

Ashford Borough Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **19th February 2015**

Present:

His Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr. J Link (Chairman);

Cllrs. Aaby, Adley, Apps, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Chilton, Clark, Clarkson, Claughton, Davey, Davidson, Davison, Dyer, Feacey, Galpin, Heyes, Mrs Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Mrs Hutchinson, Marriott, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Michael, Mortimer, Ovenden, Robey, Shorter, Sims, Smith, Taylor, Wedgbury.

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Culture and Environment, Head of Finance, Principal Solicitor for Property and Projects, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Communities and Housing, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Reverend Eileen Harrop said prayers.

Apologies

Cllrs. Bell, Britcher, Clokie, Hodgkinson.

356 Exempt or Confidential Information

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.

357 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 11th December 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

358 Announcements

(a) Leader of the Council

The Leader said that firstly he would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Cllr. William Howard and his wife on the birth of their first child, Leo Thomas who weighed in at 9lb 3 oz.

The Leader then said he would like to take a few moments to update colleagues on some recent very positive developments in this important and significant year. He said he was very conscious that there were only 76 days to the General Election, the Borough Elections and the Parish Elections which actually represented only 53 working days. He considered that the Council and all its elected Members had an excellent record of behaving in the best interests of the people of Ashford and he wished this to continue.

Ashford had also again been named among the top 50 places to live in the UK, and an independent national survey placed Ashford 38th best place to live in the UK, which was the fourth time in the last five years Ashford had been included in the top 50.

The Leader said that this followed the results of another independent survey which showed Ashford as “Best Business Location in Kent” and that the Council had a proactive attitude towards business. Furthermore a recent residents’ survey had found that 9 in 10 residents were satisfied with the local area as a place to live, work and enjoy life, whilst 8 in 10 indicated that they were satisfied with how Ashford Borough Council ran things. The Leader said that being named as 38th best place to live in the UK was pleasing, and echoed everything residents had told the Council about the Borough as a desirable place to live. The Leader explained that Ashford had the lowest Council Tax in Kent, and the most improved recycling service in the country, and that the Borough was attracting large scale investment. There was more to be done but this would only enhance Ashford’s attraction as a special place in which to live, do business and to visit.

On this note the Leader said that the 2013/14 Tourism Review had revealed a thriving visitor economy and Ashford’s Tourism Service was performing well. The results would help shape the Council’s Tourism Action Plan for the next five years. The Leader considered that the value of tourism in the Borough must never be underestimated as it accounted for thousands of jobs and contributed millions to Kent’s economy. This had been reinforced by Ashford being given the opportunity to host the United Kingdom Annual Tourism Symposium in June this year. The Leader said that the last location for this was in Liverpool, so he considered that Ashford was moving in the right direction to promote tourism nationally and internationally.

The Leader said he could also report that the Government had recently given the green light to the new signalling works at Ashford International Station by the allocation of £2m, with a further £2m to come from European funding. The bid was currently in the process of being prepared and the deadline for submission was in the region of only a week away. This would ensure that the signalling at Ashford International Station would be upgraded to take the next generation of international trains, thus benefiting the whole of the South East. It would also allow the next generation of Eurostar trains to continue to stop in Ashford and would help the town to be one of the most connected places in the UK. This followed Eurostar’s announcement that services would be expanded from May 2015 to include daily trains to Marseille and Lyon, meaning France’s three largest cities, when including Paris, were within easy reach of Ashford, thus reinforcing the view that Ashford was the UK’s International town.

The Leader then explained that works to create a new public realm around International House and Dover Place was set to begin next month, which would create an attractive first impression of the town for visitors arriving at the International Station. The new public realm would be a visually impressive space that would include granite paving, benches, street lighting columns and greenery, which would improve the look and feel of the area, and create an attractive environment for businesses to invest in Ashford's Commercial Quarter, which would be situated right behind Dover Place thus stimulating further economic growth and development.

Public Works on Conningbrook Lakes Country Park were well under way, and it was expected that it would open later in the year. Further significant developments were also on the horizon such as the Designer Outlet Expansion, the Elwick Place Town Centre Development and the proposed Ashford International Model Railway Museum.

In conclusion the Leader said that he was sure that Members would agree that these were important times for the Borough, and there was a need to keep an eye on the ball and not be too distracted during those remaining 53 important working days to the elections on the 7th May 2015.

(b) Councillor Chilton

Councillor Chilton announced that there had been reports in the press that Labour in Ashford was in chaos, but he said he was pleased to say that tonight, quite the opposite was true in that he was delighted to welcome Councillor Jeremy Aaby from the Liberal Democrat Group to join the Ashford Labour Group with immediate effect.

359 Cabinet 15th January and 11th February 2015

(a) 15th January 2015

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 15th January 2015 be received and noted.

