



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 21st April 2016 at 7.00 pm

Yours faithfully

T W Mortimer
Corporate Director (Law and Governance)

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:-** To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document: 1
 - a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)
 - b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)
 - c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests

See Agenda Item 3 for further details
4. To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 18th February 2016
5. To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader or other Members of the Cabinet
6. To receive any petitions
7. 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
8. To receive, consider and adopt the Minutes of the Meetings of the Cabinet held on the 10th March and 14th April 2016 (to follow) 2-10

		Page Nos.
9.	To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Appeals Committee held on the 15 th February 2016	11-12
10.	To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on the 15 th March 2016	13-19
11.	Electoral Review Ashford Borough – Draft Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission on Council Size	20-60
12.	To consider Motions of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 11	
13.	Questions by Members of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 10	

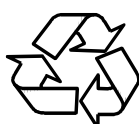
NOTE:- If debate on any item included within this Agenda gives rise to the need to exclude the press and public due to the likelihood of Exempt or Confidential information being disclosed the following resolution may be proposed and seconded and if carried, the press and public will be requested to leave 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 to the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

KRF/AEH
13th April 2016

NOTE: Following the conclusion of the meeting there will be a short presentation from William Wilson, Senior Environmental Health Officer on Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

**Queries concerning this agenda? 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**



Declarations of Interest (see also “Advice to Members” below)

- (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 meeting for that item (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 meeting 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 disclosed under (a) and (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:

- a. Membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
- b. Where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- c. 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 either an OSI or in some cases a DPI].

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/240134/Openness_and_transparency_on_personal_interests.pdf
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, with revisions adopted on 17.10.13, and a copy can be found in the Constitution at <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/part-5---codes-and-protocols>
- (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 Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

Ashford Borough Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **18th February 2016.**

Present:

Her Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Mrs G A Dyer (Chairman);

Cllrs. Aaby, Apps, Mrs Bell, Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Britcher, Burgess, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Farrell, Feacey, Galpin, Hicks, A Howard, W Howard, Knowles, Koowaree, Krause, Link, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Michael, Ovenden, Pickering, Powell, Shorter, Sims, Smith, Waters, Mrs Webb, Wedgbury, White.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Reverend Wilson said prayers.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Barrett, Bartlett, Buchanan, Heyes, Mrs Heyes.

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Operations), Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Planning & Development, Head of Cultural and Project Services, Head of Finance, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Principal Accountant, Senior Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer.

328 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.

329 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Shorter	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a Director of Kent Play Clubs and A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd.	333 (b) & 334

330 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 10th December 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

331 Announcements

(a) The Mayor

The Mayor said she wanted to make her usual announcement about charity events. As Members would be aware each year the Mayor tried to raise funds for charity with the support of as many Councillors as possible. Up to now the levels of support had been slightly disappointing, although one or two Councillors had supported her very well. The recent Burns Night had been a really good evening and raised quite a lot of money, but there had not been many Councillors present. She therefore advised that her 'last fling' was coming up on the 7th May with a Beatles Tribute Evening and she hoped that Councillors would be able to support that event. She reminded the meeting that her charities for the year were Pilgrims Hospice and Find A Voice.

(b) Leader of the Council

The Leader said that the turn of the year had seen positive news with several companies announcing that they were investing in Ashford. Kent Space based on Kingsnorth Industrial Estate provided modern and secure professional serviced office accommodation space. With over two dozen companies and 200 staff based in 37 high quality office suites, they were bringing plans forward to expand their facilities in Ashford due to strong demand and Ashford's buoyant local economy. Those extra facilities would bring in investment worth £5.5m to the town and work was due to start this summer. Another new face came in the form of Recursive Media, an exciting audio visual media and acoustics company with clients such as the Royal Society of Arts, Harrods, the 2012 Olympic Park and the Dubai Shopping Mall in its portfolio. They had relocated to Park Mall from Brighton for one reason – Ashford's unrivalled connectivity with Europe and London. These business investments rather emphasised and reinforced Ashford's position as a welcoming location for economic growth and Ashford remained the best business location in Kent.

With work being completed on the first phase of the new public realm around International House and Dover Place, Ashford would soon see the start of creating a new employment area on the lower part of what was known as the 'Island site' – between the approach to the International Station and Dover Place itself. This had been further enhanced by news that leading Property Regeneration Company U&I planned to bring forward proposals for a £180m investment in regeneration projects close to the town centre. The two schemes across 14 acres at Victoria Way would bring in about 800 homes and over 200 jobs to the local area. The Leader said it was important for the Council to keep the Council Tax as low as possible, and certainly the lowest in Kent, and one of the lowest in the country, in order to help build trust in what they were trying to achieve. This would also help to ensure that Ashford remained in the top 50 best places to live in the UK. He said he was sure colleagues would join him in welcoming these proposals coming forward from the private sector who clearly saw the attractiveness of investing in Ashford. Of course the Council would need to carefully examine any application that came in and ensure that the appropriate planning process was followed as these two important sites must play a huge part in bringing added vitality and life in to the heart of the town centre and must deliver attractive and high quality investment. Parking and other issues such as traffic flows and highway management would need close attention. Along with the

college, commercial quarter, town centre cinema, designer outlet expansion, these sites would play a key part in changing the face of the town in the coming years. These were exciting times for Ashford and could only be described as a full and tremendous positive improvement and this had been mirrored with positive media coverage of the Conservative Administration's plans in the last few weeks' editions of the Kentish Express and other media. In saying all that, he also wished to pay tribute to the two Opposition Group Leaders, who although quite properly had challenged as any Opposition should, had also been fully engaged in the most positive way in the case of these exciting projects to increase the prosperity of Ashford and its residents. All needed to realise that whilst they had made enormous progress as evidenced by the on-site work that as currently underway on some sites and due to start shortly on others, there was still some way to go and all needed to pull together to achieve the whole development of Ashford.

The Leader said that one such project making its mark on the town centre was the revitalisation of Park Mall Shopping Centre. Since making the purchase last year the Council had been working hard to improve the look and feel of the centre and attract people with its emerging quality led independent offer. The footfall figures constantly indicated that Park Mall was boasting a marked increase on previous years with a 6.8% increase for January which was particularly noteworthy given the traditionally quiet period after Christmas. The quality independent retailers including Emporia Fabric and Crafts, Happy and Glorious, Glam R Us, PJ Produce and the collection of start-ups who occupied Made in Ashford all added to that mix. These new retailers were all on loveashford.com, Ashford's digital high street where the latest information on town centre businesses could be found and special offers be accessed. However, the success of Park Mall was not just about new traders. Existing traders were noting an increase in sales figures since the Council's initiatives began with Wilkos noting an uplift in paying customers every single week. Several traders had approached the Council about renewing their leases such as Blossom Hair, Games Workshop and others who were due to come and see the Council shortly. Initiatives that the Council had put in place such as loveashford.com, T-CAT, free parking and investing in the appearance of Park Mall were all paying obvious dividends even at this early stage. There was of course more to do and they would continue with this task.

Two important community facilities were also set to make a difference in their local areas. These were the community centre at Kennington and the new facility proposed for Repton Park. He knew that the residents of Kennington had waited a long time for their new centre and the new facility at the Repton development should have happened earlier. With everything that was going on, largely in the centre of Ashford, it was all too easy to lose focus on the Borough's large rural area with its beautiful rural town and villages. They must re-double efforts to do a number of things in the rural area, not least of which faster speed broadband to the hard to reach areas meaning broadband across the entire Borough of Ashford. There were also other challenges such as the Boundary Commission's Review of Wards and distribution of electors and the Council was looking forward to how it may be able to work more closely with others to provide better and more cost effective services.

Finally, the Leader said he wanted to mention the Council's Chief Executive, John Bunnett who would be leaving his role to move to the private sector and the Head of Cultural and Project Services, Mark Carty who would be retiring after more than 25 years' service at Ashford. Ashford Borough Council would soon have a new Chief

Executive and would have to deal with organisational changes that would need to be in following these senior staff changes. In November last year John had announced he was standing down as Chief Executive of Ashford Borough Council after six very hectic years in the post where he had worked tirelessly to attract significant inward investment to Ashford. With John's move and the fact that Mark would also be leaving after serving the Borough in an exemplary manner for over 25 years, Cabinet Members and Senior Officers had been working to ensure as smooth a transition as possible and to assess the challenges that lay ahead for the organisation both internally and externally. These included the need to ensure stability, the need to maintain focus on key priorities, and to assess what impact devolution and future working arrangements for Local Government in Kent may have on this Council. Cabinet therefore believed that Tracey Kerly was the best candidate to take the organisation forward, ensuring a seamless transition and to help maintain the excellent progress the Council had achieved in recent years. As this was the last Full Council meeting for both John and Mark he felt it was fitting to extend an invitation to all Members and Officers present to join him in a small personal reception in Committee Rooms 1 and 2 following this meeting, where colleagues could say a personal thank you to them both.

332 Licensing and Health and Safety Committee – 25th January 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee held on the 25th January 2016 be approved and adopted.

333 Cabinet – 14th January and 11th February 2016

The Mayor's Briefing Note, which had been tabled, clarified the procedure for consideration of the Cabinet minutes.

(a) Cabinet – 14th January 2016

Resolved:

That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 14th January 2016 be received and noted with the exception of Minute No. 274.

(ii) Minute No. 274 be approved and adopted.

(b) Cabinet – 11th February 2016

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Crompton, a local resident spoke on Minute No. 305. He said the item referred to the Council's performance with regard to disabled adaptations. This had been a topic he had expressed an interest in for the last ten years as some Members may remember. He had previously rebuked the Council for what he viewed as its shortcomings in terms of the finance it provided for disabled adaptations. According to the Council's website, it said that "as far as was reasonably practicable the Council would ensure that all those entitled to a

mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) would have the opportunity to apply for and receive this grant". At the Cabinet meeting on 10th July 2014 Members had agreed to adopt some policy changes with regard to disabled adaptation work for Council tenants which restricted the eligibility criteria in certain cases e.g. those tenants significantly under occupying properties. He said that Council tenants had the right to a mandatory grant and the Council had the legal obligation to fund adaptation of Council properties through its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and if a Council tenant applied for a DFG all the Council had to do was transfer the funds from the HRA to the DFG fund, there was in effect no choice. He considered that the upshot of adopting the policy changes in July 2014 had been that 25 tenants on the waiting list in summer 2014 had been advised that they could not have adaptations work done. He considered this was unlawful and institutional discrimination. The total value of that work that had been refused was £98,000, but the report also advised that as a matter of working practice, when refurbishing bathrooms in designated older persons' accommodation such as sheltered dwellings and haven bungalows, the Council installed flush floor showers. In 2014/15 the Council had installed 53 such bathrooms at a cost of £240,000. A further 102 bathrooms had been scheduled for work in 2015/16 at an estimated cost of £560,000, with a further £95,000 estimated to be spent in 2016/17, providing another 17 wet rooms. Mr Crompton said that these had all been included within the Council's planned programme works, but none of those people had applied for a disabled adaptation and he thought the Council was providing adaptations for people who did not need them. Those people might have been happy to keep a bath and if they did not have a need then he considered they should not be given wet rooms, especially ahead of those people who had been refused work that they actually needed. Needs had to be met and it should not be about what the Council wanted to pay for but what people needed. Mr Crompton said he had complained to the Head of Housing some time ago in response to something that appeared in the Council's Housing News, which stated that "although at present the Council spends £200,000 a year on disabled adaptations for tenants, the available budget simply cannot keep pace with demand. We are doing all we can but some people will have to wait some time to get their recommended work done." He said that where adaptations had been recommended this had come from Occupational Therapists assessing need and case law suggested that a corporate failure to act on reports of Occupational Therapists would expose the Council to large fines for failing to meet those needs.

Councillor Clokie, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Home Ownership, said that he could obviously not comment on individual cases but with regard to DFG's the Council had spent a great deal of money. He said that the Council placed a great deal of importance on delivering the best service possible for disabled people in need of assistance with adaptations to their home within the Borough. Generally this would either be via the DFG, which was a means tested mandatory grant or alternatively via the adaptations budget included within the HRA for Council tenants. This year so far a total of 415 households had benefited from adaptations work from either DFG's or Council house adaptations at a total spend of £1,360,000. The Council was always striving to improve efficiency to help as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Officers were confident that the processes and procedures utilised to achieve this followed the law and took into account the guidance issued to deliver the most efficient method of providing help to disabled people. A great deal of the requests came through Occupational Therapists as opposed to the individual.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 11th February 2016 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 303, 304, 308, 310 and 315.**
- (ii) Minute Nos. 304, 308, 310 and 315 be approved and adopted.**
- (iii) the recommendations in Minute No. 303 be deferred for consideration as part of the agenda item dealing with the Budget and Council Tax Resolutions 2016/17.**

Following approval of Minute No. 310, the Mayor said she wished to congratulate Tracey Kerly on her appointment as Chief Executive.

334 Council Tax 2016/17 Resolutions and General Fund Budget and Minute Number 303

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Crompton, a local resident spoke on this item. He said that the Council had been very efficient in keeping the Council Tax down but wondered at what cost this had been to disabled people. He had met with Officers of the Council and given them copies of the relevant case law. He then read from this which stated “save the extent expressly authorised or required by the Act of 1996 to have regard to resources, Local Housing Authorities are not entitled to take resources into account when deciding whether or not to approve a DFG. In the Act of 1996 Parliament chose to downgrade statutory duties with regard to the approval of four types of grants, with the exception of DFG’s. In the decision to treat those DFG’s differently it recognised the importance of obliging Local Housing Authorities to approve grants for disabled occupants whose applications fulfilled the purposes of Section 23(1). Lord Browne-Wilkinson had concluded that Parliament has chosen to impose a statutory duty with regard to DFG’s in relation to Section 23(1) purposes and the Court should be very slow to downgrade such a duty to a mere discretion over which the Court would have very little control. If Parliament wishes to re-direct public expenditure on meeting the needs of disabled occupants and their building then it is for Parliament to so provide”. He considered it was clear that everyone had to follow what Parliament said and the Council should not take a lack of resources into account. The Officer concerned had read this and said that whilst he accepted and understood that resources could not be taken into account, in the ‘real world’ they were. Mr Crompton considered that ‘the real world’ was the people of Ashford. If people did not meet their obligations to the Council they would have no hesitation in taking them to Court, and that unfortunately is what would happen to the Council regarding disabled adaptations. He believed the Council was ‘penny wise and pound foolish’ as the cost of paying compensation to people who were entitled to these grants and were refused was going to be phenomenal. The Council needed to ask itself why they were undertaking adaptations for people who had never been assessed but were refusing to adapt homes for people who were in need.

In response Councillor Clokie said he recognised Mr Crompton’s comments on the need to spend more on disabled adaptations, but he was pleased to confirm that over the years as a good landlord, Ashford Borough Council had considerably

increased its spend and budgets to meet the growing demand for the needs of disabled people.

In terms of adaptations to Council tenancies, Council Members had supported increases to the budget year on year from £376,000 in 2013/14 to £729,000 for the financial year (2016/17), which was a significant increase in resources to assist tenants with an identified need for adaptations. In addition the revised budget this year for Disabled Facilities Grant was approximately £570,000 and was on target to be fully spent this year. Apart from the 93 cases the Council was already working with in the year, there were a further 88 cases waiting for a DFG with the average grant coming in at around £7,000. Several of those waiting may decide not to proceed with a grant and they were confident that next year's budget would cater for a significant proportion of those cases still waiting.

The Leader of the Council proposed

"That the budget recommendations as set out in Minute No. 303 of the Cabinet and the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2016/17 be approved"

This was seconded.

The Leader also advised that in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.4A a recorded vote was required to be taken on the budget recommendations.

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 that the Budget Scrutiny Task Group had found the budget to be achievable and balanced. He wanted to thank all of those who served on the Task Group and advised that the Committee commended the budget to the Council.

A recorded vote was then taken on the motion and the Members voted as follows: -

For: Councillors Aaby, Apps, Mrs Bell, Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Britcher, Burgess, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Mrs Dyer, Farrell, Feacey, Galpin, Hicks, A Howard, W Howard, Knowles, Koowaree, Krause, Link, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Michael, Ovenden, Pickering, Powell, Shorter, Sims, Smith, Waters, Mrs Webb, Wedgbury, White.

Votes For 37

Against: None

Votes Against 0

Abstentions: None

Abstentions 0

Resolved:

That (i) the Budget for 2016/17 as recommended by the Cabinet in Minute No. 303 be approved.

