



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on Tuesday 25th September 2012 at 7.00pm.

The Members of this Committee are:-

Cllr. Adby (Chairman)

Cllr. Chilton (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Apps, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bennett, Davison, Feacey, Galpin, Mrs Heyes, Hodgkinson, Mrs Hutchinson, Link, Mrs Martin, Mortimer, Robey, Shorter, Smith, Yeo.

Agenda

1. **Apologies/Substitutes** – To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii)
2. **Declarations of Interest (see “Advice to Members” overleaf)**
 - (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011 relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.

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

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

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

- (c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests not required to be declared under (a) or (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:
 - membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
 - where Members know a person involved, but do not have a close association with that person, or

- where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, etc, but not his/her financial position

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

Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:

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

3. **Minutes** – To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 24th July 2012

Part I – Matters Referred to the Committee for a Decision in Relation to Call-in of a Decision Made by the Cabinet

None for this Meeting

Part II – Responses of the Cabinet to Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

None for this Meeting

Part III – Ordinary Decision Items

None for this Meeting

Part IV – Information/Monitoring Items

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|----|---|---------|
| 4. | Review of changes made to the Mayoralty following the O&S review in 2010. | 1 - 9 |
| 5. | Apprenticeships | 11 - 15 |
| 6. | Future Reviews and Report Tracker | 17 - 22 |

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Queries concerning this agenda? Please contact Hayley Curd:
 Telephone: 01233 330565 Email: hayley.curd@ashford.gov.uk
 Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.gov.uk/committees

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **24th July 2012**

Present:

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

Cllrs. Apps, Bennett, Buchanan, Galpin, Mrs Hutchinson, Mortimer, Robey, Shorter, Smith.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii) Councillor Buchanan attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Hodgkinson.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Aaby, Bartlett, Claughton, Davison, Hodgkinson, Mrs Martin, Yeo.

Also Present:

Cllr. Mrs Blanford, Sims.

Development Planning Manager (KCC), Principal Urban Designer, Engineering Services Manager, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

102 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 26th June 2012 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

103 Ashford Shared Space – 3 year post implementation report

The Development Planning Manager (KCC) introduced the item. He advised the Committee that visitors had come from far afield to see the Shared Space scheme in action. Using a PowerPoint presentation he gave Members an overview of the presentation that he had given to a number of organisations, including the Society of Road Safety Auditors. The presentation showed the different stages of the scheme, including before and after photographs. The scheme had resulted in a reduction in the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. Future changes would result in a further reduction of the speed of vehicles. He acknowledged that, whilst the publicity before and during the construction of the scheme had been of a high standard, the post construction publicity could have been handled better.

The Development Planning Manger (KCC) was pleased to report that there had been a 41% reduction in personal injury crashes on the ring road as a whole, with a 36% reduction in casualties. In the Shared Space section of the ring road, and including Bank Street, there had been a 50% reduction in personal injury crashes and casualties. There had however been an increase in cyclist related accidents from one to two. The improvement in safety on the ring road was largely as predicted. In the three years of operation of the Shared Space seven personal injury crashes had been recorded, these were detailed to the Committee. On the remainder of the ring road, they were reviewing the pedestrian signals at the North Street and Somerset Road junction following a number of incidents. All of the incidents were included in the 'three years of operation' analysis.

There was a need to be honest about the shortcomings of the scheme. The materials had been costly, overrunning of some areas by larger vehicles had caused damage and there had been surface staining issues in Bank Street. The issues with the maintenance had not progressed to the extent that had been hoped. An investigation would be held during the summer and would involve Ashford Borough Council Officers. On a positive note the Shared Space had a much improved safety record, the speed of traffic had been reduced and the area had been de-cluttered. There was one side of Elwick Road that was undeveloped, once this had been developed it was hoped that the Shared Space would become more effective.

The Vice-Chairman in the Chair advised the Committee that Ashford Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) had been invited to attend the meeting; no comments had been received from them. The Senior Scrutiny Officer advised that Councillor Cloughton, the Chairman of Ashford Access, had sent his apologies to the meeting and had welcomed the report and gave the scheme his full support.

