



To the Members of the Borough Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Notice of a Meeting, to be held as a Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams in accordance with Regulation 5 of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 on **Thursday 4th March 2021 at 7.00 pm.**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS VIRTUAL MEETING:-

Please note the public cannot physically “attend” a Virtual Meeting. However any member of the press and public may listen-in to proceedings at this ‘virtual’ meeting via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council’s website at www.ashford.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the meeting. Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc. during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Council meeting at the Civic Centre. It is important, however, that Councillors can discuss and take decisions without disruption, so the only participants in this Virtual Meeting will be the Councillors concerned, the Officers advising the Council and the Officers designated to address the Council on behalf of any members of the public who have registered in advance to ‘speak’ on the items to be considered. This will take the place of the usual procedure for public speaking at the Council’s regular meetings at the Civic Centre. In order to register for this, written notice must be given on the Council’s website at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors-meetings-and-elections/councillors-andmeetings/public-participation/application-to-speak-at-a-public-meeting/> or by email to membersservices@ashford.gov.uk by 10am on the Wednesday before the meeting.

Summary of the Scheme of Public Participation for Virtual Meetings (referred to as “VMs”)

The public cannot physically “attend” a VM.

H.M. Government has recently changed the public’s legal right to attend meetings into a right to hear, by means of technology, the Councillors attending the VM remotely.

Written notice of a wish to speak (by means of the procedure below) at a VM must be given, either to membersservices@ashford.gov.uk or on the Council’s website at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors-meetings-and-elections/councillors-andmeetings/public-participation/application-to-speak-at-a-public-meeting/> by 10:00 hours on the Wednesday before the VM – i.e. 10:00 a.m. on **Wednesday, 3rd March 2021**

Those registered to speak must submit to membersservices@ashford.gov.uk by 10:00 hours on the day of the VM, a copy of their speech in written, legible English. It should be no longer than 400 words, on a single side of A4 paper, printed in 12-point non-italic sans-serif font (e.g. Arial). Any text above 400 words will not be read out.

Speeches received as above will be read to the VM by a competent Officer for and on behalf of the speakers, at the normal times and in the normal order during the VM (subject to the Chairman’s normal discretion).

IMPORTANT:

An Officer reading any speech on behalf of any speaker shall have discretion to omit/edit out any inappropriate language, information or statements.

If any defamation, insult, personal or confidential information, etc. is contained in any speech received from any speaker, and/or is read to the VM by an Officer, each speaker accepts by submitting their speech to be fully responsible for all consequences thereof and to indemnify the Officer and the Council accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Agenda

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1. **Apologies**
2. **To consider whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of Exempt or Confidential Information**
3. **Declarations of Interest** 1 - 2
 1. 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 3 for further details
4. **To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 10th December 2020** 3 - 10
5. **To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader or other Members of the Cabinet**
6. **To receive any petitions**
7. **To receive any questions from, and provide answers to, the public (being resident of the Borough) which in the opinion of the Mayor are relevant to the business of the Meeting**
8. **To receive, consider and adopt the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 19th January 2021** 11 - 14
9. **To receive, consider and adopt the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on 19th January 2021** 15 - 20
10. **To receive, consider and adopt the recommendations set out in the Minutes of the Meetings of the Cabinet held on the 17th December 2020 and 25th February 2021 (to follow) - with the following exception - The recommendations of the 25th February meeting regarding the item 'Budget 2021/22 be deferred for consideration with Agenda item No 11** 21 - 28
11. **To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet regarding the item 'Budget 2021/22 (which includes the adoption of the budget)**

and the report 'Council Tax 2021/22 Resolutions (to follow) and to determine the Borough Council's precept on the Collection Fund.

12. **To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of the Appointments Committee held on 18th December 2020 and 20th January 2021** 29 - 32
13. **To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 25th January 2021** 33 - 36
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16. **To consider Motions of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 11**

“That the Park Farm Buffer Zone be considered for designation as a green buffer area as part of the next review of the Local Plan, protecting it from development in perpetuity, in the same way that was agreed for the land at Sevington at the Full Council meeting in October 2020.”

Councillor J N Wedgbury

17. **Questions by Members of which Notice has been given pursuant to Procedure Rule 10**

NOTE: - If debate on any item included within this Agenda gives rise to the need to exclude the press and public due to the likelihood of Exempt or Confidential information being disclosed the following resolution may be proposed and seconded and if carried, the press and public will be requested to leave the meeting for the duration of the debate.

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item as it is likely that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to the appropriate paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

DS
24 February 2021

Queries concerning this agenda? Please contact Danny Sheppard Telephone (01233) 330349 Email danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
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Agenda Item 3

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 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 alone, such as:

- Membership of amenity societies, Town/Community/Parish Councils, residents' groups or other outside bodies that have expressed views or made representations, but the Member was not involved in compiling or making those views/representations, 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: Where an item would be likely to affect the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc.; OR where an item is an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc., there is likely to be an OSI or in some cases a DPI. ALSO, holding a committee position/office within an amenity society or other outside body, or having any involvement in compiling/making views/representations by such a body, may give rise to a perception of bias and require the Member to take no part in any motion or vote.]

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 alongside the Council's Good Practice Protocol for Councillors dealing with Planning Matters. See <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/2098/z-word5-democratic-services-constitution-2019-constitution-of-abc-may-2019-part-5.pdf>
- (c) Where a Member declares a committee position or office within, or membership of, an outside body that has expressed views or made representations, this will be taken as a statement that the Member was not involved in compiling or making them and has retained an open mind on the item(s) in question. If this is not the case, the situation must be explained.

If any Member has any doubt about any interest which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democracy as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

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Ashford Borough Council

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council held on Microsoft Teams on the **10th December 2020**.

Present:

His Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor J S Link (Chairman);

Cllrs. Anckorn, Barrett, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Farrell, Feacey, Forest, Harman, Hayward, B Heyes, Howard, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Knowles, Krause, Ledger, Michael, Mulholland, Ovenden, Pauley, Pickering, Rogers, Shorter, Spain, Sparks, C Suddards, L Suddards, Turner, Walder, Webb, Wedgbury, Wright.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Reverend John Emmott said prayers and asked Members to respect a period of silence for Vicky Louise MacDonald who was the Borough Council Member for the Ashford Stanhope Ward from 1995 to 2003 and who had passed away recently.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Campkin, Cornish, T Heyes, White.

In Attendance:

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of HR and Customer Services, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Civic Engagement Officer, Member Services Manager (Operational).

177 Exempt or Confidential Items

The Mayor asked whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of Exempt or Confidential information. There were none.

178 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he was Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	181
Forest	Made a Voluntary Announcement as his Company provided IT Services to the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	181

Webb Made a Voluntary Announcement as she was 181
a Director of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.

179 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 15th October 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

180 Announcements

(a) The Mayor

The Mayor said that at the beginning of 2020, they had all entered a new decade with hope and excitement. Everyone had their own dreams and aspirations for the year ahead but little did they know that within a matter of weeks they would enter a new dimension and be forced to expand their thinking, strength and patience. The pandemic had truly been a challenge and continued to stretch everyone as they awaited the delivery of the vital vaccine and the chance to hug loved ones and share time with those everyone had missed so much.

He and his dear wife Jill may not have had a conventional term of office, but what they had seen was so many incredible acts of kindness and achievements across their great Borough – all realised through compassion and love. He was immensely proud of the Council – both its Members and Officers, the Borough’s businesses and organisations, its volunteers and its citizens, for coming together and reaching out to one another. The demonstration of love and strength of spirit had been most humbling and reminded him of wartime – yes, he was old enough!

Over the last month, he had taken part in Ashford’s Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day ceremonies. Despite the necessity for closed gatherings, the dignity and honour shown was most poignant. They had remembered all those who fought and died for our freedom during the World Wars as well as all those who continued to protect us at this present time. “We will Remember them.”

Before the second Lockdown they had been fortunate enough to view, participate in and experience several occasions either virtually or in person. Throughout October, they had marked Black History Month 2020. This had been a true showcase of discovery, exploration and celebration of the heritage and culture of Black history across the Borough’s communities, and for him this festival was only the start of a greater celebration for the future. He had been honoured to speak at the pre-recording of the finale event and to see for himself the magnificent talent and skills on show – well done to all those involved in the programme. He and the Mayoress had also witnessed the Licensing of the new Team Rector for Ashford in late October. Led by the wonderful Bishop Rose, Revd Dr Jeremy Worthen had been inaugurated at St Mary’s Church in the town centre and they had much pleasure in welcoming him to this great Borough. The Mayor advised that he also met up with his third charity – Parkinson’s Ashford – to discuss the support they needed and where monies were required to provide the

necessary provision for this most worthwhile cause. In fact, fundraising was difficult, if not impossible at present. He was however planning to organise a series of events before his term ended and he looked forward to colleagues' support.

During his Civic Visits to businesses, attractions, accommodation providers and charities over the past few months, it had been most rewarding to hear their words of thanks to the Council for the support they had been given. Council staff had excelled themselves by relocating to a virtual world overnight way back in March. Within hours they had continued providing all of the services necessary to keep the Borough 'Open for Business' and ensuring its residents and businesses were kept well informed and safe during the pandemic. So he wanted to extend a sincere thank you to each of the Council's Members and Officers for all of the hard work and dedication shown throughout these challenging times.

