



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 15th December 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 20th October 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 November and 8th December 2016 (to follow) 2-4

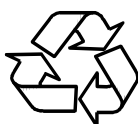
9. To receive, consider and adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on the 6th December 2016 (to follow)
10. To receive, consider and adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee held on the 8th December 2016 (to follow)
11. To consider Motions of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 11
12. 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
7th December 2016

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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 **20th October 2016**.

Present:

His Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr. S J G Koowaree (Chairman);

Cllrs. Adby, Apps, Barrett, Mrs Bell, Mrs Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Mrs Dyer, Farrell, Feacey, Galpin, Heyes, Mrs Heyes, Hicks, A Howard, W Howard, Knowles, Krause, Link, Macpherson, Miss Martin, Michael, Murphy, Ovenden, Pickering, Powell, Shorter, Sims, Smith, Waters, Mrs Webb, Wedgbury, White.

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Law and Governance), Head of Finance, Senior Member Services Officer.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting: -

- (i) The Reverend Alan Dinnie said prayers.
- (ii) His Worshipful the Mayor asked Members to remain standing in silence in respect of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand who had passed away recently.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bartlett, Bell, Bennett, Bradford, Buchanan, Mrs Martin.

173 Exempt or Confidential Information

The Mayor asked whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of exempt or confidential information. The Corporate Director (Law and Governance) advised that there were none.

174 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 21st July 2016 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 8th September 2016 be approved and confirmed as correct records.

175 Announcements

(a) The Mayor's Charity

The Mayor advised that he was hosting a Neil Diamond Tribute evening on Saturday the 19th November at London Beach Golf Club, Tenterden. He said he would love as

many Councillors as possible to attend. More details could be obtained by contacting his PA, Andrea Collard.

(b) Leader of the Council

The Leader said that over the summer months there had been some significant developments on which he would like to take a few moments to update colleagues.

In September he had attended the topping out ceremony of the new Ashford College campus. The event marked a significant milestone in the delivery of one of the Council's Big 8 projects. One of the key challenges to economic growth and greater prosperity within the Borough was the improvement of the skills base locally. The delivery of this project should improve the prosperity of businesses and in doing so would support a stronger future economy within the area. With over 1,000 students and over a hundred staff in this location, all within easy walking distance of nearby shops, services and restaurants, this development would begin to change the dynamics of the town centre and would also have a positive effect more generally.

Colleagues would be aware that the Council had recently approved plans for an extension to the popular Cineworld cinema complex at the Eureka Leisure Park near Junction 9 of the M20. Three screens would be added at the site, including Kent's second IMAX screen. The expansion would complement the proposed six-screen town centre cinema at Elwick Place, in the heart of the town, which would breathe new life into an old brownfield site that had laid barren for so long. The Council was also in the process of finalising the legal documents in order that building works could start shortly.

He advised that the site for the first of Ashford's Commercial Quarter office blocks now had a hording around it as a prelude to the commencement of the construction works. This would be part of Ashford's exciting new business hub, which he liked to refer to as CQ38 (Commercial Quarter – 38 minutes from London).

The previous evening the Planning Committee had approved plans by Curious Drinks Limited, the beer and cider subsidiary of the Chapel Down winery, to build a state-of-the-art brewery and visitor attraction centre on the corner of Victoria Way. This would enable the business to grow its domestic and international distribution and provide for at least 40 new jobs. In addition they had approved the creation of 216 homes on Victoria Way and some of the Section 106 sums being levied would allow for great enhancements at Victoria Park.

With all these exciting developments now coming to fruition, Ashford's dynamic growth was set to continue. A growing town needed a strong business support network, which is why the Council had extended its close-working relationship with the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce into a 15th year. Ashford was fortunate to have such an active and strong Chamber and he saw the partnership as a key building block in the Council's vision to achieve greater economic prosperity for Ashford.