During the discussion, the following issues were raised:

- There was a distinct difference between perception and reality. The positive news surrounding the Shared Space should be promoted. The Development Planning Manager (KCC) agreed and explained why a cautious approach to the release of information had been taken.
- Would there be a way to prevent service providers digging up the Shared Space and refilling the section that had been dug up with tarmac? The Development Planning Manager (KCC) advised that with particular schemes limitations were placed on what service providers could do and how they had to reinstate the area worked upon. He believed in this case there were provisions made for a five year limitation. The key element however was the placement of services prior to the construction of a scheme.
- Members questioned how the maintenance issues were progressing, in particular the staining of the materials. The Development Planning Manager (KCC) advised that this was being dealt with by the Head of Operations, who had commissioned an investigation into these issues to be carried out in the summer.

- The Portfolio Holder for the Environment felt that KCC needed to work alongside the Council's Communications Team to ensure that the success of the Shared Space was promoted properly. She advised that the results of the maintenance investigation were expected to be received by the Council in September 2012. It was suggested that the Chairman of the Committee write to KCC to emphasise the need for an investigation and the involvement of Council Officers in the process.
- A Member felt that the footfall in the area would increase once the shops improved and the café culture came to fruition. The scheme was not yet complete and so it felt that the comparison of the safety record was premature.
- Members agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in conjunction with the Leader, should write to KCC to underline the need for an investigation into the maintenance of the Shared Space and to impress upon them the desire of the Committee for Council Officers to be involved in this process.
- The Vice-Chairman in the Chair advised that an email had been received from a Member requesting that a review be undertaken in relation to various aspect of the project. The Vice-Chairman reminded the Committee that the last time the Shared Space was discussed by the Committee they had decided not to undertake a review of the project. The Development Planning Manager (KCC) advised that KCC had undertaken a review of the project and important lessons had been learnt. A Member questioned what the processes were behind this review and how KCC ensured that lessons learnt became policy. The Development Planning Manager (KCC) advised that a tighter approach to project management had been introduced following the review. Lessons learnt had been put into practice with schemes at Maidstone and Victoria Way.
- It was proposed that the Committee recommended to the Cabinet that the real, not perceived, safety figures were promoted to the residents of the Borough in conjunction with KCC. This was seconded.
- A Member highlighted a number of issues with young people on BMX bikes and suggested that some signage be placed around the Shared Space to remind cyclists how to behave. The Development Planning Manager (KCC) advised that it was noted that further engagement was needed with the public.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee write, in conjunction with the Leader, to Kent County Council to underline the need for an investigation into the maintenance of the Shared Space and that Ashford Borough Council Officers be involved in this process.**

- (ii) **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet, in conjunction with Kent County Council, ensure that the real not perceived, safety figures are promoted to the residents of the Borough to make residents feel safe in the Shared Space.**
- (iii) **The report be received and noted.**

104 Ashford Borough Council Business Plan Performance Report – Quarter 1 2012/13 (to end May)

The Vice-Chairman in the Chair advised that there were no Officers present to answer questions on the Report, however if Members had any questions these would be taken back to the relevant Officer.

A Member was delighted by the progress that had been made with the Five Year Business Plan.

A Member drew attention to the Open Spaces and Public Realm Review and highlighted a number of issues experienced in his Ward in relation to management companies. Another Member suggested that a further report on the issue be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

105 Future Reviews and Report Tracker

The Vice-Chairman in the Chair drew Members' attention to the Tracker. The Meeting of the Committee in August had been cancelled and the Meeting in September would receive reports on the Post Mayoralty Review and Apprentices. Members were encouraged to contact the Senior Scrutiny Officer if they had any suggestions for future reviews.

Resolved:

That the Future Reviews and Report Tracker be noted.

Agenda Item No: 4
Report To: O&S
Date: 25th September 2012
Report Title: Review of changes made to the Mayoralty following the O&S review in 2010.
Report Author: Senior Scrutiny Officer



Summary:

Following a review of the Mayoralty in 2010 some amendments were made to its day-to-day functioning. These amendments were introduced at the start of the municipal year in May 2011. It was agreed that an update report on the effect of these changes would be provided to the O&S committee about 18 months after the implementation of the changes.