As they moved towards Christmas and the end of 2020, the Mayor said that they would, no doubt, reflect on what the New Year might bring. He encouraged everyone to step into 2021 with courage - knowing that all they had learnt and achieved through these months had made everyone more aware of their priorities and their passions. He therefore wanted to take this opportunity to wish everyone a peaceful holiday time and a healthy and happier New Year.

In conclusion the Mayor said that whilst this Christmas would be slightly different, there were a few other dates he wanted to make colleagues aware of. On Sunday 13th December there would be a Christmas Service at St Mary's, Great Chart, on Wednesday 16th December the Mayor and Mayoress would be undertaking a Civic Tour of the Town Centre, on Saturday 19th December there would be carols around the Christmas tree at St Francis Church, Cryol Road and on Tuesday 22nd December they would be delivering Christmas parcels around Ashford.

(b) Leader of the Council

The Leader said that he wanted to take a few minutes to provide colleagues with some recent news and announcements of interest.

He was sure that colleagues would have shared the disappointment that Ashford, along with the rest of Kent, was recently placed into Tier 3 and was now facing the highest coronavirus restrictions as a consequence. He assured everyone present that while sharing this disappointment, he had seen the empirical evidence put before Leaders and Chief Executives across the county by Public Health England and KCC Public Health experts, and it was the collective view of the Leaders that this was absolutely the right thing to do. This move should ensure the safety of local communities and lessen the strain on local health facilities. Sadly in Ashford cases were rising and this was true across most of the County, with some parts of Kent seeing the highest rates in the Country. There was thankfully some light at the end of the tunnel, with the first vaccines in the Country taking place this week, including at the William Harvey Hospital. While this news should be welcomed, now was not the time to relax and so he wanted to ask everyone - Elected Members, Council Officers, residents and businesses - to all do everything they could to follow the Government guidance to protect themselves and others to reduce the number of cases.

With the clock ticking down to the end of the Transition period on the 31st December,

preparations were in full swing for minimising potential disruption caused to Kent's road network by expected delays in processing freight and other traffic through the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. As all would know, Ashford was likely to be centre stage during this challenging time, which was why a pre-Cabinet Transition update had been presented to the Council by Senior KCC Officers. They had taken Members through the latest position and the planning for the end of EU Transition and examined potential impacts on Kent in general and Ashford in particular. They also outlined: - Government progress in enabling businesses, traders and hauliers to be "border-ready" by 31st December; how the Kent Access Permit had been designed to provide hauliers who had all the correct documentation with smooth access to the port and Eurotunnel; and how partners in Kent had worked tirelessly this year to prepare for Transition. There were five sites in Kent which had been chosen to help mitigate against the impact of HGVs being held up while they waited to cross the Channel, either via Dover or Eurotunnel. These were Sevington and Waterbrook (both in Ashford), Ebbsfleet, the former airfield at Manston and a site in Dover. Detailed planning should ease the flow of HGV traffic with worst-case scenario modelling suggesting that as many as 7,000 HGVs could be held in queues for up to two days in Kent while waiting to cross the Channel if things did not run as smoothly as intended. To counter this, a traffic management system had been devised to control and manage the flow of HGVs along the M20 and M2/A2 corridors towards the coast. These included Dover TAP, M20 Operation Brock between Junctions 8 and 9, the new Sevington site alongside M20 Junction 10A, Manston airport and also TAP256. These would be used in turn, but only if the need for more lorry parking escalated.

Referring to the development of the Sevington Border Control Post, the presentation had informed that acoustic fencing being installed on top of earth mounds bordering the site was already doing an effective job in shielding local residents from excessive levels of noise and disturbance. At the last Full Council meeting they had received a petition from the local community on designating this area as a buffer zone, which had been fully endorsed on the night and they continued to discuss this, and a large number of other matters, with regards to the site with Central Government. They had been assured that great efforts were being made to ensure that Covid-secure steps were being taken to provide maximum safety for staff operating the site and also HGV drivers. KCC Officers had also confirmed that Waterbrook would only be used if Sevington was not ready for the 1st January, and if it was not ready it would only be used for a short period whilst it was made ready. The presentation had also indicated that KCC was lobbying Government to be given greater powers to be able to clamp illegally-parked HGVs across the County and to issue on-the-spot fines. Members had made it clear that it was important to take a firm approach from Day 1 to ensure that a clear message was sent out to all hauliers and HGV drivers that illegal parking would not be tolerated. Communities, Ward Members and Parish Councils all had a key role to play by being the eyes and ears on the ground and by providing local intelligence on any issues that emerged so that swift action could be taken. The Operation Fennel plan, which set out preparations to mitigate against any impact of Brexit, had been produced by the Kent Resilience Forum in conjunction with KCC, Districts, Emergency Services and several other partners and could be found on the 'Kent Prepared' website. As a consequence of EU Transition, Ashford would become responsible for checks on imports of products of animal origin, high-risk food not of animal origin and animal by-products imported from the EU. The Border Control Post would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and it was currently estimated that it would involve over 124,000 checks per year. Over 120 staff were likely to be directly employed/engaged by the Council. The service would be introduced on a phased approach with documentary checks starting on the 1st April 2021 and physical checks three months later. Clearly this was a huge undertaking and the Council had asked

Government for financial and practical support in setting this up. The creation of new inland border facilities was of national importance and the site at Sevington was a key part of the national plan. When fully operational it would be one of the largest in the UK. This Council would therefore play a vital role in making a success of the country's new trading arrangements with the EU, in whatever format this took. The new service being developed for the Sevington Border Control Post was definitely a challenge but equally it was an exciting prospect and the Council was rising to the occasion. Clearly this was a big undertaking and the Council had asked the Government for finance and practical support in setting it up. The Leader said he was therefore pleased to announce tonight that they had today received confirmation that their funding bid for the Sevington Border Control Post had been endorsed by Defra and fully approved by the Treasury for the full amount that the Council had asked for. This was extremely pleasing to note.

The Leader advised that figures released earlier that week by Visit Kent showed that the tourism industry in Ashford was worth £311m to the Borough in 2019, before the devastating impact of the coronavirus. The latest Tourism Economic Impact Study recorded that the Borough welcomed 4.7m visitors in 2019, with £20m spent on average in the local economy each month, as a direct result of the region's tourism and hospitality industry. Using the industry-respected Cambridge Economic Impact Model, the study measured the volume and value of tourism across the County in 2019, and the impact of visits and visitor expenditure on the local economy. There had been an increase in tourism jobs across the district of 5.8%. This represented 11% of the Borough's total employment last year. The findings provided a detailed picture of the significant effect that tourism and hospitality had on the Borough's wider economy, and also established a benchmark from which to measure the impact of COVID-19. The research showed how more visitors were coming to try the wealth of experiences they had within the Borough of Ashford before the pandemic took hold. These included their world-class vineyards and heritage steam trains, inspirational gardens and endangered Big Cats - all set among some of the most beautiful countryside the Garden of England had to offer. The Council would be working with the Borough's tourism businesses to help them get back on their feet in 2021 and be able to welcome these visitors once again and more details would follow on this, including a detailed breakdown of the report's findings.

Finally, as this was the final Full Council meeting of the year, the Leader said he would like to wish the Mayor, colleague Members, Officers, and indeed all residents a Merry Christmas and he too hoped a more engaging and wholesome New Year in 2021 as they came out of the hold of the COVID-19 virus.

181 Cabinet – 26th November 2020

Resolved:

- That (i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 26th November 2020 be received and noted with the exception of Minute Nos. 149, 151 and 152.**
- (ii) Minute Nos. 149, 151 and 152 be approved and adopted.**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 15.5 Councillors Anckorn, Chilton, Farrell, Spain, C Suddards and L Suddards asked for it to be recorded that they had voted against the Minutes as they had particular concerns about the Town Centre Reset, Medium Term

Financial Plan and Council Tax Base items, although these were items previously resolved by the Cabinet.

182 Audit Committee – 24th November 2020

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on the 24th November 2020 be received and noted.

183 Appointments Committee – 3rd November 2020

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Appointments Committee held on the 3rd November 2020 be received and noted.

184 Selection and Constitutional Review Committee – 19th November 2020

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee held on the 19th November 2020 be approved and adopted.

185 Audit Committee – Annual Report 2019/20

Resolved:

That the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2019/20 be received and noted.

186 Notices of Motion

The Member Services Manager (Operational) advised that the Motion previously submitted with the Summons for the Meeting had been withdrawn.

187 Questions by Members of which Notice Had Been Given

Question from Councillor Charles Suddards to Councillor Clarkson, Leader of the Council

“In respect of the ‘Town Centre Reset report’ it should be noted that neither of the two Ward Members representing the Town Centre (Victoria Ward) have been consulted or involved in any way. How does the Leader propose to rectify this?”

