



CABINET

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on **Thursday, 27th January, 2022 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 Bell – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development
Councillor Buchanan – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management
Councillor Clokie – 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

Members of the Press and public are permitted to attend this meeting in person. Anyone attending will be requested to follow the measures introduced by the Council in order to manage the risk of COVID-19. This includes wearing face coverings until seated and not attending the meeting if you are displaying any symptoms of, or have tested positive for, COVID-19. You may also wish to consider taking a Lateral Flow Test no longer than 24 hours before attending the meeting.

Agenda

	Page Nos..
1. Apologies	
2. Declarations of Interest	1 - 2
To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:	
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)	
b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)	
c) Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests	
See Agenda Item 2 for further details	
3. Minutes	3 - 12
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 16 th	

December 2021.

4.	To Receive any Petitions	
5.	Leader's Announcements	
6.	Automatic Number Plate Recognition Parking Solution - Edinburgh Road and Park Mall Car Parks	13 - 30
7.	Parking Charges at Edinburgh Road and Park Mall Car Parks	31 - 40
8.	Extension of Electric Vehicle Charger Provision	41 - 54
9.	Health and Safety Policy	55 - 80
10.	Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write Offs Schedule	81 - 92
11.	Greater Ashford Borough Environment and Land Mapping Commission - Notes of 7th December 2021	93 - 94
12.	Joint Transportation Board - Minutes of 14th December 2021	95 - 98
13.	Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board - Notes of 22nd December 2021	99 - 104
14.	Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group - Notes of 2nd December 2021	105 - 110
15.	Schedule of Key Decisions	111 - 118
16.	Items for Future Meetings	
17.	To Consider Passing the Following Resolution to Exclude the Public	
	<p>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.</p>	
18.	Newtown Works	119 - 144
19.	Regeneration, Infrastructure and Improvement Co-Ordination Board - Notes of 17th December 2021	145 - 148

19 January 2022

Queries concerning this agenda? Please contact Member Services

Telephone: (01233) 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk

Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: <https://www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

This page is intentionally left blank

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

Decisions effective from the 31st December 2021 unless they are called in or are recommended to the Council for approval

Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **16th December 2021**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Bell, Buchanan, Clokie, Feacey, Iliffe, Pickering.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Forest, Shorter, Chilton.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Brooks, Spain, Sparks, Wright.

In attendance:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Head of Housing, Economic Development Manager, Member Services Manager.

216 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Kingsnorth Community Council	220
Iliffe	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Kingsnorth Community Council	220

217 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th November 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

218 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said that he had no particular announcements this evening other than to advise that the Council were adopting the Government's new rules for Covid at the Civic Centre. Officers had acted very swiftly in the last week or so apply them and he wanted to thank them for their efforts.

219 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2021 – 2051 (including Financing and Affordable Homes Programme)

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which explained that each year Members were asked to agree the priorities within the HRA and note a 30 year Business Plan. This set the parameters of the work and spend that were undertaken by the Council's housing teams and underpinned every decision taken in the HRA.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) the HRA Business Plan financial projections be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group to support the Draft HRA Budget reported to Cabinet in November.**
 - (ii) the updated HRA Business Plan and financial projections be agreed.**
 - (iii) delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Finance and IT and the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Finance and IT, to acquire land up to the value of £5m and this be extended to include s106 acquisitions up to the value of £5m.**
 - (iv) the streamlined process for commencing the preparatory work on acquired sites as outlined in paragraphs 37 and 38 of the report be agreed, and it be noted that, where time permits, Members' approval for acquisitions will be sought and reported through to Cabinet, otherwise the existing delegated authority will be utilised.**
 - (v) the HRA priorities set out in the report from paragraphs 7-53, which mirror those agreed by Cabinet Members in the equivalent report last year, be noted.**
 - (vi) the Council will continue with the on-street purchase programme, recognising that some units per annum will be cross-subsidised in later financial years, and set affordable rents.**
 - (vii) the progress in delivering affordable housing in the HRA and temporary accommodation within the General Fund as set out in the report be noted.**

- (viii) **the Council's plans for future housing delivery, as set out in Exempt Appendix A to the report which presents projects underway or in consultation phase be noted, and authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Finance and IT and the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Finance and IT, to vary the programme as necessary.**

220 Bockhanger Consultation Outcomes 2021 and Next Steps

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Dean, a local resident, spoke on this item. He said he hoped that Cabinet Members would have at least had a chance to skim read the summary report sent to Councillors earlier in the week. This had been produced by the 'Bockhanger and Bybrook Matters' Group, which was a group set up by residents of those two Wards in response to a general dis-satisfaction of residents who felt they were not being listened to or heard by the Borough Council. He realised there may be differing views around this, but this was particularly felt regarding issues related to the old Community Centre and what would replace it. Bockhanger and Bybrook were the two Wards most affected by the loss of the community facility and the Borough Council's last survey had received only 41 replies – a number of which were from a much wider area. As a consequence of this, the Group decided to build its own survey and the Group wanted to ask the Cabinet to consider it properly as it statistically represented the views of the local residents – probably more effectively than the Council's 2020 survey. One example he pointed to was the housing question in the 2020 survey where the response indicated that 28% of respondents (from that wider geographical base) considered affordable housing to be the number one priority. Their own survey had shown that figure to be 18% with 20% pointing to 'social housing'. The survey had shown that residents did have very a clear view about what facilities they would like to see. In conclusion Mr Dean said he would like to ask the Cabinet to consider deferring any final decisions for two months to allow ABC Officers to fully analyse and discuss the survey results produced by the Group. In addition the Group would ask the Council to consider actively researching alternative funding streams for the project, not just HRA funding.

The Deputy Leader advised that this issue had been discussed at the Kennington Community Council meeting the previous evening. The Group had endeavoured to provide further information to the Community Council and a further analysis of their survey early in the New Year. This would include details of other facilities in the area, including their availability and size and a more detailed critique of the consultation, and that would all be most welcome. There would also be further meetings in the New Year between Community Council Members and members of the Group to shape the operation of any new community facilities. One issue from the emerging proposals that had been raised was the size of the proposed hall and the capital costs being met from Central Government affordable housing sources. Therefore there needed to be a clear agreement on what was wanted and how that would be paid for if those sources were not going to be accessed. This was a significant piece of work that could take time, but the costs for this were now budgeted by the

Community Council and that work would proceed at pace in the New Year. He hoped all could work together to achieve the best outcome for the community.

The Ward Member for Bockhanger said he would very much like to commend the Group's survey to the Cabinet. It had been conducted on a very professional basis and had huge buy-in from the community. 28 volunteers had distributed 2500 leaflets and the response level currently stood at 232. A near 10% response rate represented a good level. He considered the results shed a lot of light on the priorities of the residents and what could be included as part of the community facility/hall, so he supported Mr Dean's request to give some time to examine the results in more detail. In terms of funding, he agreed that a range of funding should be considered. HRA funding did come with some 'hoops to jump through' in terms of Secretary of State permission and had certain requirements which may restrict what could be delivered for the residents. He saw no reason not to consider other sources of funding to sit alongside HRA funding in a mix and match approach including perhaps approaching local commercial companies who may be prepared to sponsor some element of the main hall. Perhaps thinking could be more entrepreneurial and "outside the box".

The Portfolio Holder for Housing agreed that there needed to be some further discussion to work out exactly what was required rather than imposing something on the community that was only wanted by one group or another. In his view it was likely that Affordable Housing would be the way to generate the capital for the main facility and ongoing income and he was wary of any solution that was put out to volunteers as this was too reliant on individuals.

The Leader thanked everyone for their comments so far and thought there was a common goal to create a worthwhile and versatile facility for Bybrook and Bockhanger that all could be proud of. He noted the results of the Group's survey and accepted that the response to the second survey had been disappointing, but they had not mentioned that the first survey had received a 13% response. He also understood there had been a lot of negative comment on social media which had been unhelpful and clouded the issue somewhat. With the Community Council in the area, and the Residents' Group, there was a need to work together, particularly with the elected body.

In response to comments about social media, the Ward Member said that the residents were deeply unhappy about the last survey. When it came out people were disappointed as they did not believe it asked them directly what they wanted on that site and there was insufficient space under each of the five questions asked to write the answers in, so he did not think it was unreasonable to argue in an analytical way about a particular piece of work if it was not up to a certain standard. He personally did not feel it was, nor did a huge number of residents, so he felt that was one the Council needed to 'take on the chin' and let residents have their say. The Leader said he understood that, but it was also important to point that whilst social media was often a good tool, it did also have a dark side and people had to be circumspect when making comments on it.

The Leader urged the Cabinet to support the recommendations in the report which he considered did not deflect or detract from the overall objective. There would be

plenty of time for further consideration and current designs for the hall were only iterative, but this would allow the project to proceed to the next stage and for momentum not to be lost. If extra funding became available that would be welcomed, but there were a number of competing pressures and the Council had to be careful when dealing with public money. It was important to continue this journey and work together in a harmonious way and he hoped residents would take tonight's decision positively.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the feedback from the consultation event and subsequent mail out be noted.**
 - (ii) further work be undertaken into the viability of an affordable housing-led scheme, which provides a flexible community hub within it.**
 - (iii) the options for delivery of the scheme are developed and agreed in principle with Kennington Community Council.**
 - (iv) any community facilities developed will be delivered only after Kennington Community Council sign a formal undertaking to lease the space provided and take responsibility for its management and coordination of services delivered, following a viability assessment.**
 - (v) the lease includes conditions restricting sub-letting without formal consent**
 - (vi) the final design, to be developed in conjunction with Kennington Community Council, be shared with the local community at a further consultation event before being brought back to the Cabinet for endorsement.**

221 Street Naming and Numbering – Land West of Viaduct Terrace, Warehorne Road, Warehorne

The report advised that the Street Naming and Numbering Policy required that any request for naming a new road after a person, deceased or living, should be agreed by the Cabinet. The name proposed for the development had been considered to be relevant to the site.

Resolved:

That the use of the name Mathews Court, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report, be approved

222 Vehicle Speeds and Vision Zero

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented information on road safety and proposed a Council policy on vehicle speed limits. It gave a commitment to support the introduction of lower speed limits where appropriate and took the opportunity to give support to KCC's Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy. Reference was also made to the recent changes to the Highway Code and specifically the new hierarchy of road users. It was accepted that such projects may need a small amount of monetary support and accordingly the Portfolio Holder proposed that a fund of up to £10k be made available from the Improvement Delivery Fund, to assist with supporting approved schemes (subject to a maximum of £2.5k per scheme). This would receive oversight from the Regeneration, Improvement and Infrastructure Co-ordination Board.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) proposals from Town, Community and Parish Councils to introduce lower speed limits in urban areas and villages where there is an identified demand for safer and vulnerable road users, be supported.**
 - (ii) the introduction of 30mph speed limits through all our villages that meet the relevant Department for Transport and Kent Highways criteria, be supported.**
 - (iii) the introduction of lower 20mph speed limits on the approach to certain rural villages wherever appropriate and where it meets the necessary road safety criteria, be supported.**
 - (iv) the introduction of 20mph speed limits on the approaches to, or in the vicinity of, schools wherever appropriate and where the circumstances meet the necessary road safety criteria, be supported.**
 - (v) the introduction of 20mph speed limits in areas where people and motorists meet or are in close proximity, e.g. the Ashford Shared Space arrangement, be supported.**
 - (vi) the KCC Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy be supported.**
 - (vii) the Council work with partner organisations to publicise the changes in the Highway Code and promote the new enhanced duty of care that road users owe to more vulnerable road users.**
 - (viii) £10,000 be made available from the Improvement Delivery Fund to assist supporting approved schemes (subject to a maximum of £2.5k per scheme). This to receive oversight from the Regeneration, Improvement and Infrastructure Co-ordination Board.**

223 Ashford Festival and Events Framework

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Property introduced the report on behalf of himself and the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism and Leisure. The framework included an overview of Ashford's current offer with a delivery plan that linked to the Corporate Plan 2022-24 and the benefits that festivals and events could bring. The framework included proposals for two key seasonal events for the Council to commit to, and the development of two new seed events each year.

He also gave an update on the Carnival of the Baubles event that had taken place the previous weekend. This had been a great event and increased footfall in the Town Centre significantly (approximately 30% up on the same Saturday in 2019). Positive reports had been received from Town Centre businesses and the voluntary/cultural sector and members of the public.

A Member said she fully supported the framework and hoped it would fully embrace the diverse multi-cultural communities within the Borough.

Resolved:

That the Framework be adopted and the key opportunities to help deliver the Council's Corporate Plan be noted.

Recommended:

That a two year financial commitment of £350,000 be agreed to help build a new events programme for Ashford. First year's costs of £175k be agreed from the Improvement Delivery Fund (Reserves); and the second year budget be allocated from the same reserve, subject to an evaluation of the outcomes of the first years events by the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with appropriate Portfolio Holder and subject to budget setting for 2023/24.

224 Levelling Up Fund - Ashford International Studios, Newtown Works

The Leader introduced the report which followed from the announcement of the Council's successful Levelling Up Funding bid for £14,773,745 for the Ashford International Studios development. The report sought Members approval to take on the role of accountable body for this funding and put in place grant agreements with Government and the developer to ensure this funding could be secured.

The Economic Development Manager advised that they had attended their first inception meeting with the team from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) earlier that week and it had been very positive and they looked forward to more meetings as they moved forward.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Council act as the Accountable Body for the Levelling Up Funding Grants, through a grant agreement with Government and a subsequent grant agreement with the Newtown Works site developer.
- (ii) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Leader of the Council, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, to negotiate and agree the grant agreements with Government and the Newtown Works site developer, following appropriate due diligence.
- (iii) once funding agreements are in place, the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Leader of the Council, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, to agree expenditure in line with the grant conditions as set out in the financial table and wording in paragraph 8 of the report.
- (iv) the allocation of £40,000 of funding from reserves be agreed to undertake the legal agreements and fund monitoring for this project.

225 Greater Ashford Borough Environment and Land Mapping Commission – Notes of 12th October and 9th November 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meetings of the Great Ashford Borough Environment and Land Management Commission held on the 12th October and 9th November 2021 be received and noted.

226 Trading and Enterprise Board – 23rd November 2021

Resolved:

- That (i) the new, more inclusive, definition of ‘commercialisation’ as outlined in the report be endorsed.
- (ii) it be agreed that the Commercialisation Strategy requires a transition from what has become the testing phase, to one of greater integration within corporate culture (moving to a combined Digital and Commercialisation Board).

- (iii) KPIs reporting on commercialisation needs to be reviewed to better reflect the breadth of the definition and explicitly explore different types of efficiency savings.**

227 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.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services
Telephone: (01233) 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item No: 6

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 27th January 2022

Report Title: **Automatic Number Plate Recognition Installation**

Report Author & Job Title: Alison Oates
Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Mandy Cracknell
Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Feacey
Portfolio Holder for: Community Safety and Wellbeing

Summary: To introduce an Automatic Number Plate Recognition and barrier system at Park Mall car park and operate on a pilot basis as a wholly cashless car park.

Subject to the pilot being successful, it is proposed to implement within Edinburgh Road car park.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: Victoria

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

*Text agreed by
Simon Talijancic on
13 January 2022*

- I. **Approve the installation of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and barrier system within the Park Mall car park and operate on a pilot basis as a cashless car park.**
- II. **Approve expenditure of up to £53,000 from the previously agreed capital budget to deliver the ANPR solution within the Park Mall car park.**
- III. **Delegate authority to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, to effect and complete all necessary steps for the implementation of ANPR at Park Mill car park.**
- IV. **Receive further update reports as necessary prior to potentially introducing a similar system and**

payment arrangements within Edinburgh Road car park.

Policy Overview: Parking plays a crucial part of our transport infrastructure, especially given the link between transport accessibility and the vitality of our high streets and town centre.

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies Targeted Growth, (stimulating economic investment and growth) as a key priority. Ensuring our car parks are attractive to customers will ensure they are fully utilised and thus contribute positively to the council's economic position. ANPR installation is an important part of this.

ANPR systems and the associated technology provide visitors with a secure and efficient parking service. When combined with appropriate charging fees, ANPR provides the operator with opportunities for a greater return on investment and on-going service improvement. The proposal supports the objectives of the Town Centre re-set.

The phased removal of cash from council business is an agreed council policy (minute reference CA240920/77 refers). This is in response to the wider changes we are seeing in society, namely the move to digital services and a response to the Covid-19 pandemic whereby many do not wish to handle cash or use terminals that may be contaminated with the virus.

Financial Implications:

The capital cost of ANPR systems was approved in December 2019 for Elwick Place and Victoria Road. This funding was used to implement the ANPR system in Elwick Place but has not been utilised for Victoria Road due to this being used as a COVID-19 testing centre.

Following the recent purchase of the NCP car park in Park Mall it is considered that this and Edinburgh Road car park would be the next two car parks that are most appropriate for ANPR.

There remains sufficient capital within the budget earmarked for ANPR to cover the required equipment and ground works plus a provisional sum for miscellaneous equipment, third-party back office IT systems and a 10% contingency.

The cost of installing ANPR within Park Mall car park on a cashless basis is £52,885.

There will be on-going operational expenditure in the region of £22,000 per year (note this figure is for both car parks).

It is anticipated that the initial capital expenditure and on-going annual operational expenditure will be covered by parking receipts and efficiencies achieved as a consequence of this and other digital transformation that is taking place within the parking service.

Legal Implications: Planning permission is not required. The works are considered to have permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (Part 12 Class A).

Vehicle registrations marks are defined as personal data because the operator is able to identify an individual from the information held together with the ability to obtain keep details from the DVLA. A Data Protection Impact Assessment is required and will be completed shortly and any recommendations arising from the assessment will be complied with.