(b) 11th February 2015

Resolved:

That subject to the expiry of the period by which decisions arising from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 11th February 2015 may be called in, i.e. 24th February 2015:-

- (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 11th February 2015 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 343, 344, 345 and 348.**
- (ii) Minute Nos. 343, 344 and 345 be approved and adopted.**

- (iii) **the Recommendations in Minute No. 348 be deferred for consideration as part of the Agenda Item dealing with the Budget and Council Tax Resolutions 2015/16.**

360 Council Tax 2015/16 Resolutions and General Fund and Minute No. 348

The Leader of the Council moved

“That the Budget recommendations as set out in Minute No. 348 of the Cabinet and the Formal Council Tax Resolutions for 2015/2016 be approved subject to the amended Annex C which had been tabled.

This was seconded.

The Leader also advised that in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.4(A) the Council was now required to undertake a recorded vote on the Budget Recommendations and any amendments moved and seconded during the debate. When voting Members would be asked to use the electronic voting machine.

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 Chilton said he wished to make one or two comments on the work of the Group and thanked all Members of the Task Group, Councillors Burgess, Mrs Martin, Apps and Mortimer, for the work in scrutinising the Budget and observing the risks. In addition he said he wished to thank staff in Member Services who had supported the administration of the Group, and also to those Officers who had attended on behalf of their respective Departments, as well as all Portfolio Holders who had attended. He said he would also wish to thank Councillor Galpin in his role as Portfolio Holder for his attendance at all meetings of the Task Group.

Councillor Chilton explained that the Task Group had worked well over many weeks examining the Budget and said that the report of the Task Group had been presented to Members at the Cabinet Meeting. The Task Group had concluded that for this coming year the Budget was achievable. There would be one more meeting of the Task Group taking place on 2nd March 2015 which would examine the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and he advised that all Members were welcome to attend as usual. He said that decisions made this year such as the freeze in Council Tax combined with the Coalition Government’s reductions in grant, meant that in coming years even more difficult decisions would have to be made. The report highlighted that “real risks existed in service delivery, Council performance and to the public perception of this Authority”. The Task Group had highlighted the increasing role that New Homes Bonus was playing in supporting the Budget, and he said it was vital that this revenue source was spent wisely. It was also crucial that the ambitions that different respective parties had for the Borough, particularly post the May elections, reflected what in reality the Council was to deliver. In conclusion he said the whole Budget Scrutiny process was a success and once again thanked all involved.

A recorded vote utilising the call sheet system was then taken on the Motion and the Members voted as follows:-

For: Cllrs. Apps, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Clarkson, Cloughton, Davey, Davison, Mrs Dyer, Feacey, Galpin, Heyes, Mrs Heyes, Hicks, Howard, Mrs Hutchinson, Link, Marriott, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Michael, Mortimer, Ovenden, Robey, Sims, Shorter, Taylor, Wedgbury.

Votes for - 31.

Against: Cllr Smith.

Votes against - 1.

Abstentions: Cllrs. Aaby, Adley, Chilton, Clark, Davidson

Abstentions - 5.

Resolved:

That (i) the Budget for 2015/16, as recommended by the Cabinet in Minute No. 348 be approved.

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

1. It be noted that on **04 December 2014** the Cabinet calculated
 - (a) the Council Tax Base 2015/16 for the whole Council area as **42,365** [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 **Annex A**.
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£6,161,989.25 (Appendices A and B)**.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- (a) £ 89,589,148 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) (82,193,320) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the

- Act.
- (c) 7,395,828 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) 174.57 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).(Annex C)
 - (e) 1,233,838 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Annex 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.(Annex D & E)

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Annex 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	550.90		Little Chart	124.10
Appledore	326.00		Mersham and Sevington	627.90
Bethersden	676.80		Molash	107.20
Biddenden	1,078.40		Newenden	104.20
Bilsington	143.10		Orlestone	554.90
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,038.10		Pluckley	473.60
Brabourne	586.10		Rolvenden	654.60
Brook	150.30		Ruckinge	326.30
Challock	414.30		Shadoxhurst	489.60
Charing	1,204.00		Smarden	603.00
Chilham	716.70		Smeeth	349.10
Crundale (PM)	92.70		Stanhope	711.70
Egerton	499.80		Stone	209.60
Godmersham	173.80		Tenterden (TC)	3,433.10
Great Chart with Singleton	2,307.00		Warehorne	171.40
Hastingleigh	113.20		Westwell	321.60
High Halden	715.20		Wittersham	524.10
Hothfield	276.00		Woodchurch	818.00
Kenardington	102.00		Wye with Hinxhill	984.50
Kingsnorth	4,076.50			