This month the Council had also brought the responsibility for grounds maintenance across the Borough back in-house, under the name Aspire Landscape Management. This initiative was a key part of delivering the adopted Land Management Improvement Plan, which aimed to make the Borough a pleasant and enjoyable place to live, work and visit. It also linked to Priority 4 of the Corporate Plan to

achieve an environment that created higher standards of public realm and open landscape and green spaces, thus raising civic pride and making the Borough more attractive for all. There would also be a focus on other areas beyond the town centre and more recent successes included working to promote new community facilities at Repton Park, Charing's new sports pavilion, Kestrel Park and the Spearpoint Pavilion. They must also never forget that they had an aging population and the Council was also looking to expand and enhance its planned provision at sheltered housing schemes such as Farrow Court and Danemore.

He said that Ashford already had a number of cycle paths but he wanted to invite all Members to join him in driving forward a real effort to deliver a meaningful network of cycle paths. Ashford would then be in a position to really encourage the use of cycles. 'Ashford the Cycling Town', certainly of Kent, was the ambition.

The Leader concluded by saying that the Council's Corporate Plan set out the positive direction they were taking to help the Borough to grow, thrive and prosper in the coming years. It was pleasing to see such progress being made against their strategic priorities – they were delivering on their promises whilst still being able to maintain the election pledge of the lowest Council Tax in Kent and one of the lowest in the Country. There was a great deal more to do but he considered they could all take heart from the significant amount of progress the Council had made thus far and they would continue to focus on exciting opportunities to encourage economic growth, provide business and leisure facilities, plan for an aging population and build quality homes for Ashford residents.

The Mayor said that in response to the Leader's statement, as Mayor he had pledged to promote Ashford wherever he went and he was particularly proud to be the Mayor during this year. There was so much going on and he saw this purely by the number of legal documents etc. he was having to sign as part of his weekly sealing process. He considered all Councillors had a responsibility to promote Ashford and all of the positive developments that were going on. People across the County were talking about Ashford and what a great place it was and they had to keep that momentum going.

176 Cabinet – 8th September and 13th October 2016

The report of the Corporate Director (Law and Governance), which had been tabled, clarified the procedure for consideration of the Cabinet minutes.

(a) Cabinet – 8th September 2016

Resolved:

- That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 8th September 2016 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 120, 122, 123, 124, 125 and 133.**
- (ii) Minute Nos. 120, 122, 123, 124, 125 and 133 be approved and adopted.**

(b) Cabinet 13th October 2016

Resolved:

That subject to the expiry of the period by which decisions arising from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th October 2016 may be called in, i.e. 26th October 2016: -

- (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th October 2016 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 164 and 165.**
- (ii) Minute Nos. 164 and 165 be approved and adopted.**

177 Audit Committee – 28th July and 29th September 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Audit Committee held on the 28th July and the 29th September 2016 be received and noted.

178 Selection and Constitutional Review Committee – 13th October 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee held on the 13th October 2016 be approved and adopted.

(DS)

MINS:

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th November 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Knowles, Shorter.

Apologies

Cllrs Hicks, Michael, Ovenden

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Link, Smith, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Law and Governance), Director of Development, Head of Finance, Accountancy Manager, Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager, Head of Housing, Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development, Senior Policy, Performance and Scrutiny Officer, Communications and Marketing Manager, Member Services Manager.

189 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th October 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

190 Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised that he was pleased to report that the final meeting had been held to consider due diligence in terms of the Elwick Phase 1 Leisure Scheme and that the Council was now happy to proceed to the signing of the necessary legal documents. The Leader said that this would allow the construction work to commence in the New Year.

The Leader also said that he had started to receive favourable feedback on the work Aspire was undertaking in the Borough and advised that marked changes were already apparent. The Portfolio Holder for Public Interaction and Borough Presentation explained that Aspire had been making a special effort for the forthcoming Remembrance Services in the Memorial Gardens and in those Churchyards they had responsibility for in the Borough.

191 The Council's Approach to Compliance and Enforcement: One year on

The report set out the progress made on various enforcement issues by the Policy and Compliance Task Group following its establishment in 2015.

The Portfolio Holder explained that tightening the Council's approach to enforcement and anti- social behaviour was a major manifesto commitment of the Administration and considered that the issues outlined within the report demonstrated progress made to date.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Wellbeing and Safety reported that several Public Spaces Protection Orders were currently out for public consultation.

Resolved:

That the progress made by the Task Group and the proposed focus of the Board moving forward be noted.