Reply by Councillor Clarkson

“Firstly may I thank Councillor Suddards for his question, which actually surprises me somewhat, quite simply because there is nothing to rectify whatsoever. Our Officers quite properly drafted a paper termed the Ashford Town Centre Reset which put forward a possible overview of how we would need to think about changing the approach to the Town Centre, much as all Local Authorities have been doing in the light of changing social transformation that was occurring long before the Covid-19 Pandemic emerged. Online shopping was having a marked effect on the retail trade and thus the dynamics of Town Centres. All Members of this Authority are invited to attend all Cabinet Meetings and Committee Meetings. The draft principles of the Reset were presented to a meeting of the Ashford Town Centre Redevelopment Advisory Committee on the 25th September 2020. There was also a presentation from Milligan's regarding the Vicarage Lane Project made at the same meeting. It should be noted that both the two Ward Members for Victoria Ward were invited to attend, one as a member of that Committee and the other as an open invitation for all Members. The Minutes record that Councillor Charles Suddards was actually in attendance and that Councillor Farrell, as a Member of the Committee, gave his apologies. A report to Cabinet followed on the 26th November 2020 where all Members of the Authority are notified and able to attend. At that meeting of the Cabinet, I very clearly indicated that this report was the starting point and I went on to stress, as is clearly recorded in the Minutes, that the Town Centre Reset was a blueprint and should be seen as a springboard to improve, grow and rejuvenate the Town Centre. It was also pointed out by one of our Officers at that Meeting that the Ashford Town Centre Reset document was itself shaped by the findings from extensive research and consultation undertaken about the future of the Town Centre during 2018 and findings from the 2020 Residents' Survey. The outline plan was also informed through the visioning exercise undertaken by Experian during 2019/20 to inform and shape our longer term Corporate Planning. This exercise involved a number of workshops that all Members of the Authority were invited to and had the opportunity to attend. You may also know that these workshops included a broad range of stakeholders, including businesses, partners and community groups. May I also say to Councillor Suddards that there are more than just two Councillors with an immediate interest in the Ashford Town Centre. I think that Councillors Anckorn, Buchanan, Feacey, Forest, Heyes, Webb, Rogers, Smith, Lyn Suddards and Barrett will all have a close interest. However notwithstanding that, this is such a major development that all Members of the Authority will have a keen interest in the redevelopment of the Town Centre. I can assure Councillor Suddards that as we move forward with specific work streams and projects to help deliver the blueprint for the town, there will be further engagement with local residents, businesses, partners and of course all Members to ensure our plans meet the future needs of our community and economy as a whole.”

Point of Information by Councillor Farrell

“Thank you for allowing me to make a point of information. We have had an extensive list of meetings there from the Leader and as a point of information I have had to give my apologies to one Town Centre Meeting, I have been at all of the others, including the Town Centre Visioning. I think it's important to state on that point of information that the Ward Members are requesting to meet with the Development Managers of the Town Centre scheme. We were previously invited to two meetings with Arch Industries to discuss the project moving forward, but have not received a similar invite this time. It

was simply a polite request from Councillor Suddards and myself. Not a political point scoring one or one which was intended to rile to Leader as it seemingly has. I am apologetic if Councillor Suddards asking a question on our behalf has caused that, but this is seeking to represent our residents. I completely understand that the Town Centre is important to all Members of this Authority and indeed that is right, but I believe we are uniquely placed to represent the views of those living within the confines of the Town Centre, not least because they actually voted for us and we have a democratic mandate to do so. We are offering to work collegiately with the Leader of the Council on this. Not to fire pot-shots, but to meet privately with the new Development Managers to put forward the experiences and wishes of our residents on such a vital and important development to their lives.”

Reply by Councillor Clarkson

“All I would say is that if you think I am riled you are mistaken. I am simply answering the question that was put, and am pleased to do so in order to say that there has never been more consultation than we have in this Authority at this present time. I think we are on the first steps of this and we will be continuing to consult widely with Members and others as we move forward. The Town Centre Reset is not something that will just emerge, it is going to develop over time.”

Supplementary Question by Councillor Bartlett

“Will the Leader agree with me that the debate on the 26th November at Cabinet included a clear commitment to work collegiately with the Ashford community and the Central Ashford Community Forum?”

Reply by Councillor Clarkson

“Yes I am absolutely delighted to confirm that and that we will be consulting very very closely. That is the whole *‘raison d’etre’* of this and we did indicate that at the Cabinet and indeed I know our Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications is very committed to ensuring that we deal with the surveys we give to our residents and holding workshops to show that we are going down the road that they want to go down. It is their Borough, their town, and we are merely their agents, elected to represent them. ”

Ashford Borough Council: Licensing Committee

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the 19th January 2021.

Present:

Cllr. Webb (Chairman);
Cllr. Krause (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Buchanan, Burgess, Farrell, Feacey, Ledger, Pickering, Rogers, L Suddards.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mulholland, Shorter.

Also Present:

Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader, Principal Litigator, Member Services Manager (Operational).

205 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he was the owner of Energyshift Ltd who worked with members of the taxi trade.	207
Webb	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a Director of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	207

206 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the former Licensing, Health and Safety Committee held on the 15th January 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

207 Proposed Fee Levels for Gambling Act and Licensing Act Applications 2021/2022

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said she wanted to thank the Officers for their hard work in engaging with the trade over the setting of these fees and considered that, as always, they had worked hard to arrive at a fair outcome for all concerned.

The Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader introduced the report which proposed fees for Gambling Act licences and notices for the financial year

2021/22. He advised that the setting of licensing fees generally allowed the Licensing Authority to recover the costs of processing licence applications, regulation and back office costs associated with the running of the licensing regime. Although there was no legal duty for licensing fees to be cost neutral, the Council had a responsibility with reference to managing public funds and setting appropriate fees. The fees also could not be set so as to be profit making, but the 'books' could be balanced over a number of years rather than in any individual year if profits/losses were very different to those expected. He drew attention to the proposed fees contained within the report.

Gambling Related Fees

The report recommended that the fees increase in line with inflation, except where fees were at the statutory maximum as prescribed by regulation.

In response to a question, the Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader advised that with regard to the application fees for a Regional Casino, this was not something that the Ashford Borough had authorisation from the Government for, so whilst they did have to set a fee by the regulations, a Regional Casino was not something that would be applicable to Ashford.

Recommended:

- (i) that the fees used for gambling applications be approved.

RECOMMENDED GAMBLING RELATED LICENCE FEES FOR 2021/22

Premises Type	New Application (£)	Annual Fee (£)
New Small Casino	7316 (8000)	4153 (5000)
New Large Casino	8704 (10000)	8374 (10000)
Regional Casino	13787 (15000)	12929 (15000)
Bingo Club	2505 (3500)	780 (1000)
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	2549 (3000)	506 (600)
Tracks	1959 (2500)	780 (1000)
Family Entertainment Centres	1959 (2000)	674 (750)
Adult Gaming Centre	1959 (2000)	785 (1000)
Temporary Use Notices	216 (500)	N/A

	Application to Vary £	Application to Transfer £	Application for Re-Instatement £	Application for Provisional Statement £	Licence Application (provisional Statement holders) £	Copy Licence £	Notification of Change £
New Small Casino	2995 (4000)	1741 (1800)	1463 (1800)	7316 (8000)	2599 (3000)	25 (25)	50 (50)
New large Casino	3958 (5000)	2044 (2150)	2150 (2150)	8753 (10000)	4299 (5000)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Regional Casino	6458 (7500)	4710 (6500)	4710 (6500)	13787 (15000)	6713 (8000)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Bingo Club	1715 (1750)	952 (1200)	952 (1200)	2505 (3500)	1035 (1200)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	1448 (1500)	952 (1200)	952 (1200)	2505 (3000)	1035 (1200)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Tracks	1250 (1250)	950 (950)	950 (950)	1959 (2500)	950 (950)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Family Entertainment Centres	886 (1000)	950 (950)	950 (950)	1959 (2000)	857 (950)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Adult Gaming Centre	886 (1000)	952 (1200)	924 (1200)	1959 (2000)	1032 (1200)	25 (25)	50 (50)
Temporary Use Notices	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25 (25)	N/A

Ashford Borough Council's Licensing Authority proposes the following fees as shown in bold type in the table above. For ease of reference the maximum fees identified by DCMS that could be charged are shown in brackets.

- (ii) that the annual licensing summary in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005, at Appendix B to the report, be received and noted.

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Ashford Borough Council: Regulatory Committee

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the **19th January 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Webb (Chairman);
Cllr. Krause (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Buchanan, Burgess, Farrell, Feacey, Ledger, Pickering, Rogers, Smith, L Suddards.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mulholland, Shorter.

Also Present:

Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader, Principal Litigator, Member Services Manager (Operational).

208 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he was the Chairman of Energyshift Ltd who worked with members of the taxi trade.	209, 210
Webb	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a Director of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	209, 210

209 Proposed Fee Levels for 2021/22 Licensing Applications

The Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader introduced the report which proposed fees for licences for 2021/22 (excluding those previously proposed by the Licensing Committee). He advised that the setting of licensing fees generally allowed the Licensing Authority to recover the costs of processing licence applications, regulation and back office costs associated with the running of the licensing regime. Although there was no legal duty for licensing fees to be cost neutral, the Council had a responsibility with reference to managing public funds and setting appropriate fees. The fees also could not be set so as to be profit making. Whilst the previous year had been exceptionally difficult for all businesses, including those involved in the licensed trades mentioned below, the cost to the Local Authority in maintaining the regime continued to be affected by inflation, salaries, on-costs, accommodation, increases in back office costs as well as providing adaptations to the normal licensing service because of the pandemic. There was likely to be a significant loss of income this year due to reduced application numbers and a host of increased checks and regulations in relation to taxi licensing going in to 2021/22. He

also gave a brief summary of grants that had been available to the taxi trade to assist them during the pandemic.

The Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader then drew attention to the proposed fees contained within the report.

Sex Establishment Fees

The report proposed that the fees be increased in line with inflation (RPI).