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Parish Council Precepts

PARISH	Parish Precept		PARISH	Parish Precept
Aldington & Bonnington	23,750		Little Chart	6,000
Appledore	26,000		Mersham and Sevington	15,660
Bethersden	21,550		Molash	4,000
Biddenden	48,339		Newenden	5,030
Bilsington	4,230		Orlestone	19,030
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	21,280		Pluckley	34,000
Brabourne	14,500		Rolvenden	21,629
Brook	5,000		Ruckinge	10,000
Challock	15,770		Shadoxhurst	12,270
Charing	73,678		Smarden	26,370
Chilham	26,321		Smeeth	11,090
Crundale (PM)	200		Stanhope	17,200
Egerton	17,150		Stone	4,250
Godmersham	5,500		Tenterden (TC)	303,177
Great Chart with Singleton	137,520		Warehorne	3,250
Hastingleigh	2,950		Westwell	15,150
High Halden	33,054		Wittersham	20,995
Hothfield	9,500		Woodchurch	20,000
Kenardington	4,340		Wye with Hinxhill	57,583
Kingsnorth	136,522			

Annex C

BILLING AUTHORITY PART OF COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	125.71	146.66	167.61	188.56	230.46	272.36	314.27	377.12
Appledore	150.13	175.16	200.18	225.20	275.24	325.29	375.33	450.40
Bethersden	118.19	137.89	157.59	177.29	216.69	256.09	295.48	354.58
Biddenden	126.85	147.99	169.13	190.27	232.55	274.83	317.12	380.54
Bilsington	116.67	136.12	155.56	175.01	213.90	252.79	291.68	350.02
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	110.63	129.07	147.51	165.95	202.83	239.71	276.58	331.90
Brabourne	113.46	132.37	151.28	170.19	208.01	245.83	283.65	340.38
Brook	119.15	139.00	158.86	178.72	218.44	258.15	297.87	357.44
Challock	122.34	142.73	163.12	183.51	224.29	265.07	305.85	367.02
Charing	137.76	160.72	183.68	206.64	252.56	298.48	344.40	413.28
Chilham	121.45	141.70	161.94	182.18	222.66	263.15	303.63	364.36
Crundale (PM)	98.41	114.81	131.21	147.61	180.41	213.21	246.02	295.22
Egerton	119.84	139.81	159.79	179.76	219.71	259.65	299.60	359.52
Godmersham	118.07	137.74	157.42	177.10	216.46	255.81	295.17	354.20
Great Chart with Singleton	136.71	159.49	182.28	205.06	250.63	296.20	341.77	410.12
Hastingleigh	114.34	133.40	152.45	171.51	209.62	247.74	285.85	343.02
High Halden	127.78	149.08	170.37	191.67	234.26	276.86	319.45	383.34
Hothfield	119.91	139.90	159.88	179.87	219.84	259.81	299.78	359.74
Kenardington	125.33	146.22	167.11	188.00	229.78	271.56	313.33	376.00
Kingsnorth	119.29	139.18	159.06	178.94	218.70	258.47	298.23	357.88
Little Chart	129.20	150.73	172.27	193.80	236.87	279.93	323.00	387.60
Mersham and Sevington	113.59	132.53	151.46	170.39	208.25	246.12	283.98	340.78
Molash	121.84	142.15	162.45	182.76	223.37	263.99	304.60	365.52
Newenden	129.15	150.67	172.20	193.72	236.77	279.82	322.87	387.44
Orlestone	119.83	139.80	159.77	179.74	219.68	259.62	299.57	359.48
Pluckley	144.83	168.96	193.10	217.24	265.52	313.79	362.07	434.48
Rolvenden	118.99	138.83	158.66	178.49	218.15	257.82	297.48	356.98
Ruckinge	117.40	136.97	156.53	176.10	215.23	254.37	293.50	352.20
Shadoxhurst	113.67	132.62	151.56	170.51	208.40	246.29	284.18	341.02
Smarden	126.12	147.14	168.16	189.18	231.22	273.26	315.30	378.36
Smeeth	118.15	137.84	157.53	177.22	216.60	255.98	295.37	354.44
Stanhope	113.08	131.93	150.77	169.62	207.31	245.01	282.70	339.24
Stone	110.49	128.90	147.32	165.73	202.56	239.39	276.22	331.46
Tenterden (TC)	155.84	181.81	207.79	233.76	285.71	337.65	389.60	467.52
Warehorne	109.61	127.87	146.14	164.41	200.95	237.48	274.02	328.82
Westwell	128.37	149.77	171.16	192.56	235.35	278.14	320.93	385.12
Wittersham	123.67	144.29	164.90	185.51	226.73	267.96	309.18	371.02
Woodchurch	113.27	132.14	151.02	169.90	207.66	245.41	283.17	339.80
Wye with Hinxhill	135.96	158.62	181.28	203.94	249.26	294.58	339.90	407.88
Unparished Area	96.97	113.13	129.29	145.45	177.77	210.09	242.42	290.90