192 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2, 2016/17

The report presented an assessment of the outturn position for the financial year based on the first half of the year for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Collection Fund. During this period the General Fund was projected to have a balanced budget after transfers to reserves and there was a forecast underspend of £89,000. The Housing Revenue Account was projecting an overall deficit of £1,578,000.

The Portfolio Holder said that the report presented a broadly balanced budget position and advised that despite the effects of Brexit the Council's investments were returning between 4% and 5% which he considered represented a fair return.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Budget Monitoring position as at 30th September 2016 be noted.**
 - (ii) the approval by Management Team of the installation of a Beacon in North Park to celebrate future events be noted.**
 - (iii) the work done towards jointly procuring a cash collection contract be noted.**

193 Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 2 2016/17

The report provided a headline overview of performance against the Council's Corporate Plan for Quarter 2 - 2016/17. This included information on what the

Cabinet had achieved through its decision making, key performance data, and consideration of the wider Borough picture which impacted upon the Council's work.

The Portfolio Holder drew attention to the benefits of the new Performance Dashboard and encouraged all Members to view the various types of data on the system. He also advised that in due course elements of the data would be made available for access by the public.

Resolved:

That the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan in Quarter 2 of 2016/17 be noted.

194 Joint Transportation Board – 13th September 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 13th September 2016 be received and noted.

195 Ashford Strategic Delivery Board – 30th September 2016

Resolved:

That the Notes of the meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on 30th September 2016 be received and noted.

196 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.

(KRF/AEH)

MINS:CAXX1645

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Keith Fearon:
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Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **8th December 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Knowles, Shorter.

Apology:

Cllr. Hicks.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Burgess, Heyes, A Howard, Link, Ovenden, Pickering, Smith, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Head of Housing, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Accountancy Manager, Human Resources Manager, Assistant Planned Maintenance Manager, Senior Accountant, Communications Officer, Senior Member Services Officer.

220 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 10th November 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

221 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said he knew there would be other opportunities to give festive messages over the coming weeks, however as 2016 drew to a close he had been reflecting on the number of new developments that had been approved and for which all could now see the construction work being undertaken. These were all set to significantly improve the Borough of Ashford.

He said that 2017 would see even more construction works which would bring back to life predominantly derelict brownfield sites to even further enhance the Borough of Ashford. In September they would welcome nearly a thousand young students to the new and impressive Ashford College. This alone should inject a new vibrancy into the town centre.

The Leader said he would like to acknowledge the commitment of the Council's Officers who had, over the last year in particular, worked so hard to bring these major economic developments to the varying stages of actual delivery. In addition to wishing the Officers and Members a Merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year, he also wished the same to the Borough's residents, businesses and all involved with the aspirations and development of Ashford Borough Council.

222 Review of Housing Staff Structure

The report built on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan submitted to the Cabinet in November 2015. This had identified that the 1% reduction in social rents announced in the July 2015 Budget would result in an anticipated loss of income of £10m for the four years from April 2016. Members had agreed to implement a significant cost reduction programme, including salary savings, in order to recover the HRA's financial position. Subsequently a comprehensive review of the HRA Service had been conducted and the report set out the recommendations and impacts for staff arising from the review. These included improved working practices, an organisational restructure and a net reduction in headcount from April 2017 (and in the 2017/18 budget) of 9.12 FTE posts.

The Portfolio Holder said that he commended the report and thanked all those involved in its compilation. Other Members echoed that sentiment and said that although the subject matter was obviously difficult and sensitive, it had been dealt with well and been generally well received by the affected staff. Praise should also be given to members of the representative body Unison who had worked extremely well and pragmatically with the Council on such a difficult issue, as well as the staff in Housing itself for their professionalism and pragmatic approach.

Resolved:

- That (i) the findings of the review of Housing be endorsed.**
- (ii) the new staff structure at Appendix 3 to the report be approved.**

Recommended:

That the redundancy costs and pension costs set out at Appendix 4 to the report be approved and that the pension monies are released in the event that those staff at risk cannot be redeployed, or if there are pension implications or redundancy costs in relation to voluntary redundancy applications that they may be granted.

223 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2016-2046

The report provided an annual update to Members on the financial projections associated with the HRA Business Plan.