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

1. It be noted that on 3rd December 2015 the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2016/17
 - a) for the whole Council area as **43,750** [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. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£6,562,500 (Tables F and G)**.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

£

- | | | |
|-----|------------|---|
| (a) | 95,505,022 | 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) | 87,547,900 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. |
| (c) | 7,957,122 | 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) | 181.88 | being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1a 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) | 1,394,622 | 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) | 150.00 | being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1a 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 and E) |

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	579.80		Little Chart	123.70
Appledore	321.80		Mersham and Sevington	637.10
Bethersden	701.50		Molash	103.80
Biddenden	1,086.90		Newenden	103.20
Bilsington	147.90		Orlestone	559.90
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,043.90		Pluckley	468.80
Brabourne	590.10		Rolvenden	679.10
Brook	152.20		Ruckinge	317.70
Challock	405.40		Shadoxhurst	497.50
Charing	1,258.30		Smarden	620.50
Chilham	740.50		Smeeth	357.00
Crundale (PM)	92.50		Stanhope	782.50
Egerton	502.70		Stone	200.60
Godmersham	176.40		Tenterden (TC)	3,438.50
Great Chart with Singleton	2,420.20		Warehorne	176.70
Hastingleigh	114.70		Westwell	319.50
High Halden	715.50		Wittersham	525.30
Hothfield	287.10		Woodchurch	829.70
Kenardington	106.10		Wye with Hinxhill	1,045.30
Kingsnorth	4,334.50			

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Table B

PARISH	Parish Precept		PARISH	Parish Precept
Aldington & Bonnington	27,265		Little Chart	6,000
Appledore	26,000		Mersham and Sevington	15,340
Bethersden	22,420		Molash	4,000
Biddenden	49,789		Newenden	5,080
Bilsington	7,460		Orlestone	20,300
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	26,280		Pluckley	44,000
Brabourne	18,000		Rolvenden	21,845
Brook	6,940		Ruckinge	8,500
Challock	15,720		Shadoxhurst	14,000
Charing	80,073		Smarden	27,140
Chilham	26,384		Smeeth	15,526
Crundale (PM)	200		Stanhope	16,210
Egerton	17,402		Stone	5,500
Godmersham	5,830		Tenterden (TC)	368,093
Great Chart with Singleton	152,726		Warehorne	3,500
Hastingleigh	2,965		Westwell	15,450
High Halden	33,054		Wittersham	22,255
Hothfield	9,500		Woodchurch	21,800
Kenardington	4,840		Wye with Hinxhill	85,795
Kingsnorth	141,950			

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Table C

BILLING AUTHORITY PART OF COUNCIL TAX 2016/17

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	131.35	153.24	175.13	197.02	240.80	284.59	328.37	394.04
Appledore	153.87	179.51	205.15	230.80	282.09	333.38	384.67	461.60
Bethersden	121.31	141.53	161.74	181.96	222.39	262.83	303.27	363.92
Biddenden	130.54	152.30	174.05	195.81	239.32	282.84	326.35	391.62
Bilsington	133.63	155.90	178.17	200.44	244.98	289.53	334.07	400.88
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	116.78	136.25	155.70	175.17	214.09	253.03	291.95	350.34
Brabourne	120.33	140.39	160.44	180.50	220.61	260.73	300.83	361.00
Brook	130.40	152.14	173.86	195.60	239.06	282.54	326.00	391.20
Challock	125.85	146.83	167.80	188.78	230.73	272.69	314.63	377.56
Charing	142.43	166.17	189.90	213.64	261.11	308.59	356.07	427.28
Chilham	123.75	144.38	165.00	185.63	226.88	268.14	309.38	371.26
Crundale (PM)	101.44	118.35	135.25	152.16	185.97	219.79	253.60	304.32
Egerton	123.08	143.60	164.10	184.62	225.64	266.68	307.70	369.24
Godmersham	122.03	142.38	162.71	183.05	223.72	264.41	305.08	366.10
Great Chart with Singleton	142.07	165.75	189.42	213.10	260.45	307.81	355.17	426.20
Hastingleigh	117.23	136.78	156.31	175.85	214.92	254.01	293.08	351.70
High Halden	130.80	152.60	174.40	196.20	239.80	283.40	327.00	392.40
Hothfield	122.06	142.41	162.74	183.09	223.77	264.47	305.15	366.18
Kenardington	130.41	152.15	173.88	195.62	239.09	282.57	326.03	391.24
Kingsnorth	121.83	142.14	162.44	182.75	223.36	263.98	304.58	365.50
Little Chart	132.33	154.39	176.44	198.50	242.61	286.73	330.83	397.00
Mersham and Sevington	116.05	135.40	154.73	174.08	212.76	251.45	290.13	348.16
Molash	125.69	146.65	167.59	188.54	230.43	272.34	314.23	377.08
Newenden	132.81	154.95	177.08	199.22	243.49	287.77	332.03	398.44
Orlestone	124.17	144.87	165.56	186.26	227.65	269.05	310.43	372.52
Pluckley	162.57	189.67	216.76	243.86	298.05	352.25	406.43	487.72
Rolvenden	121.45	141.69	161.93	182.17	222.65	263.14	303.62	364.34
Ruckinge	117.83	137.48	157.11	176.75	216.02	255.31	294.58	353.50
Shadoxhurst	118.76	138.56	158.34	178.14	217.72	257.32	296.90	356.28
Smarden	129.16	150.69	172.21	193.74	236.79	279.85	322.90	387.48
Smeeth	128.99	150.50	171.99	193.49	236.48	279.49	322.48	386.98
Stanhope	113.81	132.79	151.75	170.72	208.65	246.60	284.53	341.44
Stone	118.28	138.00	157.70	177.42	216.84	256.28	295.70	354.84
Tenterden (TC)	171.37	199.93	228.49	257.05	314.17	371.30	428.42	514.10
Warehorne	113.21	132.08	150.94	169.81	207.54	245.28	283.02	339.62
Westwell	132.24	154.28	176.32	198.36	242.44	286.52	330.60	396.72
Wittersham	128.25	149.62	170.99	192.37	235.12	277.87	320.62	384.74
Woodchurch	117.51	137.10	156.68	176.27	215.44	254.62	293.78	352.54
Wye with Hinxhill	154.39	180.13	205.85	231.59	283.05	334.52	385.98	463.18
Unparished Area	100.00	116.67	133.33	150.00	183.33	216.67	250.00	300.00

Table D**Council Tax Charge per Band**

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	1,036.48	1,209.23	1,381.97	1,554.72	1,900.21	2,245.71	2,591.20	3,109.44
Appledore	1,059.00	1,235.50	1,411.99	1,588.50	1,941.50	2,294.50	2,647.50	3,177.00
Bethersden	1,026.44	1,197.52	1,368.58	1,539.66	1,881.80	2,223.95	2,566.10	3,079.32
Biddenden	1,035.67	1,208.29	1,380.89	1,553.51	1,898.73	2,243.96	2,589.18	3,107.02
Bilsington	1,038.76	1,211.89	1,385.01	1,558.14	1,904.39	2,250.65	2,596.90	3,116.28
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,021.91	1,192.24	1,362.54	1,532.87	1,873.50	2,214.15	2,554.78	3,065.74
Brabourne	1,025.46	1,196.38	1,367.28	1,538.20	1,880.02	2,221.85	2,563.66	3,076.40
Brook	1,035.53	1,208.13	1,380.70	1,553.30	1,898.47	2,243.66	2,588.83	3,106.60
Challock	1,030.98	1,202.82	1,374.64	1,546.48	1,890.14	2,233.81	2,577.46	3,092.96
Charing	1,047.56	1,222.16	1,396.74	1,571.34	1,920.52	2,269.71	2,618.90	3,142.68
Chilham	1,028.88	1,200.37	1,371.84	1,543.33	1,886.29	2,229.26	2,572.21	3,086.66
Crundale (PM)	1,006.57	1,174.34	1,342.09	1,509.86	1,845.38	2,180.91	2,516.43	3,019.72
Egerton	1,028.21	1,199.59	1,370.94	1,542.32	1,885.05	2,227.80	2,570.53	3,084.64
Godmersham	1,027.16	1,198.37	1,369.55	1,540.75	1,883.13	2,225.53	2,567.91	3,081.50
Great Chart with Singleton	1,047.20	1,221.74	1,396.26	1,570.80	1,919.86	2,268.93	2,618.00	3,141.60
Hastingleigh	1,022.36	1,192.77	1,363.15	1,533.55	1,874.33	2,215.13	2,555.91	3,067.10
High Halden	1,035.93	1,208.59	1,381.24	1,553.90	1,899.21	2,244.52	2,589.83	3,107.80
Hothfield	1,027.19	1,198.40	1,369.58	1,540.79	1,883.18	2,225.59	2,567.98	3,081.58
Kenardington	1,035.54	1,208.14	1,380.72	1,553.32	1,898.50	2,243.69	2,588.86	3,106.64
Kingsnorth	1,026.96	1,198.13	1,369.28	1,540.45	1,882.77	2,225.10	2,567.41	3,080.90
Little Chart	1,037.46	1,210.38	1,383.28	1,556.20	1,902.02	2,247.85	2,593.66	3,112.40
Mersham and Sevington	1,021.18	1,191.39	1,361.57	1,531.78	1,872.17	2,212.57	2,552.96	3,063.56
Molash	1,030.82	1,202.64	1,374.43	1,546.24	1,889.84	2,233.46	2,577.06	3,092.48
Newenden	1,037.94	1,210.94	1,383.92	1,556.92	1,902.90	2,248.89	2,594.86	3,113.84
Orlestone	1,029.30	1,200.86	1,372.40	1,543.96	1,887.06	2,230.17	2,573.26	3,087.92
Pluckley	1,067.70	1,245.66	1,423.60	1,601.56	1,957.46	2,313.37	2,669.26	3,203.12
Rolvenden	1,026.58	1,197.68	1,368.77	1,539.87	1,882.06	2,224.26	2,566.45	3,079.74
Ruckinge	1,022.96	1,193.47	1,363.95	1,534.45	1,875.43	2,216.43	2,557.41	3,068.90
Shadoxhurst	1,023.89	1,194.55	1,365.18	1,535.84	1,877.13	2,218.44	2,559.73	3,071.68
Smarden	1,034.29	1,206.68	1,379.05	1,551.44	1,896.20	2,240.97	2,585.73	3,102.88
Smeeth	1,034.12	1,206.49	1,378.83	1,551.19	1,895.89	2,240.61	2,585.31	3,102.38
Stanhope	1,018.94	1,188.78	1,358.59	1,528.42	1,868.06	2,207.72	2,547.36	3,056.84
Stone	1,023.41	1,193.99	1,364.54	1,535.12	1,876.25	2,217.40	2,558.53	3,070.24
Tenterden (TC)	1,076.50	1,255.92	1,435.33	1,614.75	1,973.58	2,332.42	2,691.25	3,229.50
Warehorne	1,018.34	1,188.07	1,357.78	1,527.51	1,866.95	2,206.40	2,545.85	3,055.02
Westwell	1,037.37	1,210.27	1,383.16	1,556.06	1,901.85	2,247.64	2,593.43	3,112.12
Wittersham	1,033.38	1,205.61	1,377.83	1,550.07	1,894.53	2,238.99	2,583.45	3,100.14
Woodchurch	1,022.64	1,193.09	1,363.52	1,533.97	1,874.85	2,215.74	2,556.61	3,067.94
Wye with Hinxhill	1,059.52	1,236.12	1,412.69	1,589.29	1,942.46	2,295.64	2,648.81	3,178.58
Unparished Area	1,005.13	1,172.66	1,340.17	1,507.70	1,842.74	2,177.79	2,512.83	3,015.40

Table E

Breakdown of Council Tax per authority

Precepting Authority	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Ashford Borough Council	100.00	116.67	133.33	150.00	183.33	216.67	250.00	300.00
Kent County Council	755.70	881.65	1,007.60	1,133.55	1,385.45	1,637.35	1,889.25	2,267.10
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	101.43	118.34	135.24	152.15	185.96	219.77	253.58	304.30
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority	48.00	56.00	64.00	72.00	88.00	104.00	120.00	144.00

Table F

CALCULATION OF THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND COUNCIL TAX AT BAND D	
	£
Gross Expenditure - General Fund	63,601,050
Gross Expenditure - HRA	30,509,350
Parish Precepts	<u>1,394,622</u>
	95,505,022
Less Gross Income	(78,546,750)
	<u>(78,546,750)</u>
NET EXPENDITURE	16,958,272
Add Deficit Distribution from Collection Fund	0
New Homes Bonus	(3,782,820)
Retained Business Rates	(3,410,410)
Government Grant (RSG and S31 grants)	<u>(1,807,920)</u>
	(9,001,150)
BUDGET REQUIREMENT	7,957,122
Less Parish Precepts	(1,394,622)
Council Tax Requirement	<u><u>6,562,500</u></u>
Council Tax Base	43,750
Band 'D' Council Tax	150.00
Average including Parishes	181.88

Table G

REVENUE BUDGET				
SUMMARY				
Actuals 2014/15 £	Budget 2015/16 £	Projected Outturn 2015/16 £	Detail	Estimate 2016/17 £
1,295,520	1,180,610	1,226,610	Corporate, Strategy & Personnel	1,270,720
1,233,907	1,402,300	1,395,230	Legal & Democratic	1,477,660
1,748,960	1,821,590	1,821,180	Planning & Development	1,995,050
2,101,070	2,167,130	2,167,080	Financial Services	2,554,620
160,623	359,740	395,110	Human Resources and Technology	291,010
775,617	888,690	903,250	Housing Services	915,710
451,022	891,010	838,450	Health, Parking & Community Safety	882,700
4,450,502	4,627,570	4,562,760	Environment and Customer Services	4,821,510
(936,132)	(1,060,370)	(1,049,960)	Corporate Property & Projects	(1,512,060)
2,788,256	3,015,240	3,095,840	Culture & the Environment	2,713,130
14,069,346	15,293,510	15,355,550	Service Expenditure	15,410,050
(1,694,370)	(2,106,200)	(2,106,200)	Capital Charges & Net Interest	(1,475,830)
50,180	40,260	40,260	Concurrent Functions Grant	30,260
237,227	241,000	241,000	Levies	241,000
2,357,724	265,120	248,120	Contribution to Balances	1,316,670
15,020,107	13,733,690	13,778,730	ABC Budget Requirement	15,522,150
			Income	
(2,947,755)	(2,106,830)	(2,106,830)	Government Grant	(1,269,920)
(2,183,239)	(2,628,370)	(2,628,370)	Retained Business Rates	(3,410,410)
(953,730)	(554,000)	(554,000)	Business Rates S31 Grants	(538,000)
(2,875,218)	(2,324,000)	(2,339,000)	New Homes Bonus	(3,782,820)
62,110	41,500	41,500	Parish CTS Payment	41,500
(6,105,813)	(6,161,990)	(6,161,990)	Council Tax	(6,562,500)
16,462	0	30,040	Budget Gap	0

335 Selection & Constitutional Review Committee – 11th February 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Selection & Constitutional Review Committee held on the 11th February 2016 be approved and adopted.

336 Standards Committee – 25th January 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 25th January 2016 be received and noted.

337 Annual Report of the Council's Monitoring Officer 2015

Resolved:

That the Annual Report of the Council's Monitoring Officer be received and noted.

338 Programme of Meetings 2016/17 and 2017/18

Councillor Wedgbury said this item concerned him as parents with children had no choice but to take holidays during school holidays, particularly half term and this would result in them potentially missing Council meetings because the alternative was receiving a fine from the school for taking their children out during term time. He considered it inappropriate to hold Committee meetings during the half term holidays and asked for those meetings to be moved.

The Leader responded that it was difficult to move meetings around too much because of particular timescales that had to be adhered to. Having had children and grandchildren he had great sympathy over the issue of school holidays, especially as opportunistic travel companies put the cost of holidays up greatly during school holiday periods. His view was that if Members wished to take their children away in the school holidays, then this was far more important than missing the odd Committee meeting because he was sure they would be able to catch up with what they had missed quite easily. Therefore he would encourage all Members to take their children away and enjoy their company and not worry about Council meetings, and people would be very forgiving of the odd meeting that may be missed.

Resolved:

That the Programme of Meetings for 2016/17 and 2017/18 as appended to these Minutes be adopted.

339 Questions by Members of which Notice Had Been Given

- (a) Question from Councillor Wedgbury to Councillor Clarkson, Leader of the Council.**

"Could the Leader join me in congratulating Ashford United for reaching the Quarter Finals of the FA Vase competition, leaving them just two ties away from a final at Wembley Stadium?"

