



## 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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at 7.00 pm.

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The Members of this Committee are:-

Cllr Aaby (Chairman);  
Cllr Chilton (Vice-Chairman);  
Cllrs. Apps, Bartlett, Bennett, Burgess, Davison, Feacey, Hodgkinson, Mrs Hutchinson,  
Link, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Mortimer, Smith, Yeo.

### Agenda

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| 1. <b>Apologies/Substitutes</b> – To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii)                             |                      |
| 2. <b>Declarations of Interest:-</b> To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document: | (i)                  |
| a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)  |                      |
| b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)  |                      |
| c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests   |                      |
| See Agenda Item 2 for further details   |                      |
| 3. Minutes – to approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Committee held on the 20 <sup>th</sup> August 2013                                  |                      |

### **Part I – Matters Referred to the Committee 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**

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| 4. Procurement of Energy Saving Proposal for Civic Centre: LED Lighting & Sub Metering | 1 - 6 |
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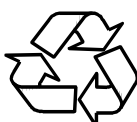
## Part IV – Information/Monitoring Items

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| 5. | Update on Conningbrook Lakes Country Park                         | 7 - 28  |
| 6. | Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarters 1 and 2, 2013/14 | 29 - 42 |
| 7. | Future reviews and report tracker.                                | 43 - 49 |
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RR/VS  
15 Nov 2013

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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:

- Membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
- Where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240134/Openness_and_transparency_on_personal_interests.pdf) plus the link sent out to Members at part of the Weekly Update email on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013.
- (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 Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services as early as possible, and in

## 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 **20<sup>th</sup> August 2013**.

### Present:

Cllr. Adby (Chairman);  
Cllr. Chilton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Bartlett, Bennett, Burgess, Davison, Mrs Hutchinson, Link, Miss Martin, Mrs Martin, Mortimer, Smith.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Apps, Feacey, Hodgkinson.

### Also Present:

Cllr. Britcher.

Chief Executive, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

## 112 Minutes

### Resolved:

**That the Minutes of the Meetings of this Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> June and the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2013 be approved and confirmed as correct records.**

## 113 Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The Senior Scrutiny Officer's report asked the Committee to agree the set up and membership of a Budget Scrutiny Task Group which would scrutinise the Council's draft 2014/15 budget and report its findings and recommendations to this Committee. The O&S Committee would then report to Cabinet on the soundness of the budget. There was some discussion about the timing of meetings and it was explained that day time meetings had been selected rather than evenings due to room availability, the need to have six or seven meetings in close succession, to avoid any potential conflict for evening meetings Members may be committed to and to increase the likelihood that both Members and the relevant Officers would be available.

The following Members were put forward as Members of the Task Group: -  
Councillors Apps, Burgess, Chilton, Mrs Martin and Mortimer.

### Resolved:

**That (i) the O&S Committee agree to set up a Budget Scrutiny Task Group.**

- (ii) **the following be selected as Members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group: - Councillors Apps, Burgess, Chilton, Mrs Martin and Mortimer.**

## **114 Best Services Resources Allow – An Update**

The Chief Executive attended and gave a presentation to update on the Best Services Resources Allow (BSRA) activity. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group had recommended that the Committee receive an update following concern that the Council may be prejudicing its ability to deliver core services at an acceptable level on a reducing budget.

The Chief Executive said it would be useful to firstly explain the background to BSRA. This was one of the priorities that arose from the SIMALTO exercise in 2010 when the people of Ashford were asked where they would like Council resources to be focussed over the next five years in the light of reductions in formula grant from the new Government. The ethos behind BSRA was that the Council could shift spending to priority areas, but it was expected that essential Council business would still be maintained at a decent standard but modest cost (the concept of less for less or a 'Ford Mondeo' level of service rather than a 'Rolls Royce' one).

The identified corporate priorities coming out of the exercise were: - recycling and environment; activities for young people; economic development and housing; and BSRA. The Chief Executive outlined progress under each of these four headings, which had been significant, along with the few areas which had not gone so well. Generally speaking the whole process had gone well and had contributed towards improved staff morale as a result of them feeling more engaged in the process, as well as delivering savings of £2.8m in 3 years whilst retaining the lowest Council Tax in Kent.

During the discussion the following points were raised: -

- Whilst it was perhaps too early to debate the success or effectiveness of the new waste and recycling arrangements, the early teething problems, particularly in the rural areas and with regard to the rollout of the garden waste scheme, were noted. It was a small fraction of 1% of residents who had experienced problems but a small fraction of 1% of 52,000 homes could still equate to a significant number. It had been clear though that the ability to more easily recycle their waste had been a top priority for residents and the Council had been able to facilitate that. A number of Members said they were pleased to report that they had received an extremely low number of complaints about the new waste and recycling arrangements and those that had been received were mainly around getting through to the Council on the telephone. There was still a general issue with phone lines and people who rang in to the Council having to wait too long and it was recognised that this was a particularly topical issue. A Member said the most frustrating thing was not necessarily the problems themselves, but not being given a time-frame for when the problems would be remedied.

- More needed to be done for young people who found themselves homeless or in vulnerable situations. Quite often they were being put into inappropriate Bed & Breakfast accommodation that did not suit their needs. Could the Council give some consideration to providing some sort of hostel, overseen by experienced and professional workers who properly understood the situation? There were plenty of people locally who had the necessary skills and control that the Council could work in partnership with on such a scheme (Housing Associations, KCC, and Youth Workers such as those at Sk8side etc.) The Committee agreed that a recommendation should be made to Cabinet to task Officers to look at options around providing support to homeless people in the Borough.
- In a similar vein, with regard to youth work, the Sk8side facility had been fantastic for young people and really engaged and supported young people of all ages who had not previously had that kind of outlet. The individuals there were doing some great work but the service was under pressure and a bit of extra resource there would go such a long way. KCC's Youth Service was the main funder of such services but they also had to find their own savings. The Chairman reminded Members that Sk8side was a facility that served young people from across the Borough and any Member was welcome to use their Ward Member Grant to support it.
- There was some discussion about the next steps and whether there was going to be a follow up survey to the one undertaken in 2010. The process of consultation and using that to form the basis of the Five Year Business Plan had worked well but now, three years into that Plan, many of the objectives raised then had been achieved and it was now important to identify the next set of priorities and savings targets. The Chief Executive said he envisaged the next survey taking place in spring 2014 with a view to compiling information to use in the budget build for 2015 and to inform the new Council from May 2015. With further reductions to Government Support Grant likely it would be vitally important for the Council to have all the information it needed to understand the public's aspirations before it had to take tough decisions and identify similar levels of savings again. Members considered that completion of this survey in the next 12 months should be a recommendation from this Committee to the Cabinet.
- A Member said that the savings made so far to the budget were impressive and he supported an early repeat of the consultation process as the next stage of savings may have to be even more dramatic.

A discussion then ensued about the future of the town centre. Some Members said they had serious concerns about the future of the immediate town centre and in their view some of the 'town centre' developments referred to in the Chief Executive's presentation were misleading as they were happening on the outskirts of the town (McArthur Glen Outlet Centre and John Lewis at Home). It was considered that such developments would not necessarily help the High Street and the area within the old ring road which was the traditional town centre and was not attracting or retaining traders. It was considered that more needed to be done to support small businesses and market traders in the town centre. There was talk of providing a cinema in the town, but if there was nothing else to draw people in, why wouldn't people still use

the existing cinema at Eureka with its free parking and variety of eateries? There were clearly other plans in place than just a cinema, but there was concern that not enough was being done for the immediate town centre. Other Members said that a cinema in the town centre would support both the daytime and night-time economy and bring with it its own eateries and it was all about creating as much footfall as possible in the town centre. The Chief Executive said that this was not really the forum to have this type of debate and this whole issue was something which perhaps needed to be discussed more widely within the Core Strategy Review. He concurred with comments about a cinema bringing footfall in the day and evening and said that in his view a cinema and an expanded outlet centre (moving closer to the town centre) would draw more people in to Ashford and that could only be positive. He agreed the town centre should be a priority as should supporting small business, but as a Borough Council it was not possible to change Government policy on business rates or write blank cheques to businesses to enable them to stay in Ashford High Street. It was also a fact that people's shopping habits had changed immeasurably. So much shopping was done on-line with shops themselves almost becoming showrooms for products people would try and then buy cheaper on the internet. In terms of positive action that had been taken, the Council had recently appointed Jo Wynn-Carter as Town Team Manager and were due to launch the Town Centre Action Team later that week. Pop-Up Britain had also launched Ashford pop-up in an empty shop in the Park Mall shopping centre in an initiative aimed at creating future high street entrepreneurs. The Committee also discussed the realities of attracting a major supermarket/retailer in to the town centre.

**Post Meeting Note: Members are reminded that information regarding the Town Centre and recent developments/initiatives is routinely circulated by way of Leader's Briefing Notes, Press Releases and the Weekly Members' Update E-mails.**

**Resolved:**

- That (i) the update report be received and noted.**
- (ii) the Cabinet be asked to task Officers to look at options around providing support to young homeless people in the Borough. Perhaps including provision of a hostel in co-operation with other operators (e.g. Housing Associations, KCC).**
- (iii) the Cabinet be asked to ensure that a revised 'SIMALTO' consultation be completed within 12 months to look at long term budget aspirations for the next Council.**

## **115 Future Reviews and Report Tracker**

A Member referred to the 'Recycling and Blue Box Scheme' item on the tracker which it had been agreed was to be considered when the procurement process had been completed and the new contract was in operation. Given that the contract had commenced in July 2013 he considered that the item should come back to the Committee after a year of operation in July 2014. This was agreed by the Committee.

