



CABINET

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber - Ashford Borough Council on
Thursday, 30th September, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

The Members of the Cabinet are:-

Councillor Clarkson – Leader of the Council
Councillor Bartlett – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Port Health
Councillor Barrett – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management
Councillor Bell – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development
Councillor Buchanan – Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Feacey – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing
Councillor Forest – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism
Councillor Iliffe – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Property
Councillor Pickering – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Customer Services
Councillor Shorter – Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC ABOUT THIS MEETING

Subject to Coronavirus risk assessments and procedures, a very small number of members of the Press and public can register to attend and observe the Meeting in person (without speaking at it), on a first-come, first served basis.

To register to attend and observe the Meeting on this basis, please email membersservices@ashford.gov.uk You will be sent details of the procedures established by the Council in order to manage the risk of COVID-19 at the Meeting, which may include requirements such as to wear face coverings, and to not attend the Meeting if you are affected by any relevant circumstances relating to COVID-19. You will be expected to confirm your agreement to these requirements prior to attendance.

However, instead of attending and observing in person, the Council encourages everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to watch and listen to the proceedings at the Meeting via a weblink, which will be publicised on the Council's website at www.ashford.gov.uk about 24 hours before the Meeting.

Summary of Public Participation for Planning Committee Meetings after 6 May 2021

In line with legal requirements, and subject to Coronavirus risk assessments and procedures:-

- A small number of members of the Press and public can register to attend and observe the meeting in person;
- In addition, seats in the meeting room are provided for those who register to speak on each item, by following the procedure below:-

1. Written notice of a wish to speak at the meeting (by means of the procedure below) must be given, either to membersservices@ashford.gov.uk or on the Council's website at <https://secure.ashford.gov.uk/committeesystem/haveyoursay.aspx> by 10:00 hours on the working day before the meeting.

2. Registering to speak at the meeting confers the right to submit (and, if desired, make in person) a speech

3. All those registered to speak must submit to membersservices@ashford.gov.uk by 10:00 hours on the day of the meeting, a copy of their speech in written, legible English. Speeches must be no longer than 400 words, printed in 12-point non-italic sans-serif font (e.g. Arial); any text above 400 words will not be read out. No speech should contain personal data about individuals, other than the speaker's name and (if relevant) postal address. Any registered speakers who do not submit their speeches as above are not permitted to speak at the meeting (even if present in person).

4. At the meeting:- (i) Speakers who are present in person may read their previously submitted speeches when called to do so, but may not read any other material; (ii) If speakers are not present in person, their previously-submitted speeches will be read to the meeting by a competent Officer for and on behalf of the speakers, at the normal times and in the normal order (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 meeting by an Officer, each speaker accepts by submitting the speech to be fully responsible for all consequences thereof and to indemnify the Officer and the Council accordingly.

Agenda

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c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests	
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19.	To Consider Passing the Following Resolution to Exclude the Public	
	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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.	
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23 September 2021

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

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

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

- (b) **Other Significant Interests (OSI)** under the Kent Code of Conduct 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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Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **29th July 2021**.

Present:

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

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

Apologies:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Blanford, Clokie, Harman, Sparks, C Suddards.

In attendance:

Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Finance and IT, Head of Planning and Development, Member Services Manager.

83 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 24th June 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

84 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said that he did want to make mention of three matters.

Firstly he said that he thought colleagues would be pleased to note that the Government had announced its intention to scrap its Action Fraud Unit. He considered this was good news as, in his view, it had been particularly ineffective. It would be replaced with a National Fraud and Cyber Crime reporting system and the Police were also keen to start taking more action in this sphere.

Secondly, the Government had also announced that they intended to ban developers from building on land at risk from flooding. This was of particular interest to this Borough with its large area in the flood plain and he knew the Council's Planning

team would be looking at this very closely. Fortunately, during the last serious spell of flooding in the Borough, not a single one of the newer developments that had benefitted from Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems had flooded. This was a great credit to the systems put in place and a sign that they needed to continue to follow this course of action.

Finally, following the devastating flooding in Ashford's twin town of Bad Münstereifel in Germany, the Leader advised that a Just Giving page had been set up and he was pleased to note that donations had now reached nearly £13,000. They had all been shocked at the tragic effect the flooding had had on their friends in Bad Münstereifel and they had indeed flown the Borough flag at half-mast in respect of those who had lost their lives and thoughts remained with them.

85 Financial Outturn 2020/21

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the outturn revenue position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account for the 2020/21 financial year. It also presented the outturn for capital works and how these works had been financed, the Collection Fund position, reserves outturn and a treasury management update.

The Portfolio Holder said that as he had just take over the Portfolio, credit for the report should go to previous Portfolio Holder and his staff. The process of logging the financial situation of the last year had been key in trying to properly understand exactly what had happened over the last 12 months, which had clearly been particularly testing. The resulting surpluses were thanks to the Organisation as a whole, with particularly good management from the Finance department. Over the last reporting year some 8000 grants had been processed by Revenues and Benefits totalling £41.5m and 2400 grants had been processed by the Economic Development team totalling £4.9m. This was a significant amount of additional work and deserved particular recognition. Savings across all Services had been delivered and had covered the massive forecasted budget deficits following the COVID pandemic. Projects had been deferred or delayed, vacancy filling had also been deferred, homelessness had become a key priority with a significant additional pressure applied to the budget, and parking revenue had dipped by 62%, therefore it was important to highlight the sheer amount of work and effort that had gone in to producing such a relatively healthy budget outcome on behalf of the residents of the Borough.

The Leader drew attention to the Kent Business Rates Pool update which had resulted in an estimated net benefit of approximately £1.68m to Ashford. This would go in to reserves as the Authority re-embarked on its investment plans and project delivery in the coming years.

Resolved:

- That (i) the financial outturn for 2020/21 be received and noted.**
- (ii) the Capital Outturn, Collection Fund position and Treasury Management update be received noted.**

- (iii) the reserve transfers and position (as per Tabled 5 of the report) be approved.

86 Annual Performance Report 2021 and Corporate Plan 2022-2024

The Leader introduced the report which presented the Annual Performance Report for the last year, set against the objectives of the Recovery Plan and the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2024. Building on the three themes of the Ashford Ambition report: - Green Pioneer; Caring Ashford; and Targeted Growth; the draft Corporate Plan's objectives and actions would enable the Council to continue the journey to achieving the Ashford Ambition developed with a wide range of local stakeholders. The report asked the Cabinet to note the 2021 Annual Performance Report and approve the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2024 for consultation.

The Leader thanked Officers for a sterling piece of work and producing a draft plan that linked across all departments and embraced the three themes of the Recovery Plan. The Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications advised that there was a slight change to the report in that the consultation would now run until September, with a report back to the Cabinet in October.

The Deputy Leader said he endorsed the document and particularly the sections on expanding the Ashford economy. On that note, he was pleased to advise that the Kent Resilience Forum had earlier that day agreed to lift Operation Brock on the M20. He thought all colleagues would appreciate this news as, in his view, it had been unnecessary to re-instate it in the first place.

The Leader advised that, on a related note, he was in the process of creating the Greater Ashford Land Mapping Commission. This would be chaired by Councillor Paul Clokie, with the Leader of the largest Opposition Group Councillor Noel Ovenden as Vice-Chairman. The Commission would be about examining the entire land mass of the Borough with a view to protecting the best of Ashford's countryside against inappropriate development, which he considered a moral duty. The Commission would have the task of identifying areas for protection and they would need to establish a sound rationale for such designation in each case, but the Council would have no hesitation in pushing back against and challenging Government where necessary. It would be a non-political group and include representation from the CRPE, WKPS, local AONB Units and KALC, as well as relevant Council Officers. The Commission also had the support of the local MP Damian Green and KCC. He had set a target of December 2022 for production of a final report. Councillor Clokie advised that one of the most important aspects would be working with the Parish Councils and ensuring that they agreed the land suggested in their own areas.

Resolved:

That (i) the Annual Performance Report 2021 be received and noted.

- (ii) **the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2024 be approved for consultation.**

87 Pay Policy Statement – Annual Review

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to publish an Annual Pay Policy Statement. This report was an opportunity to review the current Statement to ensure it was up to date and reflected the Council's approach to pay. The Council also took this annual review as an opportunity to review the rates of the Ashford Living Wage Allowance (ALWA) and the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance (AAWA) and the report provided recommendations on rates for the 2021/22 allowances. He reiterated that the ALWA and AAWA were still significantly above the statutory national rates.

Both the Leader and Portfolio Holder said they wanted to take the opportunity to praise the staff in Human Resources for dealing so well with the pressures brought about over the last year, particularly including the recruitment for a whole new Service in Port Health, along with the general pressures of the pandemic.

Recommended:

- That (i) **the updated Pay Policy Statement be approved.**
- (ii) **the Ashford Living Wage Allowance be increased to £9.27 for 2021 and this be backdated to 1st April 2021.**
- (iii) **the Ashford Apprentice Wage Allowance continues to be maintained at 15 pence per hour over the National Minimum Wage rate applicable to the age of the apprentice.**

88 A Nutrient Mitigation Strategy for the Stour Catchment in Ashford Borough

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which outlined the background of advice issued by Natural England in July 2020 with the result that the Council had been unable to grant planning permission for new housing within the Stour Catchment since then, unless the proposal could show it could achieve nutrient neutrality. In response to the gravity of the situation, Officers had been asked to pursue a mitigation strategy as a means to finding a strategic solution within the Borough's boundary. Accordingly, Officers had been working with expert consultants to prepare a Stodmarsh Mitigation Strategy for the Council. The report introduced that draft strategy and explained that the only realistic land based solution involved the creation of new strategic wetlands in the Borough. The Portfolio Holder said he could not overstate the importance and urgency of this issue. The report therefore sought Cabinet agreement to actively pursue a mitigation strategy based on the delivery of new strategic wetlands.

The report was opened up to Members and the following comments were made: -

- In terms of exploring land acquisition options and lobbying Government for financial assistance, it was also worth noting that the Government already owned land in the Borough, particularly adjacent to the International Border Facility, which could contribute to the overall solution.
- This was not a unique situation to Ashford and indeed all of the Districts in Kent, along with Kent County Council, had written to the relevant Government Ministers outlining the situation and seeking funding.
- The situation did present a great opportunity to create impressive wetlands, not only for the benefit of wildlife, but also the Borough's residents.
- The Council would continue to fight 'tooth and nail' against any inappropriate development in areas not affected by the Stodmarsh issue.
- Communications on the issue would be vitally important as would close liaison with Parish Councils and KALC (the Kent Association of Local Councils). The Leader asked if Briefing Notes and press releases could be sent out to keep everyone informed and give them a clear picture of what was happening.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the principle of acquiring land within the Borough as a means of creating new strategic wetlands for the purposes of nutrient mitigation be agreed.**
 - (ii) Central Government should be approached for grant and/or loan funding to deliver the mitigation package.**
 - (iii) in the event that (ii) above is unsuccessful, it be agreed that a financial package be set aside by the Council for the purposes of delivering the mitigation package.**
 - (iv) Officers be authorised to prepare a credits-based formula to be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document as a means of seeking proportionate developer contributions towards the delivery and maintenance of the mitigation package.**
 - (v) the Head of Planning and Development, the Head of Corporate Property and Projects and the Solicitor to the Council be authorised, in consultation with their Portfolio Holders, to negotiate, enter into agreements and complete acquisitions of land and any related documentation, to implement the nutrient mitigation strategy and to make necessary arrangements (subject to all planning and other consents) for works to be undertaken on land to create strategic wetlands, with a view to generating nitrogen and phosphorous credits.**

89 Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the formal write-off of £86,225.20. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service Write-Off Policy. The Deputy Chief Executive had been consulted along with Heads of Service for relevant areas.

Resolved:

- That (i) the action that accounts totalling £21,726.15 had been written-off under delegated powers (Financial Regulations 11.1 refers) be noted.
- (ii) the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendix to the report totalling £64,499.05 be approved.

90 Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board – Notes of 23rd June 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the 23rd June 2021 be received and noted.

91 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – Notes of 21st May and 29th June 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meetings of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 21st May and 29th June 2021 be received and noted.

92 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – Notes of 24th June 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 24th June 2021 be received and noted.

93 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.

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Agenda Item 6

Agenda Item No: 6
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 30 September 2021



Report Title: First Four Months - Financial Monitoring to 31 July 2021
Report Author & Job Title: Lee Foreman
Accountancy Manager
Portfolio Holder Cllr. Neil Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance & IT

Summary:

This report presents the first budget monitoring position for 2021/22, up to 31 July 2021.

Towards the end of the first quarter the UK eased Covid restrictions and entered the recovery phase of the pandemic, although it will take some time for a 'new normal' to be established and risks to forecasts reduced.

This first update reports the General Fund (GF) as having a small surplus of £42,000. However, this includes a pressure of £954,000 in services which is supported by additional investment income of £515,000 and £481,000 being transferred from reserves.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting an underspend of £2.468m against budget, this is due to slippages in planned maintenance works as a result of supply chain issues and continued delays from the Covid19 Pandemic.

This first quarter report also provides an update on the Collection Fund, Capital expenditure, Treasury Management and Reserve movements.

The Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP), Courtside and Pitchside fees and charges, and Council write offs are also included within the report.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: The Cabinet is asked to:-

- I. Note the forecast outturn position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- II. Note the Collection fund Position

- III. Approve and note the proposed contributions from reserves
- IV. Note the overspend on the capital programme for the Populars and how this can be funded from programme underspends Paragraph 47.
- V. Note the Treasury Management position
- VI. Cabinet is asked to note receipt of £764,235 of grant monies from round 1 funding and recommend to Council to approve capital spend of £1.7m for the purchase of 10 General Fund properties.
- VII. Cabinet is asked to approve a further application to the RSAP which will lead to a request for approval to Council for capital expenditure
- VIII. Note the fees and charges for Courtside and Pitchside as shown at Appendix C
- IX. Note the HRA write offs totalling £239,583.22 which have been processed under delegated authority
- X. Note the general fund housing write offs made under delegated authority and approve the amounts over £1,000 as detailed in Exempt Appendix D

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

Financial Implications: The General Fund is reporting an overall surplus of £42,000 for 2021/22 having contributed an additional £481,000 from reserves.

The HRA is forecasting an overall underspend of £2.468m in year (against a budgeted spend of £8.5m).

To approve general fund borrowing of up to £2,252,765 to support the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme in conjunction with the Grant Funding received from MHCLG.

Write offs totalling £267,518.45 for the General Fund and £239,583.22 for the HRA have been approved where permissible under delegated authority and seek approval for amounts over £1,000.

Legal Implications N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment As part of 2021/22 Final Budget Report a full assessment was undertaken.

Exempt from Publication: **Appendix D** Not For Publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. As the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

Contact: Lee.Foreman@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330509

Agenda Item No. 6

Report Title: First Four Months - Financial Monitoring to 31 July 2021

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the forecast outturn position for 2021/22 based on information available as at 31 July 2021. This report is the first budget monitoring report of the year.
2. The 2021/22 budget was set during the Covid19 pandemic and a number of budgets were revised to allow for changes in consumer habits. Although these revised budgets were susceptible to scrutiny, it is only now that we are starting the recovery phase of the pandemic that the accuracy of those assumptions will be measurable and future trends/habits will start to be understood.
3. This report considers each of the following areas of the Council in more detail including the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Collection Fund (Council Tax and Business Rates), Capital Expenditure, Treasury Management, reserves movements, and introduces a number of other reports for consideration including RSAP and Write off schedules.

Summary of General Fund Position

4. The current General Fund position is forecasting a surplus of £42,000, although this comprises of expenditure in services above budget of £954,000. This is being funded from additional investment income of £515,000 (Treasury Management) and contributions from reserves of £481,000.
5. Pressures in Services' largely relates to £300,000 in Cultural Services to allow the Leisure contract at Tenterden to be extended by another year and £335,000 in planning, £120,000 for additional staff costs as there is still a reliance on consultants whilst vacancies are filled, and £175,000 has been added for Counsel fees to defend Planning appeals.
6. **Table 1** shows the movement between budget and projected outturn at a Head of Service Level, narrative providing supporting information on material movements then follows.

7.

Table 1 - General Fund Quarter 1 Outturn Forecast as at 31 July 2021 – Service Level

Service and General Fund Summary	2021/22 Original Budget	2021/22 Revised Budget	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q1	Variance £'000
		A £'000	B £'000	
Ashford Port Health	0	0	0	0
Corporate Core	691	729	801	72
Corporate Policy, Economic Development, Communications and CMO	1,173	1,168	1,192	24
Community Safety and Wellbeing	712	709	632	(77)
Hr & Customer Services	155	144	144	(0)
Legal & Democratic Services	1,234	1,271	1,268	(3)
Corporate Property & Projects	(1,275)	(1,292)	(1,274)	17
Finance & Ict	2,579	2,579	2,534	(45)
Housing Services	914	914	1,004	90
Culture	3,208	3,208	3,610	402
Environmental & Land Management	4,745	4,727	4,845	118
Planning	2,168	2,146	2,502	356
Net Service Expenditure	16,303	16,303	17,257	954
Capital Charges and net interest	(2,188)	(2,188)	(2,703)	(515)
Government Grant (Covid19 related)	(859)	(859)	(859)	0
Levies, Grants and Precepts	276	276	276	0
Contribution (from)/to reserves	349	349	(132)	(481)
Budget Requirement	13,881	13,881	13,839	(42)
Financing:				
Retained Business Rates	(4,093)	(4,093)	(4,093)	0
Council Tax	(7,792)	(7,792)	(7,792)	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,908)	(1,908)	(1,908)	0
Rural Service Delivery Grant	(87)	(87)	(87)	0
Total movement	0	0	(42)	(42)

Summary of General Fund Movements

Corporate core

8. The pressure of £72,000 largely relates to an ongoing legal works where the Council needs to secure appropriate representation.

Community Safety and Wellbeing

9. The £77,000 relates to salary savings due to vacancies within the service.
10. Community Safety and Wellbeing is also responsible for parking income budget which was reduced by 15% for 2021/22. Based on current usage figures and extrapolating increases as confidence returns following the pandemic, we expect this budget to be achieved. Parking usage will continue to be monitored as the recovery gathers momentum.

Finance and IT

11. This service is showing an overall saving of £45,000. The service currently has £50,000 of savings relating to employee costs and an additional £70,000 of new burdens grants for Council Tax and Business Rates.

12. The Service has spent £71,800 of cyber security measures which is to be funded from a cyber-security grant which is held for these purposes in reserves.

Housing Services

13. Housing service is seeing a slight pressure in Temporary Accommodation as the need for more expensive temporary accommodation is necessary and anticipated new properties, such as the Henwood Development have been delayed.

Culture

14. Cultural Services is showing an early pressure of circa £402,000 although this is largely due to be supported through reserves. £300,000 of the deficit relates to the contract extension at Tenterden Leisure centre which needed to be extended at the height of the pandemic. This was necessary due to adverse market conditions where a full tender exercise would not have been possible, although this is now being progressed. £50,000 relates to the lease surrender for Ashford Leisure Trust and £20,000 relates to the Parish Council Support Scheme which was supported by Cabinet when the 2021/22 budget was set following a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group.

Environment and Land Management

15. There is an overall pressure of £118,000 within this area, £70,000 of pressure relates to increased refuse collection contract costs where the annual contract uplift was higher than expected due to emerging inflationary pressures.
16. The service has also resourced the new Environmental Enforcement Team adding £59,000 pressure, this is to be funded from reserves and is expected to be cost neutral going forward.

Planning

17. The Planning Service is reporting a pressure of £356,000 at quarter 1. £120,000 relates to additional staff costs where it is necessary to appoint consultants to support the caseload whilst vacancies within the service are filled.
18. £175,000 has been added to the outturn position to cover anticipated costs for defending planning appeals, with an additional £39,000 of agency resource being used within the Planning Enforcement Team.

Financing and Other General Fund Movements

19. This heading covers a number of central finance costs/incomes and is reporting a surplus of £996,000 after the first four months. £515,000 relates to Treasury Management activity where it is anticipated that interest receivable will be stronger than anticipated. The remaining £481,000 reflects reserve movement and is covered further on within the report.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

20. The Housing Revenue Account is showing an overall overspend of £6,000 for the year however, there has been a significant movement in capital works and a movement in reserves has offset this. Without the reserve movement the HRA would be reporting a positive variance of £2.27m.
21. A breakdown of this variance is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 2 – 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn Position

Housing Revenue Account	2021/22 Original Budget	2021/22 Revised Budget A £'000	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q1 B £'000	Variance
Income	(27,187)	(27,187)	(27,187)	0
Supervision and Management	4,469	4,469	4,475	6
Repairs and Maintenance	4,024	4,024	4,024	0
Other	21,343	21,343	21,343	0
Net Revenue Expenditure	2,650	2,650	2,656	6
Capital Works - Decent Homes	5,914	5,914	3,439	(2,475)
Financed By:				
Contribution To/(From) Major Repairs Reserve	(5,914)	(5,914)	(3,439)	2,475
Net Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Total Net Expenditure	2,650	2,650	2,656	6

Commentary on HRA Movement

22. **Capital Works (Decent Homes)** – Current forecasts suggest there will be a saving in this area of around £2.5m. This saving is largely the result of the COVID19 pandemic and the EU exit impacting the availability of materials. There also still a reduced amount of work in connection to accessing properties of vulnerable groups that continue to shield against Covid19.
23. There is a risk to the forecast with the possibility of material shortages driving up prices that could affect tender costs later in the year. The forecast outturn is the current best estimate; officers will continue to monitor these works throughout the year as the full impact of market forces continues to unfold.

Collection fund Monitoring

Business Rates

25. Collection rates for NNDR are continuing to be regularly monitored to gauge the potential impact of the Covid19 Pandemic within the Borough. At the end of August 38.99% of rates billed for the year had been collected, this compares to 43.08% in 2020/21 and 47.50% in 2019/20. This clearly shows the continued pressures on businesses impacting their ability to pay.
26. At the start of the year there was continued support for the leisure and hospitality sector with 100% relief being given for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021, and then at 66% for the remainder of the year although financial caps to limit the support given were introduced.
27. As the forecasting shows, as a result of the reliefs reported above, the amount of business rates billed is £9.8m less than expected. These specific reliefs will be fully compensated by way of additional S31 Grants from Government, leaving £nil net effect on the collection fund. However, as S31 grants are not accounted for in the collection fund this will create a significant deficit at year end although this will be funded from the S31 grant which will need to be held in reserves through year end.
28. Including a prior year deficit of £2.601m, the overall deficit on the collection fund for business rates is forecast at £12.955m with Ashford share being circa £5.182m, although as mentioned this will be funded from S31 Grant.

Table 3 – Business Rate Summary

	Original Budget	Outturn (net)	Variance - Adverse/ (Favourable)
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Opening (Surplus)/Deficit	31,313	31,911	598
(Deficit) contributed by/Surplus distributed to Major Preceptors	(29,310)	(29,310)	0
Remaining Deficit/(Surplus) to be Contributed/(Distributed)	2,003	2,601	598
2021/22			
Amount of Business Rates to be paid to Major Preceptors	52,458	52,458	0
Amount of Business Rates Billed	(54,974)	(45,135)	9,839
Transitional Relief (Recovered)/Payable	(62)	(54)	8
Other Items Charged to the Collection Fund:			
Appeals and Rateable Value Reductions	1,483	1,930	447
Bad and Doubtful Debts	800	867	67
Renewable Energy	99	92	(7)
Cost of Collection	196	196	0
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	0	10,354	10,354
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit on Collection Fund	2,003	12,955	10,952

Council Tax

29. The value of Council Tax receipts collected at the end of August was 48.22% (44.953m), this compares to previous rates of 48.35% in 2020/21 and 49.03% in 2019/20. While these figures are still strong, it is a clear indicator that the impacts of the pandemic are still prevalent. Access to the Courts to raise liability orders also remains limited although the Council has recently managed to secure a hearing.
30. With the current economic climate showing generally high inflation, increases in energy prices and the end of the universal credit £20 a week top up, this could add additional pressure to households' ability to pay Council Tax through the remainder of the year. The collection rates will be closely monitored and an additional bad debt provision of £909,000 has been allowed for.
31. The collection fund for Council Tax is indicating a year end surplus of £3.536m. There are a number of contributing factors that have added to the surplus not least the uncertain economic conditions at the time the budget was set.
32. Property growth above expectations has increased the gross Council Tax receivable by £950,000, equally lower than forecast CTRS (Council Tax Reduction Scheme) and discounts and exemptions have resulted in favourable movements of £750,000 and £1.6m respectively.
33. Ashford's share of the Council Tax surplus would be £406,000 based on current forecasts.

Table 4 Council Tax Summary

	Outturn (net) to 31/03/22
	£'000
Opening Deficit/(Surplus)	501
Deficit contributed by Major Preceptors	(319)
2021/22	
Amount of Council Tax to be paid to Major Preceptors	87,670
Amount of Council Tax billed	(92,297)
In Year Write Off's and Bad Debt Provision increase	909
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	(3,718)
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit	(3,536)

Reserves

34. Contribution to and from reserves that were not identified as part of the budget setting process are required to be reported as part of the budget monitoring process. During the first four months of the year a number of movements from reserves are recommended to support service pressures and utilise funding previously set aside, such as grant income.
35. **Table 5** below identifies the reserve movements and request that Cabinet approve the allocations, the second table highlights other reserve movements that are not yet within the reporting figures.

Table 5a – Breakdown of Reserve Movements

Purpose	Suggested Reserve	Amount £
Support Tenterden Leisure Centre contract extension	Economic Growth and Risk Fund	300,000
Fund ALT as per lease surrender agreement	Economic Growth and Risk Fund	50,000
Funding Cyber Resilience work	Fund Future Expenditure (Revenue Grants)	71,800
Funding of Corporate Enforcement Costs	Repairs and Renewal Reserve (sub fund)	59,120
Total		480,920

Table 5b - Head of Service Approvals (in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Head of Finance & IT)

Purpose	Suggested Reserve	Amount £
Review of Call Centre Volumes to identify streamlining opportunities	Fund Future Expenditure – Transformation Fund	1,700
Contribution to Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce event to Promote employment in agriculture and horticulture sector	Recovery Project Reserve	2,000
Total		3,700

Recommendation – Cabinet is asked to approve reserve movements in Table 5a and note the reserve movements in Table 5b above

Capital Monitoring

General Fund Capital Monitoring

36. **Solar PV (various sites)** - Various environmental site surveys are still underway to support the planning application which is currently being developed. Progress is being made at Carlton Road Depot with a tender expected to go out within 3 months.
37. **Victoria Park Rejuvenation** - This project is now due for completion in summer 2024. There has been no revision of the current expenditure plans.
38. **Amenity Lighting Replacement** - Phase 1 is nearly complete and expected to be handed over to Kent County Council by the end of Q2. Phase 2 was approved by Management Team in April 2021 and a budget of £100,000 was allocated. Both phases will generate ongoing saving in electricity and maintenance costs.
39. **Stour Centre & Julie Rose Renovations** - These renovations are ongoing and expected to cost £7.5m, plus the additional £1.4m in decarbonisation works funded from external grant. £41,948 of this had to be funded by the Council due to works not being complete by 31st March 2021.
40. **Tenterden Leisure Centre** - The re-roofing of the centre was due to commence mid-April but has been delayed due to birds nesting within the roof void. Several reports have now been received by the ecologist confirming that works can commence from the end of August. The contractor has submitted a revised programme with a suggested start date of early September with a construction duration of 20 weeks, weather permitting. The contract value is £742,000.
41. **Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)** – this is covered separately within this report.
42. **Henwood Temporary Accommodation** - Pre-planning application advice has been sought. Some design changes are being made before a formal planning application is made.

HRA Projects

43. **Street Purchases** - 13 properties have been purchased to date, at a cost of £2.46m, with another 10, costing £2.085m, awaiting completion. Due to the low Right to Buy sales in the past year the council does not have any available 1-4-1 money, therefore the purchase of street properties will reduce, however officers are continuing to look for large properties that are in short supply within our existing stock.
44. **East Stour Court** - Completion on site is now expected is expected this month, consisting of 29 units of older person accommodation (twenty four 1 bed and five 2 bed apartments). Officers secured £1.1m Homes England grant funding.. This project is expected to have an underspend of around £780,000, which will offset the overspend on The Poplars.
45. **Halstow Way** – Works have commenced on this site of 17 units of general needs accommodation consisting of six 1 bed, seven 2 bed and four 3 bed apartments. Completion is expected in January 2022 and officers have secured £1m Homes England grant. The contracted sum for this project is around £2.8m than the original estimate.

46. **Piper Joinery** - Demolition and clearance of contamination on the site has been completed. A design is being considered which will mitigate the Stodmarsh nutrients issue. The site is expected to accommodate 20 units and is now in the planning system.
47. **Poplars** - The construction of 31 units of independent living, consisting of 15 one bed and 16 two bed apartments is due for completion in November 2021. Officers have secured Homes England grant funding of £1.4m. This project is expected to overspend by around £700,000 however, this can be covered by the underspend on East Stour Court (paragraph 44).
48. **Oakleigh House Redevelopment** - This project has had significant delays in the consultation process due to COVID and the effects of lockdown however, the Planning application went to committee in July 2021 and the scheme was approved. This project is expected to cost around £15m and will be zero carbon when completed.
49. **Tile Kiln Road** - This project has not progressed to final costing stage. There are currently ecology matters on site, in the form of bats and reptiles, which will need to be addressed. The pre-application design has been completed and planning advice is now being considered, which includes a mix of houses and bungalows for the site, and will include around 14 units in total.
50. **New Build Programme Phase 6** - This brings together a number of infill and brown field sites and the team are currently conducting surveys, commissioning initial designs and seeking pre-planning application advice.
51. **New Quarter** – The purchase of the remaining 65 units (Stour Heights) is now complete, costing £10.5m, once the Homes England grant of £975,000 has been taken into account, the total cost of the New Quarter was in line with the approved budget.

Treasury Management

52. The breakdown of the Capital Charges and Net Interest line is shown below at **Table 6**. This table shows the borrowing and investment budget, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and depreciation. The MRP is a statutory payment the Council has to make to offset the costs of capital borrowing over the life of the associated asset.

Table 6 – Net Interest Summary

	2021/22 Original Budget	2021/22 Revised Budget	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q1	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest payable	548	548	548	0
Interest receivable	(1,975)	(1,975)	(2,491)	(515)
Minimum revenue provision	1,179	1,179	1,179	0
Depreciation	(1,939)	(1,939)	(1,939)	0
Total Net Interest	(2,188)	(2,188)	(2,703)	(515)

53. **Interest payable** – The current budget for interest payable as the strategy commenced with more weighting to short term borrowing than in previous years. The Council has also recently secured £15m of PWLB borrowing to reduce the Council's interest rate exposure but this has locked in more expensive debt in the short term.
54. In relation to short term borrowing, the Council continues to access the Local Authority to Local Authority market where headline rates for 3 month borrowing are in the region of 0.05%.
55. There is upside risk to the forecast if interest rates are increased but this is not expected or forecast for the remainder of the year.
56. **Interest receivable** – The budgets for 21/22 were set at a time when significant reduction in investment income were expected, especially for equity backed placements. However, having reviewed the Outturn position for 20/21 and interest receipts, an additional £515,000 of income is expected. Clearly there is risk around this forecast and the position will be monitored and adjusted accordingly.
57. **Investment Capital Values** – the capital values on investment significantly increased in May before slightly coming off in June. However it is good to see that the capital losses have now reversed and the current portfolio is collectively valued above cost, although some of the individual funds are still down. These positions continue to be monitored to ensure that they are in line with the Councils investment strategy and risk appetite which is supported by our Treasury Management Advisors Arlingclose.
58. Current investment balances, and borrowing portfolios are shown at **Appendix A**.

Other Reports

Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

59. Rough sleeping came to the fore during the pandemic and the Council adhered to the national “everyone in” directive of accommodating all rough sleepers in temporary accommodation.
60. Following the “everyone in” directive MHCLG are now further looking to support rough sleepers and aim to eliminate rough sleeping from 2027. To support this ambition the RSAP has been launched by MHCLG and provides Councils with the opportunity to bid for grant funding to purchase self-contained units which can act as a move on accommodation for rough sleepers.
61. The grant funding also provides revenue funding to enable Specialist Support Officers to be put in place to support the client’s individual needs.
62. The Council was successful in the first round of funding and secured £764,235 toward the acquisition of 10 units (Circa 40% of capital costs) which are forecast to be cost in the region of £1.7m, the Cabinet is therefore asked to note the grant funding received and approve to the spend of £1.7m with £1,011,765 likely to be required from borrowing to support the project. It is important to note that due to the high level of grant funding and transfer of tenants from expensive temporary accommodation, the RSAP will not add any financial burden to the General Fund over a 40 year model.

Recommendation – Cabinet is asked to note receipt of £764,235 of grant monies from round 1 funding and recommend to Council to approve capital spend of £1.7m for the purchase of 10 General Fund properties.

63. The council is now in a position to make a further bid in the final round of the scheme. The new bid will be applied for on the same basis as the initial bid although early indications are that the level of funding per property could be reduced to 30% of capital costs. However, modelling of the scheme based on a reduced grant receipts still shows it to be viable over a 40 year period and adds no additional pressure to the General Fund.
64. Cabinet is therefore asked to support the Council in its bid for further grant funding under the RSAP and approve spend of up to £1.6m to purchase a further 10 properties. It is expected that borrowing of up to £1.136m will be required to support the acquisition of the further units.

Recommendation – Cabinet is asked to approve a further application to the RSAP which will lead to a request for approval to Council for capital expenditure..

65. A combined financial model for the two funding cycles is shown at **Appendix B**

Fees and Charges at Courtside and Pitchside

66. Following on from budget setting process it was identified that fees and Charges for Courtside and Pitchside were not reported for approval.
67. The following charges are now therefore reported and Cabinet are asked to approve the proposed fees and charges as shown at **Appendix C**.

General Fund and HRA Write Offs

68. The Housing Income and Arrears Lead Specialist has recently conducted a comprehensive review of historical debt within the Housing System. From the review it is recommended that debt relating to the General Fund totalling £267,518.45, and debt due to the HRA totalling £239,583.22 be written off.
69. This is the first major review that has been taken for a number of years and has focused on debt greater than 6 years old and below £30.00, but also for HRA tenant's accounts where tenants are deceased or lost their homes through lack of Capacity.
70. Under financial procedures the Corporate Director (Finance and Economy) now Deputy Chief Executive has delegated authority in consultation with the Head of Service to write off any amounts which he is satisfied cannot be collected provided that they do not total more than £1,000 for any one debtor. Equally the same guidance applies to HRA debt although the £1,000 limit is not applied. The Deputy Chief Executive in Conjunction with the Head of Housing has exercised his delegated authority in relation to HRA and General fund Debt and the amounts written off are reported accordingly.
71. General fund debt above £1,000 needs to be approved by Cabinet and the Head of Housing, the Head of Housing is satisfied that all appropriate recovery action has been exhausted and request cabinet to approve the schedule at **Appendix D** for write off.
72. A summary of the general fund write offs is tabled below:

Debt Type	Amount	No. of Records	Comments
Garages Former Tenant Arrears < £1,000	£505.27	40	Delegated Authority
ABC Lettings < £1,000	£10,606.02	35	Delegated Authority
ABC Lettings > £1,000	£28,390.71	9	As per Appendix E
B&B Former Tenant Arrears > £1,000	£42,953.93	489	As per Appendix E
B&B Former Tenant Arrears < £1,000	£3,620.37	3	Delegated Authority
Christchurch House Former Tenant Arrears < £1,000	3,766.53	51	Delegated Authority
Private Sector Letting Former Tenant Arrears < £1,000	£27,916.25	96	Delegated Authority
Private Sector Letting Former Tenant Arrears > £1,000	£149,759.37	42	As per Appendix E
	£267,518.45		

Portfolio Holder's Views

73. It is positive at this early stage to be forecasting a small surplus although there is a significant pressure of nearly £1m in services. Some of the pressures, such as in Culture are a legacy from the Covid19 Pandemic and rightly funded from reserves, but we need to be mindful of adding any further pressures to the budget, especially in the current varying economic conditions.
74. The Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme is also covered in this report and brings forward a long term solution to helping rough sleepers. Most importantly this programme will help those in need of support, but with Government supporting this scheme through grant funding, it is not adding any additional pressure to the Council budget.

Contact and Email

75. Lee Foreman - Lee.Foreman@ashford.gov.uk

Treasury Management Positions as at 30 June 2021

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Fair Value £
Investment Accounts				
Goldman Sachs	Various	0.53%	50,000	52,391
ICD Portal - Blackrock	Various	0.01%	3,892,000	3,892,000
ICD Portal - BNP	Various	0.03%	3,919,000	3,919,000
ICD Portal - CCLA	Various	0.03%	3,919,000	3,919,000
ICD - Invesco	Various	0.01%	3,388,000	3,388,000
Payden Global MMF	Various	0.91%	3,000,000	3,006,685
Total Investment Accounts			18,168,000	18,177,076
Long Term Investments				
Property Investment				
A Better Choice of Property Ltd.***	Various		605,001	1,142,785
CCLA Local Authority Property Fund	Various	4.66%	11,000,000	11,780,010
Equity Funds**				
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	Various	3.51%	3,000,000	2,941,074
Investec Diversified Income Fund	28/03/2019	3.88%	2,500,000	2,490,328
Kames Diversified Income Fund	13/05/2019	4.30%	5,500,000	5,489,207
Schroder Income Maximiser	Various	5.64%	3,500,000	2,943,789
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	Various	5.81%	3,000,000	2,823,698
UBS Global Income Equity Fund	29/07/2019	2.44%	1,500,000	1,429,082
Total Long Term Investments			30,605,001	31,039,972
Total Investment Portfolio			48,773,001	49,217,048
* Money Market Fund (MMF) are AAA rated deposit facilities which have variable rates of interest but have constant net asset values. Interest rates are shown at the time of producing this report.				
** Equity funds and the Property fund have variable rates of interest and also have fluctuating capital values, the amount stated is the current fair value.				
*** A Better Choice Of Property Ltd. is a solely owned subsidiary of ABC				

Debt Portfolio as at 30 June 2021			
Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate	Amount
		%	£
Temporary Borrowing			
Lichfield District Council	19/01/2021	0.10%	2,000,000
Trafford Council	19/01/2021	0.10%	2,500,000
Shropshire Council	20/01/2021	0.08%	5,000,000
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	20/01/2021	0.08%	5,000,000
London Borough of Redbridge	20/01/2021	0.08%	5,000,000
Middlesbrough Council	21/01/2021	0.10%	5,000,000
Cambridge City Council	22/01/2021	0.05%	5,000,000
Tendering District Council	22/01/2021	0.05%	4,000,000
Warwickshire County Council	05/02/2021	0.06%	10,000,000
Middlesbrough Teeside PF	19/02/2021	0.06%	7,000,000
Bridgend County Borough Council	24/02/2021	0.10%	5,000,000
North Somerset Council	25/02/2021	0.07%	2,000,000
Mid Devon District Council	25/02/2021	0.08%	2,000,000
Broxbourne Borough Council	26/02/2021	0.06%	2,000,000
Craven District Council	26/02/2021	0.06%	1,000,000
South Northamptonshire Council	26/02/2021	0.06%	1,000,000
South Northamptonshire Council	11/03/2021	0.06%	3,000,000
West of England Combined Authority	17/03/2021	0.06%	5,000,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	26/03/2021	0.06%	2,000,000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	01/04/2021	0.06%	5,000,000
West Midlands Combined Authority	19/04/2021	0.06%	5,000,000
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	21/04/2021	0.05%	5,000,000
West Midlands Combined Authority	22/04/2021	0.06%	5,000,000
West of England Combined Authority	17/05/2021	0.04%	6,000,000
Uttlesford District Council	21/05/2021	0.04%	3,000,000
Hampshire County Council	24/05/2021	0.06%	3,000,000
North Hertfordshire District Council	24/05/2021	0.04%	3,000,000
Erewash Borough Council	24/05/2021	0.02%	1,500,000
Wokingham Borough Council	21/06/2021	0.05%	10,000,000
London Borough of Sutton	22/06/2021	0.05%	3,000,000
Total Temporary Borrowing			123,000,000
Long Term Borrowing			
Public Works Loan Board***	various	various	106,664,150
Total Long Term Borrowing			106,664,150
Grand Total Borrowing			229,664,150

*** HRA borrowing

Detail of PWLB Loans outstanding

All these loans are as a result of the HRA Buyout. This is a breakdown of the £106.7m referenced above.

