



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 24th November at 7.00 pm.

The Members of this Committee are:-

Cllr Chilton (Chairman)

Cllr Michael (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Adby, Burgess, Farrell, Feacey, Howard, Knowles, Krause, Link, Sims, Wedgbury.

Agenda

Members are reminded that after the conclusion of the meeting, the committee will meet informally to discuss potential review topics.

Page
Nos.

1. **Apologies/Substitutes** – To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii)
2. **Declarations of Interest:-** 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 Meeting of this Committee held on the 20th October 2015

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

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 4. | ABC Business Plan Performance Report – Quarter 2 2015/16 | 1-10 |
| 5. | Emergency Planning Lessons learned in response to the Oak Tree Road Gas Explosion | 11-15 |

Part IV – Information/Monitoring Items

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 6. | Future Reviews and Report Tracker | 16-20 |
|----|-----------------------------------|-------|

CR
16/11/2015

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
- (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 advance of the Meeting.

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 **20th October 2015**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Bartlett, Farrell, Hicks, Howard, Knowles, Krause, Link, Sims, Wedgbury.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii) Councillors Bartlett and Hicks attended as Substitute Members for Councillors Adby and Burgess respectively.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Adby, Burgess.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Clokie, Smith.

Chief Executive, Housing Improvement Manager, Member Services & Scrutiny Manager, Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

178 Minutes

The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman for stepping in for him as he had been unable to attend the previous meeting.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 22nd September 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

179 A More Strategic Approach to Scrutiny

The Chief Executive attended the meeting to give his thoughts on this Committee adopting a more strategic approach to scrutiny. The Chairman said that before the last Election he had met with the Chief Executive to discuss Scrutiny and whilst it was thought that the Committee had made some positive impact, it had largely lost its way and was not contributing in the way it perhaps could.

The Chief Executive said that in his view Overview & Scrutiny had become somewhat emasculated in recent years and there was an opportunity for it to become involved in a more strategic, constructive and ultimately more interesting programme of work that could add value to the Authority. There were a large number of organisations whose work had a big impact on the people of the Borough and this

Committee did have an opportunity to engage with them. Examples were given which included schools, healthcare providers, public transport companies, utility providers, the Environment Agency and other Local Authorities including KCC. There were also broader issues such as legislative changes around planning, business rates and troubled families, the housing market in general and the effect of Central Government cuts. There were perhaps more opportunities in the 'overview' category that could assist the Committee in being less insular, whilst still keeping a watching brief on the 'scrutiny' side and fulfilling that part of the Committee's remit where necessary. He advised that the Leader was very much supportive of the Committee moving in this direction and all three Political Groups appeared to want to make a 'better fist' of Overview & Scrutiny. There was capacity for Officers to do research for the Committee and he considered that the whole approach could provide some really worthwhile recommendations going forward to Cabinet.

The Committee was unanimously supportive of the proposals. It was considered that anything that could be done to expand the remit of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and allow it to tackle some more worthwhile work could only be a good thing. The following points and observations were made: -

- There was some discussion about how the Committee could engage with outside organisations that were under no obligation to engage with the Council. The Chief Executive considered it would be possible and it would all be about the approach. It was ultimately in the interests of most of the aforementioned organisations to engage with the Council, but perhaps the prospect of coming along to an evening meeting and being 'grilled' may not be attractive. They may be opportunities to get out and meet them at their own workplaces and report back, or doing some desktop work to research their plans and working more closely with them on initiatives.
- It would be important to respect the Council's role as a potential statutory consultee for certain planning schemes in neighbouring Districts and for this Committee not to do anything that may cut across that.
- There was a responsibility on Members themselves to be properly engaged with Council business as a whole and to get the most out of this Committee. There needed to be a better understanding of the call-in process and ultimately assisting, not frustrating, the Cabinet in its decision making.
- The KCC Select Committee approach may be one that was worth examining. They ran for a limited time concentrating on a particular subject with different Chairmen and Members for each Committee. A Member said that they worked particularly well and the opportunity to spread the leadership out a bit was a positive. The Chairman re-iterated that they did have the option to create Sub-Committees for particular issues and that had always been envisaged when they had moved to one Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- Education and schools was seen as an important area for this Committee to get involved in, but the potential difficulties of engaging when the Council had no specific remit in this area were acknowledged.