The Portfolio Holder drew attention to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report which updated on the reviewed priorities for the HRA Business Plan and the projects, including sheltered and affordable schemes, which had been incorporated in to it.

The Chairman said that this was an important report and it again drew attention to the good work the Council was doing on focusing on care and facilities for the elderly and vulnerable. Ashford was certainly an exemplar Authority in this regard and he knew that the Ashford model was well regarded by senior figures within the Health Service.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the updated HRA Business Plan and financial projections be agreed.**
 - (ii) the updated HRA priorities, set out at paragraph 9 of the report, be agreed.**
 - (iii) it be noted that Overview and Scrutiny are required to review the HRA Business Plan financial projections as part of the budget scrutiny process.**

224 Draft Budget 2017/18

The report presented the draft budget for 2017/18 for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account which included the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and approval to accept the four year funding settlement.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the draft budget continued to drive the Council towards its aim of being self-sufficient by 2018/19 and continued to allow the Administration to fulfil its election manifesto pledge of having the lowest Council Tax in Kent. He commended the draft budget and said that it would form the basis of the budget scrutiny and budget consultation processes and already presented an almost balanced budget, with just a £31k variance deficit, which he considered would be comfortably recovered during the year.

A Member said that whilst Ashford would still be in a position to offer the lowest Council Tax in Kent this year, the differential between Ashford and other Authorities was closing. With the MTFP seemingly proposing increased rises in Council Tax year on year, and other Authorities potentially freezing their element of the Council Tax, he was concerned that in the near future Ashford would no longer have the lowest Council Tax in Kent. The Chairman responded that the MTFP had to make a forecast for future years, but his personal mandate and that of this Administration was reduced increases in Council Tax year on year and to firmly remain the lowest Council Tax in Kent. There was no budging on this position and if necessary, the Council would make cuts in certain areas to achieve this. The MTFP was a five year forecasted plan but it would be reviewed and adjusted year on year. The Portfolio Holder reiterated that the Council was in a strong financial position and with its developments and investments coming on board they were certainly ahead of their neighbours in terms of their ambitions to be grant free and self-sufficient. The

Council was set up to secure significant income streams and earn its money, rather than looking for handouts or excessively taxing its residents.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the budget context be noted.**
 - (ii) the draft budget for 2017/18 be approved.**
 - (iii) the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2017/18 be approved.**
 - (iv) the report be used as the basis for budget consultation with the public, the business community, Parish Councils and staff.**
 - (v) the draft budget as set out in the report should now be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group for formal scrutiny.**

225 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Recommended Scheme Post Public Consultation

The report advised that following Cabinet agreement in May to draft a Council Tax Support Scheme and undertake a twelve week period of public consultation, final recommendations were now brought forward for a scheme to operate from 1st April 2017.

The Portfolio Holder advised that this issue had been the subject of lengthy discussion and debate via the Council Tax and Welfare Reform Task Group with many options analysed. The proposals had been largely supported during the consultation and, slightly surprisingly, had been supported by a significant number of individuals who would be affected by the increase to the contribution rate for working age claimants. He also drew attention to the fact that the recommended scheme did introduce a 'safety net' for those who were genuinely affected by exceptional hardship through no fault of their own. The Chairman said that this point further exemplified that this Council would be understanding and reasonable whenever it could for those who found themselves in vulnerable situations and would also fully consider the results of any consultation it undertook and use those to frame the relevant debates and recommendations.

Resolved:

That the outcome of the public consultation process be noted.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be amended as outlined in the report.**

- (ii) delegated authority be issued to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Leader, to make any adjustments to the final scheme by 31st January 2017.**

226 Council Tax Base 2017/18

The report advised that the Council was required to approve the Tax Base which would be used to calculate the level of Council Tax for 2017/18. It was calculated with regard to the number of domestic properties (including a forecast of new properties) which were then converted into Band D equivalents. The Tax Base had been calculated at 44,671.7 Band D properties and was an increase of 922 (or 2.11%) on the current year.