Reply by Councillor Clarkson

"Having been an avid fan of all sports as a youngster including rugby and football when I used to go to and watch Chelsea at home one week and Fulham at home the other in the days of Jimmy Greaves at Chelsea and Johnny Haynes at Fulham, I would be delighted to applaud the efforts of Ashford United Football Club. I think it is a great achievement to have got through to the phase they are in now. As a bit of background they have played at the Homelands Stadium since it was built in 1989 and the record attendance at that ground had been 3363 for a match against, would you believe, Fulham, in the FA Cup First Round in 1994/95? Their largest ever attendance was at the old Essella Park ground when they had 6500 spectators against Crystal Palace in the FA Cup First Round in 1959/60. The year 1959

particular resonates with me as my wife is in the public gallery tonight and that is the year we got married and the only other thing I can tell you about that day is that Oxo won the Grand National on the same day and I got first, second and third in that race. So when my beloved wife was coming down the aisle with her father, he leaned across to me and said "you've had a good day, you've got first, second and third" and I thought great! If I was being mischievous I may say that it was the last lucky thing that happened to me, but after 56 years of marriage I just look back on that with fondness. So, I am sure that all in the Chamber are happy with their success and we wish them very well indeed for the next round".

Supplementary Question by Councillor Wedgbury

"Ashford has competed in this competition with 550 teams from across the country from as far away places as Cornwall and Gateshead so it is a massive achievement to reach the last eight of the competition. So would the Leader join me in requesting that the Mayor write to the club congratulating them on their achievement?"

Reply by Councillor Clarkson

"I would be delighted to recommend to the Mayor that a letter be written from the First Citizen of the Borough to the Football Club and I am sure Madam Mayor would be delighted to do so."

Her Worshipful the Mayor said she would certainly do that.

(DS)

MINS: CXXX1607

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
PCC ELECTIONS

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

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
 W 15 Planning
 Th 16 Audit
 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

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

M 25
 T 26 O&S
 W 27 Parish & Urban Frm
 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 Planning
 Th 18
 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
 W 14 Planning
 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
 W 5
 Th 6
 F 7

M 10
 Tu 11
 W 12
 Th 13 Cabinet
 F 14

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

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

M 31

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

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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

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 Standards

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 Planning
Th 13
F 14 **GOOD FRIDAY**

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

M 24
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

O&S - Overview and Scrutiny

JCC - Joint Consultative Committee

 = School Holidays

DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2017 - MAY 2018

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

MAY 2017

M	1	BANK HOLIDAY	Tu	11	
Tu	2	Selection & CR	W	12	
W	3		Th	13	Cabinet
Th	4	JCC 2.30pm KCC ELECTIONS	F	14	
F	5		M	17	
M	8		Tu	18	
Tu	9		W	19	Planning
W	10		Th	20	Council
Th	11	Cabinet	F	21	
F	12		M	24	
M	15		T	25	O&S
Tu	16		W	26	
W	17	Planning	Th	27	
Th	18	Council	F	28	
F	19		M	31	

AUGUST 2017

M	22		Tu	1	
Tu	23	O&S	W	2	
W	24		Th	3	
Th	25		F	4	
F	26		M	7	
M	29	BANK HOLIDAY	Tu	8	
Tu	30		W	9	
W	31		Th	10	Cabinet
			F	11	

JUNE 2017

Th	1		M	14	
F	2		Tu	15	
M	5		W	16	Planning
Tu	6		Th	17	
W	7		F	18	
Th	8	Cabinet	M	21	
F	9		Tu	22	O&S
M	12		W	23	
Tu	13	Joint Transportation	Th	24	
W	14	Planning	F	25	
Th	15	Audit	M	28	BANK HOLIDAY
F	16		Tu	29	
M	19		W	30	
T	20		Th	31	

SEPTEMBER 2017

W	28		F	1	
Th	29	Audit	M	4	
F	30		Tu	5	
M	3		W	6	
Tu	4		Th	7	JCC 2.30pm
W	5		F	8	
Th	6	JCC 2.30pm	M	11	
F	7		Tu	12	Joint Transportation
M	10		W	13	
			Th	14	Cabinet
			F	15	
			M	18	
			Tu	19	
			W	20	Planning
			Th	21	

F	22	
M	25	
Tu	26	O&S
W	27	
Th	28	Audit
F	29	

OCTOBER 2017

M	2	
Tu	3	
W	4	
Th	5	
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	
Tu	31	

NOVEMBER 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	
W	15	Planning
Th	16	
F	17	
M	20	
Tu	21	
W	22	
Th	23	
F	24	
M	27	
Tu	28	O&S
W	29	
Th	30	

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DECEMBER 2017

F 1
M 4
Tu 5 Audit
W 6
Th 7 Cabinet
F 8
M 11
Tu 12 Joint Transportation
W 13 Planning
Th 14 Council
F 15
M 18
Tu 19 O&S
W 20
Th 21
F 22
M 25 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 26 **BANK HOLIDAY**
W 27 **OFFICES CLOSED**
Th 28
F 29

JANUARY 2018

M 1 **BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu 2
W 3
Th 4 JCC 2.30pm
F 5
M 8
Tu 9
W 10
Th 11 Cabinet
F 12
M 15 Licensing & H&S 10am
Tu 16
W 17 Planning
Th 18
F 19
M 22
Tu 23 O&S
W 24
Th 25
F 26
M 29
Tu 30 Standards
W 31

FEBRUARY 2018

Th 1
F 2
M 5
Tu 6
W 7
Th 8 Cabinet
F 9
M 12
Tu 13
W 14 Planning

Th 15 Council (C Tax)
F 16

M 19
Tu 20
W 21
Th 22
F 23
M 26
Tu 27 O&S
W 28

MARCH 2018

Th 1 JCC 2.30pm
F 2
M 5
Tu 6
W 7
Th 8 Cabinet
F 9
M 12
Tu 13 Joint Transportation
W 14 Planning
Th 15
F 16

M 19
Tu 20 Audit
W 21
Th 22
F 23

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

APRIL 2018

M 2 **EASTER MONDAY**
Tu 3
W 4
Th 5
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

MAY 2018

Tu 1 Selection & CR
W 2
Th 3 JCC 2.30pm
F 4

BANK HOLIDAY

M 7
Tu 8
W 9
Th 10 Cabinet
F 11


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

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

BANK HOLIDAY

M 28
Tu 29
W 30
Th 31

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 **10th March 2016**

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman in the Chair);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Galpin, Heyes, Miss Martin, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Britcher, Clarkson, Smith

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bradford, Buchanan, Burgess, Hicks, Krause, Link, Michael, Ovenden, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Environment and Cultural Services, Communications and Marketing Manager, Cultural Projects Manager, Head of Personnel and Development, Head of Housing, Arts and Cultural Industries Manager, Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager, Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety, Head of Environment and Customer Services, Facility Development Manager, Community Safety Operations Manager, Head of Finance, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

357 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Hicks	Announced an 'Other Significant Interest' in respect of Agenda Item 9 as she had been appointed by the Council to the Ashford Leisure Trust. She read a statement and then left the meeting for the debate and the vote.	363
Wedgbury	Made a "Voluntary Announcement" as he was a member of the Kent County Council.	361

358 Minutes

Resolved:

That subject to the inclusion of the Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development) in the list of Officers present at the meeting, the Minutes of the meeting of the

Cabinet held on the 11th February 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

359 Leader's Announcements

The Deputy Leader advised that he wished to share with colleagues an item of good news for the Borough. He explained that the Council had learned that day that it had been successful in bidding for funding in the second round of the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund (CASSH) and had been awarded £1.92 million towards the cost of providing care ready homes at Danemore in Tenterden. The Deputy Leader further explained that Ashford had been the only successful bid for such funding in Kent. The Fund, which had been first launched in 2012 by the Department of Health and the Homes and Communities Agency, aimed to support the development of specialised housing for older people and adults with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health needs. A total of 79 schemes were set to receive around £84.2 million to develop up to 2,000 affordable homes. The Deputy Leader advised that housing built under this Fund helped people to remain independent for as long as possible in a home suited to their needs. It therefore continued to play a major part in helping reduce costs and dependencies in other parts of the public sector. This success followed on from the £3.6 m the Council had been awarded from the first round of bids to this Fund which had helped with the redevelopment of Farrow Court and was yet another illustration of how Ashford was ahead of the game when it came to being "business ready for housing".

The Deputy Leader then said that colleagues may well have read a recent report in the local media regarding potential cuts to rural bus services. He said that he was sure that all were concerned about the possible consequences on the Borough's rural communities and explained that he had personally received calls from several residents in his Ward who had expressed their concerns. He advised that the Borough Council was fully aware of the importance of bus services, especially to the rural parts of the Borough, in particular as Ashford was the most rural Borough in the County. He said that the Council understood the budgetary pressures which faced Kent County Council and Ashford would look to work closely with them and the voluntary sector to see what could be done to ensure that rural communities could continue to benefit from those vital services. The Deputy Leader understood that KCC would be running a consultation on this matter shortly and the Council would be responding to the consultation in due course after careful consideration of all the options.

360 Memorial Safety in Burial Grounds

The report outlined the duties and responsibilities with regard to the safety of memorials in burial grounds and recommended that the Council update its approach to the testing and inspection of memorials and to develop a forward plan.

The Portfolio Holder explained that it was essential on health and safety grounds that the work be undertaken and she said that it was important that this message be communicated to the public. She advised that a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet in the Autumn following the initial survey.

In response to a comment from a Member, the Portfolio Holder explained that she was aware of the issues that had arisen the last time the Council had endeavoured to take this matter forward and explained that technologies were now in place which allowed memorials to be safely and uniformly assessed. However, the Portfolio Holder could not guarantee that it would not be necessary to lay any memorial stones flat.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the current position with regard to memorial testing and inspection be noted.**
 - (ii) the updated policy and operational procedures as set out in Appendix 1 of the report for the inspection and safe management of memorials be adopted.**
 - (iii) the following words be added to delegation 17.1 (f):**

“...and such closed burial grounds that are now, or subsequently become, the responsibility of the Council”.
 - (iv) a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in the Autumn following the initial survey, with findings, initial costs and proposed changes to the Cemetery Rules and Regulations and Memorial Headstone documentation.**

361 Chilmington Gypsy Site

The report sought authority to finalise negotiations with Kent County Council (KCC) for the future management and disposal of the freehold of Chilmington Gypsy site.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he believed that the report demonstrated a good deal for the Council and explained that the Kent County Council would bring further experience in terms of their management of the site.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Environment advised that the Great Chart and Singleton Parish Council would need to be briefed on the proposal and she understood that a meeting would take place in the near future.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Head of Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Home Ownership be authorised to negotiate terms for the disposal of Chilmington Gypsy Site for a nominal amount to Kent County Council, such terms to include restrictive covenants, a restriction on title and overage and that, in the event of future disposal, the land would only be used as a Gypsy site.**
 - (ii) the terms of disposal to include:**

- (a) **The site to be kept as a gypsy site in perpetuity with no less than the same number of pitches currently provided unless agreed otherwise.**
- (b) **Kent County Council should use its best endeavours to keep the site in a lettable condition and to ensure that all plots on the site are let.**
- (iii) **the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to enter into the necessary documentation to give effect to the decision.**

362 Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Concept Masterplan and Heritage Lottery Bid (HLF)

The report provided an update on the positive progress made on creating a concept Masterplan for Victoria Park and Watercress Fields prioritised as part of the Land Management Improvement Plan adopted in 2014. An opportunity for a first stage development application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was explained which could support timely and beneficial repairs and improvements to the Grade II Listed Hubert Fountain.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the proposals set out within the report stemmed from a workshop exercise and were indicative of how the area could be developed in the future. She also explained that the Indoor Bowling Club had expressed an interest in taking part in the discussions for the area.

In response to a comment, the Portfolio Holder advised that discussions had already been held with Officers regarding further bridges to provide access to the site from the proposed residential areas on the other side of the river. The Portfolio Holder referred to the article in the Kentish Express about an ice rink and said she believed that as Ashford developed this could be a reality but in her view it would be more likely located at one of the strategic entrances to the town centre by a motorway junction, for example.

The Chairman advised that the Ward Members for the area had expressed a wish for the railings to be replaced with ones which reflected the original Victorian installations which had been removed many years ago. The Portfolio Holder said that Officers were mindful of the Ward Members' wishes in this regard.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Concept Masterplan be adopted as an indicative framework to support the future planning of new development, refurbishment and timely partnership working as opportunities arise.**
 - (ii) the first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund with a Council contribution of up to £10,000 be endorsed and a further**

report be brought forward in due course to consider the second stage application.

363 Management of Leisure Facilities: Corporate Strategy 2015-2020: Priority 3 Active and Creative Ashford

The report examined matters associated with the future management and appointment process for the operation and development of key leisure facilities namely the Stour Centre, Conningbrook Lakes Country Park and the Julie Rose Stadium. The report also provided an update on the Jasmin Vardimon project and asked that agreement be given to supporting the scoping of a new location.

The Portfolio Holder explained that Ashford had a growing population and therefore there was a need to have an up to date model which would deliver well run sports facilities. The Portfolio Holder emphasised that the purpose of the report was not to remove Ashford Leisure Trust, but explained that no agreement could be reached on the Council's approach in terms of redevelopment of the Stour Centre and a revised three year agreement for the Julie Rose Stadium and Conningbrook Lakes. The Portfolio Holder considered that there was therefore a need to bring in a company who could manage those facilities not currently run by Ashford Leisure Trust for a period of up to 18 months. There would then be a process by which the sporting and leisure facilities under the Council's control would be subject to national tendering exercise. In terms of the Jasmin Vardimon project, the Portfolio Holder emphasised that the Council were very keen to retain the company in Ashford and the Borough Council would be assisting in terms of identifying a performance space.

One of the Ward Members for the Weald South Ward advised that she was speaking as both a Member of the Council and as a Trustee of Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT). She said that she believed that ALT and the Borough Council shared the common purpose of providing high quality value for money sport and leisure services to enhance the health and wellbeing of the local community. The Member explained that the Board wished to advise that they were fully committed to developing a solution which met the Council's aspirations for the management and delivery of its leisure portfolio and had latterly approved resolutions to engage external expertise to facilitate the process of market engagement for options appraisal and selection of a strategic partner organisation. The Member said that the new partner organisation, once selected, would bring strength and experience and resourcing to a new operating model for the Trust and would act as an enabler for refurbishment of the un-modelled areas of the Stour Centre in conjunction with the Borough Council, whilst ensuring that the needs of the local community of Ashford remained the main priority in service delivery.

The Member further explained that ALT were disappointed that as a result of the Cabinet recommendations, if approved, they would not be able to offer up the whole portfolio into a market testing process to deliver a consistent, robust strategic vision for sport and leisure facilities in the Borough. She advised that ALT was a not for profit organisation and was a registered Charity with the Charity Commission and therefore the Trust had been able to make investments in the facilities and services operated under the agreements with the Borough Council amounting to in excess of

a quarter of a million pounds to date including, most recently, nearly £100,000 in a new spin studio at the Stour Centre, in conjunction with the Council, which was due to open the following month. The Member said that the work of the Trust had also been independently recognised within the sports and leisure sector with ALT winning community partnership and participation awards from England Athletics over the last three consecutive years and had also successfully been awarded external funding from Sport England to encourage family participation in activity within the Stanhope Ward. On this occasion the Trust had been only one of 15 within the whole Country to be awarded such funding. In conclusion the Member believed that the performance of and the commitment from ALT in reviewing the operating model and seeking a strategic partner, whilst sharing the aspirations of the Council, made it the appropriate choice for the management of sport and leisure facilities in Ashford both now and in the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management said that he had been party to the discussions with ALT and he said that although at this stage it had not been possible to move forward with them the future procurement exercise was an opportunity for them to bid for the contract. In response to a question, the Head of Environment and Cultural Services explained that in time it was hoped that an indoor tennis facility could be provided and to this end his Officers were working on developing a strategic sport study in conjunction with the review of the Local Plan. In terms of the management of the Kingsnorth Recreation Centre, he explained that this it was hoped that the facility would be subject to the package of facilities included within the national procurement exercise.

In response to a further question about the possible implications on the operation of smaller independent facilities, the Head of Environment and Cultural Services said that the Council would be looking to develop complementary facilities in conjunction with facilities provided by independent organisations.

The Chairman explained that this was the last meeting that Mark Carty, the Head of Environment and Cultural Services would attend before his retirement and he said on behalf of the Cabinet and the Council he wished to express his gratitude for the work undertaken by Mark during his extensive service at Ashford and he wished him all the best for the future.

Resolved:

That (i) the contents of the report be noted.

(ii) the Council:

- (a) Terminate the existing agreements with Ashford Leisure Trust for the operation of the Julie Rose Stadium and Conningbrook Lakes Country Park, and**
- (b) Enter into a concession contract for 18 months (extendable for a further six months) with Neighbourhood Southern Community Trust Ltd and their management agent Serco Leisure Operating Ltd for the operation of Conningbrook**

**Lakes Country Park and Julie Rose Stadium, Pitchside,
Courtside and Spearpoint Pavilion.**

- (iii) an allocation of £24,650 be made to the Jasmin Vardimon Company for assisting the scoping of a new location.**
- (iv) the Heads of Culture and Legal and Democratic Services be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder to take all necessary steps including entering into legal Agreements as required to give effect to the above recommendations.**

364 CCTV Strategy including Renewals and Investment in the Service

The report sought a re-affirmation of a commitment to the importance of maintaining and developing CCTV services within the Borough of Ashford and also sought agreement to an investment to replace public space cameras in Ashford and Tenterden, and other updates.

