



## TRADING AND ENTERPRISE BOARD

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane,  
Ashford on **Tuesday, 28th June, 2022 at 10.00 am.**

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The Members of the Trading and Enterprise Board are:-

Councillor Bell (Chairman)

Cllrs. Feacey, Pickering and Shorter

Observer: Councillor Ovenden

### Agenda

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1. <b>Apologies/Substitutes</b>	
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To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:	
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b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)	
c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests	
See Agenda Item 2 for further details	
3. <b>Minutes</b>	3 - 6
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2022.	
4. <b>Commercialisation Strategy Update</b>	7 - 12
5. <b>Exclusion of the Public</b>	
To consider passing the following resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting:	
That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during	

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consideration of this item as it is likely that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

6. **A Better Choice for Property - Acquisition of Site (to follow)**
7. **A Better Choice for Property - Appointment of Director and Operations Manager** 13 - 16
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9. **A Better Choice for Property - Company Management Update** 21 - 26

20<sup>th</sup> June 2022

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# Agenda Item 2

## 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](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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## Trading and Enterprise Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, on the **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**.

### **Present:**

Cllr. Bell (Chairman)

Cllrs. Feacey, Pickering, Shorter

Cllr. Ovenden (Observer).

### **Also Present:**

Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Finance and IT (in her Capacity as Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Accountancy Manager, Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Member Services Manager.

## **285 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **286 Commercialisation Strategy Update**

The Head of Finance and IT gave a verbal update advising that this strand of work had been transferred to her from the Head of Environment and Land Management. It was intended to bring commercialisation and digitalisation closer together and she would bring update reports to this Board every quarter.

In response to a question about results so far, the Head of Finance and IT advised that many of the projects had been held up due to the pandemic but were expected to accelerate in the coming months. Garden waste had begun and was already generating a return which was pleasing. The projects would be about generating income but also savings and efficiencies and it would be important to devise a strategy for measuring those.

A Member referred to the savings generated by the adoption of Parking RINGO as referred to in the previously circulated report (November 2021). It was confirmed that these related to the removal of machines and reduction in cash handling costs. These savings would continue to be reflected in Financial Monitoring reports.

**Resolved:**

That the update be received and noted.

## **287 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

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

## **288 A Better Choice for Property Limited – Request for Funding**

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the confidential report which gave an update on a project the Company was working on including a request for the release of additional funding to facilitate the development

After a lengthy debate the Board agreed to delegate approval of the release of funding to the Chairman, subject to the receipt of a satisfactory timetable, with input from ABC Planning and Legal Services, detailing all of the necessary steps through to the deadline for the commencement of construction in June 2023. It was requested that such a timetable be received within a week and could then be used to help manage and monitor this particular project as it developed and provide assurance to this Board before agreeing the release of further funding.

The Chairman made it clear that he would consult with other TEB Members before taking the final decision, either by email or at a Virtual Meeting.

**Resolved:**

**That approval of the release of funding be delegated to the Chairman of this Board, subject to the receipt of a satisfactory timetable as detailed above.**

## **289 Previously Agreed Papers**

The Board noted the papers that had been previously agreed by e-mail to avoid the need for a physical meeting during a peak in the Coronavirus pandemic last November. They had been subsequently endorsed by the Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

The Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd) gave a verbal management update on the portfolio and performance of the Company. Going forward, he would bring update reports to this Board every quarter. The Board said they were heartened by the update and thanked him and his staff for their efforts.

**Resolved:**

**That the updates be received and noted.**

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**Agenda Item No:** 9  
**Report To:** Trading & Enterprise Board  
**Date of Meeting:** 28 June 2022  
**Report Title:** Commercialisation Strategy Update  
**Report Author:** Maria Stevens  
**Job Title:** Director of Customer, Technology & Finance  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Neil Bell  
**Portfolio Holder for:** Chair of the TEB

**Summary:** This report updates the board on the progress on projects currently being delivered and the activities of the new Digital & Commercial Board which was formed in March 2022.

**Key Decision:** NO

**Significantly  
Affected Wards:**

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

**I. Note the report**

**Policy Overview:** The council adopted a commercial strategy as a way to generate income. This was developed to support services to look at innovative ways to operate externally.

**Financial Implications:** The commercial strategy has a target of introducing around £130,000 per annum into the revenue budget.

**Legal Implications:** There are trading rules that are considered at the planning stage of each individual business case.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** Not required as an update report. Considered at business planning stage.

**Data Protection Impact Assessment:** Not required.

**Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):** Full risk assessment as part of the business planning stage.

**Sustainability Implications:** Varied and diverse, projects include environmental targets in action plans if applicable.