Detail of PWLB Loans Outstanding at 30 June 2021

Date of Advance	Loan Ref Number	Date of Repayment	Amount Outstanding	Rate
			£	%
28/03/2012	499500	28/03/2022	7,000,000	0.90%
28/03/2012	499516	28/03/2022	2,000,000	2.40%
28/03/2012	499514	28/03/2023	2,000,000	2.56%
28/03/2012	499507	28/03/2024	3,000,000	2.70%
28/03/2012	499503	28/03/2025	3,000,000	2.82%
28/03/2012	499505	28/03/2026	1,000,000	2.92%
28/03/2012	499496	28/03/2027	1,000,000	3.01%
28/03/2012	499509	28/03/2028	2,000,000	3.08%
28/03/2012	499497	28/03/2029	2,000,000	3.15%
28/03/2012	499510	28/03/2030	2,000,000	3.21%
28/03/2012	499498	28/03/2031	8,000,000	3.26%
28/03/2012	499511	28/03/2032	9,000,000	3.30%
28/03/2012	499499	28/03/2033	10,000,000	3.34%
28/03/2012	499512	28/03/2034	11,000,000	3.37%
28/03/2012	499506	28/03/2035	12,000,000	3.40%
28/03/2012	499513	28/03/2036	9,000,000	3.42%
28/03/2012	499515	28/02/2037	16,713,000	3.44%
29/03/2011	498502	29/03/2061	5,951,150	5.26%
		Total	106,664,150	

* Variable Rate Loan, the others are fixed rate

A Better Choice for Property Loans as at 30 June 2021

Loans	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Principal Repaid £	Balance Outstanding £
Loan 3	12/02/2015	2.83%	400,000	72,826	327,174
Loan 9	22/07/2017	3.04%	1,445,000	46,383	1,398,617
Loan 12	25/03/2018	3.06%	240,000	6,513	233,487
Loan 13	04/05/2018	3.13%	2,490,000	66,335	2,423,665
Loan 14	05/06/2018	3.06%	1,196,311	32,440	1,163,871
Loan 15	05/07/2018	3.10%	113,000	2,507	110,493
Loan 16	25/09/2018	3.19%	823,000	17,784	805,216
Loan 17*	17/10/2018	3.45%	659,000	13,220	645,780
Loan 18	02/11/2018	3.31%	820,000	17,144	802,856
Loan 19	09/11/2018	3.29%	6,517,425	136,855	6,380,570
Loan 20*	01/02/2019	3.10%	93,890	1,654	92,236
Loan 21*	04/02/2019	3.10%	7,103,180	125,182	6,977,998
Loan 22	22/02/2019	3.03%	809,240	14,549	794,691
Loan 23*	04/03/2019	3.10%	941,360	16,608	924,752
Loan 24	17/06/2019	2.80%	160,000	3,075	156,925
Loan 25	01/07/2019	2.81%	91,776	1,310	90,466
Loan 26	06/09/2019	2.24%	568,400	9,625	558,775
Loan 27	08/09/2019	2.24%	3,821,595	40,559	3,781,036
Loan 28*	16/04/2020	3.57%	1,208,000	9,108	1,198,892
Loan 29*	16/10/2020	3.84%	1,029,820	3,543	1,026,277
Loan 30	20/11/2020	3.61%	2,175,000	8,078	2,166,922
Total loans to A Better Choice For Property Ltd			32,705,997	645,298	32,060,699
* These loans have been subsequently loaned to the companies subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Development Ltd.					

Financial Model - RSAP Homeless people Scheme - Joint Funded from Government Grant				2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045
Year				11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Capital Cost				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Purchases															
			Grant Funding															
Total Capital Cost				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset Life (years)			40															
Interest Rate		Facility D	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Staffing Increase			1.00%															
Outgoings																		
Maintenance allowance	10%		of Rental Income (initially scaled up)	(21,368)	(21,581)	(21,797)	(22,015)	(22,235)	(22,458)	(22,682)	(22,909)	(23,138)	(23,370)	(23,603)	(23,839)	(24,078)	(24,319)	(24,562)
Capital Works	15.0%		of Rental Income	(32,052)	(32,372)	(32,696)	(33,023)	(33,353)	(33,687)	(34,024)	(34,364)	(34,707)	(35,054)	(35,405)	(35,759)	(36,117)	(36,478)	(36,843)
Bad Debt and Voids	5%		of Rental Income only (not office)	(10,684)	(10,791)	(10,899)	(11,008)	(11,118)	(11,229)	(11,341)	(11,455)	(11,569)	(11,685)	(11,802)	(11,920)	(12,039)	(12,159)	(12,281)
Other Exp.				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffing				(76,557)	(77,323)	(78,096)	(78,877)	(79,666)	(80,463)	(81,268)	(82,081)	(82,902)	(83,731)	(84,568)	(85,414)	(86,268)	(87,131)	(88,002)
Sub total				(140,660)	(142,067)	(143,488)	(144,923)	(146,372)	(147,836)	(149,315)	(150,809)	(152,317)	(153,840)	(155,378)	(156,932)	(158,501)	(160,087)	(161,687)
Income for ABC	Site	Bedrooms	Type of Property															
	Residential	N/a	Rent Claimable from Benefit Revenue Grant	213,678	215,815	217,973	220,153	222,354	224,578	226,824	229,092	231,383	233,697	236,034	238,394	240,778	243,186	245,617
			Total Rental Income	213,678	215,815	217,973	220,153	222,354	224,578	226,824	229,092	231,383	233,697	236,034	238,394	240,778	243,186	245,617
			Financing costs capitalised															
			Total	213,678	215,815	217,973	220,153	222,354	224,578	226,824	229,092	231,383	233,697	236,034	238,394	240,778	243,186	245,617
			Net Revenue before financing	73,018	73,747	74,485	75,230	75,982	76,741	77,509	78,283	79,066	79,857	80,655	81,462	82,276	83,099	83,930
Financing Costs																		
Interest and capital - 40 year annuity				(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)
Net Revenue			Net Revenue after financing	(9,334)	(8,604)	(7,866)	(7,122)	(6,370)	(5,610)	(4,843)	(4,068)	(3,286)	(2,495)	(1,696)	(890)	(75)	747	1,579

Financial Model - RSAP Homeless people Scheme - Joint Funded from Government Grant				2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060
Year				26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Capital Cost			Purchases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Grant Funding															
Total Capital Cost				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset Life (years)			40															
Interest Rate		Facility D	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Staffing Increase			1.00%															
Outgoings																		
Maintenance allowance	10%		of Rental Income (initially scaled up)	(24,807)	(25,055)	(25,306)	(25,559)	(25,815)	(26,073)	(26,334)	(26,597)	(26,863)	(27,131)	(27,403)	(27,677)	(27,954)	(28,233)	(28,515)
Capital Works	15.0%		of Rental Income	(37,211)	(37,583)	(37,959)	(38,339)	(38,722)	(39,109)	(39,500)	(39,895)	(40,294)	(40,697)	(41,104)	(41,515)	(41,930)	(42,350)	(42,773)
Bad Debt and Voids	5%		of Rental Income only (not office)	(12,404)	(12,528)	(12,653)	(12,780)	(12,907)	(13,036)	(13,167)	(13,298)	(13,431)	(13,566)	(13,701)	(13,838)	(13,977)	(14,117)	(14,258)
Other Exp.				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffing				(88,882)	(89,771)	(90,669)	(91,576)	(92,492)	(93,417)	(94,351)	(95,295)	(96,248)	(97,210)	(98,182)	(99,164)	(100,156)	(101,158)	(102,170)
Sub total				(163,304)	(164,937)	(166,587)	(168,253)	(169,936)	(171,635)	(173,352)	(175,086)	(176,836)	(178,604)	(180,390)	(182,194)	(184,017)	(185,857)	(187,716)
Income for ABC	Site	Bedrooms	Type of Property															
	Residential	N/a	Rent Claimable from Benefit Revenue Grant	248,074	250,554	253,060	255,591	258,146	260,728	263,335	265,969	268,628	271,314	274,028	276,768	279,536	282,331	285,154
			Total Rental Income	248,074	250,554	253,060	255,591	258,146	260,728	263,335	265,969	268,628	271,314	274,028	276,768	279,536	282,331	285,154
			Financing costs capitalised															
			Total	248,074	250,554	253,060	255,591	258,146	260,728	263,335	265,969	268,628	271,314	274,028	276,768	279,536	282,331	285,154
			Net Revenue before financing	84,770	85,617	86,473	87,337	88,211	89,093	89,984	90,883	91,792	92,710	93,637	94,574	95,519	96,474	97,438
Financing Costs																		
Interest and capital - 40 year annuity				(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)	(82,352)
Net Revenue			Net Revenue after financing	2,418	3,266	4,121	4,986	5,859	6,741	7,632	8,531	9,440	10,359	11,286	12,222	13,167	14,122	15,086

Fees and Charges at Courtside and Pitchside effective from 1 April 2021

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2021/22						
Other Charges						
Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2019/20 £	Charge 2020/21 £	Proposed Charge 2021/22 Sept 2021 - March 2022 £	Increase / Decrease on 2020/21 %
Courtside and Pitchside						
	Tennis courts prices (per hour)					
	use of 1 court	VT	7.00	7.50	7.50	0.00%
	use of 2 courts	VT	14.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
	use of 3 courts	VT	20.00	21.00	21.00	0.00%
	use of 4 courts	VT	29.00	30.00	30.00	0.00%
	use of 5 and 6 courts	VT	68.00	70.00	70.00	0.00%
	Netball prices (per hour)					
	use of 1 court	VT	15.00	17.00	19.00	12.00%
	use of 2 courts	VT	21.00	23.00	25.00	12.00%
	use of 1, 2 3 and 4 courts	VT	31.00	34.50	38.00	12.00%
	use of all courts	VT	67.00	70.00	79.00	12.00%
	Football prices (per hour)					
	Football (3g)					
	Football (3g) prices adult (full)	VT	80.00	100.00	108.00	8.00%
	Football (3g) prices junior (full)	VT	60.00	80.00	84.00	4.00%
	Football (3g) prices adult (half)	VT	60.00	50.00	54.00	8.00%
	Football (3g) prices junior (half)	VT	50.00	40.00	42.00	4.00%
	Football (grass) (per hour)					
	Football (grass) pitches prices adult	VT	55.00	60.00	66.00	10.00%
	Football (grass) pitches prices junior (full)	VT	45.00	50.00	55.00	10.00%
	Football (grass) pitches prices juniors (half)	VT	25.00	30.00	32.00	4.00%
	Season matches (10)	VT	500.00	600.00	660.00	10.00%
	Meeting Room prices (per hour)	VT	20.00	n/a	22.00	10.00%

Notes

VAT Indicator:

NB = Non Business no VAT

EX =

VT = Exclusive of VAT

* inc floodlight use added prices for Sept 2021

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny: Tuesday 14th September
Cabinet: Thursday 30th September

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2021/22

**Report Author &
Job Title:** Tom Swain
Governance and Data Protection Officer

**Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder for:** Cllr. Neil Shorter
Finance and IT

Summary: Following the presentation to Cabinet in July 2020 of the Recovery Plan which set out the council's approach to making a timely and successful recovery from the impact of the coronavirus, this periodic report summarises performance against the performance indicators introduced in that Recovery Plan.

Key Decision: No

**Significantly
Affected Wards:** None

Recommendations: **Overview and Scrutiny,
Cabinet, is asked to:-**

I. Consider the performance data for Quarter 1 2021/22

Policy Overview: The Recovery Plan as a key strategic document set out how we can embrace the 'new normal' to build: a stronger local economy, increased community resilience and public participation.

The Plan covers a 2 year period reflecting economic forecasting for the return of economic stability during the period.

This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor this Recovery Plan.

Financial Implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	N/A
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	N/A
Sustainability Implications:	N/A
Other Material Implications:	N/A
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	The Recovery Plan 2020
Contact:	Tom.Swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Portfolio Holder’s Views:

This report provides a very good overview of many aspects of the council’s performance and demonstrates some of the constraints that are affecting short and medium term performance, not just Covid but Stodmarsh in the planning sector as an example.

I would advocate that both officers and members have a brief review of the material included in this report so that we are all familiar with the issues that are affecting the general public and where we need to focus our attention going forward.

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2021/22

Introduction and Background

1. This report seeks to provide an overview of performance against the council's key performance indicators for Quarter 1 2021/22. The council's performance framework captures key performance data from across council services as it relates to the themes of the Recovery Plan 2020, that of Economic Recovery, Community Recovery, Place Making, Regeneration, and Infrastructure and Organisational Change and Workforce Development.
2. The Recovery Plan was developed to put in place a framework to enable a timely and structured recovery from the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The plan sets out to deliver a number of actions that will allow the council to re-configure how it works and can most effectively deliver services to residents and how, in collaboration with others, help mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on the local economy, communities and residents.
3. This quarterly performance report monitors the key performance measures set out in the Recovery Plan and by doing so forms part of a comprehensive and regular review of the plan ensuring our recovery remains focused and on track to deliver a timely recovery, that is inclusive and ensures those hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic are not disadvantaged.

Next Steps

4. The focus of the council in 2020 was to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. This paused the bringing together of the next Corporate Plan whilst the impacts of the pandemic were realised and the immediate priorities to aid a timely recovery were agreed and the Recovery Plan adopted.
5. The Recovery Plan did not lose sight of the long-term ambition agreed by stakeholders to form the cornerstone of the Corporate Plan. The Ashford Ambition carries forward, together with the three themes of Green Pioneer, Caring Ashford and Targeted Growth, into the Corporate Plan 2022- 2024 which is currently nearing completion.
6. Going forward this period performance report will reflect the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-2024 with a suite of performance measures in keeping with the themes of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.



Our Recovery Plan 2020 - 22

The Ashford Ambition: to be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.

Recovery Plan Themes



Our Objectives

Carbon reduction; Job creation; Building community resilience; Improving the customer journey; Revitalising the local economy; Promoting health and wellbeing; Tackling inequalities

Our Service Design Principles

This is a framework that guides us when designing services to ensure our services are:

- Efficient • Consistent • Inclusive
- Improve the customer experience

Green principles



- 1 All investment to support recovery and future growth should have low or zero carbon emissions, use resources efficiently and aim for environmental net gain.
- 2 Employees and residents are supported to protect and enhance their wellbeing through a cleaner environment and more access to rich and varied nature.
- 3 Communities are well connected both digitally, and through an effective network of footpaths, cycleways and public transport.
- 4 Future development and existing communities are resilient and adapted to the changing climate and severe weather events
- 5 Biodiversity is protected, restored and created; nature-based solutions are considered first and invested in at every opportunity.
- 6 Ensure any green recovery solutions are equitable and fair; a green and equitable recovery go hand in hand.
- 7 Greater partnership working and collaboration.



Equalities Objectives

These are refreshed every four years to ensure the council has due regard to; eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations



Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do



Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities




Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents



Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce

Recovery Plan, Quarterly Performance Indicators, Q1 2021/22

Economic Recovery

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI30 Parking usage	Parking usage: Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks	140,180			73,602			187,472			June 2021 result 

Overview

- Confidence returning as lock down eases, noticeable in short stay car parks.
- Vicarage and Recreation Ground Car park in Tenterden now hitting pre Covid figures.
- Expect no revenue from Victoria Road Car Park as will still be used solely as COVID testing site until Christmas.
- Elwick Rd Car Park will continue to provide free parking for MITIE staff who support Victoria Rd test centre. There are over 100 staff on rotation..
- Elwick Place Car Park had 21345 vehicles entering of which 6924 paid for parking, rest is free parking. Cinema users also receive free parking up to 3 hours.
- A review of our various discount schemes in council car parks is scheduled to take place over the course of the next few months.

Figures

- Income increased in June to £162k and looking at 92% against financial target of £177k per month to exceed pre Covid figures of over 2m per annum.
- Vicarage Lane remains biggest income car park, in 2nd place remains Recreation Ground in Tenterden and in 3rd Elwick Place Car Park. These are all short stay car parks supporting High Street economy.
- 2020-21 Financial Year income = £819K, compared to £2.5 million on previous year. On target for 1.9m Currently at £385,725.00
- Income figures from Flowbird, RingGO and ANPR systems.

Expectations

- Henwood Car Park to be redeveloped, however under used car park and income will not be missed.
- Planning permission submitted for Flour Mill. This provides long stay car park for college and ABC free parking staff. Again income will not be missed.
- Proposed New Car Park Adlers Yard Car Park – provide 21 spaces.
- Revamp of Victoria Park Car Park
- New Country Car Park at Conningbrook.

News

- Cashless payments continue to increase and this month at 38% from 36%.previously.
- EV project live and hope to replace and install additional chargers by end of year.
- Edinburgh Rd Car Park moving to 24/7 to help parking requirements for new apartments.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note																							
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status																								
RPKPI51 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	16.6%			15.4%			11.3%			Percentage Occupancy Rate																							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site</th> <th>Square foot let</th> <th>Total square foot</th> <th>Percentage let</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ellingham</td> <td>69,336 sf</td> <td>69,336 sf</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carlton Road</td> <td>19,408 sf</td> <td>44,087 sf</td> <td>44.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elwick Place</td> <td>66,185 sf</td> <td>66,185 sf</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>International House</td> <td>72,914 sf</td> <td>77,328 sf</td> <td>94.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>227,843 sf</td> <td>256,936 sf</td> <td>88.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>											Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let	Ellingham	69,336 sf	69,336 sf	100.0%	Carlton Road	19,408 sf	44,087 sf	44.0%	Elwick Place	66,185 sf	66,185 sf	100.0%	International House	72,914 sf	77,328 sf	94.3%	Total	227,843 sf	256,936 sf	88.7%
Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let																															
Ellingham	69,336 sf	69,336 sf	100.0%																															
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International House	72,914 sf	77,328 sf	94.3%																															
Total	227,843 sf	256,936 sf	88.7%																															

Major sites that we acquired for commercial/investment purposes included. Please note Park Mall and the Commercial Quarter are not included as these were purchased for development and regeneration purposes.

We have seen a decrease in vacancies due to a number of new leases being signed. However we have seen a percentage decrease in expected income due to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2019/20 and update to the Property Acquisition, Investment and Disposal Strategy available from [Sept 2020 Cabinet](#). This report provided a summary of how our main commercial assets were performing and the work the Council is undertaking to improve or maintain such performance. Whilst this report looks back to the financial year 2019-2020, due to the unparalleled events over the past 18 months such as the changes in the retail shopping market, the impact and uncertainty caused by Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic, the report also considers what impacts these events may have on the council's property portfolio in the short term. Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2020/21 expected shortly.

RPKPI80 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records	8.4%			8.4%			8.2%			01/07/2021 - 5168 properties, 241 exemptions, 168 reliefs
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Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records, comparing the total number of rated premises against those which have an empty property exemption or relief applied to their accounts

Q2 Sept 2020, 5059 rated properties in the borough with 256 exemptions and 169 empty reliefs
 Q3 Dec 2020, 5148 rated properties in the borough with 271 exemptions and 164 with empty reliefs
 Q4 March 2021, 5161 rated properties in the borough with 266 exemptions and 165 empty reliefs.


Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI81 Percentage business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic - Percentage business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic	Percentage business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic -	Summary of support provided to businesses									
		Schemes from March 2020 – September 2020:									
		Small Business Grants				1,757 grants paid			£17,570,000		
		Retail Hospitality (RHL) Grants				560 grants paid			£10,205,000		
		Discretionary Grants				175 grants paid			£1,351,000		
		Schemes from November 2020 onwards:									
		Local Restrictions Support Grants									
		November				1,043 grants paid			£1,767,458		
		Tier 3				430 grants paid			£466,618.47		
		Tier 4				1,053 grants paid			£1,015,866.47		
		Wet-led pub				46 grants paid			£46,000		
		January				1,066 grants paid			£2,715,696		
		One-off				1,066 grants paid			£5,430,000		
		February				1,068 grants paid			£2,837,996		
		Restart									
Restart (non-essential retail)				302 grants paid			£1,144,717				
Restart (other)				731 grants paid			£6,898,000				
Total LRSG/Restart				6,605 grants paid			£22,323,371.71				
Additional Restrictions Grants				2,687 grants paid			£4,823,350.54				

Information on the support provided and that was available to businesses is available on our [webpages](#).

More information on the prosperity of our local businesses is available within the Kent and Medway COVID-19 Economic Recovery Dashboard. [The Economic Recovery Dashboard](#) (XLSX, 1.3 MB). This dashboard has been developed to help support the economic recovery from COVID-19 in Kent and Medway. It draws from a range of economic indicators and uses modelled data to help identify the possible impact on local economies and those areas which may be more economically vulnerable

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI82 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	6%			5.9%			5%			 <p>June 2021 result 5%</p> <p>Last 12 months</p> <p>3900 fall of 265 from May. Kent 5.1% average</p>

Total unemployment: Ashford: 5% (3900) which compares to the Kent figure 5.1%. More information available within [Kent County Councils Economy and Employment data.](#)

RPKPI83 Employment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	11.2%			10.9%			9%			 <p>Q1 2021/22 result 9%</p> <p>Last 4 quarters</p> <p>795 unemployed 18-24, 9% Kent average 8.0%</p>
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Unemployment for 18-24: Ashford 9% which compares to a Kent figure of 8%. More information available within Kent [County Councils Economy and employment data.](#)




Presentation on youth unemployment recently given to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, presentation is available to view at: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Community Recovery

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI01 Rent arrears/loss		£638,245.91			£312,078.81			£376,024.12			Collected 98.78% of rents year20/21, with arrears brought forward reduced to £312,078.81. Trend continues to be monitored to understand if this alters as the economic hardships of Covid measures work through as support schemes such as furlough come to an end.
RPKPI04 Homelessness presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	352			365			323			Throughout period numbers starting to rise and getting approaches now from people who have been served S21 notices. We expect this number to continue to rise.
RPKPI05 Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	44			29			29			

The latest data tables on local government housing including Ashford Borough Council, covering social housing sales, homelessness, and affordable housing supply are available at the following links: [Social housing sales](#) [Homelessness](#) [Housing statistics](#) [Affordable housing supply](#)

A report provides the current position on homelessness following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 and the impact of Covid 19 in 2020/21 was taken to the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October](#).

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI06 Number of new complaints cases opened	No. of complaints regarding poor conditions and/or ASB in the private rented sector resolved with formal action	2			1			6			June, Notices required on 4 properties following ongoing problems. May, one case requiring action. April, an on-going case that required an Improvement Notice for works to ensure the landlord carries out as requested via formal meeting on site.
RPKPI07 Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.43%	100%		99.93%	100%		99.98%	100%		In May two properties were showing overdue. Both resulting from failure to allow access. Figure returned to 100% in June.
RPKPI08 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	17			20			17			Figures continue to remain at expected levels, recovering from covid related falls.
RPKPI24 VERA funded foodbanks RPKPI25 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANTS		<p>Coronavirus Emergency Community Fund, made up of project and support grants paid out a total of £53,300 to 48 organisations (April- June 2020)</p> <p>Vera Funding, £3.3k provided to 3 organisations, helping to contribute to over 1000Hrs of operating time and supporting an average of 270 people a week.</p> <p>Emergency Assistance Grant, utilised to aid with: a social supermarket, emergency food boxes, food stock and essentials community sign posting voluntary sector advice and debt relief.</p> <p>Further detailed information on the support given to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector is available within the following reports:</p> <p>Support given to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 13th July, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council (modern.gov.co.uk) and</p>									

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI26 MEMBER GRANTS		Report on Support given to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 13th April, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council (moderngov.co.uk)									



RPKPI31 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	99.2%	98.5%		99.1%	98.5%		98.6%	98.5%		The team is following the FSA guidance issued to local authorities which provides a priority ranking guide so that the highest risk premises are inspected first. And the support of the Ashford Port Health Authority team is continuing.
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This figure covers all inspections including for those inspections which are now overdue for their next inspection. The backlog continues to reduce.

Lockdown meant that our food inspection programme was suspended for most of 20/21. However, the team have made contact with most of the premises due an inspection to provide advice and gather key information to help prioritise and speed up the physical inspection process.




RPKPI62 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.11	10		1.94	10		1.75	10		Benefit change of circumstance and new claims processing time continues to remain on target.
RPKPI63 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	25.77	28		26.33	28		26.35	28		

The latest data tables on local government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates is available from the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#).

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI64 Universal credit new claims	Universal credit Monthly new starts	1,247			973			176 (Aprils figures only)			<p>April 2021 result</p> <p> 176</p> <p>Last 12 months</p> <p>Latest available figures run until April 2021</p>
RPKPI67 Welfare intervention new cases	Welfare intervention new cases	256			435			329			<p>Officers continue to make pro-active calls. Officers have been calling people who haven't paid any council tax offering help and financial advice. Increase in cases expected with courts starting to operate again properly.</p> <p>Welfare Intervention Officers have taken on the administration of Test & Trace payments</p>
RPKPI84 Number of positive covid 19 cases	Number of positive covid 19 cases source https://coronaviruses.data.gov.uk/	5,235			3,173			352			<p>June 2021 result</p> <p> 226</p> <p>Last 12 months</p> <p>Number of people with at least one positive COVID-19 test result, either lab-reported or rapid lateral flow test, Cumulative cases as of 30.06 - 10,074</p>
RPKPI85 Website visits to covid 19 pages	Website visits to covid 19 pages	50,407			44,890			14,526			<p>Top 5 pages for June: Covid Testing Site News Article (568), Covid Homepage (435), Coronavirus Posters (349), Advice for Retail and Shops (289), Covid Business Grants (247)</p>







Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI86 Number of referrals to voluntary sector	Number of referrals to voluntary sector	201			62			17			17 individuals signposted to Voluntary & Community Groups A further 5 aided with shopping slots

Place Making, Regeneration and Infrastructure




Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI02 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	44			0			65			65 homes were acquired through the off-plan purchase of the East Block of the New Quarter, to be known as Stour Heights. These were 27 x 1-beds and 38 x 2-beds.
<p>10 affordable homes that are coming forward through the s106 agreement on Parcel P of the Chilmington Green site. These are 6 x affordable rent homes and 4 x shared ownership homes, all of which are 2-bedroom.</p>											
RPKPI03 Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	16			6			10			Street purchases – 10 completed in this period, and 12 are sitting with legal, going through the conveyancing process.
RPKPI10 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	90%	90%		83%	90%		84%	90%		

The Council's ability to determine applications in the Stour catchment part of the Borough is constrained at present by the potential impact of new residential accommodation on the Stodmarsh Lakes European Designated Sites, which lie east of Canterbury. Without necessary mitigation of additional nitrates caused by new residential development, the granting of planning permission may be regarded as unlawful. A strategic mitigation plan is under consideration and this may enable permissions to be granted the Stour catchment area when secured. In the meantime, this is likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to approve applications. Advice has been given by Natural England on Nutrient Neutrality for new developments in the Stour catchment and more information is available on the planning pages of our [website](#).

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
<p>A Nutrient Mitigation Strategy for the Stour Catchment in Ashford Borough, the first steps to mitigating the issue of water quality degradation at Stodmarsh Lakes, which has impacted new housing development in the Ashford borough, is set to start with Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet agreeing that land acquisition options for new wetland areas should now be explored and pursued as a matter of urgency. Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 29th July, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council (moderngov.co.uk)</p>											
RPKPI11	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	100%	65%		91%	65%		94%	65%		<p>The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics</p> <p>Performance has significantly improved across the year and remains good in respect of major application determinations although it is recognised that the impact of the Stodmarsh Lakes habitats issue on the ability to determine applications is likely to result in a delay to determination timescales in the short term for residential proposals in the Stour catchment area. Officers will continue to work closely with applicants to ensure that potential solutions can be identified and revised timescales for determination agreed where possible.</p>
RPKPI11A	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	88%	75%		72%	75%		78%	75%		
RPKPI12	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the	96%	75%		88%	75%		96%	75%		<p>The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics</p> <p>Performance in non-major schemes remains strong and above target. Enhanced use of officer delegations is helping to maintain performance levels.</p>




Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	council).										
RPKPI12A % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	85%	80%		86%	80%		88%	80%		
RPKPI14 Number of live planning applications reducing backlog	Number of live planning applications reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	665	550		681	550		797	550		

The Council's ability to determine applications in the Stour catchment part of the Borough is constrained at present by the potential impact of new residential accommodation on the Stodmarsh Lakes European Designated Sites, which lie east of Canterbury. Without necessary mitigation of additional nitrates caused by new residential development, the granting of planning permission may be regarded as unlawful. A strategic mitigation plan is under consideration and this may enable permissions to be granted the Stour catchment area when secured. In the meantime, this is likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to approve applications. Advice has been given by Natural England on Nutrient Neutrality for new developments in the Stour catchment and more information is available on the planning pages of our [website](#). Alongside this, there is evidence of a rise in planning application numbers which is driving up overall caseload in the Service coupled with remaining resource gaps associated with the final stages of the restructure of the Planning & Development Service. A programme of recruitment is well under way and this should assist in bringing overall case numbers down in the months ahead.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI21 % of working population cycling to work (at least once per week)	% of working population cycling to work based on the national walking and cycling data statistics (data is from the National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey)	Not measured for Quarters Latest data for Ashford (Local Authority area) from 2019 show. 3.5% traveling by bike once a month 2.4% traveling once a week 1.6% traveling 3 times a week 1.6% traveling 5 times a week Based on the national walking and cycling data statistics, data is from the National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey									
RPKPI22 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/walking	The specification for the active travel commissioning is being finalised with a contractor lined up to deliver the first phase of the pilot scheme. It is intended that a large local employer and Ashford Borough Council will be the first organisations to benefit from the formalising of Active Travel Plans to support the move to other ways of traveling around the town and borough. The scheme is planned to commence in September.									
RPKPI40 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	50%	50%		48%	50%		52%	50%		Figure based on April/May, awaiting June figures

Ashford's recycling rate remains comfortably above the national target of 50%, and the overall figure for Ashford (54.2% for the previous year) places Ashford 48th in the country, 16th in the South East and top in Kent. These statistics form part of [DEFRA's nationwide recycling league tables](#).

Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links.
[WasteDataFlow](#)
[Waste and recycling statistics](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI41 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.97%	99.97%		99.97%	99.97%		99.96%	99.963%		<p>Due to increase in properties the missed rate per 100,000 is increased from 34/100,000 to 37/100,000 this means the target is now for 99.963% of residents to receive collection on time.</p> <p>Whilst a higher level of missed occurred in June. Performance is still good with a rate across the month of 46 bins missed per 100,000.</p>

Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links.

[WasteDataFlow](#)

[Waste and recycling statistics](#)







Organisational Change and Workforce Development

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI50 Contribution to budget from commercial investments	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books.	66%			82%			70%			70% - Quarter 1 income has seen a solid start. The majority of income not yet received is down to our larger tenants and the impact of the pandemic on their revenues. However we are engaging with them and we expect to see a significant improvement in rent received from them as the year progresses.

Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.

Incorporate Property Performance Annual Report 2019/20 and update to the Property Acquisition, Investment and Disposal Strategy [Cabinet 24th Sept 2020](#)

We have seen a decrease in vacancies due to a number of new leases being signed. However we have seen a percentage decrease in expected income due the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

RPKPI60 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	76.92%	74.25%		94.25%	99%		23.46%	24.75%		Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates are available here
RPKPI61 Council Tax Collection Rate	Council Tax Collection Rate	85.4%	74.25%		96.7%	98.25%		29.72%	24.57%		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI70	Number of days sickness per full time equivalent	7			6.98						<p>Sickness absence per employee 2020/21</p> <p>2020/21 was an exceptional year as the majority of our staff worked remotely as per the government's mandate to work from home, and much of the year was impacted by restrictions on social contact. This meant that the transmission of normal seasonal illness was reduced and remote working meant that people were able to continue to work with a minor illness. As a result, our overall sickness absence levels for 2020/21 were low.</p> <p>A total of 2,079 days were lost due to sickness absence across the 12-month period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. Based on the average number of 441 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees across the 12-month period, the total amount of working days lost due to sickness in 2020/21 is 4.7 days per FTE. This is an improvement on the previous year, which was 9.1 days per FTE.</p> <p>Annual Sickness Report 2020/21 taken to Septembers O&S committee</p>
RPKPI90	number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	69			79			89			Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
RPKPI90A	number of cases in which costs have been awarded against ABC (effectiveness measure)	0			0			0			Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI91	number of new 106 files opened	6			5			4			
RPKPI91A	number of draft 106 agreements sent out	7			0			4			
RPKPI91B	number of 106 cases completed	2			4			0			
RPKPICOM1	Increased income attributable to commercialisation projects – income and cashable efficiency savings Target 20/21 £300k.	140,600			163,015						<p>We are unable to report any significant changes to the Commercialisation Strategy for Q1.</p> <p>We are in the process of resetting the programme, setting new milestones and fresh KPIs; working with MT on benefits of a cultural shift In line with the formation of the Corporate Plan 2022-24.</p> <p>In the meantime however one of our projects Garden Waste, is nearing completion and we have just heard that the project, as part of our wider commercialisation strategy has been shortlisted as a finalist in the national APSE Awards, in the Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Initiative Category. Winners to be announced in September, although a great achievement in itself and indication of a very positive direction of travel to date.</p> <p>Garden Waste Development project, aims to increase customer base through new online payment systems and ability to sign up for annual contract at any time of year are proving successful. Further marketing and route analysis is planned.</p>
RPKPICOM2	Projects completed target Projects complete 80% planned 20/21 tasks.	48.25			68						<p>Other projects that will contribute to overall target require a longer lead in time before financial returns found, eg efficiency savings anticipated through the Category Management project which aims to streamline council contracts.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2020/21			Q4 2020/21			Q1 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPICOM3	Increase staff awareness of	16.4			32						<p>Much of the work undertaken this past year will realise revenue and efficiencies in the coming years and is not reflected in the quarterly return.</p> <p>Commercial Services Strategy taken to July's Cabinet.</p>
Improved Commercial Acumen	50% staff feeling confident and positive towards commercial approach.										
	50% of staff trained in commercial approach										

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During the compilation of this Q1 performance report Ashford Borough Council received its Annual Review Letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, this provides a summary covering complaint statistics, complaints upheld and compliance with recommendations made by the ombudsman. This indicates that during the year ending March 2021 of the complaints received by the ombudsman concerning the council no complaints were upheld. More information is available from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's local authority [performance data webpages](#).



Agenda Item No:

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 30th September 2021

Report Title: Adoption of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan

Report Author & Job Title: Harriet Turner – Planning Officer (Plan Making and Infrastructure)

Portfolio Holder Cllr. N Bell, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development
Portfolio Holder for:

Summary: The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for examination in late 2020 and the Council received the Examiner's report in April 2021.

The Examiner's report recommended that the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum subject to a number of modifications and on the 29th July 2021, the amended and final version of the Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of a local referendum in the parish and 92.67% voted in favour of the plan.

Following the successful referendum it is now the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to formally 'make' (i.e. adopt) the Plan, which will confer full Development Plan status for decision making purposes. Formally 'making' the Neighbourhood Plan must be agreed by Full Council, so this report recommends that the Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and ask Full Council to 'make' it.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Downs West and Goat Lees Wards

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

- I. **Recommend that Full Council 'make' the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood plan 2013-2030 in accordance with Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to become part of the Development Plan.**

Policy Overview: The adoption of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will mean that it becomes part of the borough Development Plan and its policies shall have the same weight in decision-making as those adopted policies

contained within the Borough Council's own Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Financial Implications:	25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy monies received from development in the Neighbourhood Plan area must be top sliced to the Parish Council, rather than 15% for those parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan.
Legal Implications	None
Equalities Impact Assessment	See Attached
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	None
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	None
Sustainability Implications:	The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development within the parishes.
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2030 (Appendix 1)
Contact:	Harriet.Turner@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330241

Report Title: Adoption of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction and Background

1. Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011, and enables local communities to shape development and growth in their area through the production of a neighbourhood development plan, a neighbourhood development order, or a community right to build order.
2. A neighbourhood plan covers a geographic area and can be taken forward by town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. It will be the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood plan, if adopted, becomes part of the statutory development plan for that area and will be used in determining planning applications.
3. In this borough, there are three Neighbourhood Plans already adopted, the Wye Neighbourhood Plan, the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan, and the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan with a number of others in various stages of production. The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will be the fourth Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted in the Borough.
4. Work commenced on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2014, and the process has involved significant consultation with the local community. Throughout the process, planning policy officers from the borough council have supported the Neighbourhood Planning Group in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes to ensure that the eventual Plan met not only the aspirations of local residents, but also fulfilled the tests of compliance with national and local planning policy.
5. Following two formal stages of public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Plan, the Council appointed an independent examiner to formally consider whether the Plan met the necessary 'basic conditions' tests set down in legislation. The examination took place over written representations throughout early 2021. In April, the Council received the examiner's report which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the Plan was sound and did meet the 'basic conditions' tests and therefore should progress to the final stages of the process – a local referendum.
6. The local referendum on the Plan, as amended by modifications, was held in the parish on 29th July 2021. Of the 368 people who voted (a turnout of 19%), 92% supported the Plan.

Proposal/Current Position

7. As more than 50% of those who voted in the local referendum were in favour of the Plan, the Local Planning Authority must 'make' (adopt) the Plan as soon as reasonably practicable, as part of the Development Plan.

Implications and Risk Assessment

8. The 'making' of the Neighbourhood Plan will confer full Development Plan status on its policies. This means that for decision-making purposes, applications should be determined in accordance with its policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Neighbourhood Plan should therefore play a central role in guiding the Local Planning Authority in assessing planning applications in the parishes alongside the policies in the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Members are referred to the attached Assessment. Although the Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by others, it is necessary to consider EIA if the Council is to adopt its policies.
10. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any existing groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

11. As set out in the background section of this report, significant consultation has taken place on the Plan, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, which has helped to shape the Plan.