- Members had the option to put forward items for the Committee but in the past decisions had been taken on whether to take them forward by the Chairman and Officers only. A Member thought that in the future all items should be discussed by the full Committee to assess their suitability.

The Chairman concluded the item by saying that there appeared to be a degree of agreement over the way forward. He said that as Chairman he considered it was his job to act on the wishes of the Committee and it appeared that everybody wanted to make this Committee more worthwhile. He proposed that following the next meeting in November, the Committee should hold a separate session to devise a new forward work programme based on some of the discussions that had taken place at this meeting. This was agreed by the Committee.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Committee agree to take a more strategic approach to Overview and Scrutiny.**
- (ii) following its November meeting the Committee hold a separate session to devise a new forward work programme based on some the discussion that had taken part at the meeting.**

180 Disabled Adaptations to Council Homes

The Housing Improvement Manager introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the impact of policy changes introduced in July 2014 for disabled adaption work to Council homes. It also gave information on the levels of spend on such work (including in relation to similar housing providers) and commented on levels of demand.

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

- Establishing a stricter policy on eligibility had reduced the demand for adaptation work. The revised policy basically excluded people who significantly under-occupied their current Council home from being eligible for all but minor adaptation works. However, Officers worked with tenants in such circumstances to encourage them to move to accommodation more suited to their needs, including offering financial support through the assisted moves scheme. There was also a degree of pragmatism and common sense involved as there were degrees of 'under occupancy'. The policy was there to guide Officers but they would take advice from Social Services and look at each individual case on its merits.
- Of the 25 refusals, none had resulted in an appeal which seemed to suggest the policy was working well and the criteria were generally accepted.
- Occupational Therapists (OTs) were made aware of community based facilities that may be able to assist some disabled tenants and would take

these into account when undertaking their assessments. The Council did work closely in liaison with both the OTs and Social Services in this area.

- Demand did appear to be more under control as the Council worked through the previous backlog and the one-off increase to the budget for 2016/17 would help to further tackle the waiting list and bring waiting times to within the maximum one year recommended. Officers were confident that the specific adaptations budget of £300,000 each year after that would be sufficient.
- The Portfolio Holder said that he was keen to ensure that in the coming years, any expensive adaptations to properties did have one eye on the future and that any particular improvement would continue to be able to be used for the same purpose.
- The direction of travel in terms of bathing facilities was very much towards Wet Rooms. These did suit a majority of more elderly and disabled tenants. This was also seen as an investment in the particular property and had been extremely well received.

Members said that would like to thank the team for the work they undertook in what was sometimes a difficult and emotive role. They had delivered some good outcomes for local people and dealt with the situation sensitively and sensibly.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

181 Review of Changes Made to the Mayoralty Following the Overview & Scrutiny Review in 2010

The report of the Member Services and Scrutiny Manager advised that following a review of the Mayoralty in 2010, some amendments had been made to its day to day functioning. These amendments were introduced at the start of the Municipal Year in May 2011. An update report on the effect of these changes was considered by this Committee in September 2012. At that Meeting the report was noted, subject to it being acknowledged that the Committee would not wish to see the Mayor restricted by the budget in their role as Ambassador to the Borough and that the effect of changes be further reviewed in three years' time. The report presented information for the 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 Mayoral years.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

182 Future Reviews and Report Tracker

The Member Services & Scrutiny Manager advised that the November meeting would consider two fairly short reports on Emergency Planning and Business Plan Performance. The Chairman reminded the Committee that following that meeting a separate session would be held to devise a new forward work programme for this

Committee therefore the rest of the Future Reviews and Report Tracker should be deferred until the outcome of that session was known.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
Telephone: 01233 330499 Email: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.gov.uk/committees

Agenda Item No: 4

Report To **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **24 November 2015**

Report Title: **Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 2 2015/16**

Report Author: Policy and Performance Officer, Nicholas Clayton

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget & Resource Management, Neil Shorter



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Summary:

This report seeks to update 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.

The report also includes a 'Technical Annex' of all numerical information included within the report which provides comparison and trend data against performance over the previous four quarters.