Key Decision: No
Affected Wards: N/A
Recommendations: **The O&S Committee is asked to consider the report on the implementation of the Mayoralty review.**
Policy Overview: None
Financial Implications: None
Risk Assessment N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment N/A
Other Material Implications: N/A
Exemption Clauses: N/A
Background Papers: None.
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Report Title: Review of changes made to the Mayoralty following the O&S review in 2010.

Purpose of the Report

1. This report updates the Committee on the effect of the changes implemented in May 2011 on the functioning of the Mayoralty which stemmed from a review undertaken by an O&S Task Group.

Background

2. One of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny of the council's 2010/11 budget was that the O&S Committee should review the corporate objectives of the Mayoralty prior to the next budget. As a budget saving the Mayor's Garden Party had been deleted the year before; the current economic situation was still difficult and it was considered that the public would be concerned if no budget reductions were put forward for the Mayoralty when other areas of the council's budget were having to be trimmed. Reductions in the cost of the Mayoralty would contribute to the 15% cost reduction in the council's proposed 5 year business plan.
3. In response to this recommendation the O&S Committee decided to set up a task group to review all aspects of the Mayoralty with a view to making financial savings. The Mayoralty Task Group met 4 times from June to September 2010 and made its report to the O&S Committee in October 2010.
4. The Task Group's review of the Mayoralty included:-
 - Transport and security arrangements for the Mayor
 - The engagements the Mayor attends
 - The cost of the Mayoralty
5. Once the review was concluded the Task Group reported their recommendations to the O&S Committee. The following were approved and adopted by full Council in December 2010.

(i) the selection procedure for choosing a Mayor should remain unchanged but nominations be discussed by Group Leaders prior to discussion within the Groups themselves followed by the Group Leader reporting them to the informal Group Leader meeting which would consider the nominations.

(ii) the Mayor's Parlour be used more often for internal meetings and for those meetings of visiting dignitaries with the Leader/Chief Executive.

**(iii) the Mayor's Guidance Notes be amended as below and as necessary to reflect any other changes:-
The Borough Duties part of the "Responsibilities" section, to be amended to read:
"To promote the Borough as a place to visit through external**

contacts, and tourism events; the Mayor to attend engagements only within the Borough of Ashford with the exception of the Queen's Garden Party, the High Sheriff of Kent's Inauguration Service and events hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, other events should be regarded as exceptional. If the Mayor wishes to attend other engagements outside of the Borough, unless his/her attendance has been agreed, the total cost (ie ticket and travel) would have to be funded personally or from the Mayor's Allowance.

An additional duty to be added to this section:

"To be involved in events marking the achievement of major milestones in Ashford's growth".

(iv) the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Entertainment Allowances be combined and reduced from (combined total) £7,390 to £5,800 and re-named "Mayoral Entertainment Allowance".

(v) the Personal Allowance of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be unchanged.

(vi) if the Mayor's Allowances are used up before the year end, no further funding be made available.

(vii) the majority of the Mayor's engagements should be in the Borough of Ashford with only a few exceptions: the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, the Inauguration Service for the High Sheriff of Kent and events hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent. Other events should be regarded as exceptional.

(viii) the Mayor could attend any engagement that fell outside of these guidelines but would be expected to fund the total cost of that engagement (ie ticket and travel cost) either personally or from the Personal Allowance.

(ix) the lease on the current Mayoral car be terminated and when the Mayor needs transport, this is to be provided by a private hire company.

(x) the accompanying of the Mayor on "walkabout" when wearing the Civic regalia be regularised. On occasions when it is not possible for the Mayor to be accompanied, the Mayor to wear the badge only.

(xi) on occasions when the Mace is required, these duties be covered by an employee of the Council, other duties be covered by an employee of the Council on an ad hoc basis.

(xii) it be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a progress report in September 2012.

The changes agreed were implemented from the start of the 2011/12 municipal year.

This update will concentrate on the effect of these recommendations on the financial aspects and functioning of the Mayoralty.