Other Options Considered

12. The Council must 'make' (adopt) the plan unless it is considered that that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights. In my opinion, there is no such incompatibility and therefore, the Council should progress to the formally 'make' the Plan.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

13. The Council are required to 'make' the Plan, following the successful referendum, unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights, and there are no such reasons.

Next Steps in Process

14. If the Cabinet agree the recommendation, then it will be for the Full Council to approve and formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan so that it can become a part of the Council's Development Plan for the borough, alongside the Local Plan 2030 and other Development Plan documents.
15. In addition, the relevant regulations require the borough council to publish this decision on the council's website and a statement setting out the reasons for making that decision. This should also be published and made available

locally within the parish. The adopted version of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be made available on the Borough Council's website.

Conclusion

16. The Parish Council as a whole and the members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group in particular, deserve much credit for undertaking and persevering with the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan through to its conclusion. The referendum result shows support for the Plan by the local community and demonstrates the efforts to engage the community throughout the process.
17. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and request that Full Council formally 'make' the Plan to form part of the Development Plan for the borough.

Portfolio Holder's Views

18. I am very supportive of local communities taking an active role in the future evolution of their environment. These plans then inform future decisions being taken by the Local Planning Authority to develop a comprehensively beneficial place for all. The work and commitment of all having undertaken this exercise is to be commended.

Contact and Email

19. Harriet Turner – Planning Officer (Plan Making and Infrastructure)

Harriet.Turner@ashford.gov.uk

Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2030

October 2021



Boughton Aluph & Eastwell
PARISH COUNCIL

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Acknowledgements

This document has been developed and produced by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council in close cooperation with local community volunteers on behalf of the Parish community.

The team would like to particularly thank the following in preparation of the documents and for their support during the process:

- The community groups, local societies and school in the Parish for providing support and comment throughout the process;
- The late Derek Anthony, former Parish Councillor and Chair of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council who initiated the Neighbourhood Plan project;
- Carol & Nigel Bunker;
- Jane Hall
- Borough Councillor Larry Krause;
- Erica Lasparini OBE;
- Jason Matthews, former Chair of Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council
- Borough Councillor Winston Michael;
- Alan Vaughan, Chair of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Residents' Association and the BAERA Committee, and
- Tony Fullwood of Tony Fullwood Associates - Chartered Town Planners, who was our professional planning consultant.

The Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would like to thank the whole community for participating in the process and for coming together and supporting the Neighbourhood Plan over its development.

Section 1: Introduction

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document produced in the Parishes. It is part of the Government's approach to planning which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act that came into force in April 2012.

The plan passed at a local referendum in July 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as the plan which must be used in law to determine planning applications in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes. It will become part of the Development Plan alongside the Borough Council's Local Plan.

The Plan therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long-term future of the Parishes for the period 2013 - 2030. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

In order to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which comprised 2 Parish Councillors supported by a number of local volunteers¹.

Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area specific and apply only to the relevant areas illustrated on the associated Map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Parish and Borough Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole and cross-referencing between Plan policies has been minimised.

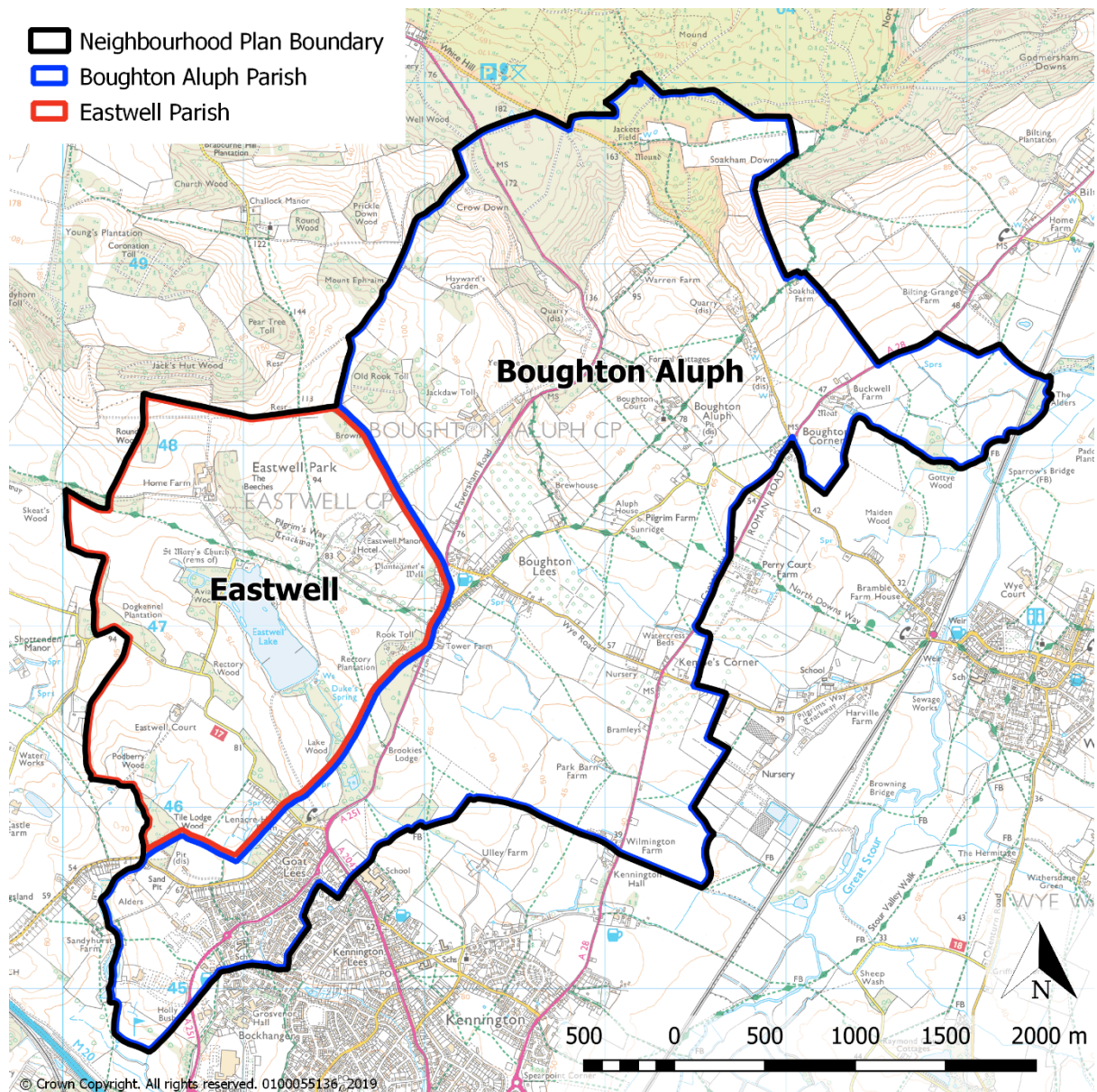
The Plan should also be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (NPPF), Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030 and the Neighbourhood Plan evidence documents.

¹ Past and present members of the Neighbourhood Steering Group are listed here:

- Carol Bunker
- Ray Burrough
- Bryan Hall
- Jane Hall
- Anna Kirke
- Erica Lasparini OBE
- Fiona Miller
- Bob Morgan
- Nigel Bunker
- Spencer Phillips

Which Area Does the Neighbourhood Plan Cover?

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan relates to the designated area covered by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council. The neighbourhood plan designation was approved by Ashford Borough Council on 12 June 2014. The area to which the Plan applies is shown on the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Designation Map (Map 1).



Map 1 - Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Area

Involvement in the Neighbourhood Plan Process

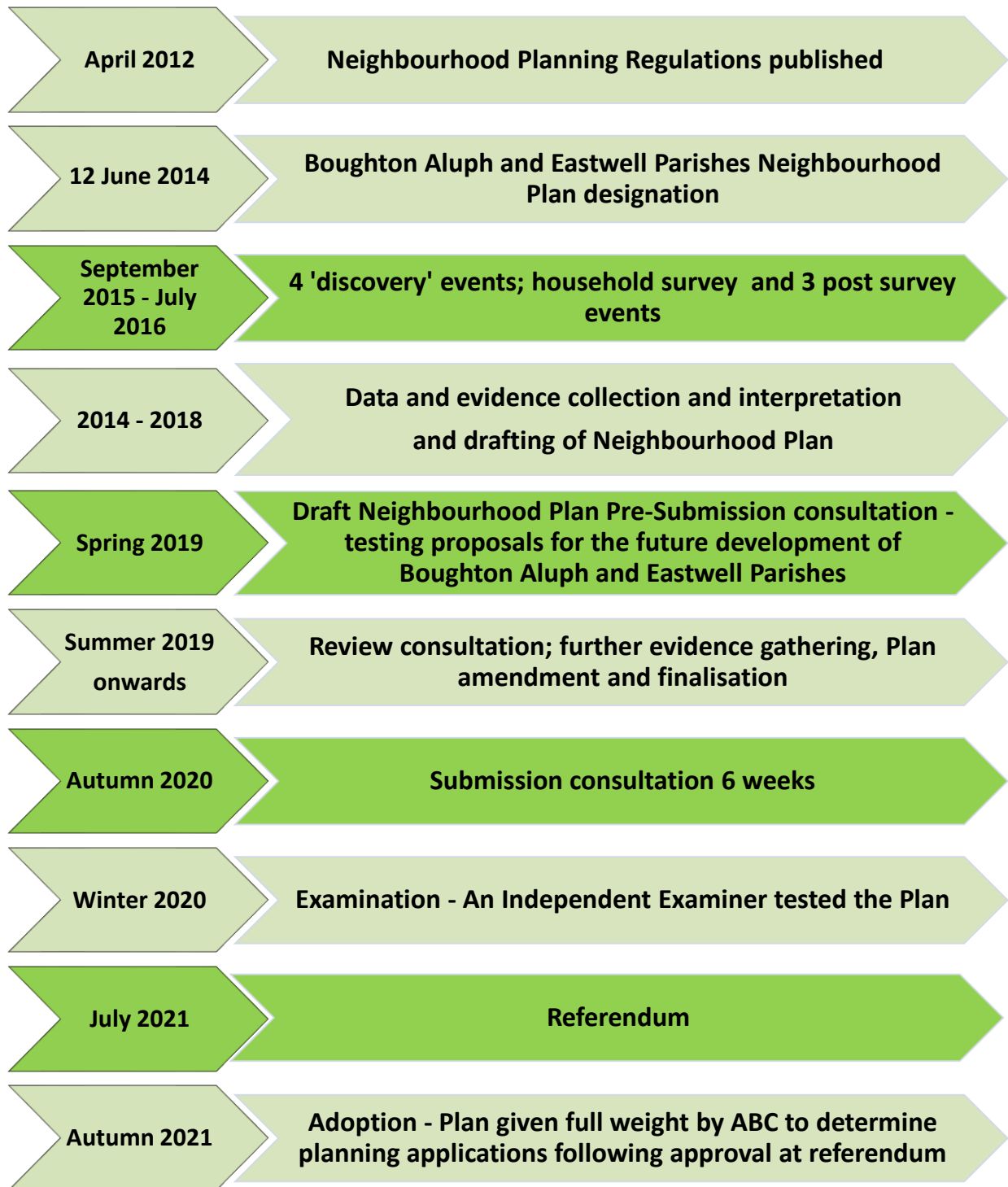
The Neighbourhood Plan team has followed the necessary legal steps to create the Plan. Importantly the team has ensured engagement with the people of both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish and others with an interest in the area.

Details of engagement and consultation are recorded in the Consultation Statement which is available to download from the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council website.

The process is set out in Figure 1 below with the opportunities for local involvement highlighted in dark green.

The Plan incorporates those modifications required by the independent Examiner to allow the Plan to go to referendum. This gives the local electorate the power over whether they want their Plan to be used in local decisions.

Figure 1 – Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Process



How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system

Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their area, all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy. That is, within the constraints imposed by national guidance and local policy, neighbourhoods should develop a shared vision for their area and develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

Neighbourhood Plans must comply with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessments and habitats, and with the NPPF, and they must generally conform with the strategic policies in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Nevertheless, after being passed at a local referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as the plan which must be used in law to determine planning applications in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.

What is in the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Plan is for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes as a whole and looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- Protecting the distinctive character of the built-up area; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside; conserving and enhancing the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and achieving high quality development which fits well with the location;
- Retaining the Local Green Spaces important to local heritage, amenity, recreation and/or wildlife;
- Protecting important public views;
- Carefully assimilating high quality housing and business development at the strategic Eureka site in a parkland setting;
- Enabling local people to stay in or return to the Parishes by ensuring a supply of affordable housing; and
- Protecting and enhancing Eureka Place Local Centre; community buildings; recreation open space and the network of local footpaths.

What period does the Neighbourhood Plan cover?

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan covers the Plan period from 2013 – 2030 to coincide with the period for the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. To determine whether the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan requires a SEA it is necessary to screen the proposals in the plan to determine whether it is likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Ashford Borough Council is legally required to determine whether a neighbourhood plan will require SEA. As part of this screening process it is necessary to consult the SEA consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) to get their opinion on whether or not the plan is likely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore whether a SEA is required.

The Screening Report for the Neighbourhood Plan finds no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Plan and it is concluded that a full SEA is not required at this time.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the appropriate assessment required for any plan to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The first stage of the HRA process is a screening exercise undertaken by Ashford Borough Council where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are examined to assess whether there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the sites. Following such an assessment, it is considered that the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan proposals will not adversely affect the integrity of the internationally designated sites, alone or in combination with other projects and plans. It is therefore considered that a full HRA of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is not required.

How this Plan is organised

The Plan is divided into the following sections:

Section 2: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Now: a brief description of the Parishes today and the key issues that have influenced the Plan

Section 3: The Vision for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes: a long-term vision for the Parish up to 2030

Section 4: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Strategy: the broad planning approach for the Parishes and how this conforms with higher level planning policy

Section 5: Neighbourhood Plan Policies: sets out policies to support the overall vision, including site specific allocations for new development. Policies are arranged in the following themes:

- Environment
- Housing and Business
- Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

Section 6: Monitoring and Review: which explains how the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored and the circumstances which may lead to a review of the plan.

Section 2: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Now

The earliest part of the Parishes has its origins in a Roman road junction, where the route linking the Weald to Canterbury crossed the road running from Dover to Faversham and Reculver (remains can be seen at Kempe's Corner). The ancient Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury doglegs through the middle of the Parishes, with a branch dividing off from the eastern end of Boughton Lees towards Folkestone and Dover.

Settlement in both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell dates back to Saxon times, and they feature in the Domesday Book of 1086. The gradual growth and increasing significance of Eastwell Park Estate, especially in the nineteenth century, led to additional housing for estate workers and trades (including blacksmith, wheelwright, butcher and grocer) in Boughton Lees around a triangular green. In this way the village grew around the green rather than by the two churches of St Mary the Virgin Church, Eastwell, and the pilgrim's church of All Saints at Boughton Aluph.

In more recent times, Ashford has expanded into the southern tip of the Parishes. Between the 1991 and 2001 censuses the population rose from 695 to 1099. More strikingly still the 2011 census shows the Parishes recording the highest percentage population increase in Kent, 126%, from 1099 to 2490 persons.

Today around 90% of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes population reside within the Ashford urban area with the remaining 10% residing in Boughton Lees and smaller hamlets within the rural part of the Parishes. Conversely, the Parishes area is predominantly rural with approximately 75% countryside with the remaining 25% to the south west of the Parish being a well-developed, residential and employment suburb of Ashford – the Eureka/Goat Lees area.

A wide range of issues have been considered in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. These are grouped under three themes:

- Environment
- Housing and Business
- Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

The key issues for these themes are set out below. The main issues have been identified from research along with issues raised by local people at the various consultation events. The background reports used to help prepare the Neighbourhood Plan are referred to in more detail in Section 5.

Environment

More than half of the Plan area is situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which skirts the northern and western edges of Boughton Lees and extends north-east and south-west to include the hamlets of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell. The remaining areas of countryside have a distinctive character and provide the setting for the AONB. There are dramatic panoramic views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees. One of the distinctive features which results from the topography and layout of development is the strong visual connectivity

between both Ashford and Boughton Lees and the landscape – offering long and shorter distance views from the built-up area.

The extensive and picturesque Eastwell Park, a Historic Park and Garden in Kent, extends between the edge of Ashford and Boughton Lees and is located within the AONB.

Areas of ancient woodland, poplar shelter belts and remnant hedgerows add to the landscape character and biodiversity of the area.

Boughton Aluph Parish incorporates the northern edge of Ashford and part of the extensive Eureka Park housing and business park allocation. The area of Ashford within the Parish Council area incorporates five distinctive areas, each with a different character. The adopted Local Plan allocates a strategic site at Eureka Park for a mix of commercial and housing development.

The historic centre of Boughton Lees is designated as a Conservation Area for its special architectural and historic character and the village comprises six distinctive character areas.

Historic England's register shows a number of listed heritage assets in the Parishes.

Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape and ecology are under threat from significant and inappropriately located or designed development. The landscape forms a setting which contributes to the attraction of Ashford, Boughton Lees and the hamlets as places to live and work, and plays a vital role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the population.

Housing and Business

The 2011 census tells us that in 2011 Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes had 1,337 dwellings located primarily within the Goat Lees area of Ashford. There is a predominance of family housing (45% of homes having 3 bedrooms or more). 64.7% of homes are owned, with 13.3% available for social rent, 17.6% private rent and 1.6% shared ownership.

Between 2001 and 2011 some 540 dwellings were added to the housing stock of the Neighbourhood Plan area, primarily in the Goat Lees area which was completed 20 years ago.

The NPPF, 2019 states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. In addition, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, allocates an area for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (indicative capacity of 375 dwellings). That part of this strategic development which is located within the Parishes is supported in the Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with the NPPF (Para. 21), the Neighbourhood Plan contains further development principles for this site.

The number of dwellings already completed within the Neighbourhood Plan area since the start of the plan period (2013) is 5 and a further 7 dwellings are committed through planning permissions. With further windfalls and potentially some of the 375 dwellings from the

Eureka site located in the Plan area, the Parishes are anticipating much slower housing growth following the significant change over the past 20 years.

There are established B1 uses at Eureka Park Business Park originally designated as a key strategic employment area with high quality buildings within a parkland and wetland setting. The area provides a different type of offer to the other business locations in Ashford with lower density development able to be incorporated within a landscaped setting - and it is important that this type of provision continues to be accommodated. However, it is possible that other uses beyond B1 office developments, such as health care facilities or similar high-quality services, could complement the wider B1 office elements of the site.

The facilities and services at Eureka Place Local Centre together with the hotels; self-catering and bed and breakfast accommodation located in the area, provide further diversity in local employment opportunities.

The Parish Council considers that a Neighbourhood Plan should be in place to help guide and coordinate the future development of the Parishes. Residents are keen to ensure that development is absorbed within the environmental constraints identified and can be supported by sufficient infrastructure to ensure the quality of life of existing and future residents.

When planning new development, it is important to understand the characteristics of each distinct area of Ashford and Boughton Lees and designs should respond to the distinctive local character.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

The focus of the Parishes population at the edge of the Ashford urban area means that most of the facilities and services in the Neighbourhood Plan area are concentrated in the Goat Lees area - clustered within the Eureka Place Local Centre. The primary school, shops, a public house, cafes/ restaurants, medical facilities, dental practice and a community hall are all found at the Local Centre which provides a focus for the area and an important opportunity for social interaction whilst enabling more sustainable linked trips to a variety of services.

Goat Lees Primary School opened in 2013 but is at capacity. The Eureka Park residential development could generate a need for approximately 105 primary school places and the only primary school within walking distance is Goat Lees. Kent County Council indicates that St. Theresa Primary School in Ashford town centre will be able to expand and that other primary schools are being planned. However, these are at some distance from the Eureka site and beyond walking distance. The lack of primary school places locally will increase the number of vehicle trips at peak time on the local roads.

There is no secondary school located within the Parishes, although Towers Secondary School abuts the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and two grammar schools are located in Ashford town centre.

There are no GP surgeries located in the Parishes with the closest found in Wye or Bybrook, Ashford.

The Parishes are served by three community halls: Goat Lees Community Hall (within the Eureka Place Local Centre); Sandyacres Sports and Social Club (which serves as a sporting hub) and the Iron Room, Boughton Lees.

Of the two public houses found in the Parishes, one is located within Eureka Place Local Centre - The Pheasant; the other adjoining the Green at Boughton Lees -The Flying Horse Inn.

In terms of outdoor sports pitches, Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, Sandhurst Lane, provides football and rugby pitches as well as tennis courts (which are out of use). The Boughton Lees village green has seen cricket played there for over 200 years. An informal playing area with a football goalpost is located between Guernsey Way and Rothbrook Drive, Goat Lees, although this is subject to flooding during winter months. A Youth Play Space is provided at Trinity Road, Goat Lees. An extensive network of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways cross the Parishes and are widely used and valued by residents.

The Goat Lees development abuts the Kennington area to the north and west and the Eureka leisure complex and Ashford Golf Course to the south. As a consequence, community facilities and services are used by many people from outside of the Parishes. Similarly, Parish residents utilise service and leisure facilities outside the Parishes, particularly within the Ashford urban area e.g. the cinema and restaurant/fast food outlet at Eureka is in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. Wye village centre also offers facilities such as restaurants, pubs, schools, medical and sporting facilities that are utilised by Parish residents.

Section 3: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Future: a vision to 2030

Our vision is for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes to retain its distinctive rural character at the urban edge of Ashford, surrounding the village of Boughton Lees and within the hamlets of Boughton Aluph, Eastwell and Kempe's Corner by carefully integrating the Eureka Park expansion of Ashford into the local landscape (including the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and successfully interweaving high quality new development into the Goat Lees area of Ashford and the historic fabric of Boughton Lees. The Parishes will continue to be served by enhanced key local services and public open space.

Section 4: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Strategy

Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes need to continue to evolve and the Neighbourhood Plan looks to set out a planning strategy appropriate for the expansion of Ashford at Eureka Park and small scale development within Boughton Lees whilst protecting valued landscapes (including the highly valued Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty, Eastwell Historic Park and Garden, ancient woodland and public footpaths and bridleways), local green spaces and important local views.

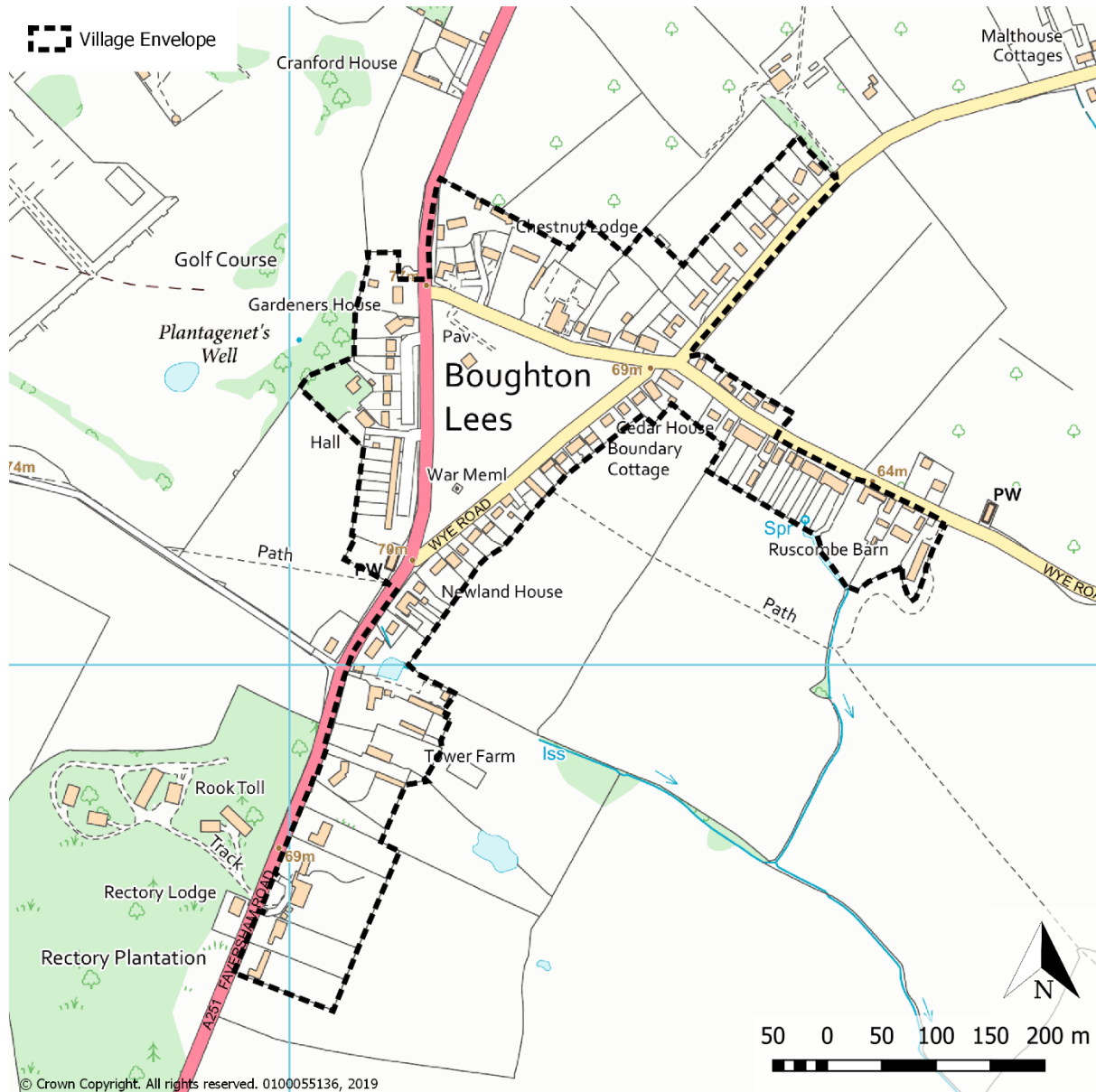
All plans should be based on, and reflect, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and take account of the NPPF with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally. The national planning policy background to each of the Neighbourhood Plan topics is set out in the relevant sections of the Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and should support the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan should reflect these policies and should plan positively to support them. The Neighbourhood Plan should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan strategy is well aligned with the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The Plan positively supports the strategic allocation for housing and commercial development at Eureka Park and recognises specific policies in the NPPF. These indicate where development should be restricted and seek to minimise any adverse impacts which development may cause to the locally valued distinctive characteristics of the area.

Recognising the strategic Local Plan allocation at Eureka Park for housing and commercial development, the planning strategy is to focus well designed development in a parkland

setting at Eureka Park - providing the necessary transport, community and open space infrastructure to ensure the quality of life of existing and future residents of the Parishes.

The built-up confines of Boughton Lees are defined (see Map 2 below) and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to enable small scale residential development opportunities within the village whilst protecting its rural setting and the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.



Map 2 – The built-up confines of the village of Boughton Lees

Hamlets such as Boughton Aluph; Eastwell and Kempe’s Corner are not sustainable places for new housing development and both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell are situated within the Kent Downs AONB.

Local Green Spaces and Important Public Views are identified and to be protected.

Affordable housing will be provided through adopted Local Plan policies within the Eureka development or an exception site at the edge of Boughton Lees if housing need can be demonstrated in the village.

The Plan seeks high quality designs which respond to the distinct character of the individual areas of Goat Lees and Boughton Lees and will preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the important community networks in Goat Lees and Boughton Lees and seeks to protect and enhance the social and economic hub of the Eureka Place Local Centre together with other community and leisure facilities which are important to the social fabric of the Parishes.

Section 5: Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Environment

Objectives

- To protect the character of the landscape and conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which provides the setting for houses at Goat Lees, the village of Boughton Lees and hamlets of Boughton Aluph, Eastwell and Kempe's Corner.
- To conserve and enhance the heritage of our Parishes, including the Boughton Lees Conservation Area.
- To protect Local Green Spaces within the built-up areas of the Parishes.
- To protect distinctive, locally valued views.
- To ensure high quality design in all forms of development which responds to the distinctive landscape, heritage and character of the Parishes.

Environment Policies

High Quality Design

The NPPF states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

Distinctive Character Areas

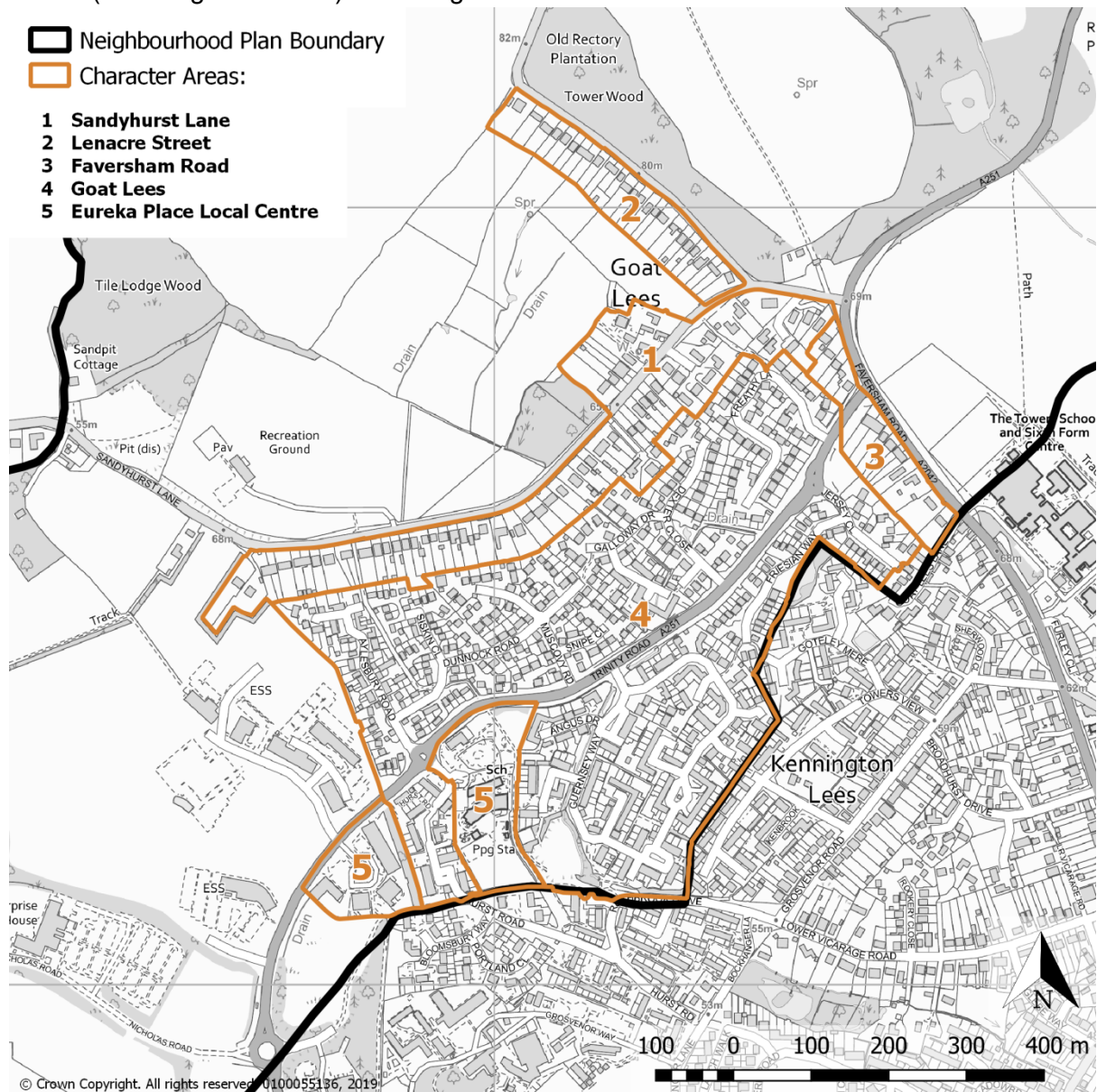
The Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy SP6 - Promoting High Quality Design attaches great importance to the quality of design in new development including demonstrating a positive response to character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

The 'character of an area' is often mentioned in the context of considering development proposals. What is often missing is a clear identification of, and agreement about, the locally distinctive features of an area that give it character that should be given careful regard in considering proposals for development. The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in identifying the special character of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in the designs of proposed development. For this purpose, the Neighbourhood Plan identifies five areas of distinctive character within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) (see Map 3 below) and a further six areas of distinctive character at Boughton Lees (see Map 4 below).

Through evaluation, there is a good understanding of the distinctive characteristics of each of the character areas. Buildings of Note are also identified where the use, mass, scale, design or visual prominence of a building mean that it plays an important role in the character of an area. Whilst many Buildings of Note are listed buildings, others are not, but the Neighbourhood Plan would seek to protect all such buildings.

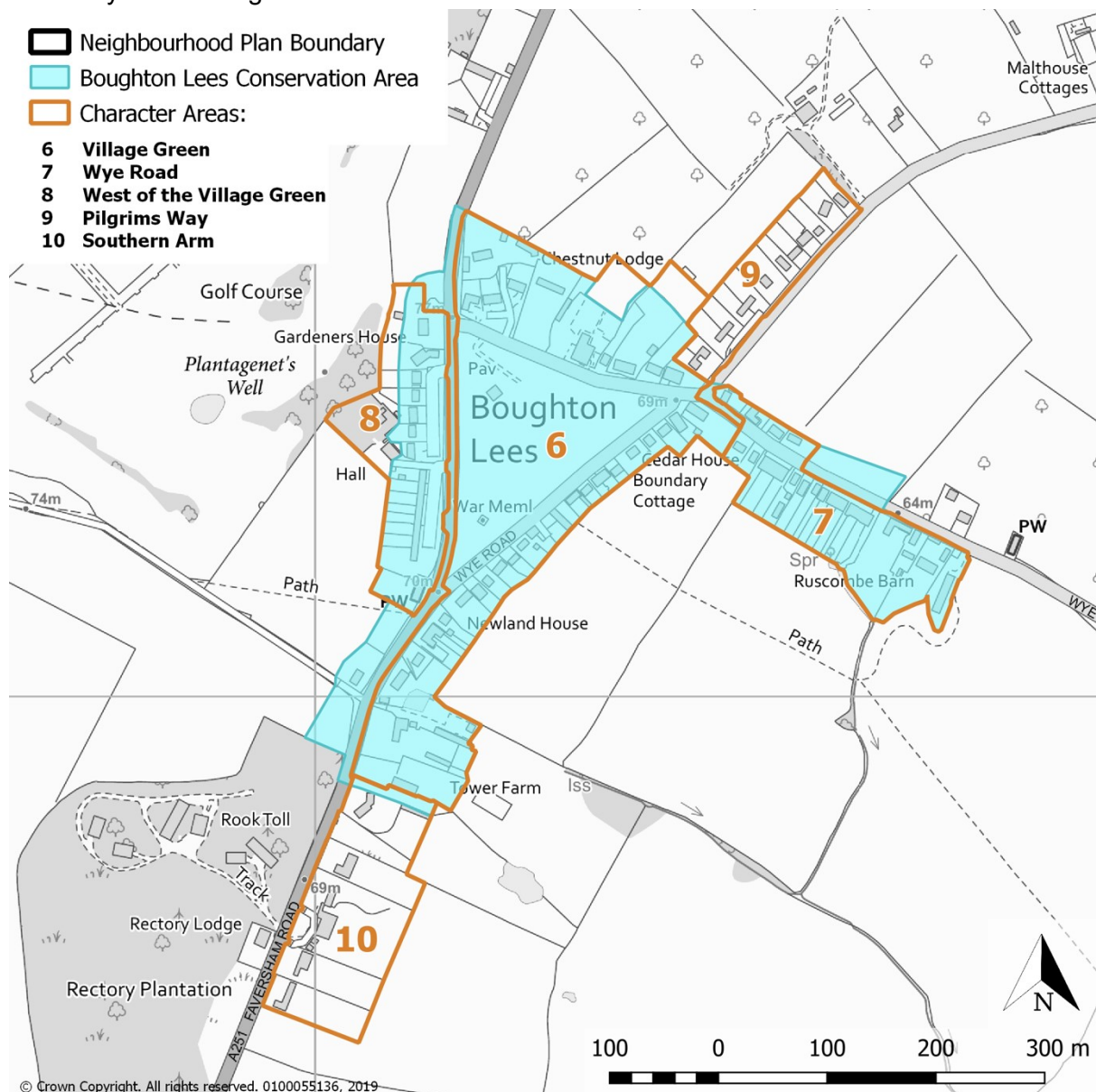
Generally, the Character Areas are in good condition but a limited number of features which detract from the character have been noted.

Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the distinctive character; Buildings of Note and detractors for each separate character area within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) and Boughton Lees.



Map 3 - South West of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) Character Areas

Map 4 below shows the position of the 6 Character Areas in Boughton Lees in relation to the boundary of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area which is shaded blue.



Map 4 - Boughton Lees Character Areas and Conservation Area

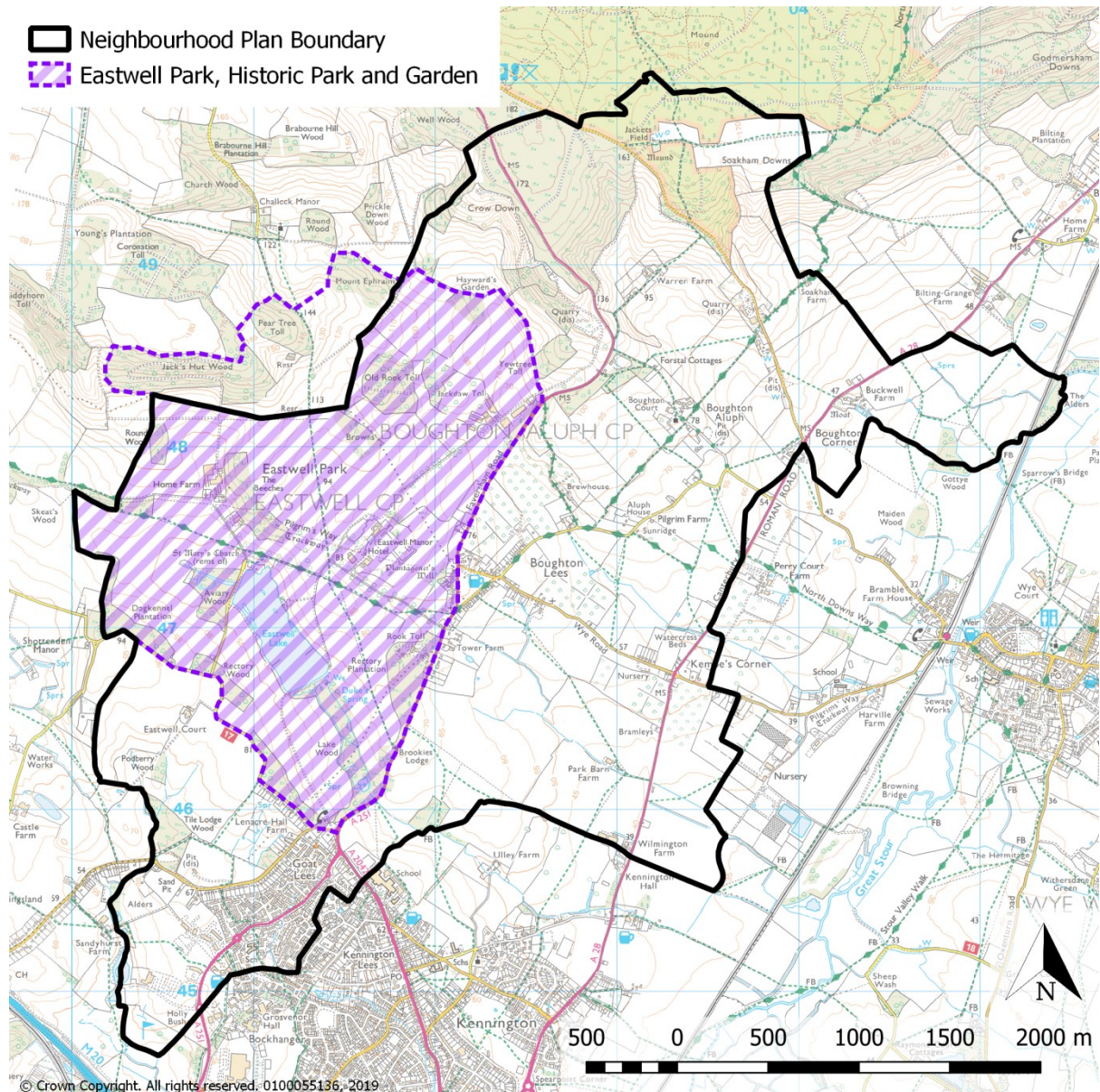
Heritage

The historic centre of Boughton Lees is designated as a Conservation Area as shown on Map 4 above. The Conservation Area is made up of areas of different character. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements. In the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Conservation Area, the special character of these designated areas can be derived from Appendix 1.