Equalities Impact Assessment: See Appendix A

Other Material Implications: The greatest staffing impact will be on the assigned Project Manager i.e. the Team Leader for Parking, Highways and Transportation, and the Senior Operations Officer.

The project implementation will be accommodated within existing resources.

There will be some changes associated with a move to ANPR for our civil enforcement officers (CEOs) as less enforcement is required within car parks covered by ANPR. The reduction is not, however, significant as only one additional car park is recommended for ANPR installation. The CEOs will be involved in the project roll out e.g. providing guidance to customers within the car parks and dealing with payment/barrier issues.

Exempt from Publication: No

Background Papers: None

Contact: Alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330225
Mandy.Cracknell@ashford.gov.uk - Tel: (01233) 330571

Report Title: Automatic Number Plate Recognition Installation

Introduction and Background

ANPR

1. The council is keen to constantly develop its parking service and enhance customer experience. The introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at Elwick Place car park in November 2020 allowed customers to leave their vehicles for as long as they wish. They are able to pay for time used via their online accounts (whereby they do not need to use a payment machine at all), using a credit card payment at a terminal or via the contactless card machine at the barrier.
2. ANPR parking systems provide more extensive back office management tools to monitor and evaluate car park usage. This is also an opportunity to go wholly cashless from implementation for any new ANPR car parks. Cashless payments are now 93% in Elwick Place car park, demonstrating the popularity of this payment method.
3. The aspiration over time is to implement ANPR in all suitable car parks, providing an operating system that is as flexible as possible. Upgrading to a state-of-the-art technology solution will enable this to be achieved. This report, however, only relates to installing in Park Mall car park immediately and Edinburgh Road car park to follow on next.
4. This initiative goes hand in hand with the economic development of the town centre which will continue at pace with a number of major development schemes already underway. It is in line with:
 - Projected year on year growth in the local population
 - Demand for off-street parking
 - Need for greater on-street controls which consequently increases demand of off-street facilities
5. In order to respond to the above factors, the council's parking strategy needs to:
 - Manage the supply, location and pricing of parking to support local economic growth and the prosperity of the town centre.
 - Manage the direction of short and long stay parking to meet the needs of town centre developments.
 - Upgrade to state-of-the-art technology solution to enable this to be achieved, making our car parks as easy and simple for customers to use as they can be.
 - Provide high quality parking facilities that create demand and attract usage.
 - Engage with the public so they are a part of our developing parking policies.

6. As highlighted in the Government's Build Back Better High Streets Report¹, parking has a crucial part to play in protecting and promoting the vitality of our high streets and town centre. This includes:
 - moving cars from on-street parking into car parks,
 - making high streets more accessible to shoppers,
 - ensuring that parking space supply and parking tariffs support high street strategies and are joined up with local transport plans,
 - tackling local air pollution and reducing emissions affecting schools, businesses and residents.

A cashless operation

7. As previously stated, the phased removal of cash from council business is an agreed council policy. This is in response to the wider changes we are seeing in society, namely the move to digital services and a response to the Covid-19 pandemic whereby many do not wish to handle cash or use terminals that may be contaminated with the virus.
8. Operating a cashless system also avoids collection costs and reduces installation and maintenance cost. The removal of cash payments is of benefit to our customers, as it maximises convenience and satisfaction, through ease of use and a streamlined payment process. It also mirrors the processes put in place by many retailers in response to Covid-19, where they are actively discouraging cash payments at the till. It supports the safety of those involved in removing cash from the payment machines, not only in terms of exposure to the virus but also in terms of reducing the risk of physical threats when removing cash. It will aid social distancing by reducing queuing and contact with machines, another potential source of transmission. The majority of the public have adapted to the behavioural changes that have been accelerated by the pandemic and have embraced technology and cashless payment options. It should be noted that removing cash from the parking machines is a phased process and is being closely monitored.

Proposal

9. To introduce ANPR and a barrier system within Park Mall car park.
10. It is further proposed that Park Mall car park be operated cashless from the point of ANPR installation. ANPR will enable customers to pay easily for their parking via pay-by-phone (i.e. RingGo) or via an online account. It is stressed that customers will not be required to have an online account; they will be able to pay by credit card on exiting the car park.
11. In making this proposal it should be noted that the following Ashford town centre car parks still have the facility for payment using cash:
 - Edinburgh Road (located immediately next door to Park Mall car park)
 - Civic/Stour Centre,
 - Dover Place,

¹ [Build Back Better High Streets Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Elwick Place,
 - Elwick Road,
 - Station Road and
 - Vicarage Lane.
12. The intention is to start the ANPR and barrier installation in Park Mall car park upon cabinet approval i.e. Spring 2022.
13. The success or not of the cashless pilot will be carefully monitored and the outcome reported to a future cabinet meeting. It is our aspiration to also install an ANPR system within the Edinburgh Road car park and operate on a cashless basis but this decision will be made in light of the Park Mall pilot.

Benefits of ANPR

14. The following benefits are anticipated:
- Provides the customer with a reliable, accessible, easy to use and flexible parking solution and therefore protects the council's parking income stream.
 - Lower system maintenance costs.
 - Reduced ASB and criminal behaviour.
 - A parking payment system that is secure and compliant with industry standards.
 - A technology platform that is in line with the council's digital transformation strategy.
 - An on-line account facility that has the potential to drive customer sign-up to the council's wider on-line portal providing links to other services across the council and potential commercialisation opportunities.
 - The payment machines can be fully integrated with powerful ANPR data to match vehicle details inputted to reduce manual entry errors. Not only does this provide confidence to the motorist and an easy-to-use system but also allows us to monitor the duration of the stay along with the ability to identify whether they have paid or not
 - A fully integrated system between our pay-by-phone system and the ANPR back office systems which will ensure an efficient service for our customers.

Financial and resource issues

15. Our ANPR provider (Sagoss) have quoted capital expenditure totalling £137,500 for both car parks. This is broken down as follows:
- £103,000 for equipment, including £25,000 for installation and ground works
 - £22,000 annual expenditure for licences and back office maintenance and monitoring
 - 10% contingency
16. The cost of only installing within Park Mall car park and operating on a cashless basis is £52,885.

17. The required funding is within the council's capital budget. Approximately £233,000 is available for ANPR for this project and subsequent ANPR installations.
18. The funds requested for this project cover the ANPR and barrier systems plus card payment terminals (in the car parks) and signage. It also covers groundwork and installation, back office systems and integration with relevant third party systems such as on-line accounts and payments. An example of the type of equipment that will be installed is provided Appendix B.
19. There will be on-going revenue expenditure in the region of £22,000 (for both Park Mall and Edinburgh Road car parks). It is anticipated that this will be off-set by additional parking income and efficiencies, such as reducing cash handling payments and other associated costs.
20. ANPR information can drive continual business improvement. Camera data can provide insights into user behaviour that allows for more informed decision-making and consequent efficiency savings. Back-office staffing costs may increase e.g. intercom calls, but decrease in terms of off-street enforcement once ANPR installation and the move to a cashless operational model has taken place.

Procurement arrangements

21. The council is able to draw on an existing agreement with its current supplier, SAGOSS, to implement the ANPR systems in Park Mall car park and subsequently Edinburgh Road car park.

Expected Programme of works

22. Subject to the approval of the recommendations contained within this report, the aim is to align the ANPR installation with the improvement and repair work that is being managed by the Corporate Property and Projects Service. The plan is to install the ANPR system in Park Mall in early 2022 ready to open in May 2022.
23. As this car park is currently closed for the above mentioned improvement and repair work, there will be no disruption to existing users or local businesses during this period.
24. The delivery programme key milestones are currently planned as follows:

Activity	Target completion date
Cabinet approval	January 2022
Site visits	January 2022
Instruction to Sagoss (supplier) and contract to be amended to reflect these two new car parks	January 2022
Equipment manufactured / configured	February 2022
Systems installed / tested and training	March 2022
Construction completion and commissioning	April 2022
ANPR live	Late April 2022

25. The programme may also need to be adjusted in light of the repair works are being planned for Park Mall car park.

Customer arrangements

26. The ultimate aim is to operate all our car parks without tickets and not to take cash. This will however take time and Cabinet has previously acknowledged the need to support our customers during this transition period. Ideally, we want our regular customers to set up online accounts. Those with online accounts never have to go near a payment terminal.
27. For those visitors who do not have accounts, as previously mentioned, they will be able to pay when exiting the car park using a credit card. It is important to understand that all customers can still pay this way and they do not need the app or an account. We are only removing cash as a payment method. Customers can also pay by phone (i.e. RingGo).
28. Users will be encouraged to sign up for an account with the council as the most convenient way to pay. By providing their vehicle and payment details they will be able to pay automatically. Signing up is easy, fast and safe.
29. While it is likely that there will a high level of satisfaction with the new arrangements, there will be a need to interact with our customers if difficulties are experienced. They will be able to speak to the back office parking team during regular office hours or the CEOs who operate over an extended shift. When the CEOs are not on duty, the calls will be handed by the Ashford Monitoring Centre (AMC) thus ensuring 24/7 support is available for customers. The back office, CEOs and AMC can remotely lift the barrier to enable a car to leave the car park.
30. Customers that wish to use cash have a number of alternative car parks within the town that will enable them to continue paying that way.
31. There will be a marketing campaign in the lead up to implementation in order to build confidence in the system and encourage cashless payment take-up. The campaign will include machine signage, street advertisement, website pages, social media posts and other communication methods. The alternative payment methods will also be advertised as well as ensuring customers know that our other car parks currently take cash.

Implications and Risk Assessment

32. The risk assessment for this project is under regular review, however, a summary of the current position is provided as follows:

Risk 1 – Disruption for existing customers during the installation of ANPR

While the physical installation of ANPR is unlikely to cause problems for our customers, there will no doubt be teething problems as people get used to the new payment arrangements. Additional support will be provided by our parking staff in the early days and guidance provided on-line.

Risk 2 – Financial risks

An economic downturn could affect income streams if demand for parking drops. This is, however, a risk relevant to all our car parks and is not exacerbated by introducing an ANPR system. Such systems enable dynamic parking charges and therefore are a positive in terms of encouraging use and being flexible to changing customer demand. Changing social behaviour could see a shift from car usage which again results in less demand for public parking.

It is a potential risk that money spent on the ANPR equipment would be wasted if this car park was taken out of use as part of wider town centre development plans. The equipment can however be moved to alternative car parks and therefore this risk is mitigated.

Risk 3 – Technology/system risk

The technology is well tested and currently operating successfully in Elwick Place.

Risk 4 – Reputational risk

Customers may not want to move away from cash and feel that they are being forced to do so. This could affect those without bank accounts and those who struggle with new cashless technology. A marketing campaign, run alongside this project, will provide details of where customers can still park and pay by cash.

The risk is also mitigated by making the system as easy to use as possible so that any fears over cashless are dispelled. Customers who experience problems will also be able use a contactless pay-at-the-barrier terminal that will let customers know that they have not paid yet, indicate how much they owe, and explain how to quickly pay.

Equalities Impact Assessment

33. An equality impact assessment (EIA) as provided at Appendix A. The only negative impact identified is on those who wish to, or are unable to, pay other than by using cash. While this is highlighted for the elderly, other groups and indeed individuals may be negatively impacted by removing cash as a payment method. Credit and debit cards can also be used, so there is no requirement to download apps, sign up for accounts etc. Retaining provision for cash payment at other car parks further reduces this impact. It is also the reason for recommending the cash free element be introduced as a pilot so that the impact can be fully assessed.
34. A positive impact has been identified for customers with physical and mental disabilities in that parking can be paid for without having to use a payment terminal. The use of ANPR in car parks in particular is a technology that enables the delivery of many new customer friendly systems and improves accessibility for the elderly and disabled motorists by enabling hands-free entry and exit and the use of internet based pre-booking systems and parking accounts.

35. The decision to introduce ANPR will not give rise to unlawful discrimination.
36. The Project Manager will monitor the equality impact implications as the project progresses.
37. The Ashford Disabled Access Group will be contacted prior to implementation with a view to mitigating any currently unidentified negative consequences of the decision to implement the technology and payment methods.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

38. The ANPR system being recommended is the same system that has been operating in Elwick Place since November 2020. The effectiveness and popularity of the system is demonstrated by the positive feedback from customers and the high percentage take up of pay by phone.

Other Options Considered

39. Do Nothing i.e. no ANPR at Park Mall or Edinburgh Road

There is a need, especially in the launch of the Park Mall car park, to introduce a system that allows for dynamic parking payment arrangements in line with the potential mixed usage of this car park. We know that ANPR and pay-by-phone systems are accepted by many customers and are increasingly offered in many private car parking situations. It is also believed that ANPR will maximise the potential of this and other car parks. For these reasons to do nothing is not a sensible option.

40. Install ANPR in both car parks and operate as wholly cashless

While there are advantages in installing ANPR in both car parks and operating cashless from day one, we do however need to be mindful of the risks as highlighted in the report, especially operating cashless in both car parks at the same time. By starting in just Park Mall we are able to minimise risks and avoid unnecessary expenditure. If it works then we will roll it out to Edinburgh Road and if not we will adapt the arrangement for any subsequent car parks.

41. Install ANPR in both car parks but operate Park Mall only as a “pilot” cashless car park (i.e. cash payment still permitted in Edinburgh Road)

This option has the advantage of bringing another ANPR car park on line sooner rather than later, however, the desire to test cashless parking in a single car park means that we need to see the outcome of this pilot before purchasing equipment tailored to a cashless method of operation. Edinburgh Road would still permit cash payments for this option.

42. Install ANPR in both car parks, continuing to allow cash payments but only at a restricted number of terminal(s)

This option would enable us to benefit from the ANPR technology and move more gradually towards cashless operation. Due to the number of floors within

multi-storey car parks, several coin payment machines would have to be installed. This would increase the cost of installing ANPR, as the quote provided does not include coin payment machines.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

43. Whilst officers would ideally like to see ANPR installed in both car parks at the same time, it is sensible to see the results of the pilot before a decision is made regarding Edinburgh Road and that treating just Park Mall as a pilot cashless car park is a sensible way forward. It will allow us to see whether the policy is successful or not before extending to other car parks.
44. This option reduces the ANPR installation cost at this point in time as we would only need to draw on the capital budget for Park Mall car park.
45. This option supports the council's vision of operating a parking service that embrace new technologies and is moving towards a cashless parking service.

Next Steps in Process

46. Following agreement, work would commence to install ANPR and have it functioning by May 2022.
47. Working with our Communications & Marketing Team we can encourage, promote and influence users through signage, communications and social media to use both car parks and be aware of the changes that are being made.

Conclusion

48. ANPR will improve customer experience and has the potential to maximise income streams for the council as well as leading to operational efficiencies. The recommendation is to introduce ANPR as per the programme detailed within the report. There is no doubt that use of this technology will greatly improve the off-street parking service. By employing the system already in use at Elwick Place we are able to build on that success. Our aspiration is to introduce ANPR in all appropriate car parks across the Borough in due course. Where necessary, additional reports will be provided to cabinet.

Portfolio Holder's Views

49. Every day, businesses spanning the private and public sectors are struggling to improve the quality and convenience of their car parks. They are doing this through ANPR providing a simple, cost effective and reliable approach to parking for their customers. No longer will customers have to worry about the stress of ticket loss or returning to top-up, and when they are ready to leave they have lots of choice as to how to pay for their parking session. With online accounts they never have to go near a terminal again. I am supportive of the gradual move towards cashless parking as recommended and see the pilot an

opportunity to check that it works for our customers. Hopefully we then be able to build on the success of this project.