Recommended:

- That
- (i) the 2017/18 'Net' tax base of 44,671.7 Band D equivalent properties as set out in the table below be agreed.**
 - (ii) the distribution across Parished areas of the proposed grant to Parish Councils to help compensate for the negative impact caused by the Council Tax Support Scheme on Parish Councils' tax bases (Appendix D to the report refers) totalling £40,900 be agreed.**
 - (iii) the possibility of further Cabinet and Council decisions being required before the end of January 2017 should any material change in the tax base be required as a consequence of any further relevant funding announcements from Government be noted.**

DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK

**TAX BASE 2017/18
LOCAL TAX BASE (WHOLE/PART AREAS)**

LOCAL TAX BASE 2016/2017	WHOLE AREA	BAND D EQUIVALENT	NEW OCCUPATIONS	1.0% PROVISION	Less discounts Council Tax Support	LOCAL TAX BASE 2017/18
		47,891.60	680.00	(440.40)	(4,381.20)	43,750.00
	<u>PARISH</u>					
579.80	Aldington & Bonnington	606.44	34.89	(4.49)	(42.39)	594.45
321.80	Appledore	381.78	0.89	(2.56)	(41.46)	338.65
701.50	Bethersden	767.14	4.67	(5.31)	(64.01)	702.48
1,086.90	Biddenden	1,178.50	2.78	(8.28)	(77.26)	1,095.73
147.90	Bilsington	156.94	0.00	(1.10)	(10.22)	145.62
1,043.90	Boughton Aluph & Eastwell	1,132.22	0.89	(8.07)	(57.61)	1,067.44
590.10	Brabourne	621.53	1.89	(4.51)	(21.85)	597.06
152.20	Brook	156.97	0.89	(1.17)	(1.67)	155.02
405.40	Challock	445.06	23.56	(3.42)	(12.29)	452.89
1,258.30	Charing	1,397.92	45.22	(9.87)	(127.10)	1,306.17
740.50	Chilham	813.11	9.44	(5.64)	(70.70)	746.22
92.50	Crundale (PM)	94.78	0.00	(0.70)	(0.91)	93.16
502.70	Egerton	525.81	0.89	(3.79)	(21.71)	501.20
176.40	Godmersham	177.56	0.00	(1.30)	(3.63)	172.62
2,420.20	Great Chart w/ Singleton	2,636.83	1.89	(18.25)	(205.82)	2,414.65
114.70	Hastingleigh	119.25	0.00	(0.86)	(4.21)	114.17
715.50	High Halden	771.19	4.67	(5.41)	(54.36)	716.09
287.10	Hothfield	334.69	0.00	(2.00)	(68.68)	264.02
106.10	Kenardington	116.53	0.89	(0.81)	(9.26)	107.35
4,334.50	Kingsnorth	4,575.81	109.56	(33.51)	(217.09)	4,434.76
123.70	Little Chart	131.81	0.89	(0.97)	(2.96)	128.76
637.1	Mersham and Sevington	752.61	25.44	(5.60)	(31.97)	740.49
103.8	Molash	117.14	0.89	(0.82)	(9.14)	108.07
103.2	Newenden	106.44	0.89	(0.77)	(4.60)	101.97
559.9	Orlestone	639.36	8.44	(4.51)	(46.04)	597.25
468.8	Pluckley	510.28	3.78	(3.59)	(34.77)	475.69
679.1	Rolvenden	728.89	14.11	(5.15)	(56.85)	681.00
317.7	Ruckinge	345.28	4.67	(2.53)	(11.97)	335.44
497.5	Shadoxhurst	543.25	38.67	(4.10)	(34.68)	543.13
620.5	Smarden	659.06	24.56	(4.84)	(38.22)	640.56
357	Smeeth	389.72	0.89	(2.72)	(27.83)	360.06
782.5	Stanhope	1,032.72	5.67	(5.87)	(255.77)	776.75
200.6	Stone	221.11	0.00	(1.52)	(17.83)	201.76
3438.5	Tenterden (TC)	3,774.56	58.44	(26.70)	(272.36)	3,533.93
176.7	Warehorne	180.47	0.00	(1.32)	(4.29)	174.86
319.5	Westwell	340.83	2.78	(2.45)	(16.58)	324.58
525.3	Wittersham	584.83	0.00	(4.00)	(51.44)	529.40
829.7	Woodchurch	896.00	4.67	(6.31)	(59.61)	834.75
1045.3	Wye with Hinxhill	1,116.78	10.33	(7.74)	(94.67)	1,024.70
16,185.60	Unparished Area	18,637.71	209.89	(124.38)	(2,184.44)	16,538.78
43,750.00		48,718.91	658.00	(336.98)	(4,368.26)	44,671.67

227 Trading and Enterprise Board – 7th November 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 7th November 2016 be received, noted and approved with the exception of Minute No. 186.