The Portfolio Holder said that he fully supported the recommendations and said that it would provide an opportunity for further investment in the future.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Council's commitment to the importance of maintaining CCTV services be re-affirmed.**
- (ii) the method of provision of these services be confirmed.**

Recommended:

That an investment of £250,000 be made to replace public space CCTV cameras in Ashford and Tenterden, to update the back office systems and to provide a single operating platform to facilitate further business development.

365 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 10th and 25th February 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 10th and 25th February 2016 be approved and adopted.

366 Town Centre Regeneration Board – 27th January 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Town Centre Regeneration Board on the 27th January 2016 be approved and adopted.

367 Schedule of Key Decisions to the Taken

Resolved:

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

368 Proposed Funding Arrangement with the Homes and Communities Agency to Enable Delivery of M20 Junction 10A

The report set out the proposed basis of funding agreements with both the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Highways England to put in place the uncommitted part of the funding needed to deliver Junction 10A. Although originally shown on the printed Agenda as an exempt item, the report had been issued as an open item.

The Chairman said that he wished to move an amendment to require the delegations proposed to be recommended to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in (ii) and (v) be exercised in consultation with the Leader as Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economic Development and Strategic Projects.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the funding proposition and terms for the delivery of M20 Junction 10A from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and as set out in the Heads of Terms attached to the report be agreed.**
 - (ii) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Corporate Director (Law and Governance) in consultation with the Chief Executive, the Head of Planning and Development/Corporate Director (Development), Head of Finance and the Leader of the Council as Portfolio Holder to negotiate, finalise and execute a detailed Funding Agreement with the HCA, including the details and mechanisms regarding Starter Homes released by the Junction 10A project and also any related documentation to implement the above.**
 - (iii) any delay to the above decisions becoming implementable would seriously prejudice the Council's and the public's interests for the reasons set out in paragraph 20 of the report and therefore, with**

the consent of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, these decisions are being made at this meeting as Urgent Decisions within the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (j).

Recommended:

- That (i) the Council enter into a consequential funding arrangement with Highways England Company Ltd (HECL) to invest the HCA funding into the Junction 10A project and to secure repayments to meet the Heads of Terms attached to the report.**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Corporate Director (Law and Governance) in consultation with the Chief Executive, the Head of Planning and Development/Corporate Director (Development), the Head of Finance and the Leader of the Council as Portfolio Holder to negotiate arrangements with HECL for funding and repayment, and to finalise and execute a detailed Funding Agreement and any related documentation with HECL to implement all of the above recommendations.**

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1610

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

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **14th April 2016**

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Galpin, Heyes, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bradford, Mrs Bell, Miss Martin, Ovenden.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Burgess, Hicks, Krause, Link, Michael, Wedgbury, White.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer, Corporate Director (Development), Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety, Head of HR, Communications and Technology, Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager, Human Resources Manager, Head of Environment and Customer Services, Head of Housing, Senior Commercial Development Manager, Head of Finance, Housing Improvement Manager, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Policy and Performance Officer, Auditor, Communications Officer, Member Services and Scrutiny Manager.

380 Minutes

The Chairman referred to the Tabled Papers which set out amendments to Minute No. 363 – Management of Leisure Facilities: Corporate Strategy 2015 – 2020: Priority 3 Active and Creative Ashford.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 10th March 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record subject to the substitution of “for up to 18 months (extendable for up to six further months)” for “for 18 months (extendable for a further six months)” and “Southern Community Leisure Trust Ltd” for “Neighbourhood Southern Community Trust Ltd” in Minute No.363 (ii) (b).

381 Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review

The report made recommendations for the annual review of the Ashford Living Wage Allowance and the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance and also for the publication of an updated Pay Policy Statement.

Recommended:

- That
- (i) the amendment to the application of the Ashford Living Wage Allowance (ALWA) to take account of the new statutory National Living Wage Rate be agreed and be implemented from 1st April 2016 and that the pay rate of the lowest paid employees is maintained at the rate of £8 per hour for 2016/17.**
 - (ii) the Pay Policy Statement as attached to the report be approved.**
 - (iii) the ALWA be paid at the rate of 15p per hour above the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate applicable to the age of the apprentice for 2016/17.**
 - (iv) the ALWA rate be paid at 15p per hour above the statutory National Living Wage Rate for apprentices over the age of 25 for 2016/17.**
 - (v) it be noted that the forthcoming Government legislation would have an impact on the Council's Pay Policy Statement.**

382 Safeguarding Policy

The report advised that the Policy had been brought up to date following changes in national policy and legislation.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the purpose of the Policy and its associated procedures was that safeguarding was “everybody’s business” and that we as an organisation were committed to ensuring children, young people and adults at risk were protected from abuse and were provided opportunities to thrive. He also explained that procedures had been updated, training had been commissioned and a group of staff have been identified as Lead Safeguarding Officers.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) the revised Safeguarding Policy be approved.**
 - (ii) the Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety be authorised to approve minor amendments to the Policy in line with working arrangements.**

383 Proposed Update to the Affordable Housing Programme and Business Case for Remodelling of Danemore Sheltered Housing Scheme

The report sought approval to update the programme of new build Council housing and of the Business Case for the proposed remodelling of the sheltered housing scheme at Danemore, Tenterden. The Portfolio Holder said he wished to draw attention to the successful bid made by the Council to the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) fund of £1.6 million to contribute towards the cost of remodelling Danemore. He also explained the nature of the proposed decanting arrangements for the tenants and commented that the residents were pleased with the proposed improvements to be undertaken at Danemore. The Portfolio Holder also referred to the Affordable Homes Programme and advised that in terms of unit costs, work was being undertaken with a view to reducing them.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) the proposed updates to the new build programme between 2016 and 2020 be approved.
 - (ii) the Business Case for Remodelling of the Danemore Sheltered Housing Scheme in Tenterden be approved.
 - (iii) the successful bid for £1.6 m from the Department of Health CASSH fund be noted.

384 Grounds Maintenance, New Operational Structure: Approval of Costs Associated with the Early Release of Local Government Pension Scheme Benefits due to Redundancy

The report advised that in October 2016 the Grounds Maintenance Function would become an in-house service and there would no longer be an external contract to manage. As a consequence there would no longer be a requirement for Officers to monitor a contract and Contract Management posts would become redundant. Two of the affected post holders were entitled to the early release of their Local Government Pension Scheme Benefits due to reasons of redundancy.

Recommended:

That the costs of the early release of Local Government Pension Scheme Benefits for affected post holders for reasons of redundancy be approved.

385 Joint Transportation Board – 8th March 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 8th March 2016 be received and noted.

386 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 9th March 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 9th March 2016 be approved and adopted.

387 Town Centre Regeneration Board – 24th February 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Town Centre Regeneration Board held on the 24th February 2016 be received and noted.

388 Schedule of Key Decisions to be Taken

Resolved:

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

389 Elwick Place Development

The report, as amended by the Update paper tabled at the meeting, asked the Cabinet to recommend to Council to fund and require the construction of a mixed use leisure development incorporating cinema, hotel, food, beverage, car park and retail use in Elwick Road. The Exempt Appendices to the report included a paper entitled “Funding and Investment Opportunity”, a draft risk analysis, and a draft report from Arlingclose Ltd, who had been appointed by the Council for independent treasury management advice. Tabled at the meeting was an update report which included revised recommendations together with an Exempt paper advising on the ongoing due diligence work and advice from Cradick Retail who had been appointed by the Council to provide valuation advice in relation to anticipated rental levels. The tabled papers also included comments from Councillor Apps, as one of the Ward Members for the Ashford Victoria Ward.

The Chairman advised that he intended to discuss this item first with the Press and Public present, prior to moving into Exempt session to discuss and answer any questions of detail on the confidential aspects of the proposal. The Cabinet and other Members present were then afforded time to read the tabled papers.

The Chairman, in introducing the report emphasised that the Cabinet would be making recommendations to the Full Council on the 21st April 2016 when Members would be able to debate the issue and receive any further updates that may arise between this meeting and the Council meeting. He also said that it was opportune that he had received that day an invitation to attend an event at the Guildhall in London launching a scheme which was encouraging Local Authorities to use capital investment to support revenue budgets and at the same time achieve social value for

the residents of the area. He believed that the report before Members met both of these aspirations.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management said that this was a significant exercise for the Borough Council to undertake. He drew attention to the Medium Term Financial Plan which provided for the loss of formula grant from Central Government leaving a £2.1 million gap in funding which the Council needed to consider. The Five Year Business Plan approved by the Council in October 2015 had highlighted the need for the Council to earn revenue rather than reduce services to residents. He explained that the site subject to this report had planning permission for a cinema, hotel and eateries already, and the proposal to fund the building works would provide an added attraction to the town, facilitate its wider development, and support both the day and evening economy. The Portfolio Holder emphasised that the whole process was subject to ongoing due diligence and emphasised that the Council owned the freehold of the site and therefore the proposal did not include any land transfers. He summarised that the proposal was to fund historic and future project costs with Stanhope Plc, who would also receive a profit share on completion. In conclusion, he said that the proposal would allow the Council to benefit from a significant level of income year on year which would be used to support the revenue budget, together with any future capital growth, which he felt was likely.

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centres Focus and Business Dynamics said that he believed that the development was absolutely vital for the Town Centre and in particular the existing shops and businesses who had shown patience and great faith in Ashford. He explained that he had spoken to the Manager of County Square who had indicated confidence that their void units would be filled as the Elwick Place development went forward. He also alluded to the increased level of business rates which would be achieved as new businesses opened in the Town Centre, and commented that enhancing the mix of uses in the Town Centre with this leisure scheme would be very beneficial and the proposal would enable it to be brought forward quicker than waiting for the market to fund the development.

In response to a comment that there was a need to ensure the development was built to a high standard and appropriate quality without over-running costs, the Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget and Resource Management confirmed that this would be covered in the agreement with the developer.

The Vice-Chairman noted the importance of securing the correct cinema tenant.

The Chairman then read the tabled comments received from one of the Ward Members for Victoria, Councillor Apps, in support of the recommendations set out within the report.

At this point in the meeting the Press and Public were excluded by means of the following resolution:

390 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, namely Elwick Place Development (Exempt Appendices) as it is likely 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

391 Elwick Place Development (Exempt Appendices)

During this part of the meeting Members asked detailed questions about the proposed financial arrangements; aspects of the proposed agreement with Stanhope; expected levels of income from the car park; the composition of the construction costs; the other parties involved; and risks associated with the project. The Officers present provided detailed responses to the questions raised and confirmed that the due diligence process was still being undertaken.

The Chairman said he wished to emphasise the strictly confidential nature of the information set out within the Exempt Appendices.

The Press and Public were then re-admitted to the meeting.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the contextual advice contained within the report be noted.**
 - (ii) the due diligence advice to date set out in Appendix C to the report, and attached to the tabled Update report, be noted.**
 - (iii) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the relevant Portfolio Holders and the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Director of Law and Governance, to negotiate measures and take any other steps she considers prudent in the Council's interests in order to enable the transaction to proceed as a sound investment, and to approve final due diligence reports and a final risk analysis schedule which are satisfactory in her view and that subject to those matters recommendations (iv) to (vii) become effective. In the event that these matters are not satisfactory, the proposal be reported back for decision by Cabinet.**
 - (iv) it be agreed to enter into an agreement to finance and require the construction of the Development with Stanhope Plc on the terms and at an outlay as set out in the Exempt Update Report.**

- (v) it be agreed to fund the construction of the Development from borrowing (a mixture of internal and external borrowing) with discretion as to the mix and duration of borrowing delegated to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, with the need for a later report containing recommendations to amend the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy as and when necessary as advised by Arlingclose.
 - (vi) the revised prudential indicators as outlined in Appendix E to the report be agreed.
 - (vii) authority be given to the Corporate Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Head of Corporate Property and Projects to effect and complete all necessary documentation including the Development Funding Agreement to action the above.
-

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1615

Appeals Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Appeals Committee held in Committee Room No.1 (Fougères Room), Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **15th February 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Michael (Chairman);

Cllrs. Hicks, Krause.

Cllr. Mrs Webb (Reserve).

Also Present:

Appellant.

Interim Licensing Manager, Licensing Officer, Legal Advisor, Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

316 Election of Chairman

Resolved:

That Councillor Michael be elected as Chairman for this Meeting of the Appeals Committee.

317 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 4th June 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

318 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, namely 'Appeal Against Refusal to Grant a Private Hire Drivers Licence' as it is likely 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 paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

319 Appeal Against Refusal to Grant a Private Hire Drivers Licence

The Councillors and Officers present were introduced. The Chairman welcomed all present and explained the procedure to be followed. The Committee confirmed that they had received and read the agenda papers.

The Licensing Officer had submitted a report which outlined the case. She went through the case and explained the decision to refuse to grant the Appellant a Private Hire Drivers licence.

The Appellant then put his case to the Committee.

The Licensing Officer, Licensing Manager and the Appellant then answered questions from Councillors.

The Committee then retired to make its decision.

On the Committee's return, the Legal Advisor read out the 'Decision and Reasoning's Statement' that had been prepared by the Appeals Committee. Copies of this were handed to the Appellant and the Officers present and would also be sent to the Appellant after the meeting, along with the minutes and a decision letter.

Resolved:

- That (i) the application for a private hire driver's licence be refused.**
- (ii) a further application would not be entertained until a twelve month lapse from this current application dated 11th November 2015.**

Audit Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **15th March 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Link (Chairman);
Cllr. Waters (Vice-Chairman);
Cllrs. Buchanan, Smith, White

Apologies:

Cllrs. Chilton, Powell.

Also Present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Audit Partnership, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Communications & Technology, Head of Personnel & Development, Audit Manager, Principal Accountant, Policy & Performance Officer, Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

Emily Hill, Lisa Robertson - Grant Thornton UK.

369 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 1st December 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

370 Data Protection Audit Report

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that pages 15-18 of the hard copy agenda had become mixed up in printing and advised of the correct order.

The Head of Audit Partnership introduced the report which set out the findings and the brief of the recent audit into controls designed and operated by the Council to ensure it met its data protection obligations. The audit had received a 'weak' assurance rating. The findings and recommendations of the audit report had been accepted by Officers and a management action plan had been completed wherein plans for improvements to the service had been set out. Given that the majority of the implementation dates in the plan referred to June/July 2016, it was expected that there would be a report back on progress later in the year.

In terms of the management response specifically, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services advised that Management Team had been disappointed and concerned with the 'weak' assurance rating and it was fair to say that they had taken collective

responsibility for the shortcomings identified. Under the Council's new emerging structure he had worked with a small number of senior colleagues in order to develop the management response. A key principle of this had been that whilst data protection was the responsibility of each member of staff, in such a large organisation it was corporate leadership that would be needed to drive forward the necessary improvements and keep it on the corporate radar. In terms of future arrangements, he said he did not think Data Protection should be considered in isolation from other data management issues such as Freedom of Information and data security and therefore it would take some time to design a full solution. However he considered there were a number of interim steps that could be taken in the shorter term to improve the situation. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services advised that the Action Plan included reference to the introduction of a Management Team Champion for Data Protection, that Management Team would receive regular reports from the Data Protection Officer, the commencement of a rolling programme of training and awareness and the creation of a Subject Access Request log. These could all be implemented in the short-term. In the longer term the plan also proposed a review of policies and procedures, a review of roles and responsibilities (including resources), the introduction of a key worker regime and better use of the intranet to offer support and advice to staff.

The following responses were given to Members questions/comments on the Management Action Plan: -

- Management Team had accepted collective responsibility for the 'weak' assurance rating. Looking at the situation objectively there had been a number of contributing factors. The number of data protection issues the Council dealt with (Subject Access Requests and the number of potential breaches to be identified) was traditionally very low and as a result it had slipped off the corporate radar somewhat in terms of importance. Combined with staff turnover it was fair to say that staff were not dealing with the situation very often and it had led to a loss of some corporate history and intelligence. Data Protection had traditionally sat within the IT Service and it had no dedicated resource as a function. The outcome of the audit was recognised as disappointing but it was considered that the Management Action Plan would address the issues, especially in terms of awareness and keeping the issue at the forefront of everyone's minds. The training programme that had been lacking for the last three or four years would also help greatly.
- Recommendations 1 and 2 had been rated as Priority 3 – Medium and it was accepted that this was a matter of judgment that could have been viewed differently by someone else. Internal Audit had taken account of the extent of the mitigating controls that were in place and higher emphasis had been placed on the recommendations such as 5 and 6 where such mitigation was lacking. It was however important to point out that the Council had accepted all of the recommendations and Internal Audit would follow them up regardless of priority and continue to follow them up until they were implemented.