**Resolved:**

**That subject to the addition above, the Future Reviews and Report Tracker be noted.**

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**Agenda Item No:** 4  
**Report To:** Overview & Scrutiny  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
**Report Title:** Procurement of Energy Saving Proposal for Civic Centre:  
 LED Lighting & Sub Metering  
**Report Author:** John Young



**Summary:**

Approval was given by the Council at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013, for a £100k budget provision for energy saving measures and approval to proceed with energy saving projects for Civic Centre.

Prior to placing orders for supplies and services, the Council referred the procurement of retrofitting LED lighting tubes and the installation of a sub metering solution to monitor and manage electricity consumption within the Civic Centre to Overview & Scrutiny.

**Key Decision:** YES

**Affected Wards:** None

**Recommendations:** **Overview & Scrutiny be asked to:-**  
 Approve the procurement proposal for the lighting replacement and sub metering projects.

**Policy Overview:** The reduction of costs and CO2 emissions is a clear corporate requirement.

**Financial Implications:** £53,355

**Risk Assessment** NO

**Equalities Impact Assessment** NO

**Other Material Implications:** None

**Exemption Clauses:** None

**Background Papers:** 22 April 2013 Cabinet report: Energy Saving Proposal for Civic Centre

**Contacts:** john.young@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233 330865)

## **Report Title: Proposed procurement of Energy Saving Measures for Civic Centre**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To demonstrate the procurement process for the LED lighting replacement and sub metering is robust.
2. Obtain approval to proceed with the proposed procurement.

### **Issue to be decided**

3. Authority for the Civic Centre energy saving project to proceed subject to the evaluation of the procurement process.

### **Background**

4. Approval was given by the Council at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013, for a £100k budget provision for energy saving measures and approval to proceed with a lighting and sub-metering installation which, would reduce the cost of our current electricity consumption by £12,766 per annum and our annual carbon emissions by 130 tonnes. The predicted payback based upon the estimates used to secure a budget to proceed with a procurement process was 3 to 3½ years.
5. The project is to retrofit LED lighting tubes into the existing Civic Centre light fittings and to install a sub metering solution to monitor and manage electricity consumption within the Civic Centre.
6. The proposed procurement was referred to Overview and Scrutiny after concerns were raised by Cllr Doug Marriott regarding a perceived disparity between the reports indicative cost of £61.5k and Cllr Marriott's estimate of £40k. The reports indicative cost of £61.5k was sought from a specialist provider to establish a business case for cost savings. It was for illustrative purposes and was not the subject of a procurement process.
7. Although the indicative costs used to demonstrate a business case and secure a budget for the project were based on a turnkey solution, our procurement approach has been to source the best arrangement for each solution. This has resulted in us proposing to deliver some of the project as a turnkey solution while delivering other elements on a materials and installation basis. This approach has provided us with greater control over the supplies and services procured and allowed us to achieve competitive pricing for each solution.
8. Upon the Council approving a budget provision enabling the Civic Centre Facilities Team to proceed with the energy saving proposal, competitive quotations have been obtained from suppliers of LED lighting (including

emergency lighting) and electricity sub metering solutions. The quoted costs obtained are set out in Appendix 1.

9. For the LED lighting (including emergency lighting) it was decided the most appropriate approach would be to for the Council to procure the LED tubes and emergency lights and use an electrical contractor to install them. This decision was taken to ensure the quality and performance of the tubes, secure a 5 year warranty and be confident we would be able to claim on the warranty if necessary. LED tube warranties can be problematic because the warranty is often with the manufacturer and not supplier. With so many items being imported from unknown manufacturers it is important to ensure the company will honour its stated warranty.

We have undertaken trials of LED tubes and emergency lighting within the building over the past several months and evaluated the performance, quality and warranty for each product. We subsequently sought quotations from:

- a) Edmundsons Electrical, Orbital Bus Park, Ashford
- b) Senate Electrical Suppliers, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford
- c) Tamlite (CEF) Orbital Business park, Ashford

For the installation we prepared a specification and sought quotations from installers with whom we have worked previously and had found their work to be of good quality. They were:

- a) Ball Construction, Bridge Road, Ashford
- b) Mechelec, Poulton Close, Dover
- c) Metroline, Channel Court, Folkestone
- d) Terry Baker Electrical Contractors, Godington Road, Ashford.

10. The existing emergency lights will be replaced as a direct consequence of the retrofitting of LED tubes. The existing emergency lights are part of the current light fitting and like the existing tubes, have reached the end of their life. The retrofit will remove the existing integrated emergency lights and we will fit standalone emergency lighting units. The new emergency lights require fewer units to cover the same office space, are significantly easier to maintain and can be installed at a much lower cost than more traditional emergency lighting systems.
11. For the sub-metering of the Civic Centre electricity supply we approached the following companies for quotations:
  - a. Logic Energy Ltd. Ainslie Road, Glasgow
  - b. Measure My Energy /GCI Limited – Sellinge, Ashford, Kent
  - c. Metroline, Channel Court, Folkestone
  - d. PSW Building Consultancy Ltd, Brentwood, Essex
  - e. Safe & Sound Controls, Chislet Close, Canterbury
  - f. Smart Innovations Group (SIG) /GCI Limited – Sellinge, Ashford, Kent

Because the sub-metering market place is currently very active with new solutions coming to market all the time, the quotations we received comprised of different technologies and approaches to delivery.

Our evaluation was based on balancing our requirement to sub-metering our electricity supply, have access to easy to use performance reporting tools, have affordable one off and on-going costs which collectively, deliver the best value solution.

## **Consultation**

12. Two small pilot installations of LED tubes have been retrofitted within Planning and Community & Housing. Both pilots have been in place for several months and have worked well from a technical and an end user perspective.
13. Advice has been sought from the council's Building Control Team to ensure our proposal is compliant.
14. We have also worked with Cllr Doug Marriott to help ensure we achieve the best outcome for the Council.

## **Handling**

15. There is the potential for significant staff handling issues with the lighting installation. We have therefore made sure Unison, the Council's Health & Safety Officer and the Health & Safety Group are aware of the proposed installation. We will be working closely with them, staff and tenants to ensure the project is delivered with minimum disruption and receives a positive reception.
16. The implementation of the lighting project will be undertaken in consultation with Health & Safety representatives, Unison and Managers. It is intended the installation will be undertaken one floor level at a time with enough time between installations to address any issues that arise.

## **Conclusion**

17. For the provision of LED lighting tubes we have selected TamLite (CES) as our preferred supplier. TamLite (CES) are the manufacturer and supplier of their LED tubes and provide a 5 year warranty. The tubes will be purchased through the Ashford branch of CES.
18. The preferred supplier to undertake the retrofit installation of LED tubes is Mechelec. In addition to having the lowest quotation, Mechelec have worked with the Council on similar installations and have previously delivered a high standard of work.
19. The preferred installer of the emergency lighting system is Mechelec using lights specified by the Civic Centre Facilities Team.
20. The preferred provider of the sub-metering system is Measure My Energy /GCI Limited. This element of the project is a turnkey solution that delivers the lowest installation cost and a highly competitive subscription cost for the

management software.

21. The savings set out in the Energy Saving Proposal for Civic Centre report to April's Cabinet Meeting predicted a payback on an outlay of £61,500 would be achieved in just 3 to 3½ years. Further to the procurement work set out in this report realising a cost of £53,355, the predicted payback period for this work is reduced to 3 years.

### **Portfolio Holder's Views**

22. Having carried out extensive research and testing, I believe that a suitable solution to the proposed changes to the electrical and lighting systems in the offices of the Civic Centre has been suitably arrived at.

The report adequately describes the procurement process and satisfies all appropriate checks and balances.

I believe that the recommendations should be agreed and implemented with all appropriate speed to start realising the savings identified."

**Contact:** John Young  
**Email:** john.young@ashford.gov.uk

## Energy Saving Proposal for Civic Centre: LED Lighting & Sub Metering

### Appendix 1 – Cost comparison

Please note, all costs exclude VAT

#### Quotations for supply of LED tubes

Company	Supply cost of LED tubes
Tamlite (CEF)	£33,757
Senate	£48,390
Edmundson	£52,006

#### Quotations for retrofit installation of LED tubes

Company	Retrofit installation Cost of LED tubes
Mechelec	£11,037
Ball Construction	£11,916
Metroline	£13,350
Terry Baker	£25,875

#### Budget provision for replacement of broken or unsuitable light fittings and installation

£2,023
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#### Civic Centre emergency lighting

Materials (purchased by ABC)	£1,650
Installation	£1,350

Total lighting costs: £49,817

#### Quotations for sub-metering of Civic Centre electricity supply

Company	Supply & installation	Annual on-going cost	Total first year cost
Measure My Energy /GCI Limited	£3,250	£288	£3,538
Smart Innovations Group (SIG)/GCI Limited	£6,509	£551	£7,060
Logic Energy Ltd.	£7,101	£516	£7,617
Safe & Sound Controls	£9,665	£0	£9,665
Metroline	£9,850	£0	£9,850
PSW Building Consultancy Ltd	£15,446	£186	£15,632

Total sub metering costs: £3,538

**Agenda Item No:** 5  
**Report To:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
**Report Title:** Update on Conningbrook Lakes Country Park  
**Report Author:** Mark Carty



**Summary:** The main focus of this report is to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed future management proposals for Conningbrook Lakes Country Park, and in particular the arrangements being made for the integration of water sports activities on the site.

The Report provides an overview of the work undertaken jointly by officers and the Ashford Leisure Trust in putting in place the relevant operating policies and procedures relating to the management and coordination by ALT of water sports activities on the main lake by accredited clubs and associations.