Cllr Peter Feacey, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Contact and Email

50. Alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330225
mandy.cracknell@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330571

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Lead officer:	Alison Oates/Sheila Davison
Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Approval in principle to proceed with proposed installation of ANPR in Park Mall Car Park and pilot as a cashless car park
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	27 January 2022
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 proposed decision will be to introduce an ANPR and barrier system at Park Mall car park.</p> <p>Use of this technology provides visitors with a secure and efficient parking service. When combined with appropriate charging fees, ANPR provides the operator with opportunities for a greater return on investment.</p> <p>The expected outcomes and benefits of an ANPR system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in satisfaction with parking for our residents, business and visitors and for customers to report that the ANPR parking experience was better than the previous pay and display system. • Greater protection of existing parking revenue streams by providing the customer with a reliable, accessible, easy to use and flexible parking solution. • Lower system maintenance costs and more automated parking solution. • A parking payment system that remains secure and compliant with industry standards. • A technology platform for parking that is in line with our digital transformation strategy. • An on-line account facility that has the potential to drive customer sign-up to the council's wider on-line portal i.e. links to other services across the council. <p>All current and new users of the car park will be affected in that the method of paying will change.</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>Information on ANPR systems and the experience of other car park operators and other council's has informed the decision to recommend that a further ANPR system is introduced.</p> <p>Data on takeup of pay-by-phone and feedback from customers has also informed the decision.</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 whom 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 & Negative – Minor
Middle age	Low	Positive & Negative – Minor
Young adult	Low	Positive & Negative – Minor
Children	Low	Positive - Minor
<u>DISABILITY</u>		
Physical	High	Positive – Major
Mental	Medium	Positive – Minor
Sensory	Low	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	Low	Positive – Minor

<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Neutral
<u>SEX</u>		
Men	Low	Positive – Minor
Women	Low	Positive – Minor
<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

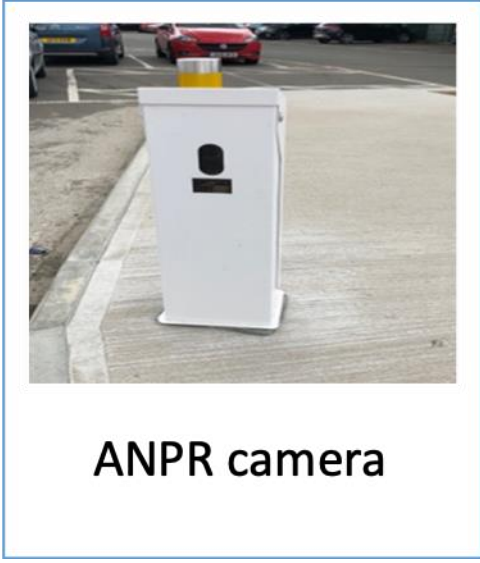
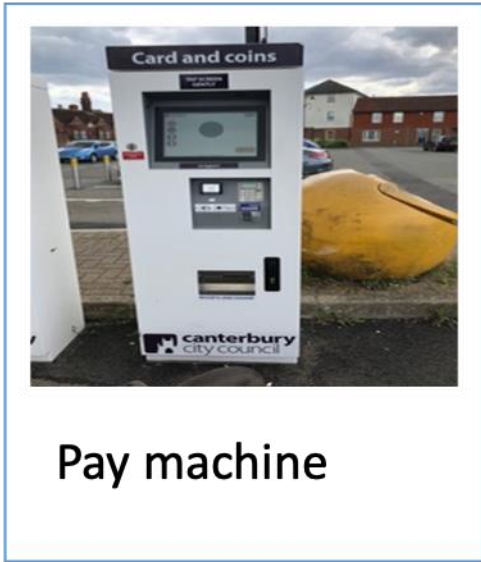
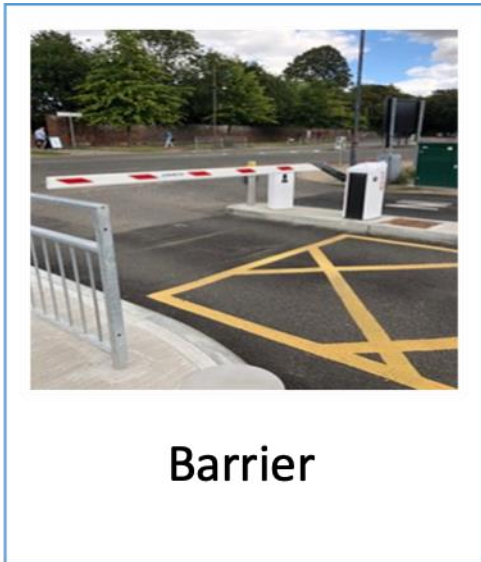
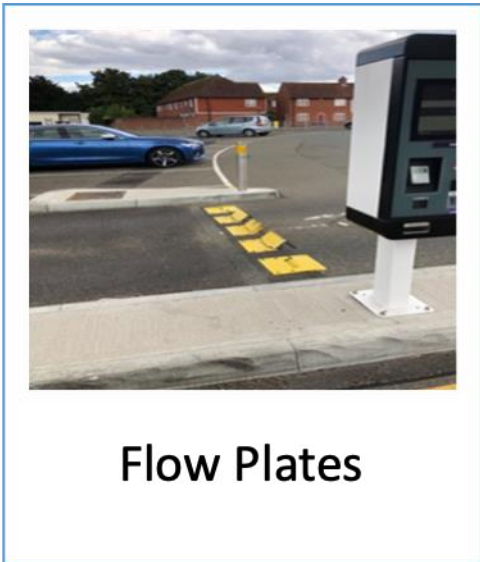
Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	The only negative impacts identified are on those who wish to pay by cash. This is mitigated by retaining provision for cash payment at other car parks.
---	--

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's <u>Essential Guide</u> , alongside fuller <u>PSED Technical Guidance</u> .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
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	N/A

Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish.	Technology is an enabler of equality and improved access and services in parking. The use of ANPR in car parks in particular is a technology that enables
--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). • Advice 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 delivery of many new customer friendly systems and improves accessibility for the elderly and disabled motorists by enabling hands-free entry and exit and the use of internet based pre-booking systems and parking accounts.</p> <p>The wider improvement to this car park will promote the safety of all users. Park Mall car park has dedicated parking spaces for the disabled and there will be no reduction in the number of such spaces, although adjustments may prove necessary. Consultation with relevant stakeholders will take place should this be necessary.</p> <p>The decision to install ANPR and cashless parking will not give rise to unlawful discrimination.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring for the project will be undertaken by the Project Manager.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>10 January 2022</p>

Appendix B – Examples of ANPR equipment



This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item No: 7

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 27th January 2022

Report Title: **Parking charges for Edinburgh Road car park and Park Mall car park**

Report Author: Mandy Cracknell

Job Title: Team Leader – Parking, Highways and Transportation

Alison Oates

Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Peter Feacey

Portfolio Holder for: Community Safety and Wellbeing

Summary: The purpose of this report is to seek agreement on new parking charges for Edinburgh Road and Park Mall car parks.

A reduction in the basic parking charges is proposed to promote use of the car parks and thus support the vitality of our town centre. A revision to the minimum parking period is recommended.

The changes include absorbing the Pay by Phone convenience fee into the basic parking charge, rather than there being an additional cost for using this service.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: NO

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

- I. Approve reduced parking charges for both Edinburgh Road and Park Mall car parks incorporating the Pay by Phone convenience fee that will be absorbed by the Borough Council.**
- II. Approve a minimum parking payment of one hour at Edinburgh Road and Park Mall car parks.**
- III. Authorise the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, to implement changes to the proposals contained in this report, including amendments to the Off Street Parking Places Order, undertaking the statutory public**

notices, consultation and dealing with any responses.

Policy Overview:

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies Targeted Growth, (stimulating economic investment and growth), as a key priority. Ensuring our car parks are attractive to customers will ensure they are fully utilised and thus contribute positively to the council's economic position. Reviewing parking charges is an important part of this.

The council's aim is to set a level of parking charges that supports the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers and commuters, whilst looking to optimise yield from parking.

Financial Implications:

Parking is an essential service that the council provides to the town centre. It is also an important service in terms of enabling the council to achieve a balanced budget.

Edinburgh Road car park is currently underutilised. Making the hourly rates more attractive should entice more motorists to use the car park, especially as it is part of the Park Mall shopping complex and only a short walk from Ashford High Street. Based on average monthly takings this financial year, the income for Edinburgh Road car park is cautiously estimated at £150,000. Pre COVID-19 in 2019 the end of year income for this car park was £234,000.

It is estimated that the proposals will be cost neutral on the basis that usage is increased when charges are reduced. The overall aspiration is recover pre pandemic income levels whilst at the same time giving customers the opportunity to park more cheaply. Further financial information is provided within the body of this report.

When Edinburgh Road car park is open 24/7 (minute CA 171220/195 refers) sales of residential season tickets, usage and income are all expected to increase.

Edinburgh Road car park currently offers free parking from 1500 hours to its closing time on Monday to Saturday and is free all day on Sundays and Bank Holidays. This incentive was implemented in 2015 to increase usage and encourage visitors to the town centre businesses. The free parking arrangements will continue, however an overnight charge will be introduced to prevent misuse of the facility. This will start at 1800 hours. Users can be assured that the car park is monitored by the council's CCTV team and extra CCTV cameras are being installed into the stairwells utilising the Safer Streets funding.

When Park Mall car park was under previous ownership, the hourly charge rate was more expensive. We wish to align the charges in both car parks as detailed in this report.

The adjustment of car park charges will require existing terminal re-programming, revised signage, website adjustment and advertising. The cost of these works will be covered by current resources.

Legal Implications:
*Text agreed by
Simon Talijancic on
18 January 2022*

The applicable legislation under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 requires a public notice to describe the Off Street Parking Places Order and provide details of the effect of the Order. The public notices must be placed in all the car parks effected by the changes.

The legal process for any changes to the off street parking places order are clearly defined including timescales and the consultation period.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not required. There are no anticipated negative impacts.

Data Protection Impact Assessment:

Not required. There are no data protection implications.

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):

Risks are low risk in relation to Edinburgh Road car park in that it is an established facility and the proposals should encourage increased usage.

There is risk that our usage estimates for Park Mall car park may be incorrect as this car park is newly under the control of the borough council. We will encourage use of the car park through active marketing. The price reduction is also likely to encourage usage, especially for those who previously used it and paid higher charges.

The proposal contained in this report will require changes to the council's parking fees and charges. To monitor the impact of the proposed changes there will be monthly monitoring and review of income targets, and an ongoing evaluation of any impact throughout the financial year.

It is essential that parking charges cover the cost of providing and running our car parks, including resurfacing, patrolling, and the maintenance of payment facilities.

There is a risk that the changes will not drive the expected increase in usage and therefore so that that reducing charges further exacerbate the council's weakened financial position due to Covid. Being flexible to changing customer demand is crucial and the proposals implemented will be carefully monitored.

Changing social behaviour could see a shift from car usage that again results in less demand for public parking.

Sustainability Implications:	Research has shown that reducing the number of cars on the road helps the climate by reducing harmful emissions. Locations that see a decrease in parking charges may show positive climate impact, as drivers will drive directly to those car parks rather than searching for a cheaper space, causing less pollution.
Other Material Implications:	<p>Reduced tariffs will be well received by customers. Good communication and signage changes will run hand-in-hand with any associated town developments to encourage potential car park users into desired car park locations. Ongoing promotion of our parking offer is critical to maintaining and increasing business.</p> <p>The greatest staffing impact on implementing the changes will be on the Team Leader for Parking, Highways & Transportation and the Senior Operations Officer. The changes can be accommodated within existing resources.</p>
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	None
Contact:	<u>mandy.cracknell@ashford.gov.uk</u> - Tel: (01233) 330571 <u>alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk</u> – Tel: (01233) 330225

Report Title: **Parking charges for Edinburgh Road and Park Mall car parks**

Introduction and Background

1. Our aim is to set parking charges that balance demand and supply for parking spaces across the town. Differential charging can be used in a way that supports the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers and commuters, whilst looking to optimise yield from our parking assets.
2. By monitoring parking trends and adapting our parking charges in response to what those trends tell us, we are able to tailor our offer to better meet the needs of our customers. Customers expect to pay for parking in a town centre as these places offer a variety of shopping, cultural and leisure experiences. Car park users choose to park taking account of location, personal safety and tariffs applied. Our aim is to ensure that we deliver a constantly improving and fair parking service to users.
3. The council's parking offer, and therefore its approach to parking fees, is an important part of supporting growth and encouraging viability and vibrancy of town centres. An important aspect is enabling visitors to stay for longer in our town than they originally planned, as well as reduce the likelihood that they will receive a parking enforcement ticket when delayed returning to their vehicle.
4. It is important the council's car parking provision supports the economic prosperity of the town centre. The parking tariffs must be fit for purpose, reflect market forces and be in line with regional pricing.
5. The council is mindful of future planned developments within and around the town centre whilst ensuring its parking provision continues to meet the current needs of local businesses, residents and visitors to Ashford Borough.
6. The Parking Service regularly reviews its parking-related fees and charges to ensure they continue to support the council's wider traffic management objectives and obligations. By doing this we are able to:
 - Ensure our short-term parking charges in town centre car parks facilitate a turnover of car parking spaces, thus enabling more visitors/shoppers to visit and easily park within the town centre.
 - Establish demand for car parking, as evidenced by occupancy rates at different time and date points and thus tailor our payment structures and marketing strategies.
 - Manage increasing demands for parking and thus reduce on-street parking pressure.
 - Support continued growth and development of the town centre by encouraging safe and efficient traffic movement.
 - Increase and improve our off-street parking facilities for all users.

Proposal

Base charges

7. The proposal is to amend the parking charges in Edinburgh Road car park and to introduce the same charges in the newly acquired Park Mall car park. The new charges are suggested as follow:

Charges (Maximum stay 24hr)
DAY (6am to 3pm)
£1.00 per hour up to 4 hours
£5.00 over 4 hours
FREE Monday to Saturday 3pm to 6pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays all day
NIGHT (6pm to 6am)
£1.50 Monday to Saturday
FREE Sundays and Bank Holidays
LONG STAY (any period up to 24 hours)
£10.00 Monday to Saturday
FREE Sundays and Bank Holidays
When parking for over 5 hours, the motorists must park on floors 3 and 4 in Edinburgh Road car park and on floor 1 only in Park Mall car park

8. Note that a minimum payment of one hour is introduced, plus charges after 6pm. The current free after 3 pm is retained but becomes 3pm to 6pm to reflect the opening of the car parks in the evenings and overnight.
9. By way of comparison, the current charge in Edinburgh Road car park is £1.20 per hour. A minimum payment of 60p (30 minutes) currently applies and stays of over 4 hours are charged at £5.50. The charges within Park Mall were considerably higher when operated by NCP.

Pay by Phone

10. It is also suggested that the council absorbs the 20p Pay by Phone convenience fee rather than it being paid as a supplementary charge by the customer. Any other additional text messaging that the motorist wishes to request when using pay by phone would be payable by the motorist i.e. optional SMS texts.
11. Pay by Phone offers a number of benefits, one of the most significant being the facility for motorists to top up their parking time by phone should they wish to extend the time they wish to park (subject to some minor conditions). With the council absorbing the 20p transaction charge this effectively makes the Pay by Phone service free to customers. The motorist, however, remains responsible for their mobile phone network charge and for any optional text messages they elect to receive e.g. texts to confirm transactions and alerts shortly before paid for time is due to expire. Each alert currently costs the user 10p.
12. There is little doubt, that Pay by Phone is becoming increasingly popular with our customers. Between April and the end of December 2021 almost 250,000 transactions were via this service. Month on month we are seeing this figure

grow and the proposal for the council to incorporate the costs in its base charges will, we believe, further encourage uptake.

Implications and Risk Assessment

13. Parking income has been difficult to predict recently due to the pandemic and the consequential increase in home working which has reduced the demand for season tickets. Recent fuel restrictions also had an impact.
14. Maintaining the current tariff could result in fewer motorists using Edinburgh Road and Park Mall car parks and seeking alternative parking arrangements such as Vicarage Lane, Elwick Place or other car parks not in the council's ownership.
15. By decreasing parking charges, it is anticipated that usage will increase. While it is difficult to gauge the effect on demand, the intention of the tariff decrease is to shift demand away from our prime location car parks such as Vicarage Lane and Elwick Place.
16. Whilst the income generated by the parking service continues to be marginally higher than expenditure, overall income generation is significantly below pre-pandemic levels. However, we are encouraged that the income will increase as the economy recovers.
17. An economic downturn could affect income streams if demand for parking drops. This is, however, a risk relevant to all of our car parks. These proposals are designed specifically to help cushion such effects by making our car parks as cost effective as possible for our customers.
18. The proposal to reduce the hourly rates by 20p will see an annual reduction in income for Edinburgh Road car park of approximately £37,724. This estimate is based on the number of transactions (average two hour stay) within Edinburgh Road between April 2019 and March 2020 (the last 12 months prior to the pandemic).
19. The proposal for the council to accommodate the Pay by Phone convenience fee for both Edinburgh Road car park and Park Mall car park would be an additional cost to the council. The estimated annual cost will be in the region £6,240 for Edinburgh Road Car Park. This figure is based on an average number of Pay by Phone transactions in Edinburgh Road car park for October/November 2021 (selected as these months have yielded the greatest number of Pay by Phone transactions to date). As car park usage naturally fluctuates across the year, some months will result in more payments to our service provider, and some less.
20. There would need to be a 23% increase in usage of this car park to offset the reduction in income detailed in paragraph 18 and the additional Pay by Phone costs detailed in paragraph 19.
21. It is however estimated that income could increase by around 15% to 20% as a consequence of absorbing the Pay by Phone service charge which we would market strongly. There will also be additional income from increasing the

minimum payment charge to 1 hour and from introducing charges to operating the car park 24/7.

22. We do not have data for Park Mall car park as it has not been under our management in previous years so it is challenging to predict the impact of the charging proposals. The price reduction is, however, likely to be very well received by users of that car park and attract new customers.
23. It is proposed that a financial review be conducted once the tariff changes have been in place for six months and any resulting impacts be incorporated into future budgets.

Equalities Impact Assessment

24. There are no anticipated negative equality impacts. Ongoing monitoring for the project will be carried out by the Project Manager.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

25. Amendments to the parking tariffs will require amendments to the Traffic Management Orders and Parking Orders. This involves a statutory consultation period in which representations can be formally lodged.

Other Options Considered

26. We could leave the charges for Edinburgh Road car park as currently set and introduce the same charges for Park Mall car park, but this does not address currently underutilisation. Our aim is to set parking charges that balance demand across all our car parks and by adjusting prices, we are able to do this. Therefore, it is not an option to do nothing as we need to attract more customers. By reducing charges, we believe we are better able to support the needs of town centre businesses, workers, shoppers and commuters, and optimise yield from our parking assets.
27. We could reduce the base charges but leave customers paying the Pay by Phone charge. As previously stated the Pay by Phone system offers many benefits to customers and is also beneficial in avoiding the costs associated with cash handling/management. By supporting the cost of Pay by Phone we believe that more users will pay in this way. This also supports the introduction of cashless parking which is being proposed as a pilot in Park Mall upon installing an ANPR system.
28. The proposal is to reduce the base charges by 20p. This could be adjusted to, for example, to 10p therefore reducing the impact on our income (i.e. in the event that the price reduction does not encourage more customers or lengthen parking stays). A figure of 10p might not, however, be enough of a reduction to attract more customers as is desired.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

29. There are numerous charging structures could be adopted with varying advantages or disadvantages for either customers or the council. The option recommended, however, has many benefits for a wide range of stakeholders.
30. The reduction in charges is significant and is likely to prove popular with existing customers and, most importantly, attract new customers. This is an advantage financially to the council and businesses that benefit from increased visitor numbers. It will encourage customers to stay longer as it is cheaper for them to park. Many of those customers will be town centre employees so the reduction is particularly beneficial to them.
31. Attracting more visitors to these currently under-used car parks will free up some capacity in our more popular and convenient car parks.
32. It will generate income from stays under 30 minutes thus increasing our income and help offset the potential loss of revenue should we not attract new customers as anticipated. It ensures a suitable charge is applied for 24 hour parking but avoids punitive charges for those wishing to use the car park in the evening especially if parked there during the day.
33. The proposal protects the 'free after 3' parking scheme thus still encouraging people into the town at the end of the day to support the high street shops. But, if someone stays beyond 6pm or enters the car park after 6pm the £1.50 fixed charge is applied until 6am the following morning. If visitors wish to stay after 6am they can but an additional charge applies. This ensures that those still parked the next morning are paying an appropriate extra charge. Finally, the charges do not conflict with our season ticket prices.
34. There is a disadvantage to this proposal in that applying a charge after 6pm will discourage the car park from being used by those visiting the town for the evening. Also, those who have parked in these car parks during the day may move at 6pm to a free car park. We are conscious that until such time as an overnight charge is introduced in all our car parks, people will choose to park where it is free.