Annex D

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	997.57	1,163.83	1,330.09	1,496.35	1,828.87	2,161.39	2,493.92	2,992.70
Appledore	1,022.00	1,192.33	1,362.66	1,532.99	1,873.65	2,214.31	2,554.99	3,065.98
Bethersden	990.06	1,155.06	1,320.07	1,485.08	1,815.10	2,145.11	2,475.14	2,970.16
Biddenden	998.71	1,165.16	1,331.61	1,498.06	1,830.96	2,163.86	2,496.77	2,996.12
Bilsington	988.54	1,153.29	1,318.05	1,482.80	1,812.31	2,141.82	2,471.34	2,965.60
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	982.50	1,146.24	1,309.99	1,473.74	1,801.24	2,128.73	2,456.24	2,947.48
Brabourne	985.32	1,149.54	1,313.76	1,477.98	1,806.42	2,134.86	2,463.30	2,955.96
Brook	991.01	1,156.18	1,321.34	1,486.51	1,816.84	2,147.18	2,477.52	2,973.02
Challock	994.20	1,159.90	1,325.60	1,491.30	1,822.70	2,154.10	2,485.50	2,982.60
Charing	1,009.62	1,177.89	1,346.16	1,514.43	1,850.97	2,187.51	2,524.05	3,028.86
Chilham	993.32	1,158.87	1,324.42	1,489.97	1,821.07	2,152.17	2,483.29	2,979.94
Crundale (PM)	970.27	1,131.98	1,293.69	1,455.40	1,778.82	2,102.24	2,425.67	2,910.80
Egerton	991.70	1,156.99	1,322.27	1,487.55	1,818.11	2,148.68	2,479.25	2,975.10
Godmersham	989.93	1,154.92	1,319.90	1,484.89	1,814.86	2,144.84	2,474.82	2,969.78
Great Chart with Singleton	1,008.57	1,176.66	1,344.76	1,512.85	1,849.04	2,185.22	2,521.42	3,025.70
Hastingleigh	986.20	1,150.57	1,314.93	1,479.30	1,808.03	2,136.76	2,465.50	2,958.60
High Halden	999.64	1,166.25	1,332.85	1,499.46	1,832.67	2,165.88	2,499.10	2,998.92
Hothfield	991.78	1,157.07	1,322.37	1,487.66	1,818.25	2,148.84	2,479.44	2,975.32
Kenardington	997.20	1,163.39	1,329.59	1,495.79	1,828.19	2,160.58	2,492.99	2,991.58
Kingsnorth	991.16	1,156.35	1,321.54	1,486.73	1,817.11	2,147.49	2,477.89	2,973.46
Little Chart	1,001.06	1,167.91	1,334.75	1,501.59	1,835.27	2,168.96	2,502.65	3,003.18
Mersham and Sevington	985.46	1,149.70	1,313.94	1,478.18	1,806.66	2,135.14	2,463.64	2,956.36
Molash	993.70	1,159.32	1,324.93	1,490.55	1,821.78	2,153.01	2,484.25	2,981.10
Newenden	1,001.01	1,167.84	1,334.68	1,501.51	1,835.18	2,168.84	2,502.52	3,003.02
Orlestone	991.69	1,156.97	1,322.25	1,487.53	1,818.09	2,148.65	2,479.22	2,975.06
Pluckley	1,016.69	1,186.14	1,355.58	1,525.03	1,863.92	2,202.82	2,541.72	3,050.06
Rolvenden	990.86	1,156.00	1,321.14	1,486.28	1,816.56	2,146.84	2,477.14	2,972.56
Ruckinge	989.26	1,154.14	1,319.01	1,483.89	1,813.64	2,143.39	2,473.15	2,967.78
Shadoxhurst	985.54	1,149.79	1,314.05	1,478.30	1,806.81	2,135.32	2,463.84	2,956.60
Smarden	997.98	1,164.31	1,330.64	1,496.97	1,829.63	2,162.29	2,494.95	2,993.94
Smeeth	990.01	1,155.01	1,320.01	1,485.01	1,815.01	2,145.01	2,475.02	2,970.02
Stanhope	984.94	1,149.10	1,313.25	1,477.41	1,805.72	2,134.03	2,462.35	2,954.82
Stone	982.35	1,146.07	1,309.80	1,473.52	1,800.97	2,128.41	2,455.87	2,947.04
Tenterden (TC)	1,027.70	1,198.99	1,370.27	1,541.55	1,884.11	2,226.68	2,569.25	3,083.10
Warehorne	981.47	1,145.05	1,308.62	1,472.20	1,799.35	2,126.51	2,453.67	2,944.40
Westwell	1,000.24	1,166.94	1,333.65	1,500.35	1,833.76	2,167.17	2,500.59	3,000.70
Wittersham	995.54	1,161.46	1,327.38	1,493.30	1,825.14	2,156.98	2,488.84	2,986.60
Woodchurch	985.13	1,149.32	1,313.50	1,477.69	1,806.06	2,134.44	2,462.82	2,955.38
Wye with Hinxhill	1,007.82	1,175.79	1,343.76	1,511.73	1,847.67	2,183.61	2,519.55	3,023.46
Unparished Area	968.83	1,130.30	1,291.77	1,453.24	1,776.18	2,099.12	2,422.07	2,906.48

Annex E

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	726.66	847.77	968.88	1,089.99	1,332.21	1,574.43	1,816.65	2,179.98
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	98.10	114.45	130.80	147.15	179.85	212.55	245.25	294.30
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority	47.10	54.95	62.80	70.65	86.35	102.05	117.75	141.30