The report also provides a brief update on the progress made in negotiating management agreements with the agreed operating partners.

**Key Decision:** NO

**Affected Wards:** All

**Recommendations:** For Information Only

**Policy Overview:**

**Financial Implications:** N/A

**Risk Assessment** NO

**Equalities Impact Assessment** NO

**Other Material Implications:** N/A

**Exemption Clauses:** N/A

**Background Papers:** Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy / Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)

Note: The various 'live documents' referred to in paragraph 14 are available on request to Simon Harris (Culture & Environment / [simon.harris@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:simon.harris@ashford.gov.uk))

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## **Report Title: Update on Management Arrangements for Conningbrook Lakes Country Park**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed future management and integration of water sports on the site and progress by officers on preparing the Conningbrook Country Park.

### **Background**

2. Members will recall that Cabinet has recently received two reports on the Conningbrook Country Park i.e. 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (minute 36/06/13) and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 (minute 79/07/13). These reports followed a series of meetings held by the Conningbrook Members Working Group, the last of which was on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013.
3. These meetings noted the encouraging progress on all aspects of the project and agreed and recommended the following:
  - a) the principles of a Commercial Agreement and authorisation for officers to finalise the agreement including transfer of land;
  - b) arrangements for early works and for officers to undertake all appropriate design and procurement given a further £200K (in addition to the £87K previously agreed) of capital funding;
  - c) that Management Agreements should be agreed by officers with the three 'operating partners' namely Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT), Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) and Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF);
  - d) that the Council lead on marketing and a promotional pack using a £5K revenue growth item in 2014/15;
  - e) that the balance from the allocated KWT subsidy payment in 2013/14 support the purchase of a Park Rangers vehicle.
4. Officers have been working hard over the last three months to progress the project and much operational research work focussed on water sports has been completed concerning the management arrangements which this report focuses on. It is anticipated that the management agreements will be finalised shortly and be ready for signature once the respective licence and lease agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded.
5. ABC and Brett are currently finalising the relevant agreements that will secure the country park, namely the licence and lease and section 106 and commercial agreements. The Section 106 agreement will secure the grant of the Lease on the commencement of the Brett planning permission and will reflect the summary heads of terms approved by Cabinet on 9 May 2013, thus securing ABC's long term interest in the country park.
6. Officers are working on the tender documents for the 'early years public access' works as detailed in the Cabinet report on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013. These include a temporary access road, wooden-clad containers for storage, additional disabled parking, a floating pontoon, safety equipment and a culvert

to connect the southern part of the country park where the main lake is situated with the northern part. These will be tendered once the respective licence and lease agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded for a spring opening.

### **Management agreements with proposed 'operating partners'**

7. Officers have been working closely with the proposed operating partners, discussing the level of expertise and skills required to manage the early years operation. Such dialogue, alongside discussions with other external professional organisations and individuals including RoSPA, Governing Bodies (Triathlon, Rowing, Canoeing), the KCC Sports Facility Manager, the Kentish Stour Countryside Project and clubs that intend, specifically, to use water, has helped inform operational specifications and risk assessments.
8. Site visits to Leybourne Lakes, Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre (Berkshire) and Shorne Woods Country Park (Gravesham) have also supported officers shape the management of the park and particularly the water sports on the site. This report provides the conclusion of such research and explains the work to be undertaken in the next few months.
9. The draft document 'Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy / Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)' attached as Appendix A, provides the framework and approach to the respective agreements, management areas and specialist expertise, governance and partnerships as previously agreed by the Conningbrook Member Working Group. The Management Strategy includes the requirement for operating partners to draft a management plan for approval by ABC within 3 months of signing their agreements.
10. It also includes the need for each operating partner to participate in a quarterly Management Board chaired by ABC, and monthly meetings where ABC will monitor each individual operator on a one-to-one basis. The interests/concerns of the various 'end users' / stakeholders' (such as water sports clubs, fisherman etc.) will be represented by the relevant operating partner.
11. It is proposed that the overall management of water sports activities on the main lake will be coordinated by ALT who will manage access onto the lake by specialist water sports clubs and organisations such as the Pirates Canoe Club, Ashford Tri Club, and Sea Cadets, etc. ALT seconded a member of staff with experience in managing water sports facilities and associated projects, as well as personally participating in a number of water sports activities to ensure that a sound understanding of needs and requirements were understood and fed into ALT's business plan, risk assessment and subsequent management plan.
12. Officers and ALT have engaged both separately and as a group with the key users and it is clear that their experience and expertise in managing and operating all aspects of water sports and member activities is now robust and relevant to Conningbrook Lakes.

## Update on policies and procedures by ALT related to water sports activities

13. ABC and ALT are currently finalising various policies and procedures relating to the use of the lake by specialist clubs and associations to ensure that the relevant health and safety procedures and practices are in place, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has been engaged to provide advice and guidance and to make recommendations towards finalising and implementing a management plan.
14. There are a number of on-going operational documents and procedures that are required when operating a sports area. ALT are currently compiling the following documents <sup>1</sup> to manage access to the lakes and mitigate all identified risks :
  - **Risk Register** (a health and safety risk assessment) and safety review report
  - **Contractor document** (e.g. management of aquatic weeds, hedge cutting etc.).
  - **Hire requirements to external organisations** (e.g. water-sports clubs)
  - **Normal Operating Procedures (NOP)** document
15. As mentioned above, extensive discussions have taken place with a number of specialist clubs and associations that have expressed a strong interest in making use of the lake and associated facilities for water sports activities, including Pirates Canoe Club, Ashford Sea Cadets, Ashford Tri Club, Trispirit Events and Dover Rowing Club. All of these clubs have a proven track record of organising water sports activities and they currently all adhere to and comply with the policies, procedures and regulations of their respective governing bodies, and in the case of Ashford Sea Cadets also follow Ministry of Defence guidelines. Their on going compliance will be monitored by ALT.
16. ALT is also drawing up a provisional timetable and allocation of space on the main lake to ensure safety and effective coordination of the lakes and facilities. Areas of the main lake will be demarcated by buoys to provide each user group with a safe and suitable environment for their respective activities, and to avoid any conflict between different user groups. These areas will be finalised in due course once the various operational procedures have been agreed.
17. A business plan is currently being prepared by ALT based on the outcomes of the discussions with various user groups and an analysis of projected operating costs.
18. Discussions are also ongoing with British Rowing on possible 'taster events', but the timing of these is very much dependent on when the agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded. However, Brett has been very accommodating in the past on providing the location over to clubs to run 'one day' events (e.g. triathlons), so it may still be possible to organise such events in the near future. Other clubs and associations will also be welcomed to use

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<sup>1</sup> These documents are available on request.

the facilities and organise their own events, subject to meeting all the operational requirements referred to above.

## **Conclusion**

19. Officers jointly with ALT have undertaken significant research and sought the advice from experienced and specialist water users, including commissioning professional risk assessment work. To this end, significant progress has been made in negotiating management agreements with the agreed operating partners, and in putting in place the relevant operating policies and procedures relating to the management and coordination of water sports by ALT. Although it is currently not possible to provide a definite date for the opening of the Country Park, due to concluding the relevant agreements between ABC / Brett, it is still hoped that the country park will open for 'early access' in spring 2014.



ASHFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy

## Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)

3<sup>RD</sup> Draft / 12 November 2013



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## ACCRONYMS

*ABC - Ashford Borough Council*

*ALT – Ashford Leisure Trust*

*EA – Environment Agency*

*EMS - Ecological Management Strategy (Oct 2012, Bioscan Report Ref: 1353R5fv)*

*KWT – Kent Wildlife Trust*

*MKF – Mid Kent Fisheries*

## I. Background

1. Ashford Borough Council has been working with the Brett Group for a number of years on proposals to develop and transform a former gravel extraction site at Conningbrook into a country park. The development of the country park will be funded by an 'enabling development scheme' led by the Brett Group, of up to 300 houses on part of the site.
2. The ***Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Business and Operating Plan*** (November 2012) proposed that the country park will include a range of leisure and recreational facilities centred on the main lake, as well as extensive areas set aside primarily for nature conservation. The plan is the culmination of extensive consultations, held with a broad range of stakeholders and potential end users.
3. Stakeholders agreed the following vision for the Country Park: -

*"Conningbrook Lakes will be transformed to create a new country park at the gateway to the Stour Valley. It will contain the existing Julie Rose Stadium and will provide opportunities to expand the existing leisure facilities offered to include a range of water based sports and other activities. The development of the country park will also contribute to biodiversity through the enhancement of habitats throughout the site, and will also provide new links to established public rights of way and cycle routes".*
4. The Brett development will fund financial contributions payable to ABC (secured by s106 agreement) for the creation of the *country park*. The Section 106 Agreement will also provide Ashford Borough Council with a long-term interest in the country park land (owned by Brett) through a long-term lease (this is still being negotiated).
5. An 'early years access' plan to bring forward public access to the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park has been agreed with the stakeholders and granted planning approval (Planning Committee May 2013). This allows Ashford Borough Council to undertake some works and provide a temporary access road from Julie Rose Stadium, parking, storage containers, office and workshop buildings, slipway, floating pontoons, together with lifelbelts, signage and parking control plus change of use of land to use as a country park.
6. If all goes to plan it is hoped that the early years' access will begin sometime around Summer 2013. It will be necessary for the management of the site to be agreed and appropriate operators in place. This Management Strategy aims to provide the framework for such and act as an overarching document for all those involved or wishing to be involved in the Conningbrook Lakes County Park development and operation.