Next Steps in Process

35. The council will advertise the proposed changes in accordance with the legislative requirements. The aim is for these charges to be introduced in both car parks at the same time, namely 1 April 2022.
36. Working with our Communications and Marketing Team we can encourage, promote and influence users through signage, communications and social media to use both car park and be aware of the changes that are being made.

Conclusion

37. Parking plays a crucial part in ensuring the vitality of our high streets and town centre. The proposals within this report aim to provide a fair deal for our

customers, encouraging visitor to our town and supporting our local businesses. The effect of these tariff changes will need to be carefully monitored taking into account feedback of our customers so as we know they are right for our high street and support the council's wider economic development aspirations.

Portfolio Holder's Views

38. We have taken this decision to help residents and visitors of our town centre, especially as we recover from the pandemic. Parking is a crucial part of our transport infrastructure. Promoting full use of our assets is very much in line with the council's aspiration to Build Back Better High Streets and the Town Centre Reset. There is a need to promote and support our businesses and stimulate growth to ensure we have a vibrant and dynamic town centre we can all be proud of.

Cllr Peter Feacey, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Contact and Email

39. mandy.cracknell@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330571
alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330225



Agenda Item No: 8
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 27th January 2022
Report Title: **Extension of Electric Vehicle Charger Provision**
Report Author: Mandy Cracknell
Job Title: Team Leader – Parking, Highways and Transportation

Alison Oates
Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Peter Feacey
Portfolio Holder for: Community Safety and Wellbeing

Summary:	To approve installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and to approve the release of funds to install in locations that are ineligible for funding through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) scheme. To utilise the Council's Climate Change Reserve Fund.
-----------------	---

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None are significantly affected. Locations where EVCPs are to be installed are detailed within the report.

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

- I. Approve the release of £164,000 from the Climate Change Reserve Fund to install 15 Electric Vehicle Charging Points.**
- II. Delegate authority to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, to effect and complete all necessary steps to install in total 44 charging points as listed in this report.**
- III. Authorise the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

Policy Overview: The Council's Corporate Plan identifies Green Pioneer as a key priority. Increasing the number of EVCPs within our public car parks will further demonstrate commitment to tackling climate change. It will help the Council achieve its aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Financial Implications:	An allocation of £164,000 is required for the second phase of EVCP installation. The capital cost will not be recovered, however, charges paid by customers using the EVCPs will cover on-going operational costs.
Legal Implications: <i>Text agreed by Simon Talijancic on 13 January 2022</i>	<p>The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021 were signed into law on 15 December 2021. They will be brought into effect from 30 June 2022, except for the security requirements in schedule 1, which will be brought into effect from 30 December 2022.</p> <p>Appropriate legal documentation and legal service support will be required in relation to the additional contracting work that is needed.</p> <p>The planning, installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charge points will be provided through BMM Energy Solutions.</p>
Equalities Impact Assessment:	See Appendix A
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	Customers pay the EVCP operator directly rather than the council for the cost of using the charging point. The council will be the data owner with the EV charge point operator being the data processor. The operator will externally host data and the council's normal requirements with regard to GDPR and ICT security will apply.
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	<p>Our financial risk is reduced in that the EVCP programme is supported by the OLEV grants system. This does not, however, cover installing EVCPs in all council owned sites and therefore there is financial risk associated with the full programme. This risk is reduced by pursuing a collaborative delivery model with a private firm that specialises in this field.</p> <p>It is worth noting the government's decision to bring forward its target date for all new cars to be Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), from 2035 to 2030. This suggests that the Government is likely to continue supporting councils wishing to install charging infrastructure as soon as possible.</p>
Sustainability Implications:	Road transport accounts for around 30% of emissions of carbon dioxide. Investment in large-scale EV charging infrastructure will complement wider measures to encourage people to switch from fossil fuel (internal combustion engine) vehicles to ULEVs.
Other Material Implications:	The greatest staffing impact will be on the assigned Project Manager i.e. the Team Leader for Parking, Highways and Transportation, and the Senior Operations Officer. The project implementation will be accommodated within existing resources.

**Exempt from
Publication:**

No

**Background
Papers:**

None

Contact:

mandy.cracknell@ashford.gov.uk, Tel: 01233 330571
alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk, Tel: 01233 330225

Report Title: Extension of Electric Vehicle Charger Provision

Introduction and Background

1. The council have begun a programme to replace existing Electric Vehicles Charging Points (EVCPs) and install additional points across the borough. Residents and visitors expect public car parks to have charging facilities and the council's is keen to deliver on this expectation. This is in line with the government plans to accelerate a switch to cleaner modes of transport and will support the council's carbon reduction and air quality objectives.
2. The programme consists of three phases. The first phase relates to council car parks that are eligible for financial support from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). Further information on OLEV can be found at: [Office for Low Emission Vehicles - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
3. The second phase of the project is to install EVCPs in locations that do not meet the current OLEV application criteria and therefore require direct council funding.
4. Once the first and second phase are complete, we will turn our attention to other areas in an attempt to make electric vehicle charging more accessible, especially to those without access to private parking. We will look to reduce emissions through uptake of on-street EV charging. This report does not address this third phase which will be the subject of future reports.
5. Useful background to Electric Vehicles and Infrastructure is provided within Commons Library Research Briefing, 20 December 2021 at [CBP-7480.pdf](https://commons.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7480) ([parliament.uk](https://commons.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7480))

Proposal

First phase of EVCPs

6. This phase of EVCP programme relates to council car parks that are eligible for financial support from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), as the car parks are accessible 24 hours a day by residential users. An application has been submitted to the OLEV to cover this phase of the council's programme. The outcome is expected shortly.
7. A total of 29 points will be supplied under this first phase via a partnership arrangement with an external provider, BMM Energy Solutions Ltd (BMM). The OLEV grant will cover installation costs of £174,000 with BMM contributing an additional £58,000. The total first phase costs are therefore £232,000. There are no capital costs required from the borough council for this phase.

8. BMM Energy Solutions are currently under contract with the council and, subject to receiving the necessary OLEV funding, will install the first phase EVCPs, operate the network, provide warranty cover, ensure electricity supply and undertake maintenance for the new metered connections.
9. It is planned to install the EVCPs by April 2022.
10. The table below details where the first phase of EVCPs will be installed:

Phase 1 OLEV/BMM funded locations	Number of chargers	Spaces	Power (kW)
Ashford Car Parks			
Civic Centre	6	12	7
Elwick Place	3	6	22
Station Road	3	6	22
Vicarage Lane	3	6	22
Victoria Road	2	4	22
Conningbrook/Julie Rose	2	4	22
Edinburgh Road	6	12	7
Tenterden Car Parks			
Leisure Centre	2	4	22
Station Road	2	4	22
Total	29	58	

Second phase of EVCPs

11. The second phase of the project is to install EVCPs in locations that do not meet the current OLEV application criteria and therefore require direct council funding. It is proposed to use the council's Climate Change Reserve Fund for this purpose. The cost is estimated at £164,000.
12. The proposal is to install this second phase of EVCPs at the same time as the first phase **subject to receiving confirmation that the council's OLEV application has been approved.**
13. The table below details where the second phase EVCPs will be installed:

Phase 2 Borough Council funded location	Number of chargers	Spaces	Estimated cost
Park Mall (previously NCP)	6	12	£20k
Adleys Yard	1	2	£9k
Stour Centre	3	6	£30k
Bridewell Lane	2	4	£45k
Recreation Ground Road	3	6	£60k
Total	15	30	£164k

14. Once both phases are complete there will be 44 EVCPs serving 88 parking spaces.

15. The chargers will be owned by Ashford Borough Council and can be relocated to alternative locations if necessary.

Technical and tariff information

16. The EVCPs will be AC fast (7kW to 22Kw) charges with connections sized to allow for up to 3 x 22kW dual socket units or 1 x 50kW and 2 x load balanced 22kW units.
17. Locations closer to the strategic road network and other route-enabling locations will be considered for DC rapid charge points.
18. Access to the charge points will be through an App or RFID card (Radio Frequency Identify Card). There will also be an opportunity to access the charging points through Chip and Pin “contactless” terminals which will be a UK first for EV Charging Networks.
19. The EVCPs will be integrated with the council’s existing car parking permit schemes.
20. Pricing (i.e. the charge that customers pay for connectivity and for the electricity consumed) for both phases 1 & 2 will initially be set at 30p per kWh. As soon as BMM have recovered their contribution to the phase 1 costs the charging tariff will be reviewed. At this point, the council will be able to modify future charges paid by the customer.
21. Note that BMM will cover a standing charge, climate levy, metering charge and pay VAT at 20%. There is a misconception that commercial operators can make use of overnight rates as low as 5p per kWh, but this is not the case. Such rates are only for domestic users and normally for a limited amount for time (normally 4 – 5 hours). The majority of operators either charge more than 30p per kWh or add an additional connection fee for each session of around £1 to £1.50. User accounts are free and there are no monthly or annual subscriptions.
22. Multiple tariffs can be set for employee or other registered groups and discounts can be applied to overnight charging.

Financial implications

23. As previously stated, funding for the first phase will be provided by OLEV and BMM and is therefore cost neutral for the council. Once BMM have recovered their investment i.e. the £58,000 supplement to the OLEV bid, any surplus receipts from EVC payments will be shared with the council. The exact details of the percentage share have yet to be agreed but will be addressed as part of the contract monitoring process when BMM get near to recouping their investment.
24. An allocation of £164,000 is required for the second phase of EVCPs. This will fund those EVCPs for which OLEV funding is not available so must therefore be funded directly by the council.

25. This figure is an estimate and there is a risk that costs may increase, for example due to connectivity and electric supply issues. Detail investigation and surveys work by BMM in all anticipated locations has reduce this risk. By combining the delivery phases, namely undertaking the installations as the same time as the OLEV funded work, costs have been reduced.

Procurement arrangements

26. BMM have been engaged for the Phase 1 EVCPs through an ESPO framework. The proposed procurement for phase 2 will be a direct award to ensure a continuity of chargers across the borough. This will help to ensure a consistent approach to maintenance and servicing and ensure any faults/damage are quickly resolved.

Implications and Risk Assessment

27. The risk assessment for this project is under regular review, however, a summary of the current position is provided as follows:

Risk 1 – Disruption for existing customers during the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

28. While the physical installation of EVCPs is unlikely to cause problems for our customers, there will no doubt be teething problems as people get used to the new payment arrangements. Our parking staff will give support to customers when the EVCPs are first available for use and suitable guidance will be provided via the council's website.

Risk 2 – Financial risks

29. There is a financial risk that the project exceeds the quoted cost. This risk has been mitigated by undertaking site surveys and obtaining detailed estimates. If the figures are exceeded it would be possible to reduce the number of chargers to ensure delivery within budget. Alternatively, additional funds will be sought.

Risk 3 – Technology risk

There is a risk that the technology is not reliable or becomes outdated quickly.

30. By using an established UK provider of public sector EVCPs we minimise this risk. BMM have provided a full service from survey to electrical design and from install to aftercare agreements. BMM are a NICEIC and OLEV approved installer and have ISO 9001 and 14001 certification. BMM have their own workforce and have relationships with industry leading manufacturers ensuring they provide customers with a solution unique to their requirements. They are able to provide standard/fast/rapid vehicle charge points for electric vehicles, installation, back office, and maintenance services. The equipment will be the latest technology.

Risk 4 – Reputational risk

31. There is a reputational risk if the chargers do not work or customers struggle to pay and obtain the electricity. This could affect those without bank accounts and those who struggle to keep up with evolving technology. However, a clear marketing campaign will run alongside this project and will provide details of where customers can charge their vehicles and how to access the electricity.

Risk 5 – Low take up

32. There is a risk that the EVCPs will be underutilised. As the council owns the EVCPs we are able to relocate them if necessary.

Equalities Impact Assessment

33. Members are referred to the attached assessment. The key issue will be to ensure that all EVCPs are accessible. The exact positioning and type of chargers to be installed has yet to be finalised but accessibility will be fully considered during the design and installation phases.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

34. A meeting of the Office of the Executive Leader on the 12 January 2022 received an update on EVCPs. This outlined the programme as reported here. A presentation was also given to the Climate Advisory Committee on the 17 January 2022. The positive feedback from both groups has helped inform this report.
35. Installation of EVCPs will require amendments to various Traffic Management and Parking Orders. This process involves a statutory consultation period during which representations can be formally lodged.

Other Options Considered

Option 1 – Do nothing

36. The council could choose to let the market dictate where EVCPs are installed and not install them in its own car parks. This would undermine local and national policy objectives to support electric vehicle charging and make it very difficult to meet targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving local air quality. Private electric vehicle charging infrastructure would continue to serve people in locations such as supermarkets, although the 30% of households that lack off road parking (and charging) would be particularly disadvantaged and the council would probably face reputational damage from not actively promoting EVCPs.

Option 2 – Only provide EVCs paid for by OLEV

37. An alternative would be to restrict EVCP provision to only those sites covered by OLEV or those supported by other third party funds. This would clearly

reduce pressure on the council's general fund but would slow provision and reduce our ability to meet our carbon neutrality aspirations.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

38. The preferred option is to accelerate EVCP provision using council funds for the second phase. It demonstrates a firm commitment by the council to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution on our roads. Expanding our EVCP provision will enable the council to meet the needs of EV users and support innovation in EVCP technologies, thereby contributing to economic growth. We will be better able to meet the demands associated with the growth in electric vehicle ownership. We will ensure that our experience and best practice is shared with other local authorities and the wider industry.

Next Steps in Process

39. Following agreement, work would commence to deliver the EVCP expansion.
40. BMM will provide, install and maintain the 21 chargers as part of phase 2 in conjunction with the OLEV funded contract. Both phases will be delivered at the same time.
41. The phase 1 delivery programme is based on key milestones as summarised as below. Note this is subject to finally receiving OLEV funding approval, which is expected imminently.

Proposed Milestone	Milestone Date	Owner
Project start – OLEV application	01/07/2021	Ashford BC
Framework / Procurement start	01/09/2021	Ashford BC
Framework/procurement completed for phase 1	01/10/2021	Ashford BC
Installation start	01/02/2022	Ashford BC / BMM
Installation complete	31/03/2022	Ashford BC/ BMM
Project completion evidence submitted to the OLEV	30/04/2022	Ashford BC

42. For phase 2, the milestone dates are as follow:

Proposed Milestone	Milestone Date	Owner
Framework / Procurement start	01/02/2022	Ashford BC
Framework/procurement completed for phase 2	01/03/2022	Ashford BC
Installation start	01/02/2022	Ashford BC / BMM
Installation complete	31/03/2022	Ashford BC/ BMM
Project completion evidence submitted to the Climate Advisory Committee	06/05/2022	Ashford BC

43. Performance management measures, such as contract KPI's, will be developed to cover installation, maintenance and operational service standards for EVCPs.

44. There will be a proactive marketing campaign in the lead up to implementation, involving signage in car parks, information on our webpages and social media messages. There will be engagement with Zap Map and other online content providers to allow residents and visitors to locate our EVCPs with ease.

Conclusion

45. The council is committed to reducing carbon emissions and improving local air quality. The installation of electric vehicle charging points plays a part in delivering on this commitment. Our residents and those who work in or visit the borough will support the expanded provision. By directly funding additional charging points, the council is able to support the global move towards electric vehicles and achieve its own carbon emission and air quality objectives. The recommendations are contained on the summary page.

Portfolio Holder's Views

46. Both Government and motoring organisations believe one of the biggest obstacles of owning and running an electric vehicle is the lack of infrastructure in charging facilities. Ashford Borough Council has an ambitious carbon neutral target and needs to support its residents and visitors that would like to own and run an electric vehicle. As more people will be buying electric cars in the future this project will help to facilitate this change.
47. One of the key elements of this project is a learning experience – identifying the best charging solutions for different situations and locations and using our assets in better, smarter ways.