The NPPF also seeks the protection of the character and setting of listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic England's register shows 39 listed heritage assets in the

Parishes, of which 36 are buildings (the others are a wall, a milestone and a burial mound - Long Barrow, Jacketts Field - which is a scheduled monument estimated to be 5,000 years old).

The extensive Eastwell Park which extends beyond the Plan area is designated a Historic Park and Garden in Kent. It is made up of part of the farmed estate and Eastwell Manor and grounds. The principal building was constructed between 1793 and 1799 and demolished in 1926. Only the gatehouse and Eastwell towers of the original buildings remain, with a new house constructed on the site between 1926 and 1928 by Sir John Pennefather.



Map 5 - Eastwell Park, Historic Park and Garden in Kent

In addition, there are areas known to be of archaeological interest and areas with archaeological potential around Boughton Aluph; within Eastwell Park and Kings Wood and around the long barrow to the west.

These designated and undesignated heritage assets provide an important context for new development.

Landscape

The northern and western part of the Plan area is situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - see Map 14 below.

The remaining areas of countryside have a distinctive character and provide the setting for the AONB. There are dramatic panoramic views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. The AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure that the natural beauty, special character and the vitality of its communities are recognised, maintained and strengthened.

Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location or design. Any development must be well integrated into the landscape for example through the use of existing and new landscape buffers.

Policy BAE NP1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

New development in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported where it:

a) Is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive characteristics of the individual area in which it is located within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) and Boughton Lees, as defined in Appendix 1, by way of:

- i. height, form, layout, orientation, materials, fenestration and boundary treatment;
- ii. the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape);

b) Protects and enhances heritage assets and their setting (including the following Buildings of Note as set out in Appendix 1);

- Lenacre Hall Farmhouse, Sandyhurst Lane
- Eastwell Towers, Eastwell Park, Faversham Road
- Stone House, Faversham Road
- Goat Lees Primary School, Hurst Road
- The Flying Horse Inn, Wye Road
- Eastwell Terrace, Wye Road
- St Christopher's Church, Faversham Road
- Gardeners House, Faversham Road

c) Protects and sensitively incorporates landscape features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site; and

d) Is well integrated into the landscape.

Development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should respect the significance of the local context of the asset as well as the positive contribution that the heritage asset makes to local character and distinctiveness.

Monitoring Indicators**Targets**

Number of applications to which Parish Council have objections to the design of development.

No applications to which Parish Council have objections to the design of development.

Areas of Local Green Space

Responses to community consultation including the Neighbourhood Plan household survey identified important open spaces within the Parishes.



Green space at junction of Trinity Road and Jersey Close/Friesian Way, Goat Lees

Public open spaces within, and close to, the built-up areas of Goat Lees and Boughton Lees are important to local amenity, the heritage and/or character of the area as well as providing opportunities for leisure and wildlife in the Parishes and are to be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan.



St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell

Away from the built-up areas there are two local green spaces at the hamlets of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell which provide the setting for listed churches as well as tranquil informal recreation spaces and these are also to be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Through Neighbourhood Plans, local communities are able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.

The location and importance of open spaces within the Parishes has been summarised in the Local Green Space Assessment, 2018. All Local Green Spaces are relatively small but, being within or close to areas of Goat Lees; Boughton Lees, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, all are in close proximity to the communities they serve.

The areas are important for a number of sometimes overlapping reasons which are outlined below:

Open Spaces of Historic Importance

The relationship of buildings and village green is important in creating the special character of Boughton Lees Conservation Area. In other cases, the local green space is important to the setting of listed buildings at All Saints Churchyard, Church Lane, Boughton Aluph; St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell and in front of Tower Lodge and adjoining flint wall, Eastwell Park Estate, at the Sandyhurst Lane/ A251 Faversham Road junction.

Open Spaces Contributing to the character of an area

Open spaces can play an important role in creating the distinctive character of an area which is not designated as a heritage asset.

Open Space of Local Visual Amenity Value

A number of open spaces within the built-up confines provide important visual amenity.

Recreational Value

Most open spaces act as informal or formal recreational amenity space to the adjoining residential development. The churchyards provide more tranquil spaces with St Mary the Virgin Churchyard beside Eastwell Lake.

Wildlife Value

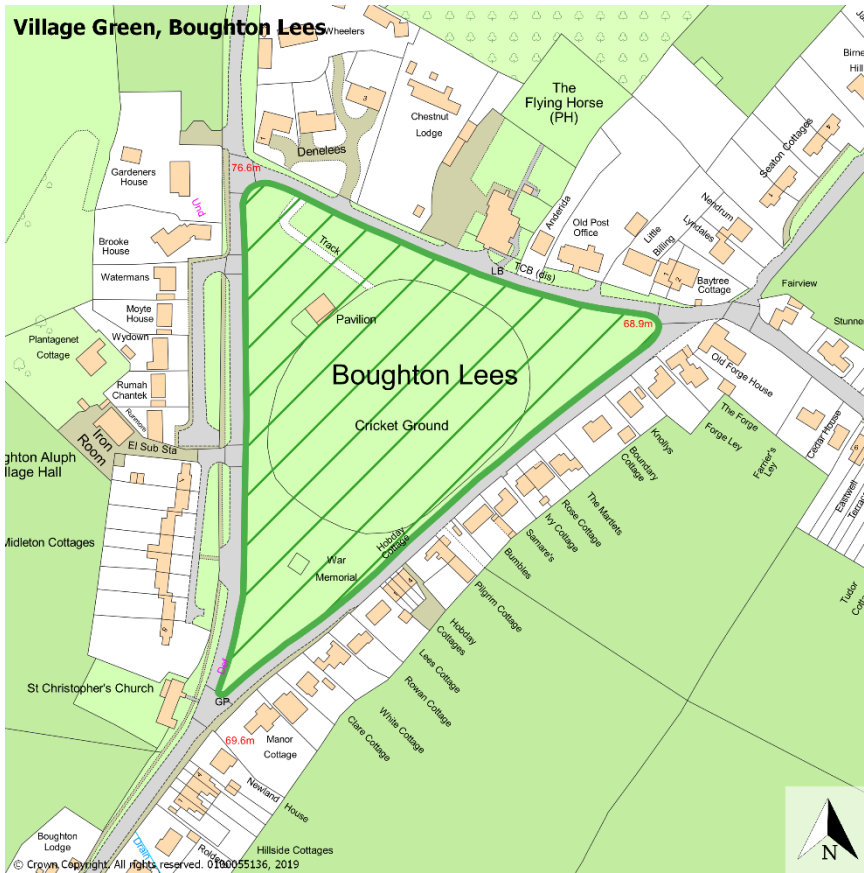
All Saints and St Mary the Virgin Churchyards contain wildlife interest on the gravestones and through ancient trees and surrounding vegetation.

The sites are listed below, and their location is identified on Maps 6 - 12 below.

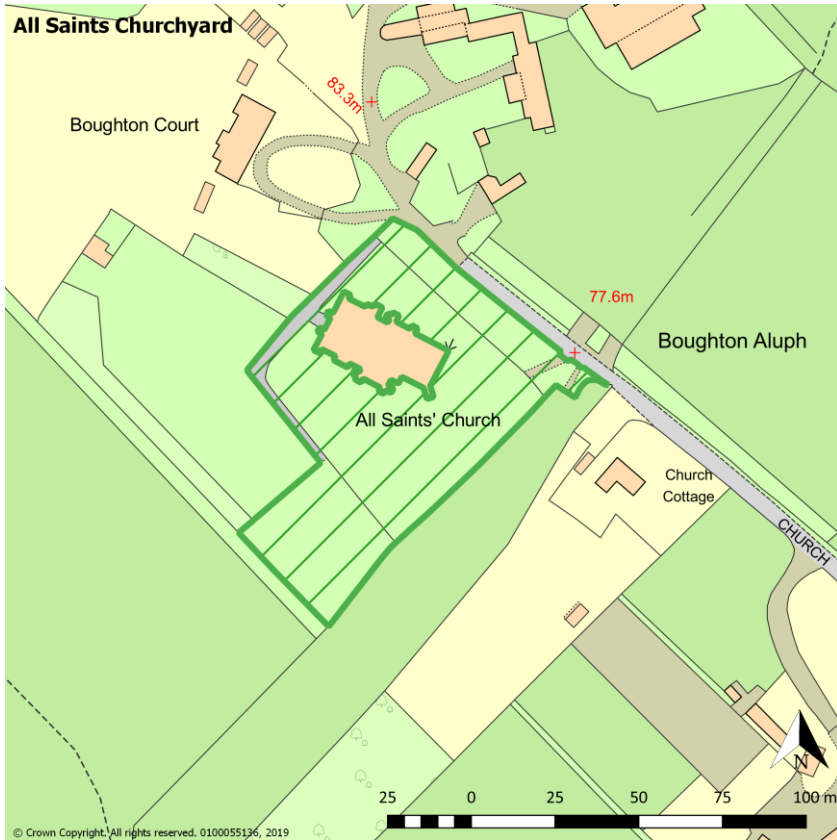
LGS Ref No.	Local Green Space Description
1	The Village Green, Boughton Lees
2	All Saints Churchyard, Church Lane, Boughton Aluph
3	St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell
4	Green space in front of Eastwell Towers and adjoining flint wall at junction of Sandyhurst Lane and A251 Faversham Road
5	Children’s play area and amenity space, Hurst Road, Goat Lees
6	Green space and informal recreational area, Guernsey Way, Goat Lees
7	Green space at junction of A251 Trinity Road, Jersey Close and Friesian Way, Goat Lees

Three of the spaces provide a cricket pitch, an informal football pitch and a sports and social recreation open space respectively whilst another is a children’s play space. Provision of appropriate built facilities in connection with the use of land for outdoor sport and outdoor

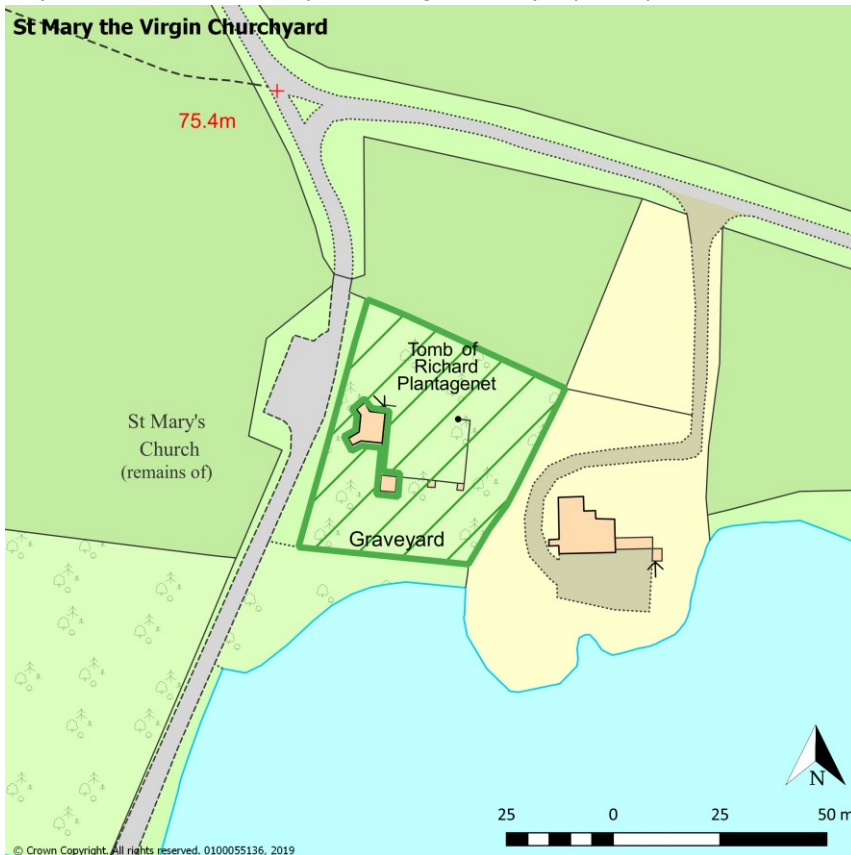
recreation would be appropriate within the Local Green Space provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space.



Map 6 - Village Green, Boughton Lees (LGS1)

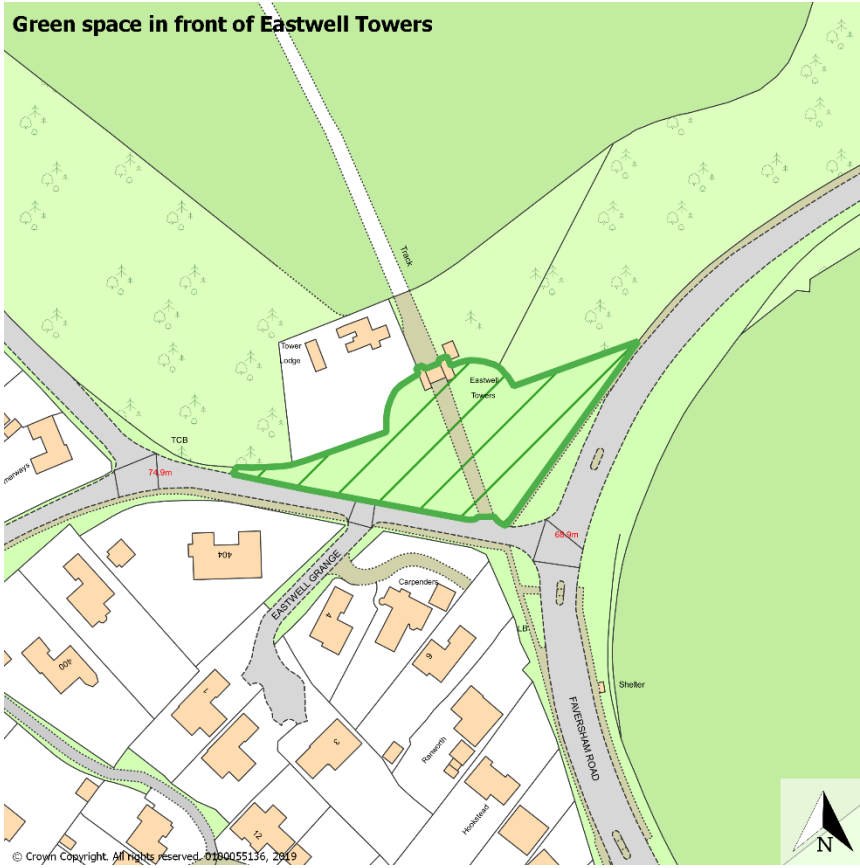


Map 7 - All Saints Churchyard, Boughton Aluph (LGS2)



Map 8 - St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell (LGS3)

Green space in front of Eastwell Towers



Map 9 - Green space in front of Eastwell Towers (LGS4)

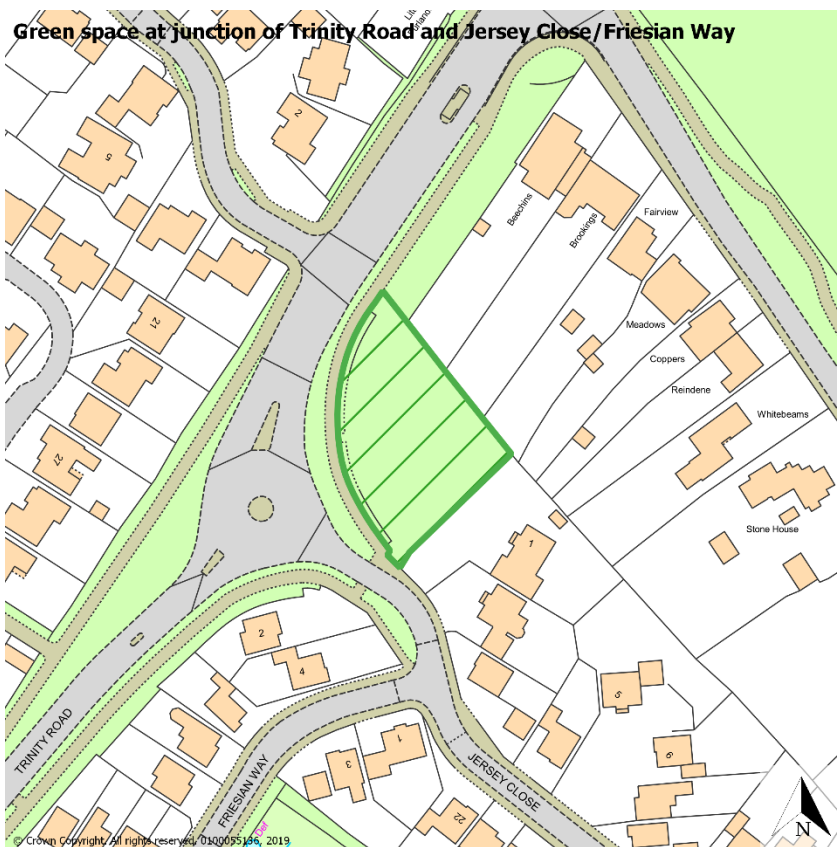
Children's Play Area and Amenity Space, Trinity Road



Map 10 - Children's Play Area and amenity space, Trinity Road, Goat Lees (LGS5)



Map 11 - Green space and informal recreational area, Guernsey Way, Goat Lees (LGS6)



Map 12 - Green space at junction of A251 Trinity Road, Jersey Close and Friesian Way, Goat Lees (LGS7)

Policy BAE NP2 – Protection of Local Green Space

Sites are designated as Local Green Spaces as defined on Maps 6-12.

Proposals for development at the sites identified on Maps 6-12 as designated Local Green Spaces will be considered in line with national planning policy on Green Belts.

The Countryside

Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes lie on land sloping, initially steeply, from the top of the North Downs towards the Great Stour Valley. A long-established tradition of mixed farming has helped create the natural beauty of the Kent Downs and its setting.



Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Local Green Spaces lost.	All Local Green Spaces retained.

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The northern and western parts of the Plan area are situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with the boundary encircling the south-western and south western edge of Boughton Lees (see Map 13). The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Assessment, 1995, prepared by the Countryside Commission, defined a number of distinct character areas within the AONB (see also Map 13).

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan sets out the special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB and formulates the local policies for its management by the 12 local authorities within the Kent Downs. Although the Management Plan does not form part of the statutory development plan, it is a material consideration that should be taken into account when preparing Neighbourhood Plans as well as determining planning applications.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

Setting of the Kent Downs AONB

The setting of the Kent Downs AONB is broadly speaking the land outside the designated area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, but may be wider when affected by intrusive features beyond that. There are extensive views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees. The setting is not formally defined or indicated on a map. Proposals which would affect the setting of the AONB are not subject to the same level of constraint as those which would

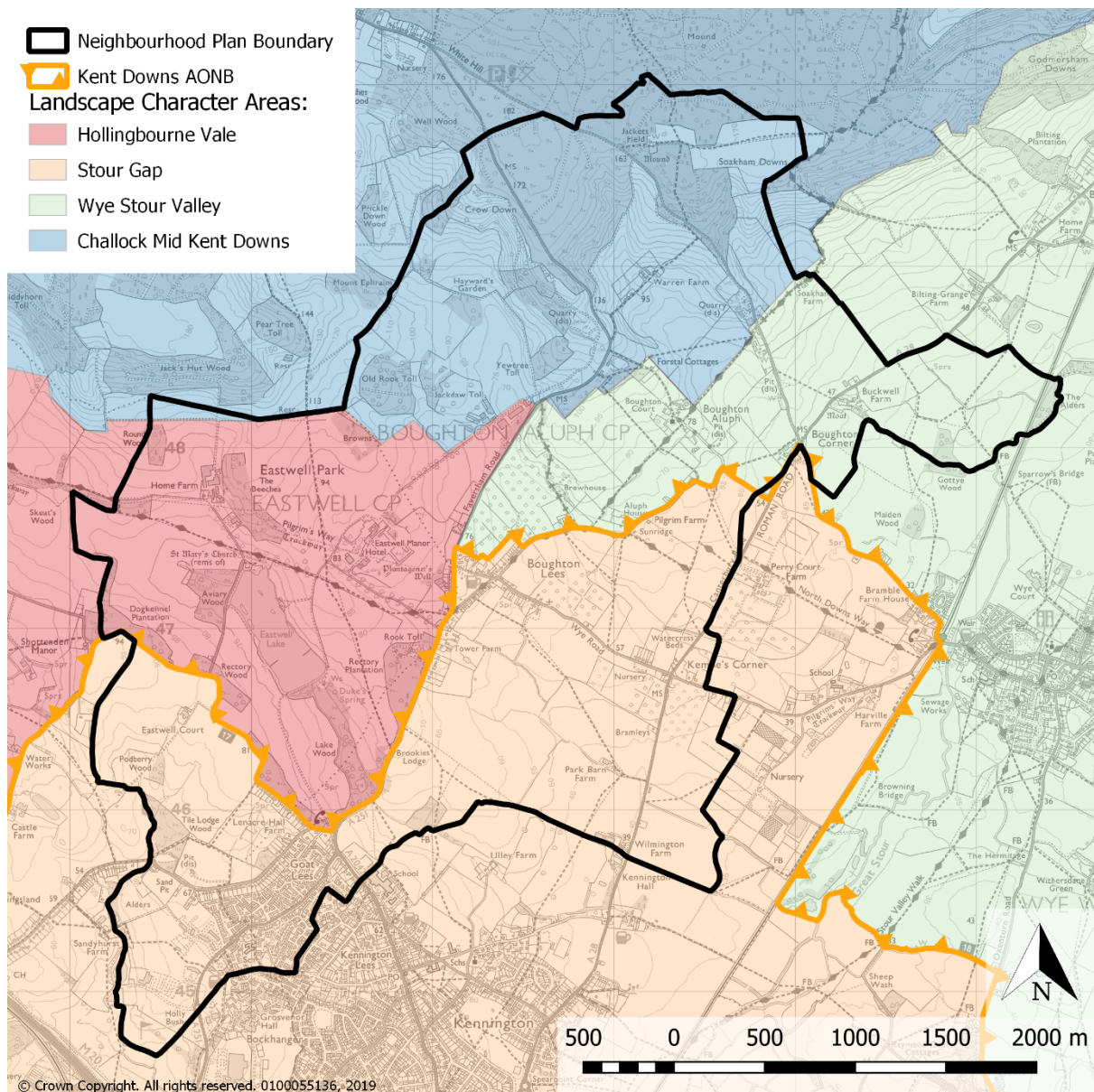
affect the AONB itself. The weight to be afforded to setting issues will depend on the significance of the impact. Where the qualities of the AONB which were instrumental in reasons for its designation are affected, then the impacts should be given considerable weight in decisions. This particularly applies to views to and from the scarp of the North Downs.

The adopted Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document (based on the Studio Engleback study, 2005) sub-divides the landscape character areas between Ashford and the AONB into district landscape types around the edge of Ashford (see also Map 13).

Sandyhurst Lane forms a well-defined edge to the Ashford urban area and provides separation between the built form which forms the edge of the settlement of Ashford on one side and open countryside on the other. Lenacre Hall and nearby buildings are located on the north side of the road, but these buildings are limited in number and the rural area to the north provides an attractive and clearly defined setting to Ashford in this location.



Sandyhurst Lane



Map 13 - Kent Downs AONB and Landscape Character Areas. The Neighbourhood Plan boundary is shown in black.

Landscape Character Areas

Hollingbourne Vale

The area to the west of Boughton Lees comprises the Hollingbourne Vale landscape character area: a rolling landscape of mixed farmland overlooked by yew-dominated scarp with thick hedges along Pilgrims' Way long distance footpath which runs through this area. The area contains Eastwell Park Estate part of which is designated as a Historic Park and Garden in Kent. The extensive and picturesque park contains many grand trees and a large lake. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



Hollingbourne Vale - Farmland of Eastwell Park Estate



Hollingbourne Vale - Eastwell Lake

Wye Stour Valley

The area to the north-east of Boughton Lees, the Wye Stour Valley landscape character area, comprises small fields with hedgerows and small plantation woodlands with characteristic historic buildings and the hamlet of Boughton Aluph. Pilgrims' Way also passes through this area. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



Wye Stour Valley - view across Stour Gap



Wye Stour Valley - View towards hamlet of Boughton Aluph

Challock Mid Kent Downs

To the north of the Plan area the Challock Mid Kent Downs landscape character area comprises a unified landscape with a coherent pattern of landform and elements and few detracting features. Woodlands, including Kings Wood, occur in large blocks and there is much single-age plantation. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



View across Warren Farm



Kings Wood

Stour Gap

This landscape character area forms a sloping landscape towards the Great Stour River and comprises large arable fields and horticultural areas of fruit orchards and small pine plantations, enclosed by continuous and remnant hedges and hedgerow trees with some discrete woodland blocks and tall poplar shelter belts. The area provides extensive, sometimes panoramic, views to the North Downs.

Eastwell Farmlands

The Ashford Landscape Character Study, 2005 identifies a number of landscape character areas. The study sub-divides the landscape character areas into district landscape types. This is in order to provide a more detailed analysis and description of the smaller land units on the edge of the urban area. Within the Stour Gap, the Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document identifies the Eastwell Farmlands as a district landscape type situated between this urban edge and the North Downs. The area comprises rolling arable and pasture land with medium sized fields generally divided by mature thick hedges (which have in places disappeared leaving remnant mature oaks) and the Studio Engleback study recommends conserving the landscape and creating hedgerow and woodland enhancements. Outside the Kent Downs AONB, this is the only part of the landscape within the Plan area for which the Study recommends conserving and creating the landscape (specifically through woodland planting and hedge reinstatement).

The adopted Landscape Character SPD, 2011 states that there is a need to ensure development proposals demonstrate regard for the area of landscape within which a proposal is located. Thus, in the Eastwell Farmlands distinctive character area the emphasis should be on conserving and creating the landscape.

This is supported by Ashford Local Plan Policy SP1 - Strategic Objectives provides the core principles that planning applications are expected to adhere to. Criterion b is:

b) To conserve and enhance the Borough's natural environment including designated and undesignated landscapes.

Local Plan Policy ENV3a - Landscape Character and Design states that all proposals for development in the borough shall demonstrate particular regard to any relevant guidance given in the Landscape Character SPD and any non-designated, locally identified, significant landscape features justified in a Parish Plan or equivalent document.

The Eastwell Farmlands area immediately abuts the Kent Downs AONB to the north. The rolling arable and pasture land with medium sized fields generally divided by mature thick hedges provides the setting for this part of the AONB.

A recent appeal (APP/E2205/W/19/3220880) confirms that this area of open countryside provides an attractive setting to the settlement of Ashford in this location.



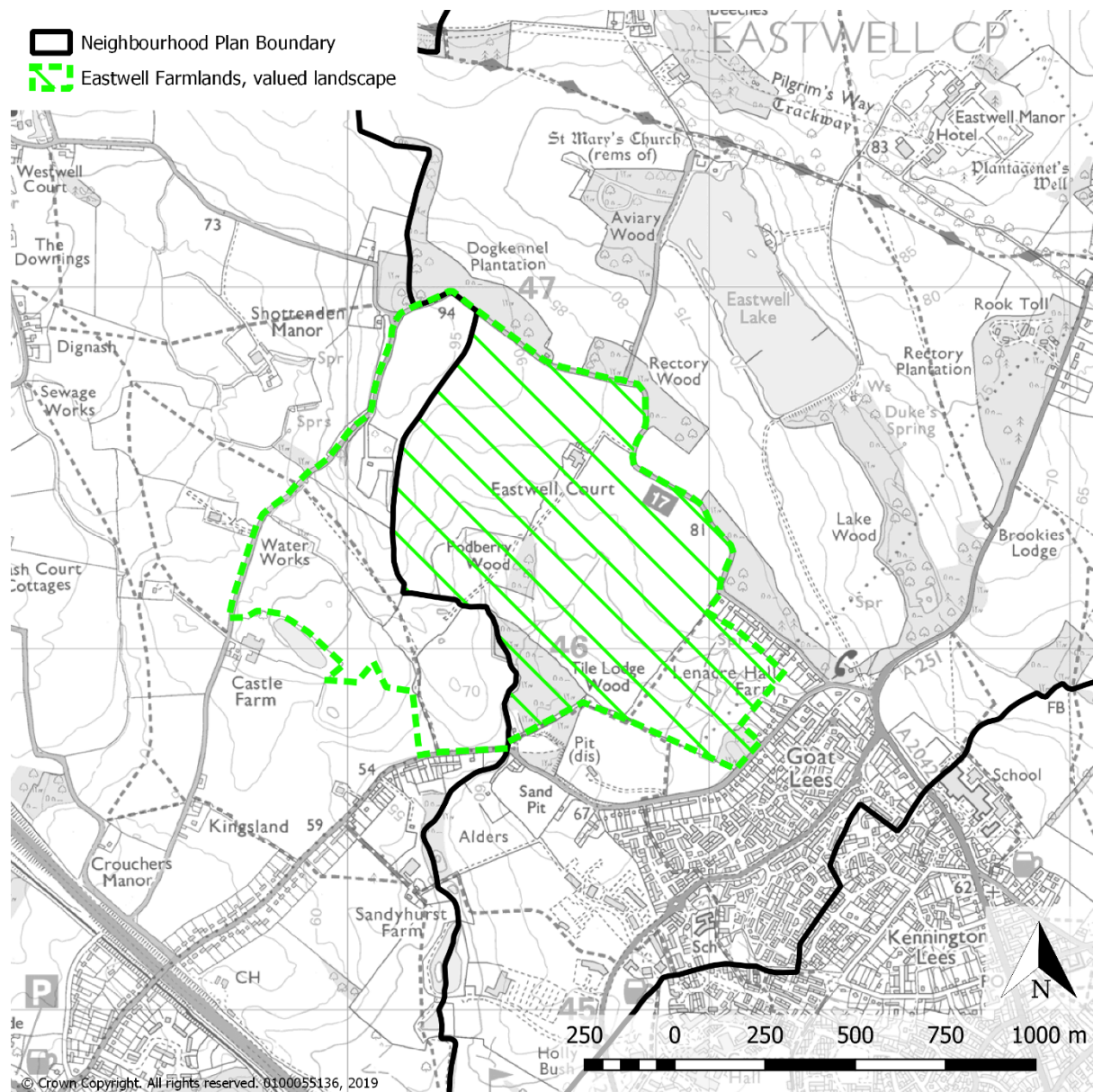
View of the Eastwell Farmlands from Sandyhurst Lane



View of the Eastwell Farmlands towards Sandyhurst Lane from public footpath AE207

For these reasons, it is appropriate that Policy BAE NP3b seeks only to permit development which would retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape defined on Map 14.

In accordance with the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance this valued landscape as defined on Map 14 below.



Map 14 - Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape

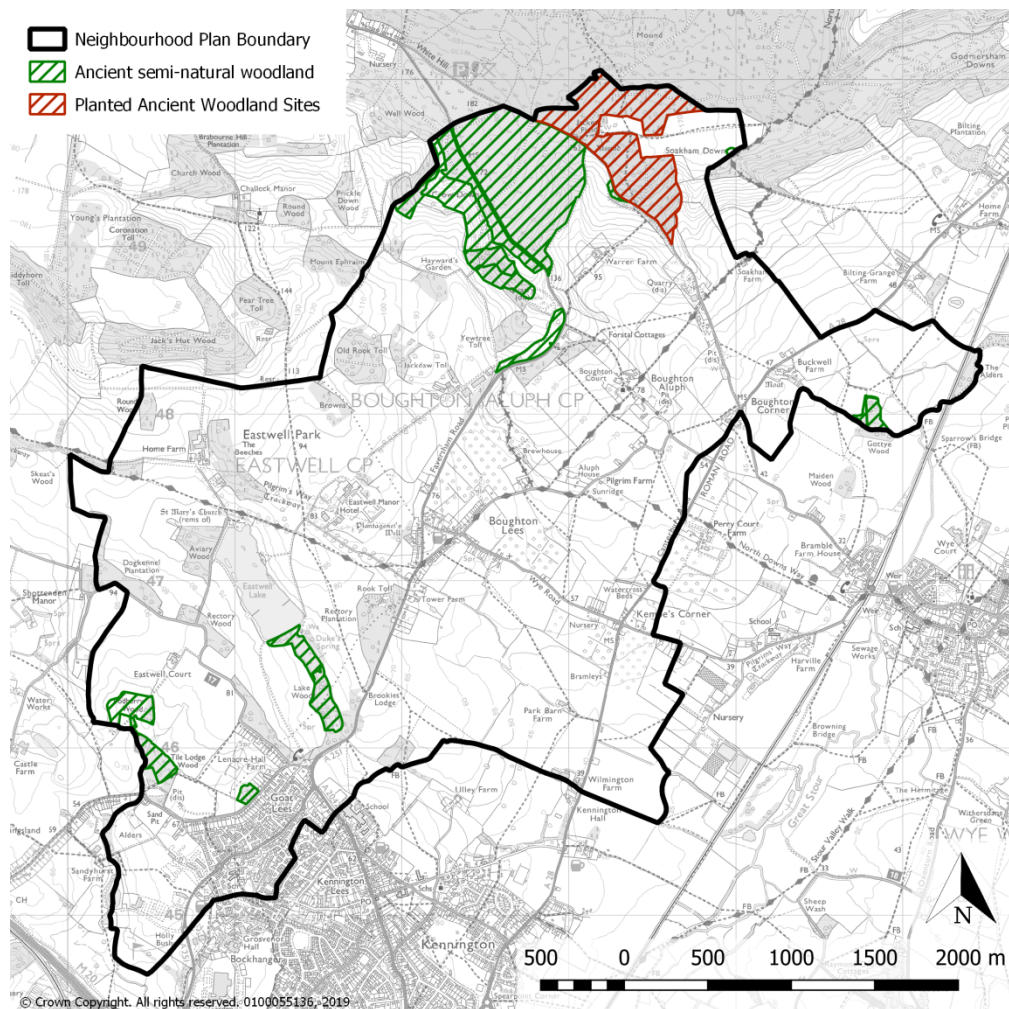
Ancient Woodland

There are significant tracts of ancient woodland within the Parishes including land abutting, and north of Sandyhurst Lane; Kings Wood and parts of the Eastwell Park Estate (see Map 15).

The NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland and that these areas should be protected. Some ancient woodland may represent the only link with the original post glacial 'wildwood' and is more likely to contain vulnerable animal and plant species than any other habitat. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands – bluebells, wood anemones, ramsons and yellow archangel – and the bird song of warblers, nightingale and nightjar are part of the natural beauty and heritage of the Parishes. Much of the valued woodland wildlife,

invertebrates, lichens and fungi, are associated with old trees, deadwood or open ground and are restricted to ancient woods and wood pasture.

King's Wood is a 1,500-acre coppiced ancient woodland which was once the hunting ground of King Henry VIII. The woodland provides an extensive habitat for wildlife such as deer, badgers, owls and foxes.



Map 15 – Ancient Woodland

Important Public Views

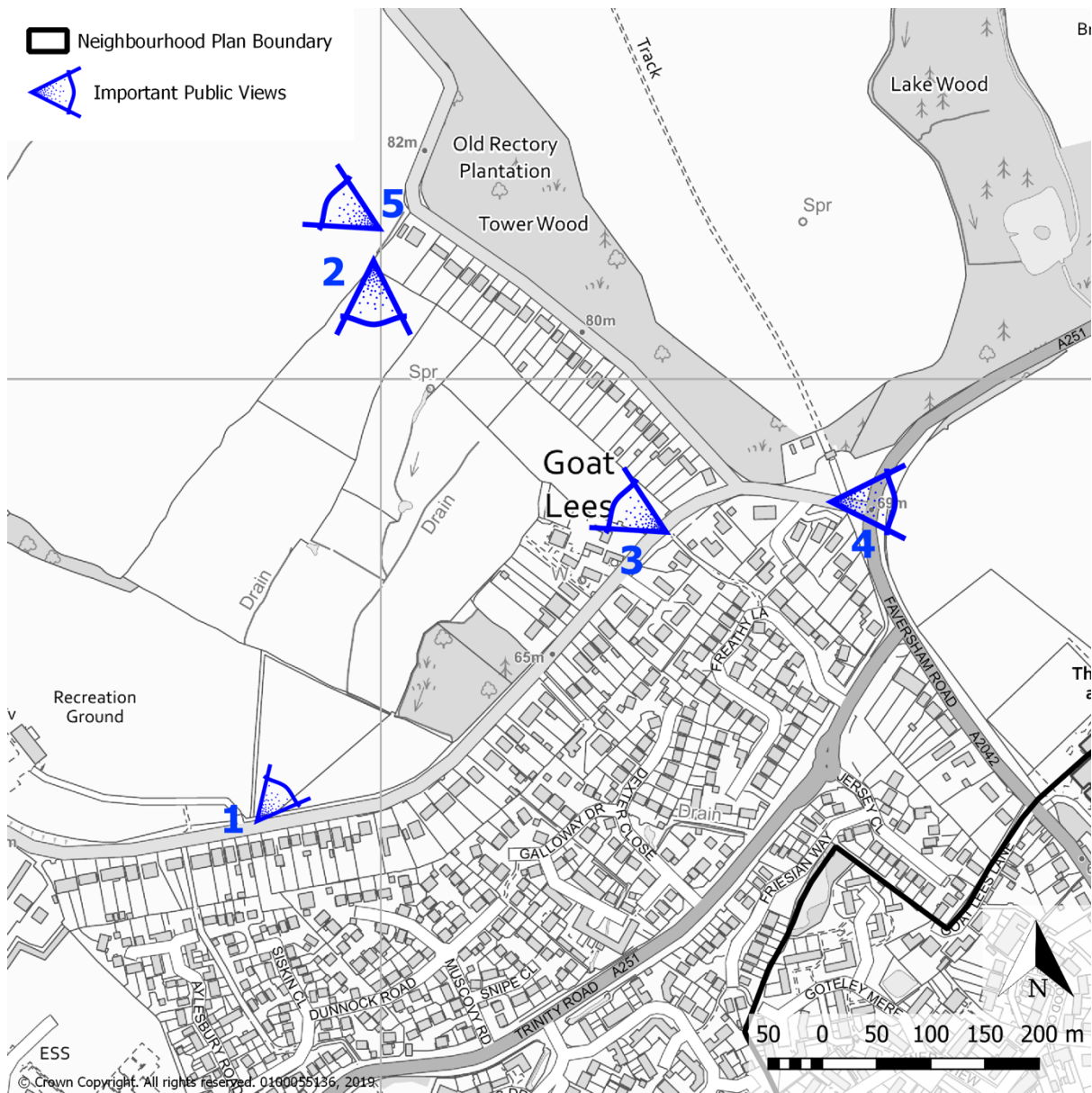
It is recognised that there are a significant number of views across the countryside, including from the numerous public rights of way that cross the area, but it is impossible to list them all. Rather, it is important to protect and enhance valued landscape through Policy BAE NP3 and the footpaths which allow access to it through Policy BAE NP9. Thus, the focus of the Important Public Views is those views from the settlements of Ashford and Boughton Lees which contribute to local character and amenity. This should not be seen as diminishing the importance of views within the wider countryside.