## II. Introduction

7. This document sets out the 'key management roles and responsibilities' that are expected of the respective '**operating partners**' to be appointed by Ashford Borough Council during the 'early years access' of the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park and its ongoing development.
8. When fully implemented Conningbrook Lakes Country Park and the associated residential area will comprise of five discreet management compartments (See Appendix A). These compartments are identified in the '**Ecological Management Strategy**' (**EMS**) for the Conningbrook Lakes development as a whole, which was prepared by Bioscan on behalf of the Brett Group, following extensive consultations with **Ashford Borough Council (ABC)** and **Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)**.
9. The Ecological Management Strategy provides the general framework for good ecological management and will serve as a reference point for the future development of specific management plans for the respective 'compartments' of the country park which are: -
  - Compartment 1 - Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river
  - Compartment 2 - Residential area
  - Compartment 3 - Lake, river and wet woodland within LWS
  - Compartment 4 - Southern grasslands and adjacent river
  - Compartment 5 - Recreational lake and activities centre
10. Four compartments (Compartments 1, 3, 4 and 5), including the main lake, form the country park. During the early years access the country park will be operated by Ashford Borough Council 'under licence' from the Brett Group. During this early years access licence period a temporary access route will be provided and the facilities of the Julie Rose Stadium made available for park visitors / users, as detailed in ABC's planning application 'Early Access Works to Conningbrook Lakes Country Park'.
11. In order to effectively integrate and coordinate the management of these four compartments, management agreements will be negotiated with three 'operating partners', each of which has specialist expertise and appropriate specialist skills & resources. It is envisaged that the following 'operating partners' will be appointed: -
  - Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) – to manage the nature conservation areas and to perform 'wardening' functions;
  - Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT) – to manage the activity programme, including water sports and recreation;
  - Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF) – to manage fishing and to perform water bailiff duties.
12. Section V explains the governance arrangements which includes the Council setting up and coordinating a *Management Board*. This will



oversee the delivery of the country park and include representatives of the three operating partners, as well as the Brett Group and (in time) representatives of groups/organisations using the country park as appropriate.

13. In the longer term it has been suggested that a '*community management trust*' may be set up in order to facilitate and promote the further involvement of the local community.
- 

### III. Approach to Agreements

14. As explained above, management agreements will be directly negotiated with each of the three 'operating partners'.
15. The operating partners will each undertake the management of designated compartment(s) in accordance with agreed 'heads of terms and resources'. These will be drafted in consultation with each operating partner and evolve into a *management agreement*.
16. Each management agreement will refer to this document – The **Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy**. In undertaking their management agreement, operating partners will be signing up to this strategy. Thus it is vital that all the operating partners approval this document and adopt its principles and understand and acknowledge the workings, role and responsibilities of others as described within this document.
17. As there are a number of operating partners who will need to work together and appreciate different management requirements for the country park to ensure good practise in partnership working is understood and transparent from the outset.
18. As well as the general legal information contained within a management agreement such as insurance and public liability and termination clauses, each agreement will include:
  - Specific roles and responsibilities
  - Overarching service outcomes (expectations on which an evolving management plan will be based)
  - Payment/fee arrangements (if appropriate)
  - Sign up to specific documents (i.e. Management Strategy)
  - Participation in the Management Board (refer section V)

### Management Plans

19. It is expected that all management agreements will include the need for the operating partner to develop and deliver a *management plan*.

20. Given that the country park in the early years is a new entity, ABC believes that the management plan for each operator needs to evolve overtime.
  21. With this in mind it is expected that the management agreements will have overarching service outcomes that the management plan will take and apply aims and objectives to. The first draft of the management plan should be in place within three months of signing the management agreement and from that point or before it will be monitored, developed and changed within the first year in consultation with ABC and others as appropriate.
  22. Each *management plan* will take account of and be consistent with the 'Ecological Management Strategy' and vision within the 'Business and Operating Plan'.
- 

#### **IV. Management Areas and Specialist Expertise**

23. There are four compartments (Compartments 1, 3, 4 and 5), including the main lake, that form the country park.
  - Compartment 1 - Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river
  - Compartment 3 - Lake, river and wet woodland within LWS
  - Compartment 4 - Southern grasslands and adjacent river
  - Compartment 5 - Recreational lake and activities centre
24. Compartment 2 is the Residential area and when fully built will be managed by a management company selected through tender and appointed (by the developers) prior to occupation of the first residential unit. This is outlined in the *Residential Management Proposal (October 2012)* prepared by BDB on behalf of the Brett Group.
25. Each of the following sections (A to C) looks at the different compartments and explains the necessary roles and responsibilities required to effectively manage it. This information is to be used to formulate the management agreements for each operating partner but as stressed previously it is important that all operating partners fully understand and appreciate all that is required to effectively deliver a country park.

**A. Nature Conservation Areas (Compartments 1, 3 & 4) / Environment, ecology & biodiversity**

26. A specialist nature conservation organisation (Kent Wildlife Trust) will be appointed to undertake the management of the country park environment, land, habitat, conservation and ecology in accordance with agreed 'heads of terms and resources' that will be detailed in a *management agreement* to which (in due course) will be appended a site specific detailed *management plan* (see below).
27. The appointed nature conservation organisation will implement a *management plan* (to be agreed) that will cover all areas designated for nature conservation (Compartments 1, 3 and 4), including the section of the River Stour Ashford to Fordwich Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (see Appendix B) that is within the site. The *management plan*, which will be prepared during the 'early years licence period' in consultation with ABC, will take account of and be consistent with the *Ecological Management Strategy*.
28. The appointed nature conservation organisation will engage a Park Ranger (or Assistant Park Ranger) with knowledge of and experience in environmental and park/habitat management within a busy public setting. A detailed job description will be agreed between ABC and the appointed nature conservation organisation with key elements of the role to include planning and executing works on site, creating a local volunteer base and liaising with other contractors, residents, visitors, councillors, etc.
29. Although the primary function of these compartments is nature conservation, the management plan will also take account of the requirements for informal recreation (including fishing, walking & cycling) and education as secondary functions.
30. It is envisaged that conservation grazing will be an important element of management of these areas, although in the early years 'licence period' there may be a need to reduce existing grazing pressure to allow 'recovery' of areas that have until now been intensively grazed by sheep.
31. The appointed nature conservation organisation will be responsible for the maintenance of stock fencing and for ensuring the grazing regime is appropriate to the aims and objectives set out in the EMS.
32. The appointed nature conservation organisation will organise an appropriate volunteer programme in support of conservation objectives and to promote community involvement / ownership.

### Compartment 1 – Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river

33. Compartment 1 is located to the north of the proposed residential development and has been designated as an area for conservation / habitat mitigation work, which will include the creation of an area of wet woodland and two ponds as part of mitigation works associated with the loss of existing habitats due to residential development.
34. The 'northern lake' at the southern end of Compartment 1 is currently used to breed coarse fish to restock the main lake. It is proposed that this lake will eventually (in the medium term) be made available for family fishing. The compartment is bordered by the River Great Stour to the east.
35. During the early years' access period this compartment may not require active management by the appointed organisation as mitigation works by the developer will be ongoing.

### Compartment 3 – Lake, river and wet woodland within Local Wildlife Site

36. This compartment is located south of the northern meadow (Compartment 1) and is at the heart of the designated Local Wildlife Site. A key feature is the 'eco lake' that was added to the Local Wildlife Site in 2005 on the basis of its use by wintering-bird species. In the long term the management of the interface between the residential area (Compartment 2) and the 'eco-lake' will be a key challenge.
37. During the early years' access period some active management of this compartment will commence, including possibly the thinning of selected trees around the 'eco-lake'.

### Compartment 4 – Southern grasslands and adjacent river

38. This compartment comprises a narrow strip of land between the River Great Stour and the main recreational lake, with a larger area of grassland to the south of the lake.
39. During the early years access period this compartment will be the most actively managed of the nature conservation areas, although even here the emphasis will probably be on reducing grazing pressure to allow a period of 'recovery'. Moreover, this compartment includes Brett's 'retained land' and 'haul road' (see Section 5. below).

## **Expected Management Requirements (Compartments 1,3,4)**

### **General**

- Undertake to provide 'park warden' duties and functions for the management of the country park;

- Develop and implement a management plan in accordance with the agreed *Ecological Management Strategy* (EMS) and in consultation with Ashford Borough Council, the Brett Group and the Environment Agency.
- Manage a grazing regime in accordance with the agreed management plan.
- Monitor and maintain condition of boundary and stock fencing and gates in all areas managed by KWT as defined in Schedule 3.
- Maintain paths and signage within the designated nature conservation areas;
- Make adequate arrangements for the management of litter and other such waste generated on the site.

### **Community Engagement**

- Develop and implement an appropriate volunteer programme in support of conservation objectives and promote community involvement / ownership;
- Organise and implement an environmental education programme in conjunction with local schools and the local community;
- Engage with other organisations with an interest in nature conservation, such as the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) with a view to developing partnership working opportunities.

## **B. Recreational Lake and Activities Centre (Compartment 5) – including Country Park Gateway / Sport, recreation and leisure**

40. A specialist sport, recreation and leisure organisation (Ashford Leisure Trust) will be appointed to effectively oversee, manage and develop public access, sports, recreation and leisure programmes in the country park, including the main recreational lake, also maximising the integration of the country park with the Julie Rose Stadium thereby securing economies of scale, especially in the early years.
41. The appointed leisure operator will be responsible for landscape maintenance of Compartment 5 from the entrance to the Country Park up to the lake edge and up to and including the boundaries of Compartments 2 and 4, as well as specified park infrastructure (temporary and permanent) including but not limited to:
  - Litter and dog bins
  - Seating, picnic tables, etc.