Comparison of the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Mayoralty with previous years

Mayoral Budget

6. the Revenue budget for the Mayor is published as part of the Council's Budget book on the Council's website and the outturns are shown in the table below for the financial years from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Outturn (£)	70,781	70,062	67,890	57,750	43,225

The expenditure costs of the Mayoralty includes employee costs, supplies and services, transport costs and internal recharges. As can be seen, since 2007/08 the cost of the Mayoralty has been falling steadily even before any budget restriction measures were applied. From 2011/12 the figure does not include amounts for the Mayor's attendant's salary (etc) but does include a modest amount for 'salary' and 'uniform' – to be used as and when required for the officer acting as the Mace bearer.

Engagements

7. When the Mayoralty Task Group looked at the number and distribution of the Mayor's engagements the following information was provided:

Engagements	Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
In the borough		206	172	184
Ticket cost £		246	210	354
Out of the borough - total		81	79	50
Civic		52	37	24
Charity		29	42	26
Ticket cost £		1,852	2,051	985
Total Engagements		287	251	232
Total ticket cost £		2,098	2,261	1,339

For comparison the following table gives the same information as applicable for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13(part)

Engagements	Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 (to end July 2012)
In the borough		191	158	78
Ticket cost £		227	454	15
Out of the borough - total		56	28	13
Civic		24	22	12
Charity		32	6	1
Ticket cost £		946	687	75
Total Engagements		246	187	91
Total ticket cost £		1,173	1,141	90

Expenditure from Mayor's Entertainment allowance

8. Set out below is a table which details a breakdown of expenditure from the Mayor's Entertainment Allowance for the years 2007/8 to 2009/10.

Year	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £
Entertainment Allowance	6500	6670	6670
Expenditure	6282	4770	4194

The expenditure figure includes the cost of any tickets for events, charity donations, expenses for hosting events, flowers, wreaths etc. The sort of events hosted by the Mayor include visits by students/schoolchildren, local groups and guests from other Boroughs/Districts to the parlour/chamber/other venue.

The table below gives the comparable figures for 2010/11 to 2012/13(part)

Year	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £ (to end July 2012)
Entertainment Allowance	6670	5800*	5800*
Expenditure	3716	4748	858

* Since May 2011 the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's entertainment allowances have been combined, renamed as 'Mayoral Entertainment allowance' and reduced to £5,800.

Even with the reduction in the Mayor's entertainment allowance, the full year figures from 2007/08 to 2011/12 show that the expenditure on this allowance has always been well within budget.

Transport

9. Prior to the changes being implemented, the council had a car and a full time attendant/chauffeur for the Mayor. Costs for providing transport included the cost of the car lease, fuel, insurance, plus an amount for the hire of a car & chauffeur to cover when the Mayor's attendant was on leave or otherwise unable to perform his driving duties. Sadly the Mayor's attendant passed away in 2010 and in view of the impending review of the Mayoralty the post was kept vacant.
10. Following the adoption of the review recommendations in 2010, it was decided to relinquish the lease on the Mayor's car and to employ a private hire company to transport the Mayor as and when necessary. The Task Group were keen to maintain security arrangements for the Mayor and requested that the private hire chauffeur should accompany the Mayor at events providing security for the Mayor and the regalia (on occasions when the Mayor was attending an event that did not require transport s/he would be accompanied by the Civic Engagement officer/another ABC officer, or would wear the Mayor's badge rather than the chains).
11. There is no obvious trend in the level of transport costs incurred from one mayoral year to the next. Factors that influence the cost include the number of engagements, how many are in/out of the borough, where the Mayor lives, if the Mayor drives him/herself to many engagements and, if so, how much mileage was claimed for this.

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Transport costs £	18,947	16,731	11,085	# 20,642	8,929	estimate 12,050
# includes the severance payment for the early termination of the lease for the Mayor's car and the hire car & chauffeur cost covering the period when the Mayor's attendant's post was vacant.						

Ceremonial Duties and Security Issues

12. The Mayor's attendant accompanied the Mayor on engagements providing security for the Mayor and the regalia and, when required, was the Mayor's mace bearer.
13. As mentioned in paragraph 10, when wearing the chains the Mayor is now accompanied by the private hire chauffeur or the Civic Engagement officer/another ABC officer. The number of occasions when the Mayor needs a mace bearer are few and this function has been provided by an ABC officer as and when required. These arrangements have worked satisfactorily and the cost of having an ABC officer acting as Mace bearer on those occasions is recharged to the Mayoral budget.