Overall, the last three months has seen good progress on a number of the council's key priorities – including the Commercial Quarter, Designer Outlet and Conningbrook Lakes. Service performance remains strong, with steady process rates for planning applications and benefits claims. One crucial positive can be seen in the reformatted approach to customer service, which has led to improved outcomes through an appointments-only system.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: ALL

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is asked to note performance for Quarter 2 2015/16.**

Policy Overview: Previously, the council's strategic direction, which informs the report's content, was held within "Focus 2013-15", the council's corporate plan.

The council agreed a new corporate plan in October 2015, under four priority themes which will be incorporated into future performance reports –

- Enterprising Ashford
- Living Ashford
- Active & Creative Ashford
- Attractive Ashford

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 Implications:

N/A

Background Papers:

None

Portfolio Holder's Comments

The last quarter has been one of success and progress against the council's overriding objectives for the borough. Not only have we received exciting plans to redevelop land along Elwick Road in the town centre, and approved a large-scale expansion of the Designer Outlet, but the council's intervention in Park Mall is beginning to bear fruit – with new traders entering and a more welcoming feel being created by the work of our TCAT team and others.

We have reviewed, considered and amended our approach to dealing with face to face enquiries – a change which has already led to significant improvements in the service offered at our Gateways. The speed at which officers deal with other transactions – from planning applications to benefit claims – remains solid.

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Ashford Borough Council

Our Performance

July to September 2015

Introduction from the Portfolio Holder

Neil Shorter, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Budget & Resource Management

The last quarter has been one of success and progress against the council's overriding objectives for the borough. Not only have we received exciting plans to redevelop land along Elwick Road in the town centre, and approved a large-scale expansion of the Designer Outlet, but the council's intervention in Park Mall is beginning to bear fruit – with new traders entering and a more welcoming feel being created by the work of our TCAT team and others.

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Helping to create jobs and economic growth

An average of 315,000 people visited the town centre per month during the quarter, as calculated by the footfall counter installed on the high street last year. This is an increase of around 5,000 compared to the previous quarter.

Source: Compiled by the Economic Development Team

An average of just over 100,000 people per month used the council's car parks during the quarter. This is similar to the previous quarter.

Source: Compiled by the Parking Services Team

Following public exhibition of the plans in July, the council received an application to develop land along Elwick Road from the leading UK developer Stanhope. Representing in excess of £75 million of private investment into Ashford, the plans include –

- A multi-screen Cinema
- A hotel to support the borough's growing tourist economy
- Restaurant space
- Homes, including private apartments and rental properties
- Attractive public space and landscaping

We received 220 applications from householders to develop their homes over the quarter – around 10 less than the previous quarter. Our latest response rates showed that we decided 92% within eight weeks while approving around 93%.

Source: Compiled by the Planning and Development Service

We received around 80 applications from small business and others to develop their properties over the quarter – around 20 less than the previous quarter. Our latest response rates showed that we decided just over 80% within eight weeks while approving around 85%. This represents stable performance compared to previous months.

Source: Compiled by the Planning and Development Service

The number of residents claiming Job-Seekers Allowance continues to fall, and now stands at around 800¹. This is around 30% less than at the same time last year and constitutes around 1.1% of Ashford's working age population. Ashford is below the Kent average, currently at 1.3%. The number of young people (18-24) claiming JSA long-term (over 12 months) remains steady at 30.

Just over 100 claimants a month either returned to work or increasing their employment hours, whilst the circumstances of around 5 per month meant a switch to another type of benefit.

Source: NOMIS

In September 2015 the council announced that it had triggered the delivery of the first new office building in the Commercial Quarter with developers Quinn Estates Ltd and George Wilson Holdings Ltd.

In September Cabinet received a review of the current situation regarding development in the town centre, and endorsed an approach to help deliver key private sector investments in this area.

Source: Cabinet 10/09/15 minute 124

In September the Planning Committee approved plans to expand the Ashford Designer Outlet. The 100,000 sq ft extension will add nearly 40 new stores, six restaurants and cafes as well as creating up to an additional 700 jobs – building on the existing 90 stores which already attract nearly three million visitors a year.

Source: Planning Committee 23/09/2015, Application number [14/01402/AS](#)

¹ As part of the Government's reorganisation of the welfare system, Universal Credit (UC) continues to be rolled out across the country, replacing a number of means tested benefits, including Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). UC rollout in Ashford began in April, meaning that JSA figures no longer include those now on UC. As not all UC claimants will be in work, it is probable that JSA claimant numbers now underestimate unemployment. The Office for National Statistics is working with the Department for Work and Pensions to produce an agreed method for separating out unemployed and inactive UC claimants to give a more accurate estimate of local unemployment – due to be updated for local data in early 2017.