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CALCULATION OF THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND COUNCIL TAX AT BAND D		
	£	£
Gross Expenditure - General Fund	58,532,340	
Gross Expenditure - HRA	28,255,680	
Parish Precepts	<u>1,233,838</u>	88,021,858
Less Gross Income	(73,012,830)	(73,012,830)
NET EXPENDITURE		<u>15,009,028</u>
Add Deficit Distribution from Collection Fund	0	
New Homes Bonus	(2,324,000)	
Retained Business Rates	(2,628,370)	
Government Grant (RSG and S31 grants)	<u>(2,660,830)</u>	(7,613,200)
BUDGET REQUIREMENT		<u>7,395,828</u>
Less Parish Precepts		(1,233,838)
Council Tax Requirement		<u><u>6,161,990</u></u>
Council Tax Base		42,365
Band 'D' Council Tax		145.45
Average including Parishes		174.57

Appendix B

REVENUE BUDGET				
SUMMARY				
ACTUALS	ESTIMATE	PROJECTED	DETAIL	ESTIMATE
2013/14	2014/15	OUTTURN		2015/16
£	£	2014/15		£
		£		
1,279,548	1,844,470	1,893,030	Corporate, Strategy & Personnel	1,743,850
1,163,989	1,310,750	1,307,590	Legal & Democratic	1,310,700
1,761,466	1,810,300	2,009,850	Planning & Development	1,821,590
1,835,018	2,055,760	2,036,540	Financial Services	2,167,060
314,814	340,150	360,380	Communications & Technology	298,540
5,176,361	4,610,980	4,598,060	Community & Housing	4,279,500
1,249,647	3,509,990	3,699,140	Culture & the Environment	3,672,270
12,780,844	15,482,400	15,904,590	SERVICE EXPENDITURE	15,293,510
(2,094,985)	(2,138,760)	(1,968,434)	Capital Charges	
60,200	50,350	50,350	Net Interest	(2,106,200)
235,205	241,000	241,000	Concurrent Functions Grant	40,260
3,173,686	12,030	112,750	Drainage Board Levies	241,000
			Contribution to Balances	265,120
14,154,951	13,647,020	14,340,256	ABC BUDGET REQUIREMENT	13,733,690
			INCOME	
(3,798,600)	(2,942,520)	(2,942,520)	Government Grant	(2,106,830)
(1,540,636)	(2,457,510)	(2,457,510)	Retained Business Rates	(2,628,370)
(401,153)	(343,990)	(343,990)	Business Rates S31 Grants	(554,000)
(2,451,700)	(1,878,000)	(2,570,000)	New Homes Bonus	(2,324,000)
81,950	61,500	61,500	Parish CTS Payment	41,500
(5,995,737)	(6,086,500)	(6,086,500)	Council Tax	(6,161,990)
49,075	-	1,236	Budget Gap	-

361 Licensing and Health and Safety Committee – 19th January 2015

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing and Health & Safety Committee held on the 19th January 2015 be approved and adopted.

362 Selection and Constitutional Review Committee – 11th February 2015

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee held on the 11th February 2015 be approved and adopted.

363 Programme of Meetings 2015/16 and 2016/2017

Resolved:

That the Programme of Meetings for 2015/16 and 2016/17 as appended to these Minutes be adopted.

364 Questions by Members

- (a) Question from Councillor Chilton to Councillor Galpin, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management (not verbatim as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).**

Could the Portfolio Holder explain why the ruling Tory Administration proposed a freeze in Council Tax for this year?

Reply by Councillor Galpin (not verbatim as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).

Councillor Chilton will recall that a proposal to freeze the coming year's Council Tax is a commitment we gave this time last year and I am pleased we are able to maintain that commitment. There is no doubting the financial challenges facing this Council; it is the same for all Councils. However through the Council's careful and prudent planning, our strong financial resilience (as acknowledged by our External Auditor), coupled with our initiative to be financially self-sufficient, we are in a good position to deliver on the commitment we made last year. As Councillor Chilton is well aware Central Government will provide some grant support for our commitment to freeze the tax. Our position on Council Tax is not taken in isolation of the broader strategy, it is a position that also builds on the positive satisfaction levels from residents. As evidenced by recent market research, we are receiving public support for the Council's efforts in aiming to build a strong economy and quality of place. As part of this commitment we continue to offer the lowest Council Tax level in Kent.

Our budget plans build on significant cost savings and income generation in recent years with more in this in the budget. Our proportion of the Council Tax is just 10%, however the overall Council Tax will increase. This is attributable to increases in other major Precepting Authorities, part of the total bill. These include KCC, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and Kent's Fire and Rescue.

