



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber - Ashford Borough Council on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:-

Councillor Ovenden (Chairman)
Councillor Chilton (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Blanford, Burgess, Farrell, Hayward, Howard, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

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 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

Page Nos..

1. Apologies/Substitutes

To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c)

2. Declarations of Interest

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To declare any interests, which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)
- b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)
- c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests

See Agenda Item 2 for further details

3. Minutes of the last Meeting

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To approve the Minutes of the last Meeting

4. Youth Unemployment in Ashford

Youth Unemployment in Ashford – Presentation from KCC and ABC

5. Future Reviews & Report Tracker

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email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk

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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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Ashford Borough Council: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Microsoft Teams on the **13th April 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman)
Cllr. Chilton (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Blanford, Burgess, Campkin, Farrell, Hayward, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apology:

Head of Corporate Policy, ED and Communications

Also Present:

Cllrs. Feacey, Forest, Harman, Sparks, Wright.

In Attendance:

Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure, Arts and Cultural Industries Manager, Funding and Partnerships Officer, Compliance and Data Protection Manager, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

295 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Farrell	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he had volunteered for Ashford Vineyard and was a KCC Councillor	297
Feacey	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he was Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	297
Forest	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as his company provided IT services to the Ashford Volunteer Centre and Repton Community Trust	297
Hayward	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as she was a trustee of a charity that had received funds from ABC	297
Wright	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as she had volunteered for FareShare Kent and Ashford Holiday Kitchen	297

296 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 9th March 2021 be approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

297 Report on support given to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager introduced this item. He explained that the report had been produced to provide reassurance to Members about the processes and contract monitoring of grants to the Borough's Voluntary, Community and Faith sector. All of the Council's COVID-19 Community Support had been reviewed and audited by Mid Kent Audit, and had received the highest rating.

The report was then opened up to the Committee and the following is a summary of Members questions and the Officers responses: -

- In response to a query from a Vice-Chairman concerning the criteria for which a charity would be awarded a grant, and whether their annual income was taken into consideration, the Arts and Cultural Industries Manager explained that the grants were not set up for charities/organisations in need, but were for organisations providing essential services to the local community. Criteria

included a clear vision for what was intended to be delivered and achieved by said organisation. The support needed to be advertised and be inclusive to everyone, regardless of background or belief. Several charities including the example mentioned by the Vice-Chairman were allocated funds because they had the resources to enable them to distribute aid across the Borough. He added that faith based organisations were intrinsically linked to providing support to the community, but controls were in place to ensure faith was not used as a criteria. When considering an organisations income, he explained that for some, their income would be ring-fenced for particular projects and consequently these may have been delayed due to the pandemic, so reserves would show higher than in normal years. £3,300 from the VERA fund had been allocated to the organisation mentioned, with additional funding from Government given to cover staffing costs.

- A Member remarked on the excellent job that all of the charities and organisations had undertaken throughout the pandemic. In response to a question asking whether funding had been made available to each and every charity in Ashford, it was explained that there were a variety of funding sources, some smaller amounts that could be distributed more widely, whilst Government funding often had more stringent criteria for larger organisations with greater structures and line management in place.
- The Social Supermarket working in conjunction with FareShare was in receipt of funding from ABC. The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager advised that he would share the figures for this with the Committee.
- A Member requested that a breakdown of the monitoring data be made available and asked about the liaison and co-ordination between County, Borough and Parish Councils, in respect of the grants being awarded. The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager advised that all of the data formed part of the Recovery Plan and through ACER and was available to view on Pentana. The Funding and Partnerships Officer explained that all Parish Councils were made aware of the funding available to them, and many were able to take up the Business Grants Funding. Allocation was made fairer by ensuring those that were eligible for government funding, were not then able to claim the Council's emergency funding. Regular contact was maintained with Parish Councils throughout the pandemic to ascertain what support they may need. Member grants also continued to be distributed throughout the pandemic to local community groups and projects. The Chairman requested that a summary report of the information that had been to ACER be made available to the Committee. The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager confirmed that this information did exist and would be completed by the end of April, when existing contracts were likely to have ended.
- A query was raised regarding what mechanisms of accountability were in place to ensure funds designated for a certain purpose were spent accordingly; this data would also be incorporated into the summary report. In

addition, the report would also include the contract details for each organisation that received funding/grants.