Creating quality homes & places to live

The average selling price of homes in Ashford (to July) was around 4% more than at the same time last year.

Source: Home.co.uk

The building of 120 new homes was started during quarter 1, an increase of 20 on the previous three months – with the vast majority of these coming from private enterprises. The number of homes completed also remained steady at around 80. (*Quarter 2 figures yet to be released by DCLG*)

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government)

100% of council-owned properties had a current gas safety certificate at the end of the quarter, a number comparable with both last quarter's and last year's performance.

Source: Compiled by the Community and Housing Service

In September Cabinet received a review of the Allotment service, carried out between May and July 2015. It approved a number of changes, aimed at ensuring that the council's approach to allotment provision remains fair and cost neutral.

Source: Cabinet 10/09/15 minute 119

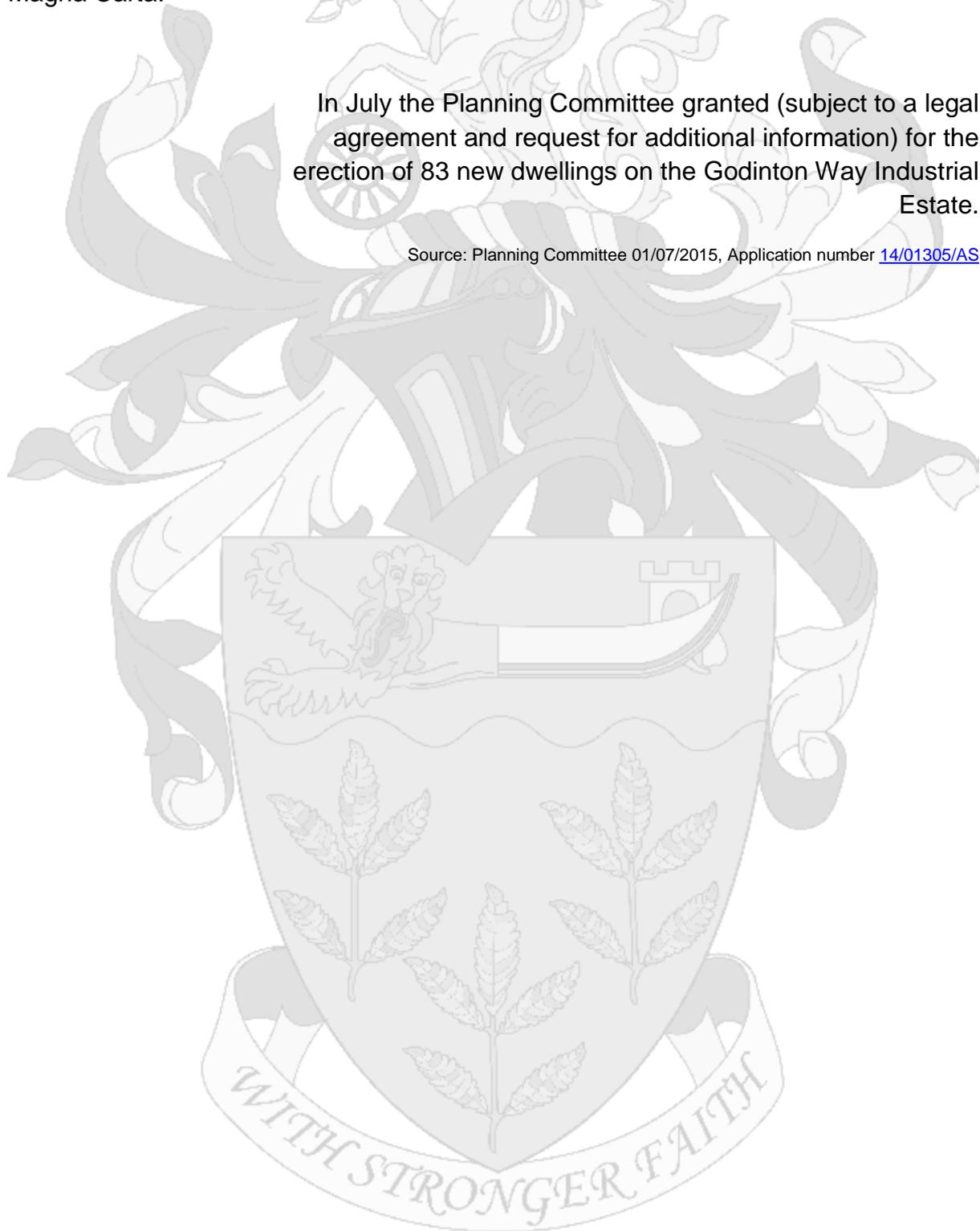
The average number of families requiring temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation during the quarter rose slightly to just under 15 a month. The number of homeless applications remains at around 40 per quarter (with just over half of these being accepted).