Recommended:

That Minute No. 186 be approved.

228 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 6th October 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 6th October 2016 be received and noted.

229 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – 27th July, 26th October and 23rd November 2016

Resolved:

That the notes of the meetings of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 27th July, 26th October and 23rd November 2016 be received and noted.

230 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.

231 Season's Greetings

Councillor Galpin, Cabinet Member for Town Centres Focus and Business Dynamics, advised that he was having a hip operation this coming weekend and would now be out of contact until after Christmas. He said he wanted to echo the earlier sentiments of the Leader by wishing Members and Officers a Merry Christmas and thanking everyone for their support in the work of his Portfolio this year.

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Audit Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **6th December 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Waters (Chairman);

Cllr. Buchanan (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Link, Powell, Shorter, Smith, White

Apologies:

Cllr. Krause, Elizabeth Jackson – Grant Thornton UK

Also Present:

Corporate Director (Law and Governance), Head of Audit Partnership, Audit Manager, Head of Finance, Senior Policy Performance and Scrutiny Officer, Policy and Performance Manager, Member Services Manager.

205 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Smith	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of the Local Government Pension Scheme	209

206 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on the 29th September 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

207 Data Protection Update

The Head of Audit Partnership introduced the report which set out the progress made since the Committee received the last update report at the previous meeting on 29th September 2016. He referred to the section of the report which dealt with breach handling and drew attention to three very minor issues which were being dealt with. From an audit perspective he said he was happy that such breaches were now being identified. He explained that management were satisfied that procedures had been operated effectively and this would be tested by Audit in January 2017.

The Corporate Director (Law and Governance) explained that the report demonstrated a significantly improved position since the previous report and he advised on progress with recruitment of a Data Protection Officer. He also advised that in October consultants had been appointed to accelerate preparation of policy and protocol documents to ensure high and medium priority recommendations were met sooner. He explained that the previous report had identified the completion of one recommendation out of a total of nine whilst the report before the Committee that evening explained that five recommendations had been fully met with a further recommendation being considered by Management Team to be met, and two further recommendations had been partly met. In terms of the Data Protection Officer, he advised that interviews had been held that day and it was hoped that an appointment could be made in the coming days subject to scoring of written test results. A Data Protection Officer would now arrive with a compliance framework substantially in place and could then work with key workers on embedding new policies and procedures, monitoring and compliance, and would also prepare for the compliance with the new European Directive on Data Protection which would be in place from May 2018.

In response to a question as to how staff were made aware of Data Protection issues, the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) advised that the procedures were set out on the Council's intranet which also included links to the Information Commissioner web site. He reiterated that the consultants would be preparing a more detailed breach handling protocol which was expected to be in place by January 2017.

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding the recommendation R5 - training, the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) said that he believed that the training had been delivered to slightly more than the previous 91% of staff and further measures would be put in place to remind staff of the need to undertake the training and he confirmed that every reasonable step was taken to ensure that staff undertook all mandatory training. He, however, said that he did not have with him statistics as to whether all members of staff reporting direct to him had completed the course. The Chairman asked for an update on the current level of staff trained on Data Protection. In terms of training for key officers the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) said that 28 key workers and other staff had attended the recent training.

In response to a comment the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) said that the option of disciplinary action could be considered if mandatory training was not undertaken but whether this option was considered appropriate needed to be considered on a case by case basis. The Head of Audit Partnership commented that from the Audit perspective and in terms of risk the Information Commissioner was generally content if figures of completion were above 90% as training to such a level would reduce risk and therefore would not attract the interest of Audit.

In response to a question about the recruitment process for the Data Protection Officer, the Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that whilst it was hoped to make an appointment this was subject to test result scoring, it being noted that when appointed the Officer would be part of her team.

In response to a question the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) gave details of the nature of the contract with the specialist consultant and confirmed that draft documents prepared by them would be given full consideration internally before being finalised.