One of the distinctive features of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes is the visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from the settlements and public footpaths.

Resident surveys undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan and responses to Ashford Borough Council consultation on local planning applications have highlighted that residents

value highly the visual connection between settlements and the surrounding countryside. In particular, this is a key characteristic of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area where the generous spacing between buildings and topography enable key views from the village green to the Kent Downs and beyond. Ashford Local Plan 2030 - Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas states that development should not prejudice important views into or out of the conservation area. The following Important Public Views have been identified where the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside.

Ref.	Description of view
1	From Sandyhurst Lane adjacent to the entrance to Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, looking North East across grassland towards Tower Wood, Lenacre Street, with views over Lenacre ancient woodland.
2	From public footpath AE207 where it enters Lenacre Hall Farm looking South, views across farmland and the Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space and over woodland towards The Warren, Hoads Wood and Godinton Park. And south-easterly towards the Ashford Town skyline.
3	From Sandyhurst Lane, adjacent to Lenacre Hall Farm buildings, looking North West over the farm gate, view across farmland and Eastwell Park Estate. The whole view framed by oak trees.
4	From the junction at the end of Sandyhurst Lane with the A251 Faversham Road looking East – a panoramic view of the North/Wye Downs and the Crown above Wye.
5	From the start of footpath AE207, Lenacre Street looking north west to Westwell and the North Downs.
6	From the A251 Faversham Road at the entrance to Eastwell Manor framed by a gate in the Great Wall, views to the North West along the drive leading to Eastwell Manor lined with mature trees and bordered on both sides by open fields with the woodland of Rook Toll/Rectory Plantation to the South West and the roofline of Eastwell Manor to the North East.
7	From the West side of the village green, Boughton Lees ('Gasworks Terrace') looking South East, panoramic views of the farmland of the Stour Gap, the Wye/North Downs, the Crown above Wye and across to parts of Ashford above and between dwellings on The Lees.
8	From the bus stop adjacent to Gardener's House, Faversham Road, looking West, view of Eastwell Manor and Gardens, Eastwell Park and the North Downs.
9	From the North side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking North between Chestnut Lodge and The Flying Horse Inn, Wye Road view across orchards to the North Downs and King's Wood.
10	From the North side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking North between The Flying Horse Inn and Anderida, Wye Road view across orchards of the North Downs and King's Wood.
11	From the entrance to footpath AE202 between Pilgrim Cottage and Bumbles looking East, panoramic views of the farmland of the Stour Gap (including the only oast house in the Parishes), the Wye/North Downs and the Crown above Wye and across to parts of Ashford.
12	From the East side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking South East between Hobday Cottage and 4 Hobday Cottages, view of the farmland of the Stour Gap, the Wye/North Downs and across to parts of Ashford.
13	From the War Memorial on the village green, Boughton Lees looking North, panoramic views of the North Downs and King's Wood above and between the dwellings (including two listed properties) on Wye Road.



Map 16 - Important Public Views - South West of Boughton Aluph Parish



Map 17 - Important Public Views – Boughton Lees

Development in the Countryside

The growth of Ashford will be facilitated by the development of Eureka Park. Sandyhurst Lane forms a well-defined edge to Ashford and specific further development within the countryside is not allocated in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 or the Neighbourhood Plan. The planning strategy is to focus development within the Eureka Park strategic allocation and the defined built-up confines of Boughton Lees. Any development in the countryside should comply with the Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy HOU5 whilst also ensuring it would conserve and enhance the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting; retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape shown on Map 15; protect ancient woodland and maintain important views from public areas. Policy BAE NP2 is also relevant in protecting Local Green Space.

Policy BAE NP3 – Development in the Countryside

A proposal for development within the countryside will only be supported where:

- a) it would conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting as well as the tranquillity of the countryside and would have regard to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan;
- b) it would retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape defined on Map 14;
- c) it would retain and enhance the landscape character of Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden defined on Map 5;
- d) it would maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up confines, in particular those defined on Maps 16 and 17;
- e) it would protect and, where possible, enhance ancient woodland as defined on Map 15; and
- f) it is necessary for the purpose of providing essential utilities infrastructure.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tranquillity of the countryside.	No deterioration in the landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tranquillity of the countryside through inappropriate development.
Valued landscape shown on Map 14	No deterioration in landscape character of the valued landscape shown on Map 14
Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden - Kent	No deterioration in landscape character of Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden
Views	No partial or complete loss of identified views as a result of development.
Ancient woodland	No loss of ancient woodland as a result of development.

Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside outside the built-up confines of Boughton Lees

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the built-up confines for Boughton Lees. The settlement lacks basic day to day facilities and the Ashford Local Plan 2030 does not enable residential development at the edge of the built up area with the exception of Local Needs housing (Policy HOU2) and rural worker accommodation, use of a heritage asset, re-use of

redundant or disused buildings, development that is exceptional quality or innovative design or a replacement dwelling (Policy HOU7) provided a number of criteria are met.

The countryside to the north and west of the built-up area is entirely within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is either within the Boughton Lees Conservation Area or forms part of its setting. It is also important to retain the public views from the built-up area (Map 17).

For these reasons, residential proposals outside the defined built up area of Boughton Lees would not be considered to represent sustainable development and will not generally be permitted.

Policy BAE NP4 – Development beyond the built-up area of Boughton Lees village

Development proposals in the Plan area beyond the built-up confines of Boughton Lees, as defined on Map 2, will not be supported unless they comprise proposals which fall within the following categories of development:

- Local Needs housing
- accommodation for Rural Workers
- re-use of a redundant or disused building for residential use
- a dwelling that is of exceptional quality or innovative design
- a replacement dwelling
- the appropriate use of a heritage asset
- the conversion of a suitable rural building to business use

Development proposals should comply with all other relevant Policies in the Plan.

Housing and Business

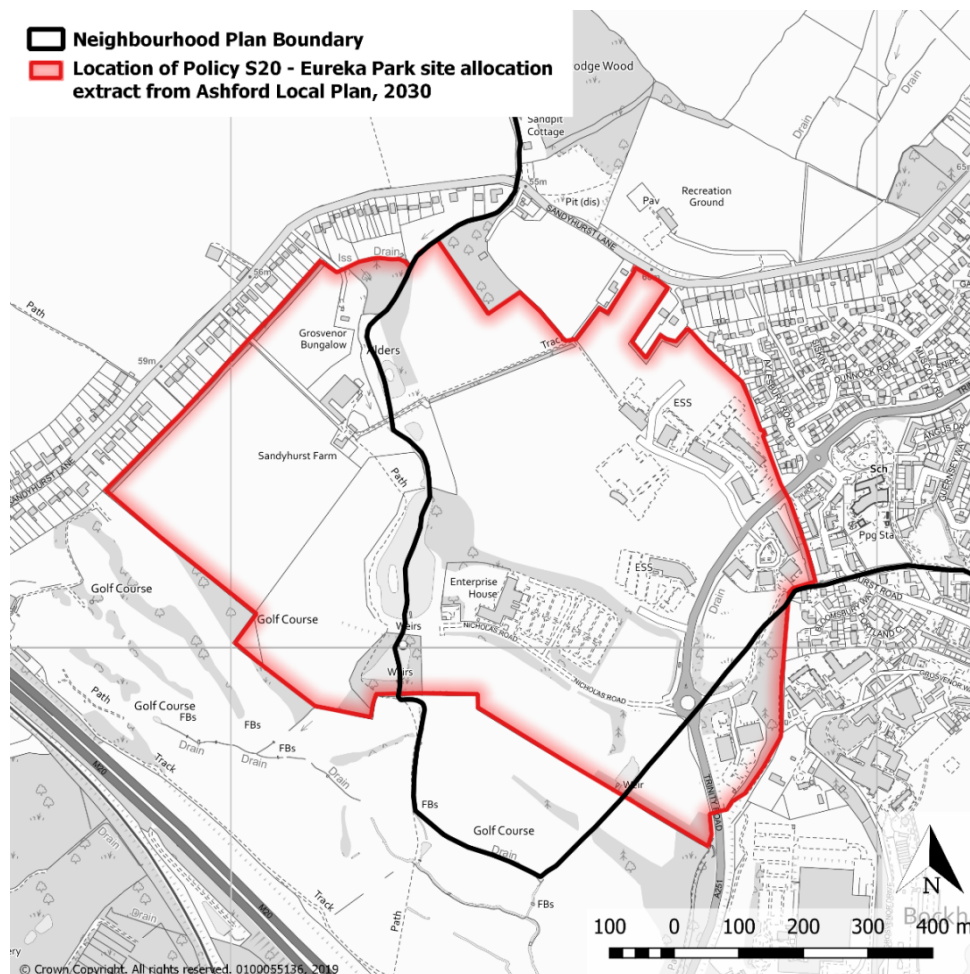
Objectives

- To assimilate development of a scale which protects the character of the landscape; conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting and preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area and its setting.
- To ensure that future development at Eureka Park maintains the parkland setting and successfully integrates business and residential development within the landscape.
- To maintain and enhance Eureka Place Local Centre and resist the loss of the public houses at Eureka Place and Boughton Lees;
- To ensure sufficient infrastructure and local services are provided to serve the needs of Parish residents, including new provision in association with new development.

Housing/ Business Policies

Eureka Park

The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, allocates a large area (see Map 19 below) for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (indicative capacity of 375 dwellings).



Map 18 - Policy S20 - Eureka Park site allocation which extends beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area - extract from Ashford Local Plan 2030

The eastern portion of this site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area (see Map 18). This area is likely to be the focus for business and commercial development.

Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Policy S20) seeks:

- individual commercial buildings which are imaginative in their architectural style and designed to sit 'comfortably' in a parkland setting,
- low plot ratios and building footprints and a high proportion of 'soft' landscaping, and
- a comprehensive network of footpath and cycleway links within the site which link up with routes in the surrounding area

The Local Plan also seeks a comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy, incorporating a linear park based around the existing lake. In accordance with the Local Plan, development proposals for this site should be designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site.

The Parish Council will be closely involved in the master planning exercise as there are a number of development principles regarding the design and layout of the site which are important to achieving a high quality development on this site in accordance with Policy BAE NP1.

There are currently two principal landscape, ecology and footpath corridors through the site which should provide the framework for interconnected strategic multi-purpose green corridors. The corridors should provide sustainable links within the site and to adjoining facilities such as Eureka Place Local Centre and the Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space. They should be based on existing natural features such as the inter-connected ponds, woodland, tree belts and hedgerows which provide connectivity between habitats through and around the site, and to off-site habitats. The wetlands, woodland, tree belts and hedgerows currently act as habitats for dormice; foraging bats; breeding birds and reptiles. Such strategic corridors should comprise wide swathes of natural/ semi-natural landscape (including the lakes) with sufficient scope for a footpath/ cycleway and natural habitats.

The north-south strategic corridor should form part of a linear park and be based on the lake and adjoining wetland landscape together with the Alders Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland priority habitat to the north of Sandhurst Farm. Existing defined views of the lakes from the north and the south should be protected within this corridor. Footpath AU3 runs along this corridor to the west of the Plan area. A landscape corridor should be extended eastwards from Alders Wood to connect with a further block of woodland to the east and towards Tile Lodge Wood Local Wildlife Site to the north as well as acting as a buffer between the houses on Sandhurst Lane and the new development on Eureka Park.

The east-west strategic corridor should be based on Footpath AE210 and associated strong tree line to link the new development (including residential development to the west of the Plan area) and Eureka Place Local Centre.

A further strategic corridor should be provided from Footpath AE210 to Sandhurst Lane/Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space following the line of the native hedgerow. To complete the footpath link a short length of footway should be provided to

connect to the existing footway south of Sandyhurst Lane, and thence the entrance to the recreation ground.

Policy BAE NP9 seeks to retain the provision, character and biodiversity of public rights of way through new development such as at Eureka Park and it is important to provide attractive sustainable links.

Eureka Place Local Centre and the eastern part of Footpath AE210 currently benefits from views of the North Downs, providing an important visual feature and orientation point for the Local Centre and this site. The siting, design and layout of buildings at Eureka Park should continue to allow the defined views of the North Downs skyline looking north westwards towards Westwell.

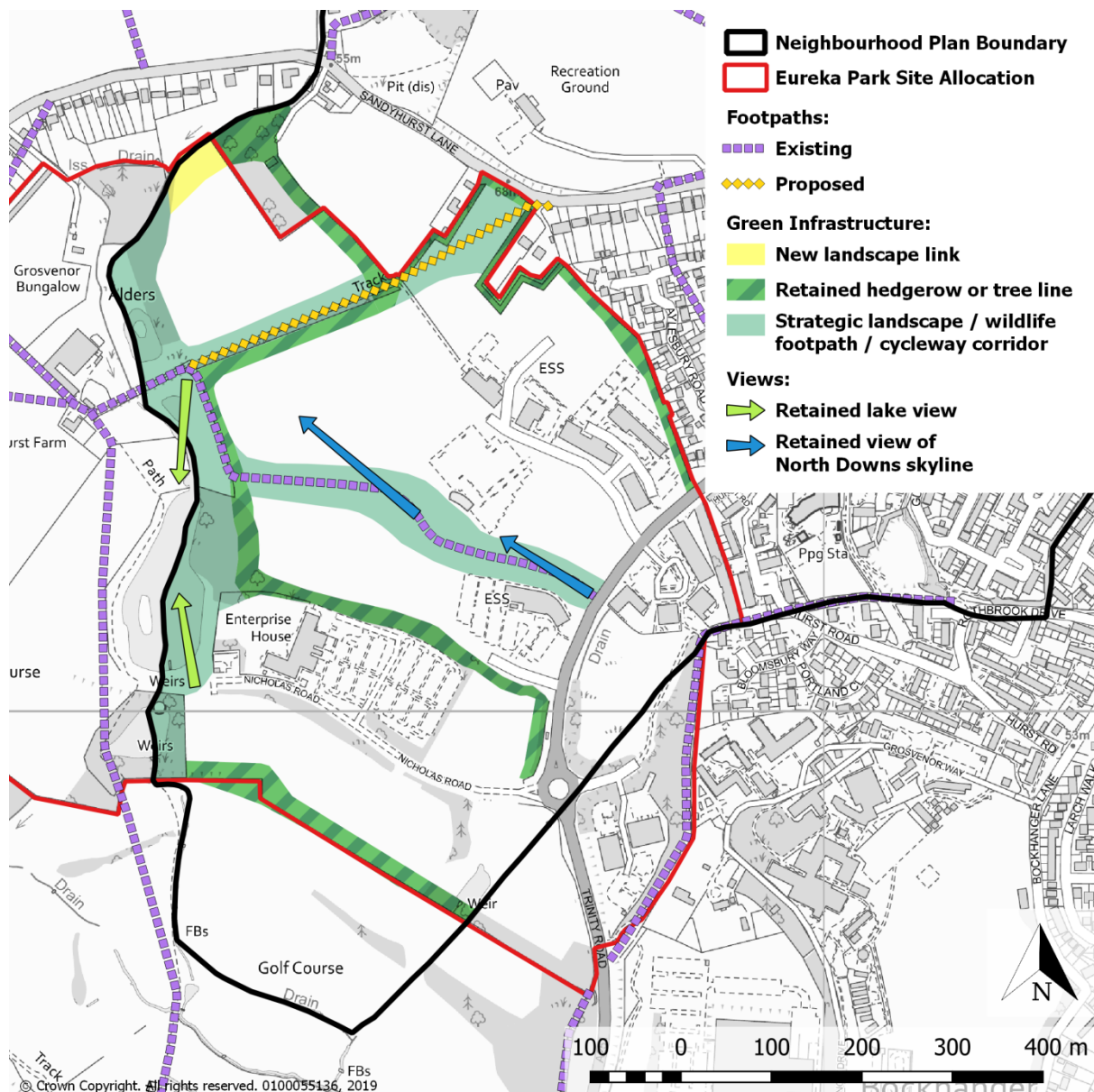


Existing views of the North Downs from Eureka Place Local Centre

Low rise innovative designs with significant glazing allow the buildings to better integrate with the surrounding landscape. It is important that the scale of new buildings does not dominate the sensitive lakeside environment and low-rise development should be situated in this area with extensive landscape edges between development and the lake.

In order to respect the landscape character of the site and defined views within it, car parking should not be prominently located and should be well concealed from the landscape corridors.

Improvements to the strategic road network are expected to serve the development of this area. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that traffic movements resulting from development proposals are sustainably managed. Where justified, traffic calming measures should be provided on local roads to ensure the impact of increased volume and size of vehicles is carefully managed. Examples of local measures which may be appropriate can be found in the Highway Feasibility Study, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council, 2014.



Map 19 - Existing and proposed footpaths, hedgerows and treelines to form the basis for green corridors

Policy BAE NP5 - Eureka Park – Site Requirements

Within those parts of the Eureka Park Development area that lie within the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Area, the proposed masterplan for the overall development and any subsequent planning applications should take account of the following site requirements to ensure that development proposals can be successfully integrated within the landscape:

1. the landscaping and open space strategy should seek to establish two interconnected green corridors through the site along a north-south alignment focused on the existing lake, ponds and woodland and on an east-west alignment focused on Footpath No. AE210 and its associated tree line;

2. a green corridor should link Eureka Park to the Sandyhurst Lane/Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space including a new link to the existing footway south of Sandyhurst Lane;
3. a substantial landscape buffer should be established from Alders Wood towards Tile Lodge Wood to the rear of properties fronting Sandyhurst Lane;
4. existing woodland, tree lines and hedgerows within the site should be retained and enhanced wherever possible within development proposals;
5. the siting, design and layout of buildings should take account of the existing important views of the North Downs skyline from Footpath No. AE210;
6. the siting, design and layout of buildings should take account of the existing important views of the lake from Nicholas Road and from Footpath No. AE210.

The above requirements are illustrated on Map 20.

Additionally, development proposals in the Plan area should ensure that:

7. New and extended access roads are tree-lined;
8. Low rise development should be situated around the lake with extensive landscape buffers between built development and the lake;
9. Car parking should be sited such that it is not prominently located and is screened from the green corridors and from the important views to be protected;
10. Traffic management measures are incorporated on local roads, where necessary.

The Parish Council will participate in the masterplanning work for the Eureka Park development proposals, as set out in Policy S20 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Eureka Park Development	Development principles met by new development

Small scale housing development at Boughton Lees

Small scale housing development, such as infilling; redevelopment, conversion or extension, is expected to come forward within the Boughton Lees built-up confines subject to meeting the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The adopted Local Plan (Policy HOU3a) permits such development and the Neighbourhood Plan applies the policy to Boughton Lees.

Much of the built up area of the village is within the Boughton Lees Conservation Area and, in accordance with Policy BAE NP1, any development should be designed to a high quality and respond to the heritage and distinctive characteristics of the individual area of at Boughton Lees in which it is located, as defined in Appendix 1.

Similarly, development should protect and sensitively incorporate landscape features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site.

Development within the Boughton Lees built-up confines should protect the village green Local Green Space in accordance with Policy BAE NP2.

Proposals should maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up confines, in particular those defined on Map 18 in accordance with Policy BAE NP3.



Boughton Lees

Residential development should not result in the loss of the public house (Flying Horse Inn) or the Iron Room community building in accordance with Policies BAE NP8 and BAE NP10.

Policy BAE NP6 – Small scale residential development within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees

Proposals for small-scale residential development, such as infill developments, redevelopment proposals and the conversion or extension of existing properties, within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees, as defined on Map 2, will be supported where they comply with other relevant policies in the Plan and with Policy HOU3a of the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030. Development proposals within the designated Boughton Lees Conservation Area must ensure that they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area by making a positive contribution to the area's character and distinctiveness.

C

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Residential development within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees	<p>No residential development outside the built-up confines of Boughton Lees unless to enable local needs housing.</p> <p>No conflict with Policies BAE NP1, 2, 3, 8 and 10.</p>

Affordable Housing

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Local Needs Survey, 2015 revealed a need for up to 13 affordable homes (4 single people, 4 couples without children, 5 families).

The adopted Local Plan 2030 (Policy HOU1 - Affordable Housing) requires affordable housing to be provided within the residential development at Eureka Park. The policy seeks 30% of all dwellings as subsidised affordable housing provision on-site. Subject to the final number of dwellings provided at Eureka Park, this could provide some 115 additional affordable homes within or close to the Parishes.

The Local Plan 2030 (Policy HOU2 - Local needs / specialist housing) enables local needs housing as ‘exceptions’ to policies restraining housing development around Boughton Lees, subject to there being clear evidence of local need and a number of other criteria regarding scale, design and residential amenity being met. It is expected that all local needs/ specialist housing schemes will be delivered without the need for any cross-market subsidy.

The Local Plan policies will be applied in the Neighbourhood Plan area to add to the affordable housing stock over the Plan period.

Eureka Place Local Centre

The Eureka Place Local Centre (see Map 21) comprises a local square surrounded by shops and community services; a primary school and a community hall. All are located close to each other and provide the following services to the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area:

Shops (E(a) Use Class)ⁱ

- Pharmacy, offers prescription deliveries
- Tesco Express, small supermarket
- Beauty Salon

Financial and Professional Service (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Bookmaker

Cafes and Restaurants (E(b) Use Class)

- Indian restaurant, café and fast food takeaway outlets
- Cinnamon Spice
- Catch, Fish & Chip shop
- Eureka Café

Public House (Sui Generis Use Class)

- The Pheasant Public House

Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Pizza Hut takeaway

Nursery (E(f) Use Class)

- Busy Bees

Dentist (E(e) Use Class)

- Easy Smile Dental Clinic

Health Services (E(e) Use Class)

- Ashford Community Mental Health Team and Kent Community Health Customer Care Team

Primary School (F1(a) Use Class)

- The Goat Lees Primary School

Community Hall (F2(b) Use Class)

- Goat Lees, Community Hall

Veterinary Surgery (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Eureka Veterinary Centre

Convenient parking is also available, but this becomes congested at times with significant staffing levels at the centre shared by the Mental Health and Dental Service; drop off and collection at the Nursery and overspill parking from the Eureka Business Park causing problems.



Map 20 - Land south of Eureka Place Local Centre

The NPPF states that planning policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.

Local Plan Policy EMP10 - Local Centres and Villages states that in local centres planning permission will be granted for additional shopping and service provision, where proposals are of a scale appropriate to the particular centre.

For uses other than cafes/ restaurants there is no alternative provision of a similar use within reasonable walking distance and such uses should be retained.

The centre provides a local focus for the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area and the opportunity for sustainable pedestrian and cycle access and linked trips. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan issues has indicated the importance of the local facilities at the centre and there is support for the retention and enhancement of the range of shops and services

found in the centre.

The ability to use a property for a range of uses without the need for planning permission has increased. Nevertheless, permitted development rights are currently intended to allow the protection of valued and successful retail provision in key shopping areas. Prior approval for such a change of use is required including an assessment of shopping impacts in relation to the effect of the development on the sustainability of such local centres and the provision of services. The distance of the Eureka Place Local Centre from the town centre means that local convenience shops, together with other community services, are important to the sustainability of the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area which they serve.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to resist the loss of local shops and services at Eureka Place Local Centre.

The proximity of Eureka Place Local Centre to the Local Plan allocation at Eureka Park means that the new strategic development is not expected to provide similar shop and community facilities on site as part of the new residential development. Rather, footpath links are to be created from the new development to Eureka Place.

Consultation with the range of businesses at Eureka Place revealed support for the proposed additional housing and businesses at Eureka Park with a majority of businesses foreseeing a need to expand their premises to meet the additional demand although currently limited by the availability of space. Generally local businesses would welcome a balance of new shops and services at Eureka Place as new residential development comes forward. There are no GP surgeries or Post Office located in the Parishes and the Household Survey indicates that these are the most sought-after facilities. With further housing in the area there may be justification for a permanent or visiting surgery and the Parish Council will seek to stimulate interest in such provision.

The NPPF states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community. Land to the south of Eureka Place Local Centre offers opportunities to develop new facilities which will contribute to maintaining the vitality and viability of the Local Centre. Most of the site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The scale of shops and services should relate to serving the local catchment area rather than a larger scale out of town facility. There is the opportunity for residential or business units above retail or service units in order to optimise the use of land and further increase the supply of new housing as well as providing informal surveillance during the day and night. Ground floors should be designed with large flexible spaces to allow a variety of uses over time. If it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for retail and service uses no longer exists and that there is no reasonable prospect of the development of such facilities during the Plan period, there should be flexibility to accommodate other uses on the site.

Policy BAE NP7 –Eureka Place Local Centre

Within those parts of the Eureka Park Development area that lie within the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Area, development proposals relating to the Eureka Place Local Centre, as defined on Map 20, which will contribute to maintaining and improving the vitality and viability of the local centre and its shops, services and other facilities will be supported.

Adequate and convenient car and cycle parking, in accordance with adopted parking standards, should be provided to serve the development.

The Parish Council will participate in the masterplanning work for the wider Eureka Park development proposals, as set out in Policy BAE NP5, to ensure that the Local Centre continues to fulfil its role in providing local residents with important local services and facilities.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Number of shops and services (Use Class E) in the Eureka Place Neighbourhood Centre in 2018.	No loss of shop units or services (Use Class E) in the Eureka Place Neighbourhood Centre.

Public houses

Public houses are an important community facility within Goat Lees (The Pheasant) and Boughton Lees (The Flying Horse Inn).



The Flying Horse Inn was used as a staging post. The building is a Grade II listed building and its use as a public house contributes to the character of the building and the Boughton Lees Conservation Area. It is part of the tourist offer within the Parishes and provides bed and breakfast accommodation with a camp site to the rear. The Parish Council has registered The Flying Horse Inn as an Asset of Community Value. The NPPF states that planning policies should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as public houses in rural areas.

The Pheasant, Goat Lees, is a family-focussed public house with restaurant situated within the Eureka Place Local Centre. It provides an important facility and contributes to the range of facilities available at the Local Centre, and extends the use of the centre into the evening.

The change of use of a public house is allowed without planning consent to a shop (Ee), financial and professional service (Sui Generis), restaurant or café (Eb) subject to building not being an Asset of Community Value. Temporary permission (for 2 years) is also allowed without planning consent to an office (Eg).

Where planning consent is required, the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to retain both public houses within the Parishes except where it can be demonstrated that the operation of the public house facility is not financially viable.

Policy BAE NP8 - Public Houses

The loss of a public house will be resisted where possible. Exceptions will be made where evidence is provided to the Borough Council to show that the operation of the facility is no longer financially viable and where there are no other realistic proposals for a public house use on the site, including through Community Right to Buy.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Two public houses in the Neighbourhood Plan area in 2018	No loss of public houses in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

Objectives

- To promote well-being and healthy living.
- To protect and enhance recreation open space and community halls.
- To protect and, where possible, to grow the network of footpaths and cycle paths serving the Parishes.
- To ensure sufficient infrastructure and local services are provided to serve the needs of Parish residents, including new provision in association with new development.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure Policies

Recreation Open Space

The NPPF states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Policy COM2) generally seeks to deliver new recreation, sport, play and open space provision to serve new development and protect existing open space, sports and recreational buildings.

The household survey revealed that residents valued the existing recreational and leisure activities highly and would seek to protect and enhance these facilities.

Sports Pitches

Sports pitches are provided on two sites in the Parishes:

1. Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space

Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, Sandyhurst Lane offers sports provision (comprising two full size grass football pitches and one rugby pitch supported by a pavilion comprising four team and one officials changing room, bar and large function room). Sandyacres also has two tennis courts which are currently not in use. The area has a natural character and comprises a significant number of mature trees. It is located within open countryside to the north of Sandyhurst Lane and provides part of the setting to the settlement of Ashford.

In relation to sports pitch provision, the Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, 2017 covers the period up to 2030 and identifies Sandyacres as one of the key hubs to the north of the town and a priority site for football and rugby pitches - although drainage requires improvement.

In relation to the tennis courts, Lawn Tennis Association research shows that most people who access courts in parks only travel a short distance to play, therefore a network of park courts needs to be retained throughout the borough and maintained to a playable quality. The Playing Pitch Strategy states that there is a need to protect all community use tennis courts across Ashford Borough. Although Ashford Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy recommends focusing on tennis facilities with 3 or more courts, the disused courts at Sandyacres could be upgraded, potentially as a multi-use surface for a number of sports.

The Playing Pitch Strategy states:

Sandyacres – has been identified in the draft Local Plan 2030 as a Sports Hub that could possibly have new playing pitches in the future. A masterplan to identify the viability of this is required.

The NPPF states that planning policies should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy COM2, states that proposals which undermine the ability of a hub to play a role in delivering additional open space to meet local needs will not be supported.

2. Boughton Lees Village Green

Boughton Lees Village Green hosts a cricket pitch where cricket matches have been played for over 200 years. There remains a demand for cricket in the Borough. In addition, the village green is an area of open space which is central to the character of the Conservation Area and provides a number of Important Public Views.

Whilst both these areas provide formal sports pitches, both may also be used for informal recreation especially when matches are not being played.

Clearly both of these areas have a long-term future as recreation open space.

Both sites are protected as Local Green Spaces where provision of appropriate built facilities in connection with the use of land for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation would be appropriate provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space (Policy BAE NP2).

Informal Outdoor Recreation Area

An informal outdoor recreation area is also available between Guernsey Way and Rothbrook Drive, Goat Lees. The informal recreation area is equipped with a football goalpost which sees little use in the winter as it is usually waterlogged.

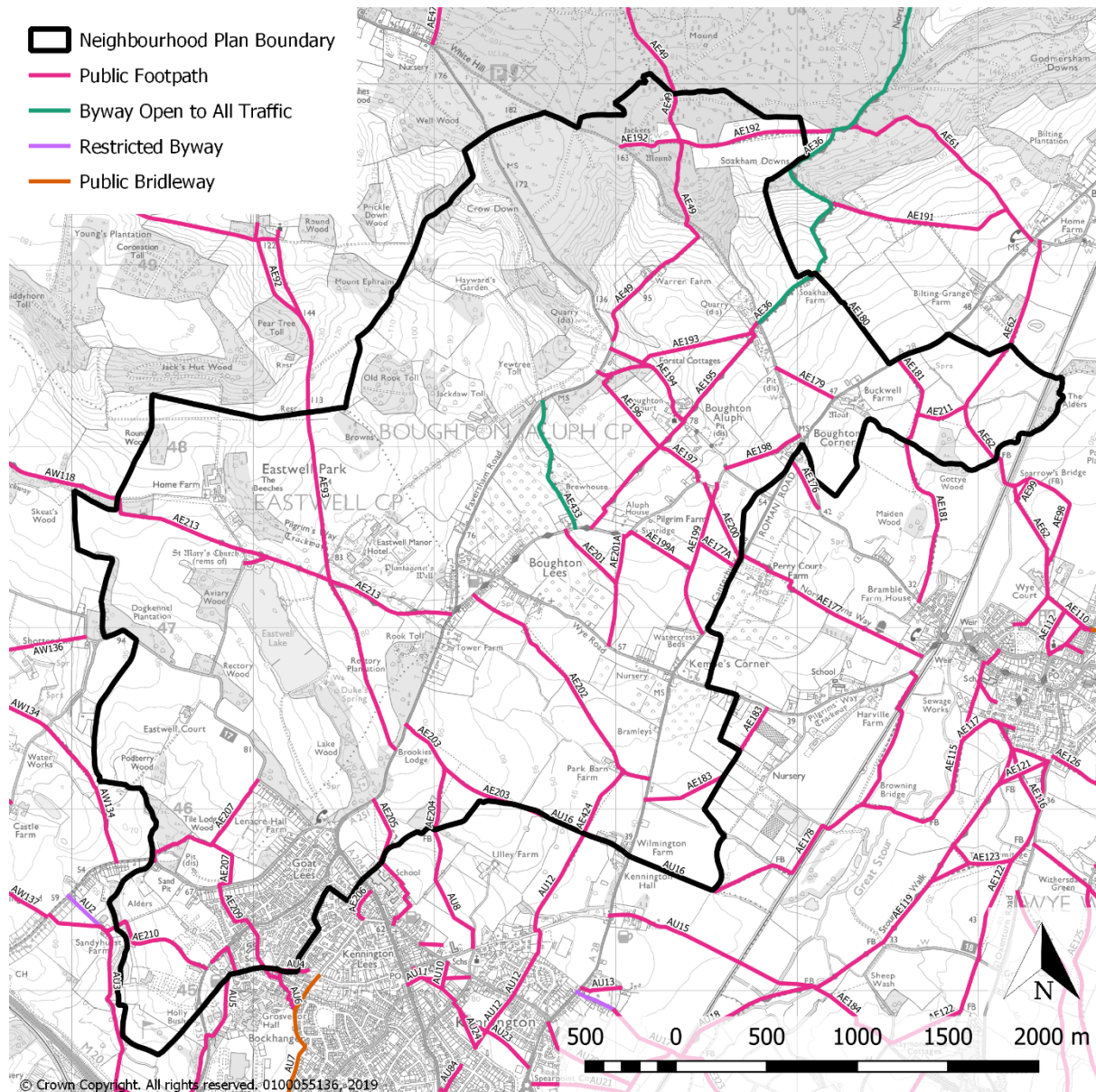
Children's play and youth provision

Children's play and youth provision is located on adjoining sites in Hurst Road, Goat Lees, The Goat Lees Youth Play Space, Trinity Road provides basket swing, ball wall and outdoor fitness equipment.

All the above areas have been designated as Local Green Spaces where provision of appropriate structures such as play equipment would be appropriate provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space (Policy BAE NP2).

Public Rights of Way

The Parishes have an extensive footpath network including the national long-distance footpath North Downs Way which divides at Eastwell to follow either the Stour valley to Canterbury (Pilgrims' Way) or along the North Downs to the coast at Dover or Folkestone and beyond. Many footpaths criss-cross the Parishes. There are few bridleways within the Parishes mostly found in the King's Wood in the north of the Plan area.



Map 21 Public Rights of Way and Bridleways including connections to routes beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area

The Neighbourhood Plan Survey, 2016, revealed that 92% of those surveyed felt it was important to be able to walk from their home to the countryside. These facilities are widely used and valued by residents and are enjoyed by ramblers for the variety of vistas and habitats, birdlife and their well-being. There are examples of public footpaths becoming narrow, unsafe, urbanised routes through new development. The National Planning Policy Framework advocates policies which protect and enhance public rights of way and access

and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain the provision, character and biodiversity of public rights of way through new development such as at Eureka Park.

It is important for the health and wellbeing of the local community that these well used public rights of way are protected.

Policy BAE NP9 – Public Rights of Way

The provision, character and biodiversity of the existing Public Rights of Way in the Plan area, as shown on Map 21, will be protected and enhanced

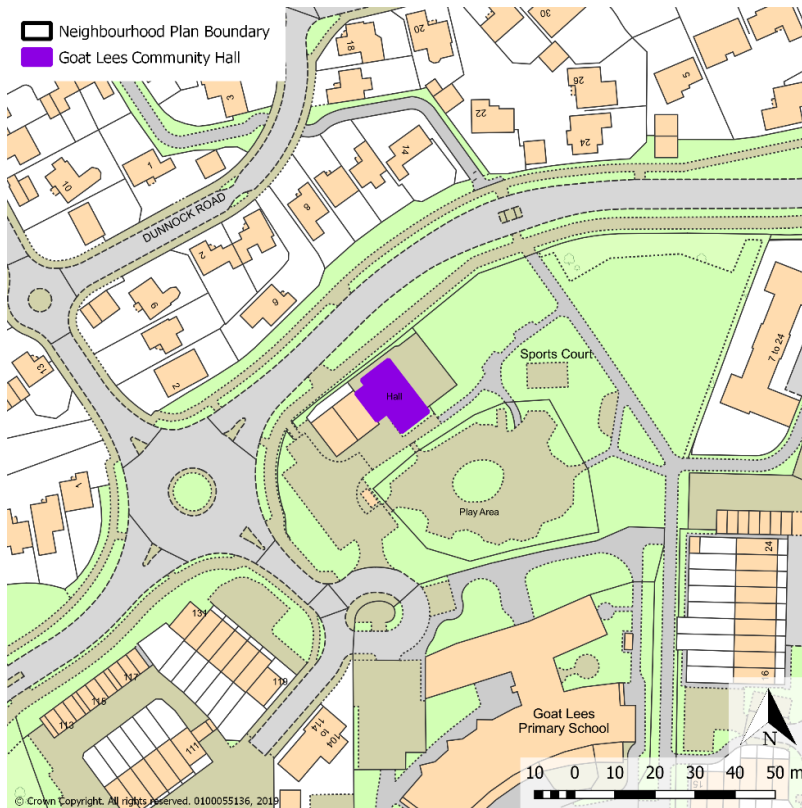
Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Length, character and biodiversity of Public Rights of Way at the start of the Plan period.	No net loss of length, character and biodiversity of Public Rights of Way.