Cllr Feacey, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Contact and Email

48. mandy.cracknell@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330571
alison.oates@ashford.gov.uk, 01233 330225

Appendix A

Lead officer:	Mandy Cracknell
Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	To provide electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in named council car parks
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	27 January 2022
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 proposed decision will see 44 EVCPs installed in our car parks. This will provide our customers and residents with an additional resource to charge their electric vehicles.</p> <p>The expected outcomes and benefits of installing additional EVCPs within the borough:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in satisfaction with parking for our residents, business and visitors and for customers to have increased locations to charge their electric vehicles. • A fit for purpose maintenance contract to ensure faulty/damaged EVCPs are repaired in a timely manner. • A payment system that remains secure and compliant with industry standards. • An on-line account facility that has the potential to drive customer sign-up to the council's wider on-line portal i.e. links to other services across the council. <p>EVCPs can also play a role in enabling a variety of opportunities for businesses.</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. 	DfT statistics on mode of travel are available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts03-modal-comparisons

<p>Consultation:</p> <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>Installation of EVCPs will require amendment to various Traffic Management and Parking Orders. This involves a statutory consultation period in which representations can be lodged.</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	Medium	Positive (minor)
Middle age	Low	Positive (minor)
Young adult	Low	Positive (minor)
Children	Low	Positive (minor)
<u>DISABILITY</u>		
Physical	Medium	Positive (minor)
Mental	Low	Positive (minor)
Sensory	Low	Positive (minor)
<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

<p>Mitigating negative impact:</p> <p>Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.</p>	<p>Providing EVCPs will be beneficial to all customers that drive electric vehicles. The siting of the charge points will take access needs into consideration.</p>
--	---

<p>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?</p> <p>Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's <i>Essential Guide</i>, alongside fuller <i>PSED Technical Guidance</i>.</p>	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
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	N/A

<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>Research has indicated that the design and location of EVCPs needs to ensure that they are as accessible as possible. Older people and those living with physical impairment can find using EVCPs challenging. The design phase of this project takes this into account in order to maximise accessibility.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring for the project will be carried out via the Project Manager.</p> <p>There is no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision. The EVCPs are available to all our customers.</p> <p>The success of the programme of installing EVCPs will be reviewed and will take into account equality aspects.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>10 January 2022</p>

Agenda Item 9



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No: 9

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 27th January 2022

Report Title: Ashford Borough Council's Health and Safety Policy

Report Author: Natalie Pearce - Community Safety & Wellbeing Manager

Job Title:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Alan Pickering and Cllr. Peter Feacey

Portfolio Holder for: Portfolio Holder for HR & Customer Services and Portfolio holder for Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Summary:

The Cabinet is asked to agree the revised Health and Safety Policy. This was last issued in 2018 and was due for review in 2021.

The Policy has been revised and updated to provide additional clarity relevant to officer responsibilities and to further strengthen governance of health and safety within the Council. The revised Policy also streamlines arrangements to enable the organisation to respond quickly to anticipate changes to legislation.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Not applicable

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

- I. Agree the revised Health and Safety Policy.**
- II. Authorise the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

Policy Overview: There is a requirement in Section 2 of the Health & Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 to have a health and safety policy. This Policy sets out the general approach and commitment regarding how the Council manages health and safety. The Policy must be made available to employees and they will be consulted on any changes to it.

This dialogue via the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) enables employees, or their representatives, to influence how health and safety arrangements are developed and maintained, and promotes measures to protect health and safety.

Financial Implications:	The Policy itself will not incur any costs. There are no transactional or budgetary costs involved in delivering the Policy other than the agreed internal budgets to relating to existing Corporate Health & Safety (CHS) resources.
Legal Implications: <i>Text agreed by Samantha Clarke, Principal Litigator on 4 January 2022.</i>	The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and any other associated health and safety Regulations. The Act requires a written statement of policy and for that statement to be kept under review and updated where necessary.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	The Cabinet is referred to the attached Equalities Impact Assessment. The health and safety process involves the assessment of risk in relation to existing Council policies, plans and activities which are themselves subject to equalities assessments. However, regard is given to young adults (under 18 years), new and expectant mothers and disabled employees who will be considered in separate risk assessments in accordance with Regulations.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	There are no material changes to processes or systems which hold personal data. The data held is protected by rigorous measures and procedures to make sure it cannot be seen, accessed or disclosed to anyone who shouldn't be allowed to see it.
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	The Council has an established governance framework that is designed to support achievement of risk appetite through the application of and compliance with a range of policies and frameworks including health and safety. As set out in the Risk Management Framework, Ashford Borough Council's risk appetite for compliance is very low as we lead by example and can be trusted.
Other Material Implications:	There are no direct HR implications arising from the report. The changes to the policy are minimal and the revised policy will be available on the Council's Smart Hub (intranet), on the notice board in the Civic Centre and included in the Health and Safety Guidance for Employees Handbook.
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact:	Natalie Pearce – Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager Natalie.pearce@ashford.gov.uk (01233) 330304

Report Title: Ashford Borough Council's Health and Safety Policy

Introduction and Background

1. Every employer has a legal duty to have a Health and Safety Policy. As the Council employs five or more employees, the law states that the Policy must be written down. This Policy sets out the Council's aims and objectives and the organisational structure and health and safety responsibilities of all employees.
2. The Council has an existing Policy in place, however Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance indicates that the policy should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This updated Policy further clarifies roles and responsibilities of all those people involved with the Council's activities.
3. The Policy formalises the responsibilities for managers and employees to ensure that health and safety associated with the Council's activities is properly managed. This ensures that all reasonably practicable steps are taken to manage the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and that the Council's responsibilities in respect of persons other than its employees are met.
4. The implementation and ongoing application of this policy will be monitored by the Corporate Health & Safety Team (CHS) and will be reviewed in line with changes in legislative requirements.
5. This Policy is supported by health and safety policies, procedures and initiatives aimed at protecting Council employees from harm. These include wellbeing initiatives to promote good mental health and physical activity, and reimbursement for the cost of the flu vaccination.

The Policy

6. The Health and Safety Policy as presented for consideration sets out the Council's general approach to health and safety. It explains how we, as an employer, will manage health and safety in their business. It must clearly state who does what, when and how.
7. The Council must share the Policy, and any changes to it, with their employees. This will allow us to:
8. State the Council's general Policy on health and safety at work, including its commitment to managing health and safety and our aims. As the employer the most senior person in the company, should sign it and review it regularly.
9. List the names, positions and roles of the individuals in the organisation who have specific responsibility for health and safety.

10. Give details of the practical arrangements the Council has in place, showing how we will achieve the health and safety policy aims. This includes, for example, carrying out risk assessments and training employees.
11. Reviewing the Health and Safety Policy will ensure that we are compliant with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974.
12. As an employer, the Council has a legal responsibility to make sure the workplace is a safe environment. If the Council fails to recognise the importance of health and safety, the business may face a decrease in productivity and an increase in staff turnover as morale falls. This may lead to an increase in ill health and injury which impacts on the individual's quality of life.
13. If responsibilities are neglected, the Council may face high legal costs and hefty fines following criminal investigations. If the Council is found to have caused a person's death, they may face charges of Corporate Manslaughter leading to a prison sentence if senior managers are found to have failed their health and safety responsibilities.

Equalities Impact Assessment

14. Members are referred to the attached Assessment.
15. In summary, the Policy covers all employees across the organisation and aims to treat everyone equitably regardless of protected characteristic. It seeks to ensure that there are no barriers to anyone accessing and making use of the Policy and related procedures.
16. However, regard is given to young adults (under 18 years), new and expectant mothers and disabled employees who will be considered in supporting policies and procedures in accordance with Regulations. This is to ensure that the hazards linked to working conditions and processes are controlled.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

17. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), UNISON representatives, Safety Representatives and Management Team have been invited to provide feedback on this Policy. Some amendments to the format and layout were made following receipt of responses, and the opportunity has been taken to review and adapt the health and safety committee and groups' terms or reference and membership. The proposed changes to the organisational senior structure is currently undergoing consultation. New appointments may result in changes to the membership of committees and groups.

Other Options Considered and Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

18. The Council as the employer must comply with the legal requirement to provide a written Health and Safety Policy. The review has provided an

opportunity to explore alternative arrangements and the Policy as presented represents reflects the results of the consultation undertaken.

Next Steps in Process

19. Once approved by the Cabinet on 27th January 2022 the Policy will be made available on the Council's SmartHub, on the notice board in the Civic Centre and included in the Health and Safety Guidance for Employees Handbook.

Conclusion

20. The Health and Safety Policy reflects our commitment and approach to managing health and safety at work.
21. The recommendations are contained on the summary page.

Portfolio Holder's Views

22. Cllr Pickering: "Ashford Borough Council recognises our duty to protect employees from the risk of harm in the course of our day-to-day activities. Our aim is to prevent injury and physical or mental ill health through a proactive safety management programme, the maintenance of effective control measures and the promotion of employee wellbeing."

Contact and Email

23. Natalie Pearce Community Safety & Wellbeing Manager
24. Natalie.pearce@ashford.gov.uk (01233) 330304

Lead officer:	Natalie Pearce, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager
Decision maker:	Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) / Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Approve the revised Health and Safety Policy.
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	JCC 13 th January 2022 Cabinet 27 th January 2022
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>To seek approval from Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) / Cabinet for the revised Health and Safety Policy for Ashford Borough Council. This internal Policy affects the health, safety and welfare of Council employees.</p> <p>The Policy must be made available to employees and they will be consulted on any changes to it. This dialogue via JCC enables employees, or their representatives, to influence how health and safety arrangements are developed and maintained, and promotes measures to protect health and safety.</p> <p>This Policy will be available on the Council's intranet, on the notice board in the Civic Centre and included in the Health and Safety Guidance for Employees Handbook.</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>Research conducted as part of the revision of the policy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering best practice guidance including from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) website • Consulting with UNISON, Safety Representatives and Management Team
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>UNISON representatives, Safety Representatives and Management Team have been invited to provide feedback on this Policy. Some amendments to the format and layout were made following their responses, and the opportunity has been taken to review and adapt the sub groups terms or reference and membership.</p> <p>It was noted that a Safety Representative found the Policy detailed and that it covers all aspects (of health & safety).</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	Low	Neutral
Middle age	Low	Neutral
Young adult	High	Positive
Children	Low	Neutral
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	High	Positive
Mental	High	Positive
Sensory	High	Positive
<u>GENDER RE- ASSIGNMENT</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	High	Positive
<u>RACE</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	Low	Neutral
Women	Low	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	Low	Neutral
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	Low	Neutral
Former service personnel	Low	Neutral
Service families	Low	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	N/A
---	-----

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	N/A

<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 Policy covers all employees across the organisation and aims to treat everyone equitably regardless of protected characteristic. It seeks to ensure that there are no barriers to anyone accessing and making use of the Policy and related procedures.</p> <p>However, regard is given to young adults (under 18 years), new and expectant mothers and disabled employees who will be considered in separate risk assessments in accordance with Regulations.</p> <p>The policy as a whole seeks to advance equality of opportunity for and between different protected groups.</p> <p>The purpose and intended outcomes of the Policy do not seek to foster good relations between and across protected groups. However, the council has a range of other policies, projects and actions to help bring people together – e.g. Equality Training, Gender Pay Gap reporting, Customer Care Policy and publishing equalities objectives and staff/resident information on the council website.</p> <p>The Corporate Health & Safety Team (CHS) will analyse the accidents and incidents logged in the council’s accident book and those reported in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 to identify any potential equalities issues. This will form part of the 6 monthly report to Management Team.</p>
--	--

	The next review of the Policy is scheduled for 2024, however CHS will review the Policy on an on-going basis e.g. if CHS receive intelligence from HR / feedback from colleagues / particular case / legislation / case law, etc. that would call for an earlier review.
EIA completion date:	20 th December 2021



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ashford Borough Council Health and Safety Policy

Dated December 2021

Review Process:

This Health and Safety Policy is subject to approval by the Cabinet. It will be reviewed every two years by the Policy Owner to check efficient and effective operation – reporting any recommendations for change to the Management Team and Cabinet Members prior to agreement of revisions.

1. Statement of Intent	3
2. Scope	4
3. Risk Strategy	4
4. Health and Safety Law.....	4
5. Health and Safety Management	5
Control	5
Co-operation	5
Communication.....	6
Competence.....	6
Assess and control risks	6
Performance measurement.....	7
Auditing and reviewing	7
6. Health and Safety Organisation and Responsibilities	8
Health and Safety Organisation Chart	8
7. Health and Safety Responsibilities	9
Chief Executive	9
Management Team.....	9
Heads of Service.....	9
Managers, Team Leaders and Supervisors	10
Employees	10
Responsible Person (RP).....	10
Corporate Health and Safety (CHS).....	11
Staff Safety Representatives.....	12
8. Appendices.....	12
Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Advisory Group (HSAG).....	13
Terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee (HSC)	14
Terms of Reference for the Fire Safety Management Group (FSMG).....	15
Terms of Reference for the Asbestos Management Group (AMG)	16

1. Statement of Intent

We aim to set and maintain sensible and proportionate standards of health and safety performance and to have effective management arrangements in place to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and of others who may work at or visit our premises and to minimise the losses (financial and reputational) to our business from ill health and injury. We will search out, adopt and update best practice relevant to and proportionate to the risks, and we will follow our own guidance for relevant activities.

To enable us to achieve this aim, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) has set the following objectives. We will:

- (a) Observe health and safety law,
- (b) Establish and maintain sensible and proportionate health and safety management arrangements throughout our organisation,
- (c) Clearly define health and safety responsibilities,
- (d) Ensure that the risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff are assessed and properly controlled,
- (e) Work to prevent accidents, incidents and cases of work-related ill health,
- (f) Ensure that competent advice and training is available to assist our staff in meeting their responsibilities,
- (g) Maintain effective arrangements for monitoring our health and safety performance,
- (h) Review our health and safety arrangements regularly to ensure their continued effectiveness and suitability,
- (i) Provide and maintain a safe working environment, facilities and equipment,
- (j) Report on our performance annually and at all times seek to involve and consult with our staff and engage their commitment, and
- (k) Expect all our employees, contractors and sub-contractors to assist us in achieving sensible and proportionate standards of health and safety.

This policy sets out how we aim to achieve this standard and will be reviewed at least every two years.

Signature:

Name: Tracey Kerly, Chief Executive, Ashford Borough Council

Date:

The following sections explain in more detail how we will put the commitments expressed in the health and safety policy statement into practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Ashford Borough Council (ABC) employees including apprentices, temporary agency workers, consultants and contractors.

3. Risk Strategy

As part of its overall strategic risk management approach, and in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework, the Council will adopt a planned method to managing health and safety that will include the:

- (a) Identification of hazards.
- (b) Assessment of risks from those hazards and the identification of those who may be exposed to the hazards.
- (c) Identification of protective and preventative measures for those risks.
- (d) Introduction of those measures including appropriate training, information, equipment, instruction, supervision of working practices by management and the incorporation of health and safety requirements into contracts.
- (e) Systematic monitoring of the operation of those measures using relevant key performance indicators.
- (f) Periodic reviewing of policies and procedures in the light of information gained through monitoring.

Where appropriate, we will capitalise on the risk management fund provided by our insurers to ensure our strategic approach to managing risks is considered, both insurable and beyond.

4. Health and Safety Law

- (a) We have arrangements in place to ensure compliance with all relevant current and future legislation by the time it comes into force.
- (b) We will implement our own published guidance where it is relevant and suitable.

5. Health and Safety Management

Control

- (a) 'The Council' is the named employer of ABC employees and this extends to apprentices, temporary agency workers, consultants and contractors.
- (b) Members of the Management Team are accountable for health and safety in ABC and will regularly monitor the organisation's performance on health and safety. Management Team will receive a report every six months on health and safety in order to achieve this.
- (c) The Council will appoint a Responsible Person (RP) to manage the Corporate Health & Safety (CHS) function, namely the Food and Health & Safety Team Leader.
- (d) The Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSaW) will be the Management Team Champion for health and safety.
- (e) The day to day responsibility for implementing, managing and monitoring health and safety arrangements in ABC is delegated to line managers, with support provided by CHS.
- (f) ABC will provide access to occupational health (OH) specialists through an external provider.
- (g) ABC will ensure that all health and safety policies and preventative measures are subject to consultation with staff via Staff representatives and Trade Union safety representatives prior to implementation (unless deemed urgent).

Co-operation

- (a) The Health and Safety Advisory Group (HSAG) and Health and Safety Committee (HSC) and are the main forums for joint consultation between ABC management, the employees and Trade Union representatives on health and safety issues.
- (b) Staff Safety Representatives will represent all staff in their workplace.
- (c) The HSAG will agree and set performance standards.
- (d) The Fire Safety Management Group (FSMG) and the Asbestos Management Group (AMG) are sub groups of the HSAG.

Terms of Reference and membership of the following Committees and Groups are appended within Section 8.

- Health and Safety Advisory Group (HSAG)
- Health and Safety Committee (HSC)
- Fire Safety Management Group (FSMG)
- Asbestos Management Group (FSMG)

Communication

- (a) This Health and Safety Policy will be brought to the attention of all staff. It will be available in the Health and Safety Guidance for Employees Handbook, on the Council's SmartHub and a copy placed on the Health and Safety notice board in the Civic Centre.
- (b) Minutes of these Committees and Groups are published on the Council's SmartHub.

Competence

- (a) We will develop and maintain staff competence by providing appropriate health and safety training and Human Resources (HR) will keep a record of the training.
- (b) Where individuals have specific health and safety responsibilities, ABC will assess their performance as part of our appraisal process. If necessary, they will receive specific training to meet the best practice requirements to ensure their health and safety competence.

Assess and control risks

- (a) We will carry out risk assessments following the common format agreed by the HSC and publish the templates and completed risk assessments on the SmartHub.
- (b) The focussed effort is to be directed on significant hazards to which ABC staff and others may be exposed to while undertaking their duties at:
 - ABC buildings,
 - other buildings or sites visited by ABC staff as part of their work, or
 - while travelling on official business.
- (c) The RP, in consultation with the HSC, will identify, prepare and publish on the SmartHub common health and safety documentation to apply across ABC.
- (d) We will make available a service to provide occupational health advice, promotion and surveillance.
- (e) Corporate Health & Safety (CHS) will provide advice with regard to management arrangements for the control of contractors and others who do work on ABC's behalf, or within ABC controlled properties.

