



CABINET

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on Thursday, 8th February, 2018 at 7.00 pm.

The Members of the Cabinet are:-

Councillor Clarkson (Chairman)
Councillor Bell (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Pickering, Shorter, White

Agenda

	Page Nos..
1. Apologies	
2. Declarations of Interest	1 - 2
To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:	
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 the Cabinet held on the 11th January 2018	3 - 6
4. To receive any Petitions	
5. Leader's Announcements	
6. Report from Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Findings of the Air Quality Task Group	7 - 36
7. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Scrutiny Task Group	37 - 46
8. Financial Monitoring Quarterly Report	47 - 58

9.	Revenue Budget 2018/19 (enclosed separately)	
10.	Corporate Performance Report	59 - 76
11.	Annual Report of Work Undertaken on Domestic Abuse and to Support Victims of Domestic Abuse	77 - 88
12.	Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy	89 - 112
13.	Gypsy and Traveller DPD - Issues and Options Report for Consultation	113 - 146
14.	Chilmington Gypsy and Traveller Site - Future Ownership and Management	147 - 154
15.	Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group - notes of 5th January 2018	155 - 158
16.	Schedule of Key Decisions	159 - 168
17.	Items for Future Meetings	

DS
31 January 2018

Queries concerning this agenda? Please contact Danny Sheppard Telephone: 01233 330349 e-mail danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.gov.uk/committees

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

- (a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)** under the Localism Act 2011, relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares a DPI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting for that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

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

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

- (c) **Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests** not required to be disclosed under (a) and (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:

- 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/5962/2193362.pdf
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, and a copy can be found in the Constitution at <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/part-5---codes-and-protocols>
- (c) If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or OSI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11th January 2018**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bennett, Bradford, Clokie, Galpin, Pickering, Shorter, White.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Burgess, Clarkson, Knowles, Link, Ovenden

Also Present:

Cllrs. Dehnel, Howard-Smith, Wedgbury.

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Place and Space, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Legal and Democracy, Head of Housing, Cultural Projects Manager, Facility Development Manager, Communications and Marketing Manager, Senior Member Services Officer.

308 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 7th December 2017 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

309 Revenues and Benefits – Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the formal write-off of 491 debts totalling £391,454.75. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Write Off Policy. Existing bad debt provisions already more than covered the sums involved.

The Portfolio Holder mentioned that this report would be the last written by Peter Purcell, the Revenues and Benefits Manager who had served the Council so diligently for nearly 42 years and was retiring later this month. He wanted to pass on the Council's thanks for all his hard work over the years and wished him well for his retirement.

Resolved:

That (i) the action that accounts totalling £63,506.67 have been written off under delegated powers (Financial Regulations 11.1) be noted.

- (ii) **the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendices to the report totalling £327,948.08 be approved.**

310 Singleton Environment Centre – Lease With Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

The Portfolio Holder explained that since its opening in 2008, the Singleton Environment Centre had become a focal point of the local community, providing a hub for a wide range of volunteering and events. Unfortunately, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had given notice to exercise the break clause in their contract to manage Singleton Environment Centre and would vacate on the 10th March 2018. Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council wished to enter into a lease with the Ashford Borough Council and intended to form a Trust to run the Centre in the future and continue its good work as a quality community facility with an environmental focus.

One of the adjoining Ward Members said that the proposals afforded the best possible opportunity to keep the Centre open and continue the good work that it undertook, and he fully supported the recommendations.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) **a lease of 25 years be granted to Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council from 11th March 2018 including break clauses in favour of landlord and tenants after three years, and enable them to form a Trust to take over management of Singleton Environment Centre.**
 - (ii) **up to £10,000 of subsidy be allocated to support the Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council, where a deficit in the first year is unavoidable due to a delay in rate relief being granted to a voluntary management entity.**
 - (iii) **the Head of Culture, in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democracy and the Head of Corporate Property and Projects, be authorised to agree terms and complete all necessary agreements, lease and documentation, to give effect to the above recommendations.**

311 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The report advised that the Homeless Reduction Bill had received Royal Assent on the 27th April 2017 and had an enactment date set as the 3rd April 2018. It provided an overview of the new duties arising under the Act, together with the Council's action plan to prepare for implementation. In addition, the report set out the impacts and risks arising from the new Act and the proposed resource implications that the Council would need to consider to meet its obligations. The Portfolio Holder said that the proposed arrangements had been carefully thought through, but they were a work in progress and would need to be kept under constant review.

Resolved:

- That** (i) the arrangements for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 be noted.
- (ii) the Implementation Programme be endorsed.

312 Trading and Enterprise Board – 4th December 2017

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held on the 4th December 2017 be received, noted and adopted.

313 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – 21st November 2017

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 21st November 2017 be received and noted.

314 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 22nd November 2017

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 22nd November 2017 be received and noted.

315 Schedule of Key Decisions to be Taken

Resolved:

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

DS

This page is intentionally left blank



Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

O&S Recommendations to Cabinet – Air Quality Task Group

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet:-

- I. That the recommendations within the attached report be adopted as the basis for an Air Quality Strategy for the Borough.
-

Date of O&S meeting:	Tuesday 28 November 2017
Chair of O&S Committee:	Cllr Brendan Chilton
Date of Cabinet Meeting:	Thursday 8 February 2018
Key Decision:	No
Significantly Affected Wards:	None specifically
Relevant Portfolios:	Health, Parking and Community Safety Planning Culture Human Resources and Customer Services
Management Team Comment:	See paragraphs 7 - 10
Background Papers:	Final Report of Air Quality Task Group , report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28 November 2017
Contact:	Will.train@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394

Report Title:

Introduction and Background

1. During scrutiny of the Council's draft 2017/18 budget, the assistance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in preparing an Air Quality Strategy was requested by the Council's Health, Parking and Community Safety service.
2. In response to this request and existing Member concerns over the state of air quality in the Borough, the Committee established a task group to research the causes and impacts of poor air quality and explore possible measures to reduce air pollution in the Borough.

Process and Findings

3. The task group met on several occasions to consider evidence and analysis by external agencies including Public Health England (PHE) and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), as well as evidence from Council officers on air quality monitoring, current and potential factors affecting air quality in the Borough and possible air pollution mitigation measures.
4. PHE estimate that particulate air pollution in the Borough is a contributory factor in 50 deaths per year, with an equivalent of 539 life-years lost from the Borough's population annually through exposure to particulate air pollution. As the principle source of air pollution in the Borough is road traffic, the majority of actions recommended within the report focus on the reduction of pollutants from road traffic.
5. The report makes a total of 29 recommendations intended collectively to form the basis of a strategy for mitigating air pollution and where possible improving air quality in the Borough. Within these recommendations, Members felt that nine were particularly key to the successful delivery of an Air Quality Strategy, and these are highlighted on page 4 of the report.
6. The actions within the report do not provide an exhaustive approach to air quality and it was felt strongly that the development of an Air Quality Strategy for the Borough utilising the recommendations in the attached report should not preclude the Council from pursuing other actions and opportunities that will serve to safeguard and improve air quality in the Borough.

Management Team Comment

7. Management Team has considered the report and wishes to submit the following comments for the attention of the Cabinet.
8. Several recommendations within the report relate to the continuation of existing Council practices, however the report makes a number of recommendations which have potentially significant implications for the Council in terms of staff and/or capital resource requirements to implement and monitor actions required under the resulting strategy.

9. If Cabinet are minded to accept the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, successful implementation of the resulting Air Quality Strategy will be dependent on the **creation of an achievable action plan** which identifies **realistic timescales for implementation** and the **allocation of appropriate resources**, including additional resources where required.
10. Recommendation 20 within the report relates to the removal of permit parking charges at the Civic and Stour Centre for staff with ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles. Management Team wish to advise the Cabinet that a review of staff parking arrangements is planned and the adoption of recommendation 20 may prejudice this review. **It is therefore recommended that Cabinet does not approve recommendation 20 of the report at this time.**

Conclusion

11. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commends the report of the Air Quality Task Group to the Cabinet and recommends the following:
 - I. **That the recommendations within the report be adopted as the basis for an Air Quality Strategy for the Borough.**

Contact and Email

12. Will Train, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer
will.train@ashford.gov.uk 01233 330394



**Ashford Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Final Report of Air Quality Task Group**

Air Quality Task Group

Final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Foreword from the Task Group Chairman

Public Health England estimate that particulate air pollution in the Borough of Ashford is a contributory factor in 50 deaths per year, and it is this alarming statistic that has driven the work of the Air Quality Task Group to research pollutant sources and identify ways to avoid a decline in and, where possible, improve the standard of our air quality.

This report outlines a wide-ranging series of actions designed to address both policies and practices within the Council which impact upon air quality; as well as recommending certain actions for partner organisations to take forward under their respective responsibilities.

We recognise that whilst the Council can (and should) set the standard for others to follow, actions undertaken by the public at large will be the principal driver of improvements in air quality. Under this ambitious air quality strategy for the Borough, the Council will strive to facilitate the means for positive changes in our air quality.

Through enabling increased use of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, to promoting a range of sustainable transport options and making more information available to residents, the actions within this report will set the conditions for the Borough to address airborne pollutants and the health risks associated with them.

Rapid advancements in vehicle technology and the changing nature of government policy on air quality mean that this strategy will need to exist as a living document, regularly reviewed to ensure that the measures pursued to safeguard and improve our air quality are effective and appropriate.

I would like to thank the Members of the Task Group and officers from across the Council for the hard work they have put into this report, and commend it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Peter Feacey
Member for Godinton (Ashford) Ward
Chairman, Air Quality Task Group

Air Quality Task Group

Final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Air Quality Task Group as the basis for an Air Quality Strategy for the Borough. The assistance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in preparing an Air Quality Strategy was requested by the Council's Health, Parking and Community Safety service during scrutiny of the Council's draft 2017/18 budget.

In response to this request and existing Member concerns over the state of air quality in the Borough, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee assembled a task group to research the causes and impacts of poor air quality and explore possible measures to reduce air pollution in the Borough. This report is the culmination of Members' analysis of evidence gathered from external source publications and Council officer testimonies, and is designed to complement and support the existing Energy Efficiency Strategy.

A principle focus for the Task Group's work was the estimated mortality burden associated with particulate air pollution. Public Health England (PHE) estimate that particulate air pollution is a contributory factor in 50 deaths in the Borough per year, with an equivalent of 539 life-years lost from the Borough's population each year through exposure to particulate air pollution.

Despite measured pollutant concentrations in the Borough being below national limit values and no Air Quality Management Areas having been declared within the Borough, Members felt that there should be an increased focus on air quality in the Council's policies and operations, particularly given the health impacts highlighted by PHE and the continued growth of Ashford.

The principle source of air pollution in the Borough is road traffic, and consequently the majority of actions recommended under this report focus on reducing pollution from road traffic – through enabling greater uptake of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles; encouraging increased use of sustainable transport options such as bus travel and cycling; and enhancing the Council's own policies with regard to lease cars, mileage schemes and fleet operations.

The report makes a total of 29 recommendations intended collectively to form a strategy for mitigating air pollution and where possible improving air quality in the Borough. Within these recommendations, Members felt that nine were particularly key to the successful delivery of an Air Quality Strategy, and these are listed in the table below.

A further 10 recommendations relate specifically to the recognition and continuation of existing good practice or working in partnership with external agencies. A full summary of all recommendations is attached to the report as Appendix A.

No.	Recommendation
1	The recommendations and evidence base contained within this report form an Air Quality Strategy for the Council.
3	The Council adopt the points noted in table 2 on page 9 of the report as best practice guidance for reducing air pollution in new developments.
5	The Council should expand the network of electric vehicle charging points within the borough, utilising S106 and government grant funding as appropriate.
6	The Council work with Kent County Council to explore options for providing on-street vehicle charging infrastructure to meet resident demand, including promoting relevant OLEV grant schemes and other trials.
14	The Council consider subsidising a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for taxi and private hire drivers.
15	That new commercial developments include adequate provision for facilities to enable and support cycling to work by staff.
19	The Council should review its lease car and mileage claim schemes to exclude high polluting vehicles from eligibility and promote ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.
22	The Council operate a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for all designated essential car users who are required to drive Council fleet vehicles for their respective roles.
26	The Council consider the appointment of an officer to lead on Sustainability; research and apply for appropriate grant funding; and deliver on the aims of the Energy Efficiency Strategy and any actions adopted from this report for inclusion in the Air Quality Strategy.

Air Quality Task Group

Final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Introduction

1. During scrutiny of the Council's draft 2017/18 budget, the development of an Air Quality Strategy was highlighted as a priority for the Council's Health, Parking and Community Safety service. The Head of Service advised at the time that input into this strategy from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be welcomed.
2. In response to this request and Member concerns over the standard of air quality in the Borough, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee constituted a five member Task Group to undertake a review into air quality in the Borough.
3. In 2014, Public Health England released '*Estimating Local Mortality Burdens associated with Particulate Air Pollution*'¹ which estimated that air pollution in Ashford contributed to 50 attributable deaths² and 539 associated life-years lost³ per year.
4. Whilst there are no anticipated exceedances of statutory limit values for key pollutants within the Borough, there is concern over the impact of air pollution on public health and that the principal aim of the strategy should be to put in place actions which would serve to reduce the number of attributable deaths and life-years lost in the Borough related to poor air quality.
5. In undertaking this review, the Task Group considered evidence on air pollution causes and mitigation measures including Air Quality Status Reports for Ashford, existing Council practices, guidelines from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), officer testimony and the UK Air Quality Plan produced by DEFRA.
6. In advance of the Task Group's first meeting the Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer conducted an evidence gathering session with officers from Planning and Development, Cultural Services, Housing, Environmental Protection, HR, Parking, Corporate Property and Procurement to establish an evidence base of current policies and planned actions which impact on air quality.
7. The Task Group considered this evidence base at its first meeting to determine which Council departments it would invite in to hear further evidence from. Members met on three subsequent occasions and heard from officers from the Council's Environmental Protection, Parking and Cultural Services teams.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332854/PHE_CRCE_010.pdf

² Where long-term exposure to air pollution is understood to be a contributory factor to deaths from, for example, respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

³ The years of life lost to the population due to an increased mortality risk attributable to long-term exposure to particulate air pollution.

Background

8. National air quality objectives concern three pollutants: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter with a diameter less than or equal to 10 micrometres (PM₁₀), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). A summary of the

health and environmental effects of these pollutants is included in table 1 below.

9. Recent central government action on air quality (including the publication of the *UK Air Quality Plan for tackling Nitrogen Dioxide*) has been focused primarily on addressing excessive concentrations of NO₂ around roads.

10. The primary sources of NO₂ and PM₁₀ in the UK are road transport related, while SO₂ primarily arises from the burning of fossil fuels in power stations, oil refineries and industrial plants. The lack of large industrial processes (and so significant generating sources of SO₂) in the Borough has meant that actions have primarily been focused on reducing road transport related pollution.

Table 1 – Air Quality Objectives in England, summary of effects

Pollutant	Human health effects	Environmental effects
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	Long-term exposure may decrease lung function and increase the risk of respiratory symptoms.	High levels damage plant life. Contributes to the formation of acid rain which damages vegetation, buildings and water courses.
Particulate matter (PM ₁₀)	When inhaled, particles may be carried into the lung and exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma. Concerns also exist over the inhalation of potentially carcinogenic particulates. Smaller particles (PM _{2.5}) are thought to pose the most serious threats as they can be carried deeper into the lungs. Recent research by Queen Mary University of London and Oxford University has also shown a link between particulate matter and heart damage.	Damaging to plants, materials and buildings. Research suggests that particulate pollution may contribute to global warming through contamination of other species and the reduction of their reflective properties, resulting in absorption rather than reflection of the sun's rays.
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	Exposure to sulphur dioxide as air pollution can irritate the eyes and respiratory system. Even at normal environmental concentrations it can harm sensitive individuals (such as those suffering from lung disease).	Reacts to form acid rain. Sulphur oxides and sulphuric acid are related to the damage and destruction of vegetation, construction material, watercourses and soil deterioration.

Local Air Quality Management

11. Ashford Borough Council undertakes air quality monitoring in the Borough via a network of diffusion tubes (measuring NO₂ concentrations) in various locations. It also has a statutory duty⁴ to periodically review and assess air quality, including comparing measured and predicted pollutant levels to national air quality standards and objectives. Maps of

the current non-automatic monitoring locations are attached as Appendix B.

12. The Council also has responsibility for regulating emissions from certain industrial processes within the Borough such as vehicle re-sprayers, cement batching plants and petrol stations. Regulation of large industries such as power stations, incinerators and chemical plants is carried out by the Environment Agency.

⁴ Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

13. The Council's 2017 Air Quality Status Report (ASR) confirmed that air quality in Ashford continues to meet the relevant air quality objectives, with no significant changes in existing emissions sources being identified and no new relevant industrial installations or significant new commercial or domestic sources of emissions being identified.
14. Therefore, the main source of air pollution in the Borough is road traffic emissions from major roads, notably the M20, A20, A28 and A292, although commercial, industrial and domestic sources also contribute to background pollution concentrations.
15. Measured (NO₂) concentrations in the Borough are highest in Lees Road, Willesborough. This monitoring site is the closest in proximity to junction 10 of the M20.
16. In considering the evidence presented to the Task Group, Members determined that a holistic approach to addressing air quality would be required across a number of different areas.
17. It is recognised that a wholesale transition from conventional fuels to alternative fuels is beyond the Council's control, however the Council could do much to provide the necessary infrastructure to serve the expanding demand for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles; and facilitate greater uptake of sustainable transport options within the Borough.
18. At its second meeting the Task Group considered guidelines produced by NICE which set out aims to improve air quality and public health through the planning process. Members also considered policies relating to air quality and sustainability as contained in the Draft Local Plan to 2030.
19. The Task Group noted the commitment to development in support of renewable and low carbon energy (policy ENV10); that achieves sustainable design and construction (policy ENV11); and does not contribute to poor air quality (policy ENV12). These policies, the content of which is included as Appendix C, were supported and Members agreed the importance of adopting the local plan to 2030.
20. It was felt that an increased uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles in the borough, and the consequential increase in home charging, that there may be validity in seeking methods to off-set pollutant generation at power stations outside the Borough through the use of renewable energy generation at the point of charging. Within the draft Local Plan, the supporting text for policy ENV10 highlights a range of renewable energy options within residential development including the use of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels where appropriate.
21. As discussed above, the majority of air pollution in the Borough is attributable to road traffic. Consequently, exploring ways to achieve a reduction in road traffic related air pollution has been the primary focus of the Task Group's work.

Recommendation 1:

The recommendations and evidence base contained within this report form an Air Quality Strategy for the Council.

**Planning Policy
Local Plan to 2030**

17. As discussed above, the majority of air pollution in the Borough is attributable to road traffic. Consequently, exploring ways to achieve a reduction in road traffic related air pollution has been the primary focus of the Task Group's work.

22. Members also noted policy TRA4, relating to the promotion of the local bus network, and supported a drive for enhancements to bus services in the Borough.

23. In addition, the NICE guidelines recommend that development sites likely to generate a significant volume of traffic should be supported by travel plans. Policy TRA8 within the draft Local Plan to 2030 accords with this recommendation.

24. Members noted that policy ENV12 as currently contained within the Draft Local Plan to 2030 required consideration of Air Quality impacts for major developments only; and that as part of the initial evidence gathering for the Task Group, Planning Policy officers had advised that the majority of developments coming forward under the Local Plan were expected to have a 'negligible' effect on air quality.

25. Concerns were expressed (particularly when considering the continued pace of growth in Ashford) regarding the cumulative air quality impact of multiple smaller developments. Members felt that there should be a heightened focus on securing a reduction in airborne pollutant concentrations in Ashford through the rigorous application of policy ENV12.

26. The NICE guidelines considered by the Task Group suggest that local authorities should consider using a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system to gather contributions from developers to fund additional air quality monitoring sites, or to pay for infrastructure changes to reduce the risk of poor air quality within an area.

27. Members noted that the Council does not have a currently implemented CIL regime, but that clarification from central government on the future of CIL is awaited before a decision is made on implementation in Ashford.

Recommendation 2:

If a CIL regime is adopted by the Council for new developments, contributions should be set aside for air pollution mitigation measures.

**Development Control
Planning Conditions**

28. Members heard from the Council's Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader with regard to reducing air pollution in the Borough, noting that there had not necessarily been a strong focus on air quality in the past.

29. Evidence gathered from the Council's Planning Policy team noted that developers could be compelled to contribute financially towards poor air quality mitigation, although there must be a strong evidential basis that development will contribute to a worsening in air quality to justify such conditions.

30. Noting the difficulty in securing developer contributions to mitigate against poor air quality, Members felt that a more suitable route to encourage improvements in air quality in the Borough would be for the Council to set out 'best practice' guidance for developers which, whilst proposing relatively low-impact measures, could do much to reduce the risk of poor air quality within new developments and encourage greater uptake of sustainable transport options in the Borough.

31. The Task Group recommends the standard use of five conditions that could be applied to planning permissions as relevant, suggested by the Environmental Protection and

Licensing Team Leader as a 'best practice' guide for air quality improvements in new development proposals within the Borough (listed in table 2).

Table 2

<p>Recommendation 3 - The Council adopt the following as best practice, to be applied to planning permissions as appropriate, for reducing air pollution in new developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each proposed dwelling with a designated parking space provided by means of a driveway, carport, or garage should be provided with at least one Electric Vehicle charging point. Such charging point may be a dedicated Electric Vehicle charging socket, or suitably rated three-pin socket capable of safely providing a slow charge to an Electric Vehicle via a domestic charging cable. <i>Reason: To take into account the cumulative impacts of development on air quality and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes including incorporation of facilities for charging plug-in vehicles.</i> • Each dwelling to be provided with gas-fired boilers should meet a minimum standard of <40mgNOx/kWh. <i>Reason: To take into account the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local area</i> • Major developments should be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction. <i>Reason: To take into account the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas, and to ensure permitted operations to not have unacceptable adverse impacts on human health.</i> • Major residential development with unallocated off street car parking should be provided with a minimum of one dedicated Electric Vehicle Charging point per ten spaces for the use of the car park user, and be maintained thereon. <i>Reason: To take into account the cumulative impacts of development on air quality and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes including incorporation of facilities for charging plug-in vehicles.</i> • Major Commercial/Retail/Industrial development with parking provision for ten or more car parking spaces should be provided with a minimum of one Electric Vehicle Charging point (increasing to an additional point for every additional thirty car parking spaces) for the use of the car park user, and be maintained thereon. <i>Reason: To take into account the cumulative impacts of development on air quality and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes including incorporation of facilities for charging plug-in vehicles.</i>
--

32. The Task Group considered NICE guidelines related to planting strategies and the air quality impacts of managed green space, noting additional guidance from the Forestry Commission⁵ on the use of vegetation for mitigating particulate pollution.

33. It was noted that the dualling of the A28 Chart Road was expected to ultimately increase the total number of trees along a key transport corridor; that the Council had long-standing commitments to securing quality green space throughout the Borough; and pollutant dispersal in the town centre was aided by the relative (current) lack of build-up.

34. Members felt that the Council should look to influence air quality when considering planting strategies for existing open spaces and new developments, particularly along key transport corridors where pollutants will be most concentrated.

Recommendation 4:

The Council should adopt, and require developers to abide by, planting strategies which will support pollutant mitigation and effective street ventilation.

**Transport
Passenger Vehicles**

35. As noted in paragraph 13, the main contributory sources of key pollutants are vehicle emissions. Vehicle emission limits are set to the Euro emission standards, which aim to reduce the levels of harmful exhaust emissions with higher euro standards imposing tighter limits on the levels of pollutants that a vehicle may produce. The current highest standards are Euro 6 (for passenger cars,

introduced in 2014) and Euro VI (for large commercial vehicles, introduced in 2013).

36. EU member states are required to achieve reductions in population exposure to particulate matter with a diameter equal to or less than 2.5 micrometres (PM_{2.5}), with the UK required to achieve a 15% reduction in average exposure between 2010 and 2020. Although local authority responsibilities for particulate concentrations are limited to PM₁₀, many control measures will contribute to reductions of finer particulate matter.

37. Achieving a reduction in roadside concentrations of NO₂ is the focus of DEFRA's air quality plan (published in July 2017). The setting of higher Euro emission standards for diesel passenger vehicles has not resulted in expected reductions in Nitrogen dioxide (and Nitric Oxide, collectively NO_x) compared to petrol passenger vehicles, largely due to disparities between laboratory testing and real-world performance.

38. The well-publicised issues of certain vehicle manufacturers utilising software to cheat emissions testing led to the introduction of a 'real driving emissions' (RDE) test procedure to better reflect real-world performance.

39. A comparison of relative pollutant values for petrol and diesel cars, which shows the relative polluting impacts of each fuel type for carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and carbon dioxide can be seen in table 3.

⁵ <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/urgc-7edhgh>

Table 3 - Emissions for Road Vehicles (per vehicle kilometre)

Vehicles	Carbon monoxide	Hydrocarbons	Oxides of nitrogen	Particulate matter	Carbon dioxide
Petrol cars without a catalyst*	100	100	100	---	100
Petrol cars with a catalyst	42	19	23	---	100
Diesel cars	2	3	31	100	85

*Petrol cars without catalysts have been given a relative value of 100 for comparison

40. Central Government have signalled an ambition for all new cars and vans to be zero emission by 2040. The main focal approach for this change has been increased support (including grant funding) for electric and hybrid vehicles and associated infrastructure.

41. The Council currently maintains a network of five double electric vehicle charging points in car parks across the borough, allowing up to 10 vehicles to charge simultaneously. In discussion over the ambition outlined in the above paragraph, and the recent growth in the electric vehicle market, Members felt that it was important that the Council acted now to increase the extent of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the borough to meet future demand, and to set the standard for charging provision in the Borough.

42. The Council's Parking Services Team Leader reported to the Task Group that changes to the ownership of the company who administered the Council's charging points had removed maintenance charges from the Council's contract and resulted in a greatly reduced capital cost for charging points.

43. The Council's Section 106 Monitoring Group reported that a limited pot of

S106 contributions was available to fund environmental improvements in the Borough. The Task Group members felt that this pot could, subject to the identification of suitable projects, provide a readily viable means of funding the supply and installation of an expanded network of electric vehicle charging points within the Borough, particularly considering the reductions in capital cost outlined by the Parking Services Team Leader.

Recommendation 5:

The Council should expand the network of electric vehicle charging points within the borough, utilising S106 and government grant funding as appropriate.

44. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) recognises that most electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle owners will wish to do the largest proportion of vehicle charging at home. Off-street electric vehicle charging needs can feasibly be addressed through recommendations 3, 6, 7 and 8; however it was noted by the Task Group that for residents who have no access to off-street parking, electric vehicles would not be an attractive alternative to conventional fuel vehicles due to the lack of access to overnight charging facilities.

45. OLEV operates a grant scheme to enable local authorities to provide residential on-street charging points for residents who have no access to any off-street parking facility. OLEV will provide up to 75% of the capital costs of procuring and installing a charging point and dedicated parking bay (up to a maximum of £7,500 per point).⁶

46. The London Borough of Hounslow are currently running a three year trial (funded by TfL) of on-street charging infrastructure provided through fitting 4G enabled electric vehicle charging points to existing streetlights at an approximate cost of £1000 per unit. It is understood that Kent County Council are monitoring the outcome of this trial, and Members felt that dependent on the outcome of this trial the Hounslow model could provide a means of providing on-street charging infrastructure for the significant number of residents within the Borough who have no access to off-street parking.

Recommendation 6:

The Council work with Kent County Council to explore options for providing on-street vehicle charging infrastructure to meet resident demand, including promoting relevant OLEV grant schemes and other trials.

47. Road traffic related air pollution is worsened when traffic is stationary and idling, particularly along key transport corridors. Members felt that within Ashford the root causes of such stationary traffic were twofold – excessive numbers of vehicles

utilising the road network, and obstacles to the free flow of traffic such as poorly co-ordinated traffic signals and speed reduction measures. In circumstances where stationary traffic was unavoidable, Members felt that the use of signage to encourage drivers to switch off their engines instead of idling could be beneficial.

48. Members noted that the completion of junction 10a of the M20 would alleviate traffic pressure at the existing junction 10, but felt that approaches should be made to Kent County Council (KCC) with regard to traffic signal optimisation and the consideration of air quality impacts when designing schemes of traffic calming measures within the Borough.

Recommendation 7:

The Council engage with Kent County Council over the potential of Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) to optimise traffic flow within Ashford.

Recommendation 8:

The Council request that Kent County Council seek to avoid negative impacts on air quality when designing speed reduction measures within the borough.

49. Members noted and supported the Cabinet's decision of 11 May 2017 (minute 407/5/17 refers) not to levy any additional charges on electric vehicle charging point users for the electricity consumed. Members felt that there could be validity in removing or reducing parking charges for electric vehicles to encourage their use.

Recommendation 9:

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-grants-for-low-emission-vehicles#electric-vehicle-homecharge-scheme>

That the Council consider reducing or removing parking charges for electric vehicles within its car parks to encourage use of these vehicles.

Transport Commercial Vehicles

50. As noted in paragraphs 28 and 29, the imposition of more stringent Euro emission standards on diesel passenger vehicles has not delivered expected reductions in NO_x emissions from these vehicles. By comparison, higher Euro emissions standards for commercial vehicles (a market segment dominated by diesel) have largely been complied with.
51. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) has shown that there are no systematic exceedances of NO_x limits from diesel commercial vehicles, despite there being no significant difference in the chemical makeup of diesel and petrol exhaust fumes.
52. Comparative testing of the NO_x emissions of light and heavy duty diesel vehicles carried out by ICCT found that despite burning more fuel per kilometre travelled, average NO_x emissions of HGVs and buses were less than half that of Euro 6 standard diesel passenger vehicles. From these findings, ICCT calculated that diesel cars produce 10 times more NO_x than buses or HGVs per litre of fuel consumed.
53. Members noted the commitments of funding made by the Department for Transport (DfT) and OLEV with regard to electric and hybrid freight vehicle trials, and it was felt that there was validity in providing electrical connections within overnight lorry parking facilities to both serve future electric HGV demand and provide an

alternative to diesel generators for powering refrigeration units whilst stopped. Utilising electricity, rather than diesel, to power refrigeration in trailers can deliver a significant cost reduction as well as reducing vehicle emissions.⁷

Recommendation 10:

New HGV parking facilities within the Borough should consider the provision of infrastructure to cater for electric HGV charging and refrigeration.

Transport Buses

54. Ashford has benefitted from a strong working relationship between the Council, public transport operators and KCC for several years through the Quality Bus Partnership (QBP); and the joint working undertaken by this group has delivered significant enhancements to the bus network in Ashford.
55. The Task Group felt that the 'Little & Often' bus service, operated by Stagecoach using Euro VI standard vehicles, was a notable credit to the Borough's public transport offer and demonstrated the potential for improving air quality on the public transport network of the Borough. The service offers a much improved frequency for residents whilst reducing public transport emissions along key routes through Ashford.
56. It was noted that although Ashford Borough Council did not tender for bus contracts (being the responsibility of KCC), it could exert a certain degree of influence through its membership of the QBP. This agreement was refreshed in 2016 to

⁷ https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/30829/BA-Scriptie-Jurgen-Baartman_finaal.pdf

include an increased focus on higher emissions standards for buses operating within Ashford.

Recommendation 11:

Through its membership of the Ashford Quality Bus Partnership, the Council should endeavour for bus services within the Borough to operate using vehicles at Euro IV emission standard or higher.

57. Members noted that the level of town centre development ongoing would increase the number of vehicle trips to the town centre and could potentially lead to a worsening of air quality along major routes through the town.

58. The Council has previously signalled an aim to achieve a modal shift away from car use to public transport, with the 2006 Parking Strategy and 2008 Transport Strategies setting out an equivalent 15 percent reduction in the modal share of the car between 2003 and 2031, with a three-fold increase in the modal share of buses over the same period.

59. Policy TRA4 of the draft Local Plan to 2030 states that the Council will *‘...in liaison with the County Council...seek enhancements to the local bus network in order to meet the additional demands created by new development as it comes forward. These enhancements could include the delivery of bus priority measures, the provision of a new service or the alteration/expansion of an existing service, contributions towards bus-related infrastructure and operational subsidy’*. Members welcomed this policy and felt that increased patronage of low emission bus services was of paramount importance to improving air quality in Ashford.

Recommendation 12:

Developer monies gathered under policy TRA4 of the (draft) Local Plan to 2030 should be used to fund enhancements to the local bus network which will encourage a modal shift from use of the private car to public transport.

**Transport
Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles**

60. Members noted that from the 1st of January 2018 TfL will mandate that all new London cabs have a ‘zero-emission capable’ range of at least 30 miles. Whilst the lack of a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) precludes the Council from introducing clean air zones or similar measures to mandate an improvement in emissions standards for vehicles, Members felt that the Council should encourage the uptake of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles by the taxi and private hire trade in the Borough, highlighting grant funding schemes as appropriate.

Recommendation 13:

That the Council, through appropriate channels, encourage the uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles within the taxi and private hire fleets within the Borough.

61. It was noted that the NICE guidelines included considerations around fuel-efficient driver training for Council staff to extend vehicle life while reducing vehicle emissions and fuel/service costs. This is dealt with in regard to the Council’s fleet in paragraph 75 below, however Members also felt that such training could be beneficial to the taxi and private hire trade in the Borough.

Recommendation 14:

The Council consider subsidising a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for taxi and private hire drivers.

Transport Rail Services

62. The air quality impacts of rail travel are relatively low and Members noted that, as the Council provided a thorough response to the South Eastern Rail Franchise consultation in May 2017, an in-depth examination of options for improving air quality in regard to rail travel would duplicate work undertaken by the Council in compiling its submission.
63. This response noted that the Council “would support the removal of diesel trains from the network where possible, and the promotion of a shift to the use of more sustainable low emission trains, which would improve the air quality within the Borough and across the south east network.” The Task Group supported this position and did not feel that further recommendations in relation to rail services would be beneficial.

Transport Cycling

64. Members considered a presentation from the Council’s Cultural Services team on the development of a cycling strategy for the Borough covering the period 2017 to 2022. It was noted that the previous borough strategy (2011 to 2016) had been successful in delivering improvements to cycling routes in the Borough, and as a result of previous work the Council had a good reputation among partner organisations.
65. The new cycling strategy would seek to further enhance the cycling network within the Borough, leading to improved opportunities for cycling in key rural locations and a more active cycling community. Members

were pleased to note the approach that the cycling strategy would take and felt that it had the potential to effect an increased modal shift toward cycling.

66. The Task Group noted that employers should encourage staff to choose sustainable transport options, including cycling to work where possible. It was recognised that for cycling to be an attractive commuting prospect, it was key that employers provided adequate facilities such as on-site showers and secure cycle storage.

Recommendation 15:

That new commercial developments include adequate provision for facilities to enable and support cycling to work by staff.

67. It was reported to the Task Group that 125,000 bicycle journeys were made to Ashford International each year, and Members noted that cycle storage facilities at the station (despite recent expansion) were oversubscribed and a lack of spaces could dissuade people from cycling and increase car use. Members felt that there was a need to expand cycle storage in key locations across the town, not just at the station, to meet existing and future demand.
68. It was felt that the evidence provided by the Cultural Services team showed a significant level of support for cycling in the Borough and that this should be capitalised upon both as a means to improve air quality and general public health. Members expressed support for a Dutch model for cycling – where cycling was seen as a viable commuting option, rather than focusing on speed or physicality. The Task group noted the evidence of the Cultural Projects Manager and

Sports and Activity Project Officer that the provision of higher quality facilities were more likely to increase the uptake of cycling.

Recommendation 16:

An audit of cycling facilities should be undertaken as part of the preparation of the new Borough Cycling Strategy, with additional storage facilities installed where demand for cycle storage exceeds or is likely to exceed supply.

Transport Schools

69. Members felt that the Council's support of walk to school schemes such as those facilitated by the KM Charity Group should be continued. Such schemes have proven highly successful at increasing the numbers of children walking to school and reducing vehicle movements around schools, with a reduction of 260,000 vehicle trips across the county achieved in the 2016/17 academic year.

Recommendation 17:

The Council continues its support for walk-to-school schemes in the Borough.

70. The lack of a declared AQMA within the Borough precludes the Council from seeking enforcement powers to tackle vehicle idling (such as that seen outside schools), however the Task group felt that there could be validity in recommending to Kent Police that guidance issued to drivers at schools by PCSOs as part of Operation OPEYE (where PCSOs attend schools at the start and end of the day to issue advice on unsafe and unsuitable parking practices) could include information on vehicle idling.

Recommendation 18:

Kent Police be asked to dissuade vehicle idling outside schools as part of Operation OPEYE.

Council Operations Fleet

- 71. The Council's adopted Energy Efficiency Strategy 2017-2022 includes a pledge to increase the prevalence of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles in its fleet operations where possible. The Task Group noted in addition to the Council's fleet vehicles (which include a fully electric pool car and 'e-bikes' used by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), there is a significant use of 'grey fleet' - where employees' own vehicles are used for business travel with the Council paying a mileage contribution to staff.
- 72. The Council also designates essential car users among staff who may either enter into a lease car scheme or take up a cash alternative. However, the Council does not currently set limits on eligible cars related to fuel efficiency when paying mileage claims, place limits on eligible lease cars or provide incentives for staff to choose ultra-low or zero emission vehicles.
- 73. The Task Group felt that the Council should do more to encourage the use of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles among staff to drive for an emissions reduction across both its owned and 'grey' fleet.
- 74. It was noted that the Council's CEOs regularly used bicycles and e-bikes for patrols in Ashford, and suggested that other staff conducting visits within cycling distance of the Council offices could be encouraged to undertake short journeys by bicycle through the

payment of a mileage claim similar to that paid for car travel.

Recommendation 19:

The Council should review its lease car and mileage claim schemes to exclude high polluting vehicles from eligibility and promote ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.

Recommendation 20:

The Council remove parking permit charges for staff with ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.

Recommendation 21:

The Council explore the feasibility of staff cycling to site or home visits within Ashford as an alternative to car use.

75. As discussed in paragraph 53 above, the NICE guidelines recommend the introduction of fuel-efficient driver training for staff, targeted on changing behaviours (such as rapid acceleration and braking, incorrect gear selection and engine idling) that contribute to increased vehicle emissions. Members felt that such training could be beneficial for the Council, and could potentially generate savings for the Council through reduced fuel bills and service requirements on fleet vehicles.

Recommendation 22:

The Council operate a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for all designated essential car users who are required to drive Council fleet vehicles for their respective roles.

**Council Operations
Travel Planning**

76. It was reported to the Task Group that the Council does not currently have a workplace travel plan in place for staff, and does not operate schemes

such as a car share; and Members felt that this was an area where a worthwhile difference could be made with the potential to reduce pollutants in the Borough associated with staff travel.

77. The Council's operated cycle to work scheme was noted as a positive initiative and one which members supported, however it was felt that the provision of changing and shower facilities for staff without a Stour Centre membership may drive further uptake of cycling among staff.

Recommendation 23:

The Council should compile a comprehensive workplace travel plan which identifies means to improve the percentage of staff utilising sustainable means to travel to work.

Recommendation 24:

The Council continue to offer a cycle to work scheme (or similar) and explore options for staff shower and changing facilities within the Civic Centre.

**Council Operations
Funding**

78. Members noted that significant pots of grant funding from both the UK Government and the European Union were regularly being made available for low and zero emission transport schemes and other sustainable transport projects. Discussed funding schemes included the Air Quality Grant Programme, which issued grants annually to local authority projects focused on tackling excessive levels of NO₂; the Workplace Charging Scheme, which contributed funds towards the installation of electric vehicle charging points for eligible businesses, charities and public sector

organisations; and the Plug-In Van Grant, which provides grants to encourage the procurement of plug-in commercial fleet vehicles.

79. It was noted that the current network of electric vehicle charging points was installed as a result of a successful county-wide funding bid. Members were concerned that the relative lack of air quality issues in the Borough could be a hindrance to bids to external funding, and as such it was felt that joint funding bids with other boroughs or Kent County Council should be considered.

Recommendation 25:

The Council should pursue grant funding related to air quality improvement, sustainable transport and associated infrastructure where feasible, including working with partners to submit joint bids as appropriate.

**Council Operations
Sustainability**

80. In 2010 the Council agreed its Carbon Management Plan, designed to achieve an ambitious 30% reduction in the Council's carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions from its estate and operations to 2016. The actions taken under the Carbon Management Plan, whilst not delivering the intended target, did result in a 23.7% reduction in the Council's CO₂e output, equivalent to over 1,000 tonnes of CO₂e.

81. From a baseline set in 2009, the Council reports annually on the level of greenhouse gas emissions arising from its estate and operations. The baseline for Greenhouse Gas reporting will be reset for the 2018/19 reporting year to account for changes in the Council's property portfolio and operations, including the current

waste contract and emissions from Aspire, the Council's in-house grounds maintenance service.

82. In October 2017, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) released '*The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future*', which set clean growth at the heart of the Government's Industrial Strategy, including setting out investment to deliver clean growth and meet the agreed Carbon Budgets – progressive five year caps on greenhouse gas emissions – up to 2050. The Clean Growth Strategy also proposes a voluntary public sector carbon emissions reduction target of 30% by 2020-21.

83. Investment measures outlined within the Clean Growth Strategy include:

- a £20m commitment to support a new clean technology early stage investment fund;
- investment of up to £100m in carbon capture usage and storage;
- £1bn to support the take-up of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV);
- £95m to support charging infrastructure deployment;
- £50m for the Plug-in Taxi programme to offer discounts of up to £7,500 on new ULEV taxis;
- £14m to deliver dedicated ULEV taxi charging points;
- £100m for retrofitting and new low emission buses;
- £1.2bn for promotion of walking and cycling.

84. The Task Group felt that there was a need for a designated officer to lead on strategic co-ordination of actions under the Air Quality and Energy Efficiency Strategies, and to reconcile

these actions with the Council's wider policy framework.

on sustainable transport options and DAQI reports.

85. This officer could also have responsibility for researching and bidding for grant funds related to air quality and sustainability such as those outlined in paragraphs 78 and 83, and it was felt that this could deliver significant value to the organisation (and potentially off-set any salary considerations) through the post holder securing grant funding and delivering savings to the Council through the actions of the Air Quality and Energy Efficiency Strategies.

87. Kent County Council maintain a number of Variable Message Signs (VMS) on key transport corridors into Ashford. Members felt that these signs could be used to display air quality improvement messages (for example, advising drivers to turn off their engines when stopped).

Recommendation 26:

The Council consider the appointment of an officer to lead on Sustainability; research and apply for appropriate grant funding; and deliver on the aims of the Energy Efficiency Strategy and any actions adopted from this report for inclusion in the Air Quality Strategy.

Recommendation 28:

The Council should work with KCC to use VMS in Ashford to promote air quality information for drivers.

**Council Operations
Public Information**

86. Members felt that more information should be made available for residents on air quality and transport options to promote the aims of the adopted strategy and resident use of sustainable transport. It was noted that a single web page capturing the strategy aims and information on cycling, bus travel, electric vehicle charging, driving habits and reporting the UK Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI).

88. NICE recommend working with healthcare professionals to raise awareness of poor outdoor air quality and advise high risk groups on how to minimise their exposure. The Council has strong working relationships with health partners in the Borough through its membership of and work with the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board (AHWB), and Members felt that this would be the most appropriate group to undertake work on raising the awareness of air quality impacts.

Recommendation 27:

The Council's website should include a page tailored toward air quality information which outlines the aims of the strategy as well as including potential air quality improvement actions, information

Recommendation 29:

The Council should work with its partners through the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board to raise awareness of poor outdoor air quality and provide advice to high risk groups.

Conclusion

89. The Air Quality Task Group felt that the issue of air quality within the Borough should be the subject of greater attention and focus from the

Council, particularly in light of the mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. Whilst the Borough does not have any declared Air Quality Management Areas within its limits, the Task Group felt strongly that this should not preclude the authority from taking action to improve air quality within the Borough.

policy framework of the Council and set ambitious goals for air quality improvement and pollutant reduction.

90. The Council has a strong track record of promoting sustainability through its procurement processes, adoption of the Energy Efficiency Strategy and setting ambitious targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from its premises and operations.
91. The actions and information within this report do not provide an exhaustive approach to air quality and the adoption of this document as an Air Quality Strategy for the Borough should not preclude the Council from pursuing actions and opportunities not contained within this report that will serve to safeguard and improve air quality in the Borough.
92. The pace of change with regard to vehicle technology, and the increased focus on air quality within Central Government means that issues of air quality are likely to evolve and as such this report and the subsequent Air Quality Strategy should be viewed as a living document. Once adopted as policy, it is recommended that this strategy is revisited annually, or sooner in response to developments in Government policy and/or external pressures.
93. It is hoped that through adoption of the recommendations within this report the Council can deliver a real commitment to improving air quality in the Borough in developing a strategy which will complement the existing

Air Quality Task Group – Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations regarding partnership working and the continuation of existing practices.

No.	Recommendation
6	The Council work with Kent County Council to explore options for providing on-street vehicle charging infrastructure to meet resident demand, including promoting relevant OLEV grant schemes and other trials.
7	The Council engage with Kent County Council over the potential of Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) to optimise traffic flow within Ashford.
8	The Council request that Kent County Council seek to avoid negative impacts on air quality when designing speed reduction measures within the borough.
11	Through its membership of the Ashford Quality Bus Partnership, the Council should endeavour for bus services within the Borough to operate using vehicles at Euro IV emission standard or higher.
13	That the Council, through appropriate channels, encourage the uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles within the taxi and private hire fleets within the Borough.
17	The Council continues its support for walk-to-school schemes in the Borough.
18	Kent Police be asked to dissuade vehicle idling outside schools as part of Operation OPEYE.
24	The Council continue to offer a cycle to work scheme (or similar) and explore options for staff shower and changing facilities within the Civic Centre.
28	The Council should work with KCC to use VMS in Ashford to promote air quality information for drivers.
29	The Council should work with its partners through the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board to raise awareness of poor outdoor air quality and provide advice to high risk groups.

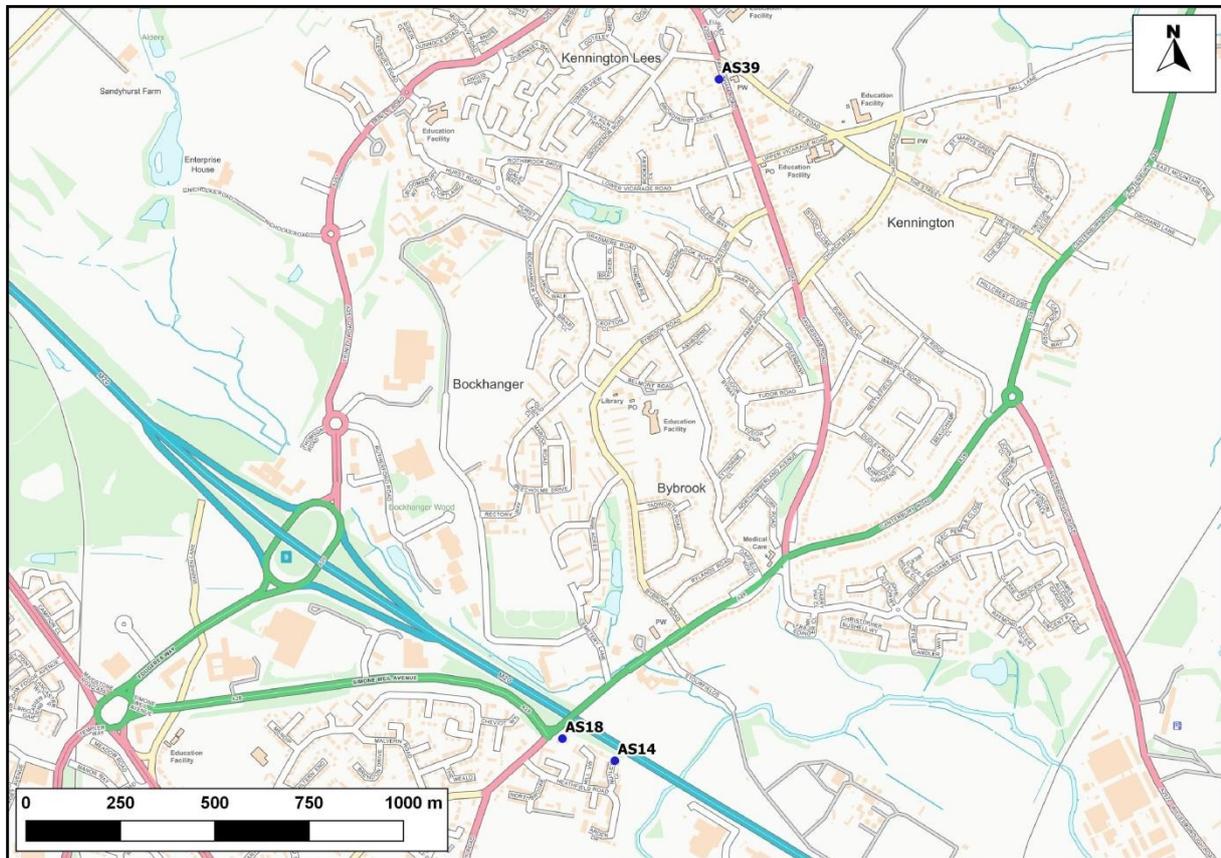
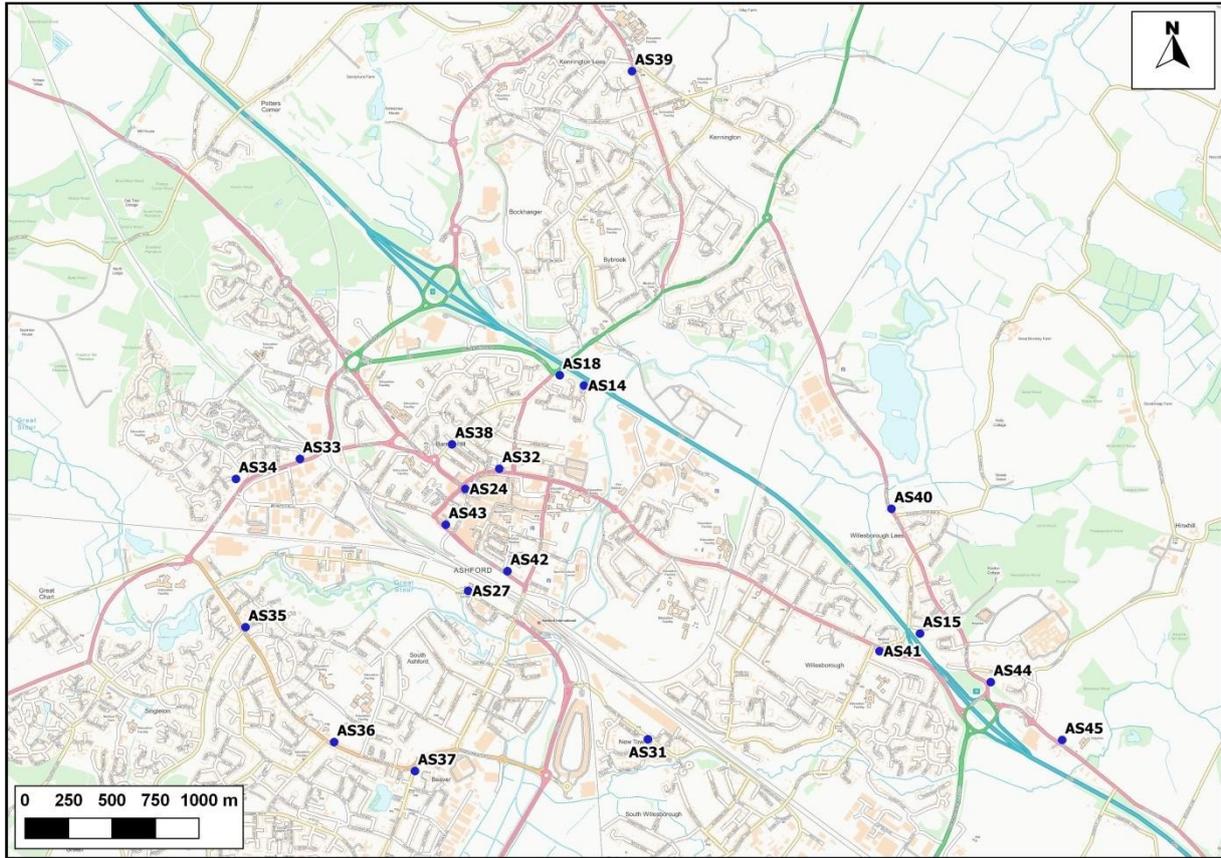
Full list of recommendations

No.	Recommendation
1	The recommendations and evidence base contained within this report form an Air Quality Strategy for the Council.
2	If a CIL regime is adopted by the Council for new developments, contributions should be set aside for air pollution mitigation measures.
3	The Council adopt the points noted in table 2 on page 9 of the report as best practice guidance for reducing air pollution in new developments.
4	The Council should adopt, and require developers to abide by, planting strategies which will support pollutant mitigation and effective street ventilation.
5	The Council should expand the network of electric vehicle charging points within the borough, utilising S106 and government grant funding as appropriate.
6	The Council work with Kent County Council to explore options for providing on-street vehicle charging infrastructure to meet resident demand, including promoting relevant OLEV grant schemes and other trials.
7	The Council engage with Kent County Council over the potential of Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) to optimise traffic flow within Ashford.
8	The Council request that Kent County Council seek to avoid negative impacts on air quality when designing speed reduction measures within the borough.
9	That the Council consider reducing or removing parking charges for electric vehicles within its car parks to encourage use of these vehicles.

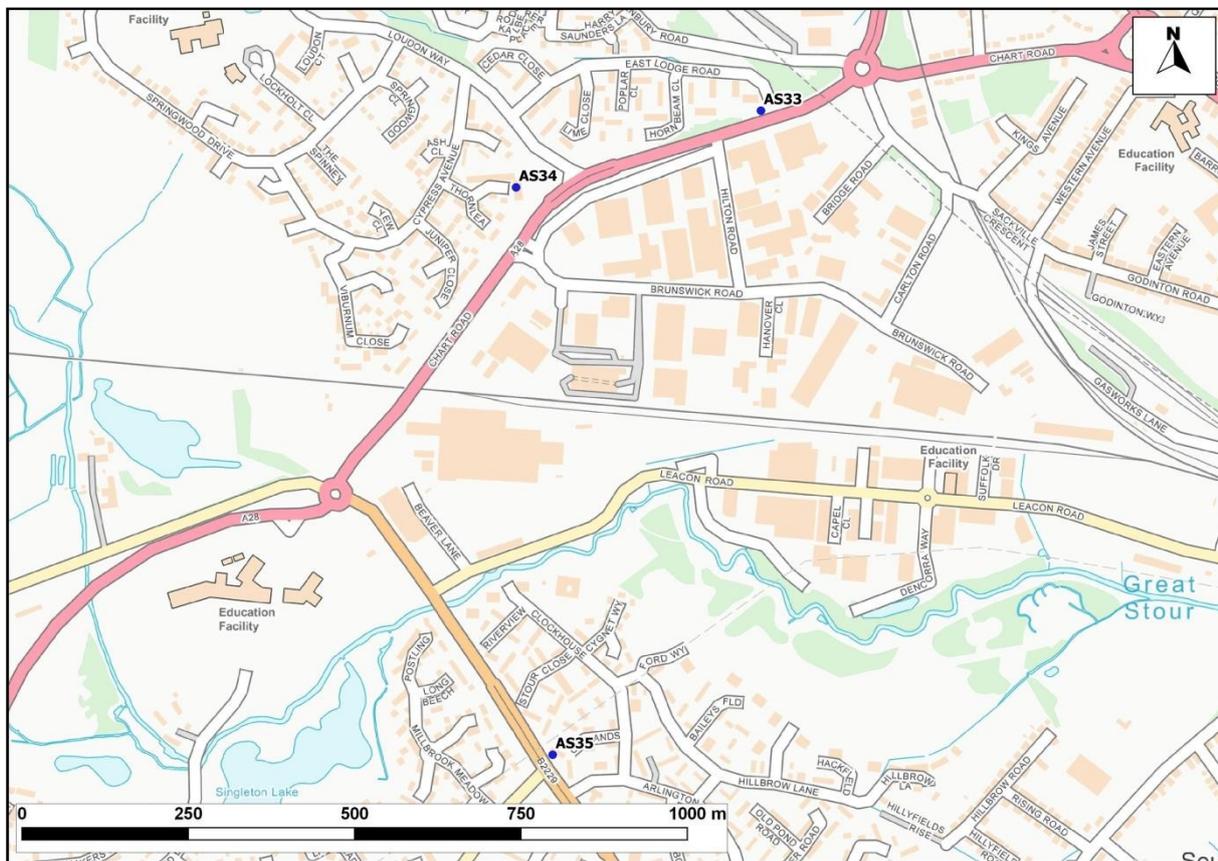
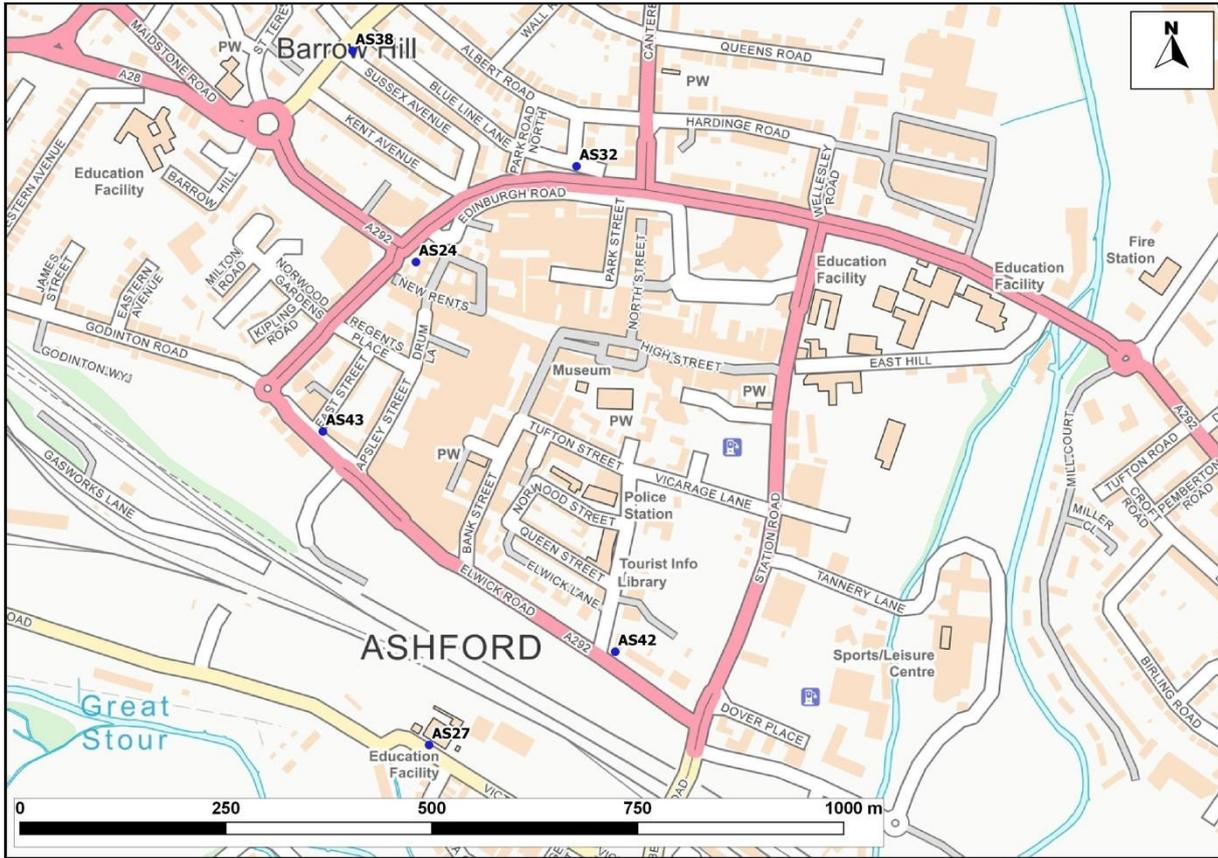
Appendix A – Summary of Recommendations

10	New HGV parking facilities within the Borough should consider provide infrastructure to cater for electric HGV charging and refrigeration.
11	Through its membership of the Ashford Quality Bus Partnership, the Council should endeavour for bus services within the Borough to operate using vehicles at Euro IV emission standard or higher.
12	Developer monies gathered under policy TRA4 of the (draft) Local Plan to 2030 should be used to fund enhancements to the local bus network which will encourage a modal shift from use of the private car to public transport.
13	That the Council, through appropriate channels, encourage the uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles within the taxi and private hire fleets within the Borough.
14	The Council consider subsidising a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for taxi and private hire drivers.
15	That new commercial developments include adequate provision for facilities to enable and support cycling to work by staff.
16	An audit of cycling facilities should be undertaken as part of the preparation of the new Borough Cycling Strategy, with additional storage facilities installed where demand for cycle storage exceeds or is likely to exceed supply.
17	The Council continues its support for walk-to-school schemes in the Borough.
18	Kent Police be asked to dissuade vehicle idling outside schools as part of Operation OPEYE.
19	The Council should review its lease car and mileage claim schemes to exclude high polluting vehicles from eligibility and promote ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.
20	The Council remove parking permit charges for staff with ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.
21	The Council explore the feasibility of staff cycling to site or home visits within Ashford as an alternative to car use.
22	The Council operate a programme of fuel-efficient driver training for all designated essential car users who are required to drive Council fleet vehicles for their respective roles.
23	The Council should compile a comprehensive workplace travel plan which identifies means to improve the percentage of staff utilising sustainable means to travel to work.
24	The Council continue to offer a cycle to work scheme (or similar) and explore options for staff shower and changing facilities within the Civic Centre.
25	The Council should pursue grant funding related to air quality improvement, sustainable transport and associated infrastructure where feasible, including working with partners to submit joint bids as appropriate.
26	The Council consider the appointment of an officer to lead on Sustainability; research and apply for appropriate grant funding; and deliver on the aims of the Energy Efficiency Strategy and any actions adopted from this report for inclusion in the Air Quality Strategy.
27	The Council's website should include a page tailored toward air quality information which outlines the aims of the strategy as well as including potential air quality improvement actions, information on sustainable transport options and DAQI reports.
28	The Council should work with KCC to use VMS in Ashford to promote air quality information for drivers.
29	The Council should work with its partners through the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board to raise awareness of poor outdoor air quality and provide advice to high risk groups.

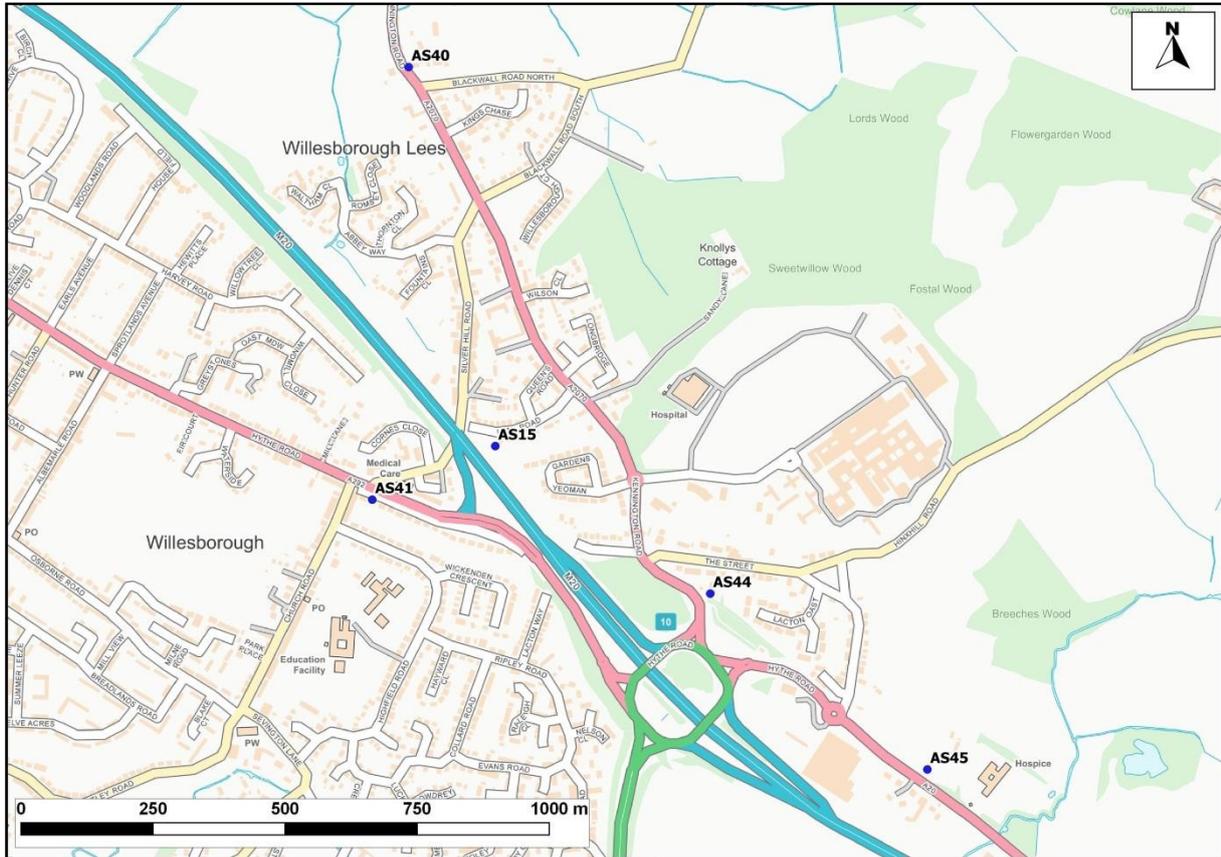
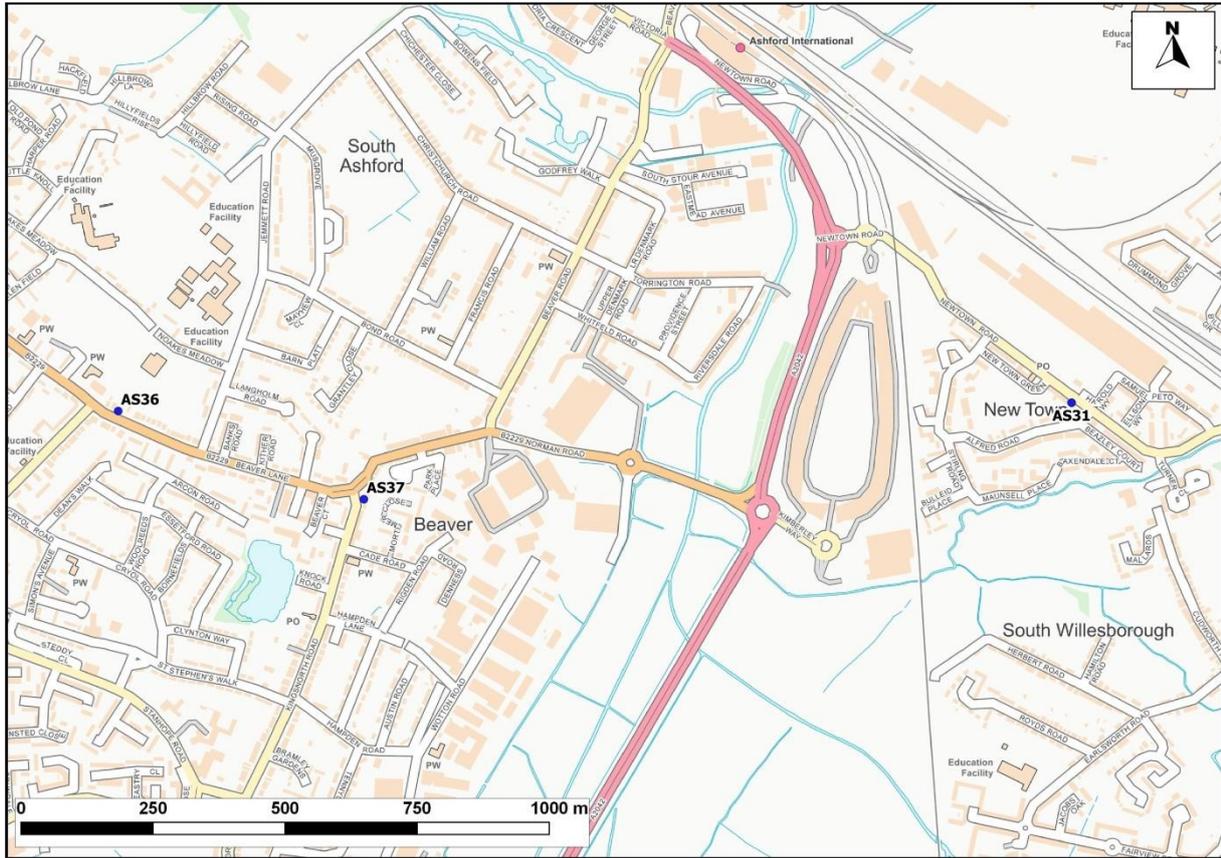
Appendix B – Maps of Air Quality Monitoring Locations



Appendix B – Maps of Air Quality Monitoring Locations



Appendix B – Maps of Air Quality Monitoring Locations



Policy ENV10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Planning permission for proposals to generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources will be permitted provided that:

- a. **The development, either individually or cumulatively does not result in significant adverse impacts on the landscape, natural assets or historic assets (including their setting);**
- b. **The scale and design of renewable energy provision is compatible with the character and appearance of the area, having special regard to nationally recognised designations and their setting, such as AONBs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.**
- c. **The development does not generate an unacceptable level of traffic or loss of amenity to nearby residents (visual impact, noise, disturbance, shadow flicker, odour).**
- d. **Provision is made for the decommissioning of the infrastructure once operation has ceased, including the restoration of the site to its previous use;**
- e. **Evidence is provided to demonstrate effective engagement with the local community and local authority.**

A Sustainability Assessment should be submitted alongside any planning application illustrating the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal against this criterion and any mitigation measures necessary.

Policy ENV11 - Sustainable Design and Construction - Non-residential

All major non-residential development will achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard, with at least a 40% improvement in water consumption against the baseline performance of the building (Wat1, 3 credits), unless demonstrated not to be practicable.

Policy ENV12 - Air Quality

All major development proposals should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality. Development should be located where it is accessible to support the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Development proposals that might lead to a significant deterioration in air quality or national air quality objectives being exceeded, either by itself, or in combination with other committed development, will require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment to be carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance. This should address:-

- a. The cumulative effect of further emissions;**
- b. The proposed measures of mitigation through good design and offsetting measures that would prevent the National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded or reduce the extent of the air quality deterioration.**

Proposals which will result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded will not be permitted.

Agenda Item 7



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No: 7
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 8 February 2018
Report Title: Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group
Report Author & Job Title: Will Train
Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. N Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance, Budget and Resource Management

Summary: The Overview and Scrutiny Budget Scrutiny Task Group has scrutinised the Council's draft 2018/19 budget and regards it as sound and deliverable.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None specifically

Recommendations: **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Cabinet:**

- I. **Be advised that the O&S Committee regards the Council's draft 2018/19 budget as sound and deliverable.**
- II. **Be advised that the O&S Committee regards the Council's reserves position as suitable to cover identified contingencies and risks.**

Policy Overview: Under the Council's Constitution the O&S Committee has a duty to scrutinise the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Financial Implications: As noted in the report

Legal Implications: As Policy Overview above

Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required as appended to main budget report

Other Material Implications: As noted in the report

Exempt from Publication: NO

Background Papers: **Medium Term Financial Plan**, report to Cabinet 9 November 2017

Draft 2018/19 budget, report to Cabinet 7 December 2017

Contact:

william.train@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394

Report Title: Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group

Introduction and Background

1. Under the Council's Constitution the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a duty to scrutinise the Council's draft Capital and Revenue Budgets. The Committee constituted a five member Task Group to undertake this work, and presents its assessment of the draft Budgets within this report.

Report of the Chairman of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group

2. I would like to express thanks on behalf of the Task Group for the hard work put in by officers in the limited timescale to support the Group. The Group asked for additional information at short notice and were grateful for the support. Thank you to Portfolio Holders who attended.
3. It was noteworthy that the Secretary of State's change in rules allowing Council's to increase the Council Tax by 2.99% (up from 1.99%) before a referendum and clarification on the way in which income from NNDR will be retained by ABC and KCC happened part way through the Group's work adding to the workload. The additional income to ABC if it were to put up Council Tax by the full amount permitted before a referendum would be around £60,000 (based on £1.50 per indicative band D property).

Summary

4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to thank all the Officers, Portfolio Holders and Lead Members who attended the Task Group meetings. The sessions yielded much information on the financial and resource challenges facing the authority and the Task Group focused on a number of key risks relating to the achievability of next year's budget, which are discussed below.
5. The Task Group found the budget for 2018/19 to be sound and deliverable. The Council has General Fund reserves of £2.6m, part of wider reserves of £16.8m (at 31 March 2017). The reserve position of the Council allows cover for contingencies and risks identified by the Task Group.
6. The Task Group's scrutiny of the draft 2018/19 budget focused on a number of risks identified by Officers in the preparation of service plans and budgets; and by the Task Group Members from the summary of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Plan progress detailed in the Task Group's meeting. The scrutiny on these points is detailed in paragraphs 8- 33 below.
7. In the course of its discussions, Members also identified a number of areas beyond the remit of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group where it was felt that reviews by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may be beneficial. These will be passed to the full Committee for consideration when setting its 2018/19 work programme, and included:

- a. A Better Choice for Property Limited
- b. Future projections for strategic and commercial acquisitions
- c. Resident Management Companies and wider application potential of the CMO model
- d. Social media
- e. Shared services

NNDR Reset

8. During scrutiny of budgets for the Finance and Economy directorate, the Task Group Members heard from the Director of Finance and Economy regarding the budgetary risks associated with a reset of the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) system.
9. Members noted the potential loss of NNDR income from the Council's current position that would arise if the Council's retained share of NNDR was reset to the baseline need level identified by government and the possible impacts on the NNDR yield that would arise if the buildouts of large commercial schemes (such as the Designer Outlet Village Expansion) were delayed.
10. The Interim Head of Finance presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) modelling assumptions to the Task Group, with particular reference to the forecasting of NNDR yields arising from the buildout of new commercial developments within the Borough.
11. On 19th December 2017 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that government would look to reset the NNDR system in 2020/21. This accorded with previous indications Officers related to the Task Group that a reset of the NNDR system was unlikely to occur within the 2018/19 budget year.
12. Members were satisfied that the reset of the NNDR system as announced by the Secretary of State will not affect the viability of the 2018/19 draft budget, and were grateful for the information provided by the Director of Finance and Economy, Interim Head of Finance and Accountancy team on the 100% NNDR retention pilot scheme for Kent and Medway.

Hospital Trust rate relief appeal

13. Members queried the possible implications for the Council's budget in regard to an upcoming court case regarding NHS Trusts claiming eligibility for an 80% NNDR discount through charitable rate relief, backdated for six years. The Director of Finance and Economy advised that due to the Council retaining only 40% of NNDR, the in-year impact on the Council's NNDR yield would be a reduction of around £144,000 – less than 1% of the total share of rates income.
14. In regard to cover against backdated relief, the Director of Finance and Economy advised that an additional £2.4m would be added to the Council's existing £3.3m appeals reserve this year to provide some protection from the potential impact of this risk.

Income Generating Projects (General Fund)

15. The Task Group queried the budgetary risks arising from any potential delays in both achieving the target level of income generation from commercial property and securing a return on commercial investments financed through the Council's General Fund; notably the potential for a shortfall in service charge income at Elwick Place, letting risks within International House and the risk to income generation at Carlton Road. The Group noted the importance of making successful acquisitions in order for the Council's goal of financial self-sufficiency to be realised.
16. The Director of Finance and Economy and Senior Commercial Development and Regeneration Manager advised that risks related to demand for property were reflected in the Corporate Property and Projects service challenges in 2018/19, however it was important to note that several assets (such as Ellingham Industrial Estate) were well established with a secure tenant base and had been part of the Council's property portfolio for a number of years, and presented a lower risk with regard to rental income.
17. With regard to new acquisitions, it was advised that every commercial acquisition made by the Council was subject to a full risk assessment and extensive due diligence was undertaken on each potential acquisition. A range of measures were also employed including long and flexible lease options to attract and retain tenants within commercial acquisitions such as International House.
18. Members noted that an examination of the timeline of key commercial acquisitions, such as International House, from the initial business case and financial assumptions to date would be beneficial in order to establish how successful the Council's investment strategy had been. It was agreed that this would be referred to the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in its 2018/19 work programme.
19. Whilst not acquired as a commercial investment, the Task Group also expressed interest in understanding the future plans for Park Mall as an asset for the Council. The Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications advised in a separate session that the development of a town centre place making framework was an objective for the Economic Development team in 2018/19.

Property Company performance

20. The Task Group expressed concerns regarding the transparency of the income flow of the Council's property company and the assumptions made when the Council issued loans to A Better Choice for Property Ltd. Whilst it was recognised that scrutiny of the property company's performance fell within the purview of the Trading and Enterprise Board (TEB), it was felt that the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider scrutinising the investment return projections for the residential acquisitions made by A Better Choice for Property Ltd, the debt structure for the company and an identification of how the company's business was likely to develop.

Resourcing for Planning Appeals and Enforcement

21. The Director of Place and Space and Head of Planning and Development advised the Task Group that resourcing for planning appeals and enforcement represented key challenges for the Planning and Development service in 2018/19. To date, the Council had committed significant resources to defending appeals, and this had required drawing down on the reserves for the Planning and Development service.
22. Whilst the adoption of the Local Plan to 2030 should aid the Council in being able to demonstrate that it had a suitable five year supply of land for housing development, concerns remained that the Council could have to commit additional resources to defend further appeals against speculative development proposals outside of the Local Plan if such applications were rejected by the Planning Committee.
23. It was also noted that there had been some difficulty in recruiting officers to certain senior enforcement roles into the Planning and Development service, and that there may be a need to draw from reserves if staff difficulties arose.
24. The Task Group noted the position of the reserves for planning and the potential bolstering that may occur as a result of central government agreeing a 20% increase in planning fees, however it was felt that there should be a facility for readily drawing on general fund reserves to supplement planning reserves if required.

Resourcing for the Homelessness Reduction Act

25. In reviewing the key service challenges for the Finance and Economy directorate, Members noted that the coming into force of the Homelessness Reduction Act was a significant challenge for the organisation and requested further information on budgetary and resource planning for this change.
26. The Director of Finance and Economy and Head of Housing presented information to the Task Group outlining the Council's response to the Homelessness Reduction Act and emphasised that the Council would focus on a preventative approach rather than a reactive service after the event, in line with the new duties established by the Act. It was also advised that a flexible 'New Burdens Fund' was in place to assist with meeting the costs and replacing lost subsidies associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act.
27. It was advised that the Housing team already worked proactively to prevent homelessness, however changes had been made to the staff structure and the service budget had been built with the changes required by the Act in mind. Additionally, the Council had previously acquired Christchurch House as a short stay accommodation facility, which reduced the Council's spending on bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, and had commenced the acquisition of an additional short stay accommodation facility to provide a preferable alternative to B&B accommodation and deliver further cost savings. Further short stay accommodation had been secured on a temporary basis in other locations within Ashford, again at a lower cost than B&B use.

28. Members noted the approach outlined by the Director of Finance and Economy and the Head of Housing and the importance of the proactive approach taken by the Council to date. The Task Group felt that it was of paramount importance that costs arising from the additional responsibilities imposed by the Homelessness Reduction Act were adequately covered within the budget.

Impact of Universal Credit

29. Members noted further challenges identified for the Housing service in 2018/19 related to homelessness included the continued implementation of Universal Credit and the potential increase in homelessness and rent arrears, and queried what assumptions had been made within the budget in regard to these challenges. Officers advised that, in regard to potential loss of income through increased rent arrears, the Council's bad debt provision was reviewed annually and had been deemed to be sufficient for a number of years. Whilst bad debts posed a small risk to the budget, there was confidence in the mitigation methods employed to address this risk.
30. Members were informed that the Council had previously recruited a number of Welfare Intervention Officers in preparation for the Universal Credit roll-out and Council funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau had been increased two years previously and was currently maintained at an elevated level on top of base funding in preparation for the roll-out. In addition, a significant increase in the budget for Benefits Administration was proposed for 2018/19.
31. Whilst the nature of benefit administration work was likely to change with the implementation of Universal Credit (for example, the flexible nature of Universal Credit meant that certain entitlements needed to be recalculated weekly), it was not anticipated that there would be a significant net increase in officer workloads, with Universal Credit only being rolled out for new claimants in 2018/19. Members noted that it was vital that the Council support residents affected by the change in the way benefits would be delivered during 2018/19.

New Homes Bonus

32. The Task Group queried the allocation of new homes bonus (NHB) within the budget, noting that there had been a commitment made to allocate NHB on a 50:50 basis between new projects and the base budget, however the draft budget showed 35% of NHB allocated to new projects and 65% to supporting the base budget in 2018/19. The Interim Head of Finance advised that additional pressures meant that a higher percentage of NHB had been allocated to the base budget in 2018/19, but it was intended that the 50:50 ratio would be re-established for 2019/20.

Capital Expenditure

33. The Task Group discussed increases in the projected non-HRA Capital Financing Requirement going forward, and questioned whether this would be sustainable if interest rates returned to former levels of 4 or 5%. The Interim Head of Finance advised that capital requirements were reviewed on a project by project basis in line with the current interest position to determine affordability.

34. Members were concerned that the projections contained within the draft 2018/19 budget would raise the expectation that borrowing would continue up to the projected levels, even if interest rates rose to levels at which such borrowing may be unviable. The Director of Finance and Economy advised that the indicators were based on current plans, but projects had not necessarily been approved yet so there was no firm financial commitment in place.

Environment and Land Management

35. The Head of Environment and Land Management advised that there was a potential financial impact regarding the contamination of recyclates, wherein any recycling load with over 10% contamination could be rejected by the recycling facility, which would result in the load being transferred to the 'energy from waste' plant at a cost, which could be passed on to the Borough Council under the terms of the joint waste contract.
36. Members were pleased to note that the current contamination rate was low (at around 2%) and that plans were in place to expand the communications and education activity around contamination of recycling with the creation of a new Waste & Recycling Education Officer post within existing budget levels.

Lorry Parking

37. Members were pleased with the success of the recent new initiative to clamp lorries parking overnight in 4 sites in the Borough. It was felt that this may increase expectations of residents of dealing with the issue and therefore demand on the service. A problem was explained that to date the fees the Council were able to recover were £75 and this did not meet the costs of providing the service.
38. This risk is now somewhat ameliorated, as it is anticipated that the service can be operated on a cost neutral basis following the Secretary of State's decision to allow an increase to the fee charged from £75 to up to £150. This increase was not known when the budget was set, however a risk remains that the service will operate at a loss.

Inflation

39. Members were concerned that an inflation rate in excess of 3% could not be managed beyond 2-3 years. Whilst the rate of inflation is outside the control of the Council, continued high levels would necessitate the Council considering further ways to manage expenditure, generate additional income or reduce expenditure on non-income projects until inflation rates fell.

Conclusion

40. On consideration of these points, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commends the following recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Cabinet:

- I. Be advised that the O&S Committee regards the Council's draft 2018/19 budget as sound and deliverable.**
- II. Be advised that the O&S Committee regards the Council's reserves position as suitable to cover identified contingencies and risks.**

Contact and Email

41. Will Train, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer.
william.train@ashford.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No: 8
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 8 February 2018
Report Title: Financial Monitoring – Quarter 3 of 2017/18
Report Author & Job Title: Jo Stocks
Senior Accountant
Portfolio Holder Cllr. Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance & IT

Summary: This report presents an assessment of an outturn position for this financial year based on the first three quarters of the year for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Collection Fund.

The General Fund is projecting an overall overspend of £57,000, with a target to have a balanced budget by the end of the year. There is an overall positive movement from last quarter of £30,000.

The Housing Revenue Account is projecting an underspend against the original budget of £318,000, with an overall movement from last quarter of £240,000.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. **Note the outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and the Collection Fund**
- II. **Approve the additional £200,000 design works for Victoria Park, and note the £99,000 approved by Management team for the initial bid**
- III. **Note the £95,000 approved by Management Team for the residents magazine**
- IV. **Approve the £10,000 to be allocated to the set up of shadow Parish Councils in paragraph 20**
- V. **Note the breach of the Investment Policy in paragraph 48**

Policy Overview: The Budget is a key element supporting the delivery of the Council's wider policy objectives

Financial Implications:	<p>The General Fund is reporting an overall overspend of £56,000.</p> <p>The Housing Revenue Account is reporting an overall underspend of £318,000. Management Team will continue to monitor the financial position to ensure it stays within budget.</p>
Legal Implications	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	As part of Budget Setting 2017/18 a full assessment was undertaken
Contact:	Jo.stocks@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330548

Report Title: Financial Monitoring – Quarter 3, 2017/18

Introduction and Background

1. This report is to inform Members of the projected outturn for the financial year based on nine months information (April to December) for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, and the Collection Fund.
2. The report includes an update on the treasury activities and current investments are detailed in Appendix A.

Current Position

3. The current General Fund position is showing an overspend, there are a number of pressures contributing to this position, including homelessness which continues to be an issue both locally and nationally.

Director of Finance & Economy

4. As reported at quarter 2, Homelessness costs are still causing a pressure, with an additional £94,000 coming forward this quarter. The numbers of homeless families, in temporary accommodation, have increased significantly this year. Budgets are based on an average of 13 families per week compared to the current cases of 63 per week (at the time of writing), although officers continue to use alternatives to B&B, where possible, in order to alleviate these costs. These issues were discussed in a paper to the January cabinet which outlined the Council's strategy to increasing the focus on prevention work to ultimately reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation.
5. Refurbishment and repairs at Ashford and Tenterden museums have resulted in a £16,000 pressure to the responsive repairs budget.
6. Voids at International House aren't being filled as quickly as anticipated, resulting in a £33,000 pressure.
7. Salary savings within Management Team and Accountancy, due to part year appointments, have resulted in a saving of £59,000 and has contributed to the overachievement of the vacancy savings.

Director of Law & Governance

8. There has been appointment of four Civil Enforcement Officers and one appeals officer. A pressure of £65,000 is being reported this year however moving forward there will be income to match against these costs. This year HGV enforcement has reduced the fine income which is not expected to continue into 2018/19.
9. There is also a £53,000 pressure on car park business rates, as a result of revaluations.

Director of Place & Space

10. During quarter 3 the previously reported deficit has been reviewed and a contribution from the planning reserve has offset the overspend along with additional planning fee income.

11. The additional planning fee income follows the Government announcement in December, this allows for planning fees to be increased by 20% from mid-January. It is anticipated that this increase in fees will provide an additional £25,000 of income.
12. As at the 31 March 2017 the planning reserve had a balance of £407,000. The current forecast is assuming a draw on reserves in the region of £263,000, to cover the cost of the local plan, general service pressures, and more significantly major planning appeals. A full analysis of reserve movements will be provided at year end. Current projections show the balance of the planning reserve to be £144,000, by the end of the current financial year. Further use of the reserve is planned with the local plan examination to commence in the new financial year and the prospect of speculative planning appeals and possible defence costs. The additional income generated from planning fees can be used to cover these costs and ultimately replenish reserves but this item will remain a risk and be monitored.
13. Environmental & Land Management is showing saving of £120,000, resulting from reductions in the unscheduled works budgets and additional income arising from garden waste collections.

Table 1 – General Fund Budget Outturn Forecast as at 31 December 2017 – Directorate

Directorate	Current Budget (net) A £'000	Forecast Outturn (net) to 31/03/18 B £'000	Variance (B-A) £'000	Movement from Quarter 2 £'000
Chief Executive	935	987	52	8
Director of Finance & Economy	3,210	3,431	221	150
Director of Law & Governance	1,825	1,954	129	98
Director of Place & Space	9,504	9,390	(114)	(245)
Net Service Expenditure	15,474	15,762	288	11
Non service specific items	(464)	(695)	(231)	(41)
Budget Requirement	15,010	15,067	57	(30)
Financing:	(15,011)	(15,011)	0	0
	(1)	56	57	(30)

Table 2 - General Fund Budget Outturn Forecast as at 31 December 2017 – Service

Service	Current Budget (net)	Forecast Outturn (net) to 31/03/18	Variance (B-A)	Movement from Quarter 2
	A	B		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chilmington	69	69	0	0
Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications	866	918	52	8
Corporate Property & Projects	(1,381)	(1,243)	138	49
Finance & IT	3,970	3,744	(226)	(59)
Housing Services	621	930	309	160
Health, Parking & Community Safety	497	625	128	118
HR & Customer Services	96	84	(12)	(32)
Legal & Democratic Service	1,232	1,245	13	12
Culture	3,018	3,043	25	13
Environmental and Land Management	4,949	4,810	(139)	(120)
Planning	1,537	1,537	0	(138)
Net Service Expenditure	15,474	15,762	288	11
Capital Charges and net interest	(2,033)	(2,223)	(190)	0
Levies, Grants and Precepts	250	250	0	0
Contribution to reserves	1,319	1,278	(41)	(41)
Budget Requirement	15,010	15,067	57	(30)
Financing:				
Revenue Support Grant	(615)	(615)	0	0
NNDR. Pool	(3,422)	(3,422)	0	0
NNDR S31 Grant	(500)	(500)	0	0
Council Tax	(7,079)	(7,079)	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(3,394)	(3,395)	0	0
	0	56	57	(30)

Victoria Park

14. The council has been awarded £167,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to carry out further feasibility and design work on the masterplan for Victoria Park. Once the design work has been completed, a bid will be submitted back to HLF to implement the masterplan and carry out physical works on the ground. The design stage is to be split into two parts:
1. The submission stage, expected to cost £99,000
 2. Assuming the submission stage is successful, the delivery phase is expected to be £200,000 and will include overseeing the works.
15. It is proposed to offer the contract for both Stages 1 and 2 to the same company to ensure continuity of delivery. However, there will be a break clause allowing the contract to be terminated if the final HLF bid is unsuccessful or if the contractors performance is sub-standard.

16. The £99,000 submission stage was approved by Management Team in January, in order to meet the deadline for submission to HLF.
17. This report therefore includes a recommendation to In order to meet the deadline for submission to HLF in September, it is proposed the contract is awarded to the preferred contractor by the end of January 2018.
18. Members are asked to approve the additional £200,000 to complete stage 2 of the design process, members are also asked to note the £99,000 approved by Management Team.

Residents Magazine

19. Members are asked to note that Management team approved spend of up to £95,000 to introduce a residents' magazine. This quarterly magazine is to be introduced on a one year trial basis. It is expected that income will be raised as a result of advertising, if these targets are met expenditure will be revised in line with this

New Parish Councils

20. In 2019/20 two new Parish (community) Council's will be introduced following community consultation in Kennington and South Willesborough & Newtown. To ensure a smooth implementation shadow parish councils will be set up for 2018/19 which will become the first 'live' Councils in 2019/20.
21. To enable this to happen it is recommended that Cabinet allocate £10,000 to help the shadow parish councils operate for one year.

Housing Revenue Account

22. The Housing Revenue Account is showing an underspend of £318,000 against the current budget, this positive variance is the accumulation of a number of movements including the following:
23. There are a number of in year savings in respect of Revenue Repairs and Maintenance, this is as a result of a number of contract savings and rescheduling of works that will happen in future years.
24. In regards to Supervision and Management, work on the Bulleid Place play area was due in 2018/19, however this has been brought forward to 2017/18, resulting in a £135,000 pressure in the current financial year, leading to a saving for 2018/19.
25. In regards to capital works, all doors in council blocks have been under review for fire safety following the Grenfell Fire in June 2017; doors found not to be compliant have been replaced by fire doors, this has led to a pressure of £240,000. This pressure has been offset by savings of £430,000, as a result of assessing the maintenance programme and postponing works, where possible, to future years.

Table 3 - 2017/18 Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position

Budget Page	Current Budget A £'000	Forecast Outturn to 31/03/18 B £'000	Variance (B-A) £'000	Movement from previous quarter £'000
Income	(25,463)	(24,903)	560	50
Supervision and Management	5,111	5,257	146	129
Repairs and Maintenance	3,328	3,126	(202)	(227)
Other	21,923	21,923	0	0
Net Revenue Expenditure	4,899	5,403	504	(48)
Capital Works - Decent Homes	4,424	3,602	(822)	(192)
<i>Capital Works financed by:</i>				
Major Repairs Allowance (from Self Financing Determination)	(4,424)	(4,424)	0	0
Net Capital Expenditure	0	(882)	(882)	(192)
Total Net Expenditure	4,899	4,581	(318)	(240)

Collection Fund

27. The Collection Fund is the statutory mechanism by which income gathered by a billing authority (in this case Ashford Borough Council), from Council Tax and Business Rates, is distributed to Government and Precepting authorities (KCC, Fire, Police and Parishes).

Council Tax

28. Income continues to be higher than anticipated, this is as a result of two elements:
1. Property growth is higher than anticipated with an additional 300 more band d equivalent properties, resulting in £500,000 more income
 2. Council tax support cases have reduced, with less people being entitled to claim, resulting in a £150,000 saving.
29. In addition to this, the provision for bad debts continues to be monitored and a small reduction in this provision is anticipated for the year end, resulting in a contribution to the collection fund.
30. As a result of this, the Collection Fund, in respect of Council Tax, is forecasting an in year surplus of £1,200,000, and an overall surplus of £2,200,000.

Table 5 – Council Tax Forecast

	Forecast Outturn (net) to 31/03/18
Opening Surplus	(2,944,562)
Surplus distributed to Major Preceptors	1,995,691
2017/18	
Amount of Council Tax to be paid to Major Preceptors	71,270,041
Amount of Council Tax billed	(72,491,441)
Changes to bad debt provision	(43,000)
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	(1,264,400)
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit	(2,213,271)

It should be noted that in the event that there is a surplus on the collection fund at the end of the year, it will be divided between the precepting authorities and in the following year (so the General Fund summary is not effected this financial year), with the Council's share being approximately 10%.

Business Rates

31. Business Rate income is £2,000,000 lower the original budget, this is due to appeals, as a result of which £900,000 has been refunded to date.
32. The result of a successful appeal is a reduction of the rateable value, as a consequence, the rates payable in year has fallen, and therefore income is lower than anticipated.
33. The table below shows the current Business Rates forecast position:

Table 6 – Business Rates Forecast

	Original Budget 2017/18	Forecast Outturn (net) to 31/03/18
Opening (Surplus)/Deficit		2,867,507
Deficit recovered from Major Preceptors 2017/18		(2,378,178)
Amount of Business Rates to be paid to Major Preceptors	49,481,875	49,481,875
Amount of Business Rates Billed	(52,412,324)	(50,523,890)
Other Items Charged to the Collection Fund	241,449	241,449
Bad Debts/Appeals	2,689,000	2,261,106
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	0	1,491,679
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit		1,981,008

34. The Collection Fund, in respect of Business Rates, is forecasting an in year deficit of £1,070,000 and an overall deficit of £1,560,000, 40% of which is Ashford's share.
35. £980,000 of the in-year deficit relates to Small Business Rates relief. The cost of applying this relief will be offset by s31 grant, payable by Government.
36. In addition to this, £1,000,000 has been paid out in respect of appeals, which will be paid from the appeals provision at year end.
37. The forecast deficit will not affect the amount of money the Council will draw from the Collection Fund for the current year, however it will be necessary to earmark the additional grant received to offset the deficit.

Capital Monitoring

Property Portfolio

38. The Property Company has drawn down a further £677,000 on the agreed loan facility, purchasing a further 3 properties for its portfolio, in line with expectations.

Elwick Place

39. Work continues on site to progress in line with the build schedule, and there have been no significant variations to the build specification that would impact the expected completion date of December 2018. Expected spend in the current year will be in the region of £16,000,000.
40. Elwick Place is expected to bring many benefits to Ashford, including employment opportunities. Currently 40% of the ground workers are based in the Ashford area.

Planned Maintenance Projects

41. Work continues on Conningbrook Manor roof and internal refurbishment to bring this property back onto the rental market and is expected to be completed by March 2018, current forecasts are as expected, with total spend around £165,000.
42. Refurbishment of the ramps at Ashford Skate Park is underway and is currently expected to cost £61,500 and will be completed by March 2018, this is broadly in line with original estimates.

HRA Projects

43. The Affordable Homes Programme, is progressing well and spend is in line with HRA Business Plan expectations. Sheltered Housing continues to be a priority, each project has been costed and is in line with the HRA Business Plan.

Treasury

44. The forecast outturn for treasury management is in line with quarter 2 expectations when additional income of £190,000 was reported.
45. Payments are now falling due for the Elwick Place development, and with the previously reported changes in investment strategy this is creating an anticipated borrowing requirement for the Council.
46. In relation to the change in investment strategy, previously reported, further deposits of around £11,000,000 are still to be made before year end and this will be progressed over the next few months.
47. Borrowing (shown at Appendix A) is no longer purely attributed to HRA buyout debt. In the 3rd quarter the Council borrowed £17m, which is in advance of need and takes advantage of lower rates now which are expected to increase nearer the end of the financial year.
48. As a result of this opportunistic borrowing, the Council has breached its money market counterparty limits, which limits exposure to each fund to £5,000,000, and the overall MMF exposure limit of £20,000,000. These are highly diversified, highly credit rated vehicles and therefore there is limited risk to the security of the Council's funds. It is expected that this breach will continue until the end of January 2018.
49. Cabinet is asked to note this breach in the investment policy.
50. Before the end of the year, the Council will expect to borrow around a further £34m to fund further Elwick payments and to support the change in investment strategy, this is in line with expectations.
51. A full list of the Council's investment portfolio is shown at Appendix A

Portfolio Holder's Views

52. To be given at the meeting

Contact and Email

53. Jo Stocks
54. jo.stocks@ashford.gov.uk

Treasury Management Activity

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Fair Value £	Comment
Long Term Investments					
Blaenau Gwent	21/10/2014	2.00	3,000,000	3,000,000	Matures 21/10/2019
Total Long Term Investments			3,000,000	3,000,000	
Investment Accounts					
Santander	Various	0.50	2,723,000	2,723,000	Deposit Account
Goldman Sachs	Various	0.32	50,000	51,295	AAA rated deposit facility *
ICD Portal - BNP Paribas	Various	0.40*	5,000,000	5,000,000	AAA rated deposit facility *
ICD Portal - Invesco	Various	0.35*	5,000,000	5,000,000	AAA rated deposit facility *
ICD Portal - Black Rock	Various	0.31*	1,519,600	1,519,600	AAA rated deposit facility *
Payden Global MMF	Various	variable	3,000,000	3,004,259	AAA rated deposit facility *
Total Investment Accounts			17,292,600	17,298,154	
Pooled Funds					
CCLA Local Authority Property Fund	Estimate	4.60	10,000,000	10,932,865	Rate is Net of Management Fees (Variable Rate of Return)
Total pooled funds Accounts **			10,000,000	10,932,865	
Equity Funds					
City Financial Multi Asset Diversified Fund	27/08/2015	3.37%	997,687	968,635	Long term investment **
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	26/08/2015	4.00%	994,504	1,012,321	Long term investment **
M&G Global Dividend Fund	27/08/2015	2.13%	997,914	1,481,633	Long term investment **
Schroder Income Maximiser	03/11/2015	7.47%	992,152	1,068,068	Long term investment **
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	Various	1.71%	2,988,360	2,989,949	
Total Equity funds **			6,970,617	7,520,606	
Total Investment Portfolio			37,263,217	38,751,625	
Temporary Borrowing					
Middlesbrough Council	20/11/2017	0.50%	5,000,000		Maturity 20/04/2018
Middlesbrough Council	21/11/2017	0.45%	5,000,000		Maturity 09/04/2018
Basildon Borough Council	15/12/2017	0.43%	2,000,000		Maturity 18/04/2018
Durham County Council	15/12/2017	0.50%	5,000,000		Maturity 16/04/2018
Total Temporary Borrowing			17,000,000		
Long Term Borrowing					
Public Works Loan Board***	various	various	117,664,150		Maturity Date - various
Total Long Term Borrowing			117,664,150		
Grand Total Borrowing			134,664,150		

* Money Market Fund (MMF) are AAA rated deposit facilities which have variable rates of interest but have constant net asset

** Equity funds and the Property fund have variable rates of interest and also have fluctuating capital values, the amount stated

*** HRA borrowing



Agenda Item No:	10
Report To:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	8 February 2018
Report Title:	Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 3 2017/18
Report Author & Job Title:	Will Train, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Neil Shorter
Portfolio Holder for:	Finance and IT

Summary: This report seeks to update members and the public on the performance of the Council against its Corporate Plan during Quarter 3 2017/18. This includes information on what the Cabinet has achieved through its decision-making, key performance data, and consideration of the wider borough picture which impacts upon the Council's work.

The organisation's approach to the monitoring of its performance against this plan has been revised. Accordingly, attached are summary highlights from the online Performance 'Dashboard' for each of the Council's Corporate Plan areas.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: N/A

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

I. Note the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan in Quarter 3 of 2017/18.

Policy Overview: In December 2015 the Council agreed a new Corporate Plan - "*The Five Year Corporate Plan – for Aspiration, Action and Achievement*".

This also provided an opportunity to refresh the way in which performance against this new Corporate Plan (and its priority areas) was measured, presented and engaged with by officers and members.

Financial Implications: N/A

Legal Implications N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment Not required because the report relates to a summary of past performance rather than any item requiring decision.

Other Material Implications: N/A

Exempt from Publication: NO

Background Papers: N/A

Contact: Will.train@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233 300394)

Report Title: Ashford Borough Council's Performance – Quarter 3 2017/18

Introduction

1. The report seeks to provide a headline overview of performance against the Council's Corporate Plan for Quarter 3 2017/18.
2. This report provides a summary of the main developments affecting performance during the quarter, whilst the attached highlight summaries provide the key trend data underlying this (**Appendix 1**).

Background

3. Each quarter the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny committees receive an update on how and how well the Council is achieving its objectives.
4. In December 2015 the Council agreed a new Corporate Plan - "*The Five Year Corporate Plan – for Aspiration, Action and Achievement*". This provided an opportunity to refresh the way in which performance against this new Corporate Plan (and its priority areas) was monitored, presented and engaged with by officers and members.
5. Whilst this approach is naturally an evolving one, the aim is for this Performance Dashboard (the Dashboard) to inform the work of both officers and members, providing an ongoing tool which facilitates insight and understanding across the organisation on the state of progress against our goals.
6. As part of the Council's wider governance arrangements, such performance information is used to reflect on the organisation's approach – leading to doing things differently where needed in order to offer efficient services and effective outcomes. As such, in September 2016 the Dashboard was also presented to the Audit Committee.

Summary of Performance Developments in Quarter 3 2017/18

Activity

7. Quarter 3 saw successful activity on a variety of initiatives which will have a positive impact on the outcomes set out in the Council's corporate plan –

October

- a. Aspire Landscape Management celebrated its first year as the Council's in-house grounds maintenance service.
- b. The Council won 'Engagement Team of the Year' and were shortlisted for two further awards at the prestigious national Engagement Excellence Awards.
- c. A significant milestone was reached within the Commercial Quarter development with the topping out of the first phase.
- d. The Council launched a joint operation with KCC to clamp illegally parked HGVs in the Borough.
- e. The Council's Heritage Strategy was approved by Cabinet.
- f. The Mayor's Achievement Awards were launched, recognising exceptional commitment to serving others and the local community.
- g. Aspire had a successful HSE audit at their Carlton Road depot.
- h. The Council and KCC committed to jointly funding a dedicated occupational therapist for the Ashford area. This move will seek to reduce waiting times for disabled facility grants.
- i. The Ashford Snowdogs sculpture trail was announced for the Borough, and will take place over 10 weeks from September to November 2018.
- j. Made in Ashford, a Park Mall based platform for local businesses to test their trade on a flexible basis, celebrated its second birthday.
- k. The Council signed a new partnership agreement with Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT) and both parties will work together to secure major investment into leisure facilities in the Borough.
- l. A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), covering Ashford town centre and part of South Ashford (including the Designer Outlet and Victoria Park) was introduced with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour.

November

- m. The Council's Digital Transformation Strategy was agreed by Cabinet, setting out how the Council will transform its service provision through developing a greater online service and offering customers a wider choice of ways to access Council services.
- n. Cabinet approved an action plan for supporting members of the Armed Forces Community to ensure that current and former service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged because of their service.
- o. A service was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Cambrai at Ashford's WWI Mark IV tank.
- p. The Council was shortlisted in two categories in the prestigious 2018 LGC Awards – Entrepreneurial Council of the Year and Council of the Year.

December

- q. Ashford celebrated 175 years of rail service in the town with the unveiling of a specially named train 'Ashford – Proudly served by rail for 175 years'.
 - r. The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, announced that development consent had been granted for the construction of Junction 10a of the M20.
 - s. Council adopted a discretionary rate relief scheme for the Borough.
 - t. Bethersden Parish Council submitted the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 to the Council for consultation.
 - u. Full Council approved the final submission version of the Local Plan to 2030, and it was submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.
 - v. DEFRA confirmed that Ashford's recycling rate for 2016/17 was 55%, above the national target of 50% for the third consecutive year and 2% higher than 2015/16. The 2016/17 rate means that Ashford is the 35th best recycling local authority in the country, and has the highest rate in Kent.
 - w. The Council began the process of acquiring a property in Beaver Road to provide an additional eight units of short-stay accommodation to replicate the success of Christchurch House.
 - x. A Better Choice for Property Ltd, the Council's property company, purchased a number of properties off-plan at Victoria Crescent.
8. An online timeline of achievements and milestones in delivering the Corporate Plan is now available through the website, alongside the latest Annual Report - <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/transparency/our-performance/our-annual-report/>
9. As part of efforts to ensure that the Council operates transparently, work is currently underway to make the live Dashboard site available to the public. Once completed, a link to the Dashboard will be provided on the Council's website.

Commentary on performance trends

10. Monthly town centre footfall throughout quarter 3 was lower than for the same period in 2016, with a sharp fall (-16.5%) in November. Footfall was up 1.7% across the wider south east and 0.8% nationally in the same period, with retail performance analysts Springboard noting that the increase was largely driven by leisure related trips, rather than spending¹.
11. Average daily footfall has been lower than the previous year's performance in each month of 2017 with the exception of June, where the daily average was slightly above 2016 levels. Footfall has declined nationally over 2017, however Springboard note that this decline has been limited to day time hours, with footfall increasing post 5pm.²

¹ <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2017/12/november-sees-footfall-boost/>

² <http://www.spring-board.info/updates/article/2017-footfall-review>

12. Nationally, online shopping continues to grow, with a 27.2% increase in the number of online transactions in the four weeks leading up to Christmas 2017 compared to a 4.3% increase last year. Over the same period, footfall fell by 3.3% compared to a 1.6% increase in 2016.
13. Vacancy rates for both the high street and Ashford's shopping centres have fallen further over the last year, and are currently at 8%, the lowest level of vacancy since recording began in 2008 and below the national average of 11.1%.
14. Unemployment rates have remained steady over the past quarter at 1.6% of the Borough's population, broadly in line with the Kent average. Youth unemployment remains above the Kent average, but reduced through Quarter 3 to a lower level than the majority of 2017. Across the South East, unemployment levels were largely static over the last two quarters, with national unemployment falling to a 42 year low of 4.3% in November³. National average earnings also increased slightly in the last quarter, up 2.4% (equivalent to £11 per week) from last year.
15. The percentage of Major, Minor and Other planning decisions made within identified timescales all exceeded 80% at the start of Quarter 3, the highest levels achieved in the past 12 months.
16. The number of residents needing temporary accommodation has continued to increase over the last quarter, having moved above 50 (at time of recording) for the first time in the previous quarter.
17. The monthly recycling figures for the Borough showed an increase following lower recorded rates in the summer. Figures released by DEFRA summarising progress over the past year has seen the Borough increase its recycling share by 2% to 55%.

Conclusions

18. Progress continues to be made against the aims of the Corporate Plan, with several performance goals at or near target. The information included within these reports provide merely a high-level snapshot of the information available constantly through the live Dashboard site, interactive Annual Report page and timeline of achievements.

Equalities Impact Assessment

19. N/A

Other Options Considered

20. N/A

Portfolio Holder's Views

21. To be given at the meeting.

³ Office for National Statistics

Contact and Email

22. Will Train, Corporate Scrutiny and Overview Officer
Will.train@ashford.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Enterprising Ashford

Town Centre Footfall



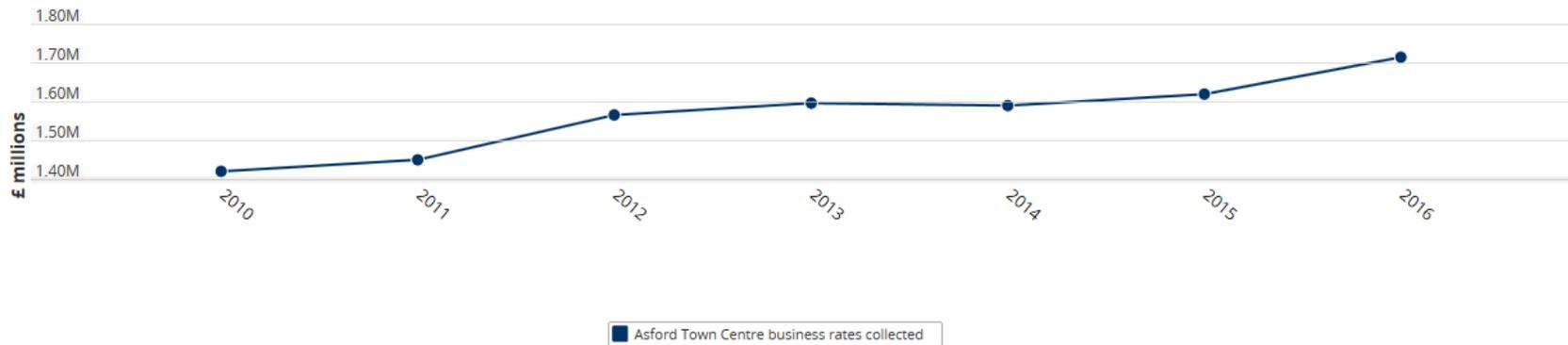
Footfall was lower across quarter 3 than in the same period last year, with a sharp fall in November. This November decline is in contrast to the wider South East and the national picture, where footfall improved on 2016 levels. Across 2017, average daily footfall has followed broadly the same trend as 2016, however daily averages have been below 2016 levels in all months (bar June, where an increase on 2016 performance was seen).

Ashford Town Centre Vacancy Rates



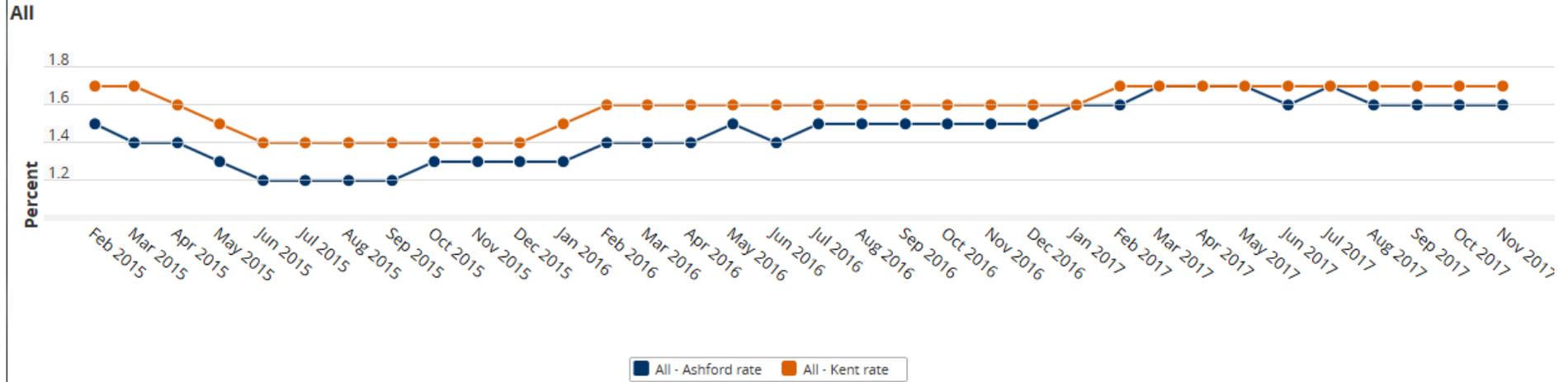
The vacancy rate for the town centre has fallen to 8%, the lowest since rates were first recorded in 2008 and below the current national average of 11.1%. Vacancy rates have fallen across the town centre overall over the last year. Park Mall's historically higher rates have also begun to fall since the Council took over direct operations in 2015, with over half of the vacant units now full. The rejuvenation has been directly attributed with improving customer spend in neighbouring stores such as Wilko.

Town Centre Development and Future Plans



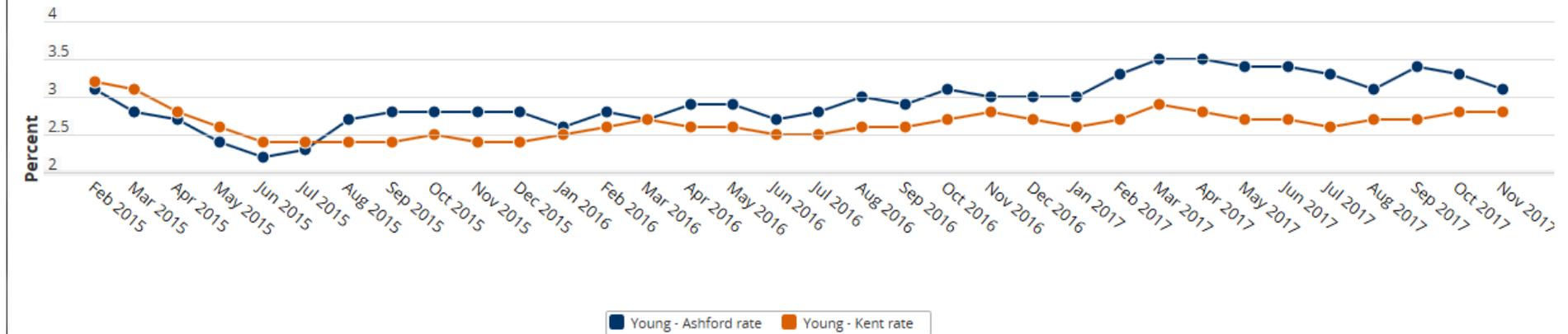
In December 2017 Kent and Medway was confirmed as one of ten areas to participate in a 100% business rates retention pilot scheme.

Unemployment



Following a short period of increase, the total number claiming either Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally for the reason of being unemployed has remained steady or fallen slightly over the last few months, and now stands at just over **1,200**, constituting around **1.6%** of Ashford's working age population.

Young People



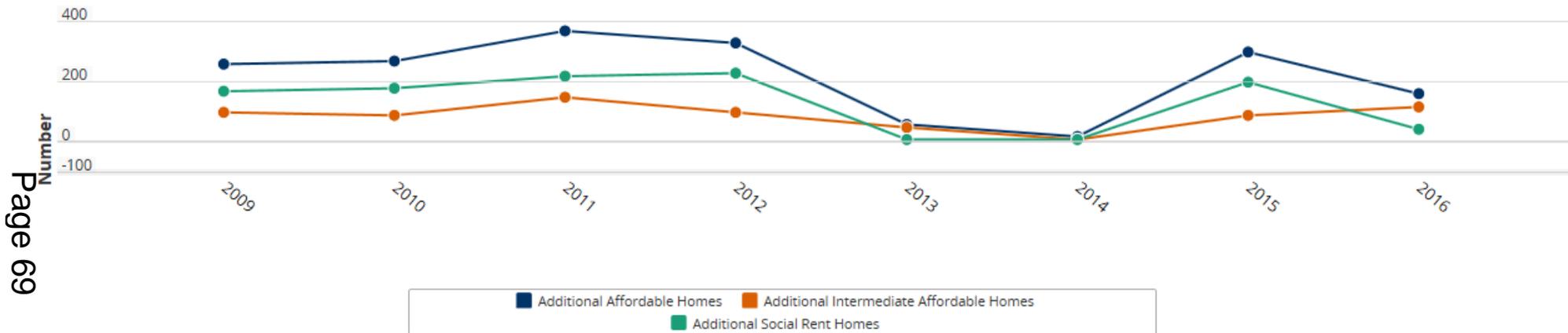
The number of young people (18-24) claiming unemployment benefit remained relatively steady through 2017, but is still slightly higher than the Kent average. A reduction in claimants over quarter 3 has brought claimant levels closer to 2016 performance.

Living Ashford

Affordable Housing

The total additional Affordable Homes is made up of the following two main areas -

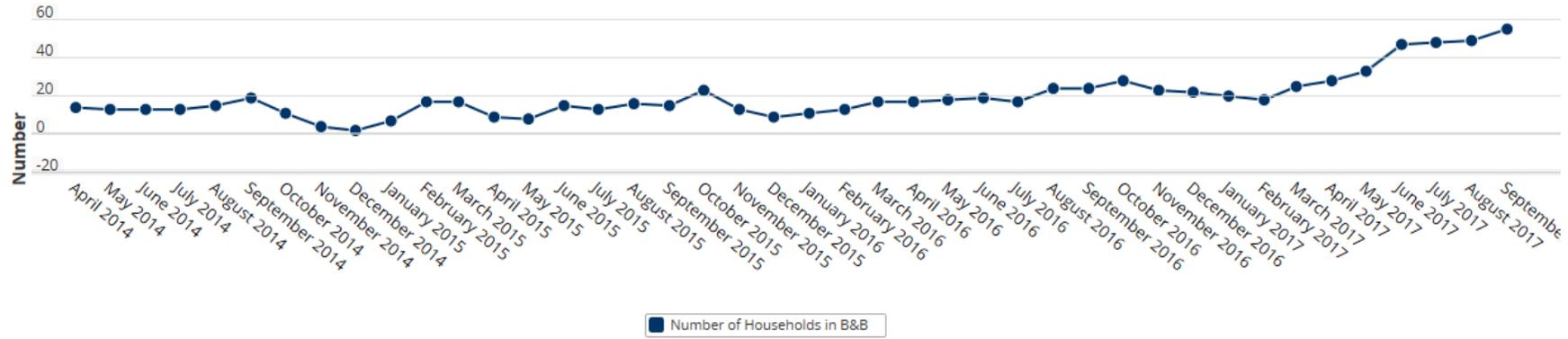
- Intermediate Affordable Homes, which includes intermediate rent and affordable home ownership; and
- Social Rent Homes, which include affordable rent homes



The economic downturn that occurred in 2008 had negative consequences for the housing market, though impacts for affordable housing completions were not felt until later - with a low point occurring in 2013/14.

In July Cabinet received an update on the HRA affordable housing delivery programme, and approved proposals for a new affordable housing programme over the next five years

Temporary Accommodation



By the end of the quarter the average number of households in temporary accommodation had increased to around 55.

House prices and the number of homes sold

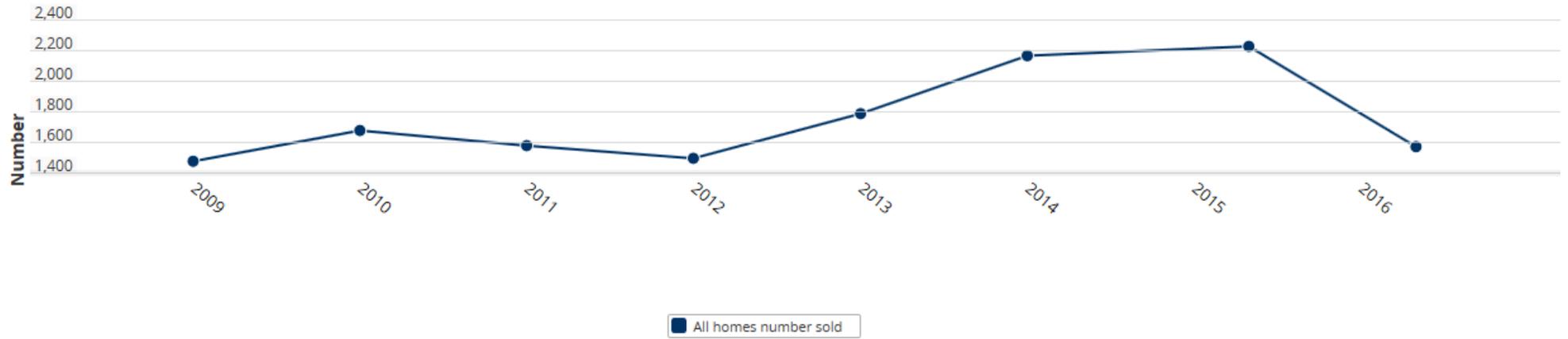
House Price



The average house price in Kent (KCC area) during 2016 was **£283,323**. The average price in Kent (KCC area) has increased for five consecutive years and is now **30%** higher than in 2008.

There were **1,574** homes sold in the Ashford area during the year, **29%** lower than in the year before.

Number of Houses Sold



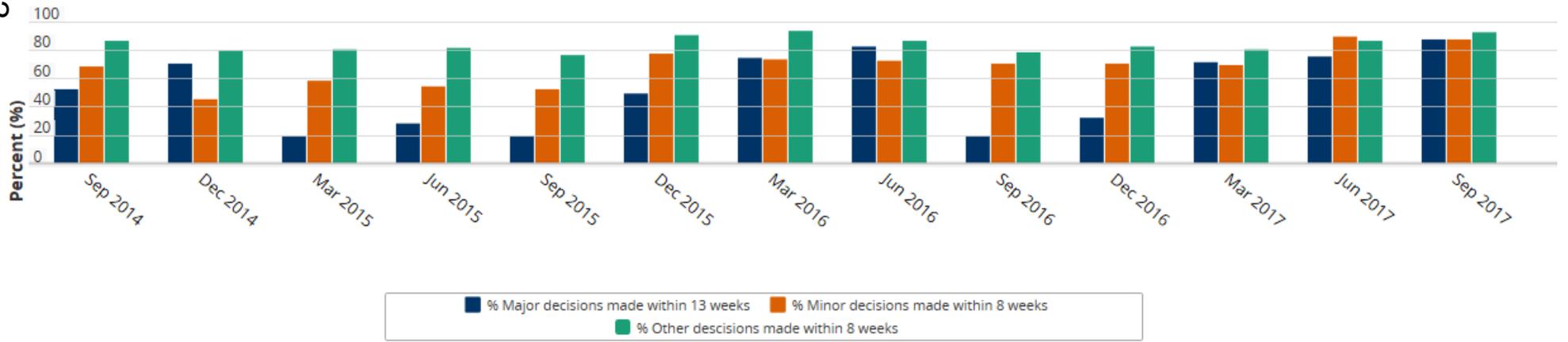
Page 71
In July a new supported housing scheme for vulnerable young people opened at Belgic Court, The Limes – consisting of eight self-contained fully furnished one-bedroom flats and communal facilities

Planning



Page 72

The number of planning applications considered by the council has increased in 2017, largely mirroring the trend of 2016, whilst the last year has seen significant improvement in the percentage of decisions made within target.



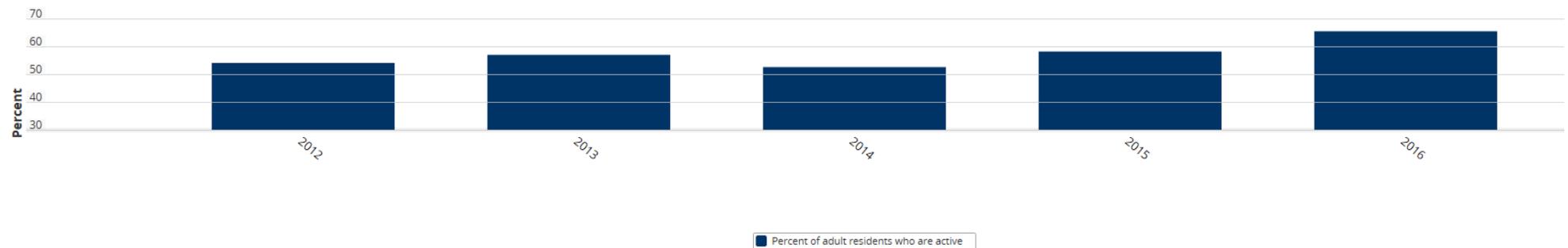


Ashford Borough Council Performance Dashboard

Headline Report

Active and Creative Ashford

Healthy Lives and Active Living



Sport and Health

In June the OneYou Health Shop has been given the go-ahead to continue for a further two years following a successful initial trial.

In July Cabinet approved plans to redevelop the existing play area near Victory Hall, Hamstreet

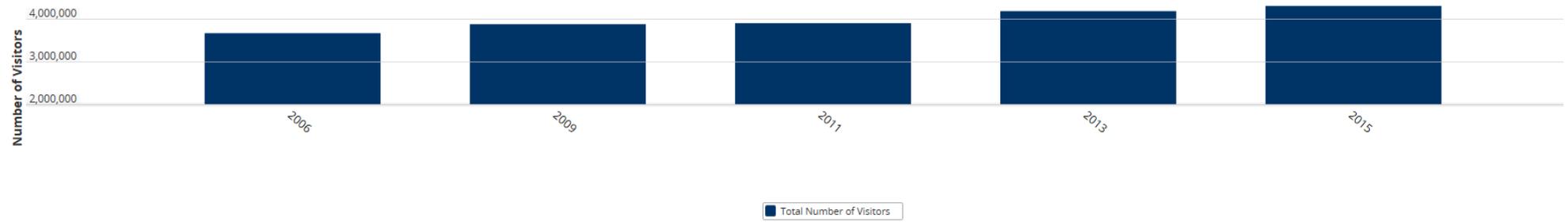
The Council has agreed to host the National Wellbeing Symposium at the Ashford International Hotel in February 2018

In September Conningbrook Lakes celebrated its 20th anniversary with a family fun day that attracted over 1,000 people to try canoeing, paddle boarding and other activities

Supporting Culture and Creativity

Tourism

In September 2016 a refreshed www.visitashfordandtenterden.co.uk website, which promotes the tourism offer of the borough, was launched during an event at Eastwell Manor.





ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ashford Borough Council Performance Dashboard

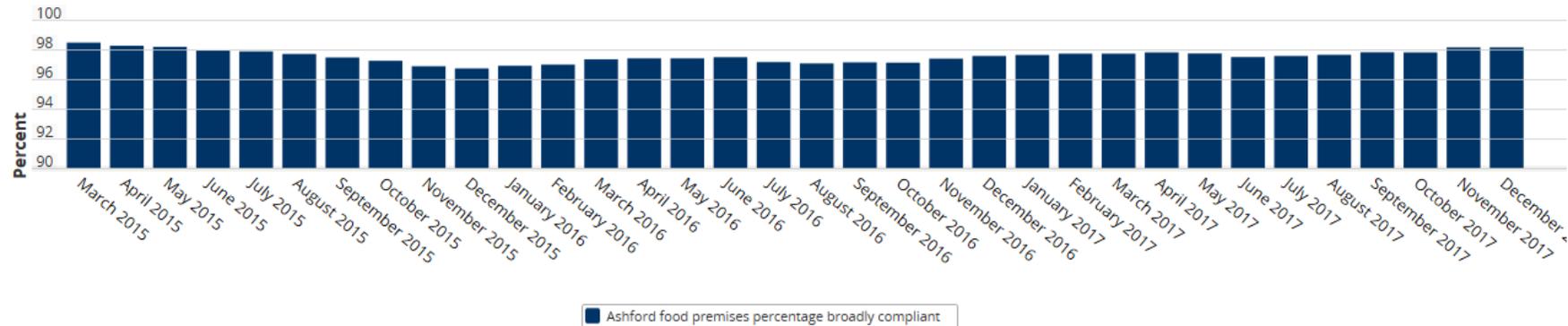
Headline Report

Attractive Ashford

Quality Across the Borough

Food Business Hygiene

There are almost 1,300 registered food businesses within the Borough. All are inspected on a regular basis according to their risk category.

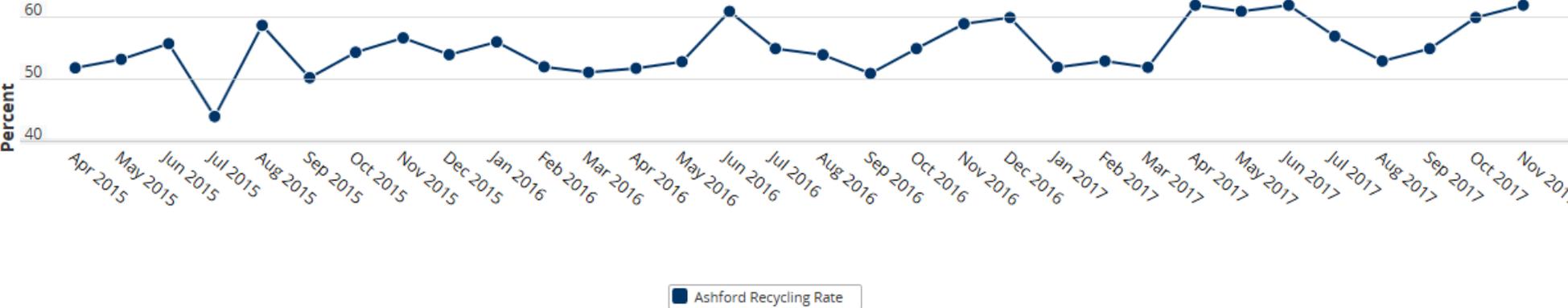


This graph shows the percentage of businesses that are broadly compliant with food hygiene standards. Any business found to be non-compliant either receives a formal letter or a revisit. The percentage compliant upon inspected has remained within a half percent range during the last six months. Guidance is provided to food businesses in the first instance and notices are service if conditions do not improve. Food businesses are also given a food hygiene rating which can view at <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/food-hygiene-rating-scheme>. In September 2016 the Council approved a revised Food Safety Policy, which ensures a consistent approach to food safety inspections, enforcement and food sampling in line with current nationally accepted standards.

Other Measures to Improve Ashford

In December DEFRA released annual league tables for recycling, which recorded Ashford's recycling rate for 2017 at 55% - a 2% increase on last year. This result means that Ashford remains the best recycling authority in the county and is placed 35th nationally.

Recycling





Agenda Item No: 11
Report To: CABINET
Date of Meeting: 8th February 2018
Report Title: Domestic Abuse Annual Report
Report Author & Job Title: Alison Oates
Community Safety Team Leader
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Bradford
Portfolio Holder for: Health, Parking and Community Safety

Summary: This report will update the Cabinet on the multi-agency work completed over the course of 2017 by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators. This work is in conjunction with the Ashford Domestic Abuse Forum (ADAF) who supports victims of domestic abuse within the borough.

The report provides the detail of how the work supports victims of domestic abuse and addresses future work plans.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. **Note the work of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)**
- II. **Endorse the work of partners tackling domestic abuse**
- III. **Agree that future updates on Domestic Abuse are included in the annual Community Safety report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from next year.**

Policy Overview: Our work on domestic abuse is key to supporting those most vulnerable within our communities and provide necessary services.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications: None

Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required

Other Material Line management of the council's domestic abuse

Implications: coordinators and responsibility for the overall work programme falls now sits with the Community Safety Team Leader.

Exempt from Publication: No

Background Papers: No

Contact: Alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330513

Report Title: Domestic Abuse annual report

Introduction and Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update in relation to the domestic abuse coordinator role and the domestic abuse commissioned services. The report also demonstrates the achievements over the past 12 months and identifies the forward plan. The work around domestic abuse relies on a strong multi-agency approach and this is something that Ashford prides itself on. This is mainly due to the domestic abuse coordinator role being the driving force.
2. The domestic abuse coordinator role is to provide support to the Ashford Domestic Abuse Forum (ADAF), coordinate the One Stop Shop (OSS) and facilitate group courses for victims of domestic abuse such as the “Freedom” programme and “Recovery Tool Kit”.
3. The domestic abuse coordinator role is a full time position that is currently subject to a job share arrangement. This allows for greater flexibility and resilience when directing resources to the One Stop Shop. A review of where the domestic abuse role best sits within the organisation has recently been undertaken. This is to ensure the most effective delivery of services going forward. Our work in this area closely compliments the work undertaken by the Community Safety Unit (CSU), therefore a change of line management with direct report to the Community Safety Team Leader took place from 2 January 2018. Domestic abuse is a key part of community safety and requires the same level of multi-agency engagement alongside the other community safety priorities such as anti-social behaviour and safeguarding. This also compliments the new policing model ‘New Horizon’ that came into force from September 2018 where specialists teams are in place to deal with vulnerabilities and in particular those cases where there is the highest impact on the victims.
4. In addition to funding the domestic abuse coordinator post, the council assists by providing funds towards an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) for Ashford through the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service.

Current Position

Commissioned Services in Ashford

5. Kent County Council (KCC) redesigned their domestic abuse commissioned services, integrating the support services across the county. Previously women’s refuges and floating support were commissioned by KCC and the IDVA service was partnership funded, with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) holding the contract. The IDVA service is where the council’s funding plays an important role. A number of partners working in the

domestic abuse support field deliver the new integrated service. The contract for Ashford, Canterbury and Shepway is delivered by Centra, with Rising Sun subcontracted to provide the IDVA support from 2017 to 2024. Centra have years of experience of providing refuge support within the borough. A new domestic abuse support service and referral pathway was created in April 2017.

6. Over the next 6 years Rising Sun will continue to provide the IDVA and outreach provision for the borough. This will maintain consistency as Rising Sun have been the service provider within Ashford for many years and have delivered an outstanding service to victims of domestic abuse.
7. IDVAs act as a primary contact for victims of domestic abuse. The IDVA proactively works with a client from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of options available and act as an advocate on the client's behalf. This service aims to encourage and enable the voice of the victim to be heard by the required service providers ensuring that advice and support given safeguards the victim and their family.
8. The IDVA generally works with victims who have been identified, as high risk, through a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
9. The table below shows the number of Ashford cases which have progressed through the MARAC process:

Year	Cases	Number of repeat victims
Jan 2016 to Sept 2017	107	23
Jan 2017 to Sept 2017	101	28

10. This indicates that the number of initial contact cases in Ashford has slightly reduced. However, the number of repeat victims has increased.
11. Rising Sun have also secured additional funding to provide the following services in Ashford:
 - Adolescent girls' service – This project provides long term mentoring support to girls aged between 11 and 24 who are at risk of being exploited or abused, as well as initiatives to improve relationships between mothers and their daughters.
 - Liberty programme – this is a 10 week supportive group programme for women aged 18-24 who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. The programme explores the tactics and impacts of domestic abuse along with how to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.

- Adolescent boys’ service – This is a two-year pilot project running from 2016 to 2018. It supports adolescent boys who are showing signs of violent behaviour, normally from being exposed to violence in the family home.
- All about me programme – 1 to 1 support by specialist providers for children who have been affected by domestic abuse.

12. Victim Support play a key role in assisting each of these services. They provide an assessment and triage service at the central referral hub. In addition, they provide support to victims whose cases have been identified as “standard” risk by working with the commissioned services and other agencies to provide proportionate interventions such as extra safety planning advice.

Kent Police

In September 2017, Kent Police were restructured to create a new policing model known as ‘New Horizons’. The core purpose of this restructure was to allow Kent Police to focus on the vulnerability of the victim as opposed to the crime type. They have created a number of specialist roles and teams. The key role in relation to domestic abuse is their Domestic Abuse Police Community Support Officer (PCSOs). They are the main point of contact for those victims identified as medium risk and act as the liaison between partners and Police.

13. Domestic Abuse continues to be a Kent Police priority and they are committed to protecting those at risk and bringing offenders to justice.

Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop

14. The Ashford Domestic Abuse OSS is a free drop-in service for anyone affected in any way by domestic abuse who feels they could benefit from support, help or advice. It is a free and confidential service and no appointment is necessary. This is currently one morning a week in a safe environment.

15. The figures below show the attendance at the Ashford One Stop Shop for the previous two years:

Location	No of visitors 2015/16 (July 2015 to June 2016)	No of visitors 2016/17 (July 2016 to June 2017)	% increase/decrease in visitors (compared to previous year)
Ashford	362	443	20% increase

16. There has been an increase in attendance that it is believed to be due to the leadership, delivery and awareness of the facility that is provided by the domestic abuse coordinator. This also indicates that people affected by domestic abuse have confidence in the service and attend to receive the necessary help and support.

17. There is an increased number of returning visitors, with 20% attending the OSS on two or more occasions. This again highlights how this is an essential service for people affected by domestic abuse. Some of the visitor's stories and feedback (examples of which are provided at **Appendix A**) best reflect the success of the OSS.
18. During the year, July 2016 to June 2017, 26 male victims attended the OSS accounting for just under 6% of the total attendance.
19. Ashford OSS is the second busiest in the county. **Appendix B** provides a full comparison of OSS attendance across the county.
20. The OSS continues to be an area for professionals to work together in a coordinated response. This year has seen the council's Housing Options Team strengthen commitment to attend weekly slots ensuring that anyone attending with urgent housing needs can be dealt with quickly and effectively. This is proving highly successful for clients at the OSS with positive feedback being received from victims and professionals.

Group work

21. Ashford has a consistent approach for delivering support groups. The main service being the 'Freedom' programme. This is a 12-week course to help victims of domestic abuse understand the impact on their lives and their children's lives. It enables them to understand the behaviour that they were exposed to and to be aware of warning signs in possible future relationships.
22. The Freedom Programme is organised by the domestic abuse coordinator and delivered by a number of partners including Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS), KCC Education Service and Centra. The venue for these courses and any required crèche facilities are also provided free of charge via the Beaver Community Trust, a commissioned service within Ashford.
23. There have been six Freedom programmes completed within the past 12 months and these have supported a total of 94 victims of domestic abuse.
24. In 2015, funding was secured by the ADAF to run 'The Recovery Toolkit' and this funding continues to date. The recovery toolkit is a psycho-educational resource that includes a cognitive behavioural therapy module. In the last 12 months, three courses have run in the borough and this has supported 29 individuals.

Training and awareness

25. It is important that all front line professionals have an awareness of domestic abuse and the referral pathways. The following training has been completed within the borough by the domestic abuse coordinator:
 - Multi-agency awareness session held on 30 November 2017. This was attended by over 50 front line professionals from a variety of agencies including ABC housing, KCC community wardens, schools and mental health.

- Bespoke domestic abuse training was provided to William Harvey Hospital A&E staff, paediatric nurses and hospital administration staff. As a result, the hospital identified that domestic abuse knowledge needed enhancing within the hospital and have since secured funding to provide a hospital IDVA.
- The domestic abuse coordinators organised and facilitated a workshop at “Safety in Action” entitled “Personal responsibilities and consequences”. In total, 1200 primary school year six pupils engaged with this workshop over the two-week event period.
- The domestic abuse coordinator supports the council’s learning and development officer by co-running the Safeguarding Level 2 courses.

Community Safety Partnership Funding

26. Ashford Community Safety Partnership (CSP) receives a small grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to support local projects that meet the PCC priorities and those of the CSP. Domestic abuse meets both of those requirements and the following funding was provided to support domestic abuse work:

- £500 provided to the ADAF to act as a flee fund for victims of domestic abuse that have to flee a situation where they are at significant risk of harm. This money is used to purchase essentials such as food, one night’s accommodation or travel. This also provides an accessible fund for victims who do not have recourse to public funds but need emergency help.
- £203 provided for printing costs for OSS advertising cards which are distributed to promote the Ashford shop and encourage victims to attend the free ‘drop in’ service so they can seek support and advice.
- £300 provided for facilitating two domestic abuse awareness courses held in November 2017. Over 50 front line professionals attended these sessions from KCC, ABC, Schools and housing providers.

Moving forward

27. In 2018/19 the key areas of focus for the domestic abuse coordinator will be:

- Perpetrator programme - the domestic abuse coordinator has been trained by Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC) to deliver this programme. The first course is due to take place in the early part of 2018. This is a 12-week programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse. It aims to assist them to understand the impact of their behaviour and help them to build respectful relationships. The course will be made up with 50% self-referrals and 50% who are required to do so as part of a rehabilitation order.

- Developing greater understanding of ‘hard to reach’ communities and how they can be supported – due to the diversity of the borough it is felt that more work needs to be completed to establish where and how to engage fully to ensure all victims are supported where possible. A community assessment will be completed followed by an action plan in order to understand the best way to provide the services.
- Rural drop in service – due to the size of the borough it is felt that there is a need to explore the options surrounding a “drop in” service to the rural communities. Scoping work will initially be completed to understand the demand alongside the ability to deliver.
- A campaign to increase facilitators to run the group work both professionals and volunteers.
- Completing the Freedom programme review. This is a county-based project and the aim is to continue to deliver the service but more efficiently with reduced delivery costs.
- In 2017, the Council was successful in a bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for £100,000 of funding to provide emergency accommodation to people within the borough. The project is aimed at providing a service to female victims of domestic abuse and to provide support to those from hard to reach communities. This project will be progressed through Management Team and ADAF in the form of a project initiation document (PID).

Implications and Risk Assessment

28. Councils play a key role, alongside other agencies, in tackling domestic abuse by safeguarding victims, offering services to reduce the impact and holding perpetrators to account. This has been recognised by the council’s commitment to permanently fund the domestic abuse coordinator post and the financial contribution to the IDVA.

Equalities Impact Assessment

29. Not required as the report relates to a summary of past performances rather than any item requiring a decision. The service is available to everyone.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

30. In preparing this report, the views of our major stakeholders were sought including the Chair of the ADAF, Community Safety Police Inspector and Service Director for Rising Sun.

Conclusion

31. Due to the drive and enthusiasm of the domestic abuse coordinator there has been a great deal of work completed including training events, group work and continued growth of the OSS.
32. The ADAF has received charitable status, meaning additional funding streams will become available. They will be working towards securing funding, as a priority, to support future domestic abuse projects within the borough.
33. The work being undertaken across the borough to support the domestic abuse agenda has been extremely valuable. Services are dealing with more victims than ever before and feedback from other agencies and organisations has been positive with many victims and their families being supported and safeguarded.
34. The council continues to play an integral part in helping those families in crisis. The committed funding for this area of work ensures that services are coordinated and that Ashford has the necessary dedicated professionals to continue helping those at risk. The council can be justifiably proud of its role in helping victims of domestic abuse within the borough.

Portfolio Holder's Views

35. The council continues to play an important role in coordinating the response to domestic abuse. This ensures that Ashford has many excellent services committed to supporting such a worthwhile cause. This report highlights the marvellous work that has been undertaken by a range of agencies and I am impressed by the future work plan. I fully support the recommendation that this report forms part of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Process.

Contact and Email

36. Alison Oates, Community Safety Team Leader
alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk, Tel: 01233 330513

Appendix A – One Stop Shop Feedback

Service was brilliant and very helpful. Thanks you for your help”

“Great advice. Feel more at ease with my situation and not alone in finding a solution for my son”

“Brilliant service. Advice on everything that was asked for. Police, caring and listens to you. Felt very confident and reassured. Referrals advised and made easy”

“All staff were kind and welcoming. I felt comfortable to be talking to them about my situation”

“Thank you very much. You have given us what we needed”

“It was very informative, I have steps to take to help me move forward with this issue”

The information I received was very beneficial and I found it very helpful and the people are supportive”

Appendix B - One Stop Shop visit figures across the County

Location	No of visitors 2015/16 (July 2015 to June 2016)	No of visitors 2016/17 (July 2016 to June 2017)	% increase/decrease in visitors (compared to previous year)
Ashford	362	443	22.38%
Canterbury	328	293	-10.67%
Dover	188	208	10.64%
Shepway	260	295	13.46%
Maidstone	222	182	-18.02%
Dartford	138	111	-19.57%
Gravesend	135	106	-21.48%
Herne Bay	163	157	-3.68%
Medway	638	546	-14.42%
Sheerness	167	64	-61.68%
Sittingbourne	208	148	-28.85%
Thanet	281	146	-48.04%
Tonbridge	70	53	-24.29%

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item No: 12
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 8th February 2018
Report Title: Memorial Safety in Burial Grounds
Report Author & Job Title: Alison Tickle, Environmental Operations Manager
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Clair Bell
Portfolio Holder for: Environment and Land Management

Summary: An extensive memorial safety inspection was carried out from May 2017 to January 2018 on all memorials in both open and closed burial grounds that are the responsibility of Ashford Borough Council. This report provides members with the outcomes of the inspections and options for undertaking any remedial works that may be required and associated costs.

Key Decision:

Significantly Affected Wards: All wards in the Ashford Borough

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. Agree that any category 1 memorials that do not receive remedial attention inside 12 months be carefully, horizontally re-laid**
- II. If further memorials become category 1 from future inspections, the same procedure is followed to contact grave owners and where required carefully horizontally re-lay**
- III. Approve the updated rules and regulations**

Policy Overview: Ashford, as a burial authority, has the principal responsibility for safety in the cemeteries and closed churchyards under its management. This responsibility includes a duty to take, reasonably practicable measures to prevent injury from unstable memorials. In order to fulfil this duty, Councils are recommended to have a testing policy and inspection programme with a maximum inspection interval of five years.

Financial Implications: Finances have been identified in reserve funds which will meet costs of this work going forward.

Legal Implications: The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not required. Actions to be undertaken in delivery of the inspection and remedial safety work which will be assessed individually with regard to their impact on equalities.

Exempt from Publication:

Background Papers:

Contact:

alison.tickle@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330390

Report Title: Memorial Safety in Burial Grounds

Introduction and Background

1. In March 2016, Cabinet supported the approach to be taken to memorial testing and inspection for Ashford Borough Council's open cemeteries and those which are closed burial grounds, that are now the responsibility of the Council. It was agreed that following the initial survey, a further update would be provided with the outcomes of the survey, outline costs and proposed changes to the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.
2. The survey of all memorials, which have been carried out by a National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMMs) approved stonemason, followed the inspection process previously reported to Cabinet. For ease of reference for this report, the key information required relates to the categorisation of the memorials:
 - Category 1 – immediate action is required to make the memorial safe or to stop the public accessing the memorial; or
 - Category 2 – the memorial is not an immediate danger but is not fully stable and will, therefore, need to be monitored every 12 months to assess any further deterioration of the memorial; or
 - Category 3 – The memorial is stable and will need to be re-inspected in 5 years' time.
3. The public were informed of the inspections being carried out in several ways, these were:
 - Notices placed in the local papers
 - Letters sent to all grave owners who purchased their right of burial in the last 30 years
 - Notices erected in all open and closed cemeteries
 - Information made available on Ashford Borough Council's website.

Following the inspections, memorials that were classified as category 1 and 2, the grave owners were sent letters advising of the findings of the inspections and the action they needed to undertake.

4. In the event that a memorial was classified as a category 1 and deemed an immediate danger to the public, either of the following actions would have been taken at the time of the inspection:
 - The installation of a temporary support using a staking and protective banding system where the size and location of the memorial allows; or
 - The installation of a temporary barrier to the perimeter of the memorial or sections of a cemetery where there is more than one category 1 assessed memorial.

The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order allows us to make memorials safe but has no power to force memorial owners to undertake repairs.

This work has been undertaken very sensitively. It was carefully planned notifying the public/grave owners prior to the inspections being carried out and then of outcomes. Only one complaint was received. The nature of the complaint was regarding the classification of the memorial.

Proposal/Current Position

5. Between May and November 2017 memorial safety inspections were carried out in all four of the council's open cemeteries: Willesborough, Bybrook, Tenterden and Canterbury Road. The closed cemeteries that Ashford Borough Council are responsible for were inspected between November 2017 and January 2018.
6. During the memorial safety inspection of open cemeteries 7957 headstones in total were surveyed. Of those surveyed 177 were classified as a Category 1 and 564 classified as a Category 2. A breakdown of each cemetery is detailed in the table/chart below in Appendix 1.
7. Immediate action has been taken with 177 memorials graded as Category 1 in the open burial grounds to make them temporarily safe: 168 memorials were "staked and banded" and 9 barrier fenced.
8. Where memorials were categorised 1 and 2, 298 letters were sent to owners of graves/memorials going back over a period of 30 years. The owners/family were advised of the findings and the action that needed to be taken. Of the 298 letters sent 115 were returned as "not known at this address". Since the letters have been issued, 22 permits have been submitted for repairs. We have also identified that 2 memorials that were identified as unsafe have had their protective banding removed with no remedial works undertaken and have had to be re-staked. The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order allows us to make memorials safe but has no power to force memorial owners to undertake repairs.
9. Therefore, out of the 168 memorials that were "staked and banded" in the open cemeteries, there are still 146 memorials requiring permanent remedial work. The options are:
 - Instruct an approved stonemason to undertake the repairs and pay the cost of this; or
 - Arrange to have the memorial re-laid horizontally; or
 - Remove headstones where they are in several pieces or inscriptions are no longer legible.
10. Inspections carried out to 1993 memorials in the 13 closed burial grounds identified that there were 10 memorials classified as category 1 and 10 classified as category 2. Within four of the closed burial grounds 5 memorials that were classified as category 1 have been barrier fenced: 1 at St Mary's Church Yard, Ashford, 1 at Vicarage Lane, 2 at High Halden (one of which is a tomb) and 1 at Molash. Four of these memorials are listed and will require repair. The cost to repair these 4 listed memorials will be approximately £10,500 with £10,000 being the estimated cost to repair the tomb due to the specialised work required to undertake any repair.

The only circumstances where we must repair a memorial headstone rather than re-lay it horizontally or remove it is where that memorial is listed.

Implications and Risk Assessment

11. In order to take the next step of the process and undertake the appropriate action there will be financial costs. These costs are based on estimates provided by our NAMMs accredited stonemason and cater for worst case scenarios:

- a. To repair and refix a memorial headstone on a plinth;
- b. To repair and refix a headstone and kerb memorial;
- c. To re-lay headstone and undertake pocketing (see below);
- d. To re-lay a large headstone requiring lifting equipment
- e. To undertake specialist repair to a listed item (1 x tomb)

	Bybrook	Canterbury Road	Tenterden	Willesborough	All closed	Per unit £	Cost £	Summary Costs £
a.	26	15	43	57	5	315	45,990	100,990
b.	7	6	10	65	0	625	55,000	
c.	33	18	53	117	3	35	7,245	17,245
d.	0	3	0	5	2	1,000	10,000	
e.	0	0	0	0	1	10,000	10,000	10,000

12. If we were to repair all memorials that are identified as a category 1 and still in an unsafe condition this could cost £100,990 (rows a and b) whereas re-laying a memorial could cost £17,245, plus £10,000. A difference of £83,745.
13. We have the power to completely remove any memorial that is on a grave where the inscription is illegible or which is dilapidated by reason of long neglect. This is in line with The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977. This is likely to incur the same costs as laying the memorial flat plus disposal costs, however, it is not our intention to do this.
14. Additionally some burial grounds have "listed" memorials. Any items that are listed would need to be repaired and not laid down. Such items may have special requirements placed on the listing to ensure that the work is carried out to meet the specification and may require a specialist (beyond the abilities of an accredited memorial mason) to undertake the work.
15. The risk of re-laying a memorial is that we could create a trip hazard if there are any elements that are protruding above ground level. A solution to this would be to carry out "pocketing", where necessary. Pocketing involves excavating the ground behind the memorial and carefully laying the memorial slightly in the ground so that the face of the memorial is level with the ground, to avoid trip hazards. This also ensures that grounds maintenance in the cemeteries (which is hand strimming around the memorials) does not damage the memorials. This method of maintaining the cemeteries is already an adopted practice.

16. In addition to the category 1 memorials detailed above, category 2 memorials will require re-inspection a year after the initial inspection and may require re classification to a category 1. With this in mind, detailed below are figures of all category 2 memorials and potential costs if they were all re-classified as a category 1.
- a. To repair and refix a memorial headstone on a plinth;
 - b. To repair and refix a headstone and kerb memorial;
 - c. To lay down a headstone and undertake pocketing;
 - d. To lay down a large headstone required lifting equipment

	Bybrook	Canterbury Road	Tenterden	Willesborough	All closed	Per unit £	Cost £	Summary Costs £
a.	26	11	2	273	5	315	99,855	234,855
b.	12	14	5	181	4	625	135,000	
c.	39	25	7	454	5	35	18,550	77,550
d.	1	0	0	53	5	1000	59,000	

17. If we were to repair all memorials detailed above (rows a and b) this could cost £234,855 compared to re-laying a memorial (rows c and d) which could cost £77,550. A difference of £157,305.
18. To ensure we are not faced with unsafe newly installed memorials we have reviewed the cemetery rules and regulations (detailed in Appendix 2) including the provisions for memorial placement.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

19. Consultation was carried out prior to the inspections being undertaken with churches concerned and the diocese for permission to undertake the inspections. The public were made aware of the inspection programme through the media and direct advertisements, where the work was being undertaken. All affected grave / memorial owners have been written to at their last known address. Each memorial that is currently category 1 has been staked and banded and a notice attached for a period of 12 months to allow time for owners to contact us before any further actions is taken.
20. All work that is being delivered is in line with the recommendations from the Ministry of Justice.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

21. Category 1 memorials that have had no remedial work to make them safe inside 12 months should be re-laid horizontally. This option deals with any safety issues immediately and effectively. This option also allows the memorial owners (where known) to resurrect and fully repair or replace their memorial at a later date, should they so choose.
22. Going forward our in house grounds maintenance team (Aspire) are being fully trained over the winter period, to be qualified to undertake the memorial inspections. Inspections will be carried out on a 5 year rolling programme

based on risk assessments initially undertaken. This will assist with keeping budget expenditure for the inspections to a minimum and ensure that we have an up to date risk assessment for all our memorial headstones and the mechanism in place to deal with any issues as they arise.

Conclusion

23. The Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendation that where memorials are found to be unsafe (category 1), have been staked and banded, memorial owners contacted but no remedial works undertaken inside 12 months, that said memorials will be re-laid horizontally.

Portfolio Holder's Views

24. This report has demonstrated the extensive work undertaken in this inspection programme and this Council's commitment to the health and safety of our residents and visitors.
25. The next stage of the process will be carried out as sympathetically as possible to both the environment and the owners of graves. Where it is considered appropriate due to the sensitive nature of a memorial (war memorial) or where it is listed a full repair may be required.

Contact and Email

Alison Tickle, Environmental Operations Manager Tel: 01233 330390
Email: alison.tickle@ashford.gov.uk

		Cemetery Statistics			Outcome of inspections		
	Cemeteries	No of Graves	No of Memorials	%	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3
Open Burial Grounds	Willesborough, Church Road, Ashford	4745	1800	37.93	71	477	1252
	Bybrook, Cemetery Lane, Kennington	8931	2913	32.62	32	40	2841
	Tenterden, Cranbrook Road, Tenterden	3277	1396	42.60	53	21	1322
	Canterbury Road, Ashford	10704	1848	17.26	21	26	1801
Closed Burial Grounds	Grave Yard Station Road, Tenterden	N/K	67	-	0	0	67
	St Mary's Church, Little Chart	N/K	52	-	0	0	52
	St Mary's Church, Ashford Town Centre	N/K	179	-	1	0	178
	St Mary's Church, High Halden	N/K	219	-	2	3	214
	St Mary's Church, Kennington	N/K	196	-	2	6	188
	St Mary's Church, Willesborough	N/K	117	-	0	1	116
	St Michael's and All Angels Church, St Michaels, Tenterden	N/K	219	-	3	0	216
	Old Burial Ground, Vicarage Field, Ashford	N/K	138	-	1	0	137
	St Peter and Paul Church, Appledore	N/K	233	-	0	0	233
	St Mildred's Church, Tenterden	N/K	348	-	0	0	348
	St Mary's Church, Stone	N/K	89	-	0	0	89
	St Peter's Church, Newenden	N/K	73	-	0	0	73
St Peter's Church, Molash	N/K	63	-	1	0	62	



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cemetery Rules & Regulations

V.4 10 Jan 2018

Page 97



Contents

1	Cemeteries Regulations	3
2	Burial Authority	3
3	Our Cemeteries	3-5
	3.1 Opening Times	
	3.2 Conduct in Cemeteries	
	3.3 Maintenance	
4	Cemetery Grave Sections	5-7
	4.1 Lawn Sections	
	4.2 Non Lawn Sections	
	4.3 Children's Sections	
	4.4 Muslim Sections	
	4.5 Woodland Section	
5	Fees and Payment	7
6	Memorials	7-11
	6.1 Erecting a Memorial	
	6.2 Inscriptions	
	6.3 Memorial Measurements and Type	
	6.4 Memorial Safety	
7	Arranging a burial	11-13
	7.1 The Interment	
	7.2 Cremated Remains	
8	Exhumations	13
9	Right of Burial	13-14
	9.1 Exclusive Right of Burial	
	9.2 Public Graves	

1. Cemeteries Regulations

The rules and regulations for the control and proper management of the Cemetery are made under the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (as amended) and replaces Version 3.0 December 2017 of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

If you need help in interpreting the rules and regulations please contact the Cemeteries Officer.

The council reserves the right to alter, add to or amend the Regulations from time to time as necessary.

2. Burial Authority

The Burial Authority is Ashford Borough Council, located at Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL

Cemeteries Officer Tel: 01233 330472 or email: cemeteries@ashford.gov.uk

It must be noted that none of the following can take place without specific permission of the burial authority:

- a. Burials or exhumations
- b. Burial of ashes
- c. Erection or fixing of a memorial, including trees and plants
- d. Inscription on a memorial
- e. Renovation of a memorial
- f. Removal and /or replacement of a memorial

3. Our Cemeteries

Bybrook Cemetery (opened 1928)

Cemetery Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN24 9JX

Canterbury Road Cemetery (opened 1859) Canterbury Road, Ashford, Kent TN24 8LB

Willesborough Cemetery (opened 1882)

Church Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 8LB

Tenterden Cemetery (opened 1887)

Cranbrook Road, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6UG



3.1 Opening Hours

Our cemeteries are open to visitors every day including weekends and all public holidays.

Monday to Saturday: 07:30 hrs – 21:00 hrs or sunset whichever is the earliest Sunday and Public Holidays: 08:00 hrs – 21:00 hrs or sunset whichever is the earliest Outside of these hours, the cemeteries are closed and secured.

Ashford Borough Council has the right to close the cemeteries at any time without prior notice.

3.2 Conduct in Cemeteries

Under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, it is an offence for anyone to wilfully:

- create any disturbance in a cemetery
- commit any nuisance in a cemetery
- interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery
- interfere with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, or any flowers or plants in any such matter
- play any game or sport in a cemetery
- enter or remain in a cemetery when it is closed to the public, unless authorised by the council to do so

The council reserves the right to refuse access to a cemetery if anyone is intoxicated or showing signs of drug abuse that could lead them to cause a public nuisance or disorder. No person is to vandalise any grave, memorial, wall, fence, tree, plant or shrub in the cemetery.

All visitors should enter and exit the cemeteries using the main entrances and pedestrian gates only.

Children under the age of 12 are not authorised to visit our cemeteries unless under the supervision of a responsible adult.

No person is to display any printed paper, notice or sign without the authorisation of the burial authority.

No person may canvass, promote or sell their services to visitors in a cemetery.

Dogs are welcome in the cemetery to attend a funeral or accompany someone who is visiting a grave but must be kept on a short lead. If a dog fouls, the owner must clean up any dog faeces and dispose of it in a litter or dog bin or remove from site. Failure to clean up after your dog may result in a fine or prosecution.

3.3 Maintenance

The council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrub, tree, plant or flowers if, in the opinion of the Cemeteries Officer, they have become unsightly, overgrown or dangerous in any area of the cemetery.

Grass cutting, leaf and litter clearing, upkeep of trees, shrubs, flower beds and hedges will be carried out by the council or their contractor, at a frequency determined by the council. The

council reserves the right to disconnect the water supply when notice has been given that there is a risk of drought, freezing conditions or the water supply is abused.

The council has the right to remove from graves: flowers, wreaths, weeds, rubbish, fencing, border edging, glass objects and other decorations which have either perished and/or are a hazard or encroach on an adjacent grave space and dispose of such items without prior notice to the owner.

Consideration should be given to wildlife in cemeteries and be aware that they can cause damage to tributes on graves such as flowers and plants. The nature of their activity can also cause the ground to be uneven and small holes may appear therefore it is recommended that flat shoes should be worn and attention should be given for any trip hazards.

4. Cemetery Grave Sections

In this section are details of what the various sections of the cemeteries are and any specific rules for those sections.

In general though for all sections of the cemetery:

- The deceased must be transported to the graveside in coffin/casket, solid box, container, closed van or other suitable means. It is not permitted to transport an uncovered body into the cemetery
- Any open grave is a potential danger and should not be entered by anyone other than authorised staff of the council or their contractor.
- Any containers left on the grave must be of a non breakable material
- Any items left on the graves are at the owners own risk
- The council cannot be held responsible for any breakages however caused
- The council may remove any articles from any grave that are likely to cause risk, damage or offence or which may interfere with the councils maintenance of the site
- Memorials cannot be erected with out prior permission from the Cemeteries Officer (Please refer to section: 6. Memorials)

4.1 Lawn Grave Sections

A lawn grave is a grave that remains as grass with the exception of the area at the top end of each row of graves where headstones may be erected with the council's permission.

A space of 18" (457mm) deep in front of the memorial may be cultivated and planted with seasonal plants. Any fencing or edging must be kept within the 18" border. The planting of annuals and seasonal bulbs or miniature shrubs to the height of 12" (300mm) are permitted within the headstone border but must not be allowed to encroach on the lawn area of the grave or any neighbouring grave space.



The grave area must be maintained as grass lawn. Artificial grass is not allowed on the grave space.

Kerbs or any other memorial/artefact placed on the lawn section of the grave are not permitted and the council has the right to remove any such items without prior notice to the owner.

The following cemeteries have lawn grave sections in the areas as detailed below:

Bybrook Cemetery Sections 95-99

Willesborough Cemetery Sections 50-57 Tenterden

Cemetery Sections H-M

4.2 Non Lawn Sections

Non lawn graves (otherwise known as traditional kerb grave) are in the older sections of the cemeteries and are permitted to have both a headstone and a kerb memorial placed on the grave with the council's written consent.

The planting of annual and seasonal bulbs or miniature shrubs to the height of 12" (300mm) are permitted within the grave space but must not be allowed to encroach on any neighbouring grave space.

4.3 Woodland Grave Section

Both Bybrook and Tenterden cemeteries have a woodland section dedicated for natural burials. This section of the cemetery is designed to look and feel like a natural woodland area. Burials are carried out only using biodegradable materials. This means that any body wrappings/clothing must be made of natural fibres and the coffin/casket must be made of cardboard.

The use of embalming fluid is discouraged however a flexible policy on this will be practised where environmentally safe balm may be used to assist funeral directors.

The council will provide and install a wooden marker post with a memorial plaque. This will be the only item allowed on the grave. Traditional type memorials such as headstones are not permitted in the woodland section of the cemeteries. The council has a right to remove any other memorial or artefact from the grave area without notice to the owner.

If a grave has been allocated a memorial tree, the plantings will be arranged for the months of December, January and February. The family will be invited to agree the date and attend the tree planting. If they wish to hold a ceremony at the time of the tree planting this would be their responsibility to organise.

Where graves have been allocated a memorial tree only native woodland plants can be planted. Details of species can be obtained from the Cemeteries Officer.

4.4 Children's Section

Within each cemetery, there is an area designated for infant graves for the burial of children under 5 years of age.

On these graves it is permitted to have:

- A small headstone and kerb memorials with council approval
- Small ornaments and decorations such as toys, teddies or windmills
- Fencing or border edging

However, the following are not permitted:

- No large ornaments, toys or any other artefact such as cots
- No breakable, glass or sharp items
- Headstones or kerb memorials that are brightly coloured
- Headstones or kerb memorials that are not traditional in nature of style

4.5 Muslim Burial

In Bybrook cemetery there is a section dedicated for Muslim burials. These graves are orientated to face Mecca.

When undertaking the burial and in the event where a coffin/casket is not used to contain the body in the grave, the deceased must be wrapped in a shroud or suitable cloth and kept from public view during the burial service.

The usual notice period for a burial is 24 hours. The Cemetery Officer must be in receipt of a completed Notice of Interment, appropriate certificates for burial and applicable fee prior to any burial taking place.

5. Fees and Payment

All fees and charges regarding cremations, burials and memorials must be paid before the funeral service.

Charges are in accordance with the council's published scale of fees for cemeteries; these are available on our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/fees-and-regulations.

All fees and charges must be received by the Cemeteries Service, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

Cheques must be made payable to Ashford Borough Council.

The fees and charges for any burial must be paid at the time of giving notice of booking and all other fees paid before the work to which they relate is started.

The price of a woodland grave includes the purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial, digging the grave, plaque and post.

6. Memorials

Only stonemasons that have been approved by the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMMS) will be permitted to undertake any work on memorials within the council's cemeteries.

The stonemason will be required to supply to the Cemeteries Service a copy of their NAMMS certificate together with current insurance certificates before any permits will be issued.



Headstones must be in keeping with the cemetery appearance and only natural colours are allowed. There will be no permission granted for brightly coloured memorial, any that are not of a traditional style or any that are made of glass or materials that will become fragile and breakable when exposed to the variety of weather conditions.

Designs and inscriptions must be submitted to the council on the form 'Application for Permission to Erect a Memorial'. This form must also detail the grave number, dimensions of the memorial (height, width and depth).

Every grave that has a current Exclusive Right of Burial deed and a monument or memorial placed on the grave, must be kept in good repair and condition by the owner and remains at the owner's sole risk. The council is not responsible for any damage or injury which may occur to the memorial or caused by the memorial to a person visiting or working in the cemetery grounds.

The council may remove, without notice, any monument, memorial, stone, tree, shrub, plant or item erected or placed in the cemetery in contravention of these regulations or reaches a condition that that can be a health and safety risk.

6.1 Erecting a Memorial

The 'Application for Permission to Erect a Memorial' must be signed by the registered owners of the graves on which the memorial(s) are to be placed.

The number of the grave space and stonemason's name must be inscribed into the base of the headstone/memorial with letters no larger than 3/4 " in height.

No monuments, memorials or materials may be taken into a cemetery before 8.30 am on any working day or at any time on Good Friday, Christmas Day, Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holiday unless with the prior consent of the Cemeteries Service.

Memorials must be fixed so that the backs of them stand in line with those on a base.

Memorials fixed without basement stones must be in line with those fixed in basement stones.

All monuments and materials must be carried into the cemetery in such a way as not to cause any damage to roads, walkways or grass areas.

Everyone employed in fixing, painting, or restoring memorials, must leave the cemetery by 5.00pm or the hour of closing - whichever is earlier.

All materials must be carefully removed from vehicles and neatly piled or placed in or near where they are to be used, as directed by the Cemeteries Service. No working is permitted on roads, walkways, or adjoining graves.

All surplus materials, rubble and rubbish must be removed from the cemetery grounds immediately following any work undertaken and where a removal of a memorial has been required prior to an interment the area should be cleared in time for the funeral cortege arrival.

The structure must be ground anchored by an approved method and most suitable for the soil condition. Fixings generally shall be in accordance with the current Code of Working Practice of the National Association of Memorial Masons.

6.2 Inscriptions

Stonemasons must not inscribe any inscription until it has been approved, or start a monument until the dimensions and other details have been submitted to the Cemeteries Service with the fees and approval has been granted in writing.

Only inscriptions on the face of the memorial are permitted .

The council reserves the right to refuse permission for a memorial where the inscription is unsuitable.

6.3 Memorial Measurements and Type

Below are details of the maximum dimensions and types of memorials that can be placed on graves in which the Exclusive Right of Burial have been granted:

Bybrook Cemetery

Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections 95-99	3' (914mm) high x 3' (914mm) wide	Not permitted
Non Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
All older sections not mentioned in Lawn Section above	3' (914mm) high x 2' 10" in (865mm) wide (overall headstone with kerbstone must not exceed 3' 6" (1050mm) high)	7' long (2134 mm) x 2' 10" (865mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high
Children Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections 76 - 84	3' (914 mm) high x 2' (609 mm) wide	4' long x 2' (609mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high

Willesborough Cemetery

Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections 50 - 57	3' (914mm) high x 3' (914mm) wide	Not permitted
Non Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
All older sections not mentioned in Lawn Section above	3' (914mm) high x 2' 10" in (865mm) wide (overall headstone with kerbstone must not exceed 3' 6" (1050mm) high)	7' long (2134 mm) x 2' 10" (865mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high



Children Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections 36, 43,47	3' (914 mm) high x 2' (609 mm) wide	4' long x 2' (609mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high
Garden of Remembrance (Cremated Remains)	Headstone	Kerb
Sections 42	18" (450mm) high x 18" (450mm) wide x 18" (450mm) front to back	Not permitted
Sections 58 & 59	24" (600mm) high x 20" (500mm) wide x 20" (500mm) front to back	Not permitted

Tenterden Cemetery

Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections H – M	3' (914mm) high x 3' (914mm) wide	Not permitted
Non Lawn Section	Headstone	Kerb
Sections A - D	3' (914mm) high x 2' 10" in (865mm) wide (overall headstone with kerbstone must not exceed 3' 6" (1050mm) high)	7' long (2134 mm) x 2' 10" (865mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high
Children Section	Headstone	Kerb
Section G	3' (914 mm) high x 2' (609 mm) wide	4' long x 2' (609mm) wide x 6" (1800mm) high
Garden of Remembrance (Cremated Remains)	Headstone	Kerb
Section E	24" (600mm) high x 20" (500mm) wide x 20" (500mm) front to back	Not permitted
Section F	24" (600mm) high x 18" (450mm) wide x 18" (450mm) front to back	Not permitted
Area 1 (Graves 1-178)	18" (450mm) high x 18" (450mm) wide x 18" (450mm) front to back	Not permitted
Area 2 (Graves 180-219)	24" (600mm) in high x 20" (500mm) wide x 20" (500mm) front to back	Not permitted

6.4 Memorial Safety

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all burial authorities to ensure that memorials are safe so that the potential for injury to those visiting and working in the cemetery is reduced.

Memorials remain in the ownership of the grantee of the Exclusive Right of Burial who is responsible for all future maintenance. In the event the grantee of the Exclusive Right of Burial is deceased then the next of kin is responsible for all future maintenance.

The council will undertake a programme of inspections rolling over a 5 year period and will categorise headstones as follows:

- a. Category 1 – immediate action is required to make the memorial safe or to stop the public accessing the memorial; or
- b. Category 2 – the memorial is not an immediate danger but is not fully stable and will, therefore, need to be monitored every 12 months to assess any further deterioration of the memorial; or
- c. Category 3 – The memorial is stable and will need to be re-inspected in 5 years time.

If a memorial is identified as a Category 1 this may result in the memorial being laid flat or a stake and protective band placed around the memorial to make the memorial temporarily safe. Areas where there are several identified as a Category 1 the area may be cordoned off to prevent public access.

Notification will be sent to the owner of any headstone/memorial that is identified during the inspection or at any other time that it has been graded as at Category 1 or Category 2 risk and requires remedial works.

If the name and/or address of the owner is not known where records have not been updated, a notice shall be considered properly served if placed upon the grave space, monument or memorial.

It is illegal for anyone to remove, alter or disturb a monument, headstone, tombstone, flat stone, gravestone or memorial inscription which has been erected, placed or made in any cemetery without the council's consent.

If the owner or another person removes any protective banding or barriers without approved repairs being carried out they will be responsible for any injury or death caused by unsafe memorials.

7. Arranging a Burial

No interment can take place unless the council has received a "Certificate of Disposal" from the Registrar of Births and Deaths or an "Order for Burial" from the Coroner, or a "Certificate of Cremation" from a crematorium, as appropriate.

Reservations for burial services must be made to the Cemeteries Service providing a minimum of 4 working days notification.

Reservations are considered "provisional" until the formal document 'Notice of Interment' is received.

The council will not accept any responsibility for any delay of information or documents or any misunderstanding if instructions are not provided on formal documents.



We accept notice of burial as 'confirmed' when we receive all forms and certificates to fulfil both statutory and the Burial Authority requirements.

The completed 'Notice of Interment' document should be received no later than two full working days before the proposed date of the funeral, this excludes Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. The period of notice may be waived for recognised religious reasons.

No body may be buried, or cremated remains interred unless the grave owner signs the interment form except where the deceased is the grave owner.

The council reserves the right to delay or cancel any interment where, in its opinion, ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial is disputed.

7.1 The Interment

To organise a date for an interment contact the Cemeteries Officer.

Interments can take place on any weekday, other than public holidays as agreed with the council.

The council will not organise any interments for the Christmas period.

The Grantee (owner of grave) or his/her representative or appointed Funeral Director should advise the council if the deceased to be buried has died of an infectious disease which may require special arrangements.

Relatives or friends of the deceased must make their own arrangements for the conduct of any burial service. Any authorised or recognised minister, or any other authorised person, may officiate at interments providing the ceremony is conducted with decorum.

The time booked for a funeral must be when the procession is to arrive at the cemetery. The time must be strictly adhered to in order to prevent one funeral interfering with another.

If a funeral arrives late there may be an additional fee to be paid.

We require prior notice for extraordinary funeral processions. For example, the use of a horse drawn hearse, a military funeral, a cortege of vehicles exceeding 30 cars or when a police escort is to be in attendance.

The Funeral Director or person arranging the funeral is responsible for providing sufficient bearers to transfer the coffin from the hearse to the graveside. Cemetery staff are not permitted to assist with bearing.

Burials will normally take place:

April to August - Monday to Friday 09:30 – 14:30 (excluding Public Holidays)

September to March - Monday to Friday 09:30 – 13:30 (excluding Public Holidays) The council may amend these times for recognised religious reasons.

Excavation of all graves shall be carried out by staff employed by or on behalf of the council. No grave shall be excavated beyond such a depth as the council may determine.

The grave will be excavated by the council in accordance with the Cemeteries Act, and all current applicable Health and Safety Legislation. If any health and safety issue is compromised on excavation, the excavation will be discontinued until all issues relating to health and safety are resolved to a satisfactory conclusion. If this results in any delay or postponement of a funeral there will be no compensation for this and on occasion, this may necessitate a new

grave being excavated by the council to replace the allocated grave. Where the allocated space was a reserved plot, a new Exclusive Right of Burial Deed will be issued by the council at no cost to the owner but will be for the same period as originally issued.

Graves will be of a sufficient size to admit coffins or caskets to the dimensions specified on the "Notice of Interment" form submitted by the Funeral Director or the person arranging the funeral. If the grave has to be enlarged, the Cemeteries Officer may add an extra charge.

For any oversized grave, the council has the right to charge for two grave spaces.

Un-coffined burials may take place provided a body is properly shrouded, death has not been due to a notifiable or infectious disease, and it is for a single interment or a last interment in a multiple grave.

All coffins/caskets must be made of perishable materials. Coffins/caskets made of or lined with materials such as metal or plastic are not permitted.

The council reserves the right to retain any grave spaces for its own purposes.

The council will erect a wooden cross and a plaque on every new grave. The council have the right to remove the cross if it deteriorates to a poor condition or when a memorial is erected on the grave.

The council and any contractor appointed by the council has the right to place soil on graves when digging an adjacent plot for a burial without any notice. Cemetery staff will remove the soil immediately following a funeral and leave the area tidy.

The authorised officer will determine the method of excavation of a grave taking into account the location, access and health and safety.

7.2 Cremated Remains

The scattering of cremated remains over graves, or in any area of the cemetery is not permitted.

The unauthorised disposal of cremated remains within the council's cemeteries is deemed a criminal offence and those found to be carrying this out act will be prosecuted.

8. Exhumations

It is unlawful to disturb any remains buried in the Cemetery unless all legal requirements are complied with. For un-consecrated land, a licence from the Ministry of Justice is required. In the case of consecrated land, a faculty from the Diocese of Canterbury must be obtained.

9. Right of Burial

9.1 Exclusive Right of Burial

Any Exclusive Right of Burial deed granted may be transferred by a grantee to another person but the transfer must be agreed and recorded by the council. Such right may also be bequeathed by will whose executors must confirm its accuracy in

Cemetery Rules and Regulations
V.4 - 10 Jan 2018

writing. In either case a transfer fee may be payable.

Owning an Exclusive Right of Burial for a grave does not give ownership of the actual land, but does give the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial Deed the right to:

- Be buried in that grave if space is available
- Authorise further burials in that grave, where space is available, or the interment of cremated remains in that grave
- Place a memorial on that grave, subject to the council's Regulations relating to memorials
- Have inscriptions, or additional inscriptions, on a memorial on that grave, subject to the council's regulations on this.

The Exclusive Right of Burial deed, like any other deed, is an important document and should be kept in a safe place.

Following the death of the grantee, the Exclusive Right of Burial in any grave space must be transferred and re-registered before the grave can be further re-opened or any stone or monument erected on the grave or any existing stone or monument repaired, altered or removed. No interment can take place in any grave unless a prior grant of Exclusive Right to Burial in that grave has been made. The name and address of the owner of this right must be given to the council at the time of giving notice of the interment.

9.2 Public Graves

A public grave is an unpurchased grave where no Exclusive Right of Burial exists. There is usually no family connection with those buried in this type of grave. No memorial rights exist for a public grave, therefore no headstone or memorial can be placed on it without the councils consent.





ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Agenda Item No: 13

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 8th February 2018

Report Title: **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

Report Author & Job Title: Ian Grundy – Principal Policy Planner

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Clokie (Planning & Development)

Portfolio Holder for:

Summary: The Council has a statutory duty to plan for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers by identifying suitable sites in their Local Plans to meet an identified need. In addition to the approach set out in the submitted Ashford Local Plan the Council is committed to preparing a specific Development Plan Document that deals with Gypsies and Travellers.

The Issues and Options report is the first stage in the process of preparing the Gypsy and Traveller DPD and poses a series of consultation questions.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: ALL

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- 1. Agree the Gypsy and Traveller DPD – Issues and Options report - for the purposes of public consultation**

Policy Overview: The Council has a statutory duty to plan for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers by identifying suitable sites in their Local Plans to meet an identified need. The submitted Ashford Local Plan includes two sites and a general policy dealing with windfall applications. The Council is committed to preparing a specific Development Plan Document that deals with Gypsies and Travellers and the Issues and Options report is the first stage in that process.

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications at this stage

Legal Implications: In preparing a Local Plan, the Council has to comply with procedural and legal duties as set out in its Statement of Community Involvement and in statutes, regulations and guidance.

Equalities Impact Assessment See Attached.

Other Material Implications: None

Exempt from Publication: **NO**

Background Papers: None

Contact: ian.grundy@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330642

Report Title: Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document – Issues and Options Report

Introduction and Background

1. The Borough Council has a statutory duty to plan for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers by identifying appropriate sites within its Local Plans based on an identified need.

Proposal/Current Position

2. The Ashford Local Plan, which was submitted for public examination on the 21st December 2017, includes two sites for gypsies and travellers for a total of seven new pitches together with a general policy that enables the Council to assess and deal with planning applications for windfall sites.
3. In order to address the provision of pitches it is proposed that there should be a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) that deals with Gypsies and Travellers. The Issues and Options report is the initial stage in that process.

Implications and Risk Assessment

4. The submitted Ashford Local Plan proposes to meet the gypsy and traveller requirement through a combination of allocating sites for traveller pitches and a windfall policy against which individual applications may be considered. There are two site allocations proposed in the Local Plan that provide a total of seven pitches. It is acknowledged that the proposed seven pitches do not meet the overall identified need for pitches. Policy HOU16 in the Local Plan deals with potential windfall sites coming forward. The Local Plan also includes a policy (HOU17) that seeks to safeguard existing traveller sites.
5. The current approach set out in the submitted Local Plan presents a risk that at the Local Plan examination the Inspector may take the view that there should be additional sites identified and he or she could instruct the Council to identify further sites before he or she could find the Plan sound which would lead to further delay.
6. In the light of the above, the Council's preferred approach is to prepare a separate Gypsy and Traveller DPD which would involve the Council in identifying potential sites but that the two currently proposed sites allocated in the draft Local Plan and the associated policies HOU18 and 17 should also continue to be rolled forward in the submitted Plan.
7. In the early stage of plan-making, a common practice amongst Local Planning Authorities is to prepare a report setting out what the authority considers to be the main issues that the DDP will address and what the options are for dealing with those issues. The topic of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation lends itself to such an Issues and Options report as a way of exploring options

available to the Council and gauging the public reaction. The Issues and Options consultation will be an opportunity to engage directly with parish councils, in addition to other stakeholders and representatives of the gypsy and traveller communities themselves.

8. One of the primary remits of the Issues and Options consultation will be to act as a vehicle for finding suitable gypsy and traveller sites in the borough. Whilst previous bespoke “call for sites” exercises for specific gypsy and traveller pitches and sites have yielded few suitable alternatives, the Issues and Options process can be part of a concerted effort to identify suitable sites.

Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Members are referred to the attached Assessment. There are no significant implications identified in respect of the nine protected characteristics.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

10. The submitted Ashford Local Plan that includes the proposed two sites for gypsies and travellers was the subject of extensive public consultation.
11. The draft Issues and Options report has been discussed and agreed by the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task group.
12. The Issues and Options report will be the subject of extensive public consultation for a six week period in accordance with Council’s Statement of Community Involvement.

Other Options Considered

13. The main alternative is to proceed with the current Local Plan and rely upon the proposed policy HOU16 to deliver a suitable supply of appropriate windfall sites.

Next Steps in Process

14. The Issues and options report will be published for a six week period of consultation which will include a concerted “call for sites” process. There will be an assessment of the various responses and the next step will be the publication of a draft Plan setting out site policies and proposals.

Conclusion

15. The submitted Ashford Local Plan does not make enough provision for gypsy and traveller sites to meet the identified need and the most appropriate course of action is to produce a separate DPD that will deal exclusively with gypsies and travellers. The first stage in that process is the production of an Issues and Options report that will set out some of the key issues for public consultation. The principle purpose of the report and the consultation will be a concerted effort to identify additional sites for gypsy and traveller pitches.

Portfolio Holder's Views

16. I hope that the results of this consultation will be helpful in assisting the Council to produce a successful plan for the provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation for the next decade.

Contact and Email

17. Contact for this report: ian.grundy@ashford.gov.uk tel: 01233 330213

This page is intentionally left blank

Ashford Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople DPD – Issues and Options for Consultation

Introduction

Ashford Borough Council are committed to meeting the identified needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community within the borough. In order to meet this need, the Council is in the process of developing a Development Plan Document for Gypsies and Travellers. This document seeks the views of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, residents and stakeholders, on the issues and options for Gypsy and Traveller site selection in Ashford.

The issues and options outlined within this document are not a statement of intention by Ashford, instead they are designed to highlight the key themes and suggested options upon which we need your views. Consultation on the issues and options report and consideration of the responses to consultation will assist the Council to analyse the merits and drawbacks of all the practical options available for providing sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. As part of this issues and options consultation, we are seeking to identify suitable sites to consider for inclusion as Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople sites within the DPD. Suggestions for the inclusion of specific sites are an important aspect of consultation on this particular Issues and Options report.

The format of the report is to provide some background information and then pose a series of questions to help guide responses, and there is the opportunity to raise further issues and options as part of this consultation.

How to make comments and submit a site for consideration?

A digital copy of this document, the response forms and site submission forms are available at www.ashford.gov.uk Hard copies are available at the following locations:

- Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL
- Ashford Gateway, Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
- Charing Library, Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LR
- Tenterden Gateway, 2 Manor Row, Tenterden, TN30 6HP
- Wye Library, 6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF

Hard copy representations and site submissions can be sent by post to:

Planning Policy
Ashford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Tannery Lane
Ashford
TN23 1PL

Policy background

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for local authorities to replace their Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks.

Currently, the Development Plan for Ashford is made up of the Core Strategy, and a number of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Core Strategy is the principal Development Plan Document and was adopted in July 2008. This sets the overarching strategic guidance and principles for development and frames the more detailed policies that are delivered through lower level documents.

The Borough Council has prepared a new local Plan that will cover the period to 2030. This plan was submitted for public examination in December 2017.

The term 'Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople' is a broad term that refers to a diverse range of groups with different ethnicities, histories and cultures. Appendix 1 of this document provides some details of cultural definitions as used in this document.

The Equality Act of 2010 provides protection from discrimination based upon, amongst other things, race. The courts have established that because of their ethnic group, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected against race discrimination under the Equality Act.

Why a DPD is needed?

Gypsy and traveller sites can be contentious. The travelling community often believes that inadequate provision is being made for their basic housing needs and the settled community often considers that the travelling community has an unfair advantage. Making adequate site provision will benefit the travelling community and will also enable the Council to take appropriate action against unauthorised developments where necessary.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires that local planning authorities identify and update annually a five year supply of deliverable sites for travellers, and to identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites, or broad locations for years 6-10 and where possible years 11-15.

The DPD will identify a number of sites for potential residential occupation by Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople based upon the numbers identified through an accommodation assessment. A DPD is not to be read in isolation from the Local Plan or other planning documents, and the selected sites will need to be those which are the least in conflict with national and local planning policies and those which are the most acceptable to both the travelling and settled populations. The benefits and disadvantages of the sites which come forward will need to be carefully examined so that sustainability considerations are given particular weight.

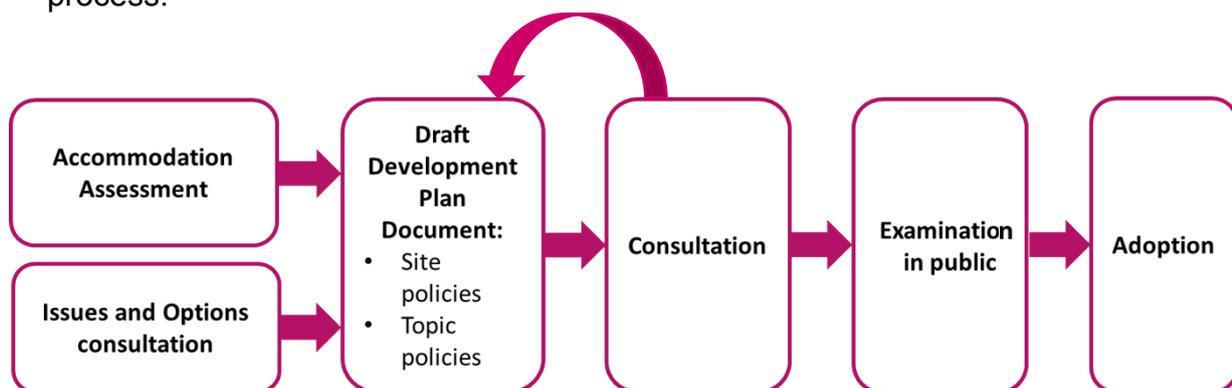
The Issues and Options Report has the following aims:

- 1. To identify the main issues as they relate to locating sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople.**

2. To seek and obtain suggestions of specific sites which could be considered for allocation in the Submission Document.
3. To set out a framework for the selection of sites and seek views on the issues and options that have been identified as being important to this process.
4. To invite comments on the types of site to be provided, ownership and management of the sites, where those sites should be located and any other relevant issues which may arise.

The main stages in the preparation of the DPD are as follows:

1. Formulating the Evidence base
 - a. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
 - b. Issues and Options report - setting out the broad issues and options and seeking views on these through a wide consultation exercise. Responses are then considered and may lead to changes in the matters to be included in the next stage. This Issues and Options report does not suggest specific locations but seeks details of sites to be considered.
2. Publication of the Draft Development Plan Document
3. Consultation on the Draft Development Plan Document
4. Examination in public - this is a hearing conducted by a Planning Inspector. The Council and objectors to the plan are invited to present evidence at the hearing.
5. Adoption - If the plan is found to be sound as a result of the Examination in Public, it is adopted by the Council and becomes an important tool in the decision making process.



Community Involvement

Community involvement will follow the pattern set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2013. The Council's SCI ensures that all sections of the community, including local voluntary and community groups and organisations, key stake holders, Parish Councils, service providers, landowners, individuals and developers, are actively involved throughout the process of preparing Development Plan Documents. In the case of this DPD, it will be particularly important to involve

Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople, those groups which represent them, and members of the settled community likely to be affected by the site allocations.

Comments made on the Issues and Options Report will inform the drafting of the document to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval (the Draft Submission Document). A further full consultation will be carried out on this Draft Submission Document and acceptable changes to the plan will be made in response to the representations received if necessary.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

A Sustainability Appraisal or 'SA', is an essential part of the preparation of a DPD and the process of preparing the Sustainability Appraisal runs alongside the preparation of the DPD.

What happens next?

Once a period of consultation on this Issues and Options document has been undertaken, the responses received will be taken into account in the next stage of plan preparation. The next stage is the production of the Draft Submission version of the DPD. As a result of public consultation carried out on the Draft Submission Document, minor changes may be agreed and these are notified to the Secretary of State when the DPD is submitted for approval. If as a result of the representations received, it becomes apparent that significant changes are needed, the Council will make appropriate amendments. A period of consultation on the amendments would then be necessary prior to the document being submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

The DPD will be submitted to the Secretary of State together the Sustainability Appraisal and a summary of the main issues raised in response to the consultation process. The Council will need to explain how issues raised by objectors have been addressed. Matters raised by the DPD and particularly those to which objections have been made, are then discussed at an Examination in Public, which is a hearing chaired by a Planning Inspector acting on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Gypsies and Travellers in Kent

Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople have lived in the UK for around five hundred years and estimates put the Gypsy and Traveller population at around 62,000.¹ With its concentration of fruit and vegetable farms Kent has historically had a high population of Gypsies and Travellers because these farms needed a large mobile workforce.² This provided an ideal way for Gypsies and Travellers to make a living. The annual round of farm work began in late spring with hop training and throughout the summer and autumn Gypsies moved from farm to farm as each crop needed harvesting. In the days of horse drawn caravans the extended family would travel and work together following a seasonal pattern of work on the county's farms. In winter they would pull on to one of the traditional stopping places on the edges of towns.

Despite this embeddedness within British histories, Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople have, and continue to be misunderstood, maligned or romanticised and government policy has increasingly led to their marginalisation. Whilst legislation against Gypsy and Traveller culture dates back to the passing of the Egyptians Act of 1530³, the latter half of the twentieth century saw the passing of a series of laws that served to increasingly criminalise the nomadic way of life. In the years after the Second World War much of the traditional farm work gradually disappeared due to increasing mechanisation and the use of chemicals in farming.

By the mid 1960s all hops were picked by machines and herbicides had dispensed with the need for hand weeding. Gradually the fruit farms that still needed extra labour at harvest time were beginning to employ students from abroad rather than travellers and other local people. During this period Gypsies and Travellers continued to resort to their traditional over wintering sites on the edges of major urban settlements where some casual employment could be gained. As the farm work dried up, so did the impetus to keep travelling, and some of the winter stopovers gradually became permanent sites and other families moved into houses. This period coincided with The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, which gave the power to council's to close commons to Gypsies and Travellers, thus removing their traditional stopping places. These powers were subsequently made obligatory in the Caravan Sites Act of 1968, meaning that local authorities had a statutory duty to enforce the Act and remove caravans from sites.⁴ Although there has been a shift away from the

¹Office for National Statistics, 2011 *Census analysis: What does the 2011 Census tell us about the Characteristics of Gypsy or Irish Travellers in England and Wales?* Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/datasets/2011censusanalysiswhatdoesthe2011censustellusaboutthecharacteristicsofgypsioririshtravellersinenglandandwales>, Accessed on 31/10/2017.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland, (2013), *Gypsy Travellers In Scotland; A resource for the media*.

² BBC Kent (n.d.) *The history of Gypsy Travellers in Britain*, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/voices/history_intro.shtml, accessed on 31/10/2017

³ Friends Families and Travellers, (n.d.) *Historical Laws Affecting Gypsies and Travellers*, available at <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/resource/historical-laws-affecting-travellers/>, accessed 31/10/2017

⁴ Johnson, C., et al, n.d, *The Law Relating to Gypsies and Travellers*. Available at http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/pdfs/The_law_relating_to.pdf, accessed 31/10/2017

traditional nomadism, Gypsies and Travellers remain proud of their cultural inheritance and still seek to express it in the way they live.

Current provision and the Gypsy and Traveller Community in Ashford

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government, Ashford Borough Council undertakes a bi-annual count of caravans across the borough. Whilst caravans do not necessarily relate to the number of pitches, the data does provide a basic monitor of pressures on existing sites

In July 2017 the Planning Department carried out a count which revealed that there were a total of 228 caravans on 60 sites. This equated to 145 pitches in total. 12 caravans are stationed on the basis of temporary permissions.

The caravan count methodology set out by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requires that Local Authorities carry out a census of the number of caravans sited in the borough within a defined time period. Because of this census style approach, it will not produce a wholly accurate picture of the exact number of families who are resident in the borough, nor of the number of pitches. It can mean for example, that temporary visitors will be included in the caravan count even if they are present on a site only on the day of the count. Similarly, if gypsies and travellers are visiting or travelling for work, then this would result in a reduction in numbers. The count carried out by Ashford Borough Council records the numbers of static and tourers on each site.

For planning policy purposes, the term pitches are used as a planning unit. Whilst it is assumed that a pitch will include a static caravan, tourer and amenity block, this format does not apply to all pitches. For example a family may have two tourers instead of a tourer or static, or no static at all. The difference between the caravan count methodology and the units of measure used for planning purposes makes direct conversion of caravan numbers into pitches difficult. It is for this reason that we are reviewing our monitoring methodology to establish a more rigorous system for monitoring.

The Issues and Options consultation includes in it a question on monitoring. The purpose of this is to establish a more thorough methodology for counting Gypsy, Traveller and traveller sites that goes beyond the requirements of the DCLG. ARC4, who are carrying out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, will be visiting all sites within the borough to conduct questionnaires. We have asked that as part of this they assess the number of pitches in use on each site which will act as a starting point for future monitoring.

Ashford Borough Council owns and manages a 16 pitch site at Chilmington.

The need for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites

Since the last GTAA was produced, 31 pitches have received full planning permission in the Borough, which has left a remaining target of 23 pitches by 2030.

The Local Plan policy approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is based on a comprehensive evidence base that includes a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) that was completed in 2013. This indicated a requirement for 57 pitches for the 15 year period 2013 - 2028. Permanent permissions granted since the GTAA was carried out can be taken into account and deducted from the number of new pitches to be allocated. Following the publication of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites in 2015 which altered the definition of Gypsies and Travellers, the Council re-assessed the base data to establish a revised requirement. A new GTAA is currently being carried out and it is expected that the requirement for pitches will change.

Ashford Local Plan 2030

The Ashford Local Plan to 2030 adopts a dual approach to Gypsy and Traveller site supply to meet the demand identified in the GTAA. It allocates seven new pitches through Policies S43 at Biddenden and S44 at Westwell. Because of the shortfall, the Gypsy, Traveller and travelling Showpeople DPD will have the function of allocating sites as well as setting out site selection criteria and monitoring. It will include general policies to be applied to all of the allocated sites in addition to any windfall sites that are not allocated. These policies are necessary to guide development management decisions through the planning process. The DPD may also include policies which relate to particular allocated sites.

In addition to these allocations, the Local Plan to 2030, through Policy HOU16, allows for suitable sites to come forward to further contribute to the supply. This 'windfall' approach has successfully delivered 31 sites across the borough since the 2013 GTAA was published.

Policy HOU16 - Traveller Accommodation

Planning permission for new sites to accommodate Gypsy and traveller accommodation or accommodation for travelling showpeople will only be permitted outside of allocated sites if the following criteria are met:

- a) **The Council is satisfied that there is a clearly established need for the site and the proposals cannot be accommodated on an existing available site or allocated site;**
- b) **The site would not accommodate more than 5 pitches or make an existing site exceed 5 pitches in size;**
- c) **The site would provide a good living environment free from the risk of flooding and risks to health through contamination, noise or pollution;**
- d) **Occupation is limited to those meeting the definition of Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople in the relevant national planning policy;**
- e) **Local services and facilities - shops, public transport, schools, medical and social services, can be readily accessed from the site;**
- f) **The site is capable of being provided with on-site services such as water supply, sewage disposal and power supply;**
- g) **The form and extent of the accommodation does not adversely affect the visual or other essential qualities of the AONB and its setting, SSSI, Ancient woodland, international, national or local nature reserve or wildlife site, or the key characteristics of a Landscape Character Area;**
- h) **Access to the site which does not endanger highway safety for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided;**
- i) **Proposals incorporate a landscape strategy, which will be required by use of planning conditions, where mitigation of the impact on the landscape is necessary to protect the quality of the surrounding landscape.**

In addition to this, the Council is keen to ensure that existing sites are protected from non- Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople development. In this regard, Policy HOU17 seeks to safeguard existing Traveller sites.

Policy HOU17 - Safeguarding existing Traveller sites

Existing permanent authorised gypsy and traveller sites and sites for travelling showpeople shall be retained for the accommodation of gypsies and travellers and for travelling showpeople as defined in the relevant National Planning Policy Document.

Any new gypsy and traveller sites granted permanent planning permission shall also be safeguarded under the provisions of this policy.

This policy may not apply if:-

- a) **There is a surplus of available accommodation over and above the required five year supply of sites,or,**
- b) **The site will be replaced by a site of similar proportions in an appropriate location which complies with the criteria listed in policy HOU16, or,**
- c) **A site has been granted a personal permission restricting residency to a named occupier or family.**

Generating a criteria for site suitability

The need for more permanent gypsy and traveller pitches has been identified in the 2013 GTAA and this need has not been met by the site allocations within the Local Plan to 2030.

In the past it has been difficult to refuse permission for sites that do not comply with planning policies because there has been a lack of alternative sites. Refusal to grant permission on such sites has sometimes been overturned at appeal or temporary permission has been granted in some instances. Once the sites have been allocated and made available, the Council will be in a stronger position to refuse planning permission for sites which are not in accordance with planning policies and where new residential development would not normally be permitted.

Issues and Options

Objectives

This section includes a number of questions which invite views and information that will be taken into consideration in the production of the next stage of the DPD.

The Council has identified seven objectives, which have a more local function and are to be addressed by the Council's DPD on gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. These are:

1. To reduce the likelihood of unauthorised sites or encampments in the borough by allocating sites for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople.
2. To reduce the number of planning applications and appeals on unallocated sites.
3. To ensure that there are a sufficient number of allocated sites to accommodate the number of pitches identified as required in the GTAA.
4. To allocate sites which have acceptable social, environmental and economic impacts.
5. To find sites, which fulfil the requirements of 4) above and satisfy the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.
6. To set out policies for allocated and non allocated sites which will protect the environment and retain the allocated sites for use by Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople in the future.
7. To tackle social exclusion.

Question: Do you agree with these objectives? Are there any other objectives which the DPD should seek to achieve?

Selecting Sites

Like all sites that are included in the Local Plan, the starting point for the assessment of sites for allocation in the DPD will be its availability. That is, the owner must be willing to either sell or develop the site for Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople use and to establish a choice of available sites this Issues and Options Consultation makes provision for site submission. Once an available status has been established for a site, it will need to be tested against suitability and sustainability criteria.

Selecting the best locations for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople is key to supporting the communities and providing good community relations. One of the objectives of the DPD is to allocate sites which would have acceptable social, environmental and economic impacts. These impacts should apply equally to Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople as they do to the settled community.

Sites need to have good access to services, which is unlikely to be the case in rural areas away from the towns or larger villages. In the interests of sustainable development, new housing development for the settled population is concentrated in the existing towns and larger villages or urban extensions. An exception is made for local needs affordable housing which may be located on land adjoining an existing

settlement where there is a demand for affordable housing for people with local connections.

In line with Government advice, the Council should consider the most sustainable locations first when deciding where to locate sites for Gypsies and Travellers or travelling showpeople. The location of new development for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople in areas which more closely resemble those considered suitable for new housing development, should help to stem the view that planning is unfair and biased in favour of Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. This view has been expressed consistently by local residents at recent planning appeals in the borough relating to sites in the rural area. Restrictive policies to protect the countryside from unnecessary development would be seen to apply more equitably to both the travelling and settled communities if the sustainability approach is applied to both new housing development and sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople.

Proximity to services

Identifying suitable and well located sites is key to establishing the sustainable development of Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople sites in Ashford. Sites have historically been located within isolated locations and this has often been as a combined result of the national policy push for the delivery of pitches through private ownership and a desire for larger sites isolated from the settled community. However, whilst more remote sites may serve to deliver cheaper accommodation, they can lead to communities that are isolated from nearby services.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires that Local Authorities enable suitable provision of sites with good access to employment and services. This is reflected in criterion (e) of policy HOU16 of the Draft Local Plan to 2030, which requires that new sites are located where they have access to local services and facilities such as shops, public transport, schools, medical and social services. For planning purposes 'access' can mean that sites are either located in or adjacent to settlements, or that they are located close to public transport links that provide reasonable services to a district centre.

The disadvantages of sites within or adjoining settlements are that the extent of sites is more likely to be constrained, and there could be a conflict of interests especially if site occupants seek to pursue commercial activities on site. If sites are to include provision for self employed Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople, it may be necessary to achieve a degree of separation between such sites and existing residents. This is in order to reduce conflict over noise disturbance and any detrimental impact to the visual amenity of an area through inappropriately located and poorly screened storage areas. It should be noted that most of the existing authorised private sites in the borough do not include permission for commercial uses and are located in rural areas.

Landscape and visual impact

Land within the Borough of Ashford forms part of the High Weald AONB and the Kent Downs AONB. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires that local planning authorities have due regard to the local environment, and such areas are afforded special protection through broader national and local planning policy. Sites in areas

with special designations are unlikely to be considered until other options have been discounted. Development in areas such as AONBs, SSSIs, Conservation Areas and Ancient Woodlands will only be acceptable if the objectives of their designation would not be compromised by the development and there are no alternative sites in less sensitive areas. Where necessary, mitigation measures such as screening should be considered where this will result in there being no visual harm.

Environmental considerations

Sites must not adversely impact on the visual or other essential qualities of; the AONB and its setting; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Ancient Woodlands; international, national or local nature reserves and wildlife sites or; the key characteristics of a Landscape Character Area. Policy HOU16 reiterates the contents of the National Planning Policy Framework and whilst not precluding development within protected landscapes, it does state that they should be afforded the 'highest protection'. Sites should therefore not be located where they would cause adverse impacts to features of nature conservation interest, and such protected areas will be considered within the selection criteria.

Flood risk

Caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for permanent residential use are classified as highly vulnerable to flood risk. Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople sites should not be located within flood zone 3 and should only be located in flood zone 2 where they meet the Exception Test set out in paragraph 102 of the NPPF.

Access and infrastructure

Sites should be located so that they have safe and convenient vehicle access and where they are located within reasonable proximity to public transport links.

Gypsy and Traveller sites require access to utilities, including water, electricity and sewerage. More remote sites may find accessing these difficult as it requires extensive financial outlay in order for these to be brought to sites.

In some cases sites may include land for grazing of the animals which is important in the consideration of animal welfare matters.

Site sustainability

Every site suggested for allocation in the DPD will be assessed for its potential suitability in terms of its sustainability. The checklist below is a guide to indicate which sites have the greatest and the least potential to provide suitable sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople based upon sustainability factors. A crude measure of the sustainability of each site will be obtained by balancing 'plus and minus marks' followed by a more detailed analysis of each site. Some of the listed criteria may attract different weighting in terms of how they are used in the assessment of suitability of potential sites.

Possible site selection criteria:

Areas to avoid if possible	Areas with potential
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Within or adjoining an existing settlement
Flood risk zones 2&3	Within an area already allocated for housing development or where policies allow new residential development
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	On or close enough to walk to a frequent service by public transport.
Ancient Woodland.	Previously developed land
Areas of particularly sensitive landscape, wildlife or geological interest	Within easy walking distance (400m or close to) of social and community facilities.
Sites which are contaminated and where the costs of remedial treatment would be prohibitive.	Safe areas for children to play
Sites where the cost of providing infrastructure such as water, sewerage and electricity are likely to be unusually high.	Good natural or other existing screening that would help the development to sit comfortably in the landscape
Development would have a harmful effect on one or more listed buildings and/or a conservation area or scheduled monument.	Easy access to main roads avoiding the need to use narrow rural lanes.
Pollution, including noise, would have a harmful effect upon health and wellbeing of the occupants and could not be readily mitigated.	Good safe site access, including via adopted roads.
Significant intrusion on a landscape that could not be mitigated by a landscaping scheme	Existing utilities such as drainage, Water supply, electricity.
Development would have a significant effect upon the amenities of adjoining residents, eg noise disturbance from commercial activities.	Sites that can accommodate or are adjacent to suitable land for the grazing of animals.

Question: Does the proposed site selection methodology and the range of factors to be considered provide a reasonable and robust means of assessing potential site suitability?

Question: Are there any additional criteria that should be considered in selecting appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers?

Settlement strategy

The Gypsy and Traveller population of Ashford has historically settled to the west and north east of Ashford. As a consequence, the rural parishes of Shadoxhurst and High Halden have a high number of Gypsy and Traveller sites, accounting for around 50% of the total number of pitches in the borough and this can often impact upon local services. The PPTS states that 'When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community'.⁵

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015, *Planning policy for traveller sites*

It may therefore be appropriate to consider the geographical concentration of current sites when addressing the possible location of new sites but this may not address pressures on local services where a site may be in one parish but due to infrastructure and proximity to other villages it might have a greater impact on another area . On the other hand, the need for additional pitches is often derived from the need to accommodate additional family members as they grow older and seek their own accommodation. In many cases this could be achieved through the sympathetic and appropriate expansion of existing sites providing that all other site criteria can be met.

Question. Should the Council allow for the appropriate limited expansion of existing sites, and only where this would fulfil emerging household needs?

Question. Should the council seek to locate new sites in areas of the borough where they will not significantly increase pressures on local services?

Question. What should be the balance between urban and rural locations?

Site size, design and layout

Site size

The majority of the privately owned sites in the Borough are small and consist of 1 to 3 pitches. The Council owned site at Chilmington, which accommodates 16 pitches, has the largest number of pitches of any of the sites within the Borough.

Sites which integrate best with local communities tend to be the small single family sites, which normally accommodate only a small number of pitches. A larger site can obviously accommodate more pitches, although policy HOU16 limits this by requiring that new sites should not accommodate more than 5 pitches or make an existing site exceed 5 pitches in total. Whilst this appears a relatively small number, should the pitches follow the conventional layout then a 5 pitch site could result in up to 15 structures on the site. Such a scale of development may be unsuitable in some locations.

The solution therefore may be a balance between small scale sites and some larger allocations depending upon availability, requirements and location.

Question. What should the balance be between large and small site allocations?

Pitch size and layout

Criterion C of policy HOU16 stipulates that 'sites provide a good living environment free from the risk of flooding and risks to health through contamination, noise and pollution'. Therefore key to delivering sites that deliver a suitable safe and pleasant living environment for residents. This can be done through is ensuring that the scale, and layout of sites can accommodate the needs of occupants and do not lead to cramped forms of development that would impinge on residential amenity. The CLG

good practice guidance on Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople sites⁶ has been withdrawn, and in the absence of alternative guidance we are seeking views as to whether to carry forward the criteria set out in this document, or whether to adopt alternative size criteria.

Site and pitch sizes may vary depending upon the location of the site, for example urban sites may lend themselves to a more compact layout, as may sites which serve several households from the same family. This can mean that setting a universal pitch size can be too restrictive. However notwithstanding this, there is a need to consider the provision of on site services and amenities to ensure that pitches and sites provide a suitable standard of living.

A typical pitch is considered to comprise a static caravan or lodge, a touring caravan as well as an amenity building typically containing a kitchen area and washroom. The area provided for the touring caravan should be constructed of hardstanding. In addition to these typical structures, there is a need to provide space for the parking of vehicles as well as private external open space for functional as well as play/relaxation uses. For bricks and mortar housing, the minimum standards of new housing are set out in policies HOU15 for private external open space, and TRA3 for parking provision, however given the character of Gypsy, Traveller and travelling showpeople sites, it may be more appropriate to have specific space standards.

Question: Taking into account the typical characteristics of a pitch the need to provide amenity space and parking, should the DPD seek to set a minimum pitch size and site requirements?

Question: How should this pitch size be determined? (Eg based on number of households occupying a pitch)

Site tenure and management

The allocation of sites is only one step in the process of making sites available for occupation. There is no point in allocating sites unless they are deliverable. The Council is required to allocate sites but this does not necessarily mean that the Council should buy the land and run the sites. Delivery could be enabled by acquisition of sites by any of the following:

1. The Council.
2. A Registered Social Landlord.
3. The Gypsies, Travellers or travelling showpeople themselves.
4. Private Landlords.

There are various different options for ownership and management of sites such as the following:

1. Allocated land is sold to Gypsies, Travellers or travelling showpeople who then have the responsibility of equipping the site in the same way that this happens on privately owned sites at present.
2. Allocated sites form part of the affordable housing provided on a private housing development (for example in the Ashford growth areas or

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government, (May 2008), *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide*.

development sites elsewhere in the borough). In such cases the developer would in all probability put in access, land drainage, sewerage, water and electricity as a minimum. Pitches could be sold or rented but would have to remain affordable. This is usually achieved by the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord but there may be other ways of achieving this.

3. The Council or Registered Social Landlord buys allocated land, provides the facilities as in 2. above and then sells or rents the site to the occupants. The Council or Registered Social Landlord retains a role in site management if the site is rented to the occupants.
4. The land is privately owned and rented to the occupants with or without facilities. The site owner is most likely to manage the maintenance of the site if it remains in his/her ownership.
5. A variety of means of tenure could be spread across the allocated sites.

Whilst over recent decades national policy has placed greater emphasis on privately owner occupied family sites, there remains a significant number of sites which are owned and managed by the public sector. The sixteen pitch Chilmington site to the south west of Ashford is owned and managed by Ashford Borough Council. Whilst in the past there has been difficulties in managing the site and filling the pitches, the site is currently running at full occupancy. The site currently provides a significant number of pitches and turnover on the site means that pitches becoming available contribute to the continuing overall supply of sites in the Borough.

In addition to socially owned and managed and private sites, there may be scope to incorporate alternative methods of site management and ownership. This could be in the form of co-operatives or private ownership and management of public sites.

Question: What form of tenure and management would best suit the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Ashford?

How should land be found to provide suitable sites?

Having established that the Council has to find a number of sites to be allocated for occupation by Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople, it is necessary to search for suitable sites. The Council does not have extensive land ownership and land from this source is likely to be extremely limited or already earmarked for other uses. However, unused or underused land owned by the Council and other public bodies will be assessed for availability and suitability.

Compulsory Purchase is unlikely to be used for this purpose particularly if it is decided that small family sites are to be favoured. However, the Compulsory Purchase of land by the Council, for the purpose of making sites available, remains a possibility especially if it is decided to search for land to accommodate medium to large sites.

Land already owned by Gypsies, Travellers or travelling showpeople can be included for consideration. If considered appropriate, these sites could be allocated sites in the DPD. Once allocated, owners would have the knowledge that their land would be acceptable in principle to accommodate Gypsies, Travellers or travelling showpeople. Details such as the number of pitches, siting of caravans/buildings, access and

landscaping would still need to be agreed but the principle of the use would have been established by the allocation.

It is expected that land will be sourced from other land owners or their agents, who should contact the Council if they have sites which they would like to put forward for consideration.

Question: Do you know of any land in the district that, may be suitable, available and deliverable to provide Gypsy and Traveller pitches? If the answer to the above is yes, please supply details including ownership if known, on the form in appendix 2 of this document.

Transit Sites and Temporary Stopping Places

PPTS recognises that the ability to travel remains an important part of gypsy and traveller culture, and that planning for the accommodation of gypsies and travellers must recognise this factor.

A transit site provides for the needs of gypsies and travellers who are on the move and may be used for a few days or a few weeks at a time. It should not provide permanent accommodation although there is a danger of this happening if there is a shortage of permanent sites. Previous government guidance suggested that a transit site is likely to require a resident site manager because of difficulties in managing this type of site.

A transit site needs to have the same services as a permanent site and would therefore need land drainage, sewerage, water supply, electricity, refuse collection, utility buildings, and safe access onto a metalled road. Electricity can be provided on a metered basis. This would leave the Council/s with the cost of setting up and equipping the site and thereafter maintaining it and possibly paying for water and refuse collection.

Temporary stopping places are used by gypsies and travellers for a few nights at a time. These need not be equipped to the same standard as a permanent site or transit site but require planning permission. They must: have safe and convenient access to the road network; provide water, electricity (which can be metered) and a portaloos for every 4 households; contain a sewerage disposal point and; facilities for refuse disposal.

It is expected that the requirement for provision of transit sites and/or temporary stopping places within or adjoining the borough (if any) will come from the GTAA and collaboration between the Kent authorities.

There may not be a need for a transit site or a temporary stopping place in Ashford, however provision of one such site could provide short term accommodation to allow other allocated sites to remain undeveloped until such time as they are needed.

Question: Do you think that Ashford should have a transit site or temporary stopping place? If so, where should such a site be provided?

Monitoring

The Council's adopted planning policies are monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report which assesses and reviews the extent to which policies in local development plan documents are being implemented. This is supplemented by the bi-annual caravan count. One of the weaknesses of a reliance on this lies in the fact that the gypsy and traveller caravan count uses caravans as a unit of measure whereas for planning purposes the use of pitches is more common, where a pitch may in fact include two caravans.

A key objectives of the DPD is to reduce the level of unauthorised development within the borough, and to do this there is a need to ensure that our monitoring methods are appropriate and affective.

Question: What indicators should be used for monitoring the council's performance in managing Gypsy and Traveller site provision?

Any other issues and options

Question: Are there any other matters concerning sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople that should be dealt with by way of additional planning policies?

Appendix (i) Definitions

Romani Gypsies

It is believed that Romani Gypsies have resided in the UK since the sixteenth century. The term 'Gypsy' is a corruption of the word 'Egyptian', however linguistic analysis suggests it is more likely that they originate from the Indian sub continent.⁷

Travelling showpeople

Culturally similar but distinct from Romani Gypsies, Travelling Showpeople run funfairs and circuses. They ordinarily over-winter at sites with sufficient space to store and repair machinery and equipment meaning that their site requirements differ from other Traveller groups.

Irish Travellers

These are a distinct ethnic group from Romani Gypsies, originally rooted in Ireland they have their own culture and language – Cant – but share many lifestyle preferences with the Gypsy community, for example mobile and temporary employment and travelling in caravans.

Other Travellers

New Travellers grew out of the hippie movements of the second half of the twentieth century, though some have been travelling for some generations. Other Traveller groups include Scottish and Welsh Travellers and Bargees or boat dwelling groups.

Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches

A 'pitch' is the accommodation normally required by a single Gypsy family and as a minimum usually consists of one caravan for living in, which is often a mobile home, plus a touring caravan for travelling and a utility building providing bathroom kitchen and often day room accommodation. It is common for there to be several caravans on one pitch and it is also common for there to be several pitches on one site. For example the Council owned site at Chilmington has 16 pitches. Sites to accommodate one travelling circus or fairground usually need to be larger than a pitch for a Gypsy or Traveller family. This is because even a small travelling circus or fairground is likely to have a number of large lorries associated with it for moving the equipment around and may include more than one family as well as individuals who are essential to the business and likely to live on the same site.

Transit sites

Transit sites are for Gypsies and Travellers on the move and are for short term occupation only.

⁷ The Traveller Movement. *Cultural History*, available at <http://travellermovement.org.uk/cultural-history/>
Bowers, J., *Gypsies and Travellers: Their Lifestyle, History and Culture*. Travellers Times Online FAQ Pack. Available at:
<http://travellerstimes.org.uk/UserFiles/Resources/lifestylehistoryandculture24052010111520.pdf>

Policy definitions

National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), published in August 2015, requires that Local Planning Authorities use evidence to plan positively for Gypsy and Traveller development. This policy document sets out the definition of gypsies and travellers. For planning purposes, the Government defines Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople as

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.⁸

⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government, (August 2015), *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*.

Appendix (ii) Site Submission Form



Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document: Site Submission Form

Please use one form for each site. See the attached guidance notes at the end for information on how to complete the form.

1. SITE DETAILS	
Site Name	
Site Address <i>(including postcode)</i>	
Which Parish is the site located within? <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Which electoral ward is the site located within?	
Site area <i>(hectares)</i>	
Current site use	
Site description <i>(include details of existing structures)</i>	
Adjacent land-uses <i>(e.g. open or agricultural land / 2 storey detached dwellings)</i>	
Details of any relevant planning history <i>(e.g. previous planning applications)</i>	

2. ECOLOGICAL & LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Is the site within, or near, any of the following?	YES Please state which, and proximity:			NO
	In or within 100m of the boundary	Within 500m of boundary	Within 1km of boundary	
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)				
National Nature Reserve				
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)				
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)				
Local Wildlife Site				
Ancient Woodland				

3. ENVIRONMENTAL

<i>(see guidance notes to find out how to obtain this information)</i>	YES <i>Please provide details:</i>	NO
Is the site wholly or partially affected by flooding		
Is the site on previously developed (brownfield) land?		