Source: Compiled by the Community and Housing Service

Ashford's newest country park, Conningbrook Lakes, held a family open day in September. This gave the local community a fantastic opportunity to try out the exciting range of activities which will be available across the site – including canoeing, paddle-boarding, rowing and water zorbing. The day also saw the unveiling of a plaque at the Black Poplar tree planted earlier in the year to mark the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta.

In July the Planning Committee granted (subject to a legal agreement and request for additional information) for the erection of 83 new dwellings on the Godinton Way Industrial Estate.

Source: Planning Committee 01/07/2015, Application number [14/01305/AS](#)



Giving residents value for money services

Our Customer Service Agents at the Gateway +, Civic Centre and elsewhere dealt with an average of just over 7,000 visitors per month – the same as in the previous quarter. A fully appointment-only service now runs five days a week, a change which is working really well – with the need for face to face appointments reducing and the numbers using our ‘fast track’ service increasing. This has meant that overall wait times have also improved, with just under 99% of face-to-face queries seen within our target of 15 minutes.

The proportion of customers using ‘self-service’ provision is increasing slightly to around 20% each month, and it remains above our target of 10% - meaning that customers didn’t need to speak to a member of staff and freeing up officers to deal with more complex queries.

Source: Compiled by the Customer Services Team

By the end of September we had collected around 60% of council tax and business rates, around the same as at this point last year.

Around 67% of residents chose to use direct debit for paying council tax, a figure which remains broadly constant compared to last year.

Source: Compiled by the Revenues and Benefits Team

The benefits caseload has fallen to around 9,700 throughout the quarter. This in turn has meant that the average time taken to process new claims and changes in circumstances has levelled-out at around 5 days.

Source: Compiled by the Revenues and Benefits Team

In September Cabinet received a progress report on the implementation of the Customer Service Strategy (approved in December 2014), and agreed the relocation of face to face services.

Source: Cabinet 10/09/15 minute 123

The percentage of sundry debtor income received – small payments from residents who don't usually interact with the council (parking fines, pest control services etc) - averaged around 85%, slightly less than the previous quarter.

Source: Compiled by the Revenues and Benefits Team

Working with colleagues from Kent County Council's occupational health, we completed around 65 disabled adaptations - from grab rails to flush floor showers - to private and public sector homes during the last three months. This is slightly higher than during the previous quarter, and comparable to the same time last year.

Source: Compiled by Community and Housing Services

In September the Audit Committee received an update on progress in reviewing the council's risk management processes, and agreed a new set of parameters and criteria for assessing risk in a balanced manner whilst making sure the organisation is not risk averse.

Source: Audit Committee 29/09/15 minute 150

In September Cabinet endorsed an Ashford Borough Council / Kent County Council Delivery Deal. This deal offers a short, clear statement of the two councils' shared commitment to work together to deliver the council's key priorities and better quality outcomes – including the 'Big 8' projects and future service improvements.

Source: Cabinet 10/09/15 minute 120

97.2% of food premises comply with environmental health standards. The council has maintained its effort in this area, with a continued focus and resources. The percentage has remained steady over the last year. Any food premises found to be non-compliant either receive a formal letter or a revisit, and officers always seek to work with the premises in the first instance. If non-compliance is severe, or does not improve after these initial interventions, officers would then serve a notice. However, during this period no notices were served.