- Many Councillors were not registered with the Information Commissioner as data controllers for the purpose of the Data Protection Act, despite it being a requirement of the Council's Members Allowances IT Scheme. It was considered there needed to be better guidance on this for Councillors, in terms of exactly what needed to be done and which email addresses needed to be registered. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services advised he was pursuing a block registration of all Members.
- An update report on this audit was expected to be submitted to the September meeting of this Committee.

Resolved:

That the findings of the Data Protection audit be noted and the Management Action Plan be endorsed.

371 Presentation of Financial Statements

The Principal Accountant introduced the report which advised that the Council was required to follow statutory guidance for the publication of its accounts. Each year the guidance was reviewed and updated and this report looked at the impact of those updates on the Council's accounts for 2015/16. In addition the report reviewed the lessons learnt from the accounts process in 2014/15. She also advised that the Council had completed a review of its accounting policies that would be used for the publication of the statement of accounts and these were presented at Appendix A to the report.

The Committee was reminded that following the new Accounts and Audit Regulations the Council had agreed to close early this year to aid the transition to earlier closing. This would result in the annual Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2016 being produced by the end of May. The Accounts would then be audited by Grant Thornton during June with an opinion issued by the end of July.

In response to a question the Principal Accountant advised that some of the web links throughout the larger statement document had been displayed in the printed version which may have caused some confusion, but there was no missing information.

Resolved:

That (i) the report be received and noted.

(ii) the accounting policies for the 2015/16 Accounts, contained at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

372 Internal Audit Charter 2016/17

The Head of Audit Partnership introduced the report which set out the Internal Audit Charter covering the work undertaken by Mid Kent Audit at Ashford Borough Council. The Charter, and its annual review, was a requirement of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Aside from minor updates, for 2016/17 the most significant change was the expansion of the potential scope of audit's work as outlined by guidance issued by the Institute of Internal Audit. He re-iterated that these were only safeguards against a potential position at this stage though as the additional work was not in the current plan.

A Member referred to the 'three lines of defence' model and emphasised the importance of Senior Management Team playing their part in picking up some of the more obvious weaknesses.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Internal Audit Charter 2016/17 be approved.**
- (ii) the Head of Audit Partnership's view that the Partnership is operating with sufficient independence and freedom from managerial interference to fulfil its responsibilities in line with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, and will continue to do so, be noted.**

373 Internal Audit Plan 2016/17

The Head of Audit Partnership introduced Alison Blake, the Partnership's Audit Manager for Ashford, and she presented the report which set out the detail of the proposed plan for Mid Kent Audit's work at Ashford Borough Council during 2016/17, along with an outline plan for further years up to 2018/19. The plan was a development of the four year plan approved by this Committee in March 2015, updated following continuing risk assessment, discussions with Officers and feedback from Members. She advised that as a result of the Partnership's re-shuffle they had been able to increase capacity and the total audit allocation for Ashford had increased from 370 days in 2015/16 to 395 days in 2016/17.

With reference to the audit of the new Appraisal system, a Member advised that the Committee had previously aired some concerns about this and requested a report back. The Head of Personnel & Development advised that they did now have the data to prepare a meaningful report back and she proposed that this happen at the next meeting of this Committee in June.

A Member referred to page 82, paragraph 19 of the report which stated that Senior Managers 'may be invited to provide further explanation to Members at the Audit Committee' when failings were identified. He reminded Officers that this Committee had previously said it was a requirement for Heads of Service to attend in these circumstances and that remained the position going forward.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Internal Audit Plan 2016/17 be approved.**
- (ii) the longer term plan to 2018/19 and the Head of Audit Partnership's view that the Service is sufficiently resourced to deliver the plan be noted.**

374 Strategic Risk Management

The Policy and Performance Officer introduced the report and directed Members' attention to a tabled paper which contained an updated summary Strategic Risk Register. He advised that since the September 2015 meeting of this Committee where a new and refreshed risk management process had been agreed, Officers had been working to review the Council's Risk Register, particularly in light of the adoption of a new Corporate Plan. This report presented a refreshed Corporate Risk Register which was designed to collate the headline strategic risks identified by Management as potentially affecting achievement of the Council's corporate aims, in one place and on a common structure. The register clearly represented a view at a particular point in time, but it would be dynamic with content changing over time. The initial work had produced seven thematic risks which were outlined in the summary register and for each risk included: - a description; examples of risk elements in scope; a risk owner; key existing controls and a risk rating. Although a number of different risks had been identified and discussed in Officers' work, the paper summarised those regarded as most likely to present the greatest threat to the Authority being able to achieve its corporate objectives.

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

- The rating system was based on the traditional risk matrix system of likelihood multiplied by impact. At present all of the risks fell within the 'amber' or 'medium' section of the matrix, but this was always based on a moment in time and it was important to note that the risk scores could change and there was always an element of objectivity involved.
- The Committee would continue to receive a six monthly update on risk, but Officers would be assessing these on a weekly if not daily basis and Management Team would also receive quarterly update reports. The Committee should be assured that the Council was doing everything it could to manage risk.
- The Risk Owners for Risks 1 and 6 had changed since the earlier publication of the Register, largely due to recent changes in the Council's management structure. For Risk 1- Workforce, Skills & Capacity – Terry Mortimer would be the Corporate Director responsible for this area so would give a wider view. With regard to Risk 6 – Community Capacity – it had been agreed that Christina Fuller, as Head of Cultural Services, would be a better fit as Risk Owner, than Tracey Kerly as Chief Executive because she would be in a

better position to liaise with those integral to the risk and be able to challenge and be in touch with the risks and issues on a day to day basis.

Resolved:

That the Strategic Risk Register be endorsed and the Committee receive a review of the Register in six months.

375 External Auditor Reports

Three reports had been submitted by the Council's External Auditor Grant Thornton UK.

(a) 2014/2015 Grant Certification Letter

Emily Hill presented the certification letter following completion of the audit of the housing benefit grant claim. The grant claim was significant (£36.7m) and following further sample testing, the auditors made no amendment or qualification to the claim. This was regarded as a particularly good performance by the Council.

(b) 2015/16 Audit Plan Update

Lisa Robertson introduced the report which updated the Committee on the External Auditor's work and plans for the current year's financial audit. It highlighted some key areas of focus for the auditor and the assurance testing to be applied and of approaches to materiality, risk identification and the value for money assessment. The report also summarised the auditor's interim findings where no matters of concern had been identified for reporting.

In response to a question, Lisa Robertson explained that the External Auditors wanted to be clear in understanding the management restructure at the Council and to keep an eye on developments.

A Member asked about payroll payments and if there were any bonus payments linked to the appraisal system which had been mentioned before as in need of review. It was confirmed that the Council did not have performance related cash bonuses.

(c) 2015/16 Audit Committee Update

Lisa Robertson introduced the latest in the usual series of general updates on recent developments and topical issues. She advised that she had brought copies of Grant Thornton's latest publication entitled 'Reforging Local Government' and they would be issued to Committee Members.

A Member asked if the National Audit Office had given Grant Thornton any guidance on examining Councils' financing plans in the coming years in the face of the loss of Revenue Support Grant. Emily Hill advised there was no specific guidance and she considered this would be a local issue for each individual Local Authority to

determine their own strategies in the face of their own circumstances. There may be a role for the National Audit Office to share best practice, but from Grant Thornton's point of view as an External Auditor, their focus would be on making sure Councils were following standard accounting practices whatever route they decided to take. The Member said this whole area was interesting as Local Authorities were inevitably going to have to be more commercial and he considered there would need to be a focus on corporate governance from both External and Internal Audit.

The Deputy Chief Executive drew attention to mention of Audit Panels in the report in the context of the requirement for Local Authorities to appoint their own External Auditors. It had originally been intended to report on this issue at this meeting, however this would now happen at one of the meetings in the summer.

Resolved:

That the three reports from Grant Thornton UK be received and noted.

376 Report Tracker and Future Meetings

The Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer advised of two additional Audit Committee meeting dates that had been arranged to ensure the new deadlines for the Statement of Accounts work were met. The dates for Committee meetings for 2016/17 were therefore as follows (all at 7pm in the Council Chamber): -

Thursday 16th June 2016
Thursday 30th June 2016
Thursday 28th July 2016
Thursday 29th September 2016
Tuesday 6th December 2016
Tuesday 21st March 2017

Resolved:

That subject to the additions to the Tracker mentioned at this meeting, the report be received and noted.

COUNCIL

21 APRIL 2016

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW TASK GROUP

The Task Group met on Monday 11 April 2016 to consider the attached draft submission on Council size. The submission document was prepared by a small team of Officers led by the Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer. The Task Group approved the draft submission and recommend the Council approves it for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

The submission document itself explains the statutory background to the electoral review and the next steps in the process.

The Electoral Review Task Group Recommends the attached submission be approved and sent to the LGBCE.

ELECTORAL REVIEW

ASHFORD BOROUGH

Ashford Borough Council Submission on Council Size

April 2016

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Executive Summary

At present, 43 councillors representing 35 Wards serve on Ashford Borough Council. 27 Wards are single member wards; 8 are double member wards.

All councillors are elected every four years and serve a four year term of office. The most recent elections were held in May 2015.

The next scheduled Borough Council elections are due to take place in May 2019.

Based on the evidence set out in this submission, Ashford Borough Council propose that the number of elected councillors for the Borough will be 47.

Introduction

1. This document is submitted as evidence from Ashford Borough Council (ABC) to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in relation to the size of the Council.
2. This submission has been prepared and collated by Officers using a range of data available, as outlined in the document, and in full consultation with elected members of the Borough Council through the Electoral Review Task Group. This final submission has been endorsed by full Council, and so reflects the views of the Borough Council, and the political parties represented on it.
3. The Electoral Review of Ashford commenced in January 2016 with the aim of reviewing electoral arrangements for the whole Borough. The review includes looking at the total number of members to be elected to the Council (Council size), the number and boundaries of electoral wards, the number of councillors for each ward, and the names of each ward.
4. The initial stage of an Electoral Review is to identify and confirm the preferred Council size. This is the number of elected councillors who will serve on the Borough Council. This should be the number required to deliver effective and convenient local government (ie: the number which allows the council and individual councillors to perform most effectively).
5. The final size of the Council will determine the average number of electors per councillor, and this is then used to determine warding patterns. It is therefore important that the figure agreed accurately reflects the needs of the authority and of the community. The LGBCE may amend the agreed figure if necessary to allow for a better representation of electors or as a result of consultation.

6. Within the review process, the LGBCE have no initial view on whether there should be an increase, decrease or no change in the size of Council. However, all submissions must be justified by evidence.
7. The last review of electoral arrangements in Ashford took place in 2000/2001 just as the Borough Council was preparing to move in 2001 from the "Committee System" of governance to the Leader and Cabinet model in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. The outcomes of that review took effect from the local elections in May 2003. A report to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in July 2000 outlined some key points in the Council's then proposed scheme:-
- *It will involve a Council size of 43 members (compared with 49 at present). The reasons for this size are:-*
 - (i) *The Council is required by Central Government to modernise the democratic process by splitting the executive function from the 'back bench' role. Legislation provides that the executive unit should comprise no fewer than 3 members and no more than 10. This Council considers that on the projected electorate, the 'back bench' contingent will not need to be as large as it would be with the current number of councillors.*
 - (ii) *Regional Planning Guidance has identified Ashford as one of three future growth areas in the south east. A smaller Council size will make possible future expansion in line with the electorate more feasible.*
 - *It involves 33 wards. 23 with one member and 10 with two. The Review of Ward Membership Working Group favoured single member wards where possible as, in its view, they enhance councillors' links with the public they represent.*
 - *There will be approximately 2009 electors to each councillor in the year 2005. This is the year the LGC required us to plan around. The projected electoral figures were calculated and have been justified in liaison with the Council's Planning Policy section'.*
8. Thus it was clear that the predicted likely impact of cabinet style arrangements was taken into account when the current Council size was determined; and that future growth in size in line with electorate might need to follow in any later electoral review.
9. It is worth noting that in the financial year 2015/16, the total sum of allowances paid to Borough councillors was in the region of £340 K (including travel and subsistence). The sum paid to each councillor varies depending on responsibilities but the average is c. £7,885. Whilst the cost of allowances is not a matter taken into account in determining size, it is right to be aware of the likely cost implications of any increase in the number of councillors.

Guidance on Council Size

10. The LGBCE Guidance on Council Size submissions recommends the following issues should be considered:
- (A) Governance and Decision-Making – how decisions are taken across the Authority and the volume and distribution of responsibility amongst elected members and staff.
 - (B) Scrutiny Functions – must be capable of being administered in a convenient and effective way.
 - (C) Representational Role of Councillors – workloads and responsibilities.
 - (D) The Future – known future trends and developments may affect the issue of size.

Each of these is now considered in turn.

PART ONE - GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

11. Ashford Borough Council has had a Conservative administration since the local elections in 1999. The current composition of the 43 councillors is:

Conservative	35
Labour	3
Ashford Independent	3
Liberal Democrats	1
UK Independence Party	1

12. Whilst there is no formal role description for councillors at Ashford, the Constitution contains a brief explanation of expectations and responsibilities (see Article 2.03 (a)). A more detailed statement was produced by the Council for all councillors elected in May 2015. "What To Expect as an Ashford Borough councillor" (part of a suite of documents for new councillors called "A Framework") is attached as Appendix 1. This deals with attendance levels, training and development, community roles and standards of conduct.
13. The Council moved to the Leader and Cabinet model of governance in 2001. In 2010 the Council adopted the "new style" Leader and Cabinet model which took effect following the elections in May 2011. This provides for the Leader to be elected by Council for a 4 year term and the Leader is responsible for appointing a Deputy Leader and Cabinet.

Full Council

14. All councillors are members of Full Council which is responsible for approving the rate, the budget and adopting key policies within which Cabinet decisions are taken. The Council has six scheduled meetings a year. Additional special meetings are held as and when necessary. Meetings of Full Council are chaired by the Mayor (a civic mayor, not an executive mayor).

Composition and Work of Cabinet

15. The Cabinet currently consists of a Leader and nine Portfolio Holders. There is no individual Cabinet member decision-making. All Cabinet decisions are taken collectively at Cabinet meetings held monthly on a programmed basis.

Full details of the individual Portfolio titles and responsibilities are set out in Part 3, Appendix 2 of the Council's Constitution.

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/part-3---responsibility-for-functions>

16. The Leader and Cabinet portfolio roles are not full time roles. However, in a recent email survey (February 2016), the Leader indicated he spent 40 + hours per week fulfilling his role as Leader of the Council (and Chairman of Cabinet). From the five other Cabinet members who responded the average hours on portfolio roles was 20 hours per week. Under recent Leaderships, the role of Portfolio Holders has been broadened to include the taking of the

lead role in presenting reports at Cabinet meetings and this has inevitably increased the workload and required expertise of each Portfolio Holder.

17. The Cabinet (formerly called Executive) was established in July 2001 with a Leader and five Portfolio Holders (PH). They met on a three weekly cycle until June 2006 when it changed to a four-weekly cycle.¹ Examples of numbers of meetings per year and numbers of decision items considered are as follows:-

Year	Meetings	Items	Average Items per Agenda
2003/4	15	163	10.85
2005/6	13	162	12.46
2010/11	11	118	10.72
2013/14	10	91	9.1
2015/16 ²	9	61	6.77

18. The Council has considerable experience of running Cabinets with different sizes and meeting schedules. It considers the current division of responsibilities facilitates effective leadership, although the precise nature and content of portfolios is kept under review by the Leader of the Council and invariably some changes are made at each electoral cycle.

Cabinet Approved Boards, Steering Groups and Task Groups

19. The following Cabinet Boards, Steering Groups and Task Groups were constituted by the Cabinet in June 2015 and revised Terms of Reference were agreed at the Cabinet meeting in September 2015:-

Trading and Enterprise Board
 Joint Transportation Board
 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board
 Town Centre Regeneration Board
 Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Steering Group
 Stour Centre Regeneration Steering Group
 Park Mall – Dynamics and Occupancy Steering Group
 Policy and Compliance Task Group
 Public Transport Liaison Task Group
 Council Tax and Welfare Reform Task Group
 Environment and Conservation Task Group
 Hothfield Regeneration Task Group

¹ The size of Cabinet has changed over the years.
 May 2008 – one additional Portfolio Holder making total membership 7.
 June 2010 – one additional Portfolio Holder making total membership 8
 April 2013 – two additional Portfolio Holders making total membership 10

² This was an election year so no meetings were held in April and May (or August)

20. The Cabinet Task Groups are chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder and have a membership of four Councillors, including one Opposition Member. The Minutes of the meetings of the Trading and Enterprise Board, Joint Transportation Board, Ashford Strategic Delivery Board and Town Centre Regeneration Board are submitted to Cabinet meetings for information. If decisions are required arising from any of the discussions at the various Boards and Task Groups, these are subject to an Officer report to a Cabinet meeting for formal consideration and decision. The table below provides further details on these groups.