14. The chains and other items of regalia are valuable and have to be kept secure. In the past, the Mayor's attendant would have been able to take the chains from the secure store before an engagement and return them afterwards. He would also have been able to assist the Mayor in putting on the chains.
15. To take account of the changed circumstances the following arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the Council's Insurer's policy conditions are complied with: during office hours the chains can be taken from/returned to the secure store by the Civic Engagement officer/another ABC officer and the Mayor has to come to the civic centre to collect them and be assisted in putting them on. Out of office hours the Mayor has to come to the civic centre to collect/return the chains him/herself. The Mayoress/Escort/driver then assists the Mayor with the putting on of the chains.

Mayor's attendance at Events out of the Borough

16. Before May 2011 there was no restriction imposed on what events the Mayor could attend. Many invitations and requests for attendance of the Mayor, for events both in and out of the Borough, are received every year. Some Mayors had previously decided to concentrate their events and engagements within the borough, whilst others attended events which were more widely spread (mainly within Kent but with some in London). With the financial constraints that the whole council was having to come to terms with the Task Group considered it reasonable that the public would expect the Mayor's office to accept austerity measures too.
17. Restricting the events that the Mayor could attend out of the borough would reduce the amount spent on transport and tickets (where applicable) for those events. Under the revised arrangements the Mayor would still be able to attend certain prestigious events such as the Queen's Garden Party and others within the guidelines, or for which agreement had been given.
18. The implementation of these arrangements began in May 2011. As mentioned above, in the past the number of 'out of the borough' events attended by any one Mayor was their own choice and inclination so the overall impact of the changes will not be particularly apparent for several years to come.

Mayor's Assessment

19. The current Mayor was also Mayor in 2003/04 and is therefore in a very good position to comment on the current situation in comparison with what he experienced before the changes were introduced. A summary of his views is set out below in italic.
 - a. Transport arrangements – hire car and chauffeur vs ABC Mayoral car and Mayor's attendant.
The system works perfectly well. The only issue that will arise is that, for local events, if the Mayor is wearing the chains and doesn't have a Mayoress or Escort then self-drive would not be appropriate and the hire car will be needed for the driver to act as escort.

Note: Alternatively the Mayor could wear the Mayor's badge rather than the chains and then an escort would not be necessary.

b. Security arrangements –

1. for regalia – *no problem with the arrangements and with the signing in to collect the chains.*

2. for the Mayor at events – *either Escort or driver needed, happy with that arrangement.*

c. Restrictions on events that can be attended.

There are restrictions, but this has not created a problem. When there has been a low key event, of personal interest, that the Mayor would like to attend e.g. cricket at Tunbridge Wells, then this has been attended as a self funded event. For other events e.g. Jubilee Reception & Beating the Retreat at Dover Castle, if the Mayor had a particular reason for wanting to attend then this was explained to the Leader/Chief Executive and permission to attend, using the hire car, requested.

d. Reduction in Mayor's entertainment allowance.

There is no problem working within the given budget.

Allowance mainly spent on making donations.

Also the Mayor does get a personal allowance which can be used for whatever he/she decides and so it could be used for topping up the entertainment allowance, covering some petrol cost if self driving etc

e. Any other comments.

The system works well if one works with it.

The Civic Engagement officer gives good guidance and helpful advice about appropriate engagements etc.

Important to use the in-house media team to help promote the Mayoralty/Borough by supplying them with photographs & details of events that can then be turned into appropriate media releases for the press to use.

The number of invitations received may be a reflection of how well known the Mayor is/the reputation of the Mayor.

Conclusion

20. Even before the review of the Mayoralty took place there is evidence that the cost of the Mayoralty was reducing each year. The Mayoral budget reduced from £70,781 in 2007/08 to £57,750 in 2010/11. In the full year following the changes the actual expenditure for 2011/12 was £43,225; in the same period the total number of engagements dropped from 287 to 187 and the amount of entertainment allowance spent went from £6,282 to £4,748. However it is worth noting that the number of engagements is not necessarily an indicator of the Mayor spending a lot of money, especially if most of those engagements are local, but more a measure of the demand for the Mayor to be present at events.