Source: Compiled by the Environmental Health Team

Technical Annex

Indicator	Quarter 2 2015/16	Quarter 1 2015/16	Quarter 4 2014/15	Quarter 3 2014/15	Quarter 2 2014/15
Helping to create jobs and economic growth					
Average Town Centre footfall per month	316,600	310,000	300,000	282,484	263,500
Average car park users per month	101,950	99,650	98,600	101,000	101,000
% of compliant food premises	97	97	98	98	97
Householder planning applications - number	218	234	215	253	270
Householder planning applications - % decided within 8 weeks	92	88	84	82	86
Householder planning applications - % approved	93	93	98	90	95
Small business planning applications - number	82	97	83	90	110
Small business planning applications – % decided within 8 weeks	80	80	57	70	69
Small business planning applications – % approved	84	84	79	85	90
JSA claimants	790	850	1,070	980	1,060
Long-term (over 12 months) JSA claimants 18-24	30	30	30	35	45
Creating quality homes and places to live					
Average house selling price	226,827	215,340	217,500	229,000	209,000
Number of homes started	---	120	100	80	170
Number of homes completed	---	80	80	80	50
% of properties with a current gas safety certificate	100	100	100	100	100
Average number of families in B&B accommodation per month	15	10	14	5	15
Number of homeless applications received	---	38	65	45	60
Number of homeless applications approved	---	23	40	45	35
Value for money services					
Average number of face-to-face contacts per month	7,110	7,060	11,099	8,253	9,977
% of customers seen within 15 minutes	99	94	93	94	93.6
% of customers using 'self service'	20	16.7	19.2	17.8	16.7
% Council Tax collected	58.5	30.5	98.5	86.8	58.7
% Business rates collected	60.2	33.2	98.5	86	58.5
% take up of direct debit for paying council tax	67.1	67.1	66.7	66.6	67.1
Benefits Caseload	9,700	9,800	9,900	9,860	10,000
Number of days to process new benefit claims / CoC	5.75	5.5	4.8	5.6	5.5
% sundry debtor income	84	89	92	94.6	96
Number of disabled adaptations completed	65	50	65	68	78

Agenda Item No: 5
Report To: Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 24 November 2015
Report Title: Emergency Planning Lessons learned in response to the Oak Tree Road Gas explosion.
Report Author: Della Fackrell, Resilience Partnership Manager
Portfolio Holders: Cllr Neil Shorter



Summary: An update following the Structured Debrief and key recommendations for further enhancement of the council's emergency planning response.

Key Decision: No

Affected Wards: Beaver Ward – for the incident
All ward's for lessons learned

Recommendations: **The Committee is asked to consider:-**
Note the contents of the report for information.

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications: None

Risk Assessment No

Equalities Impact Assessment No

Other Material Implications:

Exemption Clauses: None

Background Papers: None

Contacts: della.fackrell@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233 330389)

**Report Title:
Emergency Planning Lessons Learned in Response to the
Gas Explosion in Oak Tree Road**

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members with Ashford Borough Council's lessons learned recommendations in response to the Oak Tree Road gas explosion.
2. To inform members on how these recommendations will be taken forward.

Background

3. The structured debrief was facilitated by an officer from Canterbury City Council and an officer from the NHS who had both been trained by the college of policing to facilitate and scribe structured debriefs.
4. By using this process it ensures that the staff who attend the debrief feel comfortable in raising issues that they feel did not go so well.

Areas highlighted where we could improve our response in the future

5. The lessons learned were broken down in to themes:
 - a. Emergency Centre
 - b. Rest Centre
 - c. On Site
 - d. Staff Resources
 - e. Residents welfare
 - f. Multi-Agency working
6. All elements were then summarised in to recommendations as per Appendix 1.

Summary

7. The overall feeling of the responding staff and management was that the response went extremely well with very positive feedback from the affected residents.
8. The recommendations will be overseen by the Resilience team to ensure they are completed in a specified time period with updates provided to Management Team.