Our proposal of a freeze to our element recognises the contribution this Council can make to leave more money in people's pockets. I only hope that Councillor Chilton is not suggesting that we should also increase the Council Tax. We are assisting in making our recommendation by the recovering local economy with excellent prospects for the future. Cost inflation is low and it is likely to be lower in the coming year than our forecasts; this will help residents and our budget. We are intending to deliver alternative sources of revenue through the local retention of Business Rates from entering a pooling arrangement and through growing our investments. In conclusion our proposal is fair for residents and taxpayers and fair for the Council.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Chilton (not audible as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).

Supplementary Reply by Councillor Galpin (not audible as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).

Supplementary Question by Councillor Wedgbury (not audible as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).

Reply by Councillor Galpin (not audible as microphones unavailable at this point in the meeting).

(b) Question from Councillor Chilton to Councillor Hicks, Portfolio Holder for Social, Local Needs and Special Care Housing – (Verbatim from this point on in the meeting as microphones now available).

"Does the Portfolio Holder believe that our Social Housing stocks are adequately maintained and in good condition".

Reply by Councillor Hicks

"Thank you very much for this question Councillor Chilton as this gives me the opportunity to highlight how diligent my Department is in looking after the Council's housing stock. The Council has a comprehensive responsive repair, planned maintenance and improvement programme in place which ensures that the Council housing stock is maintained to a good standard. The latest Programme of Works for 2015/16 has recently been circulated. Everybody on the Council should have got one. The Council successfully achieved the Government's decent homes standard for its housing stock several years before the deadline for doing so and has continued to maintain and improve on this standard since then. The responsive repairs service deals with the day to day repairs laid down within timescales in line with the Right to Repair legislation and consequently delivers this service to a high standard. The dedicated repairs team deals with approximately 14,000 individual repair requests per year. Tenant satisfaction with the service is currently in excess

of 90%. There is an on-going Planned Maintenance Programme of Works, which includes such things as roofing, rewiring, kitchen and bathroom refurbishments etc. This type of work is carried out in accordance with the timescales laid down in the Decent Homes Standards adjusted as necessary so that the repairs are only carried out on a just in time basis. This approach not only ensures that the stock is maintained to a high standard, but also assures that there is value for money. There are some instances where planned maintenance work such as kitchen or bathroom refurbishment is not carried out as the tenant may not want it and in these circumstances the work is actually picked up later and dealt with when the tenant decides they want the work done or the property becomes void. I would point out that it happens in my own Ward. We have had some lovely new roofs put on some of the ancient bungalows, and everybody is very happy with it. That was a really good move because the properties were built in the sixties and we need to maintain these things. Any questions relating to the maintenance of the housing stock should be passed to Chris Tillin, who is our Planned Maintenance Manager and he will be happy to deal with any questions and we have got an email for him if you need it.”

Supplementary Question by Councillor Chilton

“I thank the Portfolio Holder for her response but recent articles in the Kentish Express tell a different story. They tell of damp and mould. This year rents are going up by 2.2% why should residents have to pay for the privilege of living in a Council flat or house that is full of damp and mould.”

Reply by Councillor Hicks

“Your question I think relates to a property that has a perceived dampness problem. There are properties that present with this type of problem from time to time and there are a number of possible causes for the problems. Where these problems are encountered, and cannot be dealt with easily, as the problem is not immediately obvious they are referred to a specialist, independent damp company. They visit the property and produce a detailed report of their findings and a list of recommendations. We always carry out the recommendations that relate to issues within the fabric of a property. We also pass on any recommendations that relate to the way the occupant lives in the property to them. The majority of damp problems are encountered as a result of condensation within the property rather than specific faults with the structure of the building, such as damaged DCP's or roof leaks etc. These are dealt with when they are reported. Condensation can be caused by a number of issues. Some can be eased by the installation of additional mechanical or passive ventilation, increased insulation or adequate heating. These are issues that we deal with. However lifestyle issues also play a part in causing condensation problems and a lot of these cases can be eased by relatively minor changes in the way the occupants live within the property. I mean you can actually open a window. In most cases the answer is a combination of actions by the Council and with the occupant working together to solve the problem.”

Supplementary Question by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Clarkson

“May I ask the Portfolio Holder is it correct to say that we in Ashford have a very good reputation for our housing stock of 5,000 homes that meets all the standards

and all the accolades and I would ask the Portfolio Holder, to her recollection if she has heard of any other in the last four years or so, whether Members of the Opposition Party have brought forward any such claims because this is the first one I have heard and I don't know if it has got anything to do with the time of year?"

Reply by Councillor Hicks

"I haven't heard of any problems like this but if they do come we always deal with them extremely quickly but I think it is very much related to what has been in the local press recently and as you say the time of year."

(c) Question from Councillor Chilton to Councillor Robey, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

"Ashford has experienced a huge increase in the number of HMO's. What is the administration doing about it?"