- Gates and fences
  - Signage & public art
  - Car parking machines
  - Slipway & pontoons
  - Storage areas & buildings etc.
42. In managing the landscaped areas, the leisure operator will be guided by the EMS.
43. The leisure operator will also be responsible for managing recreational access to the lake by specialist clubs and associations (such as the Sea Scouts, canoe and sailing clubs, triathlon clubs, etc.) and will ensure that the relevant health and safety procedures and safeguards are in place. Members of the public will not be able to use the lake except under the jurisdiction of bona fide clubs and associations, with appropriately trained coaches and full risk assessments, etc.
44. These organisations have the necessary expertise to manage and develop their specialist activities under their own coaches, officials and governing bodies. While this arrangement removes specialist burdens from the chosen leisure operator, the operator will nonetheless be well placed to minimise any potential for incompatible uses, such as sailing conflicting with angling, for example, and will also market and promote the park through their existing promotional activities.

### **Expected Management Requirements**

#### **General**

- Comply with relevant health and safety, environmental and sport and leisure legislation;
- Develop and implement a Management Plan to include an Activity Development Plan in accordance with the agreed environment management strategy (EMS) and the guidelines as detailed in Schedule Three;
- Implement and manage car parking regime including appropriate traffic control measures on the Site taking account of projected visitor numbers and ensure the provision of traffic marshalls on event days to direct traffic away from the Brett Vehicular Access Point;
- Control access to the Site according to agreed 'hours of opening' as defined in the Management Plan (or as may be varied by agreement with ABC).

#### **Grounds maintenance**

- Make adequate arrangements for the management of litter and other such waste generated on the site and monitor and ensure emptying of litter and dog bins;
- Daily inspection and maintenance of safety belts around main lake;
- Maintain water sports infrastructure (i.e. slipway & pontoons, etc)

- Maintain storage areas / containers and any shelter that may be erected;
- Monitor and maintain condition of boundary and stock fencing (where appropriate) and gates;
- Maintain all grass areas within Compartment 5 either by mowing or grazing (may be assigned to KWT);
- Maintain footpaths, access ways and parking areas and any other park infrastructure within Compartment 5 (i.e. seating, picnic tables, signage & public art)

### **Management of Water Sports**

- Manage (and coordinate) recreational access to the lake by specialist clubs and associations (such as the Sea Scouts, canoe and sailing clubs, triathlon clubs, etc.) according to an agreed bookings procedure;
- Ensure all relevant health and safety procedures and safeguards are in place and implemented;
- Market and promote the water sports / recreational offer of the Country Park;
- Manage and develop programme of community engagement for the site;
- Maximise the integration of the Country Park with the Julie Rose Stadium thereby securing economies of scale

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### **C. Main Lake and North Lake / Fishing**

45. ABC will draft and agree a *licence* with a specialist fisheries operator setting out the terms and conditions under which fishing will operate on the main lake and smaller northern lake. The appointed fisheries operator will liaise closely with appointed leisure operator to ensure that fishing is well coordinated with other activities on the main lake. No fishing will be permitted in the 'eco-logical lake'.
46. The appointed fisheries operator will be guided by the EMS and will liaise closely with *the operating partner responsible for nature conservation* with regards to the proper management of lakeside 'edges' within designated nature conservation areas, water quality, etc.
47. The appointed fisheries operator will perform the role of 'water bailiff' and be responsible for ensuring that all fishermen using the lake comply with relevant 'codes of conduct' / park 'byelaws' / health and safety protocols etc).
48. The fisheries operator will be permitted to let the fishing rights to individuals and/or clubs as laid out in the *licence agreement*.

## **Expected Management Requirements**

### **General**

- Comply with relevant health and safety, environmental and sport and leisure legislation.
- Participate as required in regular meetings of the Management Board which includes the Council's representative.
- Liaise closely with Ashford Leisure Trust ("ALT") to ensure that fishing is well coordinated with other recreational activities taking place on the main lake.
- Liaise closely with the operating partner responsible for nature conservation, the Kent Wildlife Trust with regards to the proper management of lakeside 'edges' within the designated nature conservation areas.
- Perform the role of 'water bailiff' and be responsible for ensuring that all fishermen using the lake comply with relevant 'codes of conduct' / park 'byelaws' / health and safety protocols, licence terms etc.
- Regularly monitor water quality and weed/algae levels and bring any concerns and/or recommendations to the attention of the Council, particularly where there might be impacts on the safe use of the lake by other recreational users, including swimmers.
- Undertake and/or commission weed control measures as and when appropriate and as approved by the Council and Brett Group as appropriate.
- Explore the possibilities for developing family fishing.

### **Maintenance of infrastructure**

- Maintain any parking areas specifically reserved for anglers
- Maintain all banks, landscaping and fishing platforms in good repair and ensure platforms and surrounding areas are free from litter.
- 11. MKF and its associate members shall ensure that it abides by all appropriate laws and Country Park regulations.

## **V. Governance and Partnership**

### **Coordinating the Roles of Operating Partners**

49. Ashford Borough Council will monitor the management agreements in place with each partner. Each operating partner will be required to attend quarterly performance review meetings with the Council's named contact to monitor the management agreement, support the formation of the management plan (to be developed over first year of operation) and assess it's performance.
50. All operating partners will be expected to assess the impact and quality of its services to the benefit of the users and objectives of the operating partners providing an annual performance report at a fourth performance review meeting with ABC to be held on or near the first anniversary of the management agreement.



51. An annual performance report shall include customer feedback, information of the past year's services outcomes and a statement of how the operating partner has assisted in the delivery and vision of the country park as outlined in the of the *Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Business and Operating Plan*.

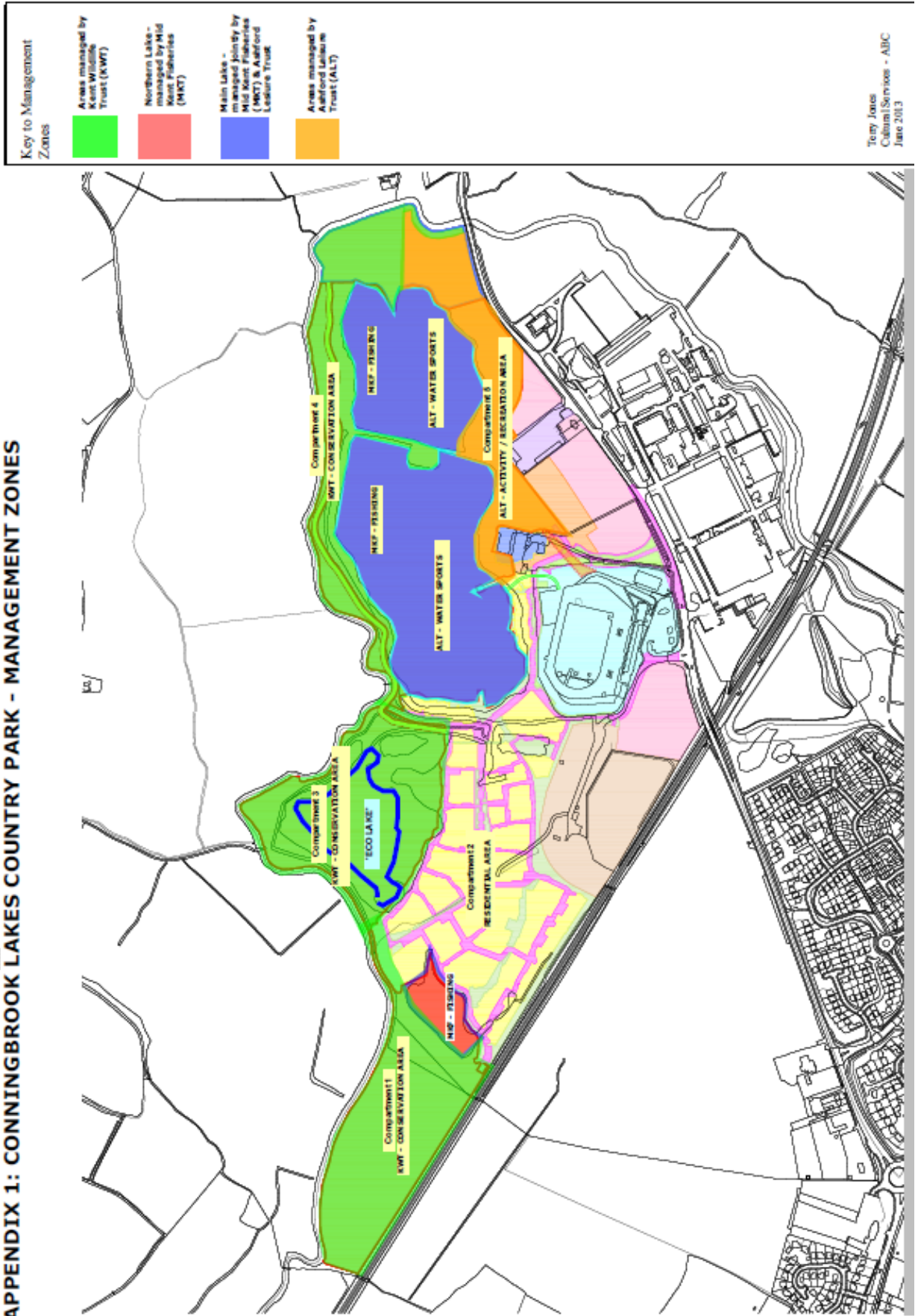
### **Management Board**

52. A Management Board ('the Board') chaired by ABC will be formed to support and coordinate the operations of the country park.
53. Each of the operating partners will be required to attend and participate.
54. *The role of the Board is to:*
- coordinate local operations;
  - work through the detail of any site management issues;
  - help identify other partners to support and fund the management plans of each of the operating partners;
  - identify any barriers, gaps and needs for future operation and in particular community engagement;
  - consider how to improve current service provision/ways of working together;
  - advocate the work of the operating partners in the local area to other stakeholders.
55. Sub groups of the Board maybe set up to monitor specific issues or research/deliver on particular topics (e.g. educational work). One such group suggested is a **Stakeholder Group** of all the clubs and community groups that may use or visit the site regularly. This will support communication for the benefit of all the operators and the users.
56. This governance structure is visualised in Appendix 3