Meeting	Frequency/Actual Number of Meetings in 2015/16
Trading & Enterprise Board	2
Joint Transportation Board	Quarterly (4)
Ashford Strategic Delivery Board	Quarterly (4)
Town Centre Regeneration Board	Monthly (9)
Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Steering Group	Ad Hoc (3)
Stour Centre Regeneration Steering Group	Ad Hoc (3)
Park Mall Dynamics & Occupancy Steering Group	Monthly (9)
Policy & Compliance Task Group	Ad Hoc (2)
Public Transport Liaison Task Group	Biannual (2)
Council Tax & Welfare Reform Task Group	Bi-Monthly (5)
Environment & Conservation Task Group	Biannual (2)
Hothfield Regeneration Task Group	Ad Hoc (2)

Further details of the Terms of Reference of each of these groups can be found here -

<https://secure.ashford.gov.uk/committeesystem/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentType=AgendaItem&AgendaId=19109&MeetingId=1887>

Delegations to Officers

21. The Council has a well-developed and comprehensive Scheme of Delegation to Officers (contained in Part 3 Appendix 5 of the Constitution) which sets out clearly where the responsibility and extent of delegation lies.
22. In line with Government requirements the majority of all planning applications are delegated. However, if an elected Member (alone or with the relevant Parish Council) feels that there are grounds for a particular application to be

determined by Committee, they can request this. Further details on Planning Committee business are given later (see paras. 25 et seq).

Regulatory and Other Committees - General

23. The Committees/Meetings shown in the Table below were constituted for the 2015/16 municipal year. The number of meetings during 2015 and attendance records for each are also included. All seats are allocated in accordance with Group strengths on the Council, save where Council has agreed to certain ex officio memberships eg Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny on Standards.

It is worth emphasising that since the last electoral review in Ashford, major licensing powers have been transferred from magistrates to local authorities. This includes the licensing of premises for the sale of alcohol which has brought significant additional work for officers and councillors in this important, high-profile regulatory function.

2015

Meeting	Number of ABC Members	Number of Meetings	Total Projected Attendance	Percentage of Actual Attendance
Council	43	6	258	86%
Cabinet	10	9	90	92%
Appeals Committee ^{1, 2}	15 (but 3 drawn per meeting)	2	6	100%
Appointments Committee	5	0		
Audit Committee	8	4	32	78%
Joint Transportation Board	7	4	28	89%
Licensing and Health & Safety Committee	13	1	13	69%
Licensing Sub-Committee ^{2, 3}	13 (but 3 drawn per meeting)	3	9	100%
Overview & Scrutiny Committee ¹	16 (2014/15) 12 (2015/16)	8	108	79%

Meeting	Number of ABC Members	Number of Meetings	Total Projected Attendance	Percentage of Actual Attendance
Planning Committee ³	17*	12	204	97%
Selection & Constitutional Review Committee	12	5	60	87%
Standards Committee	8	1	8	87.5%
Community Grants Panel	7	4	28	75%
Joint Consultative Committee	6	6	36	92%
Local Government & Polling Districts Task Group	10	5	50	76%
Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group	10	9	90	88%
Member Training Panel	8	2	16	81%
Parish & Urban Forum	7	3	21	62%
Total	198	84	1057	86.75%

*In December 2015, the voting membership increased to 18. In addition the Leader of the Council is an ex officio member of the Planning Committee.

¹ These committees cannot include Cabinet members.

² These meet during the day which limits the availability of some councillors to sit.

³ Councillors cannot sit on these committees unless they have undergone specialist training.

24. Detailed Terms of Reference for the Council Committees is set out within Part 3 Appendix 4 of the Council's Constitution.

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/part-3---responsibility-for-functions>

The membership of Committees etc is usually agreed at the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee meeting held annually in May. However, Group Leaders are free to change their representatives in accordance with their entitlement to seats on each respective Committee. Meetings of the Cabinet, Planning, Overview and Scrutiny, Joint Transportation Board, Audit, Parish and Urban Forum and Standards Committee are programmed and agreed as part of the meetings programme for the Municipal Year. There is one scheduled meeting of the Licensing, Health and Safety Committee held in January each year. Other meetings are held on an ad hoc basis dependent upon level of business. All meetings have been quorate and a breakdown of attendance per meeting is set out in the table above.

Planning Committee

25. Planning Committee meets on a four weekly cycle. Most planning decisions are delegated to officers. Committee deals with the most major, complex and controversial applications. The level of complexity involved in determining planning applications has increased significantly in recent years as a result of national and European guidance and regulation.
26. During the calendar year 2015, a total of 1282 planning decisions were made by the Council. Of these 1207 (94.15%) were dealt with by officers under delegated powers. The seventy-five most major, complex and sensitive were determined at meetings of the Planning Committee.
27. Planning Committee has a history of meetings occasionally extending very late into the evening. Accordingly a "guillotine" was introduced during the last administration which allowed meetings to be adjourned to another day at 10.30 pm in certain circumstances.¹

The average duration of Planning Committee meetings has remained reasonably constant as shown in the Table below.

Year	Average Duration	Numbers of Decisions Taken	% Delegated Approx.
2015	2 hrs 2 mins	75 out of 1282	94%
2013	2 hrs 19 mins	49 out of 1193	96%
2011	2 hrs 37 mins	88 out of 1191	93%
2009	1 hr 31 mins	102 out of 1262	92%
2007	2 hrs 10 mins	122 out of 1412	91%

¹ Since the introduction of this rule, no meeting has had to be "guillotined".

28. These figures demonstrate the depth of debate required to reach determinations. They also reflect a very keen level of public and parish council participation in Planning Committee meetings. For many residents planning decision-making is the most tangible and important role of a local councillor. Non Planning Committee councillors routinely attend meetings to speak on applications in their own wards and to represent the views of constituents.
29. Recent examples of major/complex planning decisions taken by Planning Committee are set out in the Table below.

Date	Application	Brief Description
October 2014	Chilmington Green	Mixed use development including 5,750 homes (the largest single planning application ever determined by ABC)
January 2014	Conningbrook	Creation of country park for recreational and water-sports purposes, an activity centre, a public house/restaurant, offices, car parks, including construction of 300 dwelling residential development and provision of an aggregates storage and distribution facility
September 2015	Ashford Designer Outlet	Extension of existing outlet to a site area of 18.1 ha.
December 2015	Elwick Place	Mixed use development including restaurants and cafes, a hotel, a cinema and car parking.
April 2015	Ashford College	Demolition of existing and construction of new College buildings
August 2013 - January 2016	Cheesemans Green	Various applications totalling approx. 1200 dwellings and associated facilities and works.
December 2010 – August 2014	Bridgefield (Park Farm)	Various applications totalling 454 dwellings and associated works

30. Planning Committee has more voting members (18 + 1 ex officio) than any other. This reflects its importance to local communities and the Council's wish to ensure as broad a representation as possible. The Council considers its approach to planning decision-making works well and is effective, transparent and democratic.

Conclusions on Council Committee Memberships

31. Taking into account the number of places on Committees, Task Groups, Boards, Panels etc. the number of possible attendances each year is well in excess of 1,100. The addition of the busy Overview and Scrutiny meetings schedule further increases the number of attendances.
32. Although not all councillors are eligible to sit on all Committees or Panels, an approximate rounded average number of meetings per councillor per year is in the region of 26 (leading to a total of 1118 attendances). This does not include additional ad hoc meetings of Committees, boards etc nor attendances required at partnership meetings or the considerable number of external bodies to which the Borough Council appoints representatives (as to which see paras 34 – 36 below). Nor does it include the significant number of attendances at meetings by non-committee members. This applies particularly at meetings of Cabinet and Planning Committee. Thus a considerable councillor resource is required simply to service the democratic decision-making mechanisms in place. Any material reduction of that resource would be likely to require change in the existing democratic structure. On the other hand, a modest increase in the councillor resource would assist in spreading this element of the member workload and facilitating more effective decision-making.
33. In terms of the “spread” of Committee membership (including Groups, Forums and Cabinet Task Groups) the position is as set out in the table below. The average number is 4.90 per councillor. According to the LGA “Census of Local Authority Councillors” (2013) the average is 3.3, although this may not be an exact comparison. However, the Committee workload per councillor at Ashford does appear to be higher than the national average.

Number of Committee Memberships¹	How Many Councillors
0	1
1	3
2	3
3	4
4	9
5	6
6	8
7	2
8	2
9	4
10	1
Total	43 councillors
Average	4.90 memberships

Outside Bodies

34. Ashford Borough Council appoints a councillor or councillors to a wide range of outside bodies and organisations. Such appointments may be annual or for a term of office. These are set out in the table below. In total there are 46 such bodies. Councillors are expected to attend meetings of the outside body and provide an annual report on activity of the body to the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee. The frequency with which these bodies meet and the time commitment required varies.

The link below provides further details on the bodies to which the Council appoints councillors.

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/part-6---members-allowances-scheme>

35. Over recent years, the number of bodies to which appointments have been made has been rationalised and a further review is to be undertaken to ensure all appointments remain worthwhile and relevant. However, it is considered that the number of appointments will continue to make a significant call on member time.

Partnerships

¹ This includes Groups, Forums & Cabinet Task Groups but excludes Full Council.

36. Councillors also act on various strategic decision-making partnership bodies as set out in the table below.

Partnership	What it Deals With	Councillor and Frequency of Meetings
Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board	Looks at improving the health and wellbeing of the people living in Ashford through joined up commissioning across the National Health Service, social care, borough council, public health and other services that are directly related to health and wellbeing.	1 Member – Quarterly Meetings
Ashford Community Safety Partnership	Working with representatives from the police, the local council, the fire, health and probation services amongst many others to develop and implement strategies to protect local communities from crime and to help people feel safe. They work out local approaches to deal with issues including antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and re-offending.	1 Member – Quarterly Meetings
Ashford Leisure Trust	To ensure the smooth operation of Ashford's principal leisure asset(s).	1 Member – Varies but have been meeting monthly
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust	The Council of Governors for the Hospitals Trust incorporating East Kent's five hospitals. (rep on behalf of the 6 EK Local Authorities)	1 Member – Quarterly Meetings

PART TWO - SCRUTINY FUNCTIONS

37. Ashford Borough Council currently has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) comprised of 12 members¹. Seats are allocated in accordance with political balance rules. This results in 10 Conservative and 2 opposition members. Historically at Ashford, Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship have been taken by members of opposition groups.
38. OSC meets monthly and has its regular work programme which it determines itself. A “tracker” is maintained of matters which OSC has expressed a wish to review as time permits. OSC has the ability to “call in” Cabinet decisions, although at Ashford this is rarely exercised. One reason for this is that the Leader of the Council chairs Cabinet in a way which encourages involvement by non-Cabinet councillors in decision-making at Cabinet. Chairmen of Cabinet Task Groups do likewise.
39. At their meeting on 20 October 2015, the Chief Executive recommended the Committee consider adopting a more strategic approach to scrutiny. He indicated that there was an opportunity for the Committee to become involved in a more strategic, constructive and a more interesting programme of work which could add considerable value to the Authority. The Committee were supportive of adopting a more strategic approach and at its November meeting a dedicated session was held to devise a new forward work programme based on some of the principles outlined at the October meeting. Over time, it is certainly possible that development of a more strategic role for OSC will lead to pressures on the work programme and the need to consider increasing the membership of OSC.
40. In terms of overall workload, the work programme of the Committee has proved manageable although there is a particularly heavy period between December and January when the dedicated Budget Scrutiny Task Group has a series of meetings to scrutinise the draft Budget produced by the Cabinet. The Scrutiny Committee is supported by an Officer (currently within Member Services) who provides assistance to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and who also undertakes research and drafting of reports and information for presentation to the Committee. Other Officers within the Council also regularly produce reports for consideration at the Committee. Whilst there is no routine requirement for members of the Committee to undertake work in between meetings, on occasions this does occur. For example, recently the Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended two separate briefing meetings with representatives of Southern Water and South East Water in terms of a fact finding mission based on the full Committee’s wish that issues associated with the work of those companies be examined.
41. It is fair to say that generally the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been valued by the Cabinet and indeed the vast majority of recommendations made to the Cabinet have been accepted. Cabinet

¹ Since 2001, the number of members involved directly in OSC has varied. Between 2001 and 2004 there were three OSCs (aligned to three Cabinet Policy Advisory Groups) with 15 members each. This reduced to two Committees in 2004 and then one in 2003, originally with 19 members.

Portfolio Holders are also invited to meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when matters within their Portfolio are on the agenda.

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PART THREE - REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

42. The extent to which councillors routinely engage with and represent the views of local communities has a fundamental impact on their workloads and responsibilities.
43. During February 2016 a survey of all councillors was undertaken to help gauge workloads and range of community activity. A total of 31 of 43 members responded to the survey (72%). In early March this was followed up with a further single question survey seeking an overall figure from each councillor for the total hours spent on Council business on average each week¹. Twenty councillors responded to this (c.47%), including two of the ten Cabinet members. The March survey revealed a total of 474 hours, with an average of 23.7 hours per councillor.

However, six Cabinet councillors had already responded to a separate email survey (also in February, see para. 16 above) regarding hours spent each week fulfilling Cabinet responsibilities only. The average number of hours was 20. If one assumes either a 50% uplift or 100% uplift to allow for non-Cabinet work (eg on other committees, casework, community engagement, group work) then the average for Cabinet members rises to either 30 hours per week or 40 hours per week. Adding these to the March survey data (for the eight Cabinet members who did not respond to the March survey) provides a total of 714 hours or 794 hours amongst 28 councillors, an average of 25.5 hours per week per councillor or 28.35 hours per week per councillor.

44. Thus the estimated average number of hours spent by councillors on Council business each week is likely to be between 25.5 and 28.35 hours. In the LGA Census (2013), councillors reported spending an average of 25.1 hours per week on Council and group/party business with the majority being spent on Council business (20.8 hours). Current information therefore indicates that the Ashford average number of hours per week exceeds the national average.
45. Some key data from the detailed February 2016 survey is set out in the Table below.

¹ Councillors were asked to include time spent on:

- Attending meetings at Civic Centre (member or officer)
- Reading and preparing for these meetings
- Constituency casework
- Group or party work
- Work with external bodies
- Other community work including surgeries, newsletters, social media, working with parish councils etc

Representational Topic	Survey Statistic
Sitting on Committees	35% spend 1 – 2 hours a week 26% spend 3 – 5 hours a week 23% spend 5 – 10 hours a week
Reading/Preparing for Committees	35% spend 2 – 5 hours 29% spend 5 – 10 hours 19% spend 1 – 2 hours
Casework Subject	Most common topics planning and housing
Casework Volumes	37% 2 – 5 hours 27% 5 – 10 hours 13% 1 – 2 hours 20% 10 – 20 hours
Parish Council or Urban Forum Liaison	67% regular attendance 27% occasional attendance
Methods of Engagement with Constituents and Committees (other than email and telephone)	73% Newsletter 20% Surgery 10% Blog 50% Social media 30% Public meetings

46. It is clear that in addition to their Committee-based work, councillors spend a significant number of hours each week engaging with communities through casework and liaison with other tiers of local government. This work contributes significantly to the smooth running and effective governance of the Council.

In response to a specific survey question a clear majority of councillors (between 67% and 83%) considered the time they spent on attending meetings, working with constituents and working with community organisations was “about right”.¹

47. Councillors were asked an “open” question as to how they considered the representative role of the ward councillor has changed over the last 10 years. Themes emerging included raised expectations of full accessibility, especially by electronic means², community leadership roles and a general raised

¹ But few councillors would be likely to state that they thought they spent too much time engaging with their communities! Empirical data is a more reliable barometer perhaps. An important aspect of community engagement for councillors is the Ward Member Grant Scheme. Each councillor has a budget of £3,000 each year to support community activities and initiatives in their wards. This enhances the councillor’s role as a community representative and leader.

² 41 of the current 43 borough councillors have email addresses and are able to access corporate systems remotely.

expectation of councillors being able to engage themselves (and not simply through officers) with professional and technical issues.

48. Without question, expectations in these areas will continue to rise and the workloads and pressures on individual councillors will, as a result, continue to rise. In this context it is worth noting that a significant percentage of Ashford's councillors (21 of 43) are in employment or full-time education. This affects the time they realistically have available for dealing with casework and other Council business. Both these factors tend to point in the direction of more, rather than less, councillors for the future. Too small a council size could well deter people of working age from becoming councillors due to time commitments, especially at key Cabinet or other 'special responsibility' levels.