Community Halls

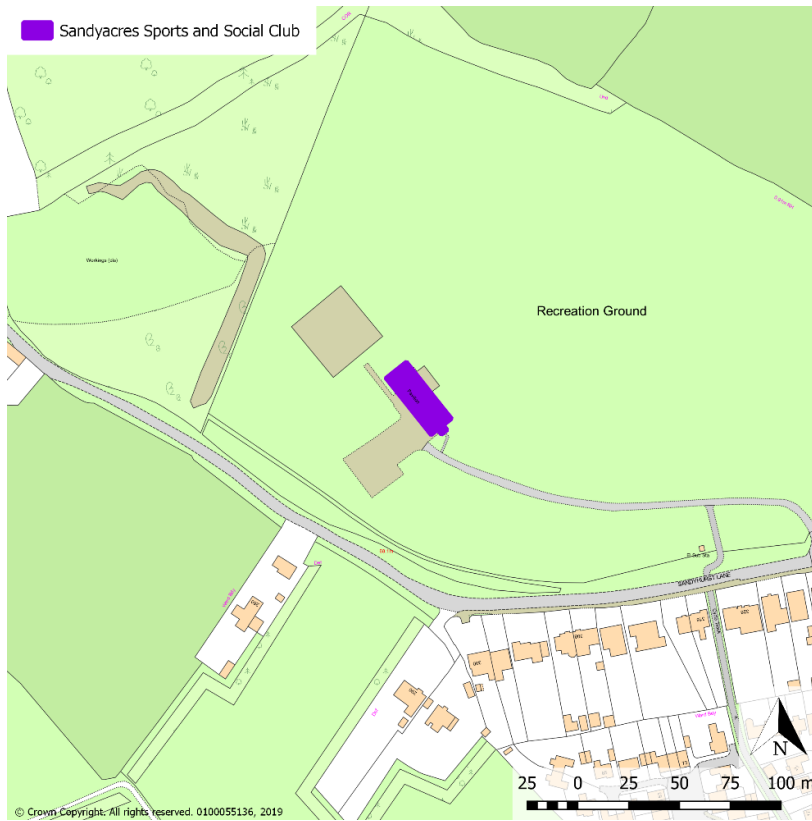
The Parishes have three well-used community halls which are available to hire:

- Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road.
- Sandyacres Sports and Social Club, Sandyhurst Lane
- Iron Room, Boughton Lees, Faversham Road

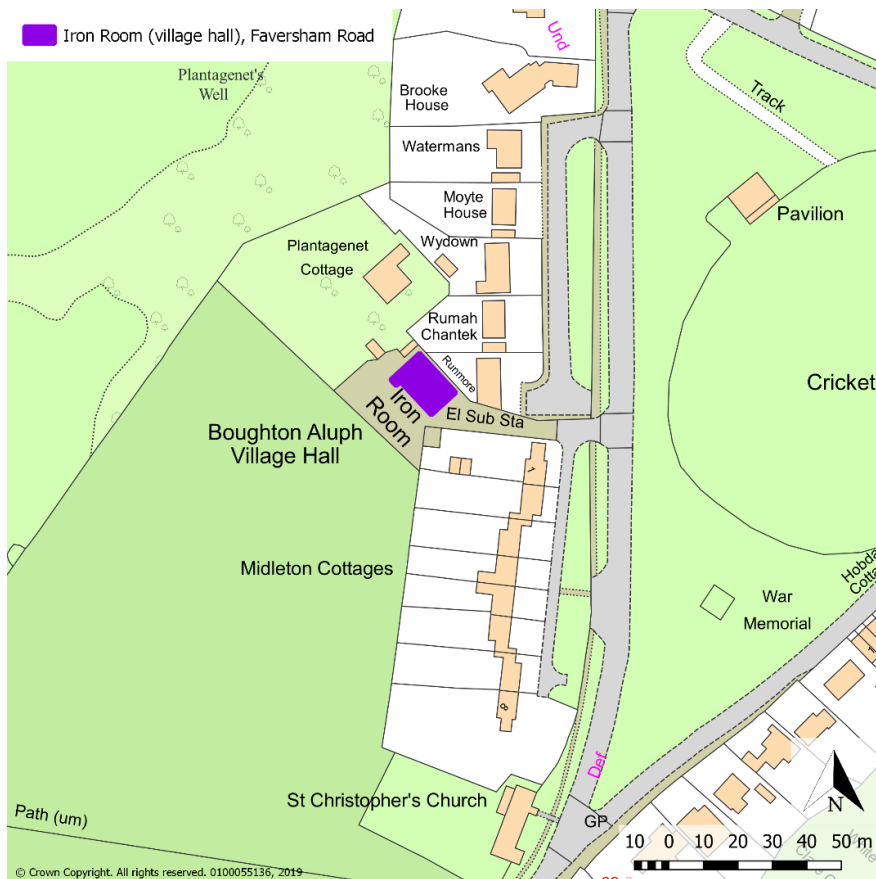
Goat Lees Community Hall is located within the Eureka Place Local Centre and hosts Tiny Tots preschool, after school and holiday provision, and Goat Lees Youth Club. Sandyacres Sports and Social Club is used as a venue for club activities such as Ceroc and football/road runner meetings; stage/music/entertainment and is popular as a venue for wedding receptions. The Iron Room, Boughton Lees hosts a yoga club, carpet bowls club, arts club, gardening club, table tennis club and the WI. The Parish Council uses all these venues to hold its meetings.



Map 22 Community Buildings - Goat Lees Community Hall



Map 23 Community Buildings - Sandyacres Sports and Social Club, Sandyhurst Lane



Map 24 Community Buildings – Iron Room, Boughton Lees

To maintain the social fabric of the Parishes and provide for demand coming from new development, the range of existing well used facilities needs to be maintained and enhanced.

Policy BAE NP10 - Retention of Community Buildings

The loss of existing community buildings, as defined on Maps 22, 23 and 24 will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists and that suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere.

Securing Infrastructure

The proposed Eureka Park development will have a profound effect on the facilities, services and transport network within the Parishes. It is important that all new development provides, or contributes towards, off-site infrastructure in relation to transport; primary and secondary education facilities, open space and sports facilities.

Open Space Provision

The strategic Eureka development will generate a need for additional green infrastructure to serve the development. Using Ashford Borough Council's adopted open space standards, an additional population of 1000 residents over the plan period would generate the need for:

- Outdoor Sports Pitches: 1.6 hectares

- Informal/Natural green space: 2.0 hectares
- Children's and young people's play space: 0.5 hectares
- Allotments: 0.2 hectares
- Strategic Parks: 0.3 hectares
- Cemeteries: 0.6 hectares

The NPPF seeks planning policies that promote opportunities to improve the local open space network.

It would be expected that informal/natural green space will be provided on the extensive Eureka Park housing and business park site as part of the linear park and sustainable green corridor network as set out in Local Plan Policy S20 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy BAE NP 5.

In Ashford, the provision of children's play, strategic parks and sports facilities is controlled by Local Plan Policy COM2 which states that provision will normally be targeted towards the sports and recreation hubs such as Sandyacres Recreation Open Space rather than on the Eureka site.

Education Provision

The primary school at Goat Lees is at capacity and Kent County Council as the Education Authority has stated that provision to serve the anticipated need for approximately 105 additional primary school places will be provided outside the Parishes. The lack of primary school places locally will increase the number of vehicle trips at peak time on the local roads.

There is no secondary school located within the Parishes, and provision for additional secondary school pupils will be made at Towers Secondary School which abuts the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and the two grammar schools located in Ashford town centre.

Health Provision

There are no GP surgeries located in the Parishes with the closest found in Wye or Bybrook, Ashford. With further housing in the area there may be justification for a permanent or visiting surgery and the Parish Council will seek to stimulate interest in such provision.

Community Halls

The three community halls at Goat Lees Community Hall (within the Eureka Place Local Centre); Sandyacres Sports and Social Club and the Iron Room, Boughton Lees will continue to provide meeting places for local activities.

Transport Provision

The strategic growth area of Eureka Park will add to traffic pressures on the local road network. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks sustainable transport measures to serve the new development to assist walking and cycling alongside traffic mitigation measures to reduce the traffic impact on local roads including Sandhurst Lane and access to the A251 and A20;

Policy BAE NP11 - Securing Infrastructure

Any development permitted will be expected to ensure provision of the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure needed to support the proposed development, and where relevant the infrastructure identified in the Neighbourhood Plan below through developer contributions, in a timely manner subject to an appropriate assessment of viability:

- Sustainable transport measures serving new development which assist walking and cycling;
- Traffic mitigation measures including on Sandyhurst Lane and access to the A251 and A20; and
- Enhancement of the Sandyacres Sport and Recreational Open Space, to provide improved sports pitches/courts and children's play area and sufficient additional cycle and car parking.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Infrastructure delivered through developer contributions, including S106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy.	Infrastructure identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to be delivered by the end of the Plan period.

Section 6: Monitoring and Review

Effective monitoring is an essential component in achieving sustainable development and sustainable communities. Monitoring provides crucial information to establish what is happening now and whether policies are working.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes with agreed objectives and policies to deliver the vision in the period up to 2030. Where relevant, targets are set in the Plan against which the delivery of the policy will be measured. Monitoring will evaluate the progress being made towards delivering the spatial vision and assess the extent to which the policies are being implemented.

Where monitoring shows that progress towards targets is unsatisfactory the Parish Council will review the situation and, where necessary, take remedial action. This may include proactive measures to bring forward sites for development or action to secure the timely provision of infrastructure.

The Ashford Local Plan 2030 has recently been adopted but may be reviewed during the Neighbourhood Plan period. A decision whether to revise the Local Plan will be taken no later than five years from its adoption in 2019. It is intended that any revised Local Plan will be adopted by the end of 2025 at the latest. This may have consequences for this Neighbourhood Plan which, if necessary, will be formally reviewed.

ⁱ Use classes are set out in accordance with the following guidance:
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a

policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.

- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Harriet Turner
Decision maker:	Council
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	New planning policy - Adoption of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	30 th September 2021 – Cabinet meeting
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The adopted plan will form part of the Council’s development plan, and need to be taken into account in making decisions on planning applications within Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.</p> <p>The adoption of the Plan impacts upon planning decisions within the parish of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes. There is a potential impact upon residents, landowners and businesses in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The production of the Neighbourhood Plan has been through its statutory process, being produced by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council.</p> <p>Following a successful referendum the Local Planning Authority is required to ‘make’ (adopt) the Plan.</p>
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>The Parish Council has carried out informal and formal consultation in accordance with the statutory requirements. Consultation has taken place with the local community, businesses, landowners and other statutory stakeholders. The Council has also carried out a consultation on the plan with all of the above.</p> <p>Limited response was received to the consultation, raising specific issues about the Plan’s proposals.</p> <p>The consultation analysis did not reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics.</p>

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	None	Neutral
Middle age	None	Neutral
Young adult	None	Neutral
Children	None	Neutral
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	None	Neutral
Mental	None	Neutral
Sensory	None	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE- ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>		Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Neutral
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact:

Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's [Essential Guide](#), alongside fuller [PSED Technical Guidance](#).

Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified. How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by others, but the Council has considered the Equalities Act when providing comments advice to the Parish Council regarding the Plan.</p> <p>The policy is not specifically relevant to any of the protected characteristics. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to bring forward development that will benefit the parish as a whole. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any existing groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.</p> <p>The monitoring of development outcomes will form part of the council's wider development monitoring activities. The Annual Monitoring report will be vehicle by which any specific outcomes can be noted as well as periodic reports on the delivery of infrastructure through Section 106 Agreements.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>2nd August 2021</p>

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Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 30 September 2021

Report Title: Play Area Investment

Report Author & Job Title: Amanda Scott, Play and Open Spaces Project Officer

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Matthew Forest and Cllr Bill Barrett
Portfolio Holder for: Culture, Tourism and Leisure; Environment and Land Management

Summary:

Play areas play a vital role in building healthy neighbourhoods contributing to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of local people. Without access to these spaces the quality of life and wellbeing of residents is reduced so it is vital that the Council continues to ensure their play facilities are accessible and imaginative, as well as eco-friendly, durable and low maintenance. A capital Play Regeneration Programme is proposed alongside a Repairs and Renewals Programme to safeguard appropriate play spaces and facilitate opportunities for ongoing improvement.

The Play Regeneration Programme includes three key priority locations that require significant refurbishment so £1.1m capital investment is required to make them fun, innovative, and fully inclusive and accessible.

To further safeguard play spaces, owned by the Council, an enhanced Repairs and Renewal programme is proposed that includes £200,000 in 2022/23 and £100,000 per annum for refurbishment and maintenance of existing play, teen and outdoor gym facilities.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: Kennington, Park Farm North, Park Farm South, Bybrook

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

- I. **Invest £1.1m for a Play Regeneration Programme from the Improvement and Corporate Projects Fund in three key priority play locations - Rylands Road, Bybrook; Central Park, Bluebell Road, Park Farm; and Spearpoint Recreation Ground, Kennington;**

- II. **Delegate the Head of Culture, Tourism & Leisure in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to execute and complete all tasks and documentation necessary to deliver the Play Regeneration Programme;**
- III. **Allocate additional budget of £200,000 in 2022/23, and £100,000 each year thereafter to the Repairs and Renewal budget, earmarked for maintenance, repair and replacement of individual play area assets as agreed by the Head of Environment & Land Management in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.**

Policy Overview: Corporate Plan 2022 – 24
Caring Ashford – Objective CA3, Reduce health inequalities and improve the wellbeing for local people.
 Green Pioneer – Objective GP1, Reduce reliance of fossil fuels in line with our carbon neutral targets.

ABC Local Plan 2020 - 2030, ABC Open Spaces Strategy 2017, ABC Play Areas Policy.

Financial Implications: The cost to deliver identified infrastructure to improve three key play and open spaces is estimated at £1.1m. A further contribution of £200,000 to the Repairs & Renewals in 2022/23 and £100,000 per year from 2023/24 onwards.

Legal Implications: Delivery and scheduling of the projects is subject to planning applications for 2 of the 3 sites.

Project delivery will include tendering and direct contacts with a variety of contractors.

Equalities Impact Assessment: See Attached

Data Protection Impact Assessment: Personal data will not be collected from contributors to consultation phases. More general demographic data such as age and gender may be collected from which individuals will not be identifiable.

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement): When evaluating the risk impact to the Council the uncertainties in the construction market of availability of workers, materials and parts coupled with a high demand of work may threaten delivery timescales and level of enhancement possible. The project manager will work to fixed price tendering processes and monitor pricing to ensure costs are not inflated beyond the budget and what would construe best value whilst ensuring materials being used do not risk elevating future maintenance costs.

Sustainability Implications:

Access to good quality local community play spaces that are well connected encourages active travel in local communities and reduces carbon emissions from fewer car journeys to access play facilities further afield. Contractor's will be asked to look at and consider sustainable materials whilst ensuring maintenance of such does not put any further pressure on future revenue budgets

Other Material Implications:

Continued support from key officers for the delivery of this programme of works.

Exempt from Publication:

NO

Background Papers:

Contact:

amanda.scott@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330393

Report Title: Play Area Investment

Introduction and Background

1. The Council has been supporting the refurbishment and maintenance of play areas using a mix of funding resources including Council budget, S106 contributions and contribution from the Housing Revenue Account. Successful play refurbishments have taken place where they provide truly accessible, safe spaces in open spaces on well used, well connected footfall routes, with free to use facilities across all age groups. Such provision facilitates the community's ability to access healthy activities with no barriers to provision across all cultural and socioeconomic groups. Further access to free outdoor recreation facilities also encourages more active travel and less car use through walking and cycling to sites, which supports the emerging Green Pioneer corporate objective.
2. A good example of a successful scheme of this nature is the newly refurbished play area and new outdoor gym at Bulleid Place behind Asda in the Aylesford Green ward. Since the play area was enlarged and refurbished and the outdoor gym added as a new facility in 2017, the range of users of all age groups has increased exponentially, increasing outdoor activity and walking locally. Speaking with local residents there is anecdotal evidence that adults from diverse communities are actively using the outdoor gym on a daily basis, helping each other out with different exercises and forming new cross-cultural friendships in a safe environment.
3. Although much work has been completed on play area improvement and day to day maintenance, it is considered a crucial time to invest in aging equipment and improve wider access to free to use play and outdoor gym facilities that encourages more daily physical activity for all ages.
4. Ashford Borough Council owns 55 play areas of which 54 are managed and maintained by Aspire with one managed through a lease agreement with Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council for Cuckoo Park in Singleton. A condition audit of play area sites in the Ashford Borough, including those sites owned and maintained by other organisations such as Parish and Town Councils and privately run housing management companies, provides an overview of the condition and quality of publicly accessible play area facilities. The last full audit of 2019 was reviewed recently and identifies 22 Ashford Borough Council owned play areas are in need of varying levels of refurbishment. This paper puts forward 3 priority sites for investment that require significant improvement as soon as possible.
5. Additionally, more revenue budget ring-fenced for the repair and maintenance of play area, MUGA and outdoor gym facilities is required. Currently Aspire stretch their unscheduled works budget to cover health and safety issues as they arise from regular inspections, but other supplementary repairs such as repainting equipment and replacing larger more expensive items including slides and complete rope systems are only achievable if Aspire have spare budget available towards the end of the financial year. Given the condition

audit it is vital additional investment is included on an ongoing basis so major capital outlay is managed in the future.

Proposal

6. It is proposed that a Play Regeneration Programme of £1.1m for three hub sites within those communities with poor play provision are prioritised for major refurbishment.
7. It is recommended that the following sites are selected for upgrading due to their low scores in the condition audit yet are well located and already attract good levels of footfall:

Rylands Road Play Area, Bybrook, Ward (also within walking distance of a large section of Bookhanger Ward)

Creation of a new recreational hub space. Plans include a new play space, outdoor gym area, Multi Use Games Area, outdoor furniture, cycle racks and new footpaths and landscaping to improve access and connectivity.

£340,000

Spearpoint Recreation Ground Play Area, Kennington Ward

A brand new play space hub including outdoor gym area, outdoor furniture, cycle racks and new footpaths to improve access and connectivity to complement the existing football, tennis and trim trail offer. Officers are looking at an opportunity for improvements to the Public Rights Of Way (PROW) network at Spearpoint that would enhance the linkages and routes to this site, making it easier for local people to access the site and build greater links to the Council's Walking & Cycling agenda.

£360,000

Central Park, Park Farm South and North Wards (the boundary of the two Wards runs through the middle of the park)

A hub site centrally servicing all households in the Park Farm area. Plans include new play spaces, outdoor gym, teen play provision, outdoor furniture, cycle racks, plus remodelling the space to improve access and safety for visitors.

£400,000

Total - £1,100,000

8. Upgrading these 3 sites will benefit **over 4,600** households living within walking distance in the urban area, plus will be visited by other residents who live further afield, making a substantial contribution to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, Ashford's Health and Wellbeing policy, Open Spaces Strategy and support the ambitions of the Local Plan.
9. Additional to the capital Play Regeneration Programme it is proposed that a Repairs and Renewals Programme supports Aspire to enhance their ability to repair and replace individual play facility assets beyond their current scope.
10. This proposal seeks to add an additional sum of £200,000 in revenue funds in year one (2022/23) to the repairs and renewal budget, and then a further £100,000 each year thereafter, specifically for the maintenance of play area

assets as part of Aspire's ground maintenance function. This will ensure the longevity of existing play areas and tackle health and safety issues as they arise onsite. Aspire will have the ability to prioritise work such as repainting equipment and replacing individual pieces of play equipment based on greatest need for repairs and renewals for health and safety and access.

Local Engagement

11. Over the last 3 years residents living near to Rylands Road Play Area and Central Park have individually set up their own community constituted groups to support local fund raising efforts to improve these play areas.
12. Through a range of events and securing funding from Kingsnorth Parish Council, the group campaigning for Central Park play area have successfully funded the supply and installation of 3 small items of new play equipment with associated safety surfacing totalling circa £12,000 with Aspire contributing another £3,000 from their unscheduled works budget. These new items will be repositioned to compliment the new scheme.
13. Equally the group campaigning for improvements at Rylands Road Play Area have raised a total of just over £25,000 towards the area, through a combination of funders providing grants (Kennington Community Council, Ashford Leisure Trust and Tesco bags for life scheme) and events. These funds are confirmed for providing the outdoor gym element of the Rylands Road scheme and as there are conditions to spend the funds in a specified time the outdoor gym will be brought forward as the first item to be completed as part of the overall programme.
14. The Housing department are running a consultation exercise with the Bybrook and Bockhanger communities in relation to the block of space housing the bockhanger shops, car park, kickabout area and where the recent Bockhanger Community Centre was sited. Although the two programmes of work are independent of each other, with Rylands Road Play Area being a short walk away from the shops, there is every expectation that residents will bring the two areas of work together in their minds. To manage this officers from the Cultural Services team are actively supporting colleagues in the presentation of the consultation phase of the Bockhanger scheme and to answer any enquiries as required.

Equalities Impact Assessment

15. Members are referred to the attached Assessment, which concludes that facilities need to be accessible to people of all ages and abilities wherever possible. Appropriate access methods will be developed wherever the landscape and budget allows to ensure the most effective inclusiveness

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

16. It is planned within the programme of works to consult on the designs needs with key local stakeholder groups and ward members to endorse the

approach that will then be developed as part of the detailed design stage for each site as part of the contracted works.

Other Options Considered

17. It is considered that these projects are prioritised due to the strong evidence base set out in the play area condition audit and subsequent mapping exercise and that combined with the Repairs and Renewal programme a more holistic and sustainable play investment programme is provided.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

18. Public Health England datasets indicate that 64.9% of adults aged 18+ living in the Ashford borough are classed as overweight or obese. One of ABC's corporate objectives is to improve rates of obesity in the borough's population so it is important to inspire communities to participate in outside activities to improve health and wellbeing in our population. It has been demonstrated through a range of studies that childhood obesity leads to an increased risk of becoming an overweight adult. Substantial improvements to play and open space facilities and improvement to pedestrian networks facilitates much improved access and inclusivity to outdoor activity across all groups in the community.
19. This investment will encourage a wide range of residents of all ages to spend more time outdoors engaged in meaningful physical, mental and social interactions that benefit communities for the longer term on many levels. It is key to both recovery and the Council's corporate plan ambitions.
20. This support will also encourage wider use of Ashford's cycling and walking network, increasing active travel and reducing short car journeys that are actively damaging the environment thus supporting corporate objectives to achieve zero carbon by 2030.

Next Steps in Process

21. Preparing and delivery of consultation with stakeholders and Ward Members to collate information to feed into the design specification stage.
22. Preparing the details for the design and build specification and tender documents.
23. Preparing the planning application documents for Spearpoint and Central Park.
24. Timescales for works – end by school summer holidays 2022.

Conclusion

25. Rylands Road Play Area, Spearpoint Recreation Ground and Central Park are recognised as a highly valued and important strategic open spaces in the Borough. It is imperative that the work to complete the new facilities is

commissioned as soon as possible so that the works can be delivered and enjoyed by the widest possible audience.

26. Ensuring a further budget is available for Aspire to maintain play areas and carry out further supplementary works and replacements safeguards existing play provision and prevents the possible decommissioning of facilities should equipment fail safety checks.

Portfolio Holder's Views

27. "This capital investment will provide much needed and urgent improvement to address aging equipment and the needs of the community, encouraging children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to learn and exercise as they play and in so doing contribute to our agenda of healthy and sustainable communities."
Cllr Matthew Forest, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism and Leisure.

"I wholeheartedly welcome this initiative, particularly the support for ongoing repairs and renewal investment which will better enable Aspire to maintain and improve play areas across the borough".
Cllr Bill Barrett, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management

Contact and Email

Amanda Scott, Play and Open Spaces Project Officer –
amanda.scott@ashford.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:

- Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or

service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Amanda Scott, Play and Open Spaces Officer
Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Agreement to endorse the Play Area Investment Delivery Plan and associated S106 funding for capital and maintenance spend.
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	30 th September 2021
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The Report seeks Cabinet endorsement of the proposed delivery plan for deliver play area and access provision on 3 open spaces. It also seeks authority for revenue funding to support the repairs and renewal budget for playgrounds maintenance.</p> <p>The resulting facility improvements will be available for all residents of the borough.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The quality of publically available play provision in the Ashford Borough is monitored through site specific condition audits, with a range of factors assessed to provide an evidence base of overall site condition.</p> <p>The audits evaluate accessibility, inclusivity, connectivity, site condition, equipment condition, play value and design. This provides each site with a comparable score which is RAG rated to prioritise sites in need of improvement works. In October 2019 the data showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 22 ABC play areas scored as Requiring Improvement (Red) - 11 ABC play areas scored as Satisfactory (Amber) - 20 ABC play areas scored as Excellent (Green) <p>A comprehensive Play Area Plan has been developed which maps out this data based on walking distances of 600m or 800m to local provision.</p> <p>This highlights where there are residential areas with no play provision within walking distance, those areas with only Red provision within walking distance and those areas with satisfactory or excellent provision (or overprovision) within walking distance.</p>
Consultation:	While formal consultation is yet to take place proposals have been discussed informally in a range of meetings with both stakeholders and ward members. The resulting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>conversations highlighted that facilities need to be accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities wherever possible. Appropriate access methods will be developed wherever practicably possible to ensure those visitors with protected characteristics are not adversely affected or their enjoyment of the space lessened.</p> <p>Further consultation with stakeholders and ward members will take place to inform the design specification stage – this will include liaising with Ashford Access Group to discuss access options to ensure this is designed in to schemes at the front end before going out to tender.</p>
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Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	Medium	Positive
Middle age	Medium	Positive
Young adult	Medium/High	Positive
Children	High	Positive
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	Medium	Positive
Mental	Medium	Positive
Sensory	Medium	Positive
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Neutral

<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Neutral
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	None	Neutral
Former service personnel	None	Neutral
Service families	None	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure quality of access and inclusivity through design specifications and test these options with appropriate stakeholders.
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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?	
Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide , alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of 	<p>Due regard has been made to the equality duty, throughout the development of the masterplan and will continue during the delivery phase</p> <p>There will be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision</p>
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<p>the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<p>The proposal meets the aims of the equality duty as all sections of the community including those with protected characteristics will benefit from the enhancements to the open space facilities.</p> <p>Monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation will be undertaken and reported by the stakeholder group</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>31/08/2021</p>

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Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 30 September 2021

Report Title: Update on the Broadband improvements in the Ashford Borough

Report Author: Tom Jenkins, Senior Economic Development Officer

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Neil Shorter, Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT

Summary:

This report analyses the latest data on fixed and mobile telecommunications access within the Borough. This shows 99% mobile coverage by at least one of the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), 90% coverage of premises with superfast broadband connections (>30Mbps), and 8% coverage of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP). Due to the predominantly rural geography of the Borough this highlights the continuing requirements for improvements in telecommunications access to ensure residents and businesses have the right access and speeds in this increasingly changing market place.

This report updates members on the activities undertaken to attract investment and improve infrastructure within the Borough by private sector operators. In particular the implementation of EMP6 within the Ashford Local Plan.

The report also sets out the potential areas for officers to investigate and work on moving forward and the importance of broadband and telecommunications infrastructure within the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: All Wards

Recommendations: Cabinet are asked to:-

- I. **Note the content of this report and the Broadband work undertaken in the past year.**
- II. **To note that the delivery of broadband is a key priority in the council's draft Corporate Plan.**
- III. **Approve the proposed actions for digital infrastructure (section 34) be incorporated into the final version of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024**

Policy Overview: The Ashford Borough Council Recovery Plan July 2020 was approved by Cabinet in June 2020 and highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure considering the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. Under the key theme of Place Making, Regeneration and Infrastructure, a key action

was identified to “Improve broadband coverage and reliability”.

The Ashford Local Plan (Adopted in February 2019) also identifies the importance of great telecommunications infrastructure through the adoption of Policy EMP6 – Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

Within the Draft Ashford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2022-2024 approved for consultation by Cabinet in July 2021, the importance of improved digital infrastructure is highlighted in Objective TG2 under Targeted Growth “Enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of business, voluntary sector and residents”. The draft explains that fast, reliable digital connectivity across the whole Borough is critical for businesses and residents to trade and access services. Some areas of the Borough are disadvantaged because of poor digital connectivity. A lack of digital connectivity can stifle innovation and business growth.

Each of these strategic documents prioritise the requirement for improvements to the existing telecommunications infrastructure.

Financial Implications:

If the recommendations are approved, the resource implications are involved in dedicating officer time to the proposed activity outlined in Section 34. No further financial undertakings from Ashford Borough Council are proposed.

Legal Implications:

N/A

Risk Assessment

Please see Section 35 within the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

A fundamental priority in improving affordable reliable broadband and mobile access for residents and businesses within the Borough, is to reduce social exclusion and rural isolation. The aspiration to level up access across the Borough will look to reduce the current inequalities in access, highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Exemption Clauses:

Contacts:

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Agenda Item No.

Report Title: Update on the Broadband improvements in the Ashford Borough.

Purpose of the Report

1. To report to Cabinet on the latest activity undertaken by officers regarding broadband improvements in the Borough, provide an update on Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) and Superfast broadband coverage and outline plans for ongoing work.

Issue to be Decided

2. Cabinet to take note of the update on the latest position and note the priority and proposed actions for improved broadband as set out in the Ashford Borough Council Recovery Plan and draft Corporate Plan.

Background

3. The UK government is increasingly supportive of faster digital connectivity, and is providing both financial and regulatory support to help meet its ambition of 85% gigabit coverage of residential premises by 2025. On 19th March 2021 the UK Government announced “Project Gigabit”; a £5bn infrastructure project fund to support rollout of gigabit capable broadband to homes and premises in hard to reach places. The first areas to benefit from the funding were announced and additional £210m worth of gigabit vouchers released. The UK Government has announced that almost 500,000 premises across the UK have been connected to gigabit-capable broadband since summer 2018 as a result of a £1 billion government funding commitment that runs until the end of 2021. The main way to deliver gigabit capable broadband (>1000 Mbps) is using Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) cabling, however, other technologies may need to be used to deliver in harder-to-reach areas, such as Fixed Wireless Access (FWA).
4. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has committed £5bn to support a series of programmes including: “outside in” deployment of FTTP in areas unlikely to be commercially viable; FTTP via schemes such as the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN); Rural Gigabit Connectivity programmes for the final 20%; and a Gigabit voucher scheme. Furthermore in the 2020 March Budget, the Chancellor reiterated the Government’s plans to invest £5bn to ensure gigabit-capable broadband is able to reach 85% of UK homes by the end of 2025.
5. In August 2021, government published their Project Gigabit Delivery Plan – Summer Update. This updates the commitments of the private sector operators to deliver gigabit connections at a national level. Kent has been identified with the Phase 2 Gigabit Programme with an allocation of between £119m to £203m modelled to connect 122,300 uncommercial premises. Each area will undergo a formal market survey to establish the extent of commercial

investment in gigabit connections before the procurement of the government gigabit delivery in that area. For Kent this will need to be undertaken before the planned procurement start date of May 2022, with the expected contract commencement in April 2023. A link to the plan is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-delivery-plan-summer-update>

6. Ashford Borough Council has been pro-actively supporting the rollout of superfast broadband across the Borough for many years and is recognised by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of the best case studies of Local Authorities taking the lead on broadband improvement. The major development in this sector has been ABC's inclusion of Policy EMP6 (Promotion of Fibre to the Premises) in its Local Plan from February 2019, which requires nearly all new developments in the Borough to provide fibre broadband connections to the premises.
7. The Economic Development team is also actively involved in conversations with individual providers to lobby for improved commercial coverage of the Borough, and works closely with KCC's Broadband team on promoting the Government's Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP).
8. To support the understanding of this report, a glossary of terms has been incorporated in Appendix B to this report.

Ashford Borough broadband status

9. The Ofcom Connected Nations Report explains in detail the digital connectivity under different technologies, different speeds and different areas. We have attached to this report as Appendix A the results from the latest report (2021 Interim). The following key measures can be identified for Ashford Borough:

- **Number of premises with Superfast broadband (>30Mbps): 52613 (90%)**
Superfast broadband UK average: 94%
Ashford change since Spring 2020: +259 (no % change)
- **Number of premises with Full Fibre (FTTP): 4,564 (8%)**
Full Fibre UK average: 18%
Ashford change since Spring 2020: +1,087 (+2% change)
- **Number of premises below USO level (<10Mbps): 657 (1%)**
USO premises UK average: 1%
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -1,676 (-3% change)
- **Percentage premises covered with 4G indoors by at least one MNO: 98.9%**
Average across all LAs in UK: 98.7%
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -0.1%
- **Percentage premises covered with 4G indoors by all 4 MNOs: 71.1%**
Average across all LAs in UK: 77.6%
Ashford change since Spring 2020: -1.8%

10. The figures above need context alongside the comparative UK figures to explain what they mean for Ashford as a predominantly rural Borough and why they are like this. The Superfast broadband percentage of properties covered matches approximately population densities due to the required Return On Investment (ROI) by providers in reaching clusters of premises. The more rural an area, the lower the population density and the less percentage of premises are likely to be covered. This is evidenced by the fact that across the country, Tewkesbury (which has a similar population density to Ashford – 223 people per km²) also has 90% coverage, Braintree (slightly higher population density – 250) has 93% SFBB coverage, while Teignbridge (slightly lower population density – 200) has 89% coverage. In Kent, Folkestone & Hythe has a higher density (317) with 93% coverage and Thanet (much higher density – 1,365) has 97%. Some change in results is due to Ofcom now refining reports to include coverage within apartments and other subunits of large buildings, which Ashford has relatively few of. However, reaching rural areas will always be an issue for commercial infrastructure builds which is why it is important for the council to lead, coordinate and lobby for investment.
11. It is also worth noting that most FTTP rollout nationally is being driven by commercial deployments which, as mentioned above, require Return On Investment (ROI) for the providers. That leads the providers to mostly install FTTP where it is more cost-effective to do so, with schemes like the Gigabit Vouchers or Community Fibre Partnerships aimed at making connections in the more rural parts of the country more viable. Openreach explained in 2019 that the cost of connecting the last 10% of premises with FTTP in hard-to-reach areas could be £4,000 or more per property. This figure is only indicative and should not be relied on to make decisions until a full quote or further consultations have been made.
12. Mobile broadband coverage has not significantly changed across the UK since last year (with the reported percentage of premises covered by at least one MNO actually decreasing 0.2% nationally). Ashford has similarly seen a slight decrease in coverage but mobile operators have now started rolling out coverage to new areas through the Shared Rural Network (SRN) scheme. Ashford Borough Council officers are in contact with Mobile UK who are managing the programme to ensure that coverage in the Borough is improved. Data published in June 2021 explains that SRN is forecasting to increase 4G coverage by all 4 MNOs in the South East from 85% to 91%.
13. We would note that the introduction of Local Plan Policy EMP6 is contributing to the increased superfast and FTTP figures with 8% of premises now covered within the Borough, an increase of a third within one year. However, Ashford is ranked only 9th out of 12 districts within Kent for FTTP coverage. Significant % increases will not be achieved until existing premises are connected to FTTP such as through the investment taking place in Tenterden through Openreach's Fibre First Programme. We would also add that when comparing Ashford Borough to other districts in Kent or more widely, the lower density and higher proportion of rural areas in hard to reach locations is likely to always affect any rankings.
14. It is officers' assumption that a number of factors can be taken into account to explain the significant changes identified under the Universal Service

Obligation (USO). Considering this reduction is seen across the UK, officers suggest that a revision of how USO is identified and calculated by Ofcom, together with the reporting of completed projects such as voucher schemes, as well as the inclusion of more communities in future commercial builds, could explain the significant reduction in premises eligible for USO improvements.

Gigabit Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships update

15. The Economic Development team has been working closely with KCC to ensure that the Government's vouchers schemes have been publicised and that communities across the Borough are able to improve their connections. The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS) and Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme (RGC) together with a Kent Top Up Voucher, have allowed residents and businesses to install gigabit capable connections at their premises. The GBVS offered up to £2,500 to help businesses and homes gain access to a 1Gbps capable broadband and the RGC offered up to £3,500 for small businesses and up to £1,500 for residents. The Kent Top Up voucher allowed households in Kent to claim a further £1,000 on top of the RGC voucher. The GBVS was closed in May 2020 with the RGC being replaced by the UK Gigabit Voucher (UKGV) scheme in April 2021. The table below shows the number of vouchers and value of grants achieved for each scheme by communities served from exchanges within the Ashford Borough.

Voucher Scheme	Number of Vouchers	Total Value
Gigabit Voucher Scheme (GBVS)	43	£95,360
Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme (RGC)	142	£326,000
KCC Top Up Voucher Scheme	32	£32,000
UK Gigabit Voucher (UKGV)	13	£19,500

Although we don't have comparable figures from other areas, officers from KCC have reported that take up of the RGC in Ashford has been high.

16. KCC recently produced an update on broadband performance which included statistics about the previous Gigabit Voucher schemes for Kent. The update has shown that KCC secured 9% of all vouchers issued in England under previous schemes. KCC secured £6.14m in vouchers for Kent compared to £3.5m for Scotland and £3.4m for Wales. KCC note that the above voucher figures relate to exchange areas so some benefit communities outside the Ashford administrative boundary. KCC also note that some vouchers are linked to Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP) and therefore are not isolated projects.
17. The Economic Development team has also supported KCC in lobbying Government for increased financial support in the form of vouchers for hardest-to-reach premises. KCC has identified that despite Government's voucher scheme and KCC's top-up voucher scheme, many premises in the

county will still be considered too expensive to connect under the current procurement frameworks. It is proposed that Ashford Borough Council supports KCC's call to Government to introduce a higher-value broadband voucher scheme that can be carefully targeted on areas that cannot be funded under the standard voucher scheme.

18. Alongside the voucher schemes, the Economic Development team has been working more closely with KCC on Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP). These are the main mechanism employed by Openreach to increase demand-led community-led broadband installation in hard to reach locations. The project requires a community to come together and work with Openreach on installing FTTP to their premises. The community has to agree however to use BT as its sole supplier as a result of the improved connections, which has presented a challenge to the programme. The reporting of Community Fibre Partnerships (CfP) creations and deliveries is subject to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) between KCC and Openreach. We can report however that 48 Community Fibre Partnerships have been registered with Openreach from communities within the Ashford Borough. Of these, 5 projects are live/connected, 13 projects are in build, 2 are in contract discussions, and a further 18 have offers out to the community. 10 projects are at the earlier stages of registering and design.

Council-focussed work update

19. Members will be familiar with the fact that Ashford Borough Council has implemented the first Local Plan policy in the country which requires developers to install Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) on most new developments in the Borough. Whilst there are exceptions, this policy is proving effective in ensuring that residential and commercial properties in the Borough are future-proofed. Following the approval by Cabinet last year of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Policy EMP6, the Economic Development Team have continued to provide support to colleagues in Planning with regards to the implementation and conditioning of the policy when possible.
20. Following guidance from DCMS aimed at supporting Local Authorities provide leadership and create a strategy, the Economic Development team has agreement from Management Team to establish a cross-departmental group of officers who are 'digital enablers' who can work from within their departments to further the digital connectivity ambitions of the council. In order to promote and attract investment by ISPs and MNOs, the council will need to ensure, in the first instance, that its own processes and assets are open to the providers.
The team has also reached agreement on the naming of Ashford's Digital Champions (Portfolio Holder and Deputy Chief Executive) and Digital Infrastructure Coordinator (Senior Economic Development Officer). These form part of the duties required of the relevant Member and officers and as such is not considered to require additional resource or time.