**[TO BE FINALISED].**

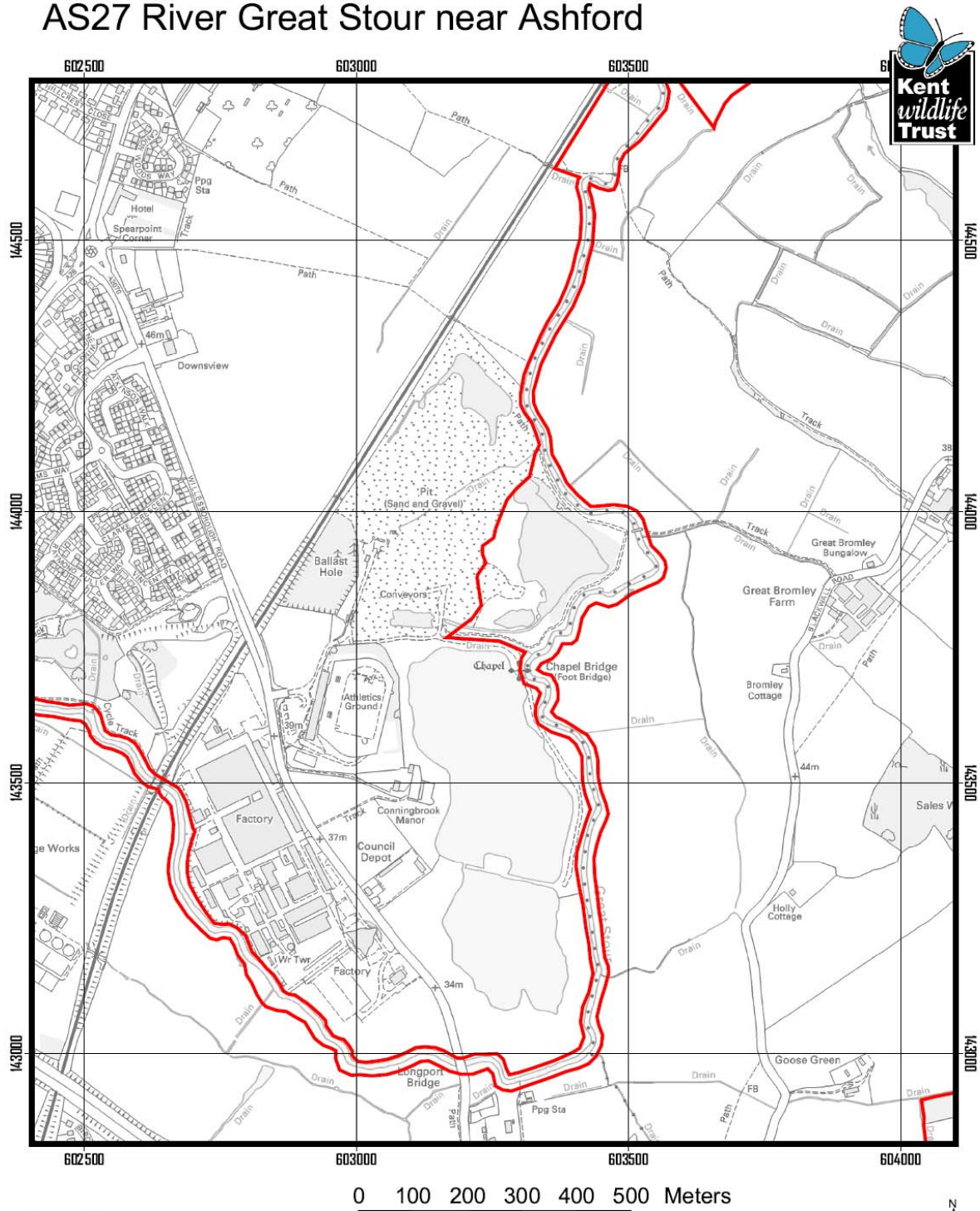
57. Over time it is envisaged that a new *community management trust* might be formed to assume the overall role of site management and community liaison so that ABC and the Brett Group can eventually step back and this will ensure a seamless partnership and business operation at the Park.

# APPENDIX 1: CONNINGBROOK LAKES COUNTRY PARK - MANAGEMENT ZONES



# APPENDIX 2: River Stour Ashford to Fordwich Local Wildlife Site

## AS27 River Great Stour near Ashford



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LWS Current



Your living landscape. Your living seas.

## APPENDIX 3: Governance Structure

[TO BE FINALISED]

DRAFT

**Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarters 1 and 2, 2013 - 14**

The attached reports were presented to the Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013 (Q1) and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (Q2) and O&S are invited to consider them.

**Agenda Item No:**

**Report To  
Date:**

**Cabinet  
12 September 2013**



**ASHFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report Title:**

**Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 1  
2013/14**

**Report Author:  
Portfolio Holder:**

Policy and Performance Officer, Nicholas Clayton  
Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control, Neil Shorter

**Summary:**

This report seeks to report to members and the public on the performance of the council during the quarter. This includes information on what the Cabinet has achieved through its decision-making, key performance data on our frontline services, and consideration of the wider borough picture which impacts upon the council's work.

**Key Decision:**

NO

**Affected Wards:**

ALL

**Recommendations:**

**The Cabinet is asked to note performance for Quarter 1.**

**Policy Overview:**

The council's strategic direction, which informs the content of this report, is enshrined within our five-year business plan. It is important that members are informed of progress against this, and that the public are updated on progress against plans which were developed in consultation with them  
None specifically arising from this report

**Financial  
Implications:**

**Risk Assessment**

Not specifically applicable, but the report notes key frontline service information which is an important indicator of pressures (external and internal) on the council's resources.

**Impact**

N/A

**Assessment**

**Other Material**

N/A

**Implications:**

**Background**

None

**Papers:**

**Portfolio Holder's  
Comments**

Although money remains tight for everyone, we have continued to invest in our community and our services. We have not only continued - but expanded - support to local community and charity groups by increasing grants from our own councillors and through government growth money. The wider economic picture shows signs of recovery, with month-on-month falls in both those unemployed and those claiming benefits. We are proactive in tackling issues which remain, for example with our new homelessness strategy. We have been active in pushing ahead with our priorities – securing early access to Conningbrook Lakes and supporting the future of youth services. We are doing more for less while still providing great value services which perform well.

**Contacts:**

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# Ashford Borough Council

## Our Performance

April to June 2013



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**Portfolio Holder Neil Shorter**

comments on this quarter's report

Although money remains tight for everyone, we have continued to invest in our community and our services. We have not only continued - but expanded - support to local community and charity groups by increasing grants from our own councillors and through government growth money.

The wider economic picture shows signs of recovery, with month-on-month falls in both those unemployed and those claiming benefits. We are proactive in tackling issues which remain, for example with our new homelessness strategy.

We have been active in pushing ahead with our priorities – securing early access to Conningbrook Lakes and supporting the future of youth services. We are doing more for less while still providing great value services which perform well.

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## Economic Growth

Received 230 applications from householders to develop their homes – we decided 78% within eight weeks, and 93% of these applications were approved.

Received over 80 applications from small business and others to develop their properties, and decided 45% within eight weeks.

287,000 people used our car parks. This is around 10,000 more than the last three months.

96% of local food premises comply with safety standards.

In June the Cabinet reaffirmed its support for proposals to ensure

further education opportunities in Ashford after 2015.

In June the Cabinet endorsed a favourable lease for the Sk8side youth facilities up until the end of 2015.

In May the Cabinet approved some minor amendments to the Council's Member Grant Scheme following a review of its first year. This scheme allocated around £98,000 to community groups directly from their local ward member during 2012/13. Building on this success, for the next year members will be given £4,000 each - £1,500 more than last year to further support their community

### Where the pressures are – Numbers of people in B&Bs

An average of 28 households were in B&B accommodation at the end of each month. This is higher than our target of 15 and reflects the tough economic picture for many residents. The number of families who have to use this accommodation is also increasing

### What We've Done – invested in the community through the New Homes Bonus

In June the Cabinet agreed the first set of community projects to be funded through the New Homes Bonus.

These projects will help support tourism, the rural economy, the voluntary and community sector and opportunities for youth and older people.

Continuing support is guaranteed for the Create music festival, Ashford St Marys and others, whilst new funds are available for major community infrastructure projects.



## Homes and Place

Over 99% of council tenants' rent was successfully collected.

In response to the rise in residents and families using B&B accommodation (see above) the Cabinet agreed to a new homelessness strategy in June. This strategy - based on a review carried out last year - provides a commitment to prevent homelessness wherever possible, with access to housing support if needed. From April two welfare intervention Officers have also been employed to assist residents

The Cabinet has also adopted a new Housing Framework until 2018, built around a number of priorities including –

- improving the supply of affordable housing
- increasing the choice and environmental quality of homes, and
- increasing resident satisfaction and involvement.

Although currently the wider economic situation has meant that the numbers of affordable homes delivered has been less than hoped for, our Affordable Housing Trajectory for this year provides a working estimate of around 150 affordable homes to be delivered.