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PART FOUR - THE FUTURE

New Corporate Plan

49. In December 2015 the council agreed a new Corporate Plan - "*The Five Year Corporate Plan – for Aspiration, Action and Achievement*", setting out what the council aims to achieve over the next five years.

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/the-five-year-corporate-plan-for-aspiration-action-and-achievement-2015-2020>

50. Work has begun to produce comprehensive 'Delivery Planning' to translate the corporate plan into action. Whilst this is in the early stages the role of local members to shape, challenge and provide responsibility for these ambitions remains central to the longer-term success of the council's ambitions. The new corporate plan is also underpinned by a set of principles that strive for the council to be well resourced, with effective governance, delivering high quality services with good communication in a safe environment – all of which should demonstrate good compliance and standards.

Devolution and the changing policy landscape

51. Following the General Election of May 2015, it has become clear that devolution forms a key pillar of the new government's legislative and policy agenda. Devolution will exert a significant impact on the scope, complexity and diversity of the council's business – with likely implications for the workload and responsibility of councillors.
52. Early discussions have already begun between the council, its district neighbours and the County Council to discuss how authorities can most effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the devolution agenda. Whilst the full range of governance options is still to be explored, it is clear that any successful devolution will be based upon core principles of transforming local services, delivering increased efficiency and offering further value for money. As such, relevant and reflective governance arrangements, of which Members are a key component, will form a key element of any devolved structures.
53. The council has already developed strong relationships with many community-based organisations to take on local assets, provide services on the council's behalf or run services which benefit the communities they serve. This ethos will continue with large-scale initiatives such as a new Community Management Organisation at the major new settlement at Chilmington Green which further shifts the emphasis down to local communities.

Service Delivery

54. Over the last few years, the council has successfully adopted a more entrepreneurial approach to service delivery. This approach has been underpinned by a commitment to actively engage with partners across sectors

and interests, and conscious investment in key infrastructure and land in order to unlock those initiatives which are crucial to the borough's long-term growth and prosperity.

55. Councillors form a key pillar of this approach, with active member involvement in the council's new governance arrangements for a Trading Company, Strategic Delivery Board, Town Centre Regeneration Board and others. Ashford Borough Council is a solution-based organisation, an ethos which demands responsive and reflective governance, risk-management and accountability. It is important that these governance arrangements (and the capacity and skills of members to fulfil their role within them) are robust, efficient and meet the needs of the council and the community. Effective scrutiny of these evolving delivery models may also necessitate additional skills and capacity within the current committee structure.
56. Hybrid service delivery methods and the opportunities presented by in-house service provision are currently being explored and implemented in areas such as grounds maintenance. This acknowledgement of the need for a multi-faceted approach to achieving financial self-sufficiency, income generation and service improvements began in 2014 when the Cabinet approved the "Informing the Next Five Years" report.¹
57. This report stressed the need to look beyond service reduction, and included a new *Counter-Inflation Strategy*, and a *Borrowing and Investment Strategy* intended to develop and maintain a set of prudent and sensible principles to enable the council to take advantage of financial and other external markets for the benefit of the borough of Ashford. A continuous drive to explore further innovative and effective services – in concert with the wider devolution agenda noted above – is likely to require very different ways of working.
58. The diversity, dynamism and entrepreneurship of this future service delivery will need to be complemented by an engaged, active and knowledgeable group of councillors, able to pivot between a wide variety of issues which may include engaging with new partnerships or different governance models.
59. As such, over and above the workload generated by the traditional ward responsibilities noted in the Section above, future service delivery which embraces hybrid, partnership and in-house provision will require further development in the skills and roles of councillors.

Finance

60. Ashford Borough Council's service and financial planning process is underpinned by a robust evidence base that is used to inform decision making. The recent past has seen a growing emphasis on prioritisation, efficiency, collaboration and most especially innovation, income generation and self-sufficiency.

¹ Cabinet, 10th July 2014, Agenda Item Number 6

61. As part of the development of the council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget, analysis is undertaken of the key financial assumptions on which the budget will be based. The key areas covered include:
- Economic factors, such as inflation
 - Treasury Management, including interest rates
 - Demographic pressures on spending
 - Asset Management, including a review of the Council's portfolio
 - Other spending pressures opportunities (revenue and capital).
62. The council's financial forecasting process is dynamic and reflects changing/ emerging priorities, demand for services and changes in external factors. As noted above, the council has embraced entrepreneurship, strategic investment and an overarching ambition to be 'Grant Free' by 2018-19 as mechanisms to achieve greater self-sufficiency for the council and the borough in future years. This has and will continue to have an inevitable impact on service delivery, response times and councillors' own constituency work – and the need for councillors to be effective community leaders and advocates for the council has, as a consequence, increased.

The Electorate

63. The current electorate in Ashford Borough (2016) is 89,862. The estimated total population is 125,000 (ONS Mid-Year Projections). The electorate is the key number for the purposes of this review.

The electorate figure for 2016 is lower than the figures for 2012 and 2013 (90,919 and 91,565 respectively), all as taken from the relevant published electoral registers. This anomaly arises due to the effect of the transition to the new Individual Electoral Registration (IER) system which began in 2014. As a result of new IER procedures, the pace of removals from the register has outstripped the pace of additions but this is not expected to be a long-term trend. Accordingly the figure for 2016 (and those for 2014 and 2015) is artificially low at a time of continuing population growth and the strong expectation is that the register will return to normal levels and trends well before the projection date of 2022.

64. Consistent with Ashford's past growth and status for many years, its population has grown steadily.

Year	Population	Electorate
2016	125,000	89,862
2011	117,956	89,313
2001	102,661	76,994

65. Electoral forecast data for Ashford shows that further significant population and electorate growth to 2022 is inevitable.

Year	Population	Electorate
2022	133,000	99,868

This represents an increase of approximately 6.5% on the current population. When the last electoral review was undertaken in Ashford, the point was made by the Council at that time that there would be scope for increasing Council size at the next review should population and electorate continue to grow (see paragraph 7).

66. Comparison with Ashford's "family group" of similar authorities reveals the following¹

Council	Review Electorate		Current Electorate	Councillors	Electors per Councillor Approx.
	Year	Forecast			
Maidstone			112,112	55	2,036
Tonbridge & Malling	2018	97,539		54	1,806
Stroud	2020	97,781		51	1,917
W. Oxfordshire		80,000		49	1,632
Braintree	2019	116,844		49	2,384
Tunbridge Wells			78,595	48	1,635
Test Valley			93,571	48	1,950
Mendip			81,745	47	1,739
Lichfield	2019	88,783		47	1,889

¹ This is the so-called "Nearest Neighbours" model prepared and published by CIPFA. The comparison is based in some cases on forecasted electorates and in some cases on current electorates, depending on whether electoral reviews have recently been undertaken.

Council	Review Electorate		Current Electorate	Councillors	Electors per Councillor Approx.
	Year	Forecast			
Wychavon			95,169	45	2,115
East Hants			88,294	37	2,386
Rugby	2016	80,026		42	1,904
Vale of White Horse	2018	98,802		38	2,600
Daventry	2016	65,380		36	1,816
ASHFORD			89,862¹	43	2,090
ASHFORD	2022	99,868		43	2,323
ASHFORD	2022	99,868		47	2,125

Notes

- Approximate average electorate (excluding Ashford) - 91,070
- Average number of councillors (excluding Ashford) - 46
- Approximate average number of electors per councillor (excluding Ashford) - 1,987

67. From this it can be seen that even Ashford's current artificially low electorate is only just below the average. Its forecast electorate at 2022 places it at 3rd highest in the "family group"

At the same time its number of councillors is currently below the average and its number of electors per councillor (2090) is above the average even using the artificially low current electorate figures. Using forecast electorate figures of 99,868 Ashford's number of electors per councillor rises to c.2323, making it fourth highest in the group.

68. "Family group" comparisons indicate that any reduction in the number of councillors would move it further away from the relevant averages referred to in the Table in para. 66 above, whilst a modest increase in the number of councillors would move it closer to the average. For example an increase in the number of councillors by 4 to, say, 47 would bring Ashford up to the

¹ See paragraph 63 for an explanation as to why this electorate figure is artificially low.

average number of councillors with the number of electors per councillor in the region of 2125, maintaining it close to its current ratio.

Conclusions on Part Four – The Future

69. The council will continue to be a partner and stakeholder with a number of organisations from both the public and private sectors, which will require officer and elected member representation. Councillors will be required to represent the council and have greater knowledge in a number of areas to negotiate and ensure the interests of the council and the community are met. The devolution agenda will only sharpen the need to explore the full spectrum of possibilities under collaborative management and governance arrangements.
70. Ashford Borough Council is very active already in including councillors in its extended management arrangements that have become a necessary constituent part of modern management. More complex (and more demanding) management will become necessary with increasing numbers of councillors involved, especially those with significant committee or executive responsibility.
71. Ashford Borough Council remains a hugely ambitious council in a time of reducing resources. In recent years the council has found alternative means of funding and delivering not only its services but also an impressive number of high-impact strategic initiatives. While the council will continue to aim for focussed, efficient and value for money services, this is matched by an ever-greater role for elected members across the Council in ensuring that the authority's emphasis on dynamic delivery is matched by an effective decision making and scrutiny process.
72. Whilst it is too early in the life of the devolution agenda to reach firm conclusions on the impact on council size, the council foresees that the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of all of its councillors will evolve to become more intense and complex over the coming years. With a continuing emphasis on efficient services - delivered through a full mix of hybrid, contracted or in-house provision, alongside devolution, collaboration and new ways of working, the council considers that any reduction in the number of councillors would lead to capacity and governance risks; whilst a modest increase could be seen as a prudent response to the future challenges described in this section.
73. A modest increase in the number of councillors would also address the risk of Ashford drifting further from the important "Family Group" averages referred to in the Table at paragraph 66.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS ON COUNCIL SIZE

- A. Given that the current structure of the Council, including the range of task groups, panels and Boards and the current framework of regulatory Committees (including Planning) works well, it is undesirable and unnecessary to make structural changes simply in order to accommodate a reduction in the number of councillors. The current structure has evolved over many years and where change has been required, change has been embraced and this would continue to be the Council's approach to good governance and effective decision-making.
- B. Any reduction in Council size would be likely to increase the direct workload of councillors in terms of numbers of meetings. This would limit time available for the increasingly important and demanding role of engaging with constituents and other local community organisations. The impact of this would be accentuated by the fact that about half of councillors are likely to be in employment or education and that the Council's electorate continues to increase significantly. Indeed the effect of this on workloads could discourage people in full-time employment from considering a role as an elected councillor, reducing the diversity of representation and limiting the skills and experience of members.
- C. A number of factors indicate that a small increase in the number of councillors would be consistent with effective decision-making and effective government. These include:-
- (i) As is clear from Section Four of this submission, Ashford's corporate strategy embraces an entrepreneurial approach untypical of shire districts and an emphasis on efficient services delivered through various types of provider. Furthermore, recent and proposed developments are creating large new communities on a scale of regional importance. Such strategies bring vital pressures and increasing complexity to the role of the councillor.
- The "Framework" document produced by the Council for new members in 2015 (see Part One of this submission and Appendix 1) clarifies and raises considerably the general level of expectation and standards for Ashford councillors.
- Recognising the need to ensure a diversity of representation amongst councillors, workloads must be reasonable and not discourage those in employment, education or those already active in the community.¹
- (ii) Comparisons with Ashford's "family group" of authorities show that Ashford already has a higher than average elector-councillor ratio and

¹ Currently in Ashford, 7 councillors are "dual hatted" (6 as parish councillors and one as a county councillor) whilst one councillor is triple hatted. In addition a number of councillors have other roles in the community independently of their council membership eg school governors, charity trustees etc.

a lower than average number of councillors. This situation worsens markedly using electoral forecast data to 2022. An increase from 43 to 47 councillors would offset the impact of the growing electorate and provide necessary additional resilience and capacity to ensure decision-making remains effective and community leadership and representation remain strong.

- (iii) At the time of the last electoral review in Ashford (2000/2001 effective from 2003 elections) councillor numbers reduced from 49 to 43, in part to reflect a perceived but un-evidenced need for less “back bench” councillors with the new executive government model. At the same time the Council recognised that future increase in council size to reflect electorate growth would be rendered “more feasible”.
- (iv) The number of committee memberships per councillor at Ashford is higher than the national average.
- (v) The average hours per week spent on council business by Ashford councillors is higher than the national average of 25.1 hours.
- (vi) Growing expectations of accessibility, community leadership roles and technical competence will make the representative role of councillors more challenging.

Ashford Borough Council therefore recommends that the number of borough councillors increases to 47 with effect from the local elections in May 2019.

AFRAMEWORK

Document for elected members



people
serving
people

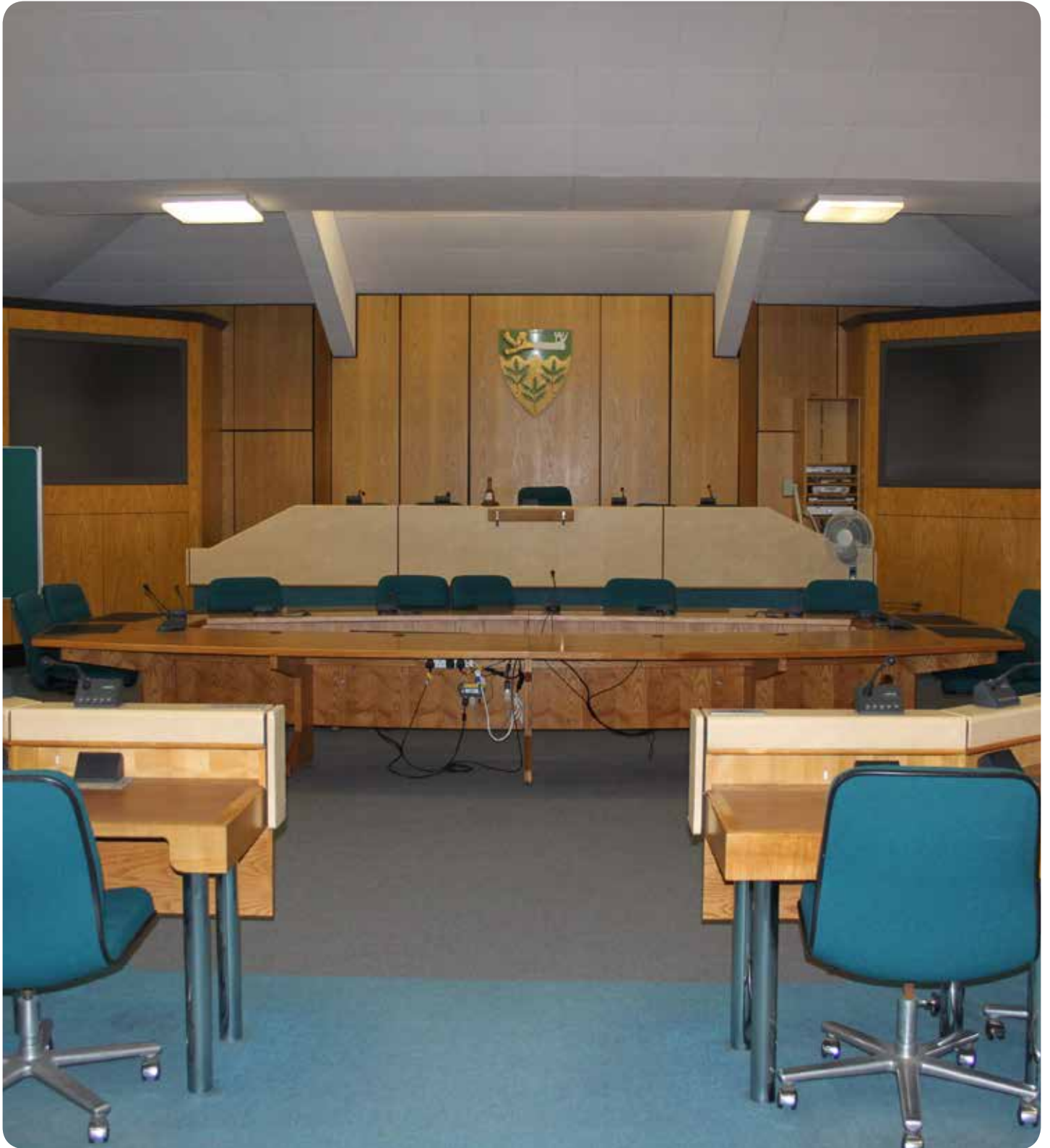
**WHAT TO EXPECT AS AN
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLOR**



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ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



What to expect as an Ashford Borough Councillor

This guide has been produced by the Member Training Panel with input from existing Councillors (of all political groups) and officers. There is no wrong or right way to be a Councillor but we hope that these tips and guidance will help to give you a better understanding of the role and what is expected at Ashford Borough Council. You will also inevitably learn through your own experiences and with guidance and assistance from your Political Groups and colleagues.