- In view of GDPR and data collected throughout the pandemic by charities and organisations, the Funding and Partnerships Officer confirmed that it was a condition on all grant funding given by the Council that the recipient sign and adhere to GDPR conditions stipulating that any data collected must only be used for that specific reason, and must thereafter be confidentially destroyed. The Chairman added that it would be useful to know who the data controller was in this instance.
- A Member highlighted how quick and efficient the team had worked to support local halls, whose revenue had significantly decreased, to prevent them from becoming insolvent. The Chairman and Members of the Committee thanked the Arts & Cultural Industries Manager and Funding & Partnerships Officer for attending the meeting and for all their efforts throughout the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted, with additional information being provided at a future meeting.

298 Review of the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer introduced this report, which reviewed the work programme for the upcoming year. Two main topics would be explored by several Task Groups. The first would be Section 106 Processes and the first meeting would take place on the 28th April. The second topic was the Consultation and Engagement Review and this would take place during the latter part of the year. Other topics for consideration included Mental Health and Wellbeing for young people and the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan & Strategy. Other annual reports were listed, including the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report and the Annual Sickness Update. A further suggestion included a review of the Budget Scrutiny Process, which was expected to take place during the summer.

A request was made for youth unemployment to be incorporated into the topic of Mental Health & Wellbeing for young people, to explore why Ashford now had a higher youth unemployment rate above both the Kent and UK average.

A Member spoke about the Environment Agency's (EA) refusal to share a report of the environmental impact of the Sevington Lorry Park and asked if the EA could be called to attend a Committee meeting to speak about this. The Chairman noted that although the Committee could not insist that any organisation or agency attend the meetings, they could certainly be invited to come along and share that information.

A further suggestion was made to invite representatives from the Community Councils already set up in the Borough to discuss what progress they have made and whether it would be of interest to other areas of Ashford.

The Chairman thanked Members for their input and was pleased to see the work programme now contained some inspiring topics for future review.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report Tracker – June 2021

Current Work Programme			
Report Title	Date due to O&S	Reporting Service	Scope of what is to be scrutinised
S106 Process	<i>Ongoing</i>	Planning and Development	Members felt that there was scope for further scrutiny of this topic and asked this to be examined by a topic specific Task and Finish group. The scope of this review is to be determined shortly.
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	July 2021	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining work carried out by the Committee in during the last year.
Funding Voluntary Organisations – Follow up report	July 2021	Culture	A review of the grant funding process and policies.
Annual Performance Report	July 2021	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	A report to outline the council's performance and achievements during the last year.
Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People (presentation)	July 2021	Community Safety & Wellbeing Culture	A report to research and examine the issues surrounding young people's mental health and wellbeing in the Borough.
Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and Strategy	TBC; Later 2021	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	A review of the council's Carbon Neutral Strategy and action plan.
Annual Sickness Report	Later 2021	HR and Customer Services	A report providing the Committee with annual sickness information for the recent year.
Consultation and Engagement	Later 2021	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Set up of a Task and Finish group to examine the council's involvement and engagement of the public and look at the consultation process for corporate issues.
Budget Scrutiny Review	Later 2021	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	A review of the budget scrutiny process.

		Finance and IT	
Safeguarding	Early 2022	Community Safety and Wellbeing	This report provides the Committee with the council's annual safeguarding update.
Community Safety Partnership	Early 2022	Community Safety and Wellbeing	This report provides the Committee with the community safety annual update.