Contact: Della Fackrell
Email: della.fackrell@ashford.gov.uk

No.	RECOMMENDATIONS	OWNER	COMMENTS
1	Look at reviewing the roles and responsibilities of those attending the Emergency Centre and maintaining appropriate staffing levels to ensure all roles are covered, throughout the response and recovery period. Ensure sufficient time is allowed during handover between shifts.	Resilience	Review guidance on role cards
2	Access to contingency funding or improved petty cash procedures in order to obtain immediately required supplies i.e. setting up accounts with taxi firms, local contractors etc. To include details of finances from other agencies i.e. KSAS	Resilience / Finance	Finance Plan already being worked on.
3	Review expectations of other responding agencies through a multi-agency debrief in preparation of future incidents, including provision of supplies, services, support, roles and responsibilities, etc.	Resilience / Housing / Management Team	
4	Investigate the use of technologies to improve the process of information management and logging, being mindful of programme restrictions, over-dependence on technology and training. Further suggestion that GIS and printing capabilities may be useful in the Emergency Centre. To include an alerting option in the review.	Resilience / ICT	GIS and printing is available.
5	Review process of contacting individuals to respond in terms of time of day, as well as putting individuals on standby for responding during later stages, noting contractual obligations. Also look at mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring regions to cover common roles, and applicable training.	Resilience	Link to Rec.4
6	Continue training on the set up of the Emergency Centre, as well as other practical training sessions and live exercises.	Resilience	
7	Demonstrate gratitude to the community for their response and encourage positive feedback between all parties involved. Similarly for responding staff, potential use of staff awards as recognition and reward.	Resilience / Housing	
8	Produce and maintain a contact list of contractors and other suppliers and putting agreements in place for them to respond or make provisions within certain timeframes and at agreed prices. Internal and external contact lists potentially to be kept as hard copies for ease of access, dependent upon data protection and information governance guidance. To also consider the space available in the new depot for resources.	Resilience / Finance / Housing / Building Control	

No.	RECOMMENDATIONS	OWNER	COMMENTS
9	Processes to be reviewed with the Housing function to include coordination between sites and coordination centres, information handling, and communication with customers regarding contents insurance to mitigate impact of similar incidents	Housing	
10	Review response plans to ensure business continuity when resources are required to respond to incidents. Acknowledge impact on individuals and their workload following the response. Managers to review staff workload and priorities following staff response.	Management Team	
11	Maintain good relationship working practices with external media agencies as well as investigating a policy on drone filming. May need to review how media messages coordinated with those of the emergency services or lead organisation.	Communications	
12	Look at the possibility of taking this incident and creating a training session around it to cement learning and relay to others that weren't involved using the real life experience. Potentially involve external agencies as well to incorporate their learning and feedback.	Resilience	
13	Look at maintaining summary briefings at the end of each day in cooperation with the Comms team.	Resilience / Communications	
14	To consider renaming the Emergency Centre to Borough Coordination Centre to promote understanding that the centre is to coordinate both immediate response but also the coordination of the council departments' recovery role. This also links with the multi-agency Strategic and Tactical Coordination Centres terminology. To also consider acknowledging when the council has moved from response to recovery.	Resilience	
15	Ensure that one ABC officer on site is nominated as the ABC site Coordinator. They should therefore lead the response and recovery at the scene with regular communication with a nominated person in the emergency centre. This will also assist with liaison with the other organisations and agencies on site and record keeping of which ABC staff are at the scene and their role. Ensure all ABC staff on site have ILO tabards with clear wording of who they are, for the other agencies benefit.	Resilience	To add to role cards.
16	Develop bitesize training for Support Managers and Support Officers to address welfare procedures for responding staff using this incident as a scenario.	Resilience	
17	To develop bitesize exercise sessions to reiterate to emergency response staff the need	Resilience	

No.	RECOMMENDATIONS	OWNER	COMMENTS
	to use emergency plans and role cards.		
18	To consider options to recruit more staff in to the emergency plan such as, all Ashford Managers, non-time critical services staff to be targeted, opt people in to the plan, make part of the appraisal process. To also consider mutual aid from other districts for a protracted incident.	Resilience	
19	To ensure there is a lead officer from each responding department located in the emergency centre as a function coordinator i.e. Housing and building control.	Resilience / Management Team	