Reply by Councillor Robey

"Thank you Councillor Chilton for your question. The growth in the number of houses in multiple occupancy is happening in many areas of the country and not just Ashford. Planning permission is not required from the Council for the use of a dwelling as a small HMO, defined as being up to six people. Planning permission will normally be required to change the use of a single dwelling to an HMO with seven or more residents. However to control the issues that can arise where there is a concentration of HMO's the Council has confirmed Article 4 Directions in four Wards in Ashford, which are Beaver, Aylesford Green, South Willesborough and Little Burton Farm. This Direction takes away the Permitted Development Rights in these Wards and means that planning permission is required for any HMO in them. As requested by the Planning Committee monitoring continues of any new concentrations of HMO's in other parts of the Borough which are having a damaging impact on the character of an area or the amenities of local residents, and if necessary further Article 4 Directions can be made. When we are aware of the HMO's that require planning permission being set up without planning permission these are investigated and applications sought or enforcement action taken as appropriate. However, HMO's do provide economically priced housing for single people on low incomes and they are an important provision within the local community. The Private Sector Housing Team is responsible for licensing larger HMO's under the Housing Act 2004. This only applies to HMO's with three storeys, where there are two or more households and six or more people in total. Licensing is not a means to control the growth of HMO's and a licence cannot reasonably be withheld if the relevant standards are in place even where planning consent is required and has not been obtained. However, the Housing Department works very closely with the Planning Department to get the planning view on any HMO at all and advises applicants accordingly. So the way I would summarise this in answer to the question is I think HMO's can be a difficult area, not just for Ashford but for any Borough but I do believe that we are on top of it in Ashford."

Supplementary Question by Councillor Chilton

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“I thank the Portfolio Holder for his reply. I supported the Article 4 Direction but one of the problems is we are now seeing in adjacent Wards an increasing number of HMO’s. Mine is included, Singleton South as well. What can we do to restrict HMO’s in those areas where they are starting to blight the community?”

Reply by Councillor Robey

“Well Councillor Chilton as I said I think if you are aware of a problem please let us have it and we can have a look at it. We can impose further Article 4 Directions. I mean it needs to be controlled the imposition of the Directions. We have got the power to do it and we will do if it is justified. So if you give me the examples then I will certainly think of it.”

MINS:CXXX1508

(KRF/VS)

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

Appendix 1

DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2015 - MAY 2016

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

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

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
F 31

Th 24
F 25
M 28
Tu 29 Audit
W 30

OCTOBER 2015

Th 1
F 2
M 5
Tu 6 Standards
W 7
Th 8 Cabinet
F 9
M 12
Tu 13
W 14
Th 15 Council
F 16
M 19
Tu 20
W 21 Planning
Th 22
F 23

JUNE 2015

M 1
Tu 2
W 3 Planning
Th 4
F 5
M 8
Tu 9 Joint Transportation
W 10
Th 11 Cabinet
F 12
M 15
Tu 16
W 17
Th 18
F 19
M 22
T 23 O&S
W 24
Th 25
F 26
M 29
T 30 Audit

AUGUST 2015

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

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

NOVEMBER 2015

M 2
Tu 3
W 4
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm
F 6
M 9
Tu 10
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
F 27
M 30

BANK HOLIDAY

SEPTEMBER 2015

Tu 1
W 2
Th 3 JCC 2.30pm
F 4
M 7
Tu 8 Joint Transportation
W 9
Th 10 Cabinet
F 11
M 14
Tu 15
W 16
Th 17
F 18
M 21
Tu 22 O&S
W 23 Planning

JULY 2015

W 1 Planning
Th 2 JCC 2.30pm
F 3
M 6
Tu 7
W 8
Th 9 Cabinet
F 10 THEAC 9.30am

DECEMBER 2015

Tu 1 Audit
W 2
Th 3 Cabinet
F 4

M 7
Tu 8 Joint Transportation
W 9
Th 10 Council
F 11

M 14
Tu 15 O&S
W 16 Planning
Th 17
F 18

M 21
Tu 22
W 23
Th 24 OFFICES CLOSED
F 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY**

M 28 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 29
W 30
Th 31

JANUARY 2016

F 1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**

M 4
Tu 5
W 6
Th 7 JCC 2.30pm
F 8

M 11
Tu 12
W 13
Th 14 Cabinet
F 15 THEAC 9.30am

M 18 Licensing & H&S 10am
Tu 19
W 20 Planning
Th 21
F 22

M 25
Tu 26 O&S
W 27
Th 28
F 29

FEBRUARY 2016

M 1
Tu 2
W 3
Th 4
F 5

M 8
Tu 9
W 10
Th 11 Cabinet
F 12

M 15
Tu 16
W 17 Planning
Th 18 Council (C Tax)
F 19

M 22
Tu 23 O&S
W 24
Th 25
F 26

M 29

MARCH 2016

Tu 1
W 2
Th 3 JCC 2.30pm
F 4

M 7
Tu 8 Joint Transportation
W 9
Th 10 Cabinet
F 11

M 14
Tu 15 Audit
W 16 Planning
Th 17
F 18

M 21
Tu 22 O&S

W 23
Th 24
F 25 **GOOD FRIDAY**

M 28 **EASTER MONDAY**
Tu 29
W 30
Th 31

APRIL 2016

F 1
M 4
Tu 5
W 6
Th 7
F 8

M 11
Tu 12
W 13
Th 14 Cabinet
F 15

M 18
Tu 19
W 20 Planning
Th 21 Council
F 22

M 25 THEAC
T 26 O&S
W 27
Th 28
F 29

MAY 2016


M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 3 Selection & CR
W 4
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm
F 6