Performance measurement

- (a) As part of the six monthly CHS report, the HSAG will set out priorities for the following six months for the Management Team to review and approve.
- (b) The HSC and Management Team will monitor progress against the CHS work plan objectives and any relevant key performance indicators.
- (c) The six monthly CHS report will include details of reported accidents. Work related ill health statistics will be provided by HR as necessary.
- (d) The HSC and Management Team will report on progress to staff as necessary including on the Council's SmartHub.

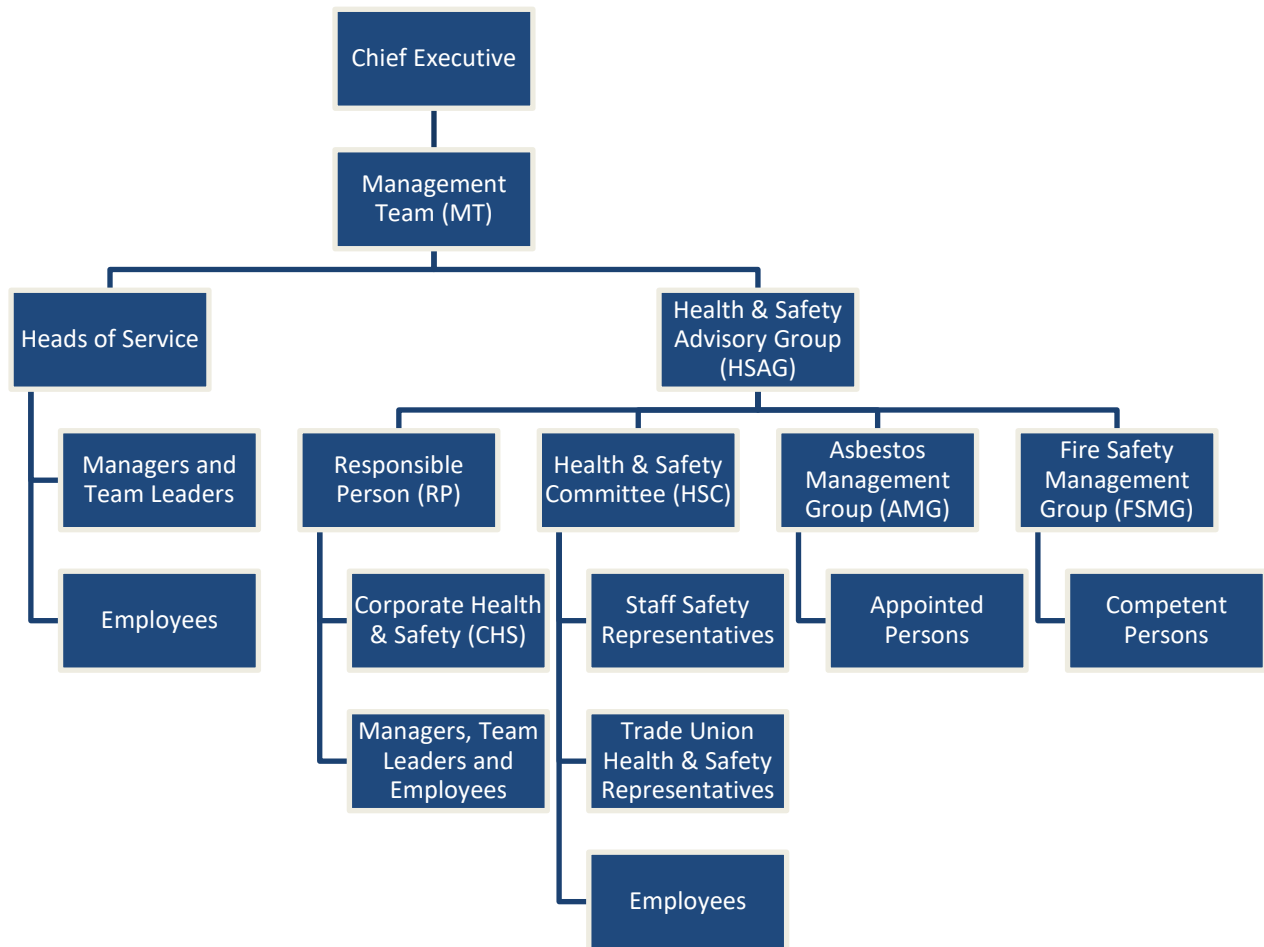
Auditing and reviewing

- (a) CHS will develop a rolling programme and undertake routine audits of the ABC safety management system including its implementation and operation. A summary of the findings will be reported to the HSAG and Management Team.
- (b) Where relevant, and based on risk, internal self-led audits and reviews may be initiated by CHS. A summary of the findings will be reported to the HSC and Management Team.
- (c) The HSC will examine the lessons arising from any audits or self-led reviews or audits to capture any wider lessons and to foster further improvement.
- (d) ABC will arrange periodic independent review of our arrangements, including peer review and Mid Kent Audit.

6. Health and Safety Organisation and Responsibilities

Health and Safety Organisation Chart

The following sets out the reporting and communication structure for the health and safety committees and groups.



7. Health and Safety Responsibilities

Chief Executive

While ABC, as the employer, is ultimately responsible for meeting the obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 as it affects Council employees; the Chief Executive will be directly responsible to the elected Members for the correct implementation of the policy and has overall responsibility for the actions of the employees of ABC.

Management Team

Management Team will:

- (a) Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement the Health and Safety Policy.
- (b) Ensure that the health and safety performance of each service is regularly reviewed at Management Team level.
- (c) Monitor the effectiveness of the Health and Safety Policy.
- (d) Set the right example for good health, safety and wellbeing in the Council.

Heads of Service

Each Head of Service is primarily responsible for the effective management of health and safety within their service. In particular, this includes:

- (a) Ensuring they are familiar with the Health and Safety Policy.
- (b) Delegating specific health and safety responsibilities to named individuals.
- (c) Monitoring their effectiveness in carrying out those responsibilities.
- (d) Appointing a Staff Safety Representative for their service and permitting that person sufficient time away from their normal duties to carry out the function effectively.
- (e) Ensuring that risk assessments are prepared for all tasks carried out by their staff and that the appropriate controls are in place.
- (f) Taking immediate steps to investigate and control any unacceptable risks to health or safety arising from work.
- (g) Consulting with staff in their section on any health, safety and wellbeing matters causing them concern and seeking the advice of CHS when necessary.
- (h) Ensuring that adequate health and safety training is provided as an ongoing process.
- (i) Bringing to the attention of Management Team any health and safety issue that requires its attention.
- (j) Actively promoting health, safety and wellbeing within their service and personally setting the right example.

Managers, Team Leaders and Supervisors

Each Manager, Team Leader and Supervisor is responsible for the effective management of health and safety within their specified area or function. In particular, this includes:

- (a) Ensuring the preparation and reviewing risk assessments for the tasks carried out by their staff.
- (b) Ensuring they are familiar with the Health and Safety Policy.
- (c) Ensuring that the controls in place to manage risks (including the use of personal protective equipment) are understood and are complied with.
- (d) Investigating accidents, incidents and near misses and making the necessary report to CHS.
- (e) Ensuring that any specialist training needs are brought to the attention of the Head of Service, and / or HR, and are suitably rectified if requested through appropriate training.
- (f) Ensuring that all equipment and machinery is properly maintained, that defects are promptly reported and rectified and is within age related requirements.
- (g) Giving adequate information and supervision to atypical workers (for example, contractors) on Council premises and carrying out competency checks where necessary.
- (h) Actively promoting health, safety and wellbeing within their group and personally setting the right example.

Employees

All employees have a legal obligation to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and for that of others who may be affected by their actions or inactions. Employees are responsible for:

- (a) Complying with the Council's safety rules and procedures.
- (b) Complying with personal protective equipment requirements.
- (c) Reporting accidents, incidents, near miss occurrences and hazardous situations including violence and aggression to their supervisor.
- (d) Reporting defects and any health and safety concerns.
- (e) Behaving in a responsible manner.

Responsible Person (RP)

The RP is responsible for co-ordinating many health and safety activities delivered by the CHS. These responsibilities specifically include:

- (a) Prepare six monthly reports to MT concerning the work undertaken by CHS.
- (b) Attending and supplying information for health and safety meetings.
- (c) Co-ordinating the activities of the HSC, HSAG, FSMG and AMG.
- (d) Supporting the investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses in conjunction with managers and recommending corrective action as appropriate.
- (e) Ensuring that reports as required by Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and MT.
- (f) Carrying out risk assessments for work activities when required and to support others with risk assessments in their services.
- (g) Ensuring appointed first aiders, fire control officers and fire wardens are scheduled to attend training as necessary and that they carry out drills with the support of the facilities team as required.
- (h) Ensuring officers involved in delivering CHS functions maintain their knowledge, skills and competence including by scheduling any appropriate training.
- (i) Continually improve and update corporate risk management procedures based on current best practice and lessons learned.
- (j) Advising on and assisting in the provision of health and safety training.
- (k) Deliver the CHS work plan endorsed by the HSAG and agreed by MT.

Corporate Health and Safety (CHS)

The CHS function will be led by the RP and delivered by a team of competent officers. These officers are responsible for co-ordinating many health and safety activities delivered by the CHS. These responsibilities specifically include:

- (a) Attending and supplying information for health and safety meetings.
- (b) Supporting the co-ordination of the activities of the HSC, HSAG, FSMG and AMG.
- (c) Supporting the investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses in conjunction with managers and recommending corrective action as appropriate.
- (d) Ensuring that reports as required by Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- (e) Carrying out risk assessments for work activities when required and to support others with risk assessments in their services.
- (f) Maintain their knowledge, skills and competence including by scheduling any appropriate training.

- (g) Continually improve and update corporate risk management procedures based on current best practice and lessons learned.
- (h) Advising on and assisting in the provision of health and safety training.
- (i) Support the delivery of the CHS work plan endorsed by the HSAG and agreed by MT.

Staff Safety Representatives

- (a) Will be familiar with the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- (b) Will seek to promote health, safety and wellbeing amongst staff.
- (c) Will undertake some routine health and safety functions i.e. checking first aid kit stock levels, recommend risk assessments within their service are implemented and reviewed as required, and carry out Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments as necessary.
- (d) Will undertake basic health and safety at work training to enable them to properly fulfil the functions of their role.
- (e) Will work with other representatives to develop a network of people who can liaise with CHS.
- (f) Will act as the contact between CHS and the service to ensure managers and employees receive appropriate information.
- (g) Will attend Safety Committee meetings, and service management meetings as required.

8. Appendices

Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Advisory Group (HSAG)

Terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee (HSC)

Terms of Reference for the Fire Safety Management Group (FSMG)

Terms of Reference for the Asbestos Management Group (AMG)

Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Advisory Group (HSAG)

The objectives this group will be to monitor the safety performance of ABC as a whole and recommend new health and safety measures, or revise existing ones as appropriate.

It will present original proposals for the improvement of health and safety standards to management. The Advisory Group will initiate action but the responsibility for implementation rests with managers.

More specifically, to achieve its objectives it will:

- (a) Endorse and set health and safety performance standards as set out in the CHS work plan.
- (b) Monitor the arrangements for the planning, organisation and control of the council's health and safety function.
- (c) Facilitate the council's compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation.
- (d) Consider reports that the Safety Committee, Staff Safety Representatives Fire Safety Management Group and Asbestos Management Group wish to submit.
- (e) Consider reports and factual information provided by the HSE and Insurance providers.
- (f) Review the results of significant accident and incident investigations and endorse the corrective action taken.
- (g) Oversee the provision and performance of the Council's emergency procedures, for example bomb threats and evacuation procedures.
- (h) Take other such actions as may be necessary or desirable for maintaining and improving occupational health and safety throughout the Council.

Membership

The RP will be responsible for the co-ordination of the Advisory Group. They will ensure that:

- (a) This Committee will **meet twice a year** prior to the MT reports to make recommendations on corporate health and safety issues, with the proviso that additional meetings may be arranged if the need arises.
- (a) There will be an agenda co-ordinated by the RP for each meeting and minutes taken of the business transacted.
- (b) Copies of the minutes are published and circulated to all Advisory Group members, as well as Management Team, and are published on the Council's SmartHub.
- (c) The membership will consist of the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, the Head of HR and Customer Service, Staff Safety Representatives, a union safety representative, a Facilities Supervisor/Officer, the RP and any other members of staff as may be required to attend.
- (d) The Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing will chair the meetings and the Head of HR and Customer Service will deputise.

Terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee (HSC)

The objective of the Committee will be to promote co-operation between managers and staff in the implementation and development of measures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing at work of all ABC employees and others who may be affected.

More specifically, to achieve this it will:

- (a) Establish a regular method of consultation between the employer and the employees working within the Service with a view to promoting a co-operative approach to health and safety.
- (b) Promote greater awareness within each Service of current health and safety issues, provide support and clarify if and when necessary.
- (c) Receive and consider reports which Staff Safety Representatives may wish to submit.
- (d) Ensure a consistent approach is applied to the implementation of health and safety policy across the Council.
- (e) Assist in the development of safety guidance and safe methods of work.
- (f) Report matters of a corporate significance to the Health and Safety Advisory Group along with the minutes of the Committee meetings.

Membership

The RP will be responsible for the co-ordination of the Committee. They will ensure that:

- (a) This Committee will meet **quarterly** with the proviso that additional meetings may be arranged if the need arises.
- (b) There will be an agenda co-ordinated by the RP for each meeting and minutes taken of the business transacted.
- (c) Copies of the minutes are circulated to all Committee members, as well as relevant persons, and are published on the Council's SmartHub.
- (d) The membership will consist of one Staff Safety Representative for each service, a Union safety representative, the Specialist Management Support Officer, the RP or nominated person will chair the meetings, and such other members of staff as may be required to attend.
- (e) Staff Safety Representatives shall feedback information to employees in their respective service and consult over issues of particular interest.

Terms of Reference for the Fire Safety Management Group (FSMG)

The objective of the Management Group will be to provide a forum for monitoring the Council's Fire Safety Policy and Management Plans (FSMP).

The Management Group will review the Fire Safety Policy and FSMP annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

More specifically, to achieve this it will:

- (a) Prepare, implement and manage an Action Plan as necessary to ensure competent discharge of identified duties.
- (b) Report on a six monthly basis to the Responsible Officer and Management Team.
- (c) The Management Group will review progress against the agreed Action Plan, review any incidents related to the FSMP, review any changes to the management or organisational structure necessitating review or changes to the FSMP, review if Fire Risk Assessments require amendments or actions, and review level of awareness to include employees, Members, contractors and any other relevant stakeholders.

Membership

The RP will be responsible for the co-ordination of the Management Group. They will ensure that:

- (a) This Management Group will meet **quarterly** with the proviso that additional meetings may be arranged if the need arises.
- (b) There will be an agenda co-ordinated by the RP for each meeting and minutes taken of the business transacted.
- (c) Copies of the minutes are circulated to all Management Group members, as well as relevant persons, and are published on the Council's SmartHub.
- (d) The membership will consist of a nominated Head of Service, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, all appointed Fire Safety Competent Persons, Specialist Management Support Officer, the RP and any other members of staff as may be required to attend.
- (e) The nominated Head of Service will chair the meetings and the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager will deputise.

Terms of Reference for the Asbestos Management Group (AMG)

The objective of the Management Group will be to provide a forum for monitoring and reviewing the Council's strategic approach to managing asbestos.

More specifically, to achieve this it will:

- (a) Prepare, implement and manage an Action Plan as necessary.
- (b) Report on a six monthly basis to the Management Team.
- (c) There will be an agenda co-ordinated by the RP for each meeting and minutes taken of the business transacted.
- (d) The Management Group will review the Asbestos Management Policy at least annually, review progress against the agreed Action Plan, review any incidents related to asbestos, review if Asbestos Risk Assessments require amendments or actions, and review level of awareness to include employees, Members, contractors and any other relevant stakeholders.

Membership

The RP will be responsible for the co-ordination of the Management Group. They will ensure that:

- (a) This Management Group will meet **twice a year** with the proviso that additional meetings may be arranged if the need arises.
- (b) There will be an agenda co-ordinated by the RP for each meeting and minutes taken of the business transacted.
- (c) Copies of the minutes will be circulated to all Group members, as well as relevant persons, and are published on the Council's SmartHub.
- (d) The membership will consist of a nominated Head of Service, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Specialist Management Support Officer, the RP and any other members of staff as may be required to attend.
- (e) The nominated Head of Service will chair the meetings and the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager will deputise.

Agenda Item No: 10

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2022

Report Title: Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

Report Author: Nic Stevens
Job Title: Recovery Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Neil Shorter,
Portfolio Holder for: Portfolio Holder for Finance & IT

Summary: This report proposes the formal write off of £321,056.74. The proposals are in line with the Council's Revenues & Benefits Service Write Off Policy. The Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) has been consulted along with Heads of Service for relevant areas.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

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

- I. Note the action that accounts totalling £40,060.70 have been written off under the delegated powers (Financial Regulations 11.1)
- II. Approve the write offs listed in the Exempt Appendices totalling £280,996.04

Policy Overview: The regular review and writing off of un-collectable debts is part of strong financial management.

Financial Implications: Provision for bad debts has been made in the final accounts to account for expected write-offs during the year.

Legal Implications: There are circumstances when it is appropriate to write off monies owed to the Council. Some of these are covered by statute or an instruction by the courts whereas other areas will be considered by local management, for example when residents abscond leaving debts. There are some debts that whilst are written off by ABC, could legally be pursued but the decision is a commercial and pragmatic one based on the likelihood of successful recovery further to the economic

position of the debtor or known whereabouts or lack of. That said, just because a debt is written off, legally in some cases, action can be reinstated if further evidence comes to light that indicates that it is now in both the commercial and public interest of ABC so long as the debt has not become statute barred.