Resolved:

That the progress made towards implementing recommendations raised in the Data Protection Audit Report brought to the Committee in March 2016 be noted.

208 Annual Governance Statement – Progress on Remediating Exceptions

The report updated on the progress made towards the areas of review highlighted by the 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement. The Senior Policy, Performance and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report and advised that the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received the first reports from the Performance Dashboard and accordingly it was now considered that the system was sufficiently embedded within the Council's procedures.

In terms of the Strategic Risk Management Procedures, the Senior Policy, Performance and Scrutiny Officer advised that the cohorts work on the formation of service risk registers to support the service planning process were being embedded and would be scrutinised as part of the budget scrutiny process during December 2016. Accordingly, a further update on progress in this area would be reported back to the Committee in March 2017.

Resolved:

That the progress made towards the areas of review highlighted by the Annual Governance Statement as detailed in the report be noted.

209 Annual Audit Letter 2015/16

The Annual Audit Letter from the Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton had been included within the Agenda papers for the meeting. The letter was a summary of the work undertaken in 2015/16. The Head of Finance advised that Elizabeth Jackson, of Grant Thornton, had indicated to him that she was happy to receive any questions on the document by email. The Head of Finance updated in terms of the executive summary of the letter regarding certification of grants and advised that work on the Council's Housing Benefit subsidy claim had been completed to a satisfactory level. The Chairman considered that Officers should be congratulated for receiving an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements.

The Chairman referred to the comments made by Grant Thornton in terms of the management structure and their use of the term "quite lean" and said that he would like Grant Thornton to report back to the Committee as he was interested to see the information used by them in terms of assessing whether risk was sufficiently

mitigated. Other Members of the Committee said that they had concerns in terms of the strength of the senior Management Team in view of current vacancies. Another Member said that he was aware that the staffing and structure was being revised to reflect the Council's drive to become more business-like.

In response to a question about the level of fees for the audit of the Council's two companies, the Head of Finance advised that under the current arrangements the companies had been tied in terms of the availability of external auditors, however, he said that under the new regulations this was something that the companies could consider in the future.

In view of comments made by the Committee, the Head of Finance suggested that at the next meeting, under the issue of the Strategic Risk Register, focus could be considered in terms of skills and capacity.

In response to questions about valuation and the pension scheme, the Head of Finance gave details of the nature of the contract with the company who provided annual valuations for the Council and in terms of the pension deficit he advised that the draft budget report due to be considered by the Cabinet indicated that the overall level of funding for the Council's share of the scheme had increased from 74% to 80%. In terms of whether Grant Thornton had any views in terms of commercial development activities by other authorities, the Head of Finance indicated that he was happy to examine other reports published by the External Auditors to see whether any comments were available.

Resolved:

That the External Auditors Annual Audit Letter be received and noted.

210 Interim Internal Audit Report 2016/17

The Head of Audit Partnership introduced the report which set out progress against the agreed Audit Plan for the first half of 2016/17 including detail on Audit findings and commentary on wider issues on Audit and the Service. The Head of Audit Partnership advised that he was pleased to report that the Audit Team had appointed an apprentice who would be with the team for one year.

A Member advised that the Member Training Panel had met that day and he said he believed it had been a very successful meeting and had looked at a number of issues on an ongoing basis. This also included Members' roles on outside bodies and dealing with the media.

Resolved:

That the Internal Audit Interim Report be received and noted.

211 Procurement and Appointment of External Auditors – Appointment of a “Specified Person”

The Head of Finance advised that this was the fourth report to the Committee updating them on the emerging picture for the procurement of an External Auditor for the 2018/19 Financial Statement.

In response to a question, the Head of Audit Partnership said he understood that there was in the region of eight Audit companies nationally which had been approved by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Recommended:

- That (i) **the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) invitation to opt in to the sector-led option for appointment of External Auditors for five financial years starting 1st April 2018 be accepted.**
- (ii) **the Head of Finance to liaise with the PSAA and respond to its consultations on specific proposals as they come forward.**

212 External Audit Update Report

The report included a summary of ongoing Audit work at Ashford and other points of general interest.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

213 Report Tracker and Future Meetings

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

(KRF/AEH)

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Selection & Constitutional Review Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Selection & Constitutional Review Committee held in Committee Room No.2 (Bad Münstereifel Room), Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the 8th December 2016.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);

Cllr. Bell (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Burgess, Galpin, A Howard, Mrs Martin, Ovenden, Shorter.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bradford, Clokie, Pickering, Smith.

Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Solicitor (Strategic Development), Senior Member Services Officer.

214 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Clarkson	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Director of the ABC Property Company.	
Shorter	Declared an 'Other Significant Interest' as the proposed nominee to the Chilmington Green Community Management Organisation Partnership Working Group. He would leave the room for this item.	216
	Made Voluntary Announcements as a Director of Kent Play Clubs and as a Director of the ABC Building Consultancy Company.	

215 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 13th October 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

216 Appointment to Chilmington Green Community Management Organisation Partnership Working Group

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report. It advised that in anticipation of the Chilmington Green development Section 106 Agreement being completed and fully signed early next year and consent being issued, approval was sought to nominate a Councillor to the Chilmington Green Community Management Organisation Partnership Working Group (PWG). The PWG was an advisory group to the developer consortium whose responsibility it was to create a Community Management Organisation (CMO). It would have a limited lifespan as its focus would be on the detail of work to create a formal CMO and once that was established the PWG would be defunct. Trustee directors would be appointed to the CMO during the course of the next year and this would include a representative from Ashford Borough Council.

A Member asked if the proposed representative, Councillor Neil Shorter, would have enough time to do justice to the role given his busy Cabinet Portfolio, and whether there would be any conflict of interest between the two roles. The Chairman said that he also had some concern about the workload all being down to one individual Cabinet Member. Following debate the Committee agreed that given his history and knowledge of the issue, Councillor Shorter was the sensible candidate to undertake the role, but a second Member should be appointed to shadow him so that they could assist and provide continuity and back up for the role. This could be kept under review as they progressed towards the creation of the CMO and appointing a trustee director. Given the location of the Chilmington Green development it was suggested that Councillor Jessamy Blanford would be the sensible nominee for the shadow role.

Resolved:

That Councillor Neil Shorter be nominated as the Borough Council's representative to the Chilmington Green Community Management Organisation Partnership Working Group for the period up to the formal creation of the Community Management Organisation. The Council will also appoint a shadow Member to assist and provide continuity and back up for the role.

217 Mandatory Training and Amendment to Terms of Reference of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee

The report sought agreement to add mandatory training requirements to the Notes of the Terms of Reference of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee to ensure consistency. It also sought the Committee's response to an Internal Audit recommendation that Members of Committees with mandatory training requirements (Planning and potentially Licensing) should undertake training/refresher training at least once every four years to remain 'eligible' to sit on those Committees.

During the debate it was agreed that training for Members of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee should be mandatory and undertaken at least once every four years. However, some Members expressed their belief that once Planning training had been undertaken, there should be no mandate to re-take that training to remain eligible. Other Members considered it was important to refresh the training each Council term in the context of representing constituents properly and continuous professional development.

One Member said that he would not be keen to see mandatory training extended further than these two particular Committees.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) mandatory training be added as a Note to the Terms of Reference of the Licensing and Health and Safety Committee.**
 - (ii) Members of Committees with mandatory training requirements (Planning and Licensing) should undertake training/refresher training at least once every four years to remain 'eligible' to sit on those Committees.**

218 Changes to the Responsibility for Functions

The report recommended amendments and additions to the Responsibility for Functions in the Constitution, in order to remove gaps in the delegations and to clarify positions.

The Chairman said that he had not had a full opportunity to review the report and discuss it with colleagues and he therefore proposed that consideration of the report be deferred to allow that to happen.

Resolved:

That the report be deferred to allow more time for consideration by Members.

219 Representatives on Outside Bodies

The report advised the Committee of the need to make nominations to positions on various outside bodies/organisations.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) Councillor Hicks be appointed as a Member representative on the Citizens Advice Bureau – Ashford Branch Management Committee.**
 - (ii) the appointment of a Member representative to sit on the Home Improvement Agency Support Group be deferred.**

- (iii) Councillors Apps and Krause be appointed to sit on the Ashford Almshouses and Parochial Charities to 30th November 2019.**

DS