<b>Other Material Implications:</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt from Publication:</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	Maria.stevens@ashford.gov.uk

## Report Title: Commercial Strategy Update

### Introduction and Background

1. The commercial strategy was developed a number of years ago by the Head of Environment & Land Management, Tracey Butler. Following changes to the senior management structure responsibility for the commercial strategy and delivery has transferred to the Customer, Technology & Finance Directorate.
2. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the Council's commercial activities over the last 6 months, income achieved, post project reviews planned and new projects emerging.
3. There is an understanding by Members and Officers that by exploring commercial opportunities some will be successful and others may fail, or not achieve expected outcomes. Knowing when to discontinue an operation is important and should be seen as an opportunity to reflect and learn. A good example of this is the Building Consultancy Company, after generating small profits for a number of years, and following a review of the business operation and expansion options, it was decided to cease trading

### The Board

4. The Commercial & Digital Board (officer group), chaired by the Chief Executive Tracey Kerly, was formed at the end of March. This board has been put in place to monitor the commercial and digital projects coming forward, helping to identify resources to take projects forward, receiving reports on progress and post project review and monitoring key performance indicators (still to be developed).
5. The board is also addressing the culture of the organisation, ensuring commercial thinking is at the forefront of everything we do. The communications team are working on strategies to share good news stories across the organisation so officers and teams can consider how their teams can make a difference.
6. Following a Management Team workshop it was decided to join the Digital & Commercial strands into one board, as there is overlap in the agenda, where digitisation increasingly enables commercialisation. The board gives us a chance to consider digitalisation, transformation and commercialisation holistically.

### Internal Project Review

7. The Board has assessed the current position of the commercial agenda and are in the process of implementing the following:
  - a. Introducing key performance indicators; this will enable success of a project to be measured throughout the implementation and delivery stages of the project.

- b. A method of measuring cost benefit for the project; whether this is through clear income generation, cost savings or through efficiencies.
  - c. Reclassifying projects that fit within the day job; some projects have been moved to day job projects however, these will be reviewed in a year's time to ensure they are effective and what cost benefit should be applied to these. These projects are:
    - i. Category Management
    - ii. Contract Management
8. An update in the other projects are as follows:
  9. Lifeline: The marketing strategy has been produced for the new branding 'Lifeline Anytime' and will be launched in the Autumn 2022. Key components to launching the new brand include the installation of a new lifeline PNC system which is up and running, the provision of , Direct Debit payments which are being finalised by the finance team, and the new website which is under construction and will be key to launching the new brand.
  10. CCTV: Opportunities for CCTV are still being explored. The team are looking at possibly working with some members of the Port team to get some ideas off the ground as resources have held this project up. Once a brief has been developed it will be reported back.
  11. Electrical Services: The electrical commercial strategy was split into three strands. Firstly the Total Mobile application which has now been fully implemented and will enable more tracking and time management reporting to maximises the effectiveness of the team.
  12. The second strand was around maximising surplus capacity identified through the Total Mobile solution to generate additional income that could offset the costs of the Council. The manager has raised some questions around when a contract should be put out to market for private work and whether the team should expand with a commercial focus in mind.
  13. The Digital team are working with the Electrical manager to start analysing the data and complete a post project review to help the Council quantify the savings/capacity generated from the implementation of the Total Mobile solution. The review will consider the possibility of expanding the service to win private works contracts and identify the opportunities and threats of any possible expansion.
  14. The third strand is around installing and maintaining EV charging points. There have been some barriers to receiving the training and the team are working with them to help these barriers to become unblocked.

## **New Projects Being Explored**

15. Reconfiguration of Level 3, Civic Centre: Officers are exploring opportunities for the third floor following the exit of the Ashford Port Health team to the Border Control Point. It is envisaged that the floor could contain hot desks, hybrid rooms, break out spaces and collaboration areas. The space could include a wellbeing room and a multi faith room. The commercial element will be to open the space up to be externally hired as well as for use by the Council officers and members. We are looking to design a vibrant and

welcoming area with movable furniture so it can be used in other locations if needed. The project is in the early stages and a Project Initiation Document will be worked up soon.

16. Tenancy Audits: The Investigation team are working with Housing Associations to conduct tenancy audits with them. They are currently working with two East Kent Authorities.

## **Conclusion**

17. The Board will continue to work across the organisation to identify commercial projects to maximise commercial income and ensure we are working in the most efficient way.

## **Contact and Email**

Maria Stevens – [maria.stevens@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:maria.stevens@ashford.gov.uk)

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