21. The Task Group's review of the Mayoralty aimed to reduce the cost of the Mayoralty as a contribution to the austerity measures across the council as a whole. The adopted recommendations reduced the amount of money available to the Mayoralty – by combining the Mayor's & Deputy Mayor's entertainment allowances and reducing them to £5,800 - and provided some constraints to the activities of the Mayor by restricting the events outside the borough that could be freely attended. The change from having a dedicated Mayoral car and Mayor's attendant/driver to having a hire car and driver has also had an effect both on the Mayoral budget (transport costs have continued to reduce) and on the security and civic arrangements for the Mayor.
22. However, in the opinion of the current Mayor, these conditions are not onerous and he has found no difficulty working within the guidelines and budget of the new system.
23. The Committee is asked to consider the report arising from the review recently undertaken.

Portfolio Holder's Views

24. It is appropriate timing for this review now that the new approach to our mayoralty has been in place for a year, especially having the benefit of a comparison by the current Mayor with his experiences nearly ten years ago. The paper notes several issues over the costs and arrangements involved by the Mayor in carrying out the various activities, and the views and reactions of the Committee will be most welcome, along with any recommendations for the future.

Contact: Julia Vink, Senior Scrutiny Officer

Email: julia.vink@ashford.gov.uk

Agenda Item No: 5
Report To: Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 25th September 2012
Report Title: Apprenticeships
Report Author: John Mills, Personnel Officer



Summary:	This report informs Overview and Scrutiny of the current situation regarding the employment of apprentices within Ashford Borough Council including how they are recruited, how many have been employed, how many have gone on to get jobs within ABC, how the scheme is promoted and how much apprentices are paid.
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Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: N/A

Recommendations: **The Committee is asked to Note the Report.**

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications:

Risk Assessment NO

Equalities Impact Assessment NO

Other Material Implications: NO

Exemption Clauses: **N/A**

Background Papers:

Contacts: John.mills@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330406

Report Title: Apprenticeships

Purpose of the Report

1. This report informs Overview and Scrutiny of the current situation regarding the employment of apprentices within Ashford Borough Council including how they are recruited, how many have been employed, how many have gone on to get jobs within ABC, how the scheme is promoted and how much apprentices are paid.

Background

2. Ashford Borough Council has been offering apprenticeships since 26 August 2008. To date a total of fourteen people have been employed as apprentices, all except one were in the 18-24 age group. We currently employ five apprentices, three in customer services, one in Housing and one in Revenues and Benefits with a further three positions approved for recruitment, two in Customer Services and one in Revenues and Benefits. Of the fourteen apprentices, five went on to secure permanent employment with ABC with four of those still remaining as of July 2012.

What are Apprenticeships?

3. Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes designed around the needs of employers, which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. They can be used to train both new and existing employees. Funding is available to train apprentices but not to cover their pay and expenses.
4. There are more than 200 different types of Apprenticeships available offering over 1,200 job roles within a variety of industry sectors Apprenticeships are designed by the Sector Skills Councils, while the National Apprenticeship Service www.apprenticeships.org.uk helps to fund the training. Business representatives from the relevant industry sector work with the Sector Skills Councils to develop the course content. Unfortunately there is not a Sector Skills Council for Local Authorities only Central Government.
5. However there are some Apprenticeship courses that are appropriate to our work such as: **Asset Skills** - Facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking - and **Financial Services Skills Council** - Financial Services, Accountancy and Finance. Typically we would normally consider:
 - o Business & Administration
 - o Customer Service
 - o Business and Information Technology
 - o Housing Practice
6. Depending on the sector and job role an Apprenticeship can take anything between one and four years to complete. It is a package of on-the-job training and qualifications. All our current apprentices are on 1 or 2 year contracts.

Apprenticeship Levels

7. There are three levels of Apprenticeship available, of which, Ashford currently offer the intermediate level on one year contracts and the advanced level on two year contracts. We do not employ any Higher Apprenticeships at the current time:

7.1 - Intermediate Level Apprenticeships

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a **Level 2** Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

7.2 - Advanced Level Apprenticeships

Apprentices work towards work-based learning such as a **Level 3** Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification. To date we have had only employed one person at this level.