Provider updates

21. Openreach Fibre First continues and has expanded across the UK. Last year Openreach announced Tenterden was in scope for Fibre First and has now started connecting premises in Tenterden for FTTP. Not all premises connected to the Tenterden exchange are covered under this rollout, with premises in scope to be upgraded being in close proximity to the High Street and town core up to parts of St Michaels.
22. Virgin Media (VM) have merged with O2 and this has caused a pausing of many planned works. VM had planned for a rollout in Willesborough and are now also looking at other areas of Ashford to rollout their FTTP where work could start over the next year to extend the number of homes connected.
23. NextGenAccess had planned to rollout dark fibre core cabling along the HS1 route. However, because of challenges being faced due to the pandemic, this is no longer going ahead. NextGenAccess are still keen to progress more localised projects following an LFFN model with individual areas.
24. Openreach and Netomnia have announced their plans for a FTTP rollout across the Ashford Urban Area. This will see approx. 30,000 premises served by Openreach and Netomnia FTTP with Netomnia rolling FTTP out to a further 20,000 premises (including businesses). Details are being worked on and further information will be provided to Members as this rolls out. ABC has reached agreement with both companies to work collaboratively in what is considered a first case of Openreach and an Altnet working together in such a way. The two companies will be working collaboratively with ABC to ensure disruption to residents is minimised where possible and the rollout is a success. ABC is also coordinating this rollout with KCC.
25. Openreach has also announced that High Halden, Wye and Sevington exchanges are due to be upgraded to FTTP however this is not scheduled to begin until after 2023 with their website quoting a deadline of December 2026. Please see the maps in Appendix D to see Openreach's planned FTTP rollout for the Ashford Borough.
26. Officers have engaged with Broadband 4 Rural Kent (B4RK) to understand their model and how their plans are progressing. ispreview.co.uk reported in October 2020 that all of the properties being targeted by B4RK reside between the M2/A2, A251, A252 and A28 which therefore could include some communities in the Borough. B4RK has since confirmed that they have ambitions to provide gigabit-capable connections to 30,000 rural premises throughout Kent using a mix of Fixed Wireless Access, 5G and FTTP by 2025.
27. The Borough has also seen 5G being installed across Ashford town centre with Three, ID Mobile, O2, Sky Mobile, GiffGaff and Tesco Mobile reportedly being able to provide 5G coverage (see attached maps in Appendix E). Provider EE has also announced plans to install 5G in Ashford although this is not live yet according to their website.

Digital connectivity work going forward

28. Broadband has been a growing priority for many, with technology evolving constantly and social trends changing at an increased pace. Residents and businesses in the Borough's communities rely on this technology and we need to ensure the future-proofing of infrastructure to enable better digital connectivity. The Coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted this need, with vulnerable residents in isolation and many people working from home. Digital connectivity has been identified as a top priority for the council in the draft Corporate Plan 2022-2024.
29. There are positive signs with increased levels of investment being seen in Ashford and Tenterden, and with plans in place for improved broadband in Wye, High Halden and Sevington. However, in Ashford, the average proportion of households per Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) with poor broadband is 1.14% (CI 0.9-1.4%) which is significantly higher than Kent (0.5%; CI 0.5-0.6%).¹ See Appendix F for a map of this data. Focus for improvements should therefore also move to the final 10% of hard-to-reach premises in rural areas. The increased investment now being seen in the urban areas of the Borough provides a starting point from which network expansion into rural areas can start. Lobbying for increased vouchers, for more investment commercially or through programmes such as CfPs could now be more achievable. The Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and subsequent funding for KCC to deliver improved broadband to those commercially unviable premises in rural parts of the county presents a key opportunity to support this.
30. Officers would also note that the issue of water quality degradation at Stodmarsh Lakes, which has impacted new housing development in the Ashford Borough, would also have an impact on FTTP coverage. Without new developments being brought forward, any improvements to FTTP coverage is solely reliant on connecting existing premises. As reported above, this is starting to happen, however, wider improvements may take longer to come forward without new developments pushing the requirements for improved infrastructure.
31. Whilst broadband, in particular FTTP, has been the principle focus of this work to date, there are other aspects of digital connectivity which will require action in order to deliver a fully improved digital Borough.
32. Mobile coverage in parts of the Borough is known to be an issue, with approximately 1% of premises not being able to access 4G indoors and some premises having issues with 2G and 3G. Mobile coverage is part of the essential digital infrastructure needed by residents and businesses especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic Development Team have not undertaken work with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to date however we have met with Mobile UK, the trade association for MNOs in the UK to understand how the Council can support investment in the Borough. Mobile UK is coordinating the Shared Rural Network (SRN) which will see the main MNOs improve their mobile capability to reach more premises in hard-to-reach areas.

¹ Kent Analytics / KCC, "Digital Exclusion in Ashford", July 2021.

33. To date the Economic Development team, together with colleagues across the council, have managed to attract investment from providers, create a policy which will future proof developments and continued to promote ways for broadband improvements to take place. The work is undertaken across a number of teams but coordinated by the Senior Economic Development Officer, with support from the Economic Development Manager (EDM). The Senior Economic Development Officer (SEDO) normally dedicates approximately a third of their time to this activity, and the work undertaken over the past year has included:
- i. Working with Planning colleagues on implementing Policy EMP6 as conditions for applications
 - ii. Light touch engagement with providers known to be building or have plans to build in the Borough
 - iii. Engaging and coordinating the Openreach and Netomnia rollout for Ashford town centre
 - iv. Seeking agreement to set up the cross-departmental officer group to barrier-bust internally
34. As part of the increased priority for Broadband within the Corporate Plan 2022-2024, in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic, further activity could be considered with the prioritisation of resources in this area. Members and officers at ABC agree that improvements to digital infrastructure are a priority and as such the following activity could be considered:
- i. Set up the cross-departmental officers group to ensure the council has clear and pro-active processes across departments that allow providers to engage and invest easily and with more confidence
 - ii. Continue to work with broadband providers to support improved connections and increase investment
 - iii. Continue the coordination of the Ashford urban area FTTP rollout and ensure other planned rollouts are continuing at pace
 - iv. Take a leading role in coordinating and promoting programmes such as the Voucher schemes and Community Fibre Partnerships
 - v. Provide increased presence at broadband and digital related events or meetings, raising the profile of Ashford for investors.
 - vi. Directly lobby alongside KCC for central Government to establish a new higher value voucher scheme for the final 10% hard-to-reach areas
 - vii. Proactively engage with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Mobile UK to progress the Shared Rural Network (SRN) and improve mobile connectivity in the Borough
 - viii. Continue to monitor Policy EMP6 and provide support to colleagues in Planning on matters relating to broadband connections
 - ix. Support KCC in their involvement in the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and the delivery of this significant government investment in future years and to seek maximum coverage within the Ashford Borough through this investment

Risk Assessment

35. The main key risks currently identified are:
 - a. Lower levels of access to broadband and mobile networks will impact on the economic aspirations for the Borough to target more knowledge based businesses and employees.
 - b. Lower levels of access will impact residents' employment opportunities where employers are increasingly likely to require them to work from home, particularly following the pandemic.
 - c. Lower levels of access will impact students within the area with their increasing need to access online education and training resources, in line with education delivery during Covid-19 terms.
 - d. Lower access impacts resident's levels of social inclusion and isolation from services, and have the potential to increase inequality, highlighted by the limits to social interactions under Covid-19.
 - e. The Council's, residents and businesses digital transformation plans will be impacted by the levels of broadband and mobile access throughout the Borough.

Options Considered

36. In considering the options for Ashford Borough Council to act, the principle objective has been to maximise the opportunities for residents and businesses within the Borough to access affordable ultrafast broadband and mobile telecommunications.
37. The chosen option has been to dedicate officer time, where possible, to attract investment, work with partner organisations and support improved broadband rollout across the Borough. The scope and prioritisation of this work stream is widening to include mobile coverage and future technologies as well.

Next Steps in the Process

38. If approved by Members, the key actions listed in Section 34 will be incorporated in the final version of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024 to deliver Objective TG2.
39. Officers will provide updates to the Portfolio Holder and key stakeholders on a regular basis and continue to provide a yearly update to Cabinet on progress of Digital Infrastructure improvements.

Conclusions

40. Ashford Borough Council is one of the few local authorities to have dedicated officer time to improving broadband within Kent. Successes such as the implementation of Policy EMP6 (Fibre to the Premises) in Ashford's Local Plan and the trials run by Openreach at Godinton Park (one of two pilot projects nationally investigating new technology for infrastructure delivery) have placed Ashford as a leading authority on broadband improvements.

However, it is clear that more can be done and should be done to improve digital connectivity for residents and businesses in the Borough. The Borough is seeing significant investment coming forward, especially in the form of Openreach and Netomnia providing FTTP for existing premises which will boost Full Fibre and Gigabit-speed broadband significantly to at least 30,000 premises over the next 24-36 months. Beyond this commercial investment, the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and allocated funds to connect Kent's commercially unviable premises presents a great opportunity for the Borough over the coming months and years.

41. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the issues that affect rural communities in the Borough that do not have decent digital connectivity. However rural premises are also in areas that will likely be left until last to be connected due to the commercial nature of FTTP rollouts. It will be important for the next 12 months to ensure the current planned commercial investment is delivered successfully, including through the establishment of an internal barrier busting team. However the main focus should be to promote take up of vouchers and support Community Fibre Partnerships, and to lobby for greater government interventions in the final 10% of hard to reach properties within the Borough. Digital Infrastructure activity will be delivered as part of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

Portfolio Holder's Views

42. "The above report very well describes the current position for broadband delivery within the Borough of Ashford. It also makes clear that our ambition to significantly improve broadband delivery, particularly in the hard to reach areas which are predominantly the rural areas, is not directly within our gift to deliver. This simply reinforces the need to liaise with providers (Openreach etc.) partners (KCC etc.) and to lobby central government (strategy and capital funding) so that our Borough is as well provided for as possible. This is fundamental to economic delivery as well as social inclusion and wellbeing. The structuring of an internal delivery group, across all departments but led by the Economic Development team, to understand constraints and then remove them, should not (and will not) be a talking shop but a collegiate mechanism to streamline practices and procedures so that any advantage that can be squeezed from both ourselves and external providers is delivered."
43. Cllr Neil Shorter, Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT

Contact: Tom Jenkins, Senior Economic Development Officer

Email: tom.jenkins@ashford.gov.uk

Appendix A: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim)

laura_name	All Premises	All Matched Premises	SFBB availability (% premises)	UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability (% premises)	UFBB availability (% premises)	Full Fibre availability (% premises)	Gigabit availability (% premises)	% of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	% of premises below the USO	% of premises with NGA	% of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
ASHFORD	58645	58326	89.7	48.1	45.1	7.8	7.8	0.4	1.9	3.8	9.7	1.1	97.8	0
CANTERBURY	73504	73218	93.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	0.3	0.6	1.2	5.7	0.5	99.1	0
DARTFORD	49540	49474	95.9	55	51.2	15.5	48.3	0.3	0.8	1.4	4	0.1	98	0
DOVER	55669	55480	92.8	34.5	34.5	8.3	8.3	0.6	1	2	6.9	0.5	98.2	0
FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE	54375	54188	92.9	41.4	41.2	5.5	5.5	0.5	1.2	2.3	6.7	0.5	97.6	0
GRAVESHAM	45181	44984	96	70.6	64.5	6.9	6.9	0.1	0.3	0.6	3.5	0.4	98.5	0
MAIDSTONE	78118	77707	91.8	62.6	56.9	15.2	15.2	0.6	1.6	2.6	7.6	1	97.3	0
MEDWAY	121647	121311	97.1	81.7	77.9	5	5	0	0.3	0.7	2.7	0.2	98.6	0
SEVENOAKS	53404	53213	92.3	44.7	44.4	20.2	38.9	0.2	0.6	1.2	7.3	0.5	99.2	0
SWALE	67603	67070	93	45.5	39	10.2	10.2	0.2	0.8	1.7	6.2	0.7	98.1	0
THANET	73160	72651	96.5	53	52.7	52.8	52.8	0	0.3	1.4	2.8	0.6	98.8	0
TONBRIDGE AND MALLING	57241	57077	94.4	62.4	59.5	12.8	12.8	0.2	0.5	1.3	5.3	0.4	98.2	0
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	52777	52535	91.8	47.6	42.2	9.2	9.2	0.1	1.2	2.6	7.8	1.2	98	0

Appendix A: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim) (Cont'd)

laura_name	All Premises	All Matched Premises	Number of premises with SFBB availability	Number of premises with UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability	Number of premises with UFBB availability	Number of premises with Full Fibre availability	Number of premises with Gigabit availability	Number of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	Number of premises below the USO	Number of premises with NGA	Number of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
ASHFORD	58645	58326	52613	28228	26422	4564	4564	217	1142	2238	5713	657	57372	0

Appendix B: Notes for Connected Nations Report 2021 Interim figures

ACRONYMS:

SFBB – Superfast Broadband

FWA – Fixed Wireless Access

UFBB – Ultrafast Broadband

NGA – Next Generation Access (incl. Fibre-to-the-Cabinet)

USO – Universal Service Obligation

WISP – Wireless Internet Service Provider

Column Header meanings (the same definition applies to percentage and number figures)

Current headers	Note
lau_name	Local and Unitary Authority Names
All premises	Count of all premises, in scope, based on Ordnance Survey AddressBase® Premium Epoch 81
All matched premises	Count of all premises matched to operator records with a nonzero recorded coverage. Unmatched premises are unclassified
SFBB availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Superfast Broadband (30Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (100Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
UFBB availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (300Mbit/s or greater) coverage from fixed broadband
Full Fibre availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have coverage from a full fibre service from fixed broadband
Gigabit availability (% premises)	Percentage of premises that have Gigabit capable services from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 2Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 5Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 10Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 30Mbit/s from fixed broadband
% of premises below the USO	Percentage of premises that do not have access to download speeds at or above 10Mbit/s and upload speeds at or above 1Mbit/s including non-matched records and zero predicted speeds from fixed broadband, WISPs and Mobile FWA
% of premises with NGA	Percentage of premises with Next Generation Access from fixed broadband
% of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA	Percentage of premises with Decent Broadband from WISPs

Appendix C: Connected Nations 2021 LSOA data associated to Wards (Table)

	SFBB availability (% premises) (=>30Mbps)	Gigabit availability (% premises) (=> 1000Mbps)
Aylesford & East Stour	98.6%	3.3%
Beaver	100.0%	3.6%
Biddenden	74.4%	8.0%
Bircholt	65.9%	0.4%
Bockhanger	98.8%	5.0%
Bybrook	99.9%	0.0%
Charing	75.2%	4.7%
Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm	90.4%	0.0%
Downs North	63.6%	4.5%
Downs West	75.4%	0.0%
Furley	97.8%	8.8%
Goat Lees	99.7%	49.2%
Godinton	98.1%	14.6%
Highfield	96.9%	0.0%
Isle of Oxney	66.2%	0.0%
Kennington	99.3%	0.0%
Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield	81.9%	7.4%
Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry	83.2%	48.8%
Norman	93.0%	0.0%
Park Farm North	99.7%	0.0%
Park Farm South	97.5%	4.4%
Repton	99.9%	52.6%
Rolvenden & Tenterden West	61.7%	15.1%
Roman	95.7%	0.0%
Saxon Shore	70.4%	1.6%
Singleton East	97.0%	5.8%
Singleton West	96.7%	52.7%
Stanhope	99.8%	0.0%
Tenterden North	98.6%	0.0%
Tenterden South	94.5%	9.0%
Tenterden St Michael's	95.4%	0.0%
Upper Weald	72.9%	1.1%
Victoria	97.5%	4.6%
Washford	99.9%	14.5%
Weald Central	74.9%	4.0%
Weald North	75.9%	9.1%
Weald South	86.9%	1.3%
Willesborough	98.8%	3.6%
Wye with Hinxhill	81.7%	0.1

Note: We are not able to compare this data to last year as the reporting on FTTP and Gigabit availability has changed from Ofcom's reports. Last year we reported FTTP by Ward which is not available in this year's reports.

Appendix D: Openreach planned rollout

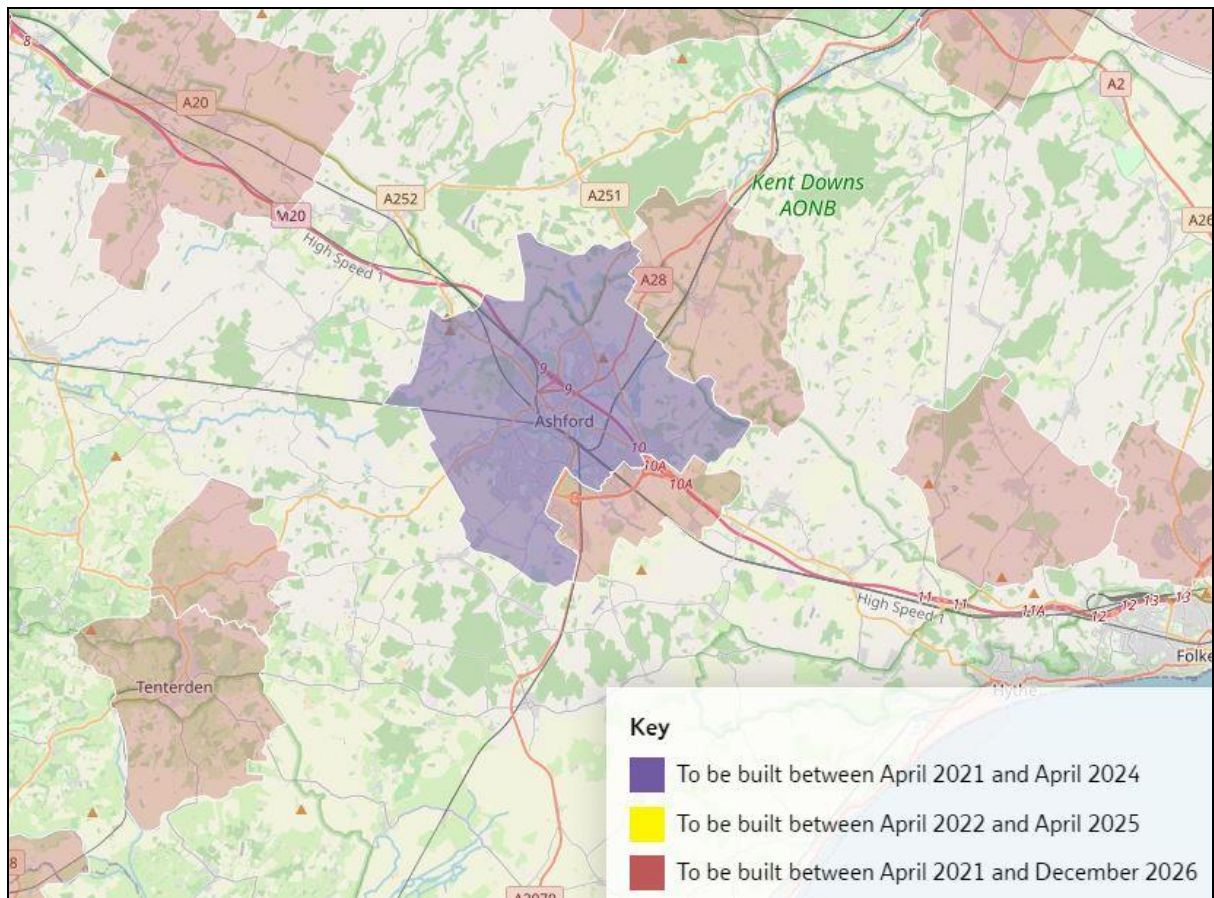


Figure 1. Openreach plans for the Ashford Borough taken from the 'When and Where' section of their website: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/where-when-building-ultrafast-full-fibre-broadband>.

Note: the areas identified are the full coverage of the exchange which does not reflect the actual coverage of Openreach's plans under Fibre First or other schemes.

Appendix E: Indicative 5G Coverage Maps

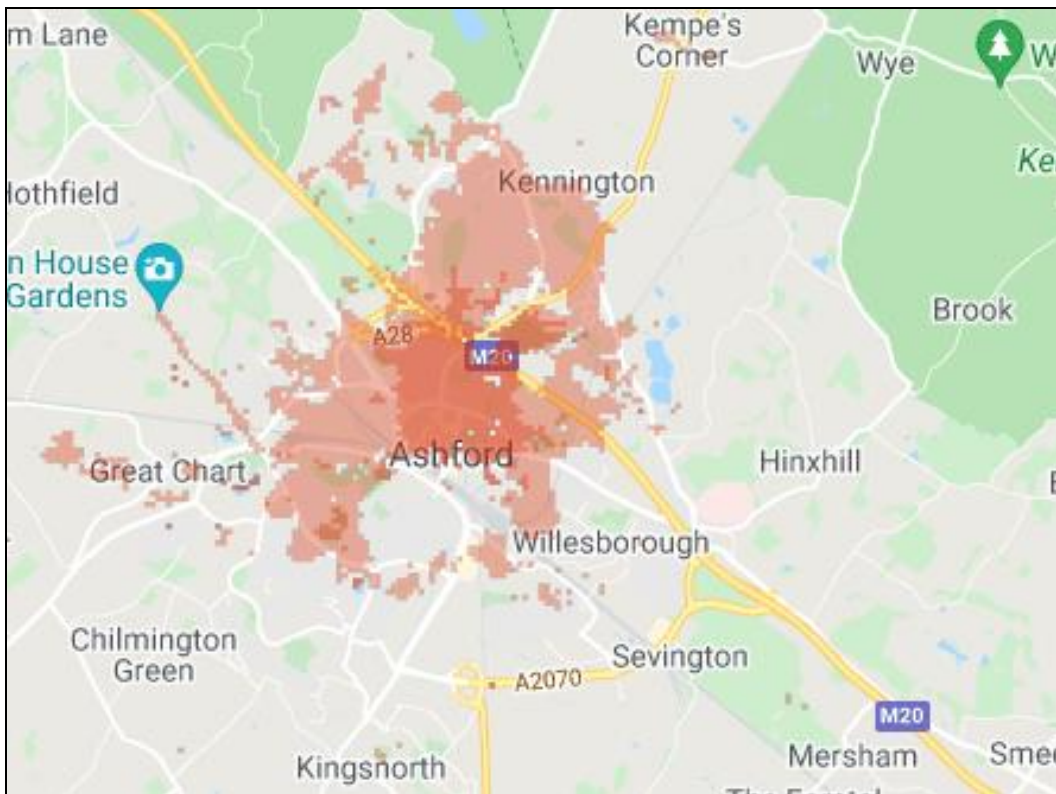


Figure 2. Indicative map of ID Mobile and Three coverage across Ashford urban area taken from providers' websites.

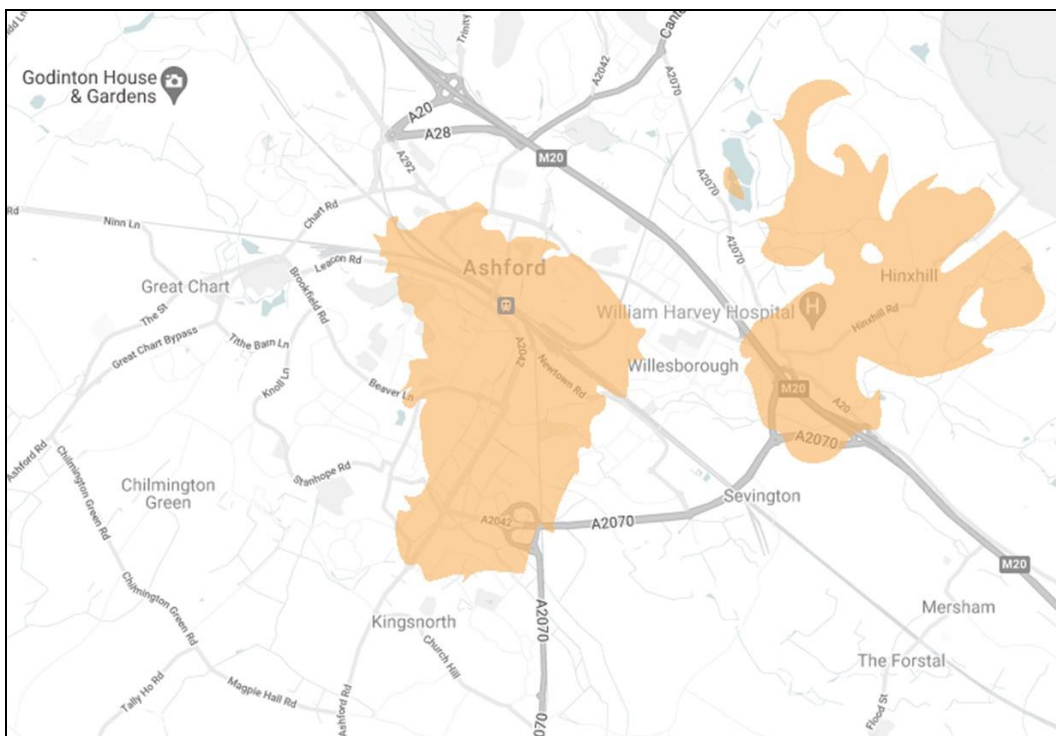


Figure 3. Indicative map of O2, Sky Mobile, GiffGaff and Tesco Mobile coverage across Ashford urban area taken from providers' websites.

Appendix F: Kent Analytics / KCC “Digital Exclusion in Ashford” report from July 2021

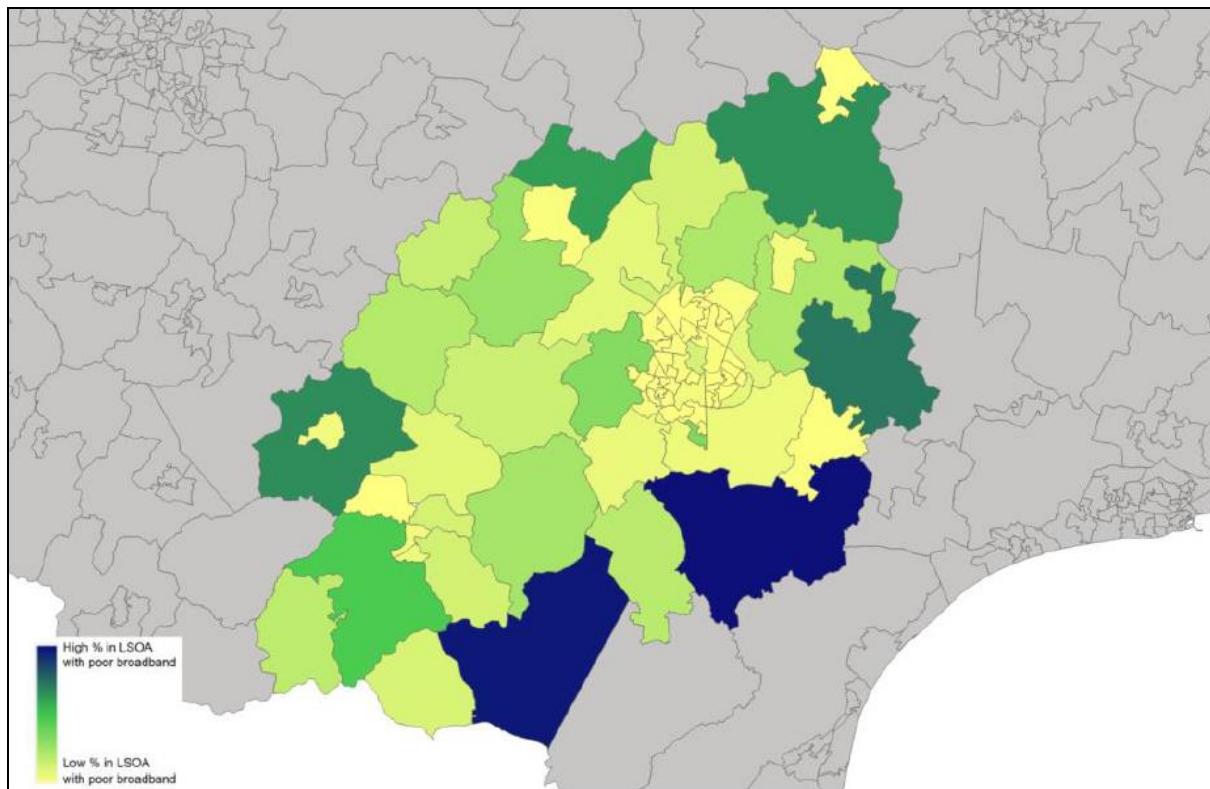


Figure 4. Map of the pattern of proportion of households with poor broadband speeds at LSOA level. The darker areas have the highest levels of poor broadband and the lighter areas have the lowest levels of poor broadband. The map shows data provided by the Ofcom Connected Nations report for Spring 2021 as reported in the Kent Analytics/KCC “Digital Exclusion in Ashford” report of July 2021.

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Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 30th September 2021

Report Title: The Resettlement of Afghan Nationals through the Government ARAP Scheme

**Report Author &
Job Title:** Anne Forbes
Resettlement Coordinator

**Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder for:** Cllr. Andrew Buchanan
Housing

Summary: The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was launched on 1 April 2021. Under the policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served. The situation in Afghanistan escalated very quickly indeed and as a result, the scheme is evolving at pace with new information, guidance and policy changes from Government being produced daily. The Government are now formulating further assistance schemes for other groups at risk and displaced by the fall of the Afghan Government.

The situation in Afghanistan has escalated quickly and as a result, the schemes to assist Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES) and other groups evacuated as a result of the fall of the Afghan Government are evolving at pace with new information and guidance from Government being produced daily.

Over the last six years, Ashford Borough Council has successfully worked alongside Government in respect of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), recently winning a major national award for its work in welcoming refugee families to the county, therefore Ashford are well placed and have sufficient expertise to resettle Afghans into the borough.

This report gives an overview of Ashford Borough Council's response to the Government's appeal to Local Authorities to assist in the ARAP and to the subsequent emergency evacuation of Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES) and their families and other qualifying Afghan nationals to continue to play its part in the national commitment to planned refugee resettlement under UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).

Key Decision: YES

**Significantly
Affected Wards:** All

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

- I. Acknowledge the debt of gratitude owed by the UK to the Afghan Locally Employed Staff.
- II. Support the offer to settle between 5 and 10 families in Ashford under the ARAP scheme.
- III. To support continuing development of projects and infrastructure to promote and enable successful integration and promote community cohesion to benefit the wider Ashford community.
- IV. A future report will come to Members in due course to approve funding for the programme.

Policy Overview: Living Ashford: quality housing and homes for all

Financial Implications:	None to the Authority. The scheme is fully funded by guaranteed grant funding claimed through the Home Office Resettlement Team.
Legal Implications	None
Equalities Impact Assessment	YES see appendix A to this report
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	None
Contact:	anne.forbes@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330826

Report Title: Continuation of Planned Refugee Resettlement beyond End of Current Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

Introduction and Background

1. Over the last six years, Ashford Borough Council has successfully worked alongside Government in respect of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), welcoming refugee families to the county and borough of Ashford. Following the success of this scheme, now the UKRS, and working in partnership with the Home Office Ashford Borough Council has committed to resettle between five and ten households from Afghanistan to Ashford from July 2021.
2. As with the UKRS, participation in the ARAP scheme on the part of local authorities is voluntary and the funding levels available to local authorities to run the scheme was to be for one year only however is currently being reviewed to look at options for additional support for participating Local Authorities.
3. The existing and dedicated Resettlement team within the Housing Service has taken responsibility for the management of the involvement of this new scheme on behalf of Ashford Borough Council. The first three families from Afghanistan arrived into the borough in July 2021 and these are each now settled into their accommodation, supported by the Resettlement Team and appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies.
4. Since committing to resettle between five and ten households the situation in Afghanistan has escalated at pace and is continuing to evolve, with a hotel in Ashford being procured by the Home Office to use as Bridging Accommodation for Afghans who have been evacuated from their home country. The Resettlement team and other members of the Housing Service and wider corporate colleagues have been working to support these families as they have arrived. Currently there are 25 families in the hotel and this equates to 130 people. One family of 4 has left to go to settled accommodation.
5. The council's excellent rapport with its public and private sector partners has ensured that mechanisms have been swiftly put in place to ensure timely engagement with statutory services including provision of access to primary care health assessment and care, and liaison to provide access to other healthcare provision such as dentists and opticians.
6. Ashford Borough Council has made the decision not use any social housing for arriving families so that there would be no impact on applicants to the Housing Waiting List. Families who have arrived in July have been provided accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (PRS), the Resettlement Team will continue to work with landlords in the PRS to secure additional accommodation to enable the authority to accept and meet the commitment to resettle between five and ten families. There will also be liaison with the authority's own social lettings agency 'A Better Choice for Lettings' should accommodation in the PRS become unavailable.
7. Individuals identified by the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) via this scheme for third country resettlement in the UK often present signs of trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety following family separation and other health needs following their time in exile living in extremely difficult circumstances. Fundamentally, the scheme supports the transitional needs of the resettled person and removes barriers to help them access national and local services in order to fully and permanently integrate into

UK society. We, along with partner agencies, work to empower individuals to achieve their full potential and meet their responsibilities as members of British society.

8. The most recent arrivals in October 2019 brought the total number of families resettled through Ashford to 34 (146 individuals with a further 13 children having been born since the families arrived).
9. On June 17th 2019, following the success of the scheme nationally, the Government announced the amalgamation of all current national planned refugee resettlement schemes into one scheme to continue beyond 2020. This will be called the Global Resettlement Scheme (GRS). [Immigration: Written Statement HCWS1627 (Commons) and HLWS1589(Lords)]
10. This report gives an overview of the ARAP Scheme nationally and locally and describes Ashford Borough Council's plans to continue to play its part in the national commitment to planned refugee resettlement under GRS.

Proposal/Current Position

11. Since December 2015, ABC has welcomed and resettled 34 refugee families under the UKRS equating to 8.5 families per year. We have also now resettled three families under ARAP and subject to access to accommodation expect to have housed a total of up to ten families before the end of 2021.
12. In September 2016, ABC identified the need for adults to be able to access additional language and integration training beyond the prescribed 8 hours per week of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision. In partnership with an Ashford based training company, Concept Training, a programme to support refugees to gain skills needed to access employment opportunities and integrate fully into the community was launched. The programme, Language and Integration Skills Training (LIST) has been recognised nationally as good practice and has been adopted by other local authorities.
13. All children from nursery age to 16 years attend a variety of schools across the Borough. Adults access English classes through Adult Education, college courses or Concept Training according to their abilities and preference.
14. There remains a challenge in securing learning opportunities for refugees aged 16-19 across the whole of Kent. In Ashford, we have developed a programme to enable this age group to fast track progress in English, maths and IT skills allowing them to access college courses of their choice as soon as possible after arrival. The situation has improved vastly since September 2017 with the introduction of new courses for this age group at Ashford College. We continue to work with education partners to increase choice and opportunities still further.
15. Ashford has been extremely successful in supporting refugees into employment. More than half the families now have at least one family member in paid employment. Of those refugees currently available for work, more than 40% have secured paid employment with the rest undertaking volunteering and work experience. This is much higher than the figures quoted nationally (3%) or regionally (11%). See attached overview and case studies (Appendix B).
16. Ashford's success in providing support for refugees to resettle and rebuild new lives in the borough has been recognised regionally and nationally and good practice acknowledged with various awards.

17. Ashford is approached regularly by other authorities seeking advice on various aspects of resettlement. The project co-ordinator received a British Empire Medal in the 2018 New Year's Honours List. The programme was awarded "Outstanding Achievement in Housing" at the 2018 Kent Housing Group and Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing Excellence Awards in 2018. Community and arts projects continue to receive positive coverage in the media. Most recently, the programme has been shortlisted for a national LGC (Local Government Chronical) Award, results to be announced in March 2020.
18. Under GRS, the UK will accept approximately 5000 of the most vulnerable refugees each year. Refugees assessed by United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as those for whom third country resettlement is the only viable option can be referred by UNHCR to the UK GRS for consideration. Refugees accepted to the UK under GRS will then be allocated by the Home Office Resettlement Team via regional Migration Partnerships to participating local authorities who have accommodation available to meet their needs.
19. As with VPRS, participation in the GRS on the part of local authorities is voluntary. The funding available to local authorities to run GRS is the same as VPRS. Authorities will be able to state the language/origin of refugees they feel best placed to support.
20. Kent has already indicated commitment to continue with resettlement in the other districts and boroughs as has Canterbury City Council (the only other Kent area directly managing their scheme locally).
21. The proposal is for Ashford to continue to welcome vulnerable families under the Government's GRS Scheme from 2020. New homes and futures would be offered to up to 10 households per year subject to suitable properties being available in the private rented sector.

Implications and Risk Assessment

22. Financially, the funding from the Home Office (central government) in support of our work on ARAP means we have experienced no risk in this regard. Grant funding claimable is claimed in arrears and is only for one year, therefore it is important to continue to monitor proposals for any changes to funding or cessation of the ARAP due to any change in policy or central government commitment, and adapt the Borough response accordingly.
23. Refugees resettled under GRS can be referred to the scheme by UNHCR from anywhere in the world. However, indications are that the majority (95%+) of refugees referred to the UK in the foreseeable future will originate from Syria and be located somewhere in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It is important to note that participating LAs can request referral of refugees from cultural backgrounds they are best placed to support. Therefore, we are proposing to continue to support families with Syrian origin as we have existing infrastructure in place to best support successful resettlement.
24. Ashford has developed a strong infrastructure and network through the excellent work and support for refugees during delivery of the UKRS since 2015. The model is adaptable to provide support for any vulnerable group arriving or already resident in the Borough in the future.

Equalities Impact Assessment

25. Members are referred to the attached Assessment.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

26. ABC continues to work closely with the Home Office, South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM), Kent County Council (for education and social care), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the NHS to ensure timely provision of services for arriving Afghans.
27. In addition to statutory services, ABC continues to work closely with third sector, voluntary, faith and community groups to enable effective community involvement and promote integration of arriving Afghans into their new communities.

Other Options Considered

28. To cease accepting families through ARAP and the Resettlement Team to continue work on the UKRS on behalf of the Borough Council.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

29. Ashford has proven to be innovative and forward thinking in developing a programme to support effective resettlement and integration of refugees in the community. Running the existing UKRS programme has brought resources to the Borough, which it would not otherwise be able to access and the ARAP scheme offers the same opportunity.
30. Ashford has developed a strong infrastructure and network of support for refugees since the commitment to the UKRS in 2015, supporting broader community cohesion objectives and community involvement and participation. The model is adaptable to provide support for any vulnerable group arriving or already resident in the Borough in the future, as achieved for the first three Afghan arrivals in July 2021.

Conclusion

31. Ashford remains well placed to continue to provide an important role in the resettlement of some of the most vulnerable refugees into new communities. There is a desire to continue planned refugee resettlement in Ashford under the Government's extension of VPRS the UKRS from 2020 and offer new homes for up to 10 families per year subject to availability of suitable properties in the private rented sector. In addition to the commitment to the UKRS Ashford is also well placed to provide this same important role to the resettlement of Afghan families through ARAP, with a commitment to each family/household for the extent of the funding period (initially one year but now extended to three years – details to be confirmed).

Portfolio Holder's Views – Andrew Buchanan.

32. I am proud and pleased to support the existing and future planned resettlement schemes in the Borough, continuing to build on the vast experience and expertise developed within the Authority and especially the dedicated Resettlement Team within Housing since 2015.
33. I acknowledge and have witnessed whilst visiting the bridging hotel in Ashford the difference we are making to the lives of some of those most affected by the global refugee crisis and more recently those impacted by the events unfolding in Afghanistan. It is important that we continue this good work and I fully support our continuing efforts to provide the established and evolving level of assistance, welcoming vulnerable families into our communities.
34. I would like to thank all of the staff at Ashford Borough Council who have been involved in supporting the Afghan families at the bridging hotel, this support, along with the response

and partnership working with the Hotel management and staff has been a huge factor in how successful our response has been.

