong position to deliver their objectives. The bid would help the Council to secure capital to provide 60 homes for affordable rent over three years and 46 units of sheltered housing scheme refurbishment. Some of the care homes were rather tired and only provided small units of accommodation which were not up to modern standards and peoples' expectations.

The Portfolio Holder said that she wished to highlight that the Council currently had over 1,400 households on the Housing Register and a predicted need of 368 per

annum in the future. In recommending the report, the Portfolio Holder drew attention to the fact that the Head of Communities and Housing would report back to Cabinet with a more detailed plan once the outcome of the bidding process was known.

Resolved:

- That (i) it be agreed that further funding should be sought through the Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18 to enable the continued development, by the Council, of affordable housing in the Borough.**
- (ii) the Head of Community and Housing be authorised to submit a bid to the AHP 2015-18 for grant funding as detailed in the report.**
- (iii) a programme of conversions in the Council housing stock from social rent to affordable rent to support the delivery of new affordable homes commencing in April 2014 be agreed.**

395 Short Stay Accommodation Provision

The report provided information regarding progress on the proposal to convert 1a Christchurch Road into a short stay accommodation facility, together with details of the necessary budget. It also set out the arrangements for the management of the facility including proposals to appoint staff to assist in the management of the building.

Tabled at the meeting were further updates and a revision to Recommendation (i) including a revised Appendix 1. The views of the Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control were also tabled.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services said that even with the higher than expected tender costs, the costs for this project were still within that original figure. She explained that the scheme would create savings of £50,000 to the General Fund every year. She further explained that Officers were working hard to try and reduce the tender costs but said there was a decision to be made as to whether to go for cheaper materials which would need replacing earlier or to go from the outset for tough, robust materials which would withstand the high churn of families. The Portfolio Holder believed that the Council should go for the more durable option as rooms would be offered predominantly to households with families. Such households would be granted a non-secure licence as interim accommodation for people claiming homelessness. This short term tenure enabled good management of the property and should any issues arise, they could be addressed quickly.

The Portfolio Holder then referred to paragraph 21 of the report and said that this report sought permission to employ two building superintendents. It also referred to the furnishings which would be purchased.

In response to a question from a Member, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services confirmed that tenders had been received. She also gave details of how the scheme could be value engineered to reduce the overall costs.

The Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control said he supported the process of value engineering but he agreed that the asset must be of high quality and fit for purpose. He believed that the scheme would not only save money for the Borough Council but would provide a much improved option compared to Bed and Breakfast accommodation. He also confirmed that the £50,000 saving to the General Fund would be on a year on year basis.

The Deputy Chief Executive referred to the tabled paper (which advised of revised costs) and explained that the figures within the third bullet point were incorrect and the original overall budget should be shown as £530,000 and not £750,000. He also said that the word "expected" in the second bullet point should have read "unexpected".

In response to a question about the overall borrowing figure, the Deputy Chief Executive said that it was based on the original costs of the scheme plus the additional £120,000 sought within the revised recommendation.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Capital and Revenue Budgets for 1A Christchurch Road set out in the Appendix 1 tabled at the meeting with an increased cost of £120,000 be approved.**
 - (ii) the Head of Community and Housing be authorised to enter into a contract for the conversion of the property subject to the outcome of the tender process.**
 - (iii) the Head of Community and Housing be authorised to proceed with the recruitment of two part-time Superintendent Posts on Grade SCP14-17 and to secure arrangements to provide an out of hours monitoring of the scheme.**

396 Proposed Response to Dealing with the Duty to Co-operate in Local Plan Making

The report outlined a possible approach to tackling the Duty to Co-operate and suggested a co-ordinated approach with other East Kent Local Authorities and other Partners.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development explained that the duty required Local Authorities to co-operate with neighbours on planning issues and in particular on the provision of housing. He said if there was a gap in an Authority's ability to comply with their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the duty stated that the Authority should approach neighbouring Authorities to see whether they were able to bridge that gap. He advised that the report set out a protocol on how it was proposed to be dealt with in conjunction with other East Kent Districts.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services said that in view of the Government's desire that Local Councils should ascertain their housing numbers and economic predictions it was essential that Ashford had a conversation with neighbouring Authorities. She explained that it would not be, for example, sufficient for Ashford to say that it didn't want to accommodate other areas' housing numbers. Furthermore there would be financial implications if the new Local Plan was found

“unsound” and she said that one of the ways to ensure a successful plan was to commence an early dialogue with other Districts in East Kent.

In response to a question from a Member as to how wide the word “neighbour” extended, the Chairman advised that it even included parts of London.

A Member referred to his understanding that the Maidstone Local Plan showed a shortage of 2,500 homes and asked whether work was in process to assess what capacity Ashford had. The Chairman confirmed that capacity figures were being examined.

Resolved:

- That (i) the proposed approach and draft protocol as set out within the report be approved and the draft protocol be shared with the East Kent Authorities for their comments.**
- (ii) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Leader to make minor amendments to the draft protocol in response to comments made by other Authorities.**

397 M20 Junction 10A

The report considered the pro’s and cons of the available options for the delivery of a new motorway junction and to establish a Cabinet position on the subject to inform future discussions with the Highways Agency, Kent County Council and developers as well as potential funding agencies such as the South East LEP.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development confirmed that Junction 10A was one of the “Big Eight” proposals prioritised by the Council and was vital for the development in South East Ashford. He said that Highway Agency modelling indicated that the proposal could provide traffic capacity up to 2030 with a potential opening date of 2018.

The Portfolio Holder for Tourism and the Rural Economy considered the report dealt too heavily on the “pro’s” rather than the “cons” of the proposal and suggested that there was a need to look further into the future. She considered that the new Junction might mean that Ashford had to increase the overall number of houses it would have to supply within its Local Plan and therefore she would have liked to see the information in the report challenged. She referred to the financial implications section of the report and drew attention to the fact that if any direct financial consequences arose for this Council, there could be a potential impact on the general revenue fund.

The Chairman explained that proposals for Junction 10A had been around for quite a while and confirmed that Kent County Council would be the Planning Authority. He said that the proposal was being developed by Kent County Council working with the Highways Agency and would involve detailed traffic modelling of the Junction. He emphasised that Cabinet was being asked to support in principle the Junction making no assumptions about future planning decisions which would be taken on their merits and at the appropriate time.

A Member, whilst accepting the need for a Junction 10A, said that it was important that it was the right one for Ashford. He said that he had concerns during the recent presentation by a representative of the Highways Agency on the current proposal.

The Chairman explained that one of the reasons behind establishing Ashford's Strategic Delivery Board was that it was comprised of all partners who would be associated with the delivery of the Junction and he said that he would emphasise at meetings that it was vitally important that the Junction worked in practice.

The Portfolio Holder for Transportation, Highways and Engineering said he had concerns over the proposed design of the Junction and was extremely worried that it could cause congestion in other areas of the Town.

The Head of Planning and Development explained that £20 million was available through LEP Funding but he said Kent County Council would be spending much of the forthcoming year working on a detailed business case. The LEP would need to be convinced that this was realistic. The Junction would only have Folkestone facing slip roads because of its proximity to Junction 10 and he commented that the interim scheme was the only option available at the present time.

The Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control referred to the recommendations in the report and confirmed that support was being sought in principle as a way to move forward. In terms of any future financial implications, he said that these would obviously need to be considered in terms of the potential benefits of the Junction in terms of the commercial impact on the Town Centre.

Resolved:

- That (i) support be given in principle to the delivery of the SELEP's funded scheme for Junction 10A by 2019.**
- (ii) support in principle be given to the subsequent delivery of an enhanced SELEP scheme to create a new, all movements Junction 10A in the same location when funding permits.**

398 Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken

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

Resolved:

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

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1415