7.3 - Higher Apprenticeships

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a **Level 4** Competence Qualification, Functional Skills and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree.

Training and Employment

8. As Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes, most of the training is 'on the job' – at our premises. The rest can be provided by a local college or by a specialist learning provider, or we can deliver everything ourselves. Whichever route is chosen it essential that this element is researched and included in any proposal to employ an apprentice, without a training element there is no apprentice. This research can be undertaken by the manager wishing to employ an apprentice, but will normally be conducted by or in consultation with the Learning and Development Officer.
9. All new apprentices are provided with an induction into their role and are given on-the-job training. Employment must be for at least 30 hours per week and Ashford's apprentices are normally employed for 37 hours per week except in the case of an apprentice in Customer Services who work 35 hours per week. This is mainly due to the shift pattern worked in that department.

Funding

10. Apprenticeship funding is available from the National Apprenticeship Service. The size of the contribution varies depending on the sector and the age of the candidate. If the apprentice is aged 16–18 years old, we will receive 100 per cent of the cost of the training; if they are 19-24 years old, we will receive up to 50 per cent; if they are 25 years old or over we may only get a contribution depending on the sector and area in which we operate.

11. This is paid directly to the organisation that provides and supports the Apprenticeship; in most cases this will be a learning provider. To date Ashford Borough Council has been provided with around £13,200 of funding towards the training of apprentices. In addition our contribution towards funding has been around £1,400 which covers 50% or a contribution towards the training costs for two apprentices who are over 18 years of age.
12. Ashford Borough Council currently uses three different training providers which are:
 - K College (Ashford Campus)
 - Key Training (Folkestone)
 - Centre for Housing & Support

Apprentices Minimum Wage

(Not to be confused with National Minimum Wage)

13. A new National Minimum Wage for apprentices was introduced on **1 October 2011**. The wage applies to:
 - All apprentices aged under 19;
 - Apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their Apprenticeship.
14. The apprentice minimum wage is currently **£2.60** per hour (**£96.20 per week**) and applies to time working, plus time spent training that is part of the Apprenticeship. Employers are free to pay above the new wage and many do so, Ashford Borough Council currently pays **£105.00** per week, but employers must ensure they are paying at least the minimum apprentice wage. The annual salary of an apprentice is £5,460,
15. Many employers tend to pay more as the apprentices develop their skills. Research has found that the average apprentice takes home around **£170** per week.
16. Like most other employees, employed apprentices have a statutory entitlement 28 days' paid holiday inclusive of bank holidays per year. We currently provide 22 days plus Bank Holidays = 30days.
17. If we choose to start an apprentice on a higher wage, we must continue to pay that for the remainder of the training or until the apprentice becomes eligible for the full national minimum wage appropriate to their age i.e. 19 years of age or over, or completed first year of apprenticeship.
18. By comparison the National Minimum Wage is:
 - **£3.68** per hour - the 16-17 rate for workers above school leaving age but under 18
 - **£4.98** per hour - the 18-20 rate
 - **£6.08** per hour - the main rate for workers aged 21 and over

Note: ABC currently has one apprentice who will be entitled to £6.08 per hour from the 7th November 2012.

Recruitment

19. Recruitment of apprentices is undertaken using one of two methods: the first is through our normal recruitment process and the second uses the facilities of a local college.

19.1 Normal Recruitment

- Manager will identify a position suitable for an apprentice.
- Manager will seek MT approval
- Position will be advertised externally via the Internet, Job Centre and other local media.
- Applicants will be shortlisted and invited to an interview.
- Successful applicant will be offered a position.
- Training programme organised via suitable provider, possibly local college.

19.2 Local College

- Manager will identify a position suitable for an apprentice.
- Manager will seek MT approval
- Local college will be approached to put forward suitable candidates for interview, saving advertising costs.
- Applicants will be shortlisted and invited to an interview.
- Successful applicant will be offered a position.
- Training programme organised by college.