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees

It was proposed that fees be increased in line with inflation with the following exceptions: -

- Vehicle licence grants to increase slightly above inflation to better balance the increased work associated with new licences.
- Vehicle renewals to remain at current rates to take account of efficiencies associated with the eForm renewal process introduced in 2020.
- Transfer of vehicle licences to increase slightly above inflation to better reflect the cost of processing such applications. These had been kept artificially low over recent years to promote the transfer of vehicles to newer, 'cleaner' vehicles, however take up had been extremely low and there was a separate incentive scheme that was operational to promote the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles. That incentive scheme was worth approximately £1,000 to vehicle proprietors over a three-year period.

Scrap Metal Dealers Fees

The report recommended an increase in line with inflation.

In response to a question, the Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader advised that over the past year the price of scrap metal had increased significantly. Given that inherent value, it was therefore not anticipated that fly-tipping of scrap metal was likely to be an issue, despite there being an increase in the level of fly-tipping in general.

Recommended:

- (i) that the sex establishment fees as given below be approved.

RECOMMENDED SEX ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE FEES FOR 2021/22

	CURRENT FEES 2020/21	PROPOSED FEES 2021/22
Grant	£3397	£3499
Transfer	£324	£334
Renewal	£324	£334

- (ii) that the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator applications licence fees as given below be approved for the purposes of public consultation.

**RECOMMENDED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FEES
2021/22**

	CURRENT FEES 2020/21	PROPOSED FEES 2021/22
Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence (for 1 year)	£70.00	£72.00
Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence (for 3 years)	£145.00	£149.00
Additional driver's licence (adding a licence)	£30.00	£31.00
Hackney Carriage Knowledge Test & Re-test	£57.00	£59.00
Replacement badge / Licence	£12	£12.50
Vehicle Licence - New or Renewal (including vehicle plate) for 1 year	£320 - New £300 - Renewal	£335 - New £300 - Renewal
Vehicle Plate Internal / External	£20.50	£21.00
Transfer of Vehicle Licence (with or without vehicle plate)	£32.00	£35.00
<i>Vehicle Inspection - Test Fee (set by contract)</i>	£32.00	£32.00
<i>Vehicle Inspection - Missed Appointment (set by contract)</i>	No Charge	No Charge
Private Hire Operators Licence - New or Renewal (for 5 years)	1-3 vehicles : £139 4-10 vehicles : £460 11-20 vehicles : £919	1-3 vehicles : £143 4-10 vehicles : £474 11-20 vehicles : £947
To increase number of vehicles licensed during duration of Operators Licence	1-3 : £137.00 4-10 : £318.00 11-20 : £461.00	1-3 : £141.00 4-10 : £328.00 11-20 : £475.00
Fee for Returned (Bounced) Cheques	£17.00	£17.50

- (iii) that the scrap metal, site and collectors fees as given below be approved.

**RECOMMENDED SCRAP METAL, SITE AND COLLECTORS LICENSING FEES
2021/22**

	CURRENT FEES 2020/21	PROPOSED FEES 2021/22
Grant Site Licence	£334	£344
Grant Collectors Licence	£224	£231
Renewal Site Licence	£224	£231
Renewal Collectors Licence	£112	£112
Variation	£84	£87
Replacement Licence	£12	£12.50

- (iv) that the annual licensing summary, at Appendix D to the report, be received and noted.

210 Review of the Hackney Carriage Fare Scale 2021/22

The Environmental Protection and Licensing Team Leader introduced the report and advised that the Committee were asked to recommend a Hackney Carriage Fare Scale to Full Council, based on the information and evidence contained within the report. The fare scale was designed to protect the public from excessive fares and act as a maximum fare that could be charged. Drivers/proprietors were free to charge less or offer discounts, and this was actively encouraged. He drew attention to a number of points, namely:

- An extremely small percentage of the trade (only one licensee and one trade representative of a potential 610 licences) had responded to the call for evidence. Both responses had called for no increase to the drop rate or yardage rate.
- 2017 saw an increase on the yardage rate of 3%, with 2019 seeing a 3% increase on the yardage rate and a 10 pence increase on the drop rate. In each of the other last five years there had been no increases.
- Fuel prices had reduced since April 2020 and had not risen back up above these levels.
- Inflation (RPI) stood at 2.8% over the last 12 months.
- Insurance premiums for general vehicles had dropped on average 2% over the past 12 months.
- The local fare rate had remained in a very similar position both nationally and a county level, as per previous years. This was approximately mid-way in Kent and the top third across the country.

In recommending a fare scale, Officers asked the Committee to consider both a percentage change in the drop rate and yardage rates. The drop rate being the minimum charge and the latter being the ongoing fare per so many yards or seconds. Options open to the Committee were a decrease to the current tariffs (including percentage change), no change, or an increase to the current tariff (including percentage change).

The Chairman said that the low level of responses from the trade continued to be disheartening. Low consultation response figures occurred year on year despite efforts to encourage a greater level of response from the trade and it was in their interests to engage more.

Members did not consider the time was right for a fare increase. It had been a difficult year for the trade and the continuing pandemic meant that many people were still reticent to use public transport and it was important to build back confidence within the community over the coming year. There also did not appear to be any appetite amongst the drivers for an increase. No increase to fares was therefore favoured.

A motion was put forward, and seconded, that there should be no increase to either the drop or yardage rate. This was voted upon and there was unanimous agreement.

Recommended:

That the Hackney Carriage fare scale for 2021/22 as given in the table below be approved for the purpose of issuing a public notice.

DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK

PROPOSED FARES FOR 2021/22

(a) Fares for distance or time: Rate 1	£
If the distance does not exceed 680 yards, for the whole distance or for the first 216 seconds of waiting time	2.90
For each subsequent 161.8 yards or uncompleted part thereof	0.20
Or for each subsequent period of 51.4 seconds of waiting time or uncompleted part thereof	0.20
(b) Fares for certain times and days: Rate 2	
a) For each hire commenced between 12 midnight and 7 am	1½ x Rate 1
b) For each hire undertaken on GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER MONDAY, MAY DAY, SPRING BANK HOLIDAY, SUMMER BANK HOLIDAY or any other specifically declared Bank Holiday only.	1½ x Rate 1
(i) Fares for certain times and days: Rate 3	
c) For each hire undertaken on a CHRISTMAS DAY, BOXING DAY or NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 x Rate 1
When the holiday charge (b) or (c) is payable the Night Charge (a) is NOT payable.	

2 Miles - £6.50
5 Miles - £13.10
10 Miles - £23.90

Extras - up to a maximum of £1.20	
(a) for each person (excluding infants in arms) carried in excess of two persons (two children under 10 years of age count as one person) irrespective of distance.	0.20
Note: For the purposes of counting the number of persons <u>that the vehicle is licensed to carry</u>, children under 10 years of age should <u>each be counted as a person</u>. A babe in arms should not be counted as a person.	
(b) for each article of luggage conveyed outside the passenger compartment of the carriage	0.05
(c) for perambulators	0.05
(d) for dogs	0.10

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Ashford Borough Council: Cabinet

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Cabinet held on Microsoft Teams on the **17th December 2020**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Barrett, Bell, Buchanan, Clokie, Feacey, Forest, Pickering, Shorter.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Anckorn, Mrs Bell, Blanford, Burgess, Chilton, Farrell, Harman, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland, Ovenden, Spain, Sparks, C Suddards, L Suddards, Walder, Wright.

In attendance:

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Head of Finance and IT, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Environment and Land Management, Head of Housing, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Accountancy Manager, Communications and Marketing Manager, Development Partnership Manager, Chilmington CMO Project Manager, Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader, Masterplanning and Delivery Coordinator, Member Services Manager (Operational).

188 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he lived adjacent to the Sevington Inland Border Facility site.	192
Feacey	Made a Voluntary Announcement as Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	192
Shorter	Declared an 'Other Significant Interest' (OSI) as he owned a property and worked adjacent to the Court Lodge site which was one of the sites mentioned in the report. He would introduce the item as Portfolio Holder and then withdraw from the debate and vote on the item.	193

189 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 26th November 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

190 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said he no particular announcements other than, as this was the last Cabinet Meeting of the calendar year, to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas.

191 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020–2050 – Affordable Housing Delivery and Aspirations

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which set out the priorities within the HRA. The Council had to have a 30 year Business Plan for its HRA and the viability of that plan was the foundation of every decision taken in the HRA. This ensured a holistic approach to balancing the need to increase the Council's stock (given demand), while providing quality, energy efficient homes and sustaining tenancies. He drew attention to the fact that the HRA had built or acquired 219 new homes in the financial year, enabled 154 homes through registered providers and had three construction sites up and running to deliver another 77 homes in the next 1/2 years. In addition, the rent arrears that had been forecast at the start of the pandemic had not been realised and the position had actually improved and there were 33% less people in temporary accommodation than before the pandemic. He said he was therefore very proud of the achievements of the Housing Service this year.

In the course of the discussion on this item the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- With regard to shared spaces and facilities as mentioned in the Social Housing White Paper, whilst this was not a requirement it was only right to state that Ashford already had some good examples of how shared space had been used within independent living schemes and involvement of nearby communities. There was perhaps a need to better emphasise what was already there and encouraging communities to access those facilities through better community engagement.
- Existing five-year fixed term tenancies would be transitioned to secure lifetime tenancies when they expired. This would allow people to put down roots and become more engaged with their communities.
- On decarbonisation and the Green Homes Grant, the Council would continue to make best use of any funding streams available to them, but it was fair to

point out that not all of those funding streams were available for Council/social housing stock.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the progress in delivering affordable housing in the HRA and temporary accommodation within the General Fund be noted.**
 - (ii) the updated HRA Business Plan and financial projections be agreed.**
 - (iii) Overview and Scrutiny will review the HRA Business Plan financial projections as part of the budget scrutiny process.**
 - (iv) the HRA priorities set out in Paragraph 10 of the report be agreed.**
 - (v) it be agreed that the Council will no longer issue five-year fixed-term tenancies, offering only secure tenancies following the successful completion of an introductory tenancy.**
 - (vi) it be agreed that the Council will, after careful consideration, cease the Ashford Promise.**
 - (vii) it be agreed that the Council will continue with the on-street purchase programme in quantities outlined in the report, recognising that 20 units will be cross-subsidised in later financial years, and set affordable rents.**
 - (viii) the Council's plans for future housing delivery as set out in Appendix B to the report which presents projects under way or in the consideration phase be noted, and authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Finance and IT and the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Finance and IT, to vary the programme as necessary.**

192 Draft Budget 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the draft budget for 2021/22 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. He also directed Members' attention to the tabled papers which included some changes to the original report. The draft budget was in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan presented to the Cabinet in November, and which formed the basis for this draft budget. It would now be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review as well as the formal budget consultation processes. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the report presented a balanced budget for 2021/22, although there were a number of risks to the delivery of the budget that were explored within the report. The report also included the HRA draft budget which incorporated the assumptions in the 30 year business plan presented to the Cabinet earlier in the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder drew particular attention to: - the modest proposed Council Tax increase which left Ashford as the lowest charging in Kent; the level of savings that had been identified in the face of the pandemic and generally reduced income; some areas of increased income; and reduced New Homes Bonus. The £2.3m of savings that had been identified were equivalent to a notional Council Tax increase of £55 rather than the £5 proposed. He therefore thanked Officers for their hard work in pulling the draft budget together. He further emphasised that this was indeed a draft document and if Members had any queries or questions on particular points of detail, they should take the opportunity to attend the Budget Scrutiny meetings which would be the opportunity to delve in to the detail and get full and comprehensive responses from Officers. The draft would also go out to consultation with residents, businesses and staff before coming back for adoption by Full Council on the 4th March 2021.

In the course of the discussion on this item the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- With regard to Government support, both the Leader and Portfolio Holder said they had no complaints about the amount Ashford had received so far during the pandemic. Clearly, this year had been difficult for everyone across the country, but the Government did not have a 'bottomless pit' and, along with more general support, this Council had received significant funding for both the Stour Centre and the Port Health Authority. The Council had received £3m in support grants, and although this did not cover all of the loss of the income, it was their view that the Government should not be expected to make up every penny that Local Authorities had lost. It was not true that the Council had not been given money by the Government that it was in some way 'owed' and it was important to not mix-up one-off Government grants with the Council's ongoing financial planning and budgeting. This Council was not the sort of authority who simply looked to Central Government for cash, they were innovative and took their destiny in to their own hands. The provisional settlement for next year had been announced by Government earlier that day and there was now a lot of data and detail for Officers to examine and digest ahead of the final budget report.
- With regard to the deletion of roughly 30 full time equivalent posts and a pay freeze for existing staff, it was confirmed that there would be full consultation with Unison. It should be emphasised that a number of the posts were already long-term vacant, so it would not be a case of 30 people losing their jobs. There were also likely to be opportunities for redeployment for the small number of individuals who may be affected. It was about looking at outputs and smarter ways of working, rather than the number of posts. Again more detail could be provided on this during the Budget Scrutiny process.
- In response to suggestions that having the lowest Council Tax in Kent may not necessarily be something to be proud of if that did not translate in to Council provided community buildings and facilities and more engagement of the community, the Portfolio Holder said that it was the view of this Administration that the Council Tax was quite a pernicious tax, particularly for those on fixed or lower incomes. It had therefore always been the intention to benefit those people by keeping the Council Tax low. The whole ethos of the

Council's Medium Term Financial Plan was to get back to a point where the budget was more stable, to enable money to be put aside again for those types of capital projects mentioned. The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism advised that whilst he agreed it was right to recognise the importance of community buildings, he also encouraged all involved to move away from thinking about these in terms of Wards and boundaries and encourage facilities and organisations to work for the Borough as a whole.

- The intention was to be as open and transparent as possible and include as much detail as they could in the final public budget report to Cabinet/Full Council, which would enable full questioning. If any Members felt this was not the case when the final reports were published, they were encouraged to contact the Portfolio Holder for further information.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the draft budget for 2021/22 be approved.**
 - (ii) the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22, at Section 2 of the report, be approved.**
 - (iii) it be agreed that the report will be used as the basis for the budget consultation with the public, the business community, Parish Councils and staff.**
 - (iv) the draft budget as set out in the report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group for formal scrutiny.**

193 Five Year Vision and Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented for adoption a Five Year Vision and Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community, following 18 months of stakeholder and wider public engagement. The document set out clear and achievable actions to be delivered by different partners, helping to join-up high quality placemaking with community-led governance and long-term sustainable development. He also directed Members attention to the Update Report which included minor amendments to the report including the recommendations and also proposed the inclusion of the Portfolio Holder in recommendation (ii) to allow for the proper Member oversight.

Before withdrawing from the discussion and vote, the Portfolio Holder responded to a question about the provision of local employment within the strategy and whether this could be formally built in. He said that using the previous Chilmington scheme as an example, there were a number of live/work units, small scale industrial units, shops, schools, medical facilities and other community assets which would usually be taken over by the Community Management Organisation and these were the principles that would also be adopted here.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the draft Vision and Strategy and the steps to implement the proposed action plan (along with strategic partners who have endorsed it) be approved in principle.**
- (ii) **the Head of Planning and Development be delegated authority, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Economy and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to approve the final document for publication.**

194 Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy

The Leader introduced the report which advised that the Council had been asked by Kent County Council to endorse the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. The Strategy set out a course of action to deliver clean growth, supporting the Kent Environment Strategy.

Resolved:

That the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy be endorsed.

195 Edinburgh Road Car Park Review

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed changes to the operation of Edinburgh Road car park in terms of operating hours, a bespoke charging tariff and the introduction of reduced fees for customers using RingGo. He thanked Officers for producing the report which sought to make better use of an underused Council asset.

A Member asked about the charging regime and if prices could be made more comparable to other areas of the town for residents, and to the Designer Outlet for shoppers/visitors. The Highways and Transportation Team Leader advised that the focus of incentives had been more around RingGo users although all charges were being reduced and free parking would continue after 3pm. The Portfolio Holder advised that charges for residents equated to about £1.60 per day so were certainly not punitive. He also advised that parking charges across all car parks were being kept under constant review and would be altered if necessary.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the new operating hours of Edinburgh Road car park, as outlined in the report, be agreed.**
- (ii) **the bespoke charging tariff for Edinburgh Road car park, as outlined in the report, be agreed.**

- (iii) the introduction of reduced fees for customers using RingGo be agreed.

196 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – Notes of 22nd October 2020

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 22nd October 2020 be received and noted.

197 IT and Digital Transformation Advisory Committee – Notes of 17th November 2020

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the IT and Digital Transformation Advisory Committee held on the 17th November 2020 be received and noted.

198 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – Notes of 21st October and 26th November 2020

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meetings of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 21st October and 26th November 2020 be received and noted.

199 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.

200 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

201 Use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers

The Leader advised that he had accepted the late inclusion of this exempt item on to the Agenda.

The exempt information report advised of the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers to complete a strategic acquisition.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

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Ashford Borough Council - Appointments Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Appointments Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the 18th December 2020.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Pickering (Vice Chairman);

Cllrs. Feacey, Ovenden, L Suddards.

Also Present:

Cllr. Shorter

Chief Executive; Head of HR and Customer Services, Personnel Advisor – Recruitment, Member Services Liaison Manager.

202 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 2nd December 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

203 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, namely Appointment of the Head of Planning and Development, as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

204 Appointment of the Head of Planning and Development

The Committee interviewed one candidate during the exempt part of the Committee meeting.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the candidate should be offered the post.

Resolved:

That the candidate interviewed that day should be offered the post of Head of Planning and Development, subject to:-

- (i) consultation with the Cabinet in accordance with General Procedure Rule – Appendix 1 – Procedural Decisions Relating to Staff – (4)(2) and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.**
- (ii) the Corporate Director (Law and Governance) confirming that the procedure referred to in (i) above has been completed with no outstanding objections.**

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Ashford Borough Council - Appointments Committee

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Appointments Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the **20th January 2021**

Present:

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

Cllrs. Feacey, Ovenden, L Suddards

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Head of HR and Customer Services, Personnel Advisor – Recruitment, Member Services Liaison Manager.

211 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 18th December 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

212 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, namely Appointment of the Head of Port Health as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

213 Appointment of the Head of Port Health

The Committee received the report of the Head of HR and Customer Services which advised upon the process for carrying out the recruitment for the post of Head of Port Health. The report sought approval for the creation of the post, the job description, person specification, remuneration package, recruitment advertisement and approval of the proposed recruitment process. The Chairman advised that it was his intention for the Deputy Leader to assume the portfolio responsibilities for this new service

area and therefore said that he would need to be invited as an observer to subsequent meetings of the Committee dealing with the recruitment to this position.

The Head of HR and Customer Services asked that recommendation (i) in the report be amended to also include the approval of the Job Description and the Person Specification.

The Committee agreed the proposals set out within the report subject to the inclusion of the salary range for the post within the job advert with the maximum not exceeding the top point of the next salary grade by way of market supplement. The Committee also asked that the Head of HR and Customer Services liaise with the Member Services and Liaison Manager over dates for the shortlisting and interview meetings.

The Chief Executive said that she wished to acknowledge the work of all members of the HR Team in terms of establishing the posts and structure for the new Border Control Post at Sevington.

Resolved:

That

- (i) the creation of the post of Head of Port Health, the Job Description and Person Specification as set out in the report be approved.**
- (ii) the terms and conditions as set out in the report be approved.**
- (iii) the recruitment process and the potential recruitment advertisement costs as set out in then report be approved.**
- (iv) options for potential dates for the shortlisting meeting and the interview meeting be circulated in due course.**

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Member Services
membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: <http://moderngov.co.uk>

Ashford Borough Council: Standards Committee

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Standards Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the **25th January 2021**

Present:

Cllr. Mrs Bell (Chairman);
Cllr. Shorter (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Chilton, Knowles, Ovenden, Pickering, Turner.

Mrs C Vant – Independent Person.

Apologies:

Mr D Lyward – Parish Council Representative, Cllr. Forest.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Clokie, Harman, Ledger, White.

In Attendance:

Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Member Services Manager (Operational).

218 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Shorter	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he was the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development and the Service was mentioned in the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report.	220

219 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 3rd February 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

220 Annual Report of the Council's Monitoring Officer 2020

The Monitoring Officer introduced his Annual Report for the calendar year 2020, which would be presented to the Council on the 4th March 2021. The report

assessed activity in probity and related governance matters, in particular in relation to formal complaints about alleged breaches of protocols and codes of conduct by Borough and Parish Councillors. These related to the calendar year 2020.

In addition, the report included data on Ombudsman complaints as these were also handled by the Monitoring Officer and his staff. The relevant period for these related to the most recent data provided by the Ombudsman, namely 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

With regard to Code of Conduct Complaints, there had been a noticeable growth in 'tensions' in certain Local Councils which had led to a significant increase in the volume of informal complaint activity and requests for advice at Parish Council level. Some of this had resulted from new Virtual Meeting procedures and considerable support had been provided to some Local Councils. Several formal complaints had also been made during 2020 although a number had fallen away due to a failure to provide information or the fact that the complaint failed to meet legal or local assessment criteria (e.g. related to private conduct). The registered formal complaints were detailed at Table 1 on Page 6 of the report.

In terms of governance issues, the year had seen noticeably fewer complaints related to social media usage. Whether that was as a direct result of the adoption of Social Media Guidance and related training in 2019 was not certain, but it was a pleasing development and one that would continue to be monitored. With regard to the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) recommendations reported in 2019, preparation of a new Model Code of Conduct for Councillors had been delayed somewhat due to the pandemic, but following extensive consultation the Local Government Association had published a new Model Code a few days before Christmas 2020. This would now be given detailed consideration by the Kent Monitoring Officers Group in the coming months and a further report would be presented to this Committee once that work was complete.

In relation to Ombudsman Complaints, the Monitoring Officer advised that there had been 17 received by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) which was a slight decrease from 19 in the previous year. Only three of these however had been upheld (an increase from one in the previous year).

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

- With regard to whether there needed to be more training for Parish Councillors and to Borough Councillors on the Member/Parish Council relationship more generally, the Monitoring Officer advised that Parish, Town and Community Councils had been invited to the Code of Conduct training put on by ABC at the start of this Council term in June 2019, and indeed a number had attended. He also knew that the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) ran a comprehensive programme of training for Local Councils and this did include some reference to the Code of Conduct. With regard to the relationship and interaction between Borough Councillors and Parish Councils, this was not a source of any of the complaints over the last few years (with perhaps one exception), but there was perhaps some merit in

Borough Members having a better understanding of the role of Parish Councils. Councillor Pickering, as Chairman of the Member Training Panel, said this was something the Panel could examine further.

- The majority of cases reported to the Monitoring Officer did involve Parish Councils and were almost exclusively around tensions and/or clashes of personalities between individuals or small opposing groups on those Councils and the way those people behaved towards one another. These were difficult issues to legislate for by way of conventional training, but they were also inevitably often time consuming and resource intensive.
- A number of Members considered that the cost and burden on District Councils for being responsible for managing the whole Code of Conduct complaint process was wholly unfair and something that should be looked at further - with the relevant bodies lobbied if necessary. Members considered that if there were options to recharge the cost of investigating such complaints to the respective Parish Council, that would be desirable. The Monitoring Officer advised that there was no legislative basis to do so within the current system. Ashford wasn't alone in this regard and the argument had been made before through the CSPL work, and rejected, so he did not think there was any appetite for this argument to be resurrected.
- In relation to resources the Monitoring Officer confirmed that it was likely that some outsourcing of investigation and support work would be required. Members asked that with effect from the start of the new financial year, data on time and costs be recorded for formal and informal complaint activity.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer for 2020 be received, noted and forwarded to Full Council for approval.**
 - (ii) the Monitoring Officer report to future meeting(s) of the Standards Committee in relation to the new LGA Model Code of Conduct.**
 - (iii) the Member Training Panel examine possibilities for further Member training on the role of Parish Councils.**
 - (iv) future Annual Reports from the Monitoring Officer include data on the time and costs incurred by the Borough Council in dealing with Code of Conduct complaints.**

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**Standards Committee
25 JANUARY 2021**

**Council
4 MARCH 2021**

**Annual Report Of The Council's
Monitoring Officer – 2020**

A. Introduction

1. The principal purpose of my Annual Report is to assess activity in probity and related governance matters, in particular in relation to formal complaints about alleged breaches of protocols and codes of conduct by borough and parish councillors. The report also provides an opportunity to review the effectiveness of current procedures. This report deals with the calendar year 2020 in relation to these matters.
2. The Council's current code of conduct for councillors was adopted on 20 July 2012 and has since been the subject of a number of amendments. This code is based on Localism Act principles and was developed as a collaborative project by Kent Monitoring Officers in consultation with task groups of councillors within individual councils. The vast majority of district and parish councils in Kent have adopted this "Kent Model Code of Conduct".
3. When it adopted the Code of Conduct in 2012, the Council also adopted new procedural "Arrangements" for handling code of conduct complaints. Again this was developed on a Kent-wide basis with the objective of simplifying procedures and removing unnecessary bureaucracy which had beset the previous standards regime.
4. The Council has also adopted a "Good Practice Protocol for Councillors Dealing with Planning Matters". This sets out detailed best practice rules for this specialist and sensitive area of the Council's work which go beyond the general rules set out in the code of conduct. The Protocol was substantially revised and updated in October 2015 to reflect changes in the law and government guidance. The first formal complaint of breach of the Protocol was dealt with in 2017.
5. My Annual Report also includes data on Ombudsman complaints as these are also handled by or on behalf of the Monitoring Officer. The Standards Committee monitors any issues of probity raised in Ombudsman investigations. In terms of Ombudsman complaints the relevant period relates to the most recent data provided by the Ombudsman namely that for the period 1st April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

B. Code of Conduct Complaints 2020

6. Formal complaint activity in Ashford has been relatively low since adoption of the new code of conduct in 2012. For example, during 2016 no new formal complaints were submitted, whilst in previous years the few complaints made,

mainly at Parish Council level, had been resolved informally. No complaints had been taken to formal investigation and hearing up to the end of 2016. However the period since 2017 has been more challenging. In my last annual report, I reported on a series of complex formal complaints which had recently been concluded. Since early 2020, various national and local “lockdowns” have been in place with most staff working remotely and councillor meetings taking place “virtually”. However this has not resulted in a reduction of formal or informal complaint activity. On the contrary the volume of informal complaint activity and requests for advice has grown significantly at parish council level. Some of this has resulted from new “virtual” meeting procedures and considerable support has had to be provided to some local councils. Several formal complaints have been made in 2020 although a number have fallen away due to a failure to provide information or the fact that the complaint failed to meet legal or local assessment criteria eg. related to private conduct.

7. The formal complaints received and registered in 2020 are set out in Table 1 below

Table 1
Formal Code of Conduct Complaints Made

Council Ref	Allegations	Decision(s)	Comments
ABC 20/007 PR304/200 TENTERDEN	Bullying/Intimidating Conduct	Under consideration	Further information awaited
ABC 20/010 PR304/203 TENTERDEN	As above	As above	As above
ABC 20/009 PR304/202	Confer advantage/disadvantage Disrepute	Under consideration	Further information awaited
ABC 20/008 PR304/201 PARISH	Misuse of resources Disrepute	Under consideration	Further information awaited

NB. In my last annual report, there was a reference to a Bilsington complaint allegation of disclosure of confidential information/bullying. The reference to bullying was incorrect

C. Other Relevant Governance Developments in 2020

8. The new Social Media Guidance Note for Councillors was adopted in May 2019. In addition a revised Councillor/Officer Working Relationship protocol was adopted clarifying standards of expected behaviours. Some training in relation to these protocols was provided following the elections in 2019 and I am pleased to say that noticeably fewer complaints (formal and informal) have related to social media usage.