M 9
Tu 10
W 11
Th 12 Cabinet
F 13

M 16
Tu 17
W 18 Planning
Th 19 Council
F 20

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

M 30 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 31

KEY	
O&S	- Overview and Scrutiny
JCC	- Joint Consultative Committee
EN&C	- Environment, Nature & Conservation
THEAC	- Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee
SGGP	- Single Grants Gateway Panel
	= School Holidays

Appendix 2

DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2016 - MAY 2017

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

MAY 2016

M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 3 Selection & CR
 W 4
 Th 5 JCC 2.30pm
 F 6

 M 9
 Tu 10
 W 11
 Th 12 Cabinet
 F 13

 M 16
 Tu 17
 W 18 Planning Council
 Th 19
 F 20

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

M 30 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 31

JUNE 2016

W 1
 Th 2
 F 3

M 6
 Tu 7
 W 8
 Th 9 Cabinet
 F 10

M 13
 Tu 14 Joint Transportation Planning
 W 15
 Th 16
 F 17

M 20
 T 21
 W 22
 Th 23
 F 24

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

JULY 2016

F 1

 M 4
 Tu 5
 W 6
 Th 7 JCC 2.30pm
 F 8

M 11
 Tu 12
 W 13
 Th 14 Cabinet
 F 15 THEAC 9.30am

 M 18
 Tu 19
 W 20 Planning Council
 Th 21
 F 22

 M 25
 T 26 O&S
 W 27
 Th 28
 F 29

AUGUST 2016

M 1
 Tu 2
 W 3
 Th 4
 F 5

M 8
 Tu 9
 W 10
 Th 11 Cabinet
 F 12

M 15
 Tu 16
 W 17
 Th 18 Planning
 F 19

M 22
 Tu 23 O&S
 W 24
 Th 25
 F 26

M 29 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 30
 W 31

SEPTEMBER 2016

Th 1 JCC 2.30pm
 F 2

M 5
 Tu 6
 W 7
 Th 8 Cabinet
 F 9

M 12
 Tu 13 Joint Transportation Planning
 W 14
 Th 15
 F 16

M 19
 Tu 20
 W 21
 Th 22

F 23

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

OCTOBER 2016

M 3
 Tu 4 Standards
 W 5
 Th 6
 F 7

M 10
 Tu 11
 W 12 Cabinet
 Th 13
 F 14

M 17
 Tu 18
 W 19 Planning Council
 Th 20
 F 21

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

M 31 THEAC

NOVEMBER 2016

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

M 21
 Tu 22 O&S
 W 23
 Th 24
 F 25

M 28
 Tu 29
 W 30

DECEMBER 2016

Th 1
F 2

M 5
Tu 6 Audit
W 7
Th 8 Cabinet
F 9

M 12
Tu 13 Joint Transportation
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 **BANK HOLIDAY**
W 28 **OFFICES CLOSED**
Th 29
F 30

JANUARY 2017

M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 3
W 4
Th 5 JCC 2.30pm
F 6

M 9
Tu 10
W 11
Th 12 Cabinet
F 13 THEAC 9.30am

M 16 Licensing & H&S 10am
Tu 17
W 18 Planning
Th 19
F 20

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

M 30
Tu 31

FEBRUARY 2017

W 1
Th 2
F 3

M 6
Tu 7
W 8
Th 9 Cabinet
F 10

M 13
Tu 14
W 15 Planning
Th 16 Council (C Tax)
F 17

M 20
Tu 21
W 22
Th 23
F 24

M 27
Tu 28 O&S

MARCH 2017

W 1
Th 2 JCC 2.30pm
F 3

M 6
Tu 7
W 8
Th 9 Cabinet
F 10

M 13
Tu 14 Joint Transportation
W 15 Planning
Th 16
F 17

M 20
Tu 21 Audit
W 22
Th 23
F 24

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

APRIL 2017

M 3
Tu 4
W 5
Th 6 Cabinet
F 7

M 10
Tu 11
W 12
Th 13
F 14

GOOD FRIDAY

M 17 **EASTER MONDAY**
Tu 18
W 19 Planning
Th 20 Council
F 21

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

MAY 2017

M 1 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 2 Selection & CR
W 3
Th 4 JCC 2.30pm
KCC Elections


F 5

M 8
Tu 9
W 10
Th 11 Cabinet
F 12

M 15
Tu 16
W 17 Planning
Th 18 Council
F 19

M 22
Tu 23 O&S
W 24
Th 25
F 26

M 29 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 30
W 31

KEY	
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