Promotion

20. Promotion of Ashford Borough Council scheme is achieved in a number of ways:
- Ashford Borough Council 's logo is included in the Roll of Honour of the Apprenticeships website
<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/Roll-of-Honour.aspx>
 - The Apprenticeships logo can be included on all relevant documentation.
 - Apprenticeship Employer Certificate. The certificate recognises businesses for their commitment and support to Apprenticeships – and ensures their customers do too.
 - Local advertising in conjunction with recruitment campaigns.

Contact: John Mills, Personnel Officer

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Agenda Item 6

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 September 2012

Scrutiny Reports/Reviews on the Forward Plan

Update

October

Community Safety Partnership – update on Strategic Assessment Document
ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report

November:

Presentation by Stour Valley Arts

December/January

The Budget Scrutiny Task Group will be meeting during December and January.
Members are welcome to attend these meetings.

Year Plan 2012/13

Month	items	Task Group
May	O&S annual report. Membership of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	
June	Sickness & Absenteeism annual report.	
July	ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report. Shared space 3 year post implementation report.	
August	Cancelled	
September	Post Mayoralty review – update on effect of changes. Apprentices	BSTG meeting
October	Community safety partnership – update on Strategic assessment document ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report	
November	Presentation by Stour Valley Arts	
December		Scrutiny of Council's draft 2013/14 budget – Budget Scrutiny TG meetings
January	Report of Budget scrutiny Task Group ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report	Budget Scrutiny TG meetings
February	Presentation from Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group re Health Care Provision in Ashford Borough	
March	Update report on Community Engagement and Consultation	
April	ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report	

O&S Committee – Report Tracker – Current position

Minute No.	Report Title	Officer	Date due	Current position	Recommended action
299/10/06	Stour Centre	Head of Cultural & Project Services	TBC -After completion of legal recovery proceedings	Officers are continuing to pursue the Council's claim and a report to Members is anticipated.	Await report to Cabinet
62/06/11	Housing Strategy Action Plan Monitoring Report	Head of Housing /Housing Strategy Officer		Housing Strategy under review. New Strategy/Action Plan not yet in place. Monitoring will recommence One year after adoption of new Strategy.	Timetable for one year after adoption of new Strategy.
432/03/11	Annual Review of Homelessness Strategy	Head of Housing		The Homelessness Strategy to be included in the Housing Strategy in future.	
61/06/12	Sickness and Absenteeism – annual report	Head of Personnel & development	June 2013		Timetable for June each year.
14/05/12	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Senior Scrutiny Officer	May/June 2013		Timetable for May/June each year
197/10/11	Community Safety Partnership – update on Strategic Assessment Document	Head of Environmental Services and Chair of Ashford CSP	October 2012		Timetable for October 2012

270/11/10	Post Mayoralty review - effect of changes implemented from May 2011 on the functioning of the Mayoralty		Sept 2012		Timetable for Sept 2012
312/01/12	Transport, travel expenses and lease car arrangements	Head of Personnel & Development	TBA	Report requested, date TBA	
312/01/12	Council's preparations for the Universal Credit & Council tax benefit changes	Revenues & Benefits Manager	TBA	Report to be provided once legislation in place, date TBA	
312/01/12	Street Markets	Licensing Manager		O&S may wish to review once report has been to Cabinet	Await report to Cabinet
389/03/12	Update report on Community Engagement and Consultation	Communications & Marketing Manager; Head of Business Change & Technology	February 2013		
429/04/12	Presentation by Stour Valley Arts	Stour Valley Arts, Arts & Cultural Industries Manager	November 2012		

431/04/12	ABC Business Plan performance report – quarter 1 2012/13	Policy & Performance Manager	Quarterly – next - July 2012		
62/06/12	Apprentices		Sept 2012		
62/06/12	Sports & Leisure		TBA		
62/06/12	Listed Buildings		TBA		

Low Priority & other proposed reports

	Report Title	Officer	Date due	Current position	Recommended action
57/06/08 199/10/11	Recycling and the Blue box scheme	Head of Environmental Services	TBC	To be considered when procurement process completed and new contract in operation.	
135/08/08	Cultural strategy.	Head of Cultural & Project Services			
291/12/08	The effectiveness of a single O&S committee		TBA		