Text agreed by Principal Litigator on 18 January 2022

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not Required

Data Protection Impact Assessment:

Not required with the nature, scope, context and purposes of any necessary processing being in line with routine procedures

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):

The write offs do not have an immediate financial effect on the current year's budget as the bad debt provision is greater than the write-off total. However, the making of that provision did have a cost implication at the time the provision was made.

Sustainability Implications:

Not Applicable

Other Material Implications:

Not Applicable

Exempt from Publication:

YES (Appendices)

[Not For Publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.] and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

Background Papers:

-

Contact:

nicola.stevens@ashford.gov.uk Tel: (01233) 330446

Report Title: Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

Introduction and Background

1. To advise Members of debts written-off and obtain approval to write off further individual debts of over £1,000.00 listed in the Exempt Appendices

Proposal / Current position

2. The write offs being recommended are in accordance with the Revenues & Benefits Service Write Off Policy. Over recent years, due to the economic climate there has been a significant increase in Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) write offs, the majority of these relate to company insolvency.
3. Under delegated powers the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) has written off debts totalling £40,060.70 column (a). Approval is sought for write off of debts totalling £280,996.04 in column (b).

Write off debt summary:-

	Value of debts written off under delegated powers	Value of debts recommended for write off (see attached appendices)	Provision for Bad Debt at 1.4.2021
	(a)	(b)	(c)
Council Tax	£21,859.27	£49,292.10	£232,098.10
Non Domestic Rates	£878.48	£192,935.30	£648,794.68
HB overpayment	£12,603.22	£34,902.64	£1,144,260.95
Sundry Debtors	£4,719.73	£3,866.00	£1,099,412.09
TOTAL	£40,060.70	£280,996.04	

Implications and Risk Assessment

The write offs do not have an immediate financial effect on the current year's budget as the bad debt provision is greater than the write-off total. However, the making of that provision did have a cost implication at the time the provision was made; those being sundry debtors at full cost, council tax approximately 10% cost (90% financed by Kent County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner of Kent & Kent Fire Authority), housing benefit overpayments 60% cost due to existing subsidy arrangements and NNDR 40% (50% financed by the Government and 10% by Kent County Council).

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

The Deputy Chief Executive been consulted along with Heads of Service for relevant areas.

Other Options Considered / Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

Recovery options are considered throughout the process and all necessary efforts made to collect amounts due. There are circumstances when it is appropriate to write off of monies owed to the Council, for example, some of which are covered by statute, bankruptcy, absconders who cannot be traced and when the amount is uneconomical to collect. That said, just because a debt is written off, in some cases action can be reinstated if further evidence comes to light that indicates that it is now in both the commercial and public interest.

Next Steps in Process

Write off amounts in attached reports.

Conclusion

The Service's Write Off policy has been followed and in many cases a number of methods of recovery followed before the debts have been recommended for write off.

Portfolio Holder's Views

"This report is a routine report that itemises outstanding debts that have little or no prospect of recovery using measures that are available to the council. As such I am content that the proposals within the report are sound and that the recommendations should be approved. It should be noted that where/when an individual who is in default and not accessible should resurface in the future which should provide members and the public a level of reassurance that ongoing due diligence remains. I recommend this report for approval and thank officers for their ongoing professionalism in these difficult times."

Contact and Email

Nic Stevens

nic.stevens@ashford.gov.uk

Exempt Appendix
Revenues & Benefits Service Write Off Schedule
The Exempt Appendix is Not for Publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of
Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Guidance notes regarding reasons for write off and any subsequent action:

1. Where accounts are in bankruptcy, liquidation, dissolved, in administration or there is a Debt Relief Order claims for the amounts due have been submitted to the Receivers, Liquidators or Administrators. Any amounts received will be written back on to the appropriate accounts. Where a company is “struck off” or there is a proposal to “strike off” this means a company has ceased to trade and comply with the requirements of Companies House i.e. submit company accounts and there is little chance of recovering any monies due.
2. Where debtors have absconded “gone abroad” or “unable to trace” a report of confirmation has been obtained from a commercial tracing agency
3. Where Action states “LO returned by Bailiffs” - the Bailiffs have returned the Liability Orders as they are unable to collect the debts as the debtor has absconded. The Bailiffs would have undertaken initial trace action to locate the debtor before returning the Liability Orders.
4. Where action states “unable to attach to benefits” the debtor is not claiming state benefits in the UK or other attachments are in force.
5. Where action states “Committal” the debtor has been taken to Court with an application to commit to prison.
6. “Statute barred” means that the debt is unable to be recovered due the lapse in time (six years or more) of having contact with the debtor.
7. Where action states “uneconomic to pursue” means that all recovery methods have been exhausted other than civil court action where legal costs are likely to outweigh any monies recovered.
8. Company and Individual Voluntary Arrangements means that recovery action cannot legally proceed but there may be a partial payment of the debt.
9. County Court Judgement (CCJ) obtained means recovery is now with the Court Bailiffs and if they cannot collect no further action can be taken.
10. There have been instances where long term empty properties incurring an empty rates charge have been let to Companies that never occupy the property but become liable for the empty charge. Once recovery action reaches an advanced stage the Company is dissolved making the debt irrecoverable. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have been informed of the practice and have advised that they are aware of the situation.

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Greater Ashford Borough – Environment & Land Mapping Commission

NOTES of the 3rd Meeting held on 7 December 2021 at 1030 in the Council Chamber

Present

Commission Members

Neil Bell	Chair of Commission & ABC Portfolio Holder Planning & Development
Michael Bax	Weald of Kent Protection Society (WKPS)
Peter Dowling	River Stour Internal Drainage Board
Christine Drury	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
Shona Johnstone	Homes England
Sue Cobb	For Sandra Norval, Southern Water
Chris Reynolds	Kent Downs AONB
David Robey	KCC Elected Member & Deputy Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Jeremy Smith	Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)

Professional Advisers

Jeremy Baker	ABC Principal Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Simon Cole	ABC Head of Planning & Development
Tom Marchant	KCC Head of Strategic Planning & Policy
Andrew Osborne	ABC Economic Development Manager

Apologies

Noel Ovenden	Vice Chair of Commission & Leader of Ashford Independent Party & ABC Chair of Overview & Scrutiny
Nick Fenton	Kent Housing & Development Group
Jo James	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC)
Sam Loades	NFU
Tracey Butler	ABC Head of Environment & Land Management
Lorna Ford	ABC Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communication

Notes of the Previous Meeting

The Notes of 9 November were agreed as a true record.

Chairman's Update

The Chair commended the Spatial Planning Manager for putting together a comprehensive paper/presentation for the Commission's December meeting, and he invited everyone to submit questions and have a discussion on the way forward.

Presentation

The Spatial Planning Manager went through his paper, highlighting various elements and stating the importance of the Local Plan as an important mechanism for shaping the future of the borough. How the Commission's work could feed into the process of putting the next Local Plan together – a Local Plan which looks at housing, employment, jobs, infrastructure, etc., and how to deliver them – was important too.

Members of the Commission requested that a map with overlays denoting various designations – e.g. AONB, SSSI, etc. – be produced so that a comprehensive 'picture' of the borough is made available.

It was also agreed that the Commission should look at definitions and working assumptions to add to the overall 'picture'; as well as consultation and see who should be consulted, how this should take place, and put together a timetable.

It was agreed that two working groups (of three or four Commissioners each, facilitated by relevant Council officers) should be set up to look at these issues.

In view of the short timescale (because of Christmas), it was agreed to move the January meeting to 18th January 2022 and to hold one or two Working Group meetings on the two areas so that proposals can be put to the January meeting.

The Commission also proposed that a consultant should be appointed to carry out the relevant mapping, and that a presentation on the various mapped areas would benefit the Commission and so should take place at the February meeting.

A proposal was made to look at Net Zero and what this would entail and to have a greener planning agenda generally, but it was agreed this would form a later part of the Commission's work (possibly March onwards).

Circulation: 11.1.22

All Commission Members + Executive Leader of the Council

All Professional Advisors + Chief Executive

Secretariat:	Linda Stringer	ABC Senior Executive Assistant*
	Jeff Simms	ABC Senior Communications Officer
	Danny Sheppard	ABC Member Services Manager*
	Kirsty Hogarth	ABC Head of Secretariat

(* denotes not in attendance for meeting)

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on Microsoft Teams on the **14th December 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. B Heyes (Chairman);
Mr. P Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Cornish, Feacey, Krause, Spain.

Mr. S Campkin, Mr. P M Hill, Mr. D Robey, Mr. D Ross, Mr C.Simkins.

Mrs. C Drury – KALC Representative.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs A Hicks, Mr A Rogers.

Also present:

Cllrs. Brooks, Hayward, Michael, Ovenden.

In Attendance:

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

Schemes Project Engineer – KCC, District Manager – Ashford – KCC.

208 Declarations of Interest

Mr Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived adjoining the Sevington Inland Border Facility site.	212
-------------	--	-----

209 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 7th September 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

210 Parking and Waiting Restrictions – update summary

The report provided an update on schemes that were currently being managed and progressed through the Parking, Highways and Transportation team.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

211 Highway Works Programme Update

The report provided an update and summarised the Highways Works Programme and the identified schemes approved for construction and delivery in the next two years. An additional item had also been appended to this report and circulated separately, giving details of a proposed speed limit reduction to 40mph to be implemented on Chart Road and Long Length, Ashford.

With regard to the Programme itself, the Chairman opened up the item for discussion. The District Manager Ashford agreed to report back to Members on the following points: -

- Would the improvements to existing road markings at the Drivers Roundabout would include hatchings to prevent blocking?
- The absence of a 20mph scheme in Bybrook Road from Appendix H (Combined Members Grant Programme Update).

In relation to the Chart Road and Long Length speed limit reduction, the Schemes Project Engineer introduced this part of the report which advised that the current speed limit of this single carriageway urban distributor road was National speed limit (60mph). This had been considered as inappropriate when adjoining roads were 30mph and primarily residential, and a proposed speed limit reduction to 40mph for this section of road had received support from Kent Police and a majority of local residents who had responded to the consultation.

Both the local KCC and ABC Members supported the proposals. It was suggested by a number of Members that 30mph may be more suitable in this particular location as it was close to schools and a children's play centre/nursery, without footpaths. The Chairman advised that the Board could only vote on the proposal before them, which was a reduction to 40mph.

Resolved:

That (i) the Highway Works Programme be received and noted.

- (ii) the implementation of the proposed speed limit reduction on Chart Road and Long Length, Ashford be agreed.**

212 Update on the Sevington Inland Border Facility

The Senior Highway Manager – KCC had submitted an update report on the Sevington Inland Border Facility (including Operation Fennell). He had been unable to attend the meeting but had endeavoured to respond to any questions that were raised.

The Vice-Chairman said that with regard to the strategic signage being arranged by the DfT, by way of an update he could advise that Ashford's MP Damian Green had met with National Highways and this would be happening in the New Year.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

213 Overnight HGV Parking Enforcement and Clamping

The Civil Enforcement Team Leader introduced the update report which advised that Ashford CEO's had recommenced enforcement on 7th September 2021, following the six month KCC trial, and gave details of activity since that date.

The Vice-Chairman asked if data could be collected during the first six months of 2022, including reports from the public, about which locations HGV's were still using to park once the larger Ashford Truck Stop was open. This would enable hotspots outside of the five designated clamping areas to be identified and the Board could perhaps decide whether any further action was required at its June 2022 meeting. This was supported by the Board.

A Member said that most lorries coming in to the UK did not have enough money to park in the Truck Stop due to wages and this forced them to park at alternate places. He did have a lot of experience in this area having worked in transport all his life and he would be happy to be involved in finding solutions in the future.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

214 Moving Traffic Enforcement

The Civil Enforcement Team Leader gave a verbal update and advised that the Government had announced its intention to enact part 6 of the 2004 Traffic Management Act which would give devolved powers to CEOs for some Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE) contraventions. Subject to parliament timescales, it was currently expected to go through in February 2022. KCC had already confirmed they would be applying for the devolved powers for Kent when possible to do so and would then discuss with Districts how to move forward once they decided how the powers were delegated. Only a select number of contraventions would be included and all MTE would be done through certified camera enforcement. The PCN would be issued by a CEO from a desk using the camera enforcement and this could be a

JTB
141221

Static or Mobile camera. No MTE could be issued by a CEO in uniform from the street and this did not replace any powers currently held by the Police. MTE would not change anything in the enforcement of Parking currently and how CEOs enforce on street - this would be additional and a separate way of working.

In response to questions, it was clarified that bus gates were included in the list of MTE contraventions and this was already on Officers' radar for the Ashford Borough. Members mentioned the Finberry/Bridgefield and Beaver Road Bus Gates as potential locations. The Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that she was meeting with the KCC Lead Officer for MTE the following day and she would be discussing Bus Gates in particular.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

215 Date of Meetings 2022/23

1st March 2022

7th June 2022

6th September 2022

6th December 2022

7th March 2023.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Member Services:
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: <https://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the **22nd December 2021**

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Harman, L Suddards, Webb.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Councillor Harman attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Ovenden

Apologies:

Cllrs. Forest, Knowles, Ovenden.

Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Heritage Development Officer.

In Attendance:

Head of Environment and Land Management, Tourism and Heritage Manager, Civic Officer, Senior Executive Assistant, Member Services Manager.

Jasper Bouverie – Funder Films CIC (Item 3 only)

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Councillor Burgess made a Voluntary Announcement as he was the Council's appointed representative on the Marshlink Steering Group which had received a presentation on the Ashford Railway Theatre Project and he had been in touch with the organisers with a view to assisting with funding.
- 1.2 Councillor Webb made a Voluntary Announcement as she was the President of the Ashford Sea Cadets.

2 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 29th September 2021

- 2.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 29th September 2021 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

3 Ashford's Hidden Treasures

- 3.1 Jasper Bouverie of Funder Films CIC gave the Board a brief presentation updating on his work, and in particular the Ashford's Hidden Treasures

Project. He said that Ashford's Hidden Treasures had arisen out of a film he had made last year called "Ashford in 100 Buildings". This had documented the history of the Borough from the year 1100 to present with pictures of buildings. The film had been funded by the Kent Community Foundation, with a contribution from Ashford Borough Council and had been given to activity leaders in Care Homes in the Borough to help stimulate conversations at a difficult time. He said he had always wanted to do a film on objects as well, inspired by the BBC Radio 4 series "The History of the World in 100 Objects". He successfully applied for a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and with the help of local curators, archivists, museums and History Societies, he had embarked on the project in April 2021. He showed a short video providing a summary of some of the objects and explaining how the project had gone.

3.2 Mr Bouverie said he had really enjoyed running this project. Everyone he had met had been incredibly enthusiastic and he wanted to continue bringing Ashford's amazing history to people's attention. In February he was due to speak to the Wye Historical Society on his highlights from Ashford's Hidden Treasures and going forward he has been speaking to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Centre for Local History in Leicester about taking the project elsewhere as there seemed to be a formula that could be replicated in other areas. In the short term, Funder Films was currently working on a film called "Dear Ashford, Alabama" with some of the young people at Sk8side. The film, funded by the Frank Brake Foundation, was in the form of a letter, explaining the town to people who lived in a much smaller and somewhat deprived town called Ashford in Alabama. There had been some delays in production but it should be finished in the New Year. He couldn't go into more detail about the projects for 2022 as the grant forms had not yet been written, but he could say that Funder Films was keen to do more work in Ashford and to meet people in the Borough who were interested in film, history, or supporting some of the community's more isolated groups. Any help the Council could give would be gratefully received. He concluded by thanking the Heritage Development Officer, at the Council for his help so far and to Members for giving him the opportunity to address the Board

3.3 The Leader thanked Mr Bouverie for his presentation and Board Members said they had found it fascinating. The Leader requested that links to the videos referred to be circulated to Board Members as he would be very interested to view them all. In the course of discussion Board Members made the following points: -

- Councillor Harman said she had followed the films with interest on Facebook and would be interested in pursuing a project on the Borough's agricultural history. She was particularly interested in 'Living History' and Funder Films' work with local Care Homes and would be keen to work further with Mr Bouverie on this.
- Councillor Webb advised that her family had donated some documents to the County Archives in Maidstone, including some related to

Elizabeth Quinton Strouts and the Earls of Thanet, which may be of interest. They had been archived under “the Webb Collection”.

- Councillor Lyn Suddards said she was fascinated by this whole topic and local history in general. Anything based on the railways seemed to have been particularly popular and she knew there was some good material out there about the Trade Unions and the first female railway workers in Ashford.

3.4 Mr Bouverie said he would be happy to make contact with anyone who was interested in getting involved in future projects and would pass on his contact details.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

4 Event Updates

Holocaust Memorial Day and 80 Trees for 80 Years

- 4.1 The Heritage Development Officer had submitted a report updating on progress since the last meeting. Plans were all now in place to hold a tree planting ceremony and unveiling of a plaque in Woodchurch on Holocaust Memorial Day – 27th January 2022. A suitable location for the planting of the oak tree had been agreed on the village green and invitations to the ceremony had been sent out. In response to a question it was advised that there would be a religious element to the ceremony. The Leader asked if joining instructions could make it clear whether there was a dress code and whether medals and decorations should be worn.
- 4.2 As an aside, the Leader said that he had found the discovery of information about Woodchurch’s links to the Holocaust fascinating, as he had with other recent discoveries about Ashford’s history. He wondered if consideration should be given to the honorary appointment of some sort of Borough Historian or Civic Archivist. This had support from the Board and was something the Leader would give more thought to.