Does the Site contain, or is it adjacent to, any of the following? <i>(see guidance notes to find out how to obtain this information)</i>	YES <i>Please provide details and distance in metres if known:</i>	NO
Green Corridor		
Area of Archaeological Importance		
Conservation Area		
Scheduled Ancient Monuments		
Registered Historic Parks / Gardens		
Listed Building/s (please specify grade)		
Tree Preservation Order		
Public open space (please specify type e.g. playing fields)		

4. UTILITIES & HIGHWAYS

Is the site currently connected to the following? If no, does it have adjoining access? <i>(optional section)</i>		Yes	No	Details
Mains Electricity Supply				
Mains Gas Supply				
Mains Sewerage				
Mains Water Supply				
Connectivity of Broadband (and speed)				
Is there direct site access from the public highway?				
Site Access information/constraints (is the access a track, road, in the same	Details:			

5. ACCESSIBILITY

Distance of Site to the Nearest: <i>(Optional)</i>	< 5 minute walk <i>(Less than 400 metres)</i>	5 – 10 minute walk <i>(400 – 800 metres)</i>	10 – 20 minute walk <i>(800m - 1.6km)</i>	Over 20 minute walk <i>(1.6km +)</i> <i>Please specify distance in km</i>
Large Village or Town Centre <i>(please state which)</i>				
Local Centre/Shop <i>(e.g. Village/ Local area shops)</i>				
Railway Station <i>(please state which)</i>				
Primary School <i>(please state which)</i>				
Green Open Space <i>(e.g. Playing fields or informal)</i>				
Equipped Play Area				
Public Right of Way www.kent.gov.uk/explorekentgis/map				
GP Surgery				

7. OWNER/AGENT DETAILS AND SITE AVAILABILITY

Site owner details	Name		
	Address		
	Telephone no.		
	Email		

	Date site submitted	
Contact details (if different from above)	Name	
	Address	
	Telephone no.	
	Email	
Availability to develop	Is the site available now?	Yes / No
	Does a developer have an option on or own the land?	Yes / No

9. SITE MAP

Please include a site location plan on an ordnance survey base, showing the boundaries of the site

(Details of how to create a map can be found in the attached guidance notes)



Ashford Site Submission Form – Guidance Notes

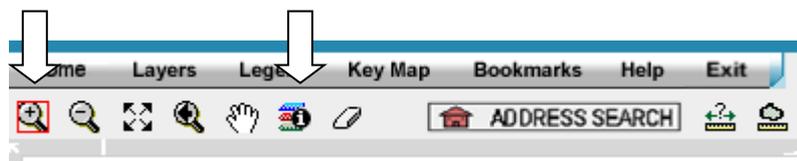
Section 1 – Site Details

Site name – This section should contain a short reference name for the site. This could be the first line of the site address or a description, for example, land adjacent to....., land to the south of....., etc.

Site address, Parish and Ward – Please provide the full address of the site, and the parish and ward the site is located within. If you do not know this information, please visit www.ashford.gov.uk and click on the 'Maps' tab at the top of the page.



Then go to the 'Local Plan Policies' Map. Once open you will see this menu along the top left hand side of the screen:



Use the magnifying glass with + symbol to zoom in to your site. Click on an area inside your site boundary and then press the 'Layer i' symbol. This will bring up a screen with the ward and parish details for this area.

Site Area – the site area should be over 0.4ha in the urban area and 0.2ha in the rural area or be able to accommodate 10 or more dwellings if the site is proposed for residential use in order to be considered. Provide details in hectares. If you do not know this information please visit the map (shown above) to locate your site, and then use the 'measure area in metres' function along the top toolbar (shown below) and click around the boundary of the site. This will produce the area in Metres, which you can convert.

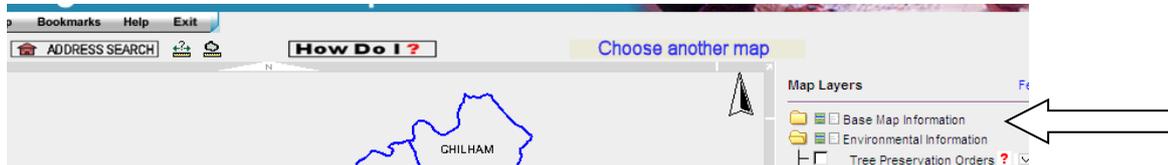


Current Use, Site Description and Adjacent land uses – Please describe the current use of the site (i.e. a field, derelict building, residential property, open space, office building) and then give details of the site description including how many buildings are on the site, if it is farmed land, overgrown scrubland etc). Then provide a similar description of the land uses of the adjacent sites.

Details of relevant planning history – Please provide details of any planning applications that have been submitted on the site previously (whether granted, refused or withdrawn) along with the planning application reference. If you are unsure, you can search planning applications on our website: <http://planning.ashford.gov.uk/>

Section 2 – Ecological & Landscape Designations

In this section please answer yes or no to all of the questions regarding distance from the ecological designations. If answering 'yes', please provide the distance of the site from the boundary. If you do not have this information, please visit the **Local Plan Policies Map (see details above)** and use the 'Map layers' on the right hand side of the map. Click on all the relevant layers and you will see from the map if they apply to your site.



Section 3 - Environmental - In this section please answer yes or no to all of the questions. If answering 'yes', please provide details. If you are unsure of the answer to the questions, please visit the **Local Plan Policies Map, as described in section 2 (above)**

Section 4 – Utilities and Highways - If you have information relating to the connection of the site to these mains facilities please give details. If you are promoting an employment site in the rural area, the connectivity to broadband and the speed is particularly relevant. If you do not know this information, please leave the section blank. For **Site Access Information/constraints** - please state whether the site already has direct access to a highway, and details of possible access constraints (i.e. is access through land in a different ownership?)

Section 5 –Accessibility

This section is optional and based on local knowledge of the area the site is located in. Please tick the relevant box to state distance from the services and facilities listed. If you are unsure of the distance, you can use the 'Local Plan Policies Map' (see above) and the '**distance in metres**' symbol at the top of the map, to measure between two points.



Section 6 – Additional Information

Please use this section to provide any further information about the site that hasn't been provided elsewhere.

Section 7 – Site Owner/Agent details and Availability

This section requires details of the site owner and agent (if applicable). If the owner is the submitter, you will only need to provide the information once. Please also state if the site is available immediately, or a timescale of when it is likely to be available. If a developer has options or ownership of the land, please provide details here.

Section 8 – Proposed Site Use

Please only select one option for the proposed site use. If mixed, please give details. Please provide here the scale of proposed development (amount of houses etc).

On the largest residential sites, it is assumed that proposals will include a mix of uses.

If the site is proposed for 100 dwellings or more please complete the separate additional information sheet

Section 9 – Site Map A site location map MUST be provided with this form. This must clearly show the boundary of the site, on a current ordnance survey base. If you do not have a suitable map, you can create one using a service recommended on the Planning Portal www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/plans

Please return your completed site submission form and map to: Planning Policy, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL, by email to planningpolicy@ashford.gov.uk , or upload to www.ashford.gov.uk/consult

For more information call: 01233 330229



Agenda Item No: 14
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: Thursday 8th February, 2018
Report Title: Chilmington Gypsy site
Report Author & Job Title: Sharon Williams
Head of Housing
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. G White
Portfolio Holder for: Housing

Summary: This report sets out a proposal for enhancing the management arrangements for Chilmington Gypsy Site.

The proposal outlines a suggested approach to strengthen the management of the site, improve the health and wellbeing of those residents on the site and ensure successful integration with the local community.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Great Chart with Singleton

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- (i) **Agree that the Council enters into negotiations with interested parties for the grant of a lease and management agreement in relation to Chilmington Gypsy Site.**
- (ii) **That delegated authority is given to the Directors of Law and Governance and Finance and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance, Housing and Community Safety, to finalise terms and grant a lease and a management agreement to an organisation identified following a formal selection process set out in the report.**
- (iii) **Authorise the Director of Law and Governance to enter into the necessary documentation to give effect to the decision.**
- (iv) **Agree that a disposal may proceed at an undervalue, if required, on the terms and for the reasons set out in paragraph 15 of the report.**

Policy Overview:	The Council as Local Planning Authority is required by planning policies to ensure that there are an appropriate number of pitches available within its Borough for Gypsies and Travellers.
Financial Implications:	<p>The Operation of the site internally is resource intensive and if the council were to continue to do this it would require additional skills to be developed which would result in additional costs. It would provide greater efficiency to seek an external provider for the management of this facility, by leasing it to a specialist provider.</p> <p>The Council must receive best consideration in return for the lease of land in its ownership unless the tenancy is a short tenancy for 7 years or less.</p>
Legal Implications	The Council wishes to ensure that the site is managed well and is retained as a gypsy site providing a minimum of 16 plots. To retain this level of control over the site it is recommended that a lease and management agreement is preferable rather than sale of the freehold.
Equalities Impact Assessment	A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken prior to finalising the arrangements and conditions forming the lease documentation.
Community Impact Assessment	A full community impact assessment will also be undertaken prior to finalising the documentation, as above.
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	None
Contact:	<u>Sharon.williams@ashford.gov.uk</u> Tel 01233 330803 Head of Housing

Report Title: Chilmington Gypsy Site

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek authority to negotiate terms and grant a lease and management agreement for Chilmington Gypsy Site to an external organisation to be identified following a formal selection process. The site is shown on the attached plan at appendix 1.

Issues to be decided

2. To agree that the Council grants a lease and a management agreement for Chilmington Gypsy Site to an external organisation following a selection process set out in the report.
3. The selection of the successful organisation and the final terms for the lease and management agreement is delegated to the Directors of Law and Governance and Finance and Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holders of Housing, Finance and Community Safety.
4. To agree the terms of the lease and management agreement to include the following points:
 - i. The site be retained as a gypsy site in perpetuity with no less than the same number of pitches as currently provided.
 - ii. That the site is managed to appropriate standards in accordance with a management agreement to ensure the provision of good quality lettable accommodation.
 - iii. That the site is maintained and that the lessee uses their best endeavours to ensure that all plots on the site are let.
 - iv. To take appropriate steps to manage anti-social behaviour of the site
 - v. not to expand the site without Council planning permission

Background

5. Chilmington Gypsy Site consists of 16 plots situated on an old landfill site. It is in the ownership of the Council and is managed by one part time housing officer who has to call upon colleagues to manage the site effectively. It is recognised that to manage a site like this effectively there needs to be fairly intensive management by appropriately skilled officer. This can present difficulties at times with the resilience of the management service that can be provided.
6. The site has been transformed with significant time investment in previous years from a half occupied site a few years ago to a generally fully occupied site that has had a focus on management and the people that live there. The site needs to continue its transformation into one that supports health and well being for its tenants and to enable it to become more engaged with the rapidly expanding communities around it.

7. A significant effort has been made to improve the management and financial viability of the site and currently although there has been significant improvement there is very little resilience to maintain and improve standards further. It is felt therefore that the site could be further enhanced with a dedicated, focussed management provided by an organisation who understand the gypsy culture and the needs of the wider community.
8. Whilst the Council has driven improvements on the site, officers do not have the training or expertise to continue its transformation to create a more inclusive setting and a consistent focus on improvements on site.

The Proposal

9. In order to facilitate the improved focus on management and in driving further improvements on the site, it is proposed that the Council seeks an external organisation with the relevant experience and expertise to take this forward.
10. The Council has received interest from two organisations so far who are interested in leasing or taking over ownership of the site with the aim of improving standards on the site, building relationships with the local community and improving the health and wellbeing of the residents on the site. It is in the Council's interests not to dispose of the freehold title for the site as in order to meet the requirements for our Local Plan we must maintain the number of pitches available to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Ashford. In addition at this stage it is felt that we need to retain an ability to intervene should the management of the site fall short of our expectations. In view of this it is recommended that we consider offering a lease for the site and a formal management agreement, which will set out various conditions and terms to protect both the Council's interest and that of the local community.
11. The Council will specify its terms for offering a lease and management agreement and request any interested parties to provide their submissions for meeting the Council's requirements, following which an evaluation will take place of each proposal received, together with other due diligence checks.
12. The selection of the successful organisation will be based upon how well they meet the Council's criteria, references obtained and due diligence checks.
13. It is suggested that delegated authority is provided to the Directors of Finance and Economy and Law and Governance, in communication with the Portfolio Holders for Finance, Housing and Community Safety to make a decision regarding which organisation the Council will agree to offer a lease to, and the final terms to be included within the lease arrangement.
14. It is important to note that this proposal only relates to the Chilmington Gypsy site in the Council's ownership, which is shown on the attached plan at Appendix 1. There is an adjacent privately owned Gypsy site, which is outside the Council's control and therefore will not be included within this proposal.
15. The imposition of onerous conditions on any lease could mean less than best consideration is obtained. Cabinet is recommended to agree that a disposal meeting the standards set out in paragraph 4 above would be likely to contribute to achievement of one or more of the objectives set out in the General Disposal

Consent (2003), namely the promotion or improvement of economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the borough or its residents, and may proceed at an undervalue within the limit of the Consent (£2m).

Risk Assessment

16. By entering into a lease arrangement and a management agreement as set out above, this enables the Council to manage the risks associated by working with an external organisation for the control and management of this site as set out in paragraph 4 above.
17. The Council will carry out extensive research into any interested parties as part of the due diligence in relation to these proposals, including obtaining references from other local authorities or County Councils.

Community Impact Assessment

18. A full community Impact assessment will be undertaken before finalising any lease arrangements.

Other Options Considered

19. The Council could continue to manage the site with the associated management and maintenance costs. However, this will result in a requirement to increase the budget provision for the site and therefore would create a financial pressure on the general fund.

Consultation

20. There is no formal requirement for consultation, however if the recommendations set out in the report are agreed, then a consultation exercise will be undertaken with the residents on the site.
21. In addition consultation will take place with the Parish Council and ward member.

Implications Assessment

22. There is one FTE member of staff who carries out duties in relation to Chilmington site management as one part of their role. It is anticipated that TUPE does not apply in this instance in view of the officers broader role within housing, which will expand. There are no staffing implications.
23. It is proposed that the lease will provide that the costs of managing the site will be contained within the income and therefore the proposal places no additional financial burden upon the local authority.
24. Chilmington Gypsy Site borders another piece of land which is a privately owned Gypsy Site, over which we have very limited control.

25. The insurance liability would remain with the Council.

Handling

26. An internal working group will identify the specification for the Council's requirements which will be signed off by the Directors of Law and Governance and Finance and Economy in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holders prior to inviting formal submissions from the interested parties.

27. Due diligence checks will be undertaken for each of the interested parties and references will be obtained. Site visits will also be undertaken to other sites in their management.

Conclusion

28. This proposal will enable a more focussed and improved management service for Chilmington Gypsy site by an organisation that has the skills and experience to work closely with the Gypsy and Traveller community.

29. The arrangements set out above balance the need to strengthen the management of this site with the ability for the Council to retain reasonable controls to ensure the site is well managed and remains a gypsy site

Portfolio Holder's Views

30. I am keen to see that the Chilmington site continues to provide good quality accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. I support the proposals fully.

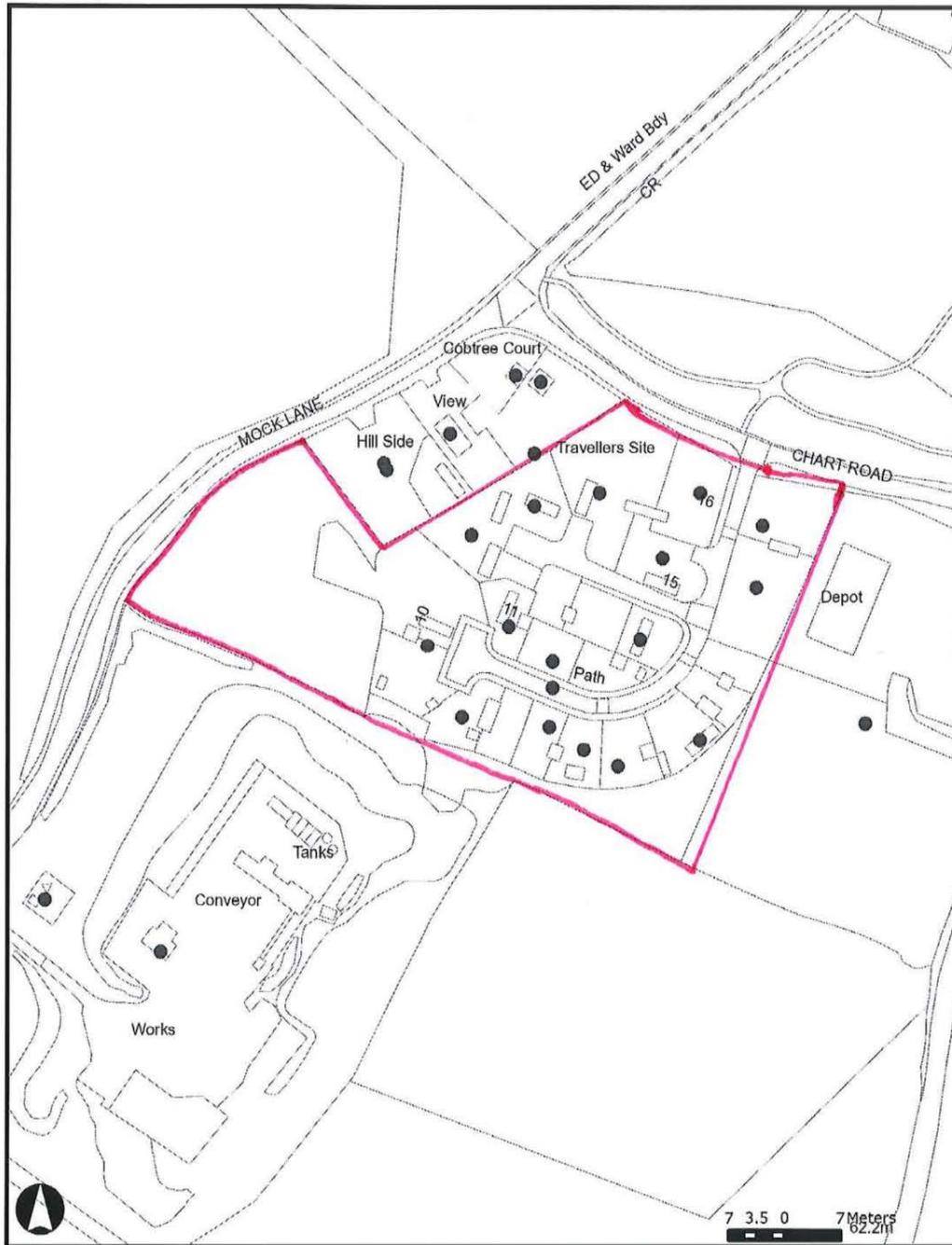
Contact: Sharon Williams

Tel: 01233 330803

Email: Sharon.williams@ashford.gov.uk



Chilmington Gypsy Site



All rights reserved. Licence Number 100024427

This product includes mapping data from
Ordnance Survey with the permission of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office ©
Crown Copyright.
All rights reserved.

This page is intentionally left blank

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the 5th January 2018.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Mrs Dyer, Galpin, Heyes, Shorter, Smith, Suddards.

Also Present:

Mrs Bell, Burgess, Hicks, Michael, Pickering.

Simon Cole – Head of Planning Policy; Ian Grundy (IG) – Principal Policy Planner; Daniel Carter (DC) – Principal Policy Planner; Helen Garnett – Policy Planner; Tim Naylor – Head of Planning & Development; Lorna Ford - Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications; Jeremy Baker – Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Rosie Reid – Member Services and Ombudsman Liaison Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd and a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.
- 1.2 Cllr. Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director of A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd and Kent Play Clubs.
- 1.3 Cllr. Clokie made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.

2 Ashford Local Plan – Submission

- 2.1 The Chairman opened this item by thanking Officers for successfully submitting the Local Plan before the Christmas break.
- 2.2 The Head of Planning Policy said that the Planning Inspectorate had confirmed receipt of the Local Plan and had advised that two Inspectors would be appointed to conduct the Examination. This may help to expedite the Examination process. The Inspectorate had also advised that the hearings may commence around the Easter period, and would last for approximately 12 weeks, although the hearings would be intermittent during that period. The Head of Planning Policy said that the Council would respond positively to the timetable. It was likely that the Inspectors would provide an initial set of issues to be discussed in mid-February, and the Head of Planning Policy would keep Members updated. It was anticipated that the Inspectors would need separate hearing rooms, and the Programme Officer would arrange accommodation accordingly. It should be borne in mind that the Examination was a public process so any room used must be appropriate for public access.

- 2.3 In response to a question about representations, the Head of Planning Policy said that this was at the Inspectors' discretion but normally only the Council and formal objectors to the Plan, who had requested to speak on their representation forms, would be provided with the opportunity to make oral representations. If a number of people wished to make representations, it was likely that the Inspector would ask for a representative to speak on behalf of the group.

3 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation DPD – draft Issues and Options Report for Consultation

- 3.1 The Principal Policy Planner (IG) introduced this item. He said that the draft Local Plan had two new sites included for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. It was recognised that further sites were required, and that this was best dealt with through a separate DPD. The Policy Planner ran through the main points of the Issues and Options report and the Chairman opened up the item for discussion. The following comments/points were raised:
- A Member said he did not consider that the opening sentence on page 14 of the report was helpful. Another Member felt strongly that there should be restrictions on site growth in those villages where there was already a high percentage of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Some Members agreed with this view, and considered that the same principles should apply to Gypsy and Traveller sites as to all other types of housing and general development. Members acknowledged that an approach which was too rigid could result in unwelcome enforcement pressure and appeals. One Member considered that every application should be taken on its merits, especially where a proposed site would have no impact on the local community. The Head of Planning Policy said that the suitability of each site in planning terms was the key factor. The Council should aim to control growth through setting clear criteria for deciding site suitability.
 - Members also discussed the ideal number of pitches per site and pitch size, but agreed that this could be discussed again at a future date. The focus of this report was to ensure that appropriate questions were asked during the consultation period, and specific details could be agreed after feedback had been received.
 - One Member raised concerns about animal welfare and methods to regulate animal management on Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Head of Planning Policy said this was a relevant point and needed to be mentioned in the report. Such matters were also affected by the management and ownership of gypsy sites.
- 3.2 Members considered the questions posed in the report, and the following comments/points were raised:

- Page 15 – questions agreed.
- Page 16 – remove first question. Second question agreed.

- Page 17 – question agreed.
- Page 18 – change the wording of the first question on the page to “*Is there a need to provide a transit site? If so, where should such a site be provided?*” Other questions agreed.
- Monitoring – a Member expressed concern regarding the methodology for counting current sites. She argued that this currently did not ensure that every pitch was included. The Policy Planner explained that the monitoring system was set by DCLG and was based on number of caravans occupied at a specific time, not number of pitches permitted. Members considered that a full register of permitted pitches should be kept as a more accurate record. The Chairman asked the Head of Planning and Development to take this forward.

3.3 A Member said he considered that page 6 of the report was very well written, but he had concerns about the definitions provided in the appendix. The Chairman explained that these definitions were provided by the Government, and not by the Council, and that these needed to be included in the consultation document. Members agreed that they should be kept in the appendix.

4 London Plan

4.1 A Member asked about the likely housing pressure on the Council arising from the London Plan. The Head of Planning Policy explained that, based on anticipated figures, the Council had included an extra 34 dwellings per year in the overall Local Plan housing requirement to accommodate out-migration from London. This figure was derived from previous SHMA work. Members considered that there may be potential economic advantages arising from a willingness to engage with the GLA should there be a subsequent need to accommodate any of London’s housing needs that could not be met in the capital, and these should be pursued if, and when, the time came.

4.2 The Principal Policy Planner gave a short presentation on the draft London Plan that was currently out to public consultation, and the following comments/points were raised:

- A Member questioned the need to include the last two paragraphs on methodology in the proposed response to the consultation. It was agreed that these paragraphs could be removed.
- In response to a question about timing, the Head of Planning Policy said that, since the submission of the Council’s draft Local Plan to 2030 had preceded the submission of the new London Plan, the Local Plan would be embedded before any issues that might arise from the London Plan came into play. These issues may need to be addressed in the next review of the Local Plan, at a future date.

5 Dates of the Next Meetings

5.1 To be advised

Councillor Clarkson (Chairman)
Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Agenda Item No: 16

Report To: CABINET
Date: 8TH FEBRUARY 2018
Report Title: SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN



Report Author and Job Title: Danny Sheppard, Senior Member Services Officer

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holders are individually specified in the attached Schedule.

Summary: To set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet of Ashford Borough Council.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Where appropriate, individual Wards are indicated.

Recommendations **That the Cabinet receive and note the latest Schedule of Key Decisions.**

Policy Overview: Under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, there is no longer a legal requirement to publish a Forward Plan of Key Decisions, however there is still a requirement to publish details of Key Decisions 28 clear days before the meeting they are to be considered at. The Council maintains a live, up to date rolling list of decision items on the Council's website, and that list will be presented to the Cabinet each month, in its current state, for Members' information.

Financial Implications: Nil

Legal Implications: n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment n/a

Other Material Implications: Nil

Exempt from publication: No

Background Papers: None

Contacts: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: 01233 330349

This page is intentionally left blank

**CABINET
SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN**

The following Key Decisions will be taken by Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet on the dates stated.

Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet is made up of: - Councillors Gerry Clarkson; Neil Bell; Clair Bell; Mike Bennett; Gareth Bradford; Paul Clokie; Graham Galpin; Alan Pickering; Neil Shorter; and Gerald White.

Copies of the reports and any other relevant documents that are submitted to the Cabinet in connection with a proposed decision will be available for inspection, or on screen, five clear days before the decision date at the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford and at The Town Hall, 24 High Street, Tenterden, during opening hours, or at www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors_and_committees.aspx

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
8th February 2018					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Seddon	Open	10/2/17
Revenue Budget 2018/19	<i>To present the draft revenue budget for 2018/19 to the Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Ben Lockwood	Open	10/2/17
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Lorna Ford	Open	10/2/17

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Annual Report of Work Undertaken on Domestic Abuse and to Support Victims of Domestic Abuse	<i>Sets out for comment the progress the Council and its partners are making on projects focusing on domestic abuse over the past 12 months.</i>	Cllr Bradford	James Hann/ Elizabeth Mannington	Open	10/2/17
Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy	<i>Report back on adoption of policy and set of operational guidelines to manage the forward process relating to the safe management of memorials in Ashford.</i>	Cllr Mrs Bell	Tracey Butler	Open	26/2/16
Gypsy and Traveller DPD – Issues and Options Report for Consultation	<i>To ask Members to approve the Issues and Options Report for the purposes of public consultation – the first stage in the process of preparing the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Ian Grundy	Open	19/12/17
Chilmington Gypsy Site – Future Ownership and Management	<i>To outline the challenges of managing the site, the consider the health and wellbeing of tenants who lived at the site, to establish any impact the site has on the surrounding local community and to create a framework for disposal of the site.</i>	Cllr White	Anthony Crossley	Open	19/12/17
8th March 2018					
Annual Pay Policy Statement	<i>A review of the annual Pay Policy Statement and Ashford Living Wage Allowance</i>	Cllr Pickering	Michelle Pecci	Open	10/3/17

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Leisure Procurement		Cllr Bennett	Christina Fuller	Open	21/9/17
Tenterden Leisure Centre Redevelopment Plans	<i>To seek approval for the project (as landlord of the building) and approve the grant and loan from the Borough Council to Tenterden Leisure Centre Trust for the redevelopment.</i>	Cllr Bennett	Ben Moyle	Open	21/9/17
Commercial Investment Strategy		Cllr Shorter/Galpin	Stewart Smith/ Lee Foreman	Open	4/12/17
Request for Flexible Retirement		Cllr Pickering	Michelle Pecci	Exempt	18/1/18
12th April 2018					
Wye 3 Masterplan		Cllr Clokie	Mark Chaplin	Open	6/10/17
Ashford College Update	<i>To update members on the progress made by Ashford College, both in terms of the new campus developments as well as improvements to the curriculum offer.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Andrew Osborne	Open	2/8/17
Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy		Cllr Galpin	Stewart Smith	Open	21/12/17
Strategic Risk Framework		Cllr Shorter	Charlotte Hammersley	Open	25/1/18

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
10th May 2018					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Seddon	Open	12/5/17
Opt-to-Buy and Keyworkers		Cllr White	Sharon Williams/ Rebecca Wilcox	Open	9/10/17
14th June 2018					
Final Outturn 2017/18	<i>Final budget outturn for previous financial year.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Ben Lockwood	Open	16/6/17
Annual Report and Quarter 4 Performance Report 2017/18	<i>The Annual Report will build upon the contents of quarterly performance monitoring, but will also include the following information – An Introduction from the Leader and Chief Executive; Facts and figures about Ashford; Timeline of key achievements in the Borough over the calendar year; Borough achievements; and a Financial Summary.</i>	Cllrs Clarkson/ Shorter	Lorna Ford	Open	16/6/17
Section 106 Agreements – Annual Progress Report	<i>Focus on s106 contributions received in the last year, contributions secured in new agreements and projects that have been supported by s106 funding.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Lois Jarrett	Open	16/6/17

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
12th July 2018					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Peter Budden	Open (Exempt Appendix)	14/7/17
Town Centre Annual Report		Cllr Galpin	Jo Wynn-Carter	Open	14/7/17
9th August 2018					
Corporate Performance Report	<i>To give Members and residents an overview of how the council is performing with a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Lorna Ford	Open	11/8/17
Corporate Commercial Property – Annual Report	<i>To advise of the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the last financial period and to advise of proposals to increase profitability in the coming financial period.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Stewart Smith	Open	11/8/17
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Seddon	Open	11/8/17
13th September 2018					

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
11th October 2018					
Medium Term Financial Plan	<i>To ask Cabinet to note the Medium Term Financial Plan ahead of this year's Budget process.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Seddon	Open	13/10/17
8th November 2018					
Corporate Performance Report	<i>To give Members and residents an overview of how the council is performing with a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Lorna Ford	Open	11/11/16
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Seddon	Open	11/11/16
6th December 2018					
Draft Budget 2019/20	<i>To present the preliminary draft service budget and outline MTFP for the purposes of subsequent formal scrutiny by the O&S Task Group and public consultation.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Ben Lockwood	Open	8/12/17
Council Tax Base 2019/20	<i>To present for approval the estimated 2019/20 Council tax base calculation for the Borough and each parished area, on which the major preceptors and local Parish Councils will base their requirements.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Ben Lockwood	Open	8/12/17

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2018 – 2048	<i>An annual update of the HRA Business Plan financial projections. This report updates the position for the period 2018-48.</i>	Cllr White	Sharon Williams	Open	8/12/17
10th January 2019					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Peter Budden	Open (Exempt Appendix)	12/1/18

***If you wish to contact a Report Author by email, unless stated otherwise, the addresses are;
first name.surname@ashford.gov.uk***

26/1/18

This page is intentionally left blank