Almost 100% of our homes have a gas safety certificate, with only two remaining without.

Around 2,500 people, including the vulnerable and elderly, have access to lifeline services. This allows them to contact us immediately if they have a problem.

Following on from its approval by the independent inspector, Cabinet has considered and agreed formal adoption of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan in July. We are continuing to work on improving both the quality design and physical and social infrastructure of the proposed plans.

### Where the pressures are – Recycling Service Roll-out

In response to substantial public enquiries relating to the recycling scheme roll out from July (we received over double the normal amount of calls) the council employed extra staff to help answer questions

### What We've Done – Ensured early access for residents to Conningbrook Country Park

In May the Cabinet approved headline terms for the lease and license of the Conningbrook Country Park, ensuring that the public will have early access to the park and its facilities, which will include walking trails and nature-watching.

The same month saw planning application approval for the 300-home development which will enable the country park to be developed.

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## Best Value Services

In April the Cabinet agreed to invest around £60,000 in energy efficiency measures for our own buildings, including the use of energy-efficient LED bulbs. These measures will produce significant return on investment

An average of over 16% - against a target of 10% - of our customers currently use 'self help' services at the Gateway, meaning that they get answers more quickly and our staff can work more efficiently.

As part of our approach to localism, Cabinet received a review of two Parish Handyman pilots (in Aldington and Wittersham).

We have, to date, collected over 30% of council tax and business rates – slightly higher than the same time last year.

The benefits caseload has fallen consistently for the first time since 2008. From a peak of 10,450 in mid-May, by the end of the quarter the number was 1,350.

In response to the changes to personal banking brought in by welfare reform, we have held eight drop-in sessions to help residents open up a bank account.

Through constant monitoring and management, we underspent our 2012/13 budget by around £50,000. This money was transferred to our reserves for future use.

### Where the pressures are – The Benefit Caseload

Although the total number of residents claiming benefits is beginning to fall, the council still receives around 300 new cases each month. This in turn increases the length and complexity of the enquiries our Benefits Assistants deal with

### What We've Done – We've made it easier for customers to help themselves

In April we introduced a self-service facility for money matters related to revenues and benefits, such as for information or to pay a household council tax or business rate bill.

Around 15,000 calls have been resolved without the need for a customer needing to speak to a member of staff.

Our staff are now free to take more complicated calls, and we have increased the number of available phone lines by 50%.

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## The Borough Picture

310 house sales were completed during this quarter, with an average selling price of just under £250,000 – although average selling prices (to April) are around 6% less than the same time last year.

Around 1,800 residents were claiming Job-Seekers Allowance at the end of June. This is just under 9% less than at the same time last year.

**Ashford Town Centre's music and arts venue Revelation St Mary's won the East Kent People's Award in June. The venue, run by the St Mary's Arts Trust (in partnership with the Parochial Church Council and funded by Ashford Borough Council, Arts Council England and Kent County Council) was crowned the winner at the Canterbury Culture Awards. The award looks for a cultural organisation that demonstrates engagement with the local community and continued efforts in developing existing and new audiences.**

Agenda Item No:

Report To **Cabinet**  
Date: **7 November 2013**



**ASHFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report Title: **Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 2 2013/14**

Report Author: Policy and Performance Officer, Nicholas Clayton  
Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control, Neil Shorter

Summary:

This report seeks to report to members and the public on the performance of the council during the quarter. This includes information on what the Cabinet has achieved through its decision-making, key performance data on our frontline services, and consideration of the wider borough picture which impacts upon the councils work.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: ALL

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is asked to note performance for Quarter 2 of 2013/14.**

Policy Overview: The council's strategic direction, which informs the report's content, is enshrined within "Focus 2013-15", the council's corporate plan. It is key that members are updated on progress against this, and that the public are updated on progress against plans which they have helped developed.

Financial Implications: None specifically arising from this report

Risk Assessment: Not specifically applicable, but the report notes key frontline service information which is an important indicator of pressures (external and internal) on the council's resources.

Impact Assessment: N/A

Other Material: N/A

Implications:

Background Papers: None

Portfolio Holder's Comments: There are signs for cautious optimism in the local economic picture, with a slow (but perceptible) decrease in the numbers claiming benefits, and a more rapid fall in those claiming job-seekers allowance – hinting at a strengthening job market. Undeniably, certain pressures remain on our services, such as with levels of homelessness, but we remain proactive. The last few months have seen not only a new strategy to tackle homelessness, but two reports to members on the issues. Our priorities have been refocused for the next couple of years in our 'Focus 2013-15' Corporate Plan, adopted by the Council in October. We are already active in pushing ahead with these priorities, as seen by the setting up of a new Strategic Delivery Board to tackle key economic development challenges.

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# Ashford Borough Council

## Our Performance

July to September 2013



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**Portfolio Holder Neil Shorter**

comments on this quarter's report

There are signs for cautious optimism in the local economic picture, with a slow (but perceptible) decrease in the numbers claiming benefits, and a more rapid fall in those claiming job-seekers allowance – hinting at a strengthening job market. Undeniably, certain pressures remain on our services, such as with levels of homelessness, but we remain proactive. The last few months have seen not only a new strategy to tackle homelessness, but two reports to members on the issues. Our priorities have been refocused for the next couple of years in our 'Focus 2013-15' Corporate Plan, adopted by the Council in October. We are already active in pushing ahead with these priorities, as seen by the setting up of a new Strategic Delivery Board to tackle key economic development challenges.

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## Jobs / Economic Growth

Received 240 applications from householders to develop their homes – we decided around 80% within eight weeks, and 87% of these applications were approved.

Received around 75 applications from small business and others to develop their properties, and decided around half within eight weeks.

292,000 people used our car parks. This is around 5,000 more than the previous three months.

96% of local food premises comply with safety standards.

In July the Cabinet approved £50,000 to help set up the Marsh Million Economic Development Fund, which allows small businesses in the

Romney Marsh area to apply for £10,000 business loans.

In October the Cabinet received an update on the performance of the town centre and the Town Centre Team. Although an early feasibility study for partial covering of the lower high street identified little support, a new project supporting pop up shops has been added.

In August the council unveiled the town centre's new T-CAT team. Its four members will tackle maintenance and clean-up jobs as well as refurbishing street furniture, tending public gardens and keeping pavements gritted during winter. The team have made a good start and can be seen regularly in the town centre.

### Where the pressures are – Numbers of people in B&Bs

An average of 34 households were in B&B accommodation at the end of each month. This is higher than our target and reflects the tough economic picture for many residents. The number of families who have to use this accommodation is also increasing

### What We've Done – Brought partners together to focus on delivering projects for economic development

In October the Cabinet agreed to set up a new Ashford Strategic Delivery Board, bringing together key partners to deliver critical projects for the growth and economic development of the borough. The Board has identified an initial 'Big Six' projects –

- The Commercial Quarter
- Elwick Place Development
- Expanding the Designer Outlet
- An International College Campus
- Redeveloping Junction 10A
- Jasmin Vardimon International Dance Academy



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## Quality Homes and Places to Live

Over 99% of council tenants' rent was successfully collected.

As part of the council's new homelessness strategy, in July the Cabinet approved a tailored training programme for staff, and recruitment of more officers, to boost proactive work in preventing homelessness.

In September work officially began on new dementia-friendly accommodation at Farrow Court. The facility will include 100 high-quality living units alongside a day-care centre, hairdressers and a restaurant.

In July the Cabinet approved the designation of the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Area, enabling the local community to help shape local

development and growth through production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Almost 100% of our homes have a gas safety certificate, with only two remaining without.

Around 2,500 people, including the vulnerable and elderly, have access to lifeline services. This allows them to contact us immediately if they have a problem.

In September the Cabinet endorsed a quality agreement, outlining 32 commitments, for the proposed Chilmington Green development. This statement of intent, believed to be the first in the UK, sets out guiding principles on the design, quality and community.

### Where the pressures were – Recycling Service Roll-out

In response to substantial public enquiries relating to the recycling scheme roll out from July (we received over double the normal amount of calls) the council employed extra staff to help answer questions. These extra staff helped us to deal as quickly as possible with residents, and the numbers of enquiries have now returned to normal levels.

### What We've Done – Proposed transfer of the Green at Churchfield Way to Wye Parish Council

In July the Cabinet approved the proposed transfer of Churchfield Way Green to the Parish Council. This will allow the Parish Council to dedicate the field as a Diamond Jubilee Field to commemorate last year's Diamond Jubilee and London Olympics.

This initiative is supported by Fields In Trust, which aims to dedicate 2012 green spaces in this way.

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## Great Value Services

In September the first stages of refurbishing the Stour Centre took place, helping the environment and saving more than a £1 million in energy costs over the next 15 years. The electrical and heating pipework in the Stour Centre has been reconfigured ready for the installation of a new combined heat and power (CHP) plant at the end of this year. The plant will serve both the Civic and Stour Centres and save approximately £1.2m over 15 years by reducing electricity consumption.

An average of over 16% (and increasing) - against a target of 10% - of our customers currently use 'self help' services at the Gateway, meaning that they get answers more quickly and our staff can work more efficiently.

We have, to date, collected around 60% of council tax and business rates - slightly higher than the same time last year.

Having shown consistent decreases for the first time in five years in the previous quarter, the benefits caseload fell more slowly over the last 3 months. From 10,350 in July, by the end of the quarter the number had fallen by around 50.

In response to the changes to personal banking brought in by welfare reform, we now hold regular sessions at the Gateway+ (with the support of Barclays and Natwest) to help residents open a bank account. We are currently working with government to extend this to the Jobcentre.