Now you are a councillor

As an elected local representative you have a unique and privileged position and the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

However, being a good Councillor can mean hard work - as well as being rewarding in itself. You will often be expected to balance the needs and interests of your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses, Parish Councils, your Political Group (if you belong to one) and the Council. All will make legitimate demands on your time, on top of your personal commitments to family, friends and workplace. As a Councillor you will have many different roles. As the local elected representative you will engage with residents and groups on a wide range of different issues and take on an important community leadership role. You will contribute to the development of policies and strategies, including

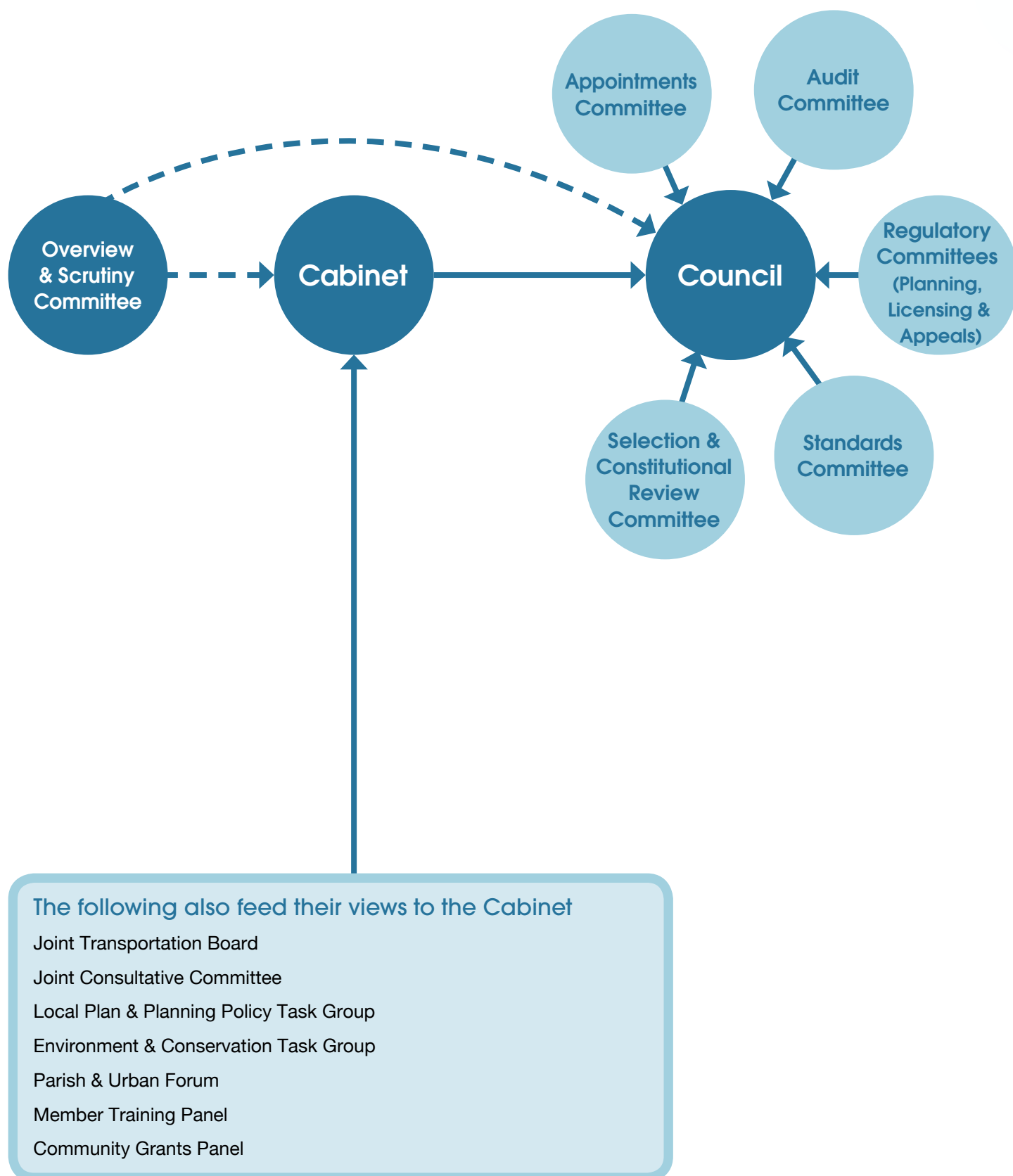
budget-setting, and you may be involved in scrutinising Council decisions or taking decisions on planning or licensing applications. Time commitments will vary from Councillor to Councillor and depend in part on what roles/Committees you may be appointed to, but it is estimated by the Local Government Association that a newly elected backbench Councillor would need to devote at least 10 hours per week to Council and Ward work. Members elected at normal elections serve a term of office of four years.

Committee Meetings

Councillors are expected to attend all the meetings of Committees and Groups to which they have been appointed, as well as all Full Council meetings. The amount of time dedicated to Council work, and attendance at meetings will obviously vary from Member to Member depending on what roles/meetings you are appointed to, but many take a wider interest and attending meetings such as Cabinet will give you a better understanding of the workings of the Council. From May 2015 attendance data for Full Council meetings will be recorded and published on the Council's website. The main Committees generally meet in the evening, but some meetings do take place during the day as well. There will clearly be occasions when you are unable to attend particular meetings and it is considered good etiquette in those circumstances to give your apologies and arrange for a substitute if possible.



ABC's Current Committee Structure



What to expect as an Ashford Borough Councillor

Training and development

There is a lot to learn in the early days of being a Councillor, so training and development opportunities are provided to assist in the learning process. Elected Members are expected to attend relevant training sessions and there is a Member training budget in place for attending external courses. An induction process will commence shortly after the May Elections and training for Members appointed to certain Committees (e.g. Planning and Licensing) will be compulsory before you can sit on those Committees.

Officers generally have a role, especially at senior level, to assist, support and guide Councillors to be effective.

Making yourself available

One of a Councillor's most important roles is to represent their Ward and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the Council. When residents contact you, you will be expected to respond in a timely fashion. As well as being an advocate for your local residents and signposting them to the right people at the Council, you will need to keep them informed about the issues that affect them.

Building strong relationships with local people and encouraging them to make their views known and engage with you will greatly assist you in understanding and representing local views. Your residents will expect you to respond to their queries and investigate their concerns in a timely fashion. Making

a telephone number and e-mail address available is important. You may wish to set up your own web page. If you have Parish Councils, active local community groups and businesses in your Ward you may wish to make early contact and forge links and relationships with those. Also with your local KCC Councillor and co-Ward Member if you are in a two Member ward. It will be important to communicate Council decisions that affect your residents and to know your patch and be aware of any problems. You may also be asked to represent residents' views at council meetings. In the early days you will not always be sure who the best contact on a particular issue is but Council officers will be able to help you with this. The Member Services team will always be available to assist you as a first point of contact. It is important not to 'promise the earth'. As an Ashford Borough Councillor you may not be able to achieve everything that residents ask of you. Being honest and realistic will help manage expectations and avoid placing you under unnecessary pressure from residents.

Local Government

Local government touches the lives of everybody, every day. Councils deal with everything from schools to care of older people, from roads to rubbish, libraries and local planning. As a Councillor, understanding how Local Government works will help you to represent your local community.

What do Councils do?

Councils work with local people

and partners to agree and deliver on local priorities. They provide a wide range of services either directly, in partnership with others or by commissioning them from a third party. Councils are responsible for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas. The Localism Act 2011 has given Councils and communities more influence over the way their local area is managed. Councils provide more than 800 services to local communities. Most are mandatory, which means that by law the Council must do them. Some mandatory functions are tightly controlled by central government, resulting in a similar level of service across the country. Other services are discretionary, which means the Council has discretion over the type and level of service it provides. They range from large economic regeneration projects right down to the removal of wasp nests.

How is Local Government organised?

Successive reorganisations of Local Government have created a complex and often baffling array of arrangements which vary from area to area. Much of England (including Ashford) has two tiers of local government – County Councils and District (or Borough) councils – with responsibility for services split between the two. Other areas have a single unitary authority responsible for all local services (e.g. Medway).

Two-tier areas:

County Councils provide services that cover the whole county, such

as education, waste disposal and adult social care.

District Councils (some are also known as Borough or City councils) are smaller and provide local services such as refuse collection, environmental health, leisure facilities, housing and planning.

Town and Parish Councils

In most areas, including Ashford, the most local tier of Local Government is a Parish or Town Council. They maintain some local amenities such as recreational areas, footpaths and cemeteries. The Parish Council is also consulted on highway and planning applications. A Councillor

may serve on one or more tiers of local government – so a County Councillor may also be a District Councillor and a Parish Councillor. Each Parish Council can be very

different and individual Parishes and their Parish Council create individual community spirit.



Who does what?

	County (KCC)	District/ Borough (ABC)
Education	✓	
Highways & Transport planning	✓	
Passenger transport	✓	
Social care	✓	
Housing		✓
Libraries	✓	
Leisure		✓
Environmental health		✓
Trading Standards	✓	
Waste collection		✓
Waste disposal	✓	
Planning applications	✓	✓
Local Strategic planning		✓
Local tax collection		✓

ABC does have an input on county functions such as education, highways and transportation, and therefore has set up its own Working Groups on those issues as well as the Joint Transportation Board (a joint Committee of KCC and ABC Councillors). As an ABC Councillor you may have an opportunity to be a member of those Groups. There is also a 'Faults Portal' on the KCC website for members to report highway faults.

Most day to day planning applications are dealt with by ABC. KCC also deal with some planning applications such as waste management and minerals development.

How are decisions made?



Ashford, as with most Councils, operates a Leader and Cabinet model of decision making. The full Council elects a Leader who in turn appoints and chairs the Cabinet. Each Cabinet Member has a specific area of responsibility. The Cabinet makes most day to day decisions within a policy and budget framework set by the Administration and approved by Full Council. The Cabinet meets regularly (monthly) so decisions are made quickly.

All Councillors sit on Full Council. This is responsible for setting the policy framework, agreeing the budget and spending plans, electing the Leader of the Council and making constitutional decisions. It is also a forum for debate on major issues affecting the Authority and its local area. Councils with a Leader and Cabinet system must establish Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, through which Non-Cabinet Councillors can scrutinise decisions.

Finally there are some regulatory functions over which the Cabinet does not have responsibility – for example determining planning applications and making decisions on licensing. These are delegated to separate Committees.

Key Positions at Ashford Borough Council

Mayor – The Mayor of Ashford is the Borough's first citizen. He/she is a Councillor who is elected by their peers for a year's term of office at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. Responsibilities of the Mayor include: Chairing Meetings of the

Full Council; hosting a number of civic events; representing the Borough at ceremonial occasions; attending a wide range of events and presentations to which he/she is invited.

Leader of the Council – A Councillor elected by peers - normally for the four year Council term. The Leader provides overall political leadership and direction and overall co-ordination of Council policies, strategies and service delivery. The Leader chairs the Cabinet and appoints colleague Members as their Deputy Leader and to the Cabinet. The Leader of the Council is therefore normally the Leader of the Council's majority Group.

Cabinet Member – (also known as a Portfolio Holder) - a Councillor appointed by the Leader to serve on the Cabinet and given a particular area of responsibility (i.e. a Portfolio). A Cabinet can be made up of between three and ten Councillors. Ashford's Cabinet is currently made up of the Leader, a Deputy Leader and eight other Portfolio Holders, each having a Lead Member to assist them in their area of responsibility.

Chief Executive – A paid officer who is responsible for: the Council's business planning; overall management of the Council and ensuring that service delivery to the people of the Borough is of as high a quality as possible and that all the resources of the Council are used in the most effective way; leading and directing the Council's Management Team, ensuring a corporate



ABC Chief Executive John Bunnett



approach to management of the Council; ensuring Council policies are put into action, performance is evaluated and the operations of the Council are kept under review. The Chief Executive is the statutory Head of Paid Service. He is also appointed as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Ashford.

Section 151 Officer - (also known as Chief Finance Officer) - A statutory position to which the council must appoint which; ensures lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making; has responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the council; contributes to the Corporate Management of the council by way of professional financial advice; and provides advice to Councillors and Officers.

Monitoring Officer - a statutory position to which the council must appoint which; maintains the council's constitution; ensures lawfulness and fairness of decision making; supports the Standards Committee, and manages the Code of Conduct complaints system; is the proper officer for access to information arrangements; ensures Cabinet decisions are within the budget and policy framework; and provides advice on probity and policy framework issues to the Council. The council's current Monitoring Officer is the Head of Legal and Democratic Services Terry Mortimer.

The Constitution

As a new Councillor you will need to be aware of the Council's Constitution, which sets out how the Council conducts its business, including:

- Who is responsible for making decisions and how decisions are made
- Procedural matters (set out in the Responsibilities and Functions section)
- Role of officers
- Codes and protocols.

It is important to familiarise yourself with these parts of the Constitution, in particular the Responsibilities and Functions section. These specify the terms of reference of the Council's various committees etc, the rules on declarations of interest, the timings and order of business at Council meetings and the rules of debate.

Agendas and minutes

By law, the Council's formal meetings must be held in public, although the public and press can be excluded for discussions on some confidential/exempt items. Councils must give at least five days' notice of a meeting. The agenda must be made available at least five days before the meeting. The minutes should be available on the Council's website and available on request. The Cabinet must also publish its forward plan showing the key decisions to be made in at least the next four months (Ashford has a twelve month rolling schedule of Cabinet Key Decisions).

Code of Conduct and Standards



As a Councillor you will be expected to comply with the council's Code of Conduct for elected members. The code is the same as that adopted by most councils in Kent.

The Code of Conduct is based on seven principles of public life set out opposite. The code also reflects the national rules in the Localism Act 2011 regarding registration and declaration at meetings of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs). Within 28 days of election all councillors must register their DPIs (including those of their spouse or partner) with the council's Monitoring Officer. These registrations must then be updated promptly if they change. Failure to do this can be a criminal offence, as can taking part in meetings and voting when you have a DPI in a matter under consideration.

The Borough Council's Code of Conduct also requires declaration at meetings of certain other types of interest (Other Significant Interests or OSIs). All these rules will be explained to councillors soon after the election. In addition, the code imposes other general conduct obligations on councillors when acting as such, including not bringing your office or the council into disrepute and not using your position as a councillor improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Complaints that councillors have breached the Code of Conduct are dealt with by the council's Monitoring Officer and can be considered by the Council's Standards Committee.



Seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to change poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Allowances and IT

Allowances are paid to Elected Councillors. A taxable basic allowance is paid to all Councillors (currently £4,466 per year - from 1st April 2015 - at Ashford) and it is intended to cover the costs associated with being a Councillor including disbursements such as telephone calls, stationery and IT peripherals. It is not intended to be remuneration for time spent in undertaking the role of a Councillor. Workloads and geographical areas covered vary between Councillors but all receive the same basic allowance.

Members who are appointed to certain roles (e.g. Leader, Cabinet Member, Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs/Group Leaders) are also entitled to claim a special responsibility allowance (also taxable). The rates vary depending on the particular position appointed to. All Elected Members are also entitled to claim travel and subsistence and dependent and child care allowances in respect of their travel to and from, and attendance at, approved meetings. More details on this are contained within the Council's Constitution and will be made available to Members following their election.

IT equipment and support will also be made available to Elected Members.



Member Services

Ashford Borough Council has a Member Services Section which will be your first port of call at the council on many issues throughout your term as an Elected Councillor. Please ask any questions if something isn't obvious and if they can't answer themselves, they will certainly know where to direct you for an answer.

The Member Services team is part of Legal and Democratic Services and undertakes the following work:

- Administering all of the work associated with the council's decision making and scrutiny functions, i.e. producing agendas, attending meetings and producing minutes of all meetings of the council, cabinet and other committees and many other member meetings
- Management of the Members' Allowances Scheme
- Management of Members' Training and Induction
- Management of the Mayoral and Civic Ceremonial functions of the council
- Management of the Overview and Scrutiny Process
- Providing administrative support to all Members of the council
- Management of the booking/hiring of the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms
- Handling Ombudsman complaints
- Holding statutory registers (for example Members interests)
- Generally assisting Members by undertaking research or offering guidance as to whom members should approach for assistance within the authority
- Information or correspondence (from Members or Officers), which is intended for All Councillors must be sent to Member Services for distribution
- Supporting the Monitoring Officer in constitutional and interest matters

Keith Fearon is the Member Services and Scrutiny Manager and leads the team. Keith can be contacted on

01233 330564 or

keith.fearon@ashford.gov.uk

Terry Mortimer is the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer. Terry can be contacted on

01233 330210 or

terry.mortimer@ashford.gov.uk

We hope you have found this document useful and it has given you a better understanding of the role of an Ashford Borough Councillor. We look forward to working with you in the future.