24 November 2015

Future Reviews and Report Tracker

1. The current Year Plan for 2015/16 and the report tracker is attached to this report.
2. Reports on the debriefing exercise in respect of the Emergency Planning incident in the summer and the standard Performance Report are on the agenda for this meeting.
3. At the last meeting the Chief Executive attended and spoke about his view that O&S should adopt a more strategic approach to scrutiny and he also suggested a number of areas which the Committee may wish to consider examining for review. The Committee agreed that they would have a full discussion and consider suggested areas for review after the conclusion of this evenings meeting. Members are therefore requested to remain behind at the end of the meeting.
4. In general apart from items such as scrutinising the Council's draft budget, which the Constitution requires the O&S Committee to do every year; the O&S Committee sets its own work programme for the year. Some items recur on a regular basis e.g. the yearly update from the Community Safety Partnership and the Quarterly Business Plan Performance Report; others are of a 'one-off' nature.
5. With the agreement of the Chairman, items can be put on the O&S agenda following a request from Cabinet or another Committee (e.g. Audit). Members of the O&S Committee are also able to suggest items that the Chairman may wish to put on the Committee's agenda (**by putting their proposal in writing to him**) – such items must represent a Borough wide perspective and provide the opportunity to influence, to improve services or contribute to policy development.
6. The Chairman will then decide if the item is appropriate for O&S to consider and, if so, is there room on the work programme. Any such item will be put to the Committee for Members to decide if they wish to add it to the work programme.
7. The Committee will need to agree any items put forward for review.
8. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group will be commencing its work on reviewing the draft budget for 2016/17 in December and the Committee is

therefore asked to consider cancelling the scheduled meeting of the Committee currently programmed for 15 December 2015 as there are currently no items on the agenda for that meeting.

Recommendation

The Committee has asked to consider:-

- **Items for future review or report.**
- **The cancellation of the December meeting.**

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Year Plan 2015/16

Month	items	Task Group
June	O&S Annual Report 2015/15 Sickness and Absenteeism Annual Report	
July	Formation of Budget Scrutiny Task Group Annual Report on the Housing Framework Quality Bus Partnership Implementing the Social Value Act 2012	
August	No Meeting	
September	ABC Business Plan Performance Report International House – report on full years trading Emergency Planning	
October	3 Year Review of Mayoralty Disabled Adaptions The Chief Executive – A more strategic approach to scrutiny.	
November	Emergency Planning – report back on outcome of debrief report ABC Business Plan Performance Report Note: After the conclusion of the meeting the Committee will consider potential items for review.	Introduction to Budget Scrutiny and MTFP Assumptions – Task Group – 10 November 2015
December	No items currently on the agenda.	Council's draft 2016/17 budget - Budget Scrutiny TG meetings:- 14, 15, and 22 December 2015. All at 10.00am. An additional meeting will be held on Thursday 17 December at 12.00 noon to consider the Housing and Community budget

		originally scheduled to be held on 14 December.
January	Budget Scrutiny Report	Budget Scrutiny TG meetings:- 5 and 12 January 2016.
February	ABC Business Plan Performance Report Community Safety Partnership – Annual Update	
March		
April		
May	ABC Business Plan Performance Report	

O&S Committee – Report Tracker – Current position

Minute No.	Report Title	Officer	Date due	Current position	Recommended action
405/04/14	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Member Services and Scrutiny Manager	May/June 2015	On the agenda for June 2015	Timetable for May/June each year
431/04/12	ABC Business Plan performance reports – 2013/14	Policy & Performance Officer	Sept/Nov/ Feb/ May	The report comes before the O&S Committee following consideration by the Cabinet.	
398/03/13	Refurbishment of the Stour Centre	TBA	TBA	Final Report from Task Group to be presented to O&S	
367/02/15	Community Safety Partnership – annual update	Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager	February 2016	Annual update for the Committee in fulfilling its Crime and Disorder responsibilities	
216/11/13	Council play parks	TBA	TBA	Awaiting confirmation of date of report	

102/07/14	Annual report on Housing Framework	Housing Strategy Manager/Head of Housing	July 2016	Report will be on the agenda for the July 2016 meeting.	
413/3/15	Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group on HRA Business Plan – Universal Credit	Head of Communities and Housing	September 2016	The O&S Committee wishes to have an update report on the roll out of Universal Credit.	
44/06/15	Sickness and Absenteeism Annual Report	Head of Personnel and Development	June 2016	Further annual progress report	
87/07/15	Quality Bus Partnership	Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety	July 2016	Update report one year on from report considered in July 2015	
88/07/15	Public Services(Social Value Act) 2012	Head of Communities and Housing	July 2016	Update report one year on from report considered in July 2015	
45/06/15 and 138/9/15	Emergency Planning Update	Resilience Partnership Manager	November 2016	The outcome of the debrief and any recommendations on the Emergency Planning response to Oak Tree Road Gas Explosion be considered by the Committee in due course	