In September the council's Audit Committee received the findings of its external auditors Grant Thornton on last year's accounts. Our auditors commented that despite the challenging financial environment the Council continues to exercise a prudent financial strategy, with robust financial planning and budget monitoring.

### Where the pressures are – The Benefit Caseload

Although the total number of residents claiming benefits is beginning to fall, the council still receives between 250 and 300 new cases each month. This in turn increases the length and complexity of the enquiries our Benefits Assistants deal with

### What We've Done – We've made it easier for customers to help themselves

Due to the success of our self-help facility we have extended their use for another full year, freeing more of our staff to deal with more complicated enquiries.

In April we introduced a self-service facility for money matters such as for information or to pay a household council tax or business rate bill.



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## The Borough Picture

Average selling prices (to July) are around 2% less than the same time last year, although they are steady (or rising in places) during the course of the year to date.

Just under 1,600 residents were claiming Job-Seekers Allowance at the end of September. This is just under 20% less than at the same time last year.

John Lewis has announced that its new 40,000 sq ft 'at home' shop in Ashford will open its doors to customers at 9am on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November. Located on a site close to junction 9 of the M20 in Kent, John Lewis at home Ashford will focus on furniture, furnishing accessories, electrical and home technology.

At the end of July 13,000 people helped Ashford's Create Music Festival celebrate its 18th birthday. Headlining the main stage were britpop stars Dodgy, while husband and wife duo Trevor Moss and Hannah-Lou topped the Acoustic Stage. Away from the music, many families enjoyed a picnic on the park, shopped at local trade stands and made full use of the amusement rides on site.

4G mobile services were switched on by EE on 28<sup>th</sup> August, making the town amongst the most connected places in Europe. The superfast service will not only benefit locals, but will also make the area more attractive for potential new residents and businesses.

## **Future Reviews and Report Tracker**

December/January

- Budget Scrutiny Task Group meetings

January

- Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group on Council's draft 2014/15 budget.

February

- ABC business plan Q3
- Annual review of Community Safety Partnership

### **Joint Transportation Board 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 - Ashford Shared Space Study**

Both JTB and O&S Members were anxious to debate the report from Amey on the Shared Space. Amey have been invited to present their full report and answer Members' questions at the December meeting of the JTB. KCC officers should also be present. This is also an ideal opportunity for O&S Members to be able to put their questions and concerns to KCC officers and representatives from Amey, and would prevent the duplication of information to two different committees.

The report is available and can be emailed to Members.

### **Forward plan**

#### **Items for consideration:-**

The following items have been suggested for the O&S work programme and the committee is invited to decide whether to consider them.

- 1. Report on the Council Play Parks. Number of Parks, Maintenance, Quality, Design, Plans for new ones.**
- 2. Focus 2013 -15, the updated Corporate Plan was considered and approved by cabinet in October 2013.**

This plan sets out the council's 3 priorities of

- Jobs and economic growth
- Quality homes and places to live
- Great value services

under which all other projects sit.

It is suggested that O&S might like to review the progress of the plan by having an update one year after its approval (i.e. October/November 2014)

Chairman's recommendation: to add to the Forward Plan so that O&S are kept informed of the progress/otherwise of the Corporate Plan.

### **3. Traffic flows and transport infrastructure associated with developments in East and South Ashford.**

With several developments planned in East and South Ashford, several Members have expressed concern about the strain this may put on the existing infrastructure. The Highways Agency has been invited to come and explain to Members how traffic modelling works, the modelling they have done on J10A and their conclusions. It is anticipated that this will take place in December. If having heard this presentation Members still had concerns about these, or wider issues, then O&S could request a review.

Chairman's recommendation: To wait until after the presentation from the Highway's Agency to see if Members still had concerns and, if so, to establish specifically what those concerns were and how best to tackle them.

**Items to remove from the tracker** – one item on the tracker was proposed in the expectation of a specific report and some items on the tracker have been there for several years, these items are not likely to progress and, with the committee's agreement, will be removed from the tracker.

#### **1. Street Markets**

The 2011/12 Budget Scrutiny Task Group had understood that a report on street markets was to be presented to Cabinet and it was suggested that O&S might wish to review this.

Updates to do with the Ashford Market will be covered in the Portas Pilot and Town team programme which is ongoing.

Chairman's recommendation – remove from tracker

#### **2. Effectiveness of single O&S committee**

This was put on the tracker in December 2008 – after O&S had been reduced from two committees to one` in May that year.

Since that time O&S has had one call-in (July 2013); and submitted 19 reports making 65 recommendations (of which 60 were supported) to Cabinet.

The O&S agendas are not oversubscribed, some items come forward from management, Cabinet, Members themselves and some are on a yearly/other period of review.

For information :-

- of the recommendations not supported 2 (April 2009) were to do with abolishing the State of the Borough debate – this was not agreed but the SOBD held in Nov 2009 was the last. The other 3 were to do with the 2012 events and programmes – O&S' comments were noted and the committee's recommendations arising from a further report were supported.

- Across the county the number of O&S committees and frequency of meetings varies considerably from one O&S committee meeting 3 times a year to four O&S committees meeting monthly.

Chairman's recommendation – remove from tracker

### **3. Cultural strategy**

This was suggested in 2008.

The following is an update from Cultural Services on the current position:-

Members will know that the 2007 to 2011 Strategy aimed to ensure that local residents and visitors can contribute to, enjoy and benefit from Ashford's culture. It acknowledged that "participation in cultural activities can empower individuals and communities, promote social inclusion, raise self-esteem and confidence, and widen horizons". These outcomes are all very relevant and were reinforced in the *Five Year Business Plan (2011 to 2015)*.

The Cultural Strategy's overarching aim is "to place culture at the heart" of Council local policy. Focus 2013-15 (the updated Corporate Plan – approved by Cabinet on 10 October 2013) recognises that the arts and leisure/sports play a central role in enhancing the quality of people's lives and contributing to civic pride and the local economy. This new document stresses the need to establish stronger links and utilise investment effectively, something that the Strategy also highlights in order to develop quality participation and opportunity. This demonstrates that the Cultural Strategy is still embedded which was its *raison d'être* at the time of creation and perhaps more importantly its delivery principles are still 'we wills' for the Council i.e. prioritise on need, quality, accessibility and best value; work in partnership; consult and engage in the delivery and management of services and facilities; support voluntary sector; and embed culture in local planning processes.

With reference to local planning processes, the Cultural Strategy helped to inform the Core Strategy and Local Plan. Members will be aware that these are being updated and we will be working closely with our planning colleagues and key partners over the next couple of months on what's needed, where and when. This work coincides with updating our project plans and we will be consulting with our Portfolio Holders on this. We have a new tourism portfolio holder and together we are reviewing this area to feed into our updated Cultural Strategy delivery plan. Such a plan should emerge in tandem with the Local Plan.

Chairman's recommendation – remove from tracker

Year Plan 2013/14

Month	items	Task Group
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O&amp;S annual report.</li> <li>• ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report.</li> </ul>	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sickness &amp; Absenteeism annual report.</li> <li>• Communication and Consultation Strategy re Planning Policy</li> </ul>	
July		
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Best Service Resources allow activity</li> <li>• Membership of Budget Scrutiny Task Group</li> </ul>	
September		
October		
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report Q1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Review of 'Invest to save' Civic Centre lighting project</li> <li>• Update on Conningbrook project</li> </ul>	
December	<b>Scrutiny of Council's draft 2014/15 budget</b>	<b>Budget Scrutiny TG meetings:- 9<sup>th</sup> Dec, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013.</b>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group</li> </ul>	<b>Budget Scrutiny TG meetings:- 13<sup>th</sup> Jan, 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014</b>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report.</li> <li>• Annual review of Community Safety Partnership</li> </ul>	
March		
April		

## 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 claim work	Work ongoing	Await completion of claim work.
62/06/11	Housing Strategy Action Plan Monitoring Report	Head of Housing /Housing Strategy Officer	July 2014	Housing Framework 2013 -18 and Homelessness Strategy 2013 –18 adopted July 2013. 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	July 2014	The Homelessness Strategy to be included in the Housing Strategy in future.	
51/06/13	Sickness and Absenteeism – annual report	Head of Personnel & development	June 2014		Timetable for June each year.
13/05/13	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Senior Scrutiny Officer	May/June 2014		Timetable for May/June each year
142/09/12	3 year review of Mayoralty		Sept 2015		
312/01/12	Street Markets	TBA			
431/04/12	ABC Business Plan performance report – 2013/14	Policy & Performance Officer	May/Sept/ Nov/Feb		

62/06/12	Sports & Leisure		TBA		
398/03/13	Refurbishment of the Stour Centre	TBA	TBA	Final Report from Task Group to be presented to O&S	
418/04/13	Community Safety Partnership – annual update	Community Safety Service Manager	April 2014		
11/05/13	Review of 'Invest to save' Civic Centre lighting project	Housing ICT development Manager	Oct 2013	Deferred to Nov meeting	
53/06/13	KCC Shared Space Contract	TBA	After final report from AMEY	Full report going to JTB 10.12.13	
53/06/13	Conningbrook project	Sports Projects Manager & Active Ashford Coordinator	November 2013		
53/06/13	Fly posting & graffiti	TBA	TBA		

Low Priority & other proposed reports

	Report Title	Officer	Date due	Current position	Recommended action
57/06/08 199/10/11 115/08/13	Recycling and the Blue box scheme	Street Scene and Open Spaces Manager	July/ August 2014	New contract commenced July 2013.	
135/08/08	Cultural strategy.	Head of Cultural & Project Services			
291/12/08	The effectiveness of a single O&S committee				