9. In my last annual report I included an update on the review work of the national Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). The CSPL had made 15 “Best Practice” Recommendations in relation to the local government ethical standards system, some of which required legislation to implement. An update has been provided to the CSPL by all local authorities.
10. One of the CSPL’s formal recommendations in 2019 was that the Local Government Association should prepare an optional new Model Code of Conduct for Councillors in order to encourage greater consistency and higher standards. Following extensive consultation the LGA published a new Model Code of Conduct a few days before Christmas. This will now be given detailed consideration by the Kent Monitoring Officers Group in the near future and a further report to this Committee will be presented when that work is complete.
11. Following a review of the LGA’s most recent “Probity in Planning” Guidance, the membership of the Council’s Planning Committee was changed to reflect some recommended practice in that Guidance

D. Ombudsman Complaints 2019/20

12. Since April 2013, complaints about social housing have been dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and not the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).
13. For Members’ information the analysis of the complaints resolved by the LGO in 2019/20 are attached (Appendix A). The LGO’s Annual Letter and Report are also included in Appendix A.
14. The number of complaints received by the Ombudsman in 2019/20 (17) was slightly lower than in 2018/2019 (19) but, the number of complaints upheld was three, as opposed to one in the previous year. Details are provided in the Table below.
15. A new column has been added to the Table of Ombudsman Complaints giving information on action taken/lessons learned where relevant. This is consistent with the approach advocated in the last Ombudsman’s annual review letter.

E. Recommendations

1. That the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer for 2020 be received and noted.
2. That the Monitoring Officer report to future meeting(s) of the Standards Committee in relation to the new LGA Model Code of Conduct.

T W MORTIMER
Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
January 2021

Appendix A – Analysis of Ombudsman Complaints

The Ombudsman investigates complaints about Council services to remedy personal injustice caused by maladministration (“fault”) or service failure.

Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received 17 complaints, with decisions on 16 of those as follows:

<u>Not investigated by the LGO</u>	
Incomplete or invalid complaint	1
Advice Given by LGO	1
Referred back for local resolution	<u>4</u>
	6
Closed after initial enquiries	7
Not upheld	0
Investigated by the LGO and Upheld	<u>3</u>
	10
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>16</u>

Attached is a table providing further details on the 10 complaints about which the LGO contacted the Council, and outcome of these complaints. Only 3 complaints were fully investigated by the LGO and these were Upheld. Actions taken by the Council and lessons learned as a result are also included in the attached table.

I have also attached the Ombudsman’s Annual Review letter 2019/20.

When the LGO has issued a report on a completed investigation, these are generally published in the Complaints Outcomes section of the LGO website www.lgo.org.uk. The published information does not name the complainant or any individual involved with the complaint.

Local Government Ombudsman Decisions 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

Reference	ABC Dept	Complaint details	LGO Decision	LGO comments	Action taken by the Council/lessons learned
18 011 675	Housing	Complained about the Council's handling of her request for housing help when she and her son were made homeless.	Upheld	Evidence of fault, particularly the Council did not comply with the Relief Duty it owed the complainant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apology to complainant. • Payment of £400 in compensation for uncertainty and distress suffered. • Action plan implemented following training sessions with the staff dedicated to casework management, administrative processes, and embedding more rigour in the qualitative element of cases. Also to impart better awareness of the LGO's role.
19 002 836	Revenues & Benefits	Complained that the Council was pursuing him for unpaid business rates for which he considered he was not liable.	Closed after initial enquiries	LGO decided not to investigate as complainant's liability had been established at court.	N/A

18 016 200	Planning & Devt	Complained about the Council's handling of his planning application and its enforcement action relating to conversion of his front garden to form a driveway.	Upheld	Evidence of fault and remedy completed late.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Payment of £150 in recognition of the injustice cause to the complainant.• This complaint was made at a time when the Council employed several case officers who were contracted consultants because of the difficulties recruiting permanent staff. The standard of service at times therefore sadly fell short of what the Council aspires to provide. Given that the Council now has an almost have a fully resourced team, it is very unlikely for this to happen again. Notwithstanding this, the Council is working with the PAS to provide internal training to look at ways of improving service delivery, which will
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					include better communication with the customer.
19 001 187	Planning & Devt	Complained that the Council took planning enforcement action against him for a garage door he fitted.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction.	N/A
19 004 114	Environmental Health	Complained about the way the Council had dealt with complainant's concerns about dog faeces in a neighbour's garden.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.	N/A
19 007 588	Planning & Devt	Complained about the Council's delay and the following refusal of her planning application.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction.	N/A
19 011 006	Parking	Complained about the Council's enforcement of a Traffic Regulation Order preventing vehicular access to the town centre.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.	N/A
19 010 743	Legal & Democracy	Complained that the Council failed to divert a footpath on her land prior to her purchase of her property.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.	N/A
19 004 416	Planning	Complained that the Council did not notify him about a planning application to develop on a site near his house.	Upheld	Evidence that the Council failed to update the complainant properly about one of his complaints	The Council agreed to remind its Planning Enforcement Officers of the need to respond to all parts of a complaint they had investigated when providing updates to members of the

				and remedy completed late.	public. A Meeting was subsequently held with Enforcement Officers, who were reminded of the importance of communicating fully with complainants.
19 018 211	Planning	Complained that the Council delayed in deciding his planning application and as a result he suffered financial loss, stress and upset.	Closed after initial enquiries	Closed after initial enquiries – out of jurisdiction.	N/A

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

22 July 2020

By email

Mrs Kerly
Chief Executive
Ashford Borough Council

Dear Mrs Kerly

Annual Review letter 2020

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the exceptional pressures under which local authorities have been working over recent months, I thought carefully about whether it was still appropriate to send you this annual update. However, now, more than ever, I believe that it is essential that the public experience of local services is at the heart of our thinking. So, I hope that this feedback, which provides unique insight into the lived experience of your Council's services, will be useful as you continue to deal with the current situation and plan for the future.

Complaint statistics

This year, we continue to place our focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have made several changes over recent years to improve the data we capture and report. We focus our statistics on these three key areas:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated. A focus on how often things go wrong, rather than simple volumes of complaints provides a clearer indicator of performance.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault and we monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority - We want to encourage the early resolution of complaints and to credit authorities that have a positive and open approach to resolving complaints. We recognise cases where an authority has taken steps to put things right before the complaint came to us. The authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

This data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 29 July 2020, and our Review of Local Government Complaints. For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#).

It is pleasing that we recorded our satisfaction with your Council's compliance in the three cases where we recommended a remedy. However, it is disappointing that in two of these cases, remedies were not completed within the agreed timescales. While I acknowledge the pressures councils are under, such delays add to the injustice already suffered by complainants. Additionally, the actions you agree to take, and your performance in implementing them, are reported publicly on our website, so are likely to generate increased public and media scrutiny in future. I invite the Council to consider how it might make improvements to reduce delays in the remedy process and to ensure it tells us promptly when it completes a remedy.

Resources to help you get it right

There are a range of resources available that can support you to place the learning from complaints, about your authority and others, at the heart of your system of corporate governance. [Your council's performance](#) launched last year and puts our data and information about councils in one place. Again, the emphasis is on learning, not numbers. You can find the decisions we have made, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the tool with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

Earlier this year, we held our link officer seminars in London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Attended by 178 delegates from 143 local authorities, we focused on maximising the impact of complaints, making sure the right person is involved with complaints at the right time, and how to overcome common challenges.

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. During the year, we delivered 118 courses, training more than 1,400 people. This is 47 more courses than we

delivered last year and included more training to adult social care providers than ever before.
To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael King
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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Agenda Item 15



Agenda Item No:

Report To: Council

Date of Meeting: 4th March 2021

Report Title: Programme of Meetings 2021/22 and 2022/23

Report Author & Job Title: Danny Sheppard – Member Services Manager (Operational)

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Clarkson
Portfolio Holder for: Leader of the Council

Summary:	To agree the programme of meetings for 2021/22 and 2022/23
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Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None specifically

Recommendations: **The Council is asked to agree the programme of meetings for 2021/22 and 2022/23**

Policy Overview: The programme reflects the monthly Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny cycle as agreed by the Council at its meeting on the 17th October 2019 (Minute No 191/10/19 refers). This generally provides for a Cabinet meeting on the last Thursday of every month and a monthly Planning Committee meeting every four/five weeks. Overview and Scrutiny meetings are programmed in line with the timetable for call-in of items from the Cabinet and will generally fall on the second Tuesday of the month.

Equalities Impact Assessment Not Required

Exempt from Publication: NO

Contact: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330349

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DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2021 - MAY 2022

Meetings are usually held at the Civic Centre and start at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated.

During the Coronavirus pandemic some meeting start times have changed and these are indicated up until September 2021

MAY 2021

M 3 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 4 Selection & CR 6pm
 W 5
 Th 6 **KCC/PCC Elections**
 F 7

M 10
 Tu 11 O&S
 W 12
 Th 13 JCC 2.30pm
 F 14

M 17
 Tu 18
 W 19 Planning
 Th 20 Council
 F 21

M 24
 Tu 25 TEB 10am
 W 26
 Th 27 Cabinet 6pm
 F 28

M 31 **BANK HOLIDAY**

JUNE 2021

Tu 1 Joint Transport 5pm
 W 2
 Th 3
 F 4

M 7
 Tu 8 O&S
 W 9
 Th 10
 F 11

M 14
 Tu 15 Audit 5pm
 W 16 Planning
 Th 17
 F 18

M 21
 T 22
 W 23
 Th 24 Cabinet 6pm
 F 25

M 28
 Tu 29
 W 30

JULY 2021

Th 1 Selection and CR 6pm
 F 2

M 5
 Tu 6
 W 7
 Th 8 JCC 2.30pm
 F 9

M 12
 Tu 13 O&S
 W 14 Planning
 Th 15 Council
 F 16

M 19
 Tu 20
 W 21
 Th 22
 F 23

M 26
 T 27
 W 28
 Th 29 Cabinet 6pm
 F 30

AUGUST 2021

M 2
 Tu 3
 W 4
 Th 5
 F 6

M 9
 Tu 10 O&S
 W 11
 Th 12
 F 13

M 16
 Tu 17
 W 18 Planning
 Th 19
 F 20

M 23
 Tu 24 TEB 10am
 W 25
 Th 26 Cabinet 6pm
 F 27

M 30 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 31

SEPTEMBER 2021

W 1
 Th 2
 F 3

M 6
 Tu 7 Joint Transportation
 W 8
 Th 9 JCC 2.30pm
 F 10

M 13
 Tu 14 O&S
 W 15 Planning
 Th 16
 F 17

M 20

Tu 21
 W 22
 Th 23
 F 24

M 27
 Tu 28 Audit
 W 29
 Th 30 Cabinet

OCTOBER 2021

F 1
 M 4
 Tu 5
 W 6
 Th 7
 F 8

M 11
 Tu 12 O&S
 W 13 Planning
 Th 14
 F 15

M 18
 Tu 19
 W 20
 Th 21 Council
 F 22

M 25
 Tu 26
 W 27
 Th 28 Cabinet
 F 29

NOVEMBER 2021

M 1
 Tu 2
 W 3
 Th 4
 F 5

M 8
 Tu 9 O&S
 W 10 Planning
 Th 11 JCC 2.30pm
 F 12

M 15
 Tu 16
 W 17
 Th 18
 F 19

M 22
 Tu 23 TEB 10am
 W 24
 Th 25 Cabinet
 F 26

M 29
 Tu 30 Audit

DECEMBER 2021

W 1
 Th 2
 F 3

 M 6
 Tu 7 O&S
 W 8 Planning
 Th 9 Council
 F 10

 M 13
 Tu 14 Joint Transportation
 W 15
 Th 16 Cabinet
 F 17

M 20
 Tu 21
 W 22
 Th 23
 F 24 OFFICES CLOSED

 M 27 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 28 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 W 29
 Th 30
 F 31

JANUARY 2022

M 3 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 4
 W 5
 Th 6
 F 7

 M 10
 Tu 11
 W 12
 Th 13 JCC 2.30pm
 F 14

 M 17
 Tu 18 Licensing/Regulatory
 10am/10.30am
 Planning
 W 19
 Th 20
 F 21

 M 24 Standards
 Tu 25
 W 26
 Th 27 Cabinet
 F 28

M 31

 * No O&S meeting in
 January due to Budget
 Scrutiny

FEBRUARY 2022

Tu 1
 W 2
 Th 3
 F 4

 M 7
 Tu 8 O&S

W 9
 Th 10
 F 11

 M 14
 Tu 15
 W 16 Planning
 Th 17
 F 18

 M 21
 Tu 22 TEB 10am
 W 23
 Th 24 Cabinet
 F 25

 M 28

MARCH 2022

Tu 1 Joint Transportation
 W 2
 Th 3 Council (C Tax)
 F 4

 M 7
 Tu 8 O&S
 W 9
 Th 10 JCC 2.30pm
 F 11

M 14
 Tu 15 Audit
 W 16 Planning
 Th 17
 F 18

 M 21
 Tu 22
 W 23
 Th 24
 F 25

 M 28
 Tu 29
 W 30
 Th 31 Cabinet

APRIL 2022

F 1

 M 4
 Tu 5
 W 6
 Th 7
 F 8

 M 11
 Tu 12 O&S
 W 13 Planning
 Th 14
 F 15 **GOOD FRIDAY**

 M 18 **EASTER MONDAY**
 Tu 19
 W 20
 Th 21 Council
 F 22

 M 25
 Tu 26

W 27
 Th 28 Cabinet
 F 29

MAY 2022

M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 3 Selection & CR
 W 4
 Th 5
 F 6


 M 9
 Tu 10 O&S
 W 11
 Th 12 JCC 2.30pm
 F 13

 M 16
 Tu 17
 W 18 Planning
 Th 19 Council
 F 20

 M 23
 Tu 24 TEB 10am
 W 25
 Th 26 Cabinet
 F 27

 M 30 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 31

KEY	
O&S	- Overview and Scrutiny
JCC	- Joint Consultative Committee

 School Holidays

DATES OF MEETINGS MAY 2022 - MAY 2023

Meetings are usually held at the Civic Centre and start at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated

MAY 2022

M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 3 Selection & CR
 W 4
 Th 5
 F 6

M 9
 Tu 10 O&S
 W 11
 Th 12 JCC 2.30pm
 F 13

M 16
 Tu 17
 W 18 Planning
 Th 19 Council
 F 20

M 23
 Tu 24 TEB 10am
 W 25
 Th 26 Cabinet
 F 27

M 30 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 T 31

JUNE 2022

W 1
 Th 2
 F 3
 M 6
 Tu 7 Joint Transportation
 W 8
 Th 9
 F 10

M 13
 Tu 14 O&S
 W 15 Planning
 Th 16
 F 17

M 20
 T 21 Audit
 W 22
 Th 23
 F 24

M 27
 Tu 28
 W 29
 Th 30 Cabinet

JULY 2023

F 1
 M 4
 Tu 5
 W 6
 Th 7
 F 8
 M 11

Tu 12 O&S
 W 13 Planning
 Th 14 JCC 2.30pm
 F 15

M 18
 Tu 19
 W 20
 Th 21 Council
 F 22

M 25
 T 26
 W 27
 Th 28 Cabinet
 F 29

AUGUST 2022

M 1
 Tu 2
 W 3
 Th 4
 F 5

M 8
 Tu 9 O&S
 W 10
 Th 11
 F 12

M 15
 Tu 16
 W 17 Planning
 Th 18
 F 19

M 22
 Tu 23 TEB 10am
 W 24
 Th 25 Cabinet
 F 26

M 29 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 30
 W 31

SEPTEMBER 2022

Th 1
 F 2

M 5
 Tu 6 Joint Transportation
 W 7
 Th 8 JCC 2.30pm
 F 9

M 12
 Tu 13 O&S
 W 14 Planning
 Th 15
 F 16

M 19
 Tu 20
 W 21
 Th 22
 F 23

M 26
 Tu 27 Audit
 W 28
 Th 29 Cabinet
 F 30

OCTOBER 2022

M 3
 Tu 4
 W 5
 Th 6
 F 7

M 10
 Tu 11 O&S
 W 12 Planning
 Th 13
 F 14

M 17
 Tu 18
 W 19
 Th 20 Council
 F 21

M 24
 Tu 25
 W 26
 Th 27 Cabinet
 F 28

M 31

NOVEMBER 2022

Tu 1
 W 2
 Th 3
 F 4

M 7
 Tu 8 O&S
 W 9 Planning
 Th 10 JCC 2.30pm
 F 11

M 14
 Tu 15
 W 16
 Th 17
 F 18

M 21
 Tu 22 TEB 10am
 W 23
 Th 24 Cabinet
 F 25

M 28
 Tu 29 Audit
 W 30

DECEMBER 2022

Th 1
 F 2
 M 5
 Tu 6 Joint Transportation
 W 7 Planning
 Th 8 Council
 F 9
 M 12
 Tu 13 O&S
 W 14
 Th 15 Cabinet
 F 16
 M 19
 Tu 20
 W 21
 Th 22
 F 23
 M 26 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 27 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 W 28 **OFFICES CLOSED**
 Th 29
 F 30

JANUARY 2023

M 2 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 3
 W 4
 Th 5
 F 6
 M 9
 Tu 10
 W 11
 Th 12 JCC 2.30pm
 F 13
 M 16
 Tu 17 Licensing/Regulatory
 10am/10.30am
 Planning
 W 18
 Th 19
 F 20
 M 23 Standards
 Tu 24
 W 25
 Th 26 Cabinet
 F 27
 M 30
 Tu 31

* No O&S meeting in January due to Budget Scrutiny

FEBRUARY 2023

W 1
 Th 2
 F 3
 M 6
 Tu 7
 W 8

Th 9
 F 10
 M 13
 Tu 14 O&S
 W 15 Planning
 Th 16
 F 17
 M 20
 Tu 21 TEB 10am
 W 22
 Th 23 Cabinet
 F 24
 M 27
 T 28

MARCH 2023

W 1
 Th 2 Council (C Tax)
 F 3
 M 6
 Tu 7 Joint Transportation
 W 8
 Th 9 JCC 2.30pm
 F 10

M 13
 Tu 14 O&S
 W 15 Planning
 Th 16
 F 17

M 20
 Tu 21 Audit
 W 22
 Th 23
 F 24

M 27
 Tu 28
 W 29
 Th 30 Cabinet
 F 31

APRIL 2023

M 3
 Tu 4
 W 5
 Th 6
 F 7 **GOOD FRIDAY**
 M 10 **EASTER MONDAY**
 Tu 11 O&S
 W 12
 Th 13
 F 14

M 17
 Tu 18
 W 19 Planning
 Th 20 Council
 F 22

M 24
 Tu 25
 W 26
 Th 27 Cabinet

F 28

MAY 2023

M 1 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 2
 W 3
 Th 4 ABC Elections
 F 5


M 8
 Tu 9
 W 10
 Th 11
 F 12

M 15
 Tu 16
 W 17
 Th 18 Selection & CR
 F 19

M 22
 Tu 23
 W 24
 Th 25 Council
 F 26

M 29 **BANK HOLIDAY**
 Tu 30
 W 31

KEY	
O&S	- Overview and Scrutiny
JCC	- Joint Consultative Committee

 School Holidays