35. I wish to thank each of the private landlords who have already helped, and would like to encourage others to offer suitable properties they may have in support of this project.
36. The continuing support from the residents of Ashford, third sector and voluntary organisations and community and faith groups continues to be key to enabling successful integration. Over recent weeks the support has been beyond expectation. The response has been humbling and heart-warming and I am confident that these strong community bonds will continue to develop and that we can use this to create a long lasting legacy and continue to set an exemplary standard of integration into our existing and thriving communities of Ashford.

Contact and Email

37. Anne Forbes
38. anne.forbes@ashford.gov.uk



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Impact Assessment

When is an assessment needed?

Councils must assess the impact of **proposed policies or practices** while they are being developed, with analysis available for members before a decision is made (i.e. at Cabinet).

Broadly, *policies and practices* can be understood to embrace a full range of different activities, such as Cabinet decisions which substantially change the way in which we do something, setting budgets, developing high-level strategies, and organisational practices such as internal restructuring. Assessments should especially be undertaken if the activity relates closely to an equalities group (see next page).

Importantly, this does not include reports that are 'for note' or do not propose substantial changes – assessments should only be considered when we propose to do something differently.

Assessments should also be carried out when conducting a large-scale review of **existing policies or practices** to check that they remain non-discriminatory. This does not mean filling out an assessment on every report on a subject – it is up to you to decide if the report's scope or scale warrants an assessment.

1. General Information

1.1 Name of project, policy, procedure, practice or issue being assessed	The Resettlement of Afghan Nationals through the Government ARAP Scheme
1.2 Service / Department	Housing
1.3 Head of Service	Sharon Williams
1.4 Assessment Lead Officer	Anne Forbes
1.5 Date of Assessment	
1.6 Is this assessment of an existing or a proposed project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	Existing policy and practice

2. What is Being Assessed?

2.1 What are the aims of this project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	To support the Resettlement of Afghan Nationals through the Government ARAP Scheme
2.2 Who is intended to benefit from this project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	Afghan families coming to the Borough under the ARAP Scheme and supporting wider community cohesion.
2.3 Who else is involved in the provision of this project, policy, procedure, practice or issue? i.e. other sections, public or private bodies	
- within Ashford BC	Resettlement Team - Housing
- from other agencies	Home Office – funding and national policy and practice development and dissemination. South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) – regional coordination, sharing of good practice locally, regionally and nationally, personnel education and training, refugee participation. Kent County Council (access to Education and Social Care) Education and training providers (Adult Ed, Colleges, Concept Training) CCG and Local Health Trusts (access to healthcare)

	Private sector landlords NGOs (AVC) Community and Faith Groups
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3. Possible Sources of Information

In order to assess the impact of proposed decision it is important to bring together all information you have on it to, analyse them and come to conclusions on how it affects those with protected characteristics.

Information on a policy, project or procedure can come in many forms:-

- Census and other demographic information
- User satisfaction and other surveys
- Previous consultation exercises
- Performance Indicators
- Eligibility Criteria
- Service uptake data
- Complaints
- Customer Profiling
- MOSAIC data

In order to come to conclusions on impacts in section 4 you **must** have taken in to account all appropriate information, and be able to provide this if necessary in support of the judgements you make.

Also, it is not enough to have broad information on service users – to meet equalities duties this information **must** be broken down – where applicable – into the relevant protected characteristics which may be affected by this decision. For example, when considering disabled access to a new community facility, overall usage figures are not enough – an understanding of how many disabled users within this total must be demonstrated.

The protected characteristics are :-

Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage and
civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity

Race Religion and belief Sex Sexual orientation

More information on the definitions of these characteristics can be found here - <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/protected-characteristics-definitions/>

4. What judgements can we make?				
4.1 Does the evidence already available indicate that the project, policy, procedure, practice or issue may affect these groups differently? (please check the relevant box and provide evidence where possible)	Positive Impact?	Negative Impact?	No Differential Impact	If yes, can it be justified (and how)?

Impact Factors:				
Age (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age range of those currently supported is from birth to 80
Disability (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage / Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We have resettled 34 households originating from Syria between December 2015 and November 2019 under VPRS. From March 2021 to July 2021 we welcomed 3 more households through UKRS. In July and August 2021 we welcomed 3 Afghan families through the ARAP Scheme
Religion / Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most households have identified themselves as Muslim (practicing or non-practicing) with the exception of one multi-faith family and one practicing Christian family.
Sexual Orientation (please detail any specific groups considered)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. Conclusions

5.1 Does the decision maximise opportunities to promote equality and good inter-group relations? If "yes" please state how?

Yes – a key part of the programme has been to help integrate these families into their new communities
 No

5.2 Based on the answers to the above can we confidently say that in its present form the decision treats different groups fairly (bearing in mind "fairly" may mean differently) and that no further amendment is required?

Yes – although getting more support than other non-resettlement scheme groups this reflects the desperate situations they are fleeing.
 No

If further action is identified to ensure fair impacts please complete the Action Plan available on the intranet and attach it to this form

6. Monitoring and Review

How will monitoring of this policy, procedure or practice be reported (where appropriate)?	Regular reports to Cabinet and on-going monitoring of central government policy and funding in support of the ARAP
When is it proposed to next review the project, policy, procedure, practice or issue?	March 2022

Ashford Borough Council: Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in Committee Room Nos. 1 and 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the 7th September 2021.

Present:

Cllr. B Heyes (Chairman);

Mr. P Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Cornish, T. Heyes, Krause

Mr. S Campkin, Mr. D Robey

Mrs. C Drury, Mrs. A Hicks, Mr. A Rogers – KALC Representatives.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Feacey, Spain, Mr. C Simkins.

Also present:

Cllrs. Hayward, Howard-Smith, Sparks, Wedgbury, Wright.

In Attendance:

Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager – ABC, Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader – ABC, Civil Enforcement Team Leader – ABC

Senior Highway Manager – KCC, District Manager – Ashford – KCC

Mr C Evans – National Highways, Chief Inspector Nick Sparkes – Kent Police.

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting the Chairman advised that he had brought Agenda Item 9 – A2070 Safety – Speeding and Anti-Social Behaviour – Discussion item, forward on the Agenda as he recognised there was a lot of interest in this item and certain contributors had attended specifically for that item.

94 Declarations of Interest

Mr Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived adjoining the Sevington Inland Border Facility site.	99
Mr Campkin	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a member of South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council.	96

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Cornish	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as she lived near the A2070.	96
Mrs Drury	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as she lived on the A20 in an area prevalent for HGV parking.	100
Mrs Hicks	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council.	96
Wedgbury	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council and as he was involved in installing the original toucan crossing at the A2070.	96

95 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 1st June 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record, subject to noting that the Declaration of Interest attributed to Mrs Drury was in fact made by Councillor Cornish.

96 A2070 Safety – Speeding and Anti-Social Behaviour – Discussion Item

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Ms Jaworska, a local resident, attended and spoke on this item. She said that as a resident of Kingsnorth she was one of the many thousands who were affected by inappropriate speeding and lack of enforcement on the A2070 and surrounding A2042. Safety was of course their biggest concern and as a parent of a 19 year old daughter, who drove to and from work, she was worried that she would be the victim of an accident caused by speeding drivers. Dangerous driving along these roads certainly discouraged her and her family from walking and cycling in this area. Noise, caused by aggressive driving, accelerating, wheel spinning and skidding, was also contributing to stress related health problems including sleep disruption, raised blood pressure and heart disease. They were often woken in the middle of the night to the sound of rapid acceleration and screeching tyres as vehicles repeatedly sped around the local roundabouts. She considered that the nonsensical speed limits on the local network of dual-carriageways indicated to the drivers what was expected of them and with the national speed limit deemed to be acceptable in certain sections, this seemed to encourage drivers to use these roads as their own private race track. Quiet enjoyment of the area was ruined by the noise of speeding drivers at all times of the day and night every single day. Motorbikes in particular could regularly be heard speeding and they were not merely passing through as you could hear them racing up and down the same stretch of the dual-carriageways. In fact, she knew that the A2070 was advertised on certain motorbike enthusiast websites as “one of the best

places in Kent to race without speed enforcement restrictions”, so not only did they have local drivers but also “speed tourists” who were treating local roads and residents with such disrespect. She considered that appropriate speed limits and enforcement must become an urgent priority with the emphasis placed on preventing casualties, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life of local residents. Without appropriate speed limits and adequate enforcement she felt the rights of entire communities were being neglected and the police were being prevented from catching and deterring speeding drivers. She wondered how much police time was being wasted by local residents calling in to report speeding, but by the time they arrived the perpetrators were long gone. She knew that local drivers co-ordinated and altered other drivers when the police were in the area and simply waited until they had left to meet up and race again.

She concluded by saying that works were scheduled to commence to replace the Orbital Park (McDonalds) roundabout with traffic lights in order to increase road safety, but she was concerned this would only encourage higher speeds when the lights were green and thought that these works provided an opportunity to overhaul road safety in the entire area by imposing safer and more appropriate speed restrictions and ensuring these were backed by a comprehensive speed enforcement programme. This would make their roads safer and give local residents the quiet enjoyment they deserved.

A number of Members spoke on this item and raised the following points:

- This had been a longstanding issue that this Board had been discussing since at least 2017. Numerous letters had been written to Highways England (now National Highways) over the years and an application had been made for a decibel meter to get to the bottom of the issue. Some traffic surveys had been carried out which had been useful, but now was the time for more detailed traffic surveys between the Cloverleaf and Bridgefield roundabouts, including deployment of the decibel meter and then options around variable messaging signs or speed cameras on that stretch of road could be explored.
- There was a particular issue at the pedestrian crossing where drivers regularly sped and jumped the lights when people were waiting to cross. Could the police deploy vehicles to undertake speed checks on that stretch of road by the toucan crossing? Particularly in the early mornings at the weekend. That piece of road was the perfect length for motorcyclists to undertake “time-trials” and this involved accelerating as hard as they could for a quarter of a mile. This type of anti-social behaviour was unacceptable and it had led to at least three motorcyclists being killed or injured on that stretch of road. There was a need for a reduced speed limit, a permanent acoustic/speed camera and regular speed enforcement on this stretch of road.
- Whilst the results of the speed surveys may have proven a little inconclusive, it was undeniable that there was a major issue on this road with problems being experienced by residents at all times of the day and night and the problem had got a lot worse in the last four or five years, particularly in the summer. It was true to say that speeding may not be the main cause of

accidents, enforcement cameras were likely to encourage generally safer and more responsible driving behaviour and improve the overall situation.

- Whilst the residents who lived closest were obviously the worst affected, the noise was loud enough to spread to other areas quite some distance away. The main cause of the problem was accelerating motorbikes and their extremely loud exhausts and speed/acoustic monitoring would therefore be welcomed. Education had been mentioned, but this was considered unrealistic. This was a hobby in to which many had invested a lot of money and they were unlikely to change their behaviour without potential repercussions.

Chief Inspector Nick Sparkes (Kent Police District Commander for Ashford) advised that they had been attempting to police this issue for a number of years and it was challenging. Unfortunately there were currently no safe locations between the Cloverleaf and Bridgefield roundabouts to deploy speed detection vans, so they had tended to police either side of that and had run a number of operations (including in conjunction with Sussex police). He gave a number of examples of particular deployments they had made including the numbers of Officers involved and the results. They had tried engagement tactics, encouraging drivers to drive more responsibly in the area and had increased police visibility, however the problem, as had been highlighted, was that this was not a precise type of anti-social behaviour or breaking of road traffic laws. The timing of the issue was quite weather dependent which made it difficult to allocate resources. The motorcycles that they had stopped were almost exclusively road legal and riding within the law. They did have noisy exhausts but were normally within the legal limits (although perhaps deliberately right on the edge). So public perception and the noise associated with the acceleration of some of these motorcycles was accepted, but call levels in to the police did not indicate that this was an issue that merited a more dedicated response over and above some other priority issues. Geographically this was also a difficult issue to police. The road had been designed poorly and left itself open to this kind of situation. They had engaged with partners over a number of years and been advised that re-engineering was not an option, the accident statistics did not support a significant change and were in the majority of cases nothing to do with speeding, but driver error along with anti-social driving.

Some practical issues that Chief Inspector Sparkes mentioned included asking for a consistent message out to the public to report incidents which would help him understand the scale of the problem and bid for resources. He stated that the submission of evidence via dashcam footage could now be used, and had helped to prosecute offenders and offending vehicles had been seized under the Section 59 Police Reform Act. He was looking to deploy extra resources towards the issue of speeding and, if Member funding was available, there may be opportunities to employ Officers on their rest days on specific issues. These were only short term and potential solutions though. Longer term solutions were obviously needed however because policing their way out of this problem was not the solution.

Colin Evans from National Highways (NH) said he wanted to thank Chief Inspector Sparks for his assistance with the recent joint operation they had run on this stretch of the A2070 and the local Councillors who had been in regular touch with him on

this issue. He said he did not want people to think that NH were not interested, did not care or were not doing anything, but this was a very tricky issue as a Highway Authority as they were limited on what they could do and fund, and clear need had to be evidenced before they could apply for funding. He had initially thought that average speed camera systems would be highly beneficial and he had started work in this regard, but he just did not have the data to justify putting that forward. There had to be Ministerial approval for any new camera systems and it was highly unlikely that would be approved given average speeds under the current speed limit which met the current criteria. It did appear to be a very small number of 'high end' offenders who were causing the issues here. In terms of the noise nuisance, there were rules around vehicle exhausts, but not necessarily the engines. Decibel meters connected to variable messaging systems may be an option, but these were less effective with motorbikes where the noise of the engine was often greater than the exhausts. The actual messages able to be displayed on the strategic road network were also set and limited. NH did use acoustic cameras, but this was more around the noise generated from road surfaces rather than engine/vehicle noise. He considered continuation of the current partnership approach was the way forward, with a focus on education, training, communication and ultimately enforcement. Mr Evans reiterated in conclusion that he was not unwilling or unable to help. Whilst there were a number of things they could not do that they might otherwise like to, there were things that could be done and he would like to focus on those through partnership working. Safety remained their primary imperative and he would help where he could.

Rather than speed enforcement cameras if these could not get funding, the Board discussed the potential for CCTV cameras to be deployed to gather evidence of anti-social behaviour at the roundabouts etc. This was considered a route that merited further examination.

The Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager – ABC proposed that from a community safety perspective, the key stakeholders should form a small Multi-Agency Task and Finish Group to explore production of a strategy for the A2070. This could consider all of the matters raised in this debate with a view to bringing a proposal back to this Board ahead of next summer. The Board confirmed their support for such a group and strategy. Both Chief Inspector Sparkes and Mr Evans indicated their willingness to be involved in this work.

The Vice-Chairman advised that on the permitted messages for variable message system, he understood the point but advised that they had worked closely with the Department for Transport on the Inland Border Facility so there may be some opportunities to exert some influence. The Board also considered it would be worth the Chairman writing to Grant Shapps MP to lobby for changes to the criteria for enforcement cameras.

Resolved:

That the points raised during the debate be noted and a small Multi-Agency Task and Finish Group be set up to explore production of a strategy for the A2070. This could consider all of the matters raised in this debate with a view to bringing a proposal back to this Board by June 2022.

97 Parking and Waiting Restrictions – update summary

The report provided an update and summarised parking and waiting restriction schemes that had been through the Joint Transportation Board.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

98 Highway Works Programme Update

The report provided an update and summarised the Highways Works Programme and the identified schemes approved for construction in the next two years.

The Ashford District Manager – KCC advised that the Re-tread schemes schedules for May 2021 listed on page 15 of the report had now been completed.

The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:

- The Moat Field Meadow toucan crossing was once again defective. Councillor Wedgbury was encouraged to report this again via the usual KCC channels.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

99 Update on the Sevington Inland Border Facility

The Senior Highway Manager – KCC gave a verbal update on the Sevington Inland Border Facility. He displayed a recent aerial photograph of the site and advised that work was continuing in two specific areas – the construction of the DEFRA Border Control buildings in readiness for 1st January 2022 and the creation of the recommissioned green viewing corridor to allow for the historic views between Sevington and Mersham churches. Further planting would happen here during the Autumn. There had been delays on the construction of the buildings in response to changes being made at the Dover site.

In response to questions he had been asked previously, he advised that there had been surveys carried out on the lighting due to concerns raised by local residents that it was too bright. Following the survey, some mitigation measures had been put in place such as baffles to reduce the impact and looking at a control management system which would automatically dim lights that were not being used or in areas where there was no activity. Lighting had also been turned off in the north west and south east corners of the site as these were only going to be used to accommodate increased capacity. He also advised that unfortunately there was still no update on the permanent signage on the M20 and that was still work in progress.

A KALC Member asked that any light surveys consider the wider issues of impact on other villages further out, especially in the context of the Borough's Dark Skies Policy.

Members mentioned that there were currently issues with HGVs using Monument Way, Willesborough as a rat run and getting stuck in Boys Hall Road and Church Road. Requests had been made to install "Not Suitable for HGVs" signs in these locations.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

100 HGV Parking Enforcement Update

The Civil Enforcement Team Leader advised that from 1st January 2021 HGV enforcement had been undertaken by KCC under a new experimental traffic order which had been set up in East Kent during the Brexit transition. At the end of the six months, on the 30th June, the DfT did not agree an extension but confirmed that Ashford was authorised to go back to its Traffic Regulation Order for enforcement with clamping. ABC had only become aware of this at a very late stage in June and was not in a position to go back out enforcing immediately. They had since worked to re-set enforcement with the team and the clamping contractor and overnight enforcement had restarted earlier that week. They had also been out monitoring before they were able to enforce and were pleased to report that the numbers of HGVs parking, especially on the A20, were not in excessive figures. She said that she would give a fuller report in December following three months of enforcement.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

101 Date of Next Meeting

14th December 2021

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Compliance and Enforcement Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held on Microsoft Teams on the 27th July 2021.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman);

Cllrs. Buchanan, Forest, Shorter, Spain.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Cllr. Forest attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Feacey.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Barrett, Feacey.

Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

Also in attendance:

Cllrs. Harman, Ledger, Michael.

Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager; Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader; Team Leader Planning Enforcement; Team Leader Environmental Enforcement; Solicitor to the Council; Senior Planning Lawyer; Investigation and Enforcement Support Manager; Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1. Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Buchanan made a Voluntary Announcement as he knew one of the owners of the sites referred to in the Planning Enforcement Update report.

2. Notes of the Meeting of 27th April 2021

- 2.1 A Member drew attention to paragraph 5.2, bullet point 1, of the Notes and said that he had not yet received details of the audit list he had requested at the last meeting. The Team Leader – Planning Enforcement undertook to ensure that these details were sent to him.
- 2.2 The Board agreed the notes as an accurate record.

3. Environmental Crime Enforcement in Ashford

- 3.1 The Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager introduced the report, which identified environmental crime enforcement activities for the period April to July 2021 and highlighted the key points in the report. He said that the Environmental Enforcement Team was now in place, with the support of the Fraud Investigation Team. He formally thanked Rebecca Cox for her support

in moving forward with the implementation of the team, and said the shared knowledge between the two teams in interviewing offenders was invaluable.

3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments were made:

- A Member noted that the booking system was still in place at KCC Waste and Recycling sites and he questioned whether this was deterring residents from using the sites and having an impact on fly-tipping. The Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager said this may be the case but KCC was setting up systems to accommodate ad hoc arrivals at the sites, which might encourage more use of the sites, even for those who had not booked. He said this would be discussed further at the Districts meeting. A Member said that the current booking system at the waste sites was no excuse for fly-tipping and that the Council should not be seen to condone or excuse fly-tipping in any way.
- A Member noted that no eye-witnesses had been willing to come forward regarding the fly-tipping at Etchden Road. He said people were clearly not prepared to speak out because of repercussions. Camera systems were needed on known tipping points, and these should be covert. He asked whether it was possible to prosecute from evidence from covert cameras. The Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager replied that this was difficult and that signage was needed a reasonable distance away from the cameras. He said Officers were currently evaluating suitable locations, and that overt cameras had also proved successful.
- A Member noted that there had been no reports of fly-tipping on agricultural land and believed that some farmers cleared any fly-tipping themselves. He considered that this kind of fly-tipping should still be included in any reports and that the message should be given to farmers that the Council was working for them.
- A Member asked that in future any reports should include a map locating all the fly-tipping locations for a specified period of months. He also asked if it was possible to gather information on the motives of fly-tippers to try to get a better understanding of the motivation. Finally, he considered that publicity should be maximized around the consequences of fly-tipping. The Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager said the website would be revised to highlight the success stories and the consequences of fly-tipping. A Member suggested that more information should be disseminated in the Ashford For You magazine, and the Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager confirmed that this could be arranged, and that social media platforms were already being used to raise awareness.
- In response to a question about reporting methods, the Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager confirmed that most fly-tipping reports were received through the online portal, and this proved a successful method for making comments and reporting incidents.

- A Member asked whether there were any plans to put noise cameras into place. The Environmental Contracts & Enforcement Manager explained that this fell under the remit of the Environmental Protection Team, but he would talk to Officers in that team and report back to a future meeting.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

4 Anti-Social Behaviour in Ashford - Update

- 4.1 The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key points and data within the report, which provided the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) performance update for the period April to June 2021.
- 4.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:
 - A Member noted the additional column on page 14 of the agenda to show a comparison on cases received by ABC Community Safety Unit from the same period of time this year compared to last year. He said this was very useful and requested that an additional column be added to Appendix A to show year on year comparison.
 - A Member mentioned the problem with drug use in the Borough, and considered that the level of reporting seemed low. He asked what was being done to tackle this problem strategically. The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader said that Officers were working with Housing colleagues to share intelligence, and that she would report back to a future meeting with more details.
 - A Member raised the issue of nuisance vehicles and noise complaints. He considered that more proactive work was needed to tackle the problem, with an easier reporting mechanism for bulk vehicle registration reports. The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader said she would discuss this further with Officers and return to a future meeting with more information. The Chairman suggested that Officers should identify the most effective ways of combating the problem and return to the Board with suggested resolutions. A Member considered that many residents did not report car noise nuisance and he questioned whether this was a bigger problem than the data suggested. He asked what could be done to encourage residents to call and make noise nuisance reports. The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader said that at the moment Officers were working on speaking to residents and looking at solutions to this issue. She acknowledged that confidence in the reporting system was essential. She considered that more publicity was needed, and she would liaise with Marketing colleagues to consider how to promote the

reporting app more extensively. A Member considered that there should be an article in the next residents' newsletter from the Council and the Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader agreed to follow up on this. The Chairman requested a sub-report on this item within the usual report to the next meeting.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

5 Planning Enforcement Update

5.1 The Team Leader – Planning Enforcement introduced this item, which provided Members with an overview of the work of the Planning Enforcement Team for the reporting period April to June 2021. She highlighted and expanded on the key points within the report.

5.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:

- A Member praised Officers for the breadth of the work undertaken and the persistence to take cases to court. He considered this protected the integrity of the Planning system and the Council's reputation. In response to a question about resources, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement said that the recent infrastructure had resulted in a team of four Officers. However, one of the Officers had been seconded to the Housing Service, which did result in a heavy workload for the remaining three Officers. In response to a question about Officers' wellbeing under such pressure, she said that it was a strong supportive team and that the work of the dedicated senior administrator was critical. Safeguards were in place and there was a good system of feedback in the team. The team had to prioritise enforcement work, and one of the biggest challenges was to explain to this to disgruntled residents. It was helpful to have understanding of this from Members and to have this prioritisation issue communicated to Parish Councils. The Chairman asked the Team Leader Planning Enforcement to arrange a meeting with the Head of Planning and Development to discuss this matter further. The Team Leader Planning Enforcement advised that Planning Enforcement Officers were scarce, as had been proved during previous attempts at recruitment, and this needed to be borne in mind when considering resources.
- In response to a question about Immunity Periods, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that this was the period during which a local planning authority could take formal action. She also explained that Stop Notices from Planning went hand in hand with Enforcement Notices. Regarding the enforcement process, she explained that it was important first to establish whether there was a breach, and, if so, whether it was unacceptable in terms of planning policy. If the answer was yes, the resident would be invited to submit a planning application. If this was considered unsound and was refused, the resident would be added to the Enforcement List. They would also be asked to rectify the

situation voluntarily as negotiation was the preferred solution. Formal action and an Enforcement Notice were considered the last resort. There were also many cases, where for a number of reasons, it was considered not expedient or in the public interest to pursue formal action.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

6 Date of Next Meetings

6.1 26th October at 10am (venue TBC)

Councillor Bell (Chairman)
Compliance and Enforcement Board

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ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL: NOTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION & INVESTMENT BOARD

25th August 2021

Attending: Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)
Cllr. Bartlett
Cllr. Clokie
Cllr. Ovenden
Cllr. Shorter

Also in attendance Cllr. Iliffe

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Corporate Property and Projects
Commercial Development & Regeneration Manager
Estates Manager
Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure
Head of Corporate Policy, ED & Comms
Communications & Marketing Manager
Head of Service Port Health
Economic Development Manager
Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development)
Head of Finance and IT
Member Services & Ombudsman Liaison Officer

	ACTION
<p>1. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett declared that he was a Member of Kennington Community Council and that he had written the Central Ashford Community Forum's response to a planning application on land next to Mabledon Avenue.</p>	
<p>2. Notes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on 29th June 2021 were agreed and confirmed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>3. Ashford Indoor Bowls Club</p> <p>Members agreed that the Bowls Club should be encouraged to grow and sustain their membership base and to become more open to the community in general. Any club subsidised by the Council should have an open membership and embrace access</p>	

<p>by the general public. The Estates Manager confirmed that the Bowls Club had CASC status (Community Amateur Sports Club) which was the equivalent of charity status for a sports organisation. The Principal Solicitor advised that it would not be appropriate to adopt the approach taken to the S2 site as the Community Uses agreement was not wholly transferrable, although some of the principles could be adapted for the Bowls Club facility at Victoria Park. Officers advised that at a recent meeting Bowls Club members had indicated a willingness by the Club to adopt a more proactive approach going forward.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That a Service Level Agreement be put in place, led by Cultural Services; b) That the lease be offered on reduced terms for a period of 2 years, subject to measured and tangible improvements in membership, led by Corporate Property; c) That interim progress reports be received from the Indoor Bowls Club by Cultural Services; d) That these arrangements be scrutinised and reviewed at 2 years by both the Cultural and Corporate Property Services. 	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Culture, Tourism & Leisure</p>
<p>4. Carlton Road Business Park – Unit Lease</p> <p>Members discussed the commercial arrangements of the current tenants of the site, as well as the future viability of their operation. Officers explained that they were seeking to assist in the creation of jobs and opportunities in Ashford, although it was recognised that this could be a risky inward investment opportunity. Members supported a cautious approach, with the offer of a further 3 months' occupancy, and an emphasis on keeping the Tenancy at Will status.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>To allow the current tenant to continue their occupancy but review their progress in 3 months' time to see how much they had been able to grow the business and their level of turnover.</p>	<p>Estates Manager</p>
<p>5. Land at Mabledon Avenue</p> <p>The Estates Manager introduced this item and highlighted the key points within the report.</p> <p>Members supported the recommendations and considered that this would be a sound investment. It was noted that the price of land per acre was very high, but it was accepted that this was the</p>	

<p>current state of the market for parcels of land in the town centre.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>That officers be authorised to pay a figure not exceeding the sum agreed by the Board for the site. Cultural Services to explore the opportunity for this piece of land to be incorporated as part of the overall cycling and walking strategy.</p>	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Culture, Tourism & Leisure</p>
<p>6. NCP Car Park Lease</p> <p>The Estates Manager introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key issues within the report.</p> <p>Members were in support of the recommendations.</p> <p>Agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Officers negotiate a surrender of the lease back to the Council at a figure not less than agreed by the Board in a full and final settlement of all liabilities to the Council; (b) A surrender agreement be expedited at the earliest opportunity; (c) The Parking, Transport and Highways Team develop their plans to take over the management of the car park at the appropriate time, and report further on potential tariffs and their rationale for further consideration. 	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Community Safety & Wellbeing</p>
<p>7. Elwick Site Update</p> <p>The Head of Commercial Property and Projects introduced this item and highlighted the main points within the report. The Principal Solicitor gave advice on the various elements of the proposed supplemental agreement.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>Members noted the progress on reaching agreement on the terms of the supplemental agreement.</p>	
<p>8. Investment Opportunity in Town Centre</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Property and Projects gave a verbal update on this item. He advised Members of an opportunity to acquire a key town centre site.</p> <p>Members discussed this opportunity in some detail and the</p>	

<p>Deputy Chief Executive advised that new guidance from the PWLB meant that a loan could be obtained, provided the site was acquired for regeneration purposes. However, if purchased to operate as currently, the Council would jeopardise its ability to access PWLB funding for any purpose. If this project were to continue it would be necessary to provide a clear strategy for future use in order to manage this risk. It was agreed that further information was required on a potential tenant for the site and officers were asked to follow up on this question.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>That Officers continue to investigate this opportunity and provide further information at future meetings. This should be a regular item at ERIB meetings for the time being in order to keep this key site in mind.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Property & Projects/Economic Development Manager</p>
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>7th September at 10am in the Council Chamber.</p>	

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Ashford Borough Council: Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on Microsoft Teams on **5th August 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Bartlett (Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Bell, N. Bell, Blanford, Chilton, Clokie, Harman, B. Heyes, Ledger, Walder.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Cllr N. Bell attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Shorter and Cllr Chilton attended as Substitute Member for Cllr Spain.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Shorter, Spain.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Chilton, Michael, Sparks, C. Suddards, L. Suddards, Wedgbury.

In attendance:

Head of Planning & Development; Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure; Deputy Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure; Principal Solicitor - Strategic Development; Senior Planning & Development Solicitor; Member Services Officer.

1 Notes of the last meeting

- 1.1 The Notes of the meeting of the Task Group held on 24th June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Housing Delivery Test and Five Year Housing Land Supply 2021-2026

- 2.1 The Head of Planning & Development and the Deputy Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure gave a presentation, which covered:

- Housing Delivery Test
- Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)
- Five Year Requirement
- Calculating Supply – what sites can we count
- Sites that are counted in Supply
- Stodmarsh
- Windfall assumptions
- Factors which affect the Supply
- Implications and Actions moving forward

- Decision Making and Weight of Local Plan
- What could we do to improve the position
- Recommendation

2.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion (for the first part of which he was absent, during which time Cllr N. Bell took the chair) and the following comments/points were raised:

- In response to a question regarding marginal sustainable settlements, and the mechanism by which sites came forward, the Head of Planning & Development explained that policy HOU5 contained an extensive list of criteria, upon which applications were considered on their own merits. A discussion of this policy would be had by the Task Group at a future meeting.
- A question was asked regarding the composition of housing delivery over the last year, and whether flats were more deliverable during the pandemic. The Head of Planning & Development explained that flatted developments came forward and were completed in large totals, as opposed to Housing estates with smaller parcels and various phases.
- A Member spoke about Stodmarsh and the issues it had raised. It was confirmed that some existing developments were on hold, until a solution to Stodmarsh could be found. The ability for sites within the town centre to mitigate their nutrient impact was less than that of Greenfield sites. Some developers were proposing to control their nutrient impact on site by creating their own wetland, but for others, a strategic solution was required.
- In respect of the timescale for a solution to Stodmarsh, there were a number of variables to consider, including land acquisition, wetland design and permissions.
- It was noted by a Member that the government were considering a potential crackdown on land banking, so this was something to consider for the future.
- The Chairman and the Principal Solicitor - Strategic Development highlighted the importance for Members to remember that both the agenda papers and discussions within the meetings of the Task Group were highly confidential and should at no time be discussed outside the Borough Council. Regarding the Stodmarsh issue, the Council had published a position statement on its website, and a very recent Cabinet report; and other issues discussed represented continually evolving positions.
- The Head of Planning & Development added that the Council were duty bound to publish an annual position statement on their Housing Land Supply, around November 2021, which would contain the exact final figures.

Resolved:

That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group agreed to:

- 1) Note the provisional Housing Delivery Test Result**
- 2) Update the public HDT position on the website (once confirmed by MHCLG) but retain reference to the ongoing actions in the 2020 Action Plan**
- 3) Note the provisional 5 year Housing Land Supply figure and advice given at the meeting**
- 4) The final HLS Position Statement for 2021-2026 being agreed by the Head of Planning & Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development and the Chairman of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group, once all the remaining calculations have been finalised, and its being published on the Council's website (in November) to frame future decision making.**

3 Brownfield Land Register and Permission in Principle

3.1 The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure introduced the report, which covered key points including:

- The Brownfield Register
- Permission in Principle (PiP)
- Updating the Land Register at an appropriate time

3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments/questions were raised:

- A Member commented that he was surprised that no developer had applied yet for PiP. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure explained that three applications had been received, and had all been refused. Generally, developers would prefer to follow the outline permission and then reserved matters route as it offered the most certainty.
- It was asked whether updates to the Brownfield Land Register should be more regular. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure acknowledged that the register had not been regularly updated owing to other priorities throughout the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group note the contents of the report and agree that the Ashford Borough Council Brownfield Land Register is updated at an appropriate point during the next Local Plan Review.

4 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure introduced this item which was regarding an update to the NPPF.
- 4.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments/questions were raised:
- It was asked whether a particular amendment in the wording of the Framework was significant. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure advised that the change in the wording was not deemed hugely important.
 - A Member spoke about flooding and whether provision within the NPPF was sufficient. She felt that reference to maintenance should also be included. The Government had acknowledged that provision within the Framework was not at the level it should be, and a review of areas at risk from flooding had been initiated, which was likely to lead to further changes to the NPPF.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

5 Tracker

- 5.1 The Chairman confirmed that the Meeting scheduled for 9th September had been cancelled, and instead there would be a Member briefing on Stodmarsh at 6pm.
- 5.2 Updates on Stodmarsh and the Planning Bill would be provided to the Task Group, as the information was made available.

6 Date of next meeting

- 6.1 21st October 2021, 10am
2nd December 2021, 10am

Councillor Bartlett
Chairman – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

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Agenda Item No:

Report To: CABINET

Date: 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Report Title: SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN

Report Author and Job Title: Danny Sheppard, Member Services Manager (Operational)

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

Summary:	To set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet of Ashford Borough Council.
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Key Decision: NO

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

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

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

Financial Implications: Nil

Legal Implications: n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment n/a

Other Material Implications: Nil

Exempt from publication: No

Background Papers: None

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

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

Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet is made up of: - Councillors Gerry Clarkson; Paul Bartlett; Bill Barrett; Neil Bell; Andrew Buchanan; Peter Feacey; Matthew Forest; Nathan Iliffe; Alan Pickering; and Neil Shorter.

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

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Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
30th September 2021					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/9/20
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	28/9/20
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan	<i>To seek the Cabinet's endorsement of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan and recommend it is formally 'made' by Full Council.</i>	Cllr Bell	Harriet Turner	Open	3/6/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Play Area Investment	<i>To ask members to agree to invest in three priority play areas as outlined in the Play Area Plan and release capital funding for repairs and renewals in perpetuity for continued regeneration and maintenance, to enable ongoing improvements to existing play facilities.</i>	Cllr Forest	Amanda Scott	Open	2/7/21
Update on Broadband Improvements in the Ashford Borough	<i>To update on projects and initiatives to improve broadband in the Borough and outline the work that the team suggests can take place in the coming year.</i>	Cllrs Clarkson/ Shorter	Andrew Osborne/ Jamie Cox	Open	15/7/21
Queen's Platinum Jubilee & Albacore Event Programme	<i>To agree the full programme of events and associated budget to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and 80th anniversary of HMS Albacore and the Ashford Sea Cadets.</i>	Cllrs Clarkson/ Forest	Sarah Barber/ Donna Sowerby	Open	27/7/21
Housing Options Review	<i>To recommend Full Council to approve the associated pension costs.</i>	Cllr Buchanan	Sharon Williams	Open (Exempt Appendix)	5/8/21
Resettlement of Afghan Nationals Scheme	<i>To advise of the commitment to resettle between five and ten households from Afghanistan in the Ashford Borough and that the Housing Resettlement Team will manage this project and also continue to support households via the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) (formerly the Government's VPRS).</i>	Cllr Buchanan	Sharon Williams	Open	20/8/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
28th October 2021					
Medium Term Financial Plan	<i>To ask Cabinet to note the Medium Term Financial Plan ahead of this year's Budget process.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	21/10/20
The Creation of Meadows and Land Management Plans to Support Increased Biodiversity	<i>To seek agreement for Officers to develop areas of meadow in <u>carefully selected areas</u> to support carbon neutrality, the national pollinator strategy and the Kent biodiversity strategy.</i>	Cllr Barrett	James Laidlaw	Open	23/6/21
Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project/Move On – Update Report		Cllr Buchanan	Sharon Williams/Mark James	Open	6/9/21
Corporate Commercial Property Strategy – Annual Report	<i>To advise of the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the last financial period and to advise of proposals to increase profitability in the coming financial period.</i>	Cllr Iliffe	Paul McKenner	Open	28/9/20
25th November 2021					
Corporate Performance Report	<i>To give Members and residents an overview of how the council is performing with a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	27/11/20

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Council Tax Base 2022/23	<i>To present for approval the estimated 2022/23 Council tax base calculation for the Borough and each parished area, on which the major preceptors and local Parish Councils will base their requirements.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	27/11/20
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	27/11/20
Corporate Plan 2022 – 2024	<i>To seek approval of Plan following consultation</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Lorna Ford/ Jennifer Shaw	Open	2/7/21
Carbon Neutral Action Plan - Adoption	<i>To adopt the plan following a period of consultation.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Jennifer Shaw	Open	20/5/21
Vicarage Lane Development	<i>The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the current proposals including the design, financial position and the programme timetable.</i>	Cllr Iliffe	Jo Fox	Open (Exempt Appendix)	1/10/20
Bockhanger Consultation – Outcomes		Cllr Buchanan	Mark James	Open	30/10/19
Kiln Field Local Nature Reserve		Cllr Forest	Terry Jones	Open	8/9/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
16th December 2021					
Draft Budget 2022/23	<i>To present the preliminary draft service budget and outline MTFP for the purposes of subsequent formal scrutiny by the O&S Task Group and public consultation.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	30/11/20
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2021-2051 (including Financing and Affordable Homes Programme)		Cllr Buchanan	Sharon Williams/Mark James	Open	21/10/20
27th January 2022					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	29/1/21
24th February 2022					
Revenue Budget 2021/22	<i>To present the draft revenue budget for 2021/22 to the Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/20
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/20

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	28/2/20
31st March 2022					
Annual Pay Policy Statement (including Review for 2022/23)	<i>A review of the annual Pay Policy Statement and Ashford Living Wage Allowance.</i>	Cllr Pickering	Michelle Pecci/ Joy Cross	Open	19/3/21
28th April 2022					
Street Lighting Project – Phase 2		Cllr Iliffe	Paul McKenner	Open	20/8/21
26th May 2022					
30th June 2022					
Recovery Plan Annual Report 2021/22	<i>To present the Annual Report 2021/22 highlighting performance against the Recovery Plan priorities.</i>	Cllr Clarkson/ Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	28/6/21
Final Outturn 2021/22	<i>Final budget outturn for previous financial year.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/6/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
28 th July 2022					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	30/7/21
25 th August 2022					
KEEP CLEAR FOR HOLIDAYS					

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first name.surname@ashford.gov.uk***

22/9/21

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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