Ashford’s Railway Theatre Project

- 4.3 The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager had submitted a report updating on the “All Change for Ashford” theatre show which was now due to take place in April/May 2022. The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that there was a potential small shortfall in the funding of around £1,045 and some Members had been approached to assist from their Members Grants, The Leader advised that if this funding was needed, it should not come from individual Member Grants and the Council would be able to find it from elsewhere. Given the amount of match funding already obtained by the project, the Board said they would be keen to support this.

Events Calendar

- 4.3 This set out the above for 2022 - 2026. This was a live document and it would be updated as Officers became aware of new anniversaries and events. Members were encouraged to input with any events that they were aware of for addition to the calendar.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the updates be received and noted.**
- (ii) **if necessary, the Council would assist with the shortfall in funding for the Ashford Railway Theatre Project.**

5 Jubilee and Albacore Event Programme 2022

Jubilee Programme including Commissioning of HM the Queen's Community Project

- 5.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that, subject to contract, Animate Arts Ltd. had been chosen to run the Queen's Community Project. They had developed some really exciting ideas around a theme of "The Queen's Trees". It was hoped that local communities, particularly the young and schools, as well as Community Groups and local businesses, would embrace it and get involved, designing wooden trees and hand-made decorations. The decorations that adorned each tree would be made from recycled materials and would have a theme that represented the Queen's achievements, passions and iconic symbols from her reign. She further advised that a creative programme and workshops would be used to promote recycling, re-purposing and reusing of waste materials and so the whole project closely aligned with the Council's Carbon Neutral Action Strategy. Central to these installations would be the Jubilee Blossom Tree - made entirely from paper and cardboard. Its branches would be adorned with hand-made paper blossom and each flower would carry a handwritten message of hope for 2022 and beyond. The artistic team would invite the public to make blossom for this collaborative tree artwork. The tree would be designed so that it could be moved to different locations and the plan was for it to 'light up' and 'pop up' at the beacon lighting event. There were also proposals to work closely with the Council's Waste and Recycling Education Officer on a Civic Eco-Warriors project and with the Love Ashford team to maximise the impact of the whole project.
- 5.2 The Tourism and Heritage Manager further advised that discussion on plans around the Civic Beacon Lighting event and the Civic Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church, were also underway.
- 5.3 Board Members welcomed the plans. A Member asked how Parish Councils and Primary Schools in the rural areas could get involved as she knew many

already had their own plans and it would be important not duplicate. She also wondered if the interactive map planned for the Queens Trees project could be extended to include all events taking place in the Borough that weekend? The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that Parish Councils had already been contacted and asked to advise of their own plans so these could be co-ordinated on the Council's website. All of the Borough's schools would be contacted to be part of the Queen's Trees Project and a free downloadable creative pack would be available to anyone who wanted to take part.

- 5.4 Road closures for street parties would also be an important consideration. The Leader said he understood KCC would be taking a 'lighter touch' approach to these but there would be a lead-in time to consider. Full guidance about this issue, and others, had been included on the Council's dedicated web pages.

HMS Albacore Programme

- 5.5 Councillor Webb gave an update on this programme. There had been a lot of exciting developments recently, including the donation of a ship's anchor and chain to be used in a new permanent installation in the Memorial Gardens. A local company had kindly agreed to shot blast and paint the anchor free of charge and an initial design and location had been identified by Aspire, including stone boulders, the anchor and chain, hard core and rope and sea thrift planting. A final design would be brought back to the next meeting of this Board and in the meantime it was hoped that some suitable stone boulders could be sourced.
- 5.6 It had been discovered that a painting of HMS Albacore currently sat in the National Gallery in London. The Leader said he would write to the National Gallery and see if a copy could be produced for Ashford to display.

Event Communications

- 5.7 The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that following Cabinet agreement in October, a press release had been issued about the overall Jubilee and Albacore programme. A series of web pages had been put together on the Albacore commemorations (and the history behind Albacore), the Jubilee (the national and Ashford events) and the Queen's Trees information would follow when finalised. There was also guidance about organising street parties and an on-line submission section for Parishes and Community Groups to complete to advise about their events. There was also a section on Jubilee funding opportunities from Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council. A communications strategy would be developed early in the New Year with the Council's Communications team. The Leader asked if Leader and Borough Briefings could also be produced on all of this in the New Year as not everyone always looked at websites.

Resolved:

That the updated be received and noted.

6 Civic Update (Including Remembrance Sunday)

- 6.1 The Civic Officer had submitted a report giving an update on activity in the Civic Office. The Member Services Manager drew attention to feedback received from the Remembrance Sunday event, which had been a success, but had flagged up some lessons learned and potential areas for improvement for future years. The principle point was the possible installation of power at the Memorial Gardens to ensure good coverage for the PA system and the company video streaming the service. The Leader said he agreed that sound could have been a lot better at the Service and in his view this was a combination of the PA system used being insufficient and those speaking not getting close enough to the microphone. He would support investigation in to the possibility of power being installed during 2022.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1 The Leader asked if the next meeting could be brought forward to February rather than March 2022.

Post Meeting Note:

The next Meeting of the Board will take place on Friday 25th February 2022 at 2.30pm.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services
Telephone: (01233) 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk

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 **2nd December 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Bartlett (Chairman)

Cllrs. N. Bell, Blanford, Harman, B. Heyes, Ledger, Spain, Wright.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Michael, Sparks.

Development Partnership Manager.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Ovenden, C. Suddards, Walder

In attendance:

Strategy and Policy Development Manager; Spatial Planning Manager; Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure; Member Services Officer; Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1 Notes of the last meeting

- 1.1 The Notes of the meeting of the Task Group held on 21st October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Carbon Neutral Action Plan

- 2.1 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager introduced this item and gave a presentation which covered:

- Overall aim
- 8 priorities
- Consultation
- Questionnaire – questions, results and action needed
- Social media
- Face to face
- Key messages
- Next steps.

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

- Members thanked the Strategy and Policy Development Manager for the presentation and the work undertaken so far. One Member said that officers had recently provided an exceptional presentation in Tenterden, although there had been noticeable levels of anger in the audience. The Strategy and Policy Development Manager responded that she understood the general feeling of frustration amongst residents that the Council were not achieving what was wanted or expected, and it was important to make clear what it was possible for the Council to achieve and what was outside of the Council's control.
- A Member said she was pleased to see that a carbon reduction strategy would be investigated, and that this must drive the final Action Plan. With regard to the priorities, she pointed out that some of the priorities were in direct conflict with others and gave as an example decreased use of fossil fuels vs biodiversity and encouragement of wildlife.
- Another Member said that clear leadership and support from the Council was essential, as well as the provision of more information.
- A Member said that the cost of sustainable new buildings was very close to the cost of traditional buildings and he considered that further investigation was needed. He also believed that the Council should employ a Climate or Sustainability Manager to give specific focus, although this was an area of collective responsibility for all officers and Members. The Chairman pointed out that the appointment of such a post would have to be fed into the budget setting process as additional resources would be needed for the new post. He agreed that the Council should make clear what work was already being done and how residents could participate and make their own contributions.
- Several Members commented that the footpaths, cyclepaths and walkways in the Borough were not sufficiently joined up. It would be necessary to develop a policy to govern how residents were expected to change their behavior and how the Council was going to drive forward that change. One Member said that every village was car dependent and it would be essential for bus companies to participate in the drive for change and provide appropriate services throughout the Borough. Another Member said he was aware that an 'on-demand' scheme had been set up by another authority, and this was working very successfully to maximize use of buses. The Chairman noted that KCC had just submitted a bid to Government for a new bus strategy.
- The Chairman concluded the item by saying that the above comments would be presented to the Climate Task Group and Cabinet in due course. He asked Members to email the Strategy and Policy Development Manager if they had any further points to make before the topic was considered by the decision-making groups.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

3 Progressing a Greener Planning Agenda

3.1 The Spatial Planning Manager introduced this item. He highlighted the importance of the plan-led approach and confirmed that the eventual target would be to introduce policies to tackle the issue of climate change through a future Local Plan Review. He said that this report offered short-to-medium term solutions, but there was a risk of pushback from the market. The Council previously adopted a similar approach when it introduced Space Standards and Fibre Optics to Premises, but he wanted Members to be aware of the risks. He said that the planning system and the NPPF were lagging behind at present and needed to catch up to help deliver current aspirations.

3.2 The Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure gave a presentation which covered:

- Focus on carbon emission reduction
- Existing framework
- What are we producing?
- Fabric First approach
- Interim Guidance – proposed content
- Risks
- Progressing the Guidance.

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

- A Member noted that residents were generally supportive of the planning enforcement service and suggested that targeted action using current enforcement powers to protect the environment might be a successful option. The Chairman said that it was important to balance Officer resources between developing new policies and enforcing current policies. He noted that the Budget Scrutiny Task Group would be considering the Planning service and would make a recommendation if they considered that one area required further resources.
- In response to a question, the Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure explained that carbon sequestration was a term to describe storing carbon through trees and soil. The Chairman asked for further information on this to be provided to a future meeting.
- The Chairman sought advice from the Principal Solicitor regarding the direction of the discussion. The Principal Solicitor advised Members not to engage in detailed discussion on any specific applications, and reminded Members that the Task Group should focus on the development of policy rather than individual locations and areas. It was important for Members to retain an open mind on any future applications to the Planning Committee.

The issues to be considered when determining any future individual applications would not be clear until the application had been lodged and details were known.

- The Spatial Planning Manager added that there was a current policy in the Local Plan in relation to solar farm development and any applications for such developments would be subject to the usual criteria. He clarified the difference between the former CS10 policy and the current Fabric First approach.
- Several Members cited instances of mature trees being removed from development sites in the Borough and they considered that retaining mature trees should be a key enforcement message. The Chairman suggested that Members advise Officers of any instances where tree cutting was taking place in their ward. Another Member suggested that there should be provision on the internet for any resident to request a Tree Preservation Order, including on trees outside their own property. The Chairman noted that this was a complicated area, especially where trees were causing damage to nearby buildings.
- In relation to the high risks, a Member suggested that a sustainability scoring system could be introduced where each development was assessed against a number of criteria to produce a simple score. Other Members agreed that this was a useful suggestion and that it could discourage unsustainable development. The Spatial Planning Manager said he would explore whether any other authorities were adopting a similar approach. The Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure added that there was a recommendation in the report for the requirement of energy and sustainability statements, and that requiring these was low risk in terms of likely challenge and could help towards achieving more sustainable developments.
- A Member commented that new purchasers were likely to be willing to spend a little extra on the purchase of a new home if it was built in such a way as to avoid excessive fuel bills. She also pointed out the environmental drawback of relying on electric cars to achieve targets.
- The Chairman concluded the item by noting that Officers would report back to the Task Group on this item in March 2022 and would also provide additional detail on sequestration at that meeting.

Resolved

The Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group agrees:

- a. That draft guidance be provided for discussion at the March Task Group**

- b. That 'Interim Guidance' should be produced and published by May/June 2022;**
- c. That the broad contents of the future 'Interim Guidance', will cover the topic areas prescribed in this Paper;**
- d. That the 'Interim Guidance' will become a material consideration in planning terms and applied to planning decisions once published.**

4 Infrastructure Funding Statement – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

- 4.1 The Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure introduced this item. She explained that since the publication of the Task Group report, there were two further updates for the Group. Highways England had confirmed that, due to personnel changes, it was not possible to provide information relating to 278 agreements in the Ashford area for this reported year. This was not a mandatory requirement, and Officers would work with Highways England to provide the information in the IFS for next year. In addition, several minor mandatory requirements could not be reported due to the previous methods of storing information. The new system was well underway in the Planning service and a recent update had advised that the new system was likely to go live in summer 2022, at which time it would be possible to report on these additional mandatory requirements.
- 4.2 The S106's signed this year and the funds secured were substantially less than last year, along with the funds received. This could be partly explained by the Stodmarsh issue and also the general effects of the pandemic on development. Although the amount of funds secured was down from previous years, it was still a substantial figure. However, although transfers to KCC and NHS were automatic, it was necessary to rely on submissions from other organisations and internal services for requests to spend. Officers were currently considering how to develop a more joined-up approach regarding funds received and spent.
- 4.3 A Member cited a current example relating to S106 and asked what lessons had been learned to make conditions more thorough in future. The Principal Solicitor said he would be happy to meet off line with the Member for a fuller discussion.
- 4.4 There was a question relating to whether there could be potential financial losses. The Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure explained that it was not possible at present to report on data which went back in time 10 years prior to the reported financial year, as this would have to be reviewed and produced manually which would present a resource challenge. However, the new system would run historic reports electronically so it would be possible to report on historic data more fully in future.
- 4.5 The Chairman requested that a copy of the 278 agreement be distributed to Task Group Members when it was ready. He also noted that a play area had been identified for the town centre and he considered that this was an excellent proposal which would assist with town centre footfall.

- 4.6 It was noted that there were a number of recommendations relating to S106 arising from different workstreams, such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the audit of the S106 process, the report to the Task Group and the IFS itself. The Spatial Planning Manager explained that Officers would seek to respond to all the outcomes from the various groups and streamline processes going forward to provide a clearer narrative about how funds would be spent.

Resolved

That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group:

- **Notes the content of the appended IFS;**
- **Notes the next steps identified to enable the requirements of the legislation to be complied with in full in future infrastructure funding statements;**
- **Agrees delegated authority to the Chair of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development and the Head of Planning and Development, to make or approve changes to the Infrastructure Funding Statement (for the avoidance of doubt including additions, amendments and deletions) as he/she sees fit.**
- **Agrees that the approved/amended IFS is published on the Council's website.**

5 Tracker

- 5.1 The Chairman noted that during the meeting a future item on the broader infrastructure agenda had been requested.

Resolved

That the report Tracker be received and noted.

6 Date of next meeting

- 6.1 25th February 2022 at 10am on Microsoft Teams.

Councillor Bartlett
Chairman – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk

Agenda Item No: 15
Report To: CABINET
Date: 27TH JANUARY 2022



Report Title: SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN

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

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

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

Key Decision: NO

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

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

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

Financial Implications: Nil

Legal Implications: n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment n/a

Other Material Implications: Nil

Exempt from publication: No

Background Papers: None

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

**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; Neil Bell; Andrew Buchanan; Paul Clokie; 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>

Page 112

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
27th January 2022					
Newtown Works		Cllrs Clarkson/ Iliffe	Andrew Osborne	Exempt	10/11/21
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	29/1/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Automatic Number Plate Recognition Parking Solution – Edinburgh Road Car Park and Park Mall Car Park	<i>To seek approval to introduce ANPR at both Edinburgh Rd and Park Mall car parks. Upgrading to ANPR will give customers greater flexibility and a wider range of payment options including payment by phone using RingGo. The intention is to start installation in both car parks upon Cabinet approval from February 2022.</i>	Cllr Feacey	Mandy Cracknell	Open	18/11/21
Parking Charges at Edinburgh Road Car Park and Park Mall Car Park	<i>To agree a minimum payment of one hour and to lower the charges to accommodate the RingGo convenience fee for both Edinburgh Rd Car Park and Park Mall Car Park.</i>	Cllr Feacey	Mandy Cracknell	Open	18/11/21
Extension of Electric Vehicle Charger provision	<i>To request funding for the installation of the phase 2 EVCs in the locations that do not meet the OLEV funding criteria.</i>	Cllr Feacey	Alison Oates/ Mandy Cracknell	Open	24/11/21
Health and Safety Policy	<i>To seek approval from Cabinet for the revised Health and Safety Policy for Ashford Borough Council. This internal Policy affects the health, safety and welfare of Council employees.</i>	Cllrs Feacey/ Pickering	Natalie Pearce	Open	24/11/21
24th February 2022					
Revenue Budget 2022/23	<i>To present the draft revenue budget for 2022/23 to the Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/20

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/20
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	28/2/20
Egerton Neighbourhood Plan	<i>To report the outcome of the referendum of the Egerton Parish Neighbourhood Plan and recommend formal adoption by Full Council, if the outcome of the referendum is in support of the Plan.</i>	Cllr Bell	Claire Marchant	Open	2/12/21
New Senior Structure	<i>To outline a proposed new structure, that seeks to introduce a new tier of Directors by realigning services under fewer Heads of Service (who will be re-designated Assistant Directors) and introducing three senior specialist roles.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Tracey Kerly	Open (Exempt Appendix)	20/12/21
Rolvenden - Land Acquisition in the HRA		Cllr Clokie	Mark James	Open	7/1/22
Project Green		Cllr Clarkson	Ben Lockwood	Exempt	7/1/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
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
Draft Equality Policy		Cllr Clarkson/ Pickering	Charlotte Hammersley	Open	6/1/22
28th April 2022					
Street Lighting Project – Phase 2		Cllr Iliffe	Paul McKenner	Open	20/8/21
26th May 2022					
Carbon Neutral Action Plan – Adoption	<i>To adopt the plan following a period of consultation.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Jennifer Shaw	Open	20/5/21
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
28th 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
25th August 2022					
KEEP CLEAR FOR HOLIDAYS					
29th September 2022					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	1/10/21
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	1/10/21
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	1/10/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
27th October 2022					
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	29/10/21
24th November 2022					
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	29/11/21
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	29/11/21
Draft Budget 2023/24	<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	29/11/21
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	29/11/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
15th December 2022					
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022-2052 (including Financing and Affordable Homes Programme)	<i>To detail the financial position in the HRA and ask Members to agree Housing's priorities for the next year.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Sharon Williams/Mark James	Open (Exempt Appendix)	20/12/21
Infrastructure Funding Statement		Cllr Bell	Daniel Carter	Open	20/12/21
Update on New Waste Contract		Cllr Buchanan	Tracey Butler	Open	5/1/22

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

11/1/22

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank