



CABINET

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on **Thursday, 29th September, 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 Safety and Wellbeing
Councillor Bell – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development
Councillor Buchanan – Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Feacey – Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance
Councillor Forest – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation
Councillor Iliffe – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Councillor Pickering – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Customer Services
Councillor Shorter – Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Digital

NB: Under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, members of the public can submit a petition to the Cabinet if the issue is within its terms of reference or ask a question or speak concerning any item contained on this Agenda (Procedure Rule 9 refers)

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 - 6
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 28 th July 2022.	
4. To Receive any Petitions	
5. Leader's Announcements	

6.	Financial Monitoring - Quarterly Report	7 - 28
7.	Performance Report, Quarter 1 2022/23	29 - 62
8.	Update on the Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Improvements in the Ashford Borough	63 - 86
9.	Graduate Planner Programme	87 - 92
10.	Joint Transportation Board Minutes - 6th September 2022	93 - 96
	To receive and note.	
11.	Trading and Enterprise Board Minutes - 6th September 2022	97 - 100
	To approve and adopt.	
12.	Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board Notes - 27th July 2022	101 - 106
	To approve and adopt.	
13.	Compliance and Enforcement Board Notes - 26th July 2022	107 - 112
	To receive and note.	
14.	Climate Change Advisory Committee Notes - 2nd August 2022	113 - 120
	To receive and note.	
15.	Schedule of Key Decisions	
16.	Items for Future Meetings	

21st September 2022

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

Agenda Item 2

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

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

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

- (b) **Other Significant Interests (OSI)** under the Kent Code of Conduct relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares an OSI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting before the debate and vote on that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

However, prior to leaving, the Member may address the Committee in the same way that a member of the public may do so.

- (c) **Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests** not required to be disclosed under (a) and (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency alone, such as:

- Membership of amenity societies, Town/Community/Parish Councils, residents’ groups or other outside bodies that have expressed views or made representations, but the Member was not involved in compiling or making those views/representations, or
- Where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- Where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position.

[Note: Where an item would be likely to affect the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc.; OR where an item is an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc., there is likely to be an OSI or in some cases a DPI. ALSO, holding a committee position/office within an amenity society or other outside body, or having any involvement in compiling/making views/representations by such a body, may give rise to a perception of bias and require the Member to take no part in any motion or vote.]

Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Government Guidance on DPI is available in DCLG’s Guide for Councillors, at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf
- (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 10th August 2022 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 **28th July 2022**.

Present:

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

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

Apologies:

Cllr. Iliffe, Chief Executive.

Also Present:

Cllr. Sparks.

In attendance:

Deputy Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director of Planning and Development, Web and Communications Assistant, Member Services Manager.

114 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 30th June 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

115 Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the formal write off of £149,067.49. The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service Write-Off Policy. The Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) had been consulted, along with Head of Service for relevant areas. He advised anyone who had concerns or questions about the report to speak to the Council's Recovery Manager who could explain the process regarding the efforts to retrieve these debts before they were written off.

Resolved:

- That (i) the action that accounts totalling £43,762.79 have been written off under delegated powers be noted (Financial Regulations 11.1 refers).
- (ii) the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendices to the report totalling £105, 304.70 be approved.

116 Street Naming and Numbering 22/0027/SNN – Land between A2070 and Railway, north of Warehorne Road, Hamstreet

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which advised that the Street Naming and Numbering policy required any request for naming a new road after a person, deceased or living, to be agreed by the Cabinet. The name proposed for the development was considered to be relevant to the location.

Resolved:

That use of the name ‘Waylett Crescent’, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, be approved.

117 South of Ashford Garden Community Vision and Strategy Update

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which shared some of the highlights of the first year of delivery, including details of Homes England’s continued investment in the project. The report also set out some of the priority projects for the years ahead. In addition, one of the key actions from year one was to produce a Sustainable Transport Strategy recognising the changing landscape of public mobility and proposing realistic actions in the near term. Members were also asked to endorse that Strategy as part of the wider Vision and Strategy.

Resolved:

- That (i) the challenges and successes of Year 1 delivery of the South of Ashford Garden Community Vision and Strategy be noted and the projects underway as part of Year 2 be endorsed, taking into consideration the current risks to delivering key infrastructure.
- (ii) the South of Ashford Garden Community Sustainable Transport Strategy as attached to the report be endorsed and the wider Strategy continue to be championed as part of the delivery of new homes in the South of Ashford.

118 Greater Ashford Environment and Land Mapping Commission – Notes of 14th June 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Greater Ashford Environment and Land Mapping Commission held on the 14th June 2022 be received and noted.

119 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.

120 Economic Regeneration and Investment Board – Notes of 22nd June 2022

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on the 22nd June 2022 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: 29 September 2022
Report Title: Quarter 1 - Financial Monitoring
Report Author & Job Title: Lee Foreman – Service Lead Finance
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Neil Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance & IT



Summary:

This report presents the first quarter budget monitoring position which was extended to the 31 July 2022 (reporting the first four months of the year). The current economic outlook and conditions have significantly changed since the budget was set and this is reflected within this report and the projections it contains.

The forecast position to 31 March 2023 indicates an overall pressure on the General Fund (GF) of £1.7m, with a pressure in services of £1.2m. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is reporting a saving of £351,000.

There are a number of significant movements within the general fund which are summarised below with further information provided in the body of the report:-

- The waste collection and recycling contract has seen an inflationary increase of 13% which has added an additional £385,000 to the core contract.
- Planning is forecasting a pressure of £245,000 for the necessity to engage consultants to support vacancies and appeal costs.
- Temporary Accommodation has seen an increase in demand and is forecasting a pressure of £183,000, this is an area of increased risk in the current economic climate.
- £500,000 pressure on investment income, as lending to Council subsidiary has not been made, as detailed in Para 49.
- £453,500 as savings (spread across various areas) included in the base budget are still to be realised, these are being reviewed to reduce this pressure over the remainder of the year.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting a reduction in operational spend of £351,000, with capital expenditure plans reducing by £637,000 which will reduce the contribution from the HRA reserve.

This report also provides an update on the collection fund, treasury management, reserves and progress on savings identified within the 2022/23 budget.

There are also a number of items that have been included under other items for Cabinet to consider.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

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

- I. Note the quarter 1 forecast position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.**
- II. Note the Collection Fund position**
- III. Note the Treasury Management position**
- IV. Note the provisional reserve allocations as highlighted at Table 5 of this report**
- V. Note the use of delegations under the 'Other Items' section of the report**

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

Financial Implications: The General Fund is reporting an overall pressure of £1.7m based on quarter one budget monitoring.
The HRA is forecasting an overall underspend of £351,000 in operational budgets, and is forecasting a reduction in capital spend of £637,000.

Legal Implications N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment As part of 2022/23 Final Budget Report a full assessment was undertaken.
N/A

Exempt from Publication:

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

Report Title: Quarter One Financial Monitoring

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the forecast outturn position for 2022/23 based on information available as at 31 July 2022.
2. The 2022/23 budget was largely set around October/November 2021 as the United Kingdom (UK) was recovering and starting to live with Covid. However, following a period of uncertainty the Russian Federation launched a “special military operation” in Ukraine which has driven up energy prices, which has driven rapidly rising inflation, which is now feeding into wider commodities thus fuelling higher inflation.
3. In response to rising inflation, the Bank of England (BOE) has increased the UK interest rate to 1.75% at the time of writing this report, with further increases of 0.50% highly expected (by the market) at the next two meetings of the BOE’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
4. The impact of the above has meant that the inflationary and interest rate forecasts used in the formulation of the 2022/23 budget setting process were considerably light, with actual rates leading to significant pressure on Council budgets, notably the refuse collection contract (13% uplift) and short term borrowing costs which are anticipated to increase by around 1,000% in cash terms.
5. In addition to the pressures being felt by the Council, the Council’s residents and businesses are also feeling the impacts of rising inflation which is likely to lead to pressure on the Council’s sales fees and charges income, debt collection rates, and also add pressure to frontline services, especially the potential for increased homelessness representations which are already above budgeted levels.
6. Although the above makes for sobering reading, this is only the start of the crisis and Council resources will be under considerable pressure for the remainder of the year, which will continue into the 2023/24 budget setting process.
7. With the new Government still finding its feet, and having already committed circa £150bn on implementing an energy cap to help dampen increasing energy bills for people and business, there is unlikely to be any financial aid from Central Government as we received during the Covid pandemic however, we await to hear announcements over the next few weeks.
8. This report considers each of the following areas of the Council in more detail including the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Collection Fund (Council Tax and Business Rates), Treasury Management, reserves movements and savings to be identified.
9. Other items are also included where decisions have been made that require subsequent reporting to Cabinet.

Summary of General Fund Position

10. The current General Fund position is forecasting a deficit of £1.7m in year with £1.2m in service expenditure and £500,000 from reduced investment income. Having considered previous years, the actual pressure in services is not that uncommon with the perpetual pressures in planning resourcing and homelessness continuing. What is different this year is that Interest rate rises have inhibited the Council's ability to flex the borrowing strategy to fund these pressures (as in recent years), with a net pressure of £500,000 against investment and borrowing budgets being reported.
11. There is also the £453,500 of savings still to be identified that while agreed as deliverable in November 2021 when they were first proposed, the longevity of the pandemic and current economic conditions have changed corporate priorities and therefore some new savings will need to be identified, and these will need more time to be realised.
12. The savings to be identified was a risk highlighted by the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group and as requested progress is reported at **Appendix B**, in accordance with the recommendation made by Cabinet when the budget was set. Management Team are reviewing, and will consider new saving opportunities to replace these targets where necessary, and will strive to reduce some of this pressure as we move through the remainder of the year. Services are also being encouraged to think about general expenditure to help reduce the overall corporate pressure, and all vacant posts and regrading proposals are now having to be referred to Directors for consideration.
13. **Table 1** shows the movement between revised budget and forecast outturn at an Assistant Director level, the revised budget has been utilised to reflect the new structure that was implemented on the 1 April 2022. Further details of material movements in each Assistant Director area are covered in the narrative section below.

Table 1 - General Fund Quarter 1 Forecast as at 31 July 2022

General Fund Summary as Assistant Director Level	2022/23 Revised Budget	Quarter 1 Projected Outturn	2022/23 Quarter 1 Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Finance and IT	2,179	2,163	(15)
HR, Customer Services, Comms and Digitalisation	603	633	30
Housing	1,227	1,460	233
Safety Wellbeing and Port	736	1,045	309
Environment, Property and Recreation	5,067	5,558	491
Planning and Development	2,298	2,634	336
Corporate Management Costs	1,561	1,389	(172)
Head of Economic Development	624	624	0
Head of Performance and Policy	1,422	1,383	(39)
Solicitor to The Council and Monitoring Officer	303	342	39
Total Service Expenditure	16,020	17,231	1,212
Capital Charges & Net Interest	(2,154)	(1,654)	500
Levies, Grants and Precepts	282	282	0
Contribution to Balances	1,947	1,947	0
Budget Requirement	16,094	17,806	1,712
Financing:			
Retained Business Rates	(4,685)	(4,685)	0
Government Grants	(398)	(398)	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(87)	(87)	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,886)	(1,886)	0
Council Tax	(8,638)	(8,638)	0
Council Tax 2020/21 Surplus	(400)	(400)	0
Total Movement	0	1,712	1,712

Summary of General Fund Movements at Assistant Director Level

Housing (General Fund)

14. General Fund housing is reporting a quarter one pressure of £233,000 with a net forecasted pressure of £183,000 in homelessness for temporary accommodation (TA). The TA budget was re-profiled and increased for 2022/23 following a service review, but this is already under pressure as the current economic conditions are leading to higher than anticipated level of representations, especially from single persons. The ability to move people from TA to permanent housing has also been hindered by the lack of affordable homes being built where they have been caught by the freeze in planning approvals and development while a solution to Stodmarsh is developed. This budget represents a forward risk to the forecast and will be monitored closely as the year progresses.
15. There is a delayed saving requirement of £99,450 within housing which is linked to the Henwood TA development that will, once operational comprise of 23 short stay accommodation units. This site now has planning

permission however, it is subject to Stodmarsh although the aim is to commence construction as soon as possible.

16. Offsetting some of this pressure is a saving of £87,000 in employee costs from vacant posts.

Safety Wellbeing and Port

17. The Safety Wellbeing and Port area is reporting an overall quarter one pressure of £309,000. Parking services is showing a pressure of £150,000, £75,000 as a result of reduced parking income following the Covid pandemic, and £75,000 of savings linked to cashless parking that cannot be achieved. Although savings have been and continue to be made as a consequence of the move to cashless parking, there is a consequential increase in payment transaction fees that offset the savings made. Ways to reduce these charges will be explored over the coming months.
18. Environment Health is showing a pressure of £41,000 on employee costs to cover long term sickness within the team and circa £35,000 of savings are still to be identified.
19. The Monitoring Centre is forecasting a pressure of £47,000 on employee costs following staff regrading's following a service review.

Environment, Property and Recreation

20. The big pressure in this area comes from the waste collection and refuse contract which has had a contract indexation uplift of nearly 13% (based on a basket of indices) at the start of the year adding a budgetary pressure of £385,000.
21. There is also pressure on fuel costs for aspire vehicles of £50,000, although this could reduce with recent drops in vehicle fuel prices and a pressure of £27,000 on fleet hire costs following an increase in rates.

Planning and Development

22. Planning and Development is forecasting an overall pressure of £336,000 against budget at quarter one (including savings not delivered).
23. The key driver for this pressure is the need to engage consultants to support the operational needs of the service (to do the day job) as in previous years and is showing a net pressure of £145,000.
24. There is also a continued wider need for consultancy advice and counsel fees that are being incurred to support planning appeals.
25. The other pressure is from savings to be identified of £160,000. Additional income of £60,000, and £100,000 of savings from IT efficiencies following the implementation of the new planning system, although it was noted previously that this saving may have to be delivered in a different way.
26. Building Control have savings in employee costs of £125,000 which is reduced by a pressure on income of £50,000.

Corporate Management Costs

27. This area is showing and net income of £173,000 as a result from recovery of legal fees awarded to the council, directly from work that was undertaken by the Council's legal team.

Financing and Other General Fund Movements

28. The movement in this areas relates to treasury activity and will be covered in the appropriate section of this report.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

29. The Housing Revenue Account is showing a decrease in operational expenditure, compared to budget, of £351,000. This largely relates to a saving of £283,000, as a result of the indexation adjustment for the PFI contract, which is based on January 2022 RPIX. There is also a saving of £95,000, as a result of a Business Rates refund, which is due to the development currently underway at Mabledon Avenue.
30. Planned capital works have reduced by £637,000 compared to budget this is partly due to contractor delays and partly as a result of cancellations due to Covid, which has led to reduced property access. The reserve contribution to fund capital works has been updated accordingly.
31. A breakdown of this variance is shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2 – 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn Position (Quarter 1)

Housing Revenue Account	2022/23 Revised Budget	Quarter 1 Projected Outturn	2022/23 Quarter 1 Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Supervision and Management	6,732	6,726	(6)
Income	(28,775)	(28,775)	0
New Build	201	108	(93)
Other	15,960	15,677	(283)
Repairs and Maintenance	4,347	4,378	31
Net Revenue Expenditure	(1,535)	(1,886)	(351)
Capital Works - Decent Homes	6,142	5,505	637
Financed By:			
Contribution to/(from Major Repairs Reserve)	(6,142)	(5,505)	(637)
Net Capital Expenditure	0	0	0
Total Net Expenditure	(1,535)	(1,886)	(351)

Collection fund Monitoring

Business Rates

32. Collection rates for NNDR are continuing to be regularly monitored to gauge the potential impact of the current economic situation within the Borough. At the end of August 48.29% (£26.447m) of rates billed for the year had been collected, this compares to 38.99% in 2021/22 and 43.08% in 2020/21.
33. Collection rates have improved significantly compared to the same point last year, however looking at the pre-pandemic figures (49.30% in 2019/20) it is clear there is a continuing pressure on businesses, impacting their ability to pay, this pressure is likely to worsen with increasing inflation and rising energy prices.
34. The amount of Business Rates billed has reduced since the original assumptions were calculated, this is largely as a result of an increase in the reliefs payable which are fully funded by Government. This will create a deficit at year end in the collection fund, with Government compensation grants held in reserves as the accounts are closed to offset this in future years.
35. Including a prior year deficit of £3.5m, the overall deficit on the collection fund for business rates is forecast at £6.1m with Ashford's share of that deficit being around £2.4m, although as mentioned, this will be funded from s31 Grant.

Table 3 – Business Rate Summary

Collection Fund - Business Rates	Original Budget	Outturn (net)	Variance - Adverse/ (Favourable)
	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Opening (Surplus)/Deficit	(13,285)	(13,285)	0
(Deficit) contributed by/Surplus distributed to Major Preceptors	16,771	16,771	0
Remaining Deficit/(Surplus) to be Contributed/(Distributed)	3,486	3,486	0
2022/23			
Amount of Business Rates to be paid to Major Preceptors	49,326	49,326	0
Amount of Business Rates Billed	(52,038)	(49,640)	2,398
Transitional Relief (Recovered)/Payable	0	(4)	(4)
Other Items Charged to the Collection Fund:			
Appeals and Rateable Value Reductions	1,500	1,687	187
Bad and Doubtful Debts	900	900	0
Renewable Energy	106	311	205
Cost of Collection	205	16	(189)
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	(1)	2,596	2,597
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit on Collection Fund	3,485	6,082	2,597

Council Tax

36. The value of Council Tax receipts collected at the end of August was 48.01% (46.975m), this compares to previous comparator collection rates of 48.22% in 2021/22 and 48.35% in 2020/21. There is a very slight decrease in the amount collected this year, compared to last year, officers are continuing to monitor this in light of the current economic forecasts, which could further impact collection rates in 2022/23.
37. As a result of the potential reduction in collection rates for 2022/23 the contribution to the bad debt provision has been increased by £200,000, this will be monitored in line with historical debt throughout the year.
38. Overall the collection fund for Council Tax is reporting a year end deficit of £1.1m of which Ashford's share of the Council Tax surplus would be around £100,000, based on current forecasts. This will form part of the 2023/24 budget.

Table 4 Council Tax Summary

	Outturn (net) to 31/03/23
	£'000
Opening Deficit/(Surplus)	(3,505)
Deficit contributed by Major Preceptors	3,891
2022/23	
Amount of Council Tax to be paid to Major Preceptors	97,347
Amount of Council Tax billed	(96,837)
In Year Write Off's and Bad Debt Provision increase	196
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	706
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit	1,092

Reserves

39. Contributions to and from reserves that were not identified as part of the budget setting process are required to be reported as part of the budget monitoring. Due to the nature of the funding these pressure are not reflected in the general fund pressure previously covered within this report.
40. **Table 5** below identifies the reserve movements that are proposes for year-end subject to the final outturn position. Cabinet are asked to note these proposals.

Table 5 – Breakdown of Reserve Movements

Purpose	Suggested Reserve	Amount £
Continued contractual support for Tenterden Leisure Centre as a new Operator is tendered for. This support is necessary to prolong the management of the incumbent operator in light of challenging market conditions and avoid closure of the centre.	Economic Growth and Risk Fund	500,000
The current operational repairs and maintenance budget for the Council is overspent by £239,000 following a number of essential projects, this is to be funded from the wider repairs and renewals reserve.	Repairs and Renewals reserve	£239,000
Total		739,000

Recommendation – Cabinet is asked to note the reserve movement proposals in Table 5 above.

Treasury Management

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

Table 6 – Net Interest Summary

Treasury Management Table	2022/23 Revised Budget	Quarter 1 Projected Outturn	2022/23 Quarter 1 Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest payable	1,146	1,146	0
Interest receivable	(3,022)	(2,522)	500
Minimum revenue provision	1,664	1,664	0
Depreciation	(1,942)	(1,942)	0
Total Net Interest	(2,154)	(1,654)	500

Interest payable / Interest receivable

42. The introduction of this report covered some of the unforeseen issues within the economy and how increased interest rates are having a significant impact on the Council's borrowing strategy.
43. For a number of years now the strategy has been kept short to maximise the benefits of the low interest rate environment and this strategy has been successful in enabling service pressures to be funded in year.
44. The treasury budget has always had an allowance for some long term debt to be taken to reduce interest rate risk, and the council took £32m of Public Works Loan Board debt in July 2023 for 15 years, £15m for the GF and £17m for the HRA accordingly.
45. However, following the unforeseen rapid rise in inflation and the equally as aggressive rises in interest rates to reduce it, the Council has been exposed to short term interest rate risk and is anticipating an increase in short term borrowing costs of circa 1,000%. This increase in rates is evident from the loans schedule at **Appendix A**.
46. To mitigate this pressure in year, the Council will maintain the short term strategy and divert the new long term borrowing budget to the short term fund, it is anticipated that this approach should mitigate a significant amount of the exposure in year and has been discussed with our external advisors Arlingclose.
47. It is anticipated that short term rates will continue upwards but will then start to reduce over the medium term as the Country is expected to fall into recession which could require the BOE to reduce rates to re-stimulate the economy.
48. As always the council will have regular meeting with its professional advisors and make the best decision at the time to ensure debt levels are affordable.
49. The budget is showing a £500,000 reduction in investment income which is as a result of borrowing not coming forward as anticipated from the Council's

subsidiary company, A Better Choice for Property Ltd., which like other developers is currently prohibited from building due to the issues regarding Stodmarsh. This reduction would usually have a matching element of saving from the debt budget although as already discussed the long term debt budget is required to furnish short term debt.

50. **Investment Capital Values** – the capital value of strategic investments has reduced since 31 March 2022 due to the financial climate by £713,000, although the Council still has positive capital growth overall. The council needs to be comfortable with the long term nature of these funds and hold them in accordance with strategy, as we did during the Covid pandemic where negative valuations were reported however, these recovered over the medium term.
51. In relation to strategic investments the Council, in conjunction with its external advisors are currently reviewing the strategic investment portfolio to confirm if the individual funds are still delivering as anticipated, and also that the portfolio is well balanced as a whole in terms of risk and volatility.
52. Provisional reports have been provided and once reviewed and considered recommendations will be reported accordingly.
53. Current investment balances, and borrowing portfolios are shown at **Appendix A**.

Other Items

54. This part of the report will be used to report to Cabinet decisions that have been made through various delegations that are then required to be reported to Cabinet through the budget monitoring report.

Savings to be identified

55. The 2022/23 draft budget had a saving requirement of £827,800 which was identified in 2021/22 as part of the £3m cumulative target to support the Council's medium term financial plan. £639,260 of these savings were still to be fully identified at the time of setting the budget.
56. These savings were identified by the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group who endorsed Cabinet's recommendation, recommended that progress on delivery of these savings be reported as part of this report, and Cabinet agreed with this recommendation.
57. As acknowledged when setting the budget, the economic situation has changed since the agreement of the original proposals and therefore it was acknowledged that savings may have to be delivered differently to the original plan. However it is universally accepted that these savings are required to achieve a balanced position for the medium to long term finances of the Council.
58. The quarter one monitoring position is reporting that £453,500 of savings are still to be delivered and have been added to the forecast pressure. A full list of the savings originally agreed, identified as 'to be delivered' and those that are now recorded as a pressure are shown at **Appendix B**.
59. Budget Mangers will continue to explore new options for delivering these saving requirements and aim to reduce the pressure items over the remainder of the year.

Jasmin Vardimon dance studio bursary

60. The Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company (JVC) asked Ashford Borough Council if we could support a bursary at the JVC. The bursary scheme will support graduates from "socio economically challenged backgrounds to have equal opportunities based upon talent and not just ability to pay" and will be £2,500 per year for two years.
61. This scheme has been supported by the Chief Executive with the cost coming from reserves as permitted under financial regulations.

Update on Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (provided by Amanda Gill – Service Improvement Manager, Housing)

62. In November 2021 a paper was taken through Cabinet advising members of the Council's intention to apply for a second tranche of money from the rough sleeper accommodation programme. The paper set out that the capital spend for the second bid would be £1,776,000, which will be partially offset by £530,000 capital grant funding secured through the RSAP bid. The homes were to sit in the General Fund and considerations were given in that report for context.
63. However, given property market conditions, in particular the buoyancy of the property market, the Council has been less successful in obtaining properties in this way through the process that mirrors its street purchase acquisitions. This is because market prices are exceeding our independent

valuations and have been until recently been acquired so quickly that even our streamlined processes have not been sufficiently agile to enable us to compete.

64. The Council then turned its focus to other alternatives, surveying empty larger buildings for example, though the self-contained nature of the homes needing to be provided ruled several of these out. Despite a number of options the Council in consultation with Homes England has agreed that it will regrettably not be able to acquire all 20 units it had aspirations to deliver. Whilst it is disappointing, the criteria for placement is more restricted than first indicated which means that the demand for these units has also reduced. It has agreed to release grant funding for 5 units and seek to deliver 15 units in total across the two tranches. It remains on track to do so. The current position is:
65. We have so far completed on the purchase of 5 x one bed flats. 4 of these have been let, 1 is still void. 240 Beaver Road is a three-bed that is being converted to 2 x one bed flats – this is in with planning. This would make 7 x one beds when Beaver Road works are completed. A further three-bed home is set to be acquired – our offer has been accepted but the seller needs to buy another property as their chain has just fallen through. A further three-bed has gone to the district valuer for a decision on value. If all came good this would take the tally to 11 homes of the 15 we seek to deliver. Obviously further work will be undertaken to secure the other homes needed to deliver the project.

Portfolio Holder's Views

66. These are extremely challenging times both for the residents of the borough and the Council as we grapple with rising inflation and interest rates as a result of global events.
67. For the Council this has led to a direct increase in our refuse collection costs by £385,000, additional pressure on homelessness and a significant increase in debt expenses.
68. Directors and the wider Management Team in conjunction with Portfolio Holders are already taking measures to tap the brakes on expenditure and will be reviewing all the savings still outstanding to see what can be brought forward swiftly to reduce this forecast.
69. As this report eludes to, this problem is not just short term and increased contract prices through this spike in inflation will need to be factored into future budgets which will inevitably put pressure on Council resources and will reflect on ability to deliver discretionary services to our residents.

Contact and Email

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

Treasury Management Portfolio as at 29 July 2022

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Fair Value £
Investment Accounts				
Goldman Sachs	Various	0.05%	54,117	54,117
ICD Portal - BNP	Various	1.59%	1,014,000	1,014,000
ICD Portal - Invesco	Various	1.78%	7,640,000	7,640,000
Payden Global MMF	Various	1.98%	3,000,000	2,956,428
Total Investment Accounts			11,708,117	11,664,545
Long Term Investments				
Property Investment				
A Better Choice of Property Ltd.***	Various	0.00%	789,060	1,096,036
CCLA Local Authority Property Fund	Various	3.68%	11,000,000	14,571,468
Equity Funds**				
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	Various	2.39%	3,000,000	3,005,843
Ninety One Diversified Income Fund	28/03/2019	3.57%	2,500,000	2,252,393
Aegon Diversified Income Fund	13/05/2019	5.00%	5,500,000	5,018,061
Schroder Income Maximiser	Various	5.63%	3,500,000	3,035,672
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	Various	4.83%	3,000,000	2,481,504
UBS Global Income Equity Fund	29/07/2019	8.90%	1,500,000	1,286,639
Total Long Term Investments			30,789,060	32,747,616
Total Investment Portfolio			42,497,177	44,412,161

* Money Market Fund (MMF) are AAA rated deposit facilities which have variable rates of interest but have constant net asset values. Interest rates are shown at the time of producing this report.

** Equity funds and the Property fund have variable rates of interest and also have fluctuating capital values, the amount stated is the current fair value.

*** A Better Choice Of Property Ltd. is a solely owned subsidiary of ABC.

Debt Portfolio as at 30 August 2022

Counterparty	Deal Date	Rate	Amount	Maturity Date
		%	£	
Temporary Borrowing				
Ryedale District Council	25/11/2021	0.08%	2,000,000	24/11/2022
Oxfordshire County Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	17/10/2022
North East Derbyshire District Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	16/12/2022
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	24/01/2022	0.20%	7,000,000	23/01/2023
Barnsley MBC	28/01/2022	0.25%	5,000,000	27/01/2023
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA	31/01/2022	0.25%	5,000,000	30/01/2023
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA	24/02/2022	0.20%	5,000,000	23/02/2023
Barnsley MBC	11/07/2022	1.20%	5,000,000	11/01/2023
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15/06/2022	1.05%	6,000,000	15/09/2022
Salford City Council	04/07/2022	1.20%	5,000,000	04/01/2023
Warwickshire County Council	05/07/2022	1.20%	10,000,000	05/01/2023
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	25/07/2022	1.25%	8,000,000	25/04/2023
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	24/08/2022	1.25%	4,000,000	24/05/2023
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	22/08/2022	1.25%	3,000,000	22/05/2023
London Borough of Newham	01/07/2022	1.30%	10,000,000	03/04/2023
Barnsley MBC	20/06/2022	1.10%	4,000,000	20/09/2022
Renfrewshire Council	22/07/2022	1.38%	5,000,000	24/10/2022
Total Temporary Borrowing			94,000,000	
Long Term Borrowing				
Public Works Loan Board - HRA	various	various	112,964,150	various
Public Works Loan Board - GF	13/07/2021	1.56%	13,500,000	13/07/2041
Total Long Term Borrowing			126,464,150	
Grand Total Borrowing			220,464,150	

Detail of PWLB Loans Outstanding at 31 August 2022

Date of Advance	Loan Ref Number	Date of Repayment	Amount Outstanding £	Rate %
28/03/2012	499514	28/03/2023	2,000,000	2.56%
28/03/2012	499507	28/03/2024	3,000,000	2.70%
28/03/2012	499503	28/03/2025	3,000,000	2.82%
28/03/2012	499505	28/03/2026	1,000,000	2.92%
28/03/2012	499496	28/03/2027	1,000,000	3.01%
28/03/2012	499509	28/03/2028	2,000,000	3.08%
28/03/2012	499497	28/03/2029	2,000,000	3.15%
28/03/2012	499510	28/03/2030	2,000,000	3.21%
28/03/2012	499498	28/03/2031	8,000,000	3.26%
28/03/2012	499511	28/03/2032	9,000,000	3.30%
28/03/2012	499499	28/03/2033	10,000,000	3.34%
28/03/2012	499512	28/03/2034	11,000,000	3.37%
28/03/2012	499506	28/03/2035	12,000,000	3.40%
28/03/2012	499513	28/03/2036	9,000,000	3.42%
28/03/2012	499515	28/02/2037	16,713,000	3.44%
29/03/2011	498502	29/03/2061	5,951,150	5.26%
13/07/2021	374161	13/07/2041	15,300,000	1.56%
Total HRA Borrowing			112,964,150	
13/07/2021	374159	13/07/2041	13,500,000	1.56%
Total GF Borrowing			13,500,000	

A Better Choice for Property Ltd. Loans as at 31 March 2022

Loans	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Principal Repaid £	Balance Outstanding £
Loan 3	12/02/2015	2.83%	400,000	(86,200)	313,800
Loan 9	22/07/2017	3.04%	1,445,000	(60,560)	1,384,440
Loan 12	25/03/2018	3.06%	240,000	(11,445)	228,555
Loan 13	04/05/2018	3.13%	2,490,000	(78,004)	2,411,996
Loan 14	05/06/2018	3.06%	1,196,311	(38,141)	1,158,170
Loan 15	05/07/2018	3.10%	113,000	(3,565)	109,435
Loan 16	25/09/2018	3.19%	823,000	(22,675)	800,325
Loan 17*	17/10/2018	3.45%	659,000	(18,691)	640,309
Loan 18	02/11/2018	3.31%	820,000	(20,745)	799,255
Loan 19	09/11/2018	3.29%	6,517,425	(165,593)	6,351,832
Loan 20*	01/02/2019	3.10%	93,890	(2,521)	91,369
Loan 21*	04/02/2019	3.10%	7,103,180	(190,721)	6,912,459
Loan 22	22/02/2019	3.03%	809,240	(22,476)	786,764
Loan 23*	04/03/2019	3.10%	941,360	(24,237)	917,123
Loan 24	17/06/2019	2.80%	160,000	(3,870)	156,130
Loan 25	01/07/2019	2.81%	91,776	(2,213)	89,563
Loan 26	06/09/2019	2.24%	568,400	(17,285)	551,115
Loan 27	08/09/2019	2.24%	3,821,595	(189,239)	3,632,356
Loan 28*	16/04/2020	3.57%	1,208,000	(11,925)	1,196,075
Loan 29*	16/10/2020	3.84%	1,029,820	(6,326)	1,023,494
Loan 30	20/11/2020	3.61%	2,175,000	(20,152)	2,154,848
Loan 31*	08/11/2021	3.22%	427,050	0	427,050
Total loans to ABCFPL			33,133,047	(996,584)	32,136,463
* These loans have been subsequently loaned to the companies subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Development Ltd.					

Savings to be identified tables

Director Of Customer Tech & Finance	2022/23 Original Saving	2022/23 Saving to be identified	2022/23 Q1 Forecast	Pressure	Q1 Budget Monitoring Comments
Communications & Marketing	(12,500)	(12,500)	0	(12,500)	
Policy And Performance	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	0	Love Ashford Website now managed in house
Accountancy	(50,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	0	Delivered through increased income from Fraud and Investigations
ICT	(20,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	0	Reduction on usage and costs
Visitor & Call Centre	(10,500)	0	0	0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Visitor & Call Centre	(6,500)	0	0	0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Total	(111,500)	(49,500)	(37,000)	(12,500)	
Director Of Health And Wellbeing	2022/23 Original Saving	2022/23 Saving to be identified	2022/23 Q1 Forecast	Pressure	Q1 Budget Monitoring Comments
Deputy Head of Property & Projects	(17,500)	0	0	0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Project Delivery Team	(56,000)	(56,000)	(56,000)	0	This saving will be delivered by charging Officer time as a Capital costs to the projects they are involved in.
Parking & Engineering	(75,000)	(75,000)	0	(75,000)	This saving was intended to be delivered from moving to a more cashless parking environment. However, despite good progress being made on removing some machines, increased costs from an enforced change in the cash collection contract provider and increased cashless transaction fees have added pressures elsewhere negating this saving.
Environmental Health	(34,830)	(34,830)	0	(34,830)	Data analysis being undertaken to obtain greater understanding of service demand increases. To determine whether the saving remains achievable in the current climate. Other options are also being considered moving forward.
Housing Options	(57,070)	(11,280)	(11,280)	0	Saving delivered as site now fully let.
Housing Options					This saving will be recognised once the Henwood development is operational and being used to limit the council's exposure to expensive temporary accommodation solutions such as Bed and Breakfast.
	(99,450)	(99,450)	0	(99,450)	
Housing Options	(32,000)	0		0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Total	(371,850)	(276,560)	(67,280)	(209,280)	

Savings to be identified tables

Director Of Place And Space	2022/23 Original Saving	2022/23 Saving to be identified	2022/23 Q1 Forecast	Pressure	Q1 Budget Monitoring Comments
Strategic Planning	(50,000)	(50,000)	0	(50,000)	Processes for charging are still being developed to charge for Pre Planning Agreement Advice.
Development Control	(10,000)	(10,000)		(10,000)	Processes for charging are still being developed to charge for Planning Performance Agreements.
Strategic Planning	(100,000)	(100,000)		(100,000)	System still not fully embedded and delivering efficiencies
Facilities Management	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	0	Recharge to be made to the HRA for building space used by repairs and maintenance contractor.
Street Scene					The closure of new rent public toilets was recommended on the back of the introduction of the Community Toilet Scheme, however there has been strong public and political pressure not to close these facilities and therefore remain open, and the saving therefore not deliverable.
Street Scene	(20,720)	(20,720)		(20,720)	
Street Scene	(31,480)	(31,480)	(31,480)		Closure of Toilets for park redevelopment.
Tenterden Gateway	(11,000)	(11,000)	0	(11,000)	Lease does not terminate until 2023 when saving will be realised.
Total	(273,200)	(273,200)	(81,480)	(191,720)	

Savings to be identified tables

Executive Functions	2022/23 Original Saving	2022/23 Saving to be identified	2022/23 Q1 Forecast	Pressure	Q1 Budget Monitoring Comments
Economic Development	(10,000)	(10,000)	0	(10,000)	This saving is not possible as the ED team has been required to support Covid business grants work and now needs the resource to manage the levelling up funding and other grant work that will bring in significant amounts of investment into the Council.
Strategic Corporate Costs	(18,750)	0	0	0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Legal	(30,000)	(30,000)	0	(30,000)	This saving was originally identified as a opportunity to bring in external income through the award of a contract. However, due to resourcing constraints the bid was not submitted and therefore saving/income was not delivered.
Electoral Services	(12,500)	0	0	0	Saving made within 22/23 budget setting process
Total	(71,250)	(40,000)	0	(40,000)	
Total	(827,800)	(639,260)	(185,760)	(453,500)	

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet



Date of Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Tuesday 13th September
Cabinet: Thursday 29th September

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2022/23

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

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Feacey
Portfolio Holder for:

Summary: This report summarises performance against the council's updated suite of KPIs reflecting the Corporate Plan 2022-24

Certain performance indicators from the previous council's framework have been retained and allow for historic data comparison, however a number of new performance indicators have been agreed upon, for which data is only available for this last quarter.

As this is the first of the performance reports reflecting the Corporate Plan 2022- 24 – all measures have been included both those which, going forward, will be reported upon annually and those reported upon quarterly.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

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

I. Consider the performance data for Quarter 1 2022/23

Policy Overview: Performance measures have been updated to reflect the objectives and priorities of The Corporate Plan 22-24.

This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor the progress made by the council against the Corporate Plan.

Financial Implications:

N/A

Legal Implications:

N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.

Data Protection Impact Assessment:

N/A

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):

N/A

Sustainability Implications:

N/A

Other Material Implications:

N/A

Exempt from Publication:

No

Background Papers:

The Corporate Plan 2022-24

Contact:

Tom.Swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Portfolio Holder's Views:

In this first quarter performance report we welcome a number of new key performance measures that will assist us in monitoring progress towards delivery of our Corporate Plan 2022-24. These new measures are set out together with well-established ones, providing a holistic overview of our direction of travel. The traffic light system is an effective way of showing that positive progress has already been made against our ambitious Corporate Plan, whilst highlighting areas of focus for quarter 2. This first report includes the quarterly as well as annual targets, the latter of which we will return to at the end of the year

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 1 2022/23

Introduction and Background

1. In 2019 we embarked on a comprehensive study to inform our next Corporate Plan, envisaging that this would be developed and adopted during 2020. As our work with stakeholders was coming to a conclusion the coronavirus pandemic forced the country into lockdown in March 2020. Our [Recovery Plan](#) was developed as an interim strategic document to focus our work towards enabling a timely recovery from the pandemic, supporting residents, communities and local business.
2. With the start of the 22/23 financial year the Recovery Plan has now been superseded by the [Corporate Plan 22-24](#). This new Corporate Plan continues this journey and looks ahead, with renewed vigour, to realise the [Ashford Ambition](#) that was developed with a wide range of local stakeholders for a vibrant, caring and sustainable borough.
3. The Ashford Ambition is supported by three priority themes:
 - Green Pioneer – Where businesses, communities and the public and third sector have come together to become carbon neutral, respect the local environment and ecology, and embrace a more sustainable way of living.
 - Caring Ashford – A caring and supportive place to live, with rich heritage; thriving towns, villages and rural communities; great schools; high-quality housing; a plethora of cultural activities and events; and a strong sense of civic pride.
 - Targeted Growth – A place where productive, innovative, responsible town and rural business communities offer good quality work to an agile and skilled local workforce who have embraced a culture of lifelong learning.

These along with our underlying principles provide a framework that focuses our efforts on working towards our strategic objectives.
4. This report seeks to provide an overview of performance against the council's key performance indicators for Quarter 1 2022/23. The council's performance framework captures key performance data from across the organisation as it relates to the council's Corporate Plan.

Areas of Note







5. As this is the first performance report reflecting the performance indicators as identified in the Corporate Plan, there are a number of new measures where this quarters data is the first available. With time, trend data will become established, allowing for performance to be compared over time. Additionally, being the first report all measures have been included, providing a baseline for those measures which going forward will be reported upon annually.

Ashford Ambition:




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






Theme	Challenges	Objectives	Outcomes
<p>Green Pioneer Our long term aim: Every community and individual plays their part in becoming a carbon neutral borough, through a more sustainable way of life. And the natural environment is protected and enhanced.</p>	<p>Tackling climate change by achieving carbon neutrality</p> <p>Enabling development whilst protecting the environment</p> <p>Ensuring no one is disadvantaged as we reduce the carbon footprint of our services and operations</p>	<p>GP1: Reduce reliance on fossil fuels in line with our carbon neutral targets</p> <p>GP2: Increase biodiversity and encourage sustainable lifestyles</p> <p>GP3: Reduce the amount of waste produced from homes and business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homes are energy efficient and cheaper to heat. Renewable energy generation and consumption increases. Fewer local car journeys are made, air quality improves and residents are more active and healthy. - Communities in urban and rural areas value, enjoy and respect the natural environment and the abundance of wildlife increases - A borough free of litter, where everyone takes responsibility for minimising the amount of waste they produce
<p>Caring Ashford Our long term aim: Towns, villages and rural communities are welcoming, safe places for all who live and work in them, offering a high quality of life where everyone is valued and respected.</p>	<p>Enabling homes that are affordable to local people on low incomes</p> <p>Improving wellbeing and opportunities for people living in the most disadvantage areas</p> <p>Raising educational attainment and skills level of local population</p>	<p>CA1: Homes and neighbourhoods in the borough meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live sustainably and safely</p> <p>CA2: Local people have access to life-long learning to ensure they have knowledge and skills to take up local employment</p> <p>CA3: Reduce health inequalities and improve the wellbeing of local people</p> <p>CA4: Communities celebrate their heritage and the diversity of their population to build a more connected community and strengthen social responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities feel safe and secure with easy access to locally - led services designed with communities to meet their needs - Local people seek positive change for themselves and others through the development of their knowledge and skills, improving social inclusion and employability - The lives of people with the worst health and wellbeing outcomes are improved - Cultural activities and events bring communities together, increasing tolerance, respect and understanding
<p>Targeted Growth Our long term aim: A thriving, productive local economy supporting a range of business and industry offering good work to local people and is recognised as a high quality visitor destination.</p>	<p>Ensuring our towns remain vibrant places and adapt to changing consumer habits</p> <p>Matching local skills with the needs of employers</p> <p>Attracting new industries to establish in borough and retain and grow existing business</p>	<p>TG1: Increase productivity and job opportunities and the establishment of sustainable, knowledge based and creative industries in the borough</p> <p>TG2: Enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of business, voluntary sector and residents</p> <p>TG3: Strengthen local supply chains and increase the resilience of the local economy</p> <p>TG4: Support growth in the visitor economy</p> <p>TG5: Stimulate vibrant, accessible and sustainable Town Centres for residents visitors and business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The borough attracts and grows businesses and industries that are innovative and sustainable that benefit local employment and incomes - Fast, reliable digital connectivity is available across the whole borough so no one is disadvantaged in accessing online services or doing business - Local business survival rates improve - The borough is a 'year round' visitor destination renowned for offering quality visitor experiences - Our town centres are lively, safe places where people of all ages live, work and visit, coming together to enjoy events and activities

PI Status		Long Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving
	Warning		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse

Green Pioneer Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_06 34 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Officers are developing a proposal for a travel plan for Ashford Borough Council staff. Work continues to explore how we can work with a local business to pilot an active travel plan within the borough to inform further role out.									
CP_KPI_09 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	48.67%	50%		49%	50%		55%	50%		Q1 figures based on data for April and May, June figure due shortly.
Ashford's recycling rate remains comfortably above the national target of 50% DEFRA's nationwide recycling league tables .											
Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links. WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics											

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_10 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made	99.95%	99.96%		99.97%	99.96%		99.96%	99.96%		Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links: WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics




Green Pioneer
Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
<p>CP_KPI_01</p> <p>Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e) Annual</p>	Council's carbon footprint (tCO2e)	Annual measure – Baseline figure 3599 tCO2e for Y2019/20			<p>In July 2019 Ashford Borough Council declared its aim to become carbon neutral in its own estate and operations by 2030.</p> <p>The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC), driven by a lead Member leads on the commitment to act and achieve this agenda.</p> <p>In May 2021 officers initiated consultancy work with Laser Energy (our corporate estate energy provider) to establish the Council's own carbon baseline (on own assets and assist with the borough wide picture) with a view to modelling potential carbon descent plans for net zero for council owned assets. This returned a carbon baseline of 3599 tCO2e for Y2019/20</p> <p>Detailed information on Ashford Borough Council's framework for climate action is included within - Climate Change Action - A Systemic Approach.pdf (moderngov.co.uk).</p>
<p>CP_KPI_02</p> <p>Council owned renewable energy provision (kWh) Annual</p>	Total potential capacity of council owned renewable energy provision (kWh)	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 estimated average of 357,000kWh per year.			<p>The council has been proactive in installing Solar PV on its buildings since 2011 and now generates an estimated average of 357,000kWh per year.</p> <p>The importance of maximising the use of solar photovoltaic (PV) on Council buildings is understood and projects including the installation at Carlton Road - Stour Centre Car Park - Ellingham Industrial Estate - Blindgrooms Lane are being explored.</p>
<p>CP_KPI_03</p> <p>Number of EV charging points on council property Annual</p>	Number of EV charging points on council property	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 14 EV charging points on council property			<p>Current network of charging points in Ashford resulted in 24,633 kWh energy consumption from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. The council currently has 14 council managed charging points.</p> <p>The network of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) is planned to be expanded and its reliability improved in the following years. Ashford Borough Council has been successful in a funding bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to help forge ahead with plans to increase the number of EVCPs in council-managed car parks. Cabinet has already approved the release of funds from its Climate Change Reserve Fund to install even more EVCPs in locations that are ineligible for funding through the OLEV scheme.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
					Further information is available within the 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ashford.gov.uk)
CP_KPI_04 Air Quality	Number of Air Quality Management Areas	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 0 Air Quality Annual Status report produced each June			Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority should prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within 12 months setting out measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of compliance with the objectives. Ashford Borough Council currently does not have any declared AQMAs. For reference, a map of Ashford Borough Council's monitoring locations, as well as those undertaken by National Highways within Ashford, is available from 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ashford.gov.uk)
CP_KPI_05 Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation Annual	Area of land (km2) managed for nature conservation	86,156M2 of meadows created			<p>Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council owed green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes.</p> <p>The creation of more meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans across the borough, will benefit wildlife, improve the wellbeing of our residents by connecting them with nature as well as continuing to maintain our open spaces in a way that promotes a sense of place and space.</p> <p>The council's in-house landscape management service, Aspire, are proposing to make some changes to selected areas of land they manage including introducing areas of uncut grass for meadow creation.</p> <p>The Creation of Meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans to support increased biodiversity: (moderngov.co.uk)</p>
CP_KPI_07 Number of trees planted (net gain) supported through ABC projects Annual	Number of trees planted (net gain) supported through ABC projects	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 40,000 trees have been planted across the borough so far			<p>To thank Her Majesty for her service and celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, Ashford Borough Council is aiming to plant one tree representing each resident who will be living in the borough in 2022. This will be almost 135,500 trees planted over the next three years.</p> <p>Trees will be planted in the winter/spring planting seasons from October 2021 through the Jubilee year in 2022 and beyond to 2024.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note																
		Value	Target	Status																	
CP_KPI_08 Level of biodiversity in defined project areas Annual	Level of biodiversity in defined project areas	New meadow areas have been created at Queen Mothers Park and Singleton to date.			<p>Ashford Borough Council have set out how they will increase biodiversity within council owned green spaces by introducing a variety of habitats and varying maintenance regimes.</p> <p>The creation of more meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans across the borough will benefit wildlife, improve the wellbeing of our residents by connecting them with nature as well as continuing to maintain our open spaces in a way that promotes a sense of place and space.</p> <p>The council's in-house landscape management service, Aspire, are proposing to make some changes to selected areas of land they manage including introducing areas of uncut grass for meadow creation.</p> <p>The Creation of Meadows and enhanced Land Management Plans to support increased biodiversity: (modern.gov.co.uk)</p>																
CP_KPI_11 Contamination rate in recycling loads Annual	Contamination rate in recycling loads	average total contamination rate for 21-22 was 13.72%			<p>Recycling is currently collected commingled via an alternate weekly collection system using a 240-litre green wheeled bin, or clear sacks, with accepted materials including paper and card, cartons, plastic bottles and pots, tubs and trays, metal cans, and glass bottles and jars accepted at the kerbside. Residual waste is collected using 180-litre wheeled bins, and the council offers a weekly food waste and fortnightly garden waste service from many homes.</p> <p>Rejected contaminated loads, for example, contained black sacks, food waste, nappies and sanitary waste, as well as other non-recyclable items, are sent to the Allington Energy from Waste (EfW) facility, where due to their contamination loads are incinerated, rather than being recycled.</p> <p>Main contamination for 21-22 coming from Black sacks 3.51% , Food 3.11% and Wood at 4.79%</p>																
CP_KPI_12 Reported incidences of fly-tipping Annual	Reported incidences of fly-tipping	Annual measure – Baseline figure from 21-22 1514 registered fly-tips.			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019 – 2020</th> <th>2020 – 2021</th> <th>2021 – 2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No. of fly tips registered</td> <td>1538</td> <td>2027</td> <td>1514</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fines Issued</td> <td>2</td> <td>7</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total £ paid in fines</td> <td>£4744.00</td> <td>£775.00</td> <td>£3595.77</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	No. of fly tips registered	1538	2027	1514	Fines Issued	2	7	48	Total £ paid in fines	£4744.00	£775.00	£3595.77
	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022																		
No. of fly tips registered	1538	2027	1514																		
Fines Issued	2	7	48																		
Total £ paid in fines	£4744.00	£775.00	£3595.77																		

Caring Ashford
Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_13 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	99%	98.5%		99.1%	98.5%		99.2%	98.5%		

With additional inspection capacity being made available by Ashford Port Health, the Food and Health & Safety team were able to complete the Food Inspection programme for 2021/22 and meet the commitments made to the Food Standards Agency in the recovery programme.

Ashford Borough Council's Annual Food Service Plan 2022/23, includes a review of performance in delivering official food controls during 2021/22 is available at: [Food Services Plan 2022/23.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2022/23.pdf)

Page 39

CP_KPI_17 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	0			31			17			Halstow Way completed in this quarter. 17 flats (4 x 3-bed duplex apartments, 7 x 2-bed flats and 6 x 1-bed homes) Repton - Land Acquisition in the HRA.pdf (moderngov.co.uk) Looking forward - At this time this is bound by Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality mitigation measures. With Stodmarsh mitigation measures necessary before we can deliver many of our current plans. However in the pipeline for delivery we have 20 homes with approval in Mabledon Avenue that we would hope to begin on site as soon as possible and that in the planning process we currently have 3 x infill schemes totalling 12 homes, an independent living scheme totalling 69 dwellings and a temporary accommodation scheme totalling 23 dwellings.
-----------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	--	--	----	--	--	----	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_18 Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	5			3			3			This quarter saw 3 completions, with a further 3 in conveyancing. Annual target of approximately 20 units. With a focus on strategic purchases, targeted at the type of properties needed.
CP_KPI_19 Homelessness Presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	323			404			391			
CP_KPI_19b Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	28			28			24			

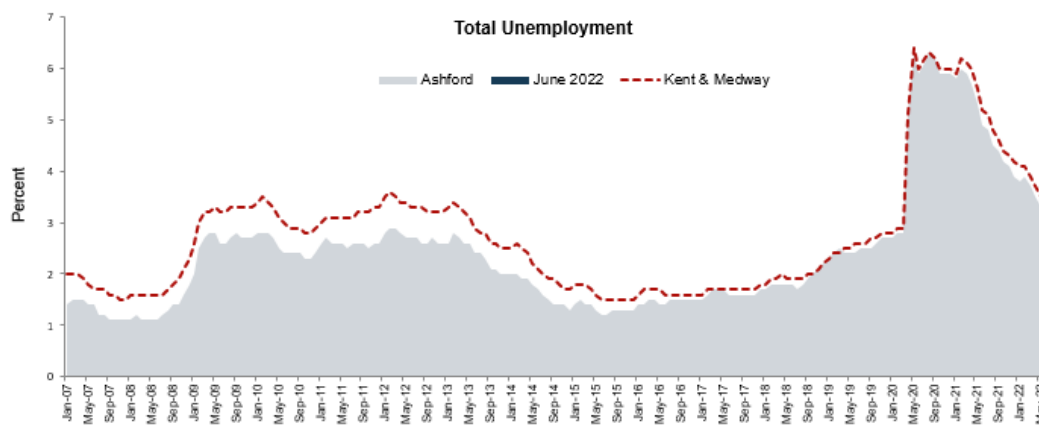
With the cost of living soaring and the effects of the pandemic ongoing, [Ashford Borough Council has received £175,000 to help prevent homelessness](#). The government grant will help tackle rent arrears that have built up as a direct result of Covid-19.

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

Report on the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, presented on the November's Cabinet agenda [Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project Move On - Update Report.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) along with [First Homes.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#).

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_20 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	18			13			16			On target figure for the time of the year.
CP_KPI_20b Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Actual spend per month for disabled facility grants	£203,740.90			£200,928.24			£196,521.61			Good figure for interim payments allowing cases to move forward prior to completion.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_21 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data	3.9%			3.7%			3.2%		Improving trend	More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council

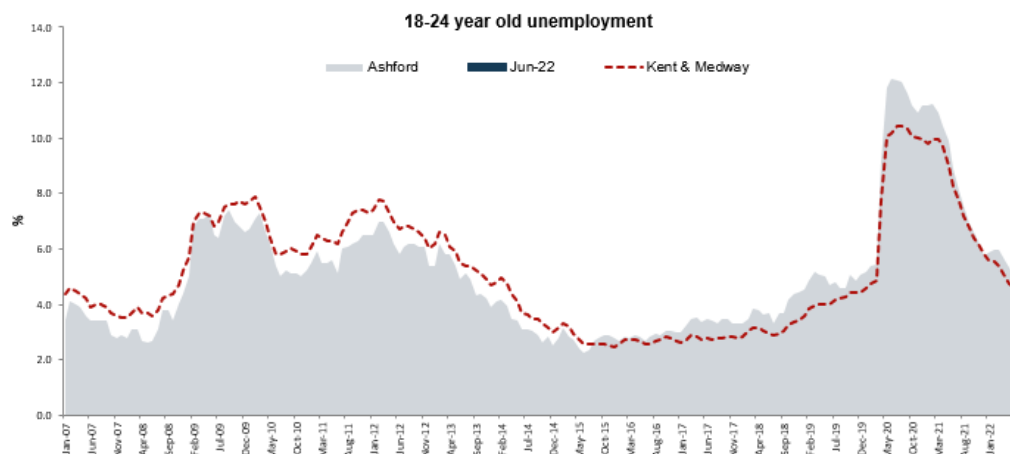


Source: ONS Claimant Count
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

June 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since May 2022	% change since May 2022	Number change since June 2021	% change since June 2021
Ashford	2,495	3.2%	-120	-4.6%	-1,340	-34.9%
Kent & Medway	38,575	3.4%	-1,170	-2.9%	-19,980	-34.1%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_22 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	5.8%			6%			4.9%		Improving trend	More information available within - Economy and employment data - Kent County Council Latest available data on Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is available from - Tracking Young People - KELS!

Page 43



Source: ONS Claimant Count
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

18-24 Unemployment

June 2022	Number	% rate	Number change since May 2022	% change since May 2022	Number change since June 2021	% change since June 2021
Ashford	430	4.9%	-35	-7.5%	-345	-44.5%
Kent & Medway	6,495	4.6%	-210	-3.1%	-5,225	-44.6%

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_26 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.02	10		1.84	10		1.94	10		Benefit change of circumstance processing time continues to remain on target.
CP_KPI_27 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	25.2	28		25.96	28		28.78	28		Please note there has been a delay in the processing of a number of new claims in Exempt Supported Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation due to delays in obtaining clarification regarding subsidy implications from the DWP.
CP_KPI_30 Number of tickets sold local Lottery Scheme	Number of tickets sold local lottery scheme – generating x amount.	New Measure			New Measure			Since start of scheme 17 Feb 2022, 16,614 tickets			<p>Lottery: Since lottery scheme started selling tickets on 17 Feb 2022, 16,614 tickets have been sold generating £9,968.40 for good causes.</p> <p>Information about the Ashford Community Lottery is available from Ashford Community Lottery: Easy online fundraising for good causes - Ashford Community Lottery</p>
CP_KPI_32 Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	Support to 'vulnerable' groups through leisure centre activity	<p>New measure</p> <p>Ongoing projects and activities: Silent Sunday (SEN); a weekly soft play session targeted towards children up to 12yrs with special educational needs. Learning Difficulties Group, East Kent NHS Foundation; This is a 10-week course where supervised access to the gym and an exclusive Aqua Aerobics class is offered. 75+ free swimming was launched recently in Q2 and now has 9 members. Local link ups to Age UK are aiming to boost participation.</p> <p>New in the quarter: GP Referral Re-launch; newly re-launched scheme across both Stour and Julie Rose with a dedicated staff member, more pathways to referral, better monitoring and use of more facilities such as the Stour Bio-circuit</p>									

Caring Ashford
Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note															
		Value	Target	Status																
<p>CP_KPI_14</p> <p>Number of all recorded crime figures Annual</p>	Recorded Town Centre crime	<p>Baseline figure for 21-22</p> <p>Victoria ward which includes the town centre all crime 175 violence against the person 65</p>			<p>In Autumn 2021, following a successful bid to the Home Office, Ashford was awarded almost £550,000 to make the streets of its town centre safer, particularly for women and girls. The scheme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of the Ashford Streetwise app (launching 29 April) • Active Bystander training has been delivered to over 180 front line staff from businesses operating in the town centre • A network of Safe Spaces - premises people can go to if they need help and support when out in the town centre (look out for the window sticker or find them on the app) • Additional Ashford Partnership Against Crime radios purchased to increase the number of guardians in the town centre (and support Safe Spaces) • 20 school presentations, emphasising key safety messages and the importance of respect and healthy relationships • CCTV cameras have been installed in Edinburgh Road Car park and at Elwick Place, eight public space cameras have been installed in the town centre as well as wall-mounted mirrors to improve sightlines • Improvements to the Memorial Gardens to remove undergrowth and replace the perimeter fence • Purchase and distribution of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarttag to licensed premises • Personal safety equipment • Pressure washer and litter picking equipment <p>Additionally, Ashford Borough Council has joined forces with Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) on a year-long project which aims to use the power of sport and physical activity to create safer, stronger and more respectful communities by engaging with young people in some of our most high-need areas.</p>															
<p>CP_KPI_15</p> <p>Number killed or seriously injured on the roads Annual</p>	Number killed or seriously injured on Ashford's roads	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Collisions</th> <th>Casualties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fatal</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Serious</td> <td>37</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slight</td> <td>198</td> <td>283</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>242</td> <td>334</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Calendar year 2021</p>				Collisions	Casualties	Fatal	7	7	Serious	37	44	Slight	198	283	Total	242	334	<p>The number of personal injury collisions at any location in Kent is available at www.crashmap.co.uk.</p> <p>The County is served by three Highway Authorities: Kent County Council (KCC), Highways England and Medway Council. Kent Police collects over 60 pieces of statistical data for each injury crash for the whole county. Crashes are categorised by severity:</p> <p>Fatal - a crash resulting in a death Serious - detention in hospital, includes paralysis, fractures and severe lacerations</p>
	Collisions	Casualties																		
Fatal	7	7																		
Serious	37	44																		
Slight	198	283																		
Total	242	334																		

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
					<p>Slight - includes whiplash, sprains and minor lacerations</p> <p>Human error is a factor in 95% of road crashes. Based on the Department for Transport's (DfT) figures the cost to the community of a fatal crash is around £1.9 million, a serious crash costs in the region of £216,000 and a slight crash costs £23,000. For more information about crash and casualty figures please see www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/crash-and-casualty-data.</p>
<p>CP_KPI_16</p> <p>Number of play areas revamped/refreshed/replaced Annual</p> <p>Page 46</p>	<p>Number of play areas revamped/refreshed/replaced</p>	<p>This year, Brisely Farm and Goat Lees, completely refreshed the safety surfaces of both.</p>			<p>Ashford Borough Council is committed to providing local communities with high quality and accessible play spaces, and we continually seek to secure additional funding to maintain and strengthen the local play offer.</p> <p>Ashford Borough Council has allocated a budget of £1.1M for upgrading and improving access for three play areas in Ashford. We have developed new draft layout plans for Rylands Road Open Space, Spearpoint Recreation Ground and Central Park.</p> <p>Public consultation took place both in person and online with very positive feedback for all three schemes during May.</p> <p>In particular, the engagement led to further interaction with a group of disabled youngsters and their parents into the design of the Central Park scheme - the resulting comments have helped to refine the design further ensuring we meet the aim of providing more inclusive and accessible facilities for the whole local community.</p> <p>Contracts have been signed up with two play manufacturers to deliver the three schemes. Spearpoint requires planning permission, as a diversion of a Public Right of Way is required to accommodate the new scheme and this is planned to be before committee in October. It is anticipated that the play area installations will start at the following timescales: Central Park – early to mid September, Rylands Road - mid October, Spearpoint - end of October.</p> <p>In the meantime, outdoor gym equipment has been installed at Rylands Road and is now open for use. Local parents formed a community group and raised funding over the last three years of £24,000 to pay for the outdoor gym. Some of this funding came from Kennington Community Council (£5,000) and Ashford Leisure Trust (£10,000) with the rest from local events.</p> <p>Additionally, two play areas so far this year have been refreshed – Brisely Farm and Goat Lees, completely refreshed the safety surfaces of both.</p> <p>We have a number of others in the pipeline which will come through over the next 3/4 of the year as part of the refurbishment programme.</p> <p>As well as our work at Victoria Park and Conningbrook Lakes.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_23 Indices of multiple deprivation score Annual	Indices of multiple deprivation score	152			<p>IMD - Rank of average rank (National) - 1 being the most deprived National rank out of 317 local authorities.</p> <p>Deprivation is a multi-dimensional problem and, to reflect this, the Indices of Deprivation are based on a basket of indicators organised across seven distinct types of deprivation or 'domains'. These are: 1. Income Deprivation; 2. Employment Deprivation; 3. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; 4. Health Deprivation and Disability; 5. Crime; 6. Barriers to Housing and Services; and 7. Living Environment Deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation.</p> <p>The latest release is the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) and is published by central government to help local authorities identify the most disadvantaged areas so that resources and funding can be allocated appropriately.</p>
CP_KPI_24 Health profile indicators for smoking prevalence, healthy weight and physical activity Annual	Health profile indicators for smoking prevalence, healthy weight and physical activity	Most recently available information source and trend data available at: Local Authority Health Profiles - OHID (phe.org.uk)			<p>Smoking Prevalence in adults (18+), Source annual Population Survey 10,096 10.1%.</p> <p>Percentage of physically active adults, Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England) 66.9%.</p> <p>Percentage of adults (18+) classified as overweight or obese, Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England) 63.5%.</p>
CP_KPI_25 Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Annual footfall to key leisure sites	Data from latest available quarter: Quarterly data Stour centre visitors 82,880 Julie Rose visitors 6,261			<p>A continued focus on growth of participation is resulting in positive growth in the majority of areas. Positive net member movements meaning a good increase in overall membership numbers and swim learners.</p> <p>Major investment works of the track replacement at Julie Rose Stadium continue to take place with anticipated re-launch later in the year.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline Figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_28 Exceptional Circumstance Payments spend Annual	Exceptional Circumstance Payments	Expenditure on ECP 2022 April to June £20,980.00 £32,109.76 ECP for April 2021 to June 2021			An Exceptional circumstances Policy has been created by Ashford Borough Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional circumstances'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant has made a claim for Council Tax Reduction but do not qualify for support or even with support are unable to meet their Council Tax liability.
CP_KPI_29 Value of grants awarded via Community grant fund. Annual	Value of grants awarded via community grant fund		£334,453.70 for 2021/22		Grants awarded via Community Grants fund for 2021/2022 year: Community Services Grants £162520 Capital Grants £55,243.00 Member Grants £116,690.70
CP_KPI_31 Trends in volunteering Annual	Trends in volunteering		New measure		Trends in Volunteering – Introduced in 2022-2023 so no report for 2021-2022.

Targeted Growth Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_33 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records Current vacancy rates	8.2%			8.4%			8.65%		Deteriorating trend	5,328 premises - 296 exemptions 165 reliefs
Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records comparing the total number of rated premises against those which have an empty property exemption or relief applied to their accounts.											
CP_KPI_34 Ashford town centre vacancy rate	Ashford town centre vacancy rate	15.4%			14.8%			15.4%			<p>April 22 332 units 51 empty - 15.4%</p> <p>The area surveyed is the High Street, Middle Row, New Rents, North Street, Bank Street, Tufton Street, County Square, Park Mall and Elwick Place. This is surveyed manually quarterly.</p> <p>Vacancy rates peaked at 20% in September 2020, due to the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. They are now slowly declining, having reached 15% by April 2022, but remain significantly above the previous low of 8% in November 2017, and remain significantly above national benchmarks, which were 12% in January 2022. There remains significant churn as there are a number of new businesses starting around Elwick Place/Bank Street.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_35 Contribution to budget from commercial investments	Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the council's budget books.	85%			85%			92.2%			Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.

Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2020/21 reports on the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year 2020-2021. It also advises of the work undertaken to increase and maintain the profitability of the portfolio. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 28th October, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)




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

Page 50

CP_KPI_36 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	10.1%	8%	8%	Percentage Occupancy Rate			
					Site	Square foot let	Lettable square foot	Percentage let
					Ellingham	64,397 sf	64,397 sf	100.0%
					Carlton Road	33,732 sf	44,496 sf	75.8%
					Elwick Place	92,026 sf	94,351 sf	97.5%
					International House	72,800 sf	82,462 sf	88.3%
					Total	262,955 sf	285,706 sf	92.0%

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

Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2020/21 reports on the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year 2020-2021. It also advises of the work undertaken to increase and maintain the profitability of the portfolio. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 28th October, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_38	Digital uptake - % of total council interactions /% Increase transactions completed electronically.	83%	80%		80%	80%		83%	80%		Our current digital uptake target is 80%



	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22
Digital Transactions	28814	28557	41561	36267	29458	33040	40621	45027	41839
Total Transactions	35515	36030	46663	43816	37003	42147	48597	53878	50379
Digital Uptake	81.13%	79.26%	89.07%	82.77%	79.61%	78.39%	83.59%	83.57%	83.05%

We have seen an increase in digital transactions for quarter 1 2022 (127,487) compared to quarter 1 2021 (110,477). In the last quarter we saw three consecutive months with each having more than 40,000 digital transactions for the first time. In April we had more than 4,000 residents apply for the Energy Rebate Scheme using our online form.

Online payments have stayed approximately the same compared to the same period last year – this is due to garden waste renewals.

The Customer Service, IT and Digital Strategy was adopted at the end of June 2022 with a key focus of keeping the customer at the centre of our services. [Customer Service IT Digital Strategy.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_39	Social media engagement	New Measure	New Measure	<p>Impressions (Total number of times our posts have been shown on a person's screen) Facebook: 972.4k Twitter: 84.4k Nextdoor: 78,163k IG: 3k</p> <p>Followers/Subscribers FB: 9.9k Twitter: 9k</p>	<p>Ashford Borough Council's Communications team is responsible for managing the council's social media accounts. Our most active platforms that residents can engage with the council on, include Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram.</p> <p>The data will allow the Council to better understand the needs of our residents and ensure that our social media strategy is shaped by the results of the data.</p> <p>With over 50,000 combined total followers across all ABC</p>
-----------	-------------------------	-------------	-------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
								Nextdoor: 22k IG:2.5K			social platforms, the Communications Team are also actively exploring methods to further grow each platform through various digital tools so that they can effectively reach more residents across the borough, including those in rural areas.
CP_KPI_41 Parking usage	Parking usage Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks	250,281			250,895			243,026  Q1 21-22 187,472			 <p>June 2022 result 70,370 Last 12 months</p>

Parking Report - Overview of Car Park and on Street Sales for June 2022

Moving into the recovery phase of the pandemic, parking usage is still expected to be down by around 15%, which has been budgeted for in 2022/23. In terms of mitigating the overarching risk, the base budget has now been factored in, including the 15% reduction, with no anticipated increase. Any increase will have a positive impact on the Council.

Innovations to provide improved services and access for all our customers are another way of ensuring we encourage people to visit our towns and come back again. Our cashless parking system is in every car park for those who wish to pay by mobile telephone. This has been a resounding success, with a large take-up from customers.

ABC income figures are taken from Flow bird, RingGo and ANPR systems.

Other relevant information of note - In June, for the Jubilee, we gave free parking for 4 days, which assumed a revenue loss of around £23,500.

Top Performing Car Parks this month

1. Vicarage Lane – £43,752 2. Recreation Ground – £37,480.50 3. Elwick Place – £22,349

June 2022 figures are £193,805 which reflects the loss in revenue for the free parking offered for the Jubilee.

In May, figures were at £217, 240, and in April at £211, 878

In June 2019, the monthly figure was £218,981.04.

Total Financial Year Figures










2019-2020 Income £2,591,786

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
2020-2021	£ 819,698										
2021-22	£2,203,918										
Forecast for 2022-23 - £2,491,692											
Our income is built up of 68% income from Ashford and 32% from Tenterden.											




Targeted Growth Annual Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_37 Percentage of creative industries in the borough	Percentage of creative industries in the borough	8.6%			<p>Creative industry enterprises Ashford 2021: 570 enterprises equating to 8.6% of all enterprises fall of 4.2% on the year (25), an 11.8% increase on 5 years.</p> <p>Kent average 9.9%.</p> <p>Economy and employment data - Kent County Council</p>
Page 54 FD_KPI_40 Percentage of tourism related businesses in the borough	Percentage of tourism related jobs in the borough	6.2%			<p>Tourism enterprises in Ashford 2021: 410 enterprises representing 6.2% of enterprises. This is a 1.2% (5) fall on the previous year but a 12.3% increase from 5 years ago. Employing circa 5000 people.</p> <p>Kent average 8.6%.</p> <p>Food & Drink Production Industries in Kent 2022</p> <p>Economy and employment data - Kent County Council</p>

Our Principles
Quarterly Measures

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_42 FOI Response Rate	% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 working days	99%	95%		99%	95%		98%	95%		221 requests received in the period - 5 requests responded to outside the 20 working day window.
CP_KPI_43 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	79.36%	74.25%		97.6%	99%		30.12%	24.75%		Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates are available here
CP_KPI_44 Council Tax Collection Rate	Percentage of council tax collected - cumulative figure per month	85.37%	73.71%		97.4%	98.25%		30.1%	24.57%		
CP_KPI_45 Percentage of invoices paid on time	Percentage of invoices paid on time	New Measure			New Measure			Due to system upgrades the information will be available from Q2			

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_46 Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.48%	100%		99.54%	100%		99.91%	100%		Focus continues on ensure access to hard to access properties is expedited maintaining gas safety compliance.
CP_KPI_47 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent		9.96 days per FTE			9.96 days per FTE			Statistics compiled 6 monthly			
<p>Period 1st Oct 2021 to 30th March 2022</p> <p>Based on the total FTE as at 31st March 2022 average absence due to sickness and coronavirus is 9.96 days (annualised), up from 6.45 days (annualised) in the previous period.</p> <p>A total of 515 days were lost due to Coronavirus, more than the 137 days in the previous period but reflecting the larger number of employees who were unwell as a result of the virus around December to March. This category has now been merged back into sickness so future reports will not show this as a separate absence type (although it will still show as an individual absence reason).</p> <p>Average absence per FTE due to coronavirus only in this period was 2.02 per FTE (annualised).</p> <p>A total of 2,021.73 days were lost due to 'normal' sickness.</p> <p>Average absence due to sickness only in this period was 7.93 per FTE (annualised) up from 5.89 days per FTE (annualised) reported in the last six month period</p>											
CP_KPI_48 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls	0h 01m 18s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 35s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 14s	0h 01m 38s		A/L 169 Hours - 12 CSA's Sick 51 Hours - 3 CSA's

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_51 Number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings	Number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings	114			140			Number of ongoing litigation matters = 92 Number of cases where costs have been awarded against ABC = 0			A considerable number of cases on ASB matters, Fly-tipping and injunction/warrant matters have been successfully concluded/ settled this quarter and not one case has been lost Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
CP_KPI_52 Number of new 106 files opened	number of new 106 files opened	Number of new 106 files opened – 2 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 3 Number of 106 cases completed - 3			Number of new 106 files opened – 4 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 5 Number of 106 cases completed – 3			Number of new 106 files opened - 10 Number of draft 106 agreements sent out – 4 Number of 106 cases completed – 56			In the Q1 period, one Appellant chose to complete 27 s.106 Deeds for each of his two appeals. This reflects the high number of completed cases for this period. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to form a Task Group to review the council's Section 106 process, recommendations available within the final report. S106 Task Group - Final Report.pdf (moderngov.co.uk) with a S106 Scrutiny Review – Update provides to the committee in May 22
CP_KPI_53 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	88%	90%		85%	90%		85%	90%		

Page 57

The Council's ability to determine applications in the Stour catchment part of the Borough continues to be constrained at present by the potential impact of new residential accommodation on the Stodmarsh Lakes European Designated Sites, which lie east of Canterbury.

Without necessary mitigation of additional nitrates caused by new residential development, the granting of planning permission may be regarded as unlawful. A strategic mitigation plan may enable permissions to be granted to the Stour catchment area when secured. In the meantime, this is likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to approve applications. Advice has been given by Natural England on Nutrient Neutrality for new developments in the Stour catchment and more information is available on the planning pages of the council's [website](#).

A Nutrient Mitigation Strategy for the Stour Catchment in Ashford Borough, the first steps to mitigating the issue of water quality degradation at Stodmarsh Lakes, which has impacted new

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

housing development in the Ashford borough, is set to start with Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet agreeing that land acquisition options for new wetland areas should now be explored and pursued as a matter of urgency. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 29th July, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#). & [Stodmarsh Mitigation Framework.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

CP_KPI_54 Speed of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	91%	65%		85%	65%		50%	65%		
CP_KPI_54b % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	87%	75%		85%	75%		82%	75%		

The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: [Live tables on planning application statistics](#)

Performance remains good across the broader period in respect of major application determinations, although it is recognised that the impact of the Stodmarsh Lakes habitats issue on the ability to determine applications is starting to result in a delay to determination timescales in the short term for residential proposals in the Stour catchment area. Officers will continue to work closely with applicants to ensure that potential solutions can be identified and revised timescales for determination agreed where possible. Given the below target measure for this period which is acknowledged by the service this measure will continue to be closely monitored by the planning team. Given the relatively small number of major applications, a small number of applications delayed beyond the 13 week window can have a significant impact on the reported figure.

In the most recent quarter the determination of a number of older schemes during the application 'clearance week' in May will have had a short term impact on performance during this quarter.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_55 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	90%	75%		79%	75%		86%	75%		
CP_KPI_55b % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	91%	80%		90%	80%		90%	80%		
<p>The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics</p> <p>Performance in non-major schemes remains strong and above target. Enhanced use of officer delegations is helping to maintain performance levels.</p>											
CP_KPI_56 Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	846	550		839	550		817	550		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2021/22			Q4 2021/22			Q1 2022/23			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	<p>Application numbers have continued to increase and a combination of Stodmarsh, a high number of vacant posts in the team from Spring 21 onwards and the resources required to implement the new planning system has resulted in the number of live applications remaining stubbornly high. In order to ensure cases may be determined as swiftly as possible once a strategic mitigation solution for Stodmarsh is brought forward and consented, officers are taking cases to the point where proposals can be agreed in all other aspects pending the nutrient mitigation solution. This includes any applications where a Committee resolution may be required and/or a Section 106 Agreement to deal with other matters. The service conducted a successful applications clearance week designed to shift a lot of our older applications that have built up over the last 12 months. This freed planning officers for one week to focus purely on making planning decisions and was successful in enabling over 150 applications to be determined. Without this proactive activity the number of live applications would be higher and further consideration will be given to repeating the exercise in the future in order to reduce the overall number of live cases once the new planning software system has been fully embedded in the service.</p> <p>Staffing resources are now more stable in the Development Management Team with most posts now filled on a permanent basis and reducing consultancy support. This trend is expected to continue but will be managed against on-going caseload numbers.</p>										

Our Principles
Annual Measure

Code & Short Name	Description	Baseline figure			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	
CP_KPI_49 Complaints resolved at Stage 1	% of complaints resolved as stage 1	85.62%			320 stage 1 complaints received Jan-Dec 2021, of which 46 escalated to stage 2. Slight increase on the number dealt with at first point (stage 1)
CP_KPI_50 Mean Gender Pay Gap	The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce.	8.8%			8.8% - data is retrospective so relates to 31 March 2021 The difference in average pay between men and women in the council's workforce, expressed relative to men's earnings. A positive figure indicates that women are paid less than men on average. A negative figure indicates that the average pay for women in the organisation is higher than the average pay for men. Further information and previous reports available at: Ashford Borough Council's statistics on the gender pay gap for 2021.

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 29 September 2022

Report Title: Update on the Broadband and Digital Infrastructure improvements in the Ashford Borough

Report Author: Tom Jenkins, Economic Development Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Neil Bell, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

Summary:

Ashford Borough Council has been very pro-active in the approach to improving broadband and digital connectivity across the borough for a number of years. ABC has built a reputation as a council that providers and developers can work with.

Over the past 12 months officers have been working on the following:

- Worked with the Digital Enablers Group to bring forward key activity for improving digital infrastructure
- Liaising with KCC on activity in the county and in the borough
- Supporting Openreach and Netomnia with delivery of FTTP to ABC's housing stock
- Engagement with providers including Openreach, Virgin, and Netomnia

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: All Wards

Recommendations: Cabinet are asked to:-

- I. Note the content of this report and the Broadband work undertaken in the past year.**
- II. To note that the delivery of broadband is a key priority in the council's draft Corporate Plan.**

Policy Overview:

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

The Ashford Local Plan (Adopted in February 2019) also identifies the importance of great telecommunications

infrastructure through the adoption of Policy EMP6 – Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

Each of these strategic documents prioritise the requirement for improvements to the existing telecommunications infrastructure as well as future proofing where necessary.

Financial Implications:

It is not proposed that ABC take on direct financial endeavours relating to broadband provision. Cabinet approved the creation of the Digital Enablers Group last year which is delivering on the work programme required to deliver the Corporate Plan actions. This report will update on progress to date and seeks to continue this agreed programme. There is therefore no further resource implication apart from ongoing staff time for officers that attend the Digital Enablers Group.

**Legal Implications:
Risk Assessment**

N/A
Please see Section 34 within the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

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

Exemption Clauses:

Contacts:

Tom.jenkins@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330 326

Agenda Item No.

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

Purpose of the Report

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

Issue to be decided

2. Cabinet to take note of the update on the latest position and note the priority and proposed actions for improved broadband as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-24.

Background

3. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is responsible for delivering the government's policies on increasing economic growth and productivity through improved digital connectivity. Central to this is its target of rolling out gigabit-capable infrastructure capable of download speeds of at least 1000 megabits per second (Mbps) to at least 85% of UK premises by 2025 through Project Gigabit. Although superfast broadband (download speed of at least 30 Mbps) is fast enough for most household use today, global internet traffic is growing by around 40% each year. Gigabit-capable broadband, such as full fibre, can provide speeds of over 1,000Mbps, fast enough to download a High-Definition (HD) film in seconds.
4. The Government has allocated £5 billion to rolling out Project Gigabit by 2025. While commercial suppliers who are expected to deliver up to 80% of the UK's coverage where profitable, the public sector needs to provide support to build gigabit infrastructure in the remaining 20% of less commercially viable areas. In order to achieve this, DCMS has supported a series of programmes including: "outside in" deployment of FTTP in areas unlikely to be commercially viable; FTTP via schemes such as the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN); Rural Gigabit Connectivity programmes for the final 20%; and a Gigabit voucher scheme.
5. Over 65% of UK premises now have gigabit-capable networks available to them, with a major upgrade to Virgin Media O2's cable network completed by October 2021 providing a significant boost. Other than cable, the main way to deliver gigabit capable broadband (>1000 Mbps) is using Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) cabling, however, other technologies may need to be used to deliver in harder-to-reach areas, such as Fixed Wireless Access (FWA).
6. Ashford Borough Council has been pro-actively supporting the rollout of superfast broadband across the Borough for many years and is recognised by

the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of the best case studies of Local Authorities taking the lead on broadband improvement. The major development in this sector has been ABC's inclusion of Policy EMP6 (Promotion of Fibre to the Premises) in its Local Plan from February 2019, which requires nearly all new developments in the Borough to provide fibre broadband connections to the premises.

7. The Economic Development team also co-ordinates the Ashford Digital Enablers Group, a cross-departmental ABC body set up to support broadband rollout within the borough. The Group meets on a monthly basis to ensure the public sector is supporting commercial providers efficiently and removing barriers to local Gigabit rollout.
8. To support the understanding of this report, a glossary of terms has been incorporated in Appendix C to this report.

Ashford Borough broadband status

9. The Ofcom Connected Nations Report explains in detail the digital connectivity under different technologies, different speeds and different areas. We have attached to this report as Appendix B the results from the latest report (2022 Interim). The following key measures can be identified for Ashford Borough:

Number of Ashford premises with Superfast broadband (>30Mbps): 54,857 (92.0%)

Ashford change since spring 2021: +2,244 (+2% overall Ashford coverage)

Superfast broadband UK average: 95%

Number of Ashford premises with Full Fibre (FTTP): 11,756 (19.7%)

Ashford change since spring 2021: +7,192 (+11.7% overall Ashford coverage)

Full Fibre UK average: 28.7%

Number of Ashford premises below Universal Service Obligation level (<10Mbps): 328 (0.6%)

Ashford change since spring 2021: -329 (-0.4% overall Ashford coverage)

USO premises UK average: 0.4%

Percentage of Ashford premises covered with 4G indoors by at least one Mobile Network Operator (MNO): 99.0%

Overall Ashford coverage since spring 2021: +0.1%

Average across all LAs in UK: 98.8%

Percentage of Ashford premises covered with 4G indoors by all 4 MNOs: 71.5%

Overall Ashford coverage since spring 2021: +0.4%

Average across all LAs in UK: 78.8%

10. The figures above need context alongside the comparative UK figures to explain what they mean for Ashford as a predominantly rural Borough and why they are like this. The Superfast broadband percentage of properties covered matches approximately population densities due to the required Return on Investment (ROI) by providers in reaching clusters of premises. The more rural an area, the lower the population density and the less percentage of premises are likely to be covered. This is evidenced by the fact that across the country, Tewkesbury (which has the same population density to Ashford – 223 people per km²) also has 92% coverage, Braintree (slightly

higher population density – 248) has 96% SFBB coverage, while Teignbridge (slightly lower population density – 197) has 89% coverage. Rural areas will always be an issue for commercial infrastructure builds which is why it is important for the council to lead, coordinate and lobby for investment.

11. It is also worth noting that most FTTP rollout nationally is being driven by commercial deployments which, as mentioned above, require Return on Investment (ROI) for the providers. That leads the providers to mostly install FTTP where it is more cost-effective to do so, with schemes like Project Gigabit aimed at making connections in the more rural parts of the country more viable. Openreach explained in 2019 that the cost of connecting the last 10% of premises with FTTP in hard-to-reach areas could be £4,000 or more per property. This figure is only indicative and should not be relied on to make decisions until a full quote or further consultations have been made.
12. Mobile broadband coverage has not significantly changed across the UK since last year (with the reported percentage of premises covered by at least one MNO increasing 0.1% nationally). Ashford has similarly seen a slight increase in coverage.
13. We would note that the introduction of Local Plan Policy EMP6 has contributed to a high level of superfast broadband coverage, meaning that FTTP coverage - which stood at 7.8% in 2021 - has now risen to 19.7%, more than doubled within one year. Without Policy EMP6 it is likely the figures in 2021 would have been lower, meaning the current figures would also be lower. EMP6 will also have enabled additional infrastructure which is currently being upgraded, meaning FTTP can be delivered quicker in these early stages. Overall, there has been a large increase in planning applications where an EMP6 condition has been applied.

Gigabit Voucher schemes and Project Gigabit update

14. The Economic Development team has been working closely with KCC to ensure that the Government's vouchers schemes have been publicised and that communities across the Borough are able to improve their connections. The Gigabit Voucher Scheme was closed in May 2020 and the Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme was replaced by the UK Gigabit Voucher (UKGV) scheme in April 2021. To avoid duplication of government subsidies in areas targeted by Project Gigabit procurement, UKGV (including any Community Fibre schemes) was paused in September 2021.
15. For Phase 2 of Project Gigabit, Building Digital UK (BDUK) – an executive agency of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport - have allocated Kent & Medway between £119 and £203 million to deliver gigabit-capable connections to areas that are not expected to benefit from telecom providers' own upgrade programmes. BDUK's current intention is that a single contract will be established to deliver these new connections across Kent. The procurement will be led by BDUK. Kent County Council's broadband team has been asked to partner with BDUK and support the local delivery across Kent.
16. In May 2022, government published their Project Gigabit Delivery Plan – Spring Update. This updates the commitments of the private sector operators

to deliver gigabit connections at a national level. Kent has been given an allocation of between £119m to £203m modelled to connect 109,500 uncommercial premises.

17. As part of the pre-procurement work, BDUK has identified the areas that were not commercially viable through Open Market Review (between 12 August 2021 - 13 September 2021) and Public Review stages (between 4 February 2022 - 4 March 2022). BDUK has published the outcome of the Public Review and provided postcode level data. BDUK will only provide subsidy to target premises that have been designated 'White' in the review. From the data published, the Ashford Borough has approx. 6,400 premises in 860 postcodes designated as 'White'. A map in Appendix G shows the postcodes across Kent. Further details and a map of the proposed areas will be published by BDUK in due course.
18. Final details of the procurement will follow once Pre-Procurement Market Engagement has been completed. The planned procurement start date is September-November 2022, with expected contract commencement in July-September 2023.

Council-focussed work update

19. Members will be familiar with the fact that Ashford Borough Council has implemented the first Local Plan policy in the country which requires developers to install Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) on most new developments in the Borough. Whilst there are exceptions, this policy is proving effective in ensuring that residential and commercial properties in the Borough are future-proofed. Following the approval by Cabinet last year of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Policy EMP6, the Economic Development Team have continued to provide support to colleagues in Planning with regards to the implementation and conditioning of the policy when possible.
20. Following guidance from DCMS aimed at supporting Local Authorities provide leadership and create a strategy, the Economic Development team has established a cross-organisational Ashford Digital Enablers Group of KCC and ABC officers who are 'digital enablers' who can work from within their departments to further the digital connectivity ambitions of the council. Key objectives of the group in its first year have been the creation of standardised wayleave agreements, mapping of ABC assets, and monitoring the application of Local Plan policy EMP6.
21. Ashford's Digital Champions (Portfolio Holder and Deputy Chief Executive) and Digital Infrastructure Coordinator (Economic Development Manager) also support this work, which form part of the duties required of the relevant Member and officers and as such is not considered to require additional resource or time.

Provider updates

22. Openreach Fibre First continues and has expanded across the UK. Openreach announced Tenterden was in scope for Fibre First and has now

started connecting premises in Tenterden for FTTP. Not all premises connected to the Tenterden exchange are covered under this rollout, with premises in scope to be upgraded being in close proximity to the High Street and town core up to parts of St Michaels.

23. Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) are developing a three year plan to upgrade their current infrastructure across their UK network and they should be able to give ABC officers more detail on this by the end of 2022. As of July 2022, 900 homes in the Ashford Urban Area were upgraded, and there is potential for 5,000 further premises to be upgraded in the coming months. It's important to note that VMO2 are upgrading their infrastructure to gigabit speeds but these won't go live until the majority of the UK network is upgraded. The whole network should be upgraded to fibre by 2028, covering 15 million premises across the UK.
24. Openreach and Netomnia have been progressing their FTTP rollout across the Ashford Urban Area. This includes approx. 35,000 premises, with Netomnia rolling out to an additional 20,000 premises, including businesses. As of June 2022, Openreach have commissioned 9,000 premises and Netomnia have commissioned 2,850 premises that are able to order FTTP from the Ashford exchange. In Q4 2022, 2,000 further premises are expected to be commissioned by Openreach, with Netomnia expected to commission 3,500 premises.
25. Openreach has also announced that in Biddenden, High Halden, Hamstreet, Sevington, Wye, Chilham, and Charing exchanges are due to be upgraded to FTTP however this is not scheduled to begin until after 2023 with their website quoting a deadline of December 2026. Please see the maps in Appendix H to see Openreach's planned FTTP rollout for the Ashford Borough.
26. International House is a base for a significant amount of telecommunications infrastructure. There is essential work that needs to take place on the International House building which will require the mobile equipment to be moved. The Property and Economic Development teams will therefore coordinate and support the mobile network operators to ensure the equipment is maintained and potentially improved as part of this work.
27. The Borough has also seen 5G being installed across Ashford town centre with Three, ID Mobile, O2, Sky Mobile, GiffGaff and Tesco Mobile reportedly being able to provide 5G coverage (see attached maps in Appendix E). EE now provide 5G in Wye and have also announced plans to install 5G in Ashford urban area, although this is not live yet according to their website.

Digital connectivity work going forward

28. Broadband has been a growing priority for many, with technology evolving constantly and social trends changing at an increased pace. Residents and businesses in the Borough's communities rely on this technology and we need to ensure the future-proofing of infrastructure to enable better digital connectivity. The Coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted this need, with vulnerable residents in isolation and many people working from home.

Digital connectivity remains a top priority for the council in the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

29. There are positive signs with increased levels of investment being seen in Ashford and Tenterden, and with plans in place for improved broadband in Wye, High Halden and Sevington. However in January 2022, Ashford had 0.6% of households below the universal service obligation (USO; i.e., having poor broadband below 10Mbit/s) which, although a decline from 1.1% in January 2021, remains the second-highest level in Kent and 0.2% above the UK average. See Appendix B for a table of this data. Focus for improvements will therefore continue to be needed in the final 10% of hard-to-reach premises in rural areas. The increased investment now being seen in the urban areas of the Borough provides a starting point from which network expansion into rural areas can start. The Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and subsequent funding for KCC to deliver improved broadband to those commercially unviable premises in rural parts of the county presents a key opportunity to support this.
30. Whilst broadband, in particular FTTP, has been the principle focus of this work to date, there are other aspects of digital connectivity which will require action in order to deliver a fully improved digital Borough.
31. Mobile coverage in parts of the Borough is known to be an issue, with approximately 1% of premises not being able to access 4G indoors and some premises having issues with 2G and 3G. Mobile coverage is part of the essential digital infrastructure needed by residents and businesses especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic Development team will increase engagement with mobile network operators to support investment in the borough in appropriate locations, in particular in light of a request from community groups in Ashford requesting a new mobile mast in their area. The siting of mobile masts can be a controversial issue due to them needing to be located in specific areas to maximise coverage, but also needing to be sensitive to the environment and location in deciding where they are best sited. Taking forward improved communication with mobile operators will help to find the best locations for new infrastructure.
32. To date the Economic Development team, together with colleagues across the council, have managed to attract investment from providers, create a policy which will future proof developments and continued to promote ways for broadband improvements to take place. The work is undertaken across a number of teams but coordinated by the Economic Development Manager, with support from the Head of Economic Development and the Assistant Economic Development Officer. The Economic Development Manager normally dedicates approximately a third of their time to this activity, and the work undertaken over the past year has included:
 - i. Working with Planning colleagues on implementing Policy EMP6 as conditions for applications
 - ii. Light touch engagement with providers known to be building or have plans to build in the Borough
 - iii. Engaging and coordinating the Openreach and Netomnia rollout for Ashford town centre
 - iv. Continue working with the cross-departmental Ashford Digital Enablers Group to barrier-bust internally

33. Broadband is a key priority in the Corporate Plan and the work being undertaken so far by all parties is delivering much-needed improvements. Officers at ABC agree that this work should continue in the following year:
- i. Continue the cross-departmental officers group to ensure the council has clear and pro-active processes across departments that allow providers to engage and invest easily and with more confidence
 - ii. Continue to work with broadband providers to support improved connections and increase investment
 - iii. Continue the coordination of the Ashford urban area FTTP rollout and ensure other planned rollouts are continuing at pace
 - iv. Provide increased presence at broadband and digital related events or meetings, raising the profile of Ashford for investors.
 - v. Proactively engage with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Mobile UK to seek improved mobile connectivity in the borough
 - vi. Continue to monitor Policy EMP6 and provide support to colleagues in Planning on matters relating to broadband connections
 - vii. Support KCC in their involvement in the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and the delivery of this significant government investment in future years and to seek maximum coverage within the Ashford Borough through this investment

Risk Assessment

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

Options Considered

35. In considering the options for Ashford Borough Council to act, the principle objective has been to maximise the opportunities for residents and businesses within the Borough to access affordable ultrafast broadband and mobile telecommunications.

36. The chosen option has been to dedicate officer time, where possible, to attract investment, work with partner organisations and support improved broadband rollout across the Borough. The scope and prioritisation of this work stream is widening to include mobile coverage and future technologies as well.

Next Steps in the Process

37. If approved by Members, officers will continue to work on the key actions in section 33 to deliver Objective TG2 of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.
38. Officers will provide updates to the Portfolio Holder and key stakeholders on a regular basis and continue to provide a yearly update to Cabinet on progress of Digital Infrastructure improvements.

Conclusions

39. Ashford Borough Council is one of the few local authorities to have dedicated officer time to improving broadband within Kent. Successes such as the implementation of Policy EMP6 (Fibre to the Premises) in Ashford's Local Plan and the trials run by Openreach at Godinton Park (one of two pilot projects nationally investigating new technology for infrastructure delivery) have placed Ashford as a leading authority on broadband improvements. However, it is clear that more can be done and should be done to improve digital connectivity for residents and businesses in the Borough. The Borough is seeing significant investment coming forward, especially in the form of Openreach and Netomnia providing FTTP for existing premises which will boost Full Fibre and Gigabit-speed broadband significantly to at least 55,000 premises as part of their current rollout. Beyond this commercial investment, the Government's Phase 2 Gigabit Programme and allocated funds to connect Kent's commercially unviable premises presents a great opportunity for the Borough over the coming months and years.
40. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the issues that affect rural communities in the Borough that do not have decent digital connectivity. However rural premises are also in areas that will likely be left until last to be connected due to the commercial nature of FTTP rollouts. It will be important for the next 12 months to ensure the current planned commercial investment is delivered successfully, including through the continued support of the Ashford Digital Enablers Group. However the main focus should be to support the Kent & Medway Project Gigabit procurement and facilitate the ongoing private provider rollout, while also lobbying for greater government interventions in the final 10% of hard to reach properties within the Borough. Digital Infrastructure activity will be delivered as part of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.

Portfolio Holder's Views

41. "One of the objectives in our Corporate Plan 2022-2024 is to enable the improvement of digital infrastructure to support the growing needs of

business, voluntary sector and residents. We are looking forward to seeing fast, reliable digital connectivity available across the whole borough so no one is disadvantaged in accessing online services or doing business.”

Cllr Neil Bell, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

Contact: Tom Jenkins, Economic Development Manager

Email: tom.jenkins@ashford.gov.uk

Full Fibre and Gigabit Coverage, UK

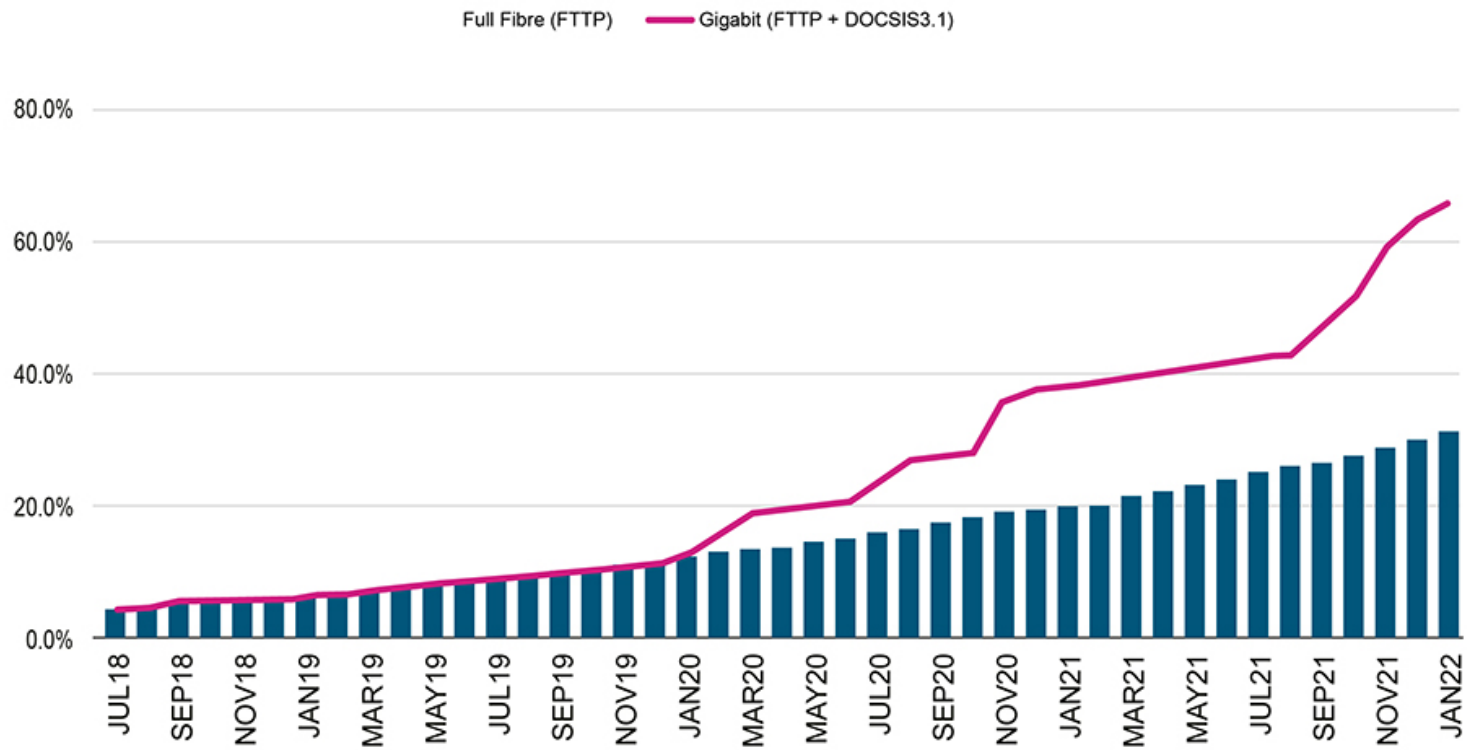


Figure 1: Project Gigabit Delivery Plan: winter update, BDUK

Appendix B: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2022 Interim)

Local Authority	All Premises	All Matched Premises	SFBB availability (% premises)	UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability (% premises)	UFBB availability (% premises)	Full Fibre availability (% premises)	Gigabit availability (% premises)	% of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	% of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	% of premises below the USO	% of premises with NGA	% of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
ASHFORD	59614	59439	92	56.8	54.1	19.7	52.2	0.3	1.1	2.5	7.7	0.6	98.4	34.7
CANTERBURY	73930	71802	91.9	26.2	26.2	26.2	26.2	0.2	0.5	1	5.2	0.2	96.7	14.7
DARTFORD	50298	50273	97.1	73.6	72.1	39.9	66.5	0.3	0.6	0.9	2.9	0	98.6	0
DOVER	56148	56069	94	49.6	49.6	23.6	49.6	0.3	0.7	1.4	5.9	0.2	98.6	32.7
FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE	54784	54630	94.2	58.3	58.2	26.6	58.2	0.4	0.9	2	5.5	0.2	98.1	12.6
GRAVESHAM	45729	45663	97.2	78	73	17	67.9	0.1	0.3	0.4	2.6	0.1	99	0
MAIDSTONE	79804	79588	93.3	73.7	69.6	29.5	66.2	0.4	1	1.7	6.4	0.4	97.9	29
MEDWAY	123252	123115	97.4	84.8	82.1	20.7	78.5	0	0.4	0.9	2.5	0.1	98.7	2.8
SEVENOAKS	53557	53499	94.4	61	60.9	36.8	60.8	0.2	0.4	0.9	5.5	0.2	99.5	0
SWALE	68191	67847	94.1	61.8	57.8	31.5	54.6	0.2	0.6	1.4	5.4	0.2	98.6	29.5
THANET	73696	73487	97.5	62.9	62.9	62.8	62.8	0	0.6	1	2.2	0	99.3	24.5
TONBRIDGE AND MALLING	57630	57591	95.2	72.6	70.7	34.3	68.6	0.1	0.5	1.4	4.8	0.2	98.4	8.3
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	53311	53194	93.9	67.8	65.2	43.3	61.9	0.1	0.8	1.8	5.9	0.6	98.5	0.1

Appendix B: Current Coverage and Situation (Connected Nations Report 2022 Interim) (Cont'd)

Local Authority	All Premises	All Matched Premises	Number of premises with SFBB availability	Number of premises with UFBB (100Mbit/s) availability	Number of premises with UFBB availability	Number of premises with Full Fibre availability	Number of premises with Gigabit availability	Number of premises unable to receive 2Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 5Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 10Mbit/s	Number of premises unable to receive 30Mbit/s	Number of premises below the USO	Number of premises with NGA	Number of premises able to receive decent broadband from FWA
ASHFORD	59614	59439	54857	33890	32265	11756	31092	180	680	1500	4582	328	58656	20674
CANTERBURY	73930	71802	67930	19395	19394	19395	19395	142	379	709	3872	127	71517	10850
DARTFORD	50298	50273	48832	37002	36241	20085	33451	133	313	472	1441	18	49613	0
DOVER	56148	56069	52783	27857	27857	13226	27855	195	404	778	3286	94	55348	18352
FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE	54784	54630	51609	31955	31894	14597	31867	218	498	1100	3021	120	53759	6876
GRAVESHAM	45729	45663	44459	35679	33392	7760	31065	26	126	180	1204	53	45262	0
MAIDSTONE	79804	79588	74486	58785	55572	23576	52821	327	831	1374	5102	359	78165	23126
MEDWAY	123252	123115	120036	104500	101136	25527	96810	39	510	1050	3079	107	121645	3491
SEVENOAKS	53557	53499	50555	32691	32607	19725	32550	93	217	499	2944	86	53266	0
SWALE	68191	67847	64175	42129	39428	21500	37227	125	438	923	3672	103	67247	20093
THANET	73696	73487	71864	46364	46364	46269	46312	13	456	707	1623	2	73212	18087
TONBRIDGE AND MALLING	57630	57591	54849	41851	40765	19789	39520	70	289	832	2742	136	56685	4804
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	53311	53194	50043	36146	34768	23089	32986	52	452	954	3151	297	52512	79

Appendix C: Notes for Connected Nations Report 2022 Interim figures

ACRONYMS:

SFBB – Superfast Broadband

FWA – Fixed Wireless Access

UFBB – Ultrafast Broadband

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

USO – Universal Service Obligation

WISP – Wireless Internet Service Provider

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

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

Appendix D: Connected Nations 2021/2022 LSOA data associated to Wards (Table)

	SFBB availability (% premises) (=>30Mbps)		Gigabit availability (% premises) (=> 1000Mbps)	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
<i>Aylesford & East Stour</i>	98.6%	98.8%	3.3%	16.4%
<i>Beaver</i>	100.0%	100.0%	3.6%	92.3%
<i>Biddenden</i>	74.4%	79.0%	8.0%	15.0%
<i>Bircholt</i>	65.9%	73.6%	0.4%	7.5%
<i>Bockhanger</i>	98.8%	98.8%	5.0%	83.4%
<i>Bybrook</i>	99.9%	99.9%	0.0%	92.1%
<i>Charing</i>	75.2%	81.5%	4.7%	12.8%
<i>Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm</i>	90.4%	100.0%	0.0%	85.0%
<i>Downs North</i>	63.6%	81.1%	4.5%	36.1%
<i>Downs West</i>	75.4%	75.3%	0.0%	2.0%
<i>Furley</i>	97.8%	98.3%	8.8%	74.2%
<i>Goat Lees</i>	99.7%	94.8%	49.2%	76.5%
<i>Godinton</i>	98.1%	99.9%	14.6%	62.2%
<i>Highfield</i>	96.9%	97.3%	0.0%	85.6%
<i>Isle of Oxney</i>	66.2%	82.8%	0.0%	20.1%
<i>Kennington</i>	99.3%	99.5%	0.0%	79.6%
<i>Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield</i>	81.9%	81.7%	7.4%	45.1%
<i>Mersham, Sevington S. with Finberry</i>	83.2%	89.4%	48.8%	54.1%
<i>Norman</i>	93.0%	92.4%	0.0%	67.7%
<i>Park Farm North</i>	99.7%	99.9%	0.0%	96.3%
<i>Park Farm South</i>	97.5%	100.0%	4.4%	74.4%
<i>Repton</i>	99.9%	100.0%	52.6%	86.7%
<i>Rolvenden & Tenterden West</i>	61.7%	79.7%	15.1%	41.2%
<i>Roman</i>	95.7%	96.0%	0.0%	56.4%
<i>Saxon Shore</i>	70.4%	76.4%	1.6%	15.6%
<i>Singleton East</i>	97.0%	97.0%	5.8%	77.3%
<i>Singleton West</i>	96.7%	97.9%	52.7%	83.2%
<i>Stanhope</i>	99.8%	100.0%	0.0%	84.4%
<i>Tenterden North</i>	98.6%	99.4%	0.0%	15.8%
<i>Tenterden South</i>	94.5%	95.8%	9.0%	41.3%
<i>Tenterden St Michaels</i>	95.4%	95.6%	0.0%	50.9%
<i>Upper Weald</i>	72.9%	73.6%	1.1%	2.4%
<i>Victoria</i>	97.5%	97.7%	4.6%	68.9%
<i>Washford</i>	99.9%	99.9%	14.5%	88.5%
<i>Weald Central</i>	74.9%	76.2%	4.0%	29.8%
<i>Weald North</i>	75.9%	80.8%	9.1%	14.3%
<i>Weald South</i>	86.9%	88.0%	1.3%	2.3%
<i>Willesborough</i>	98.8%	98.8%	3.6%	80.8%
<i>Wye with Hinxhill</i>	81.7%	85.2%	0.1%	3.2%
Overall average	89.7%	92.0%	7.8%	52.2%

Appendix E: Maps indicating broadband provision across the borough, 2021

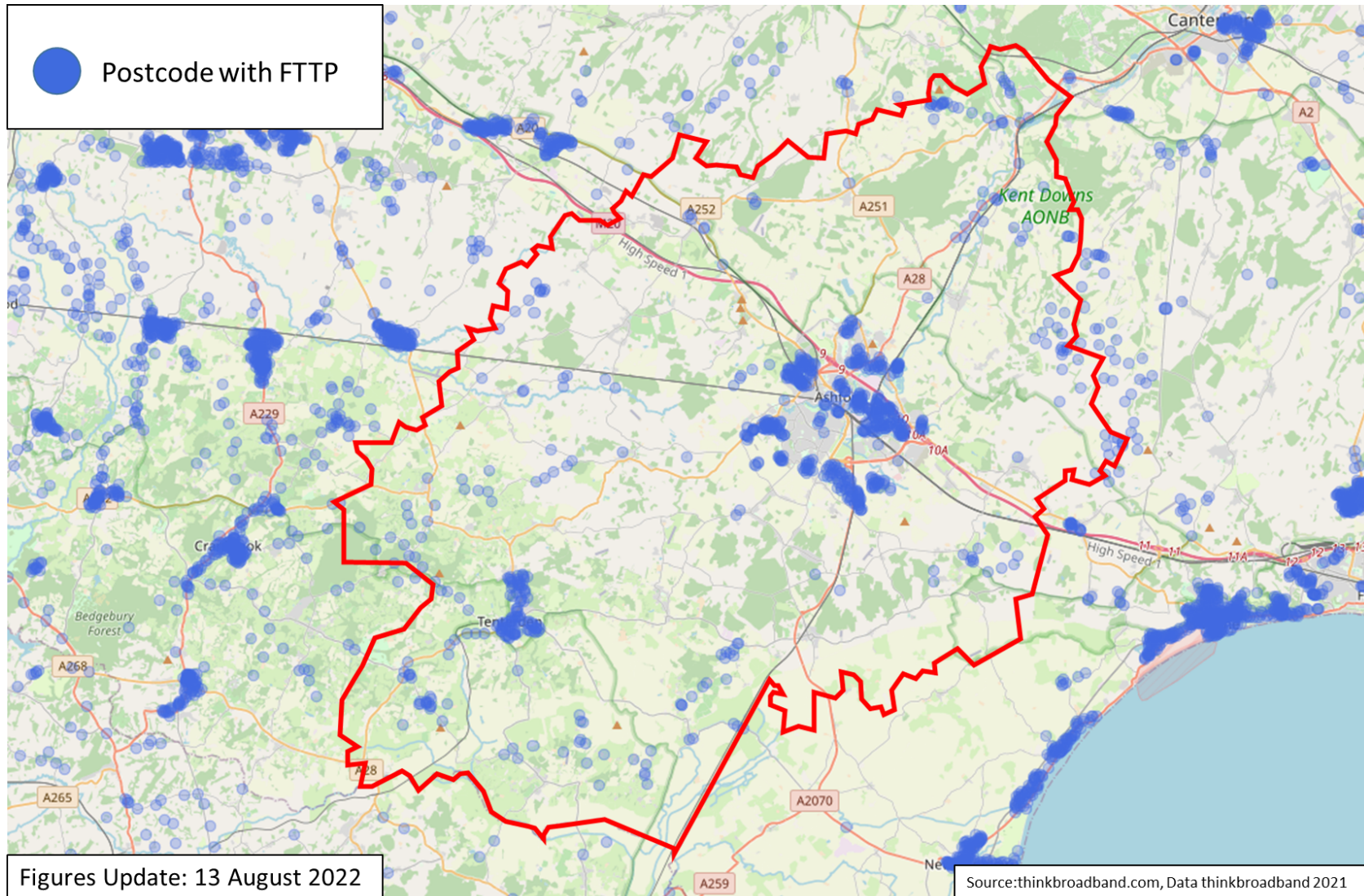


Figure 2: Ashford Borough postcodes with FTTP, thinkbroadband.com – 13 August 2022

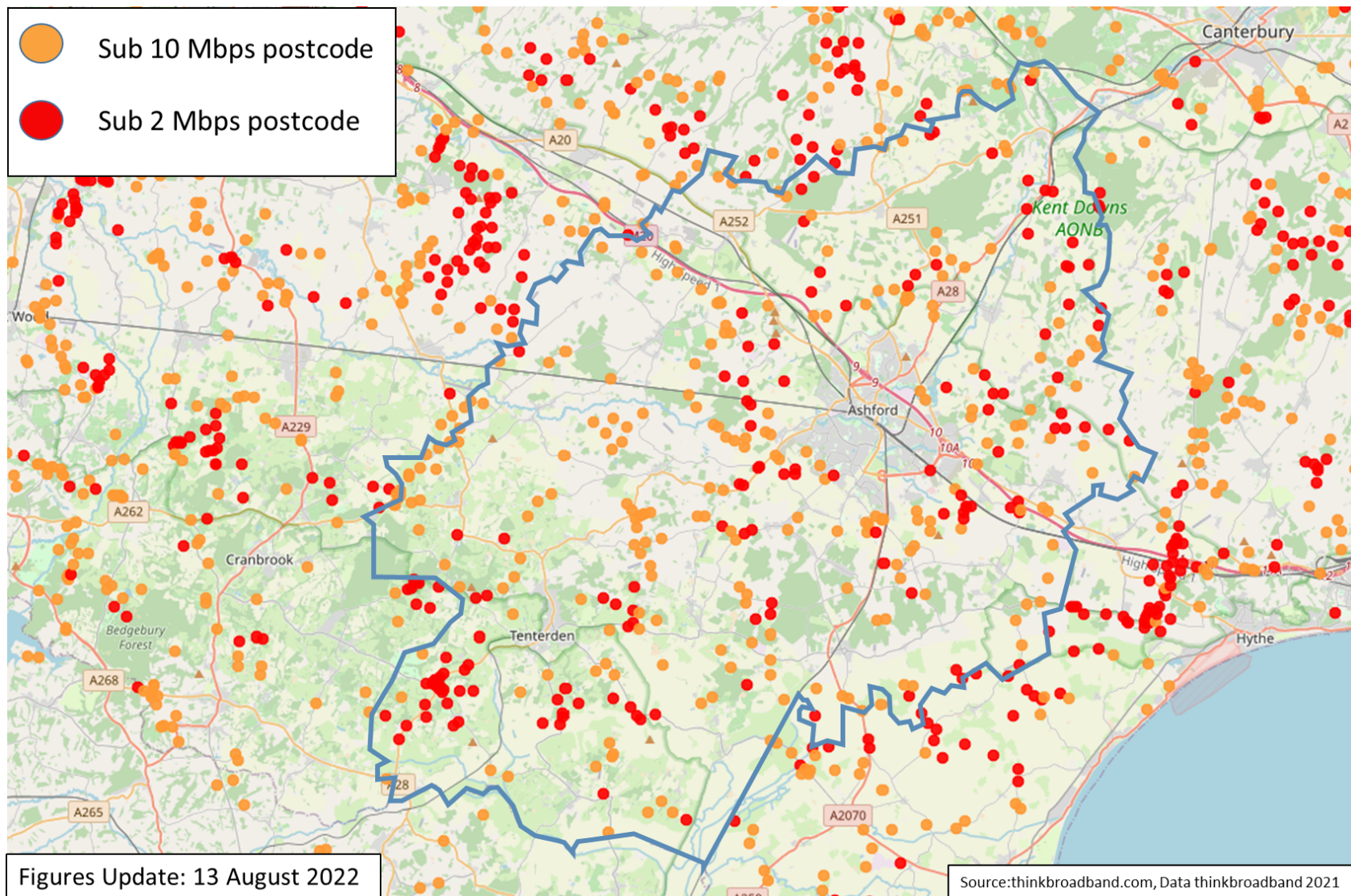


Figure 3: Ashford Borough postcodes with low broadband speeds, thinkbroadband.com – 13 August 2022

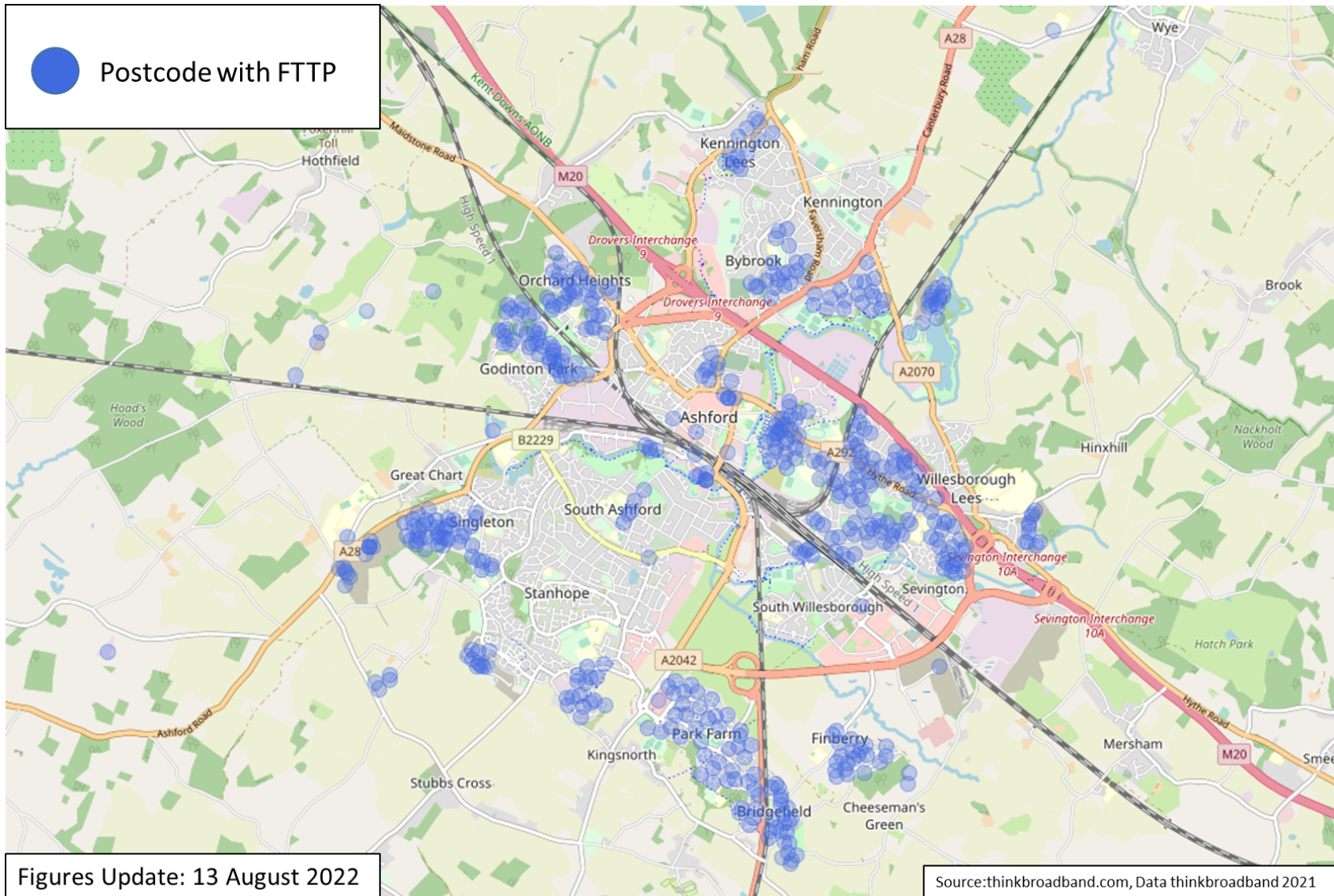


Figure 4: Ashford Urban Area postcodes with FTTP, thinkbroadband.com – 13 August 2022

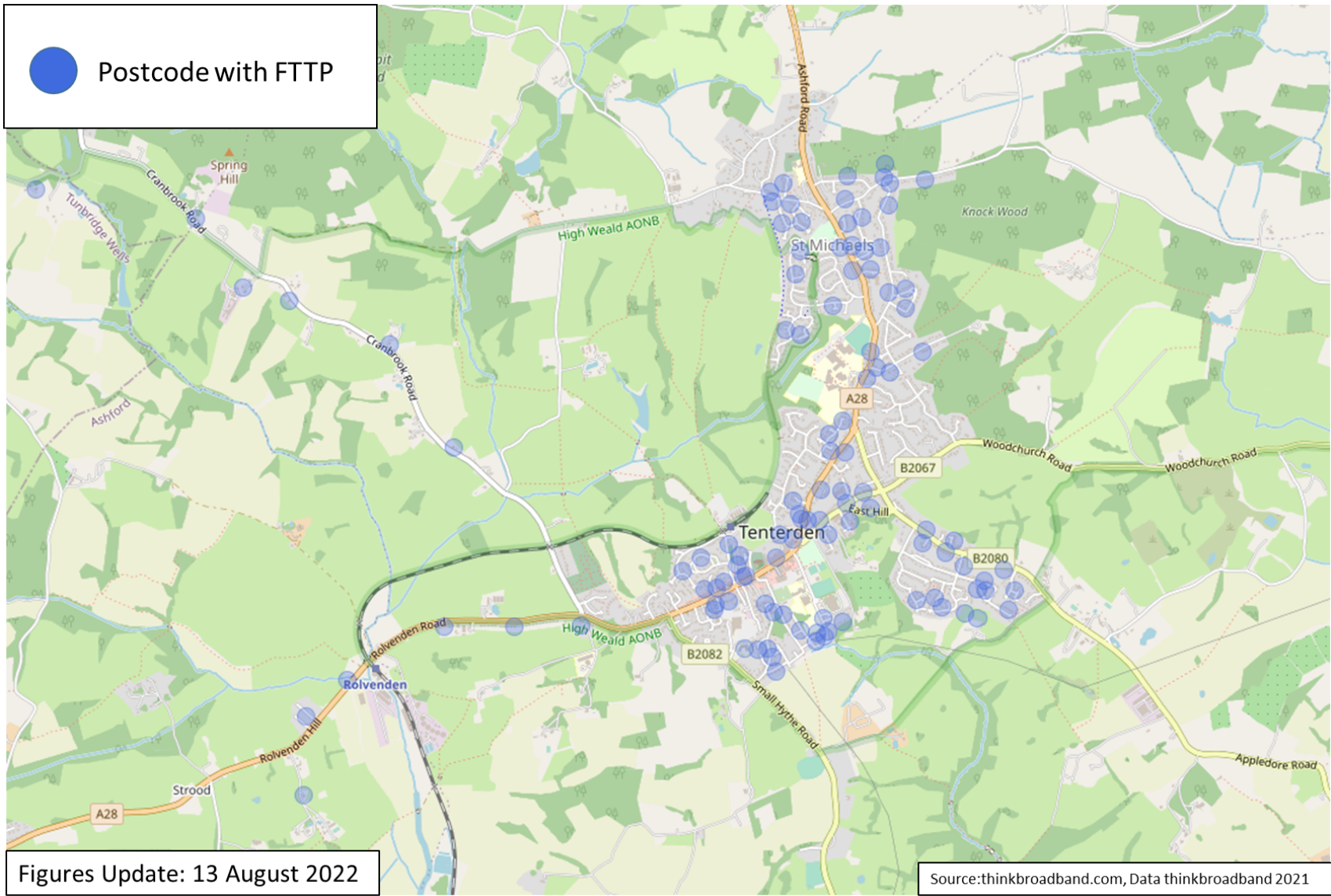


Figure 5: Tenterden postcodes with FTTP, thinkbroadband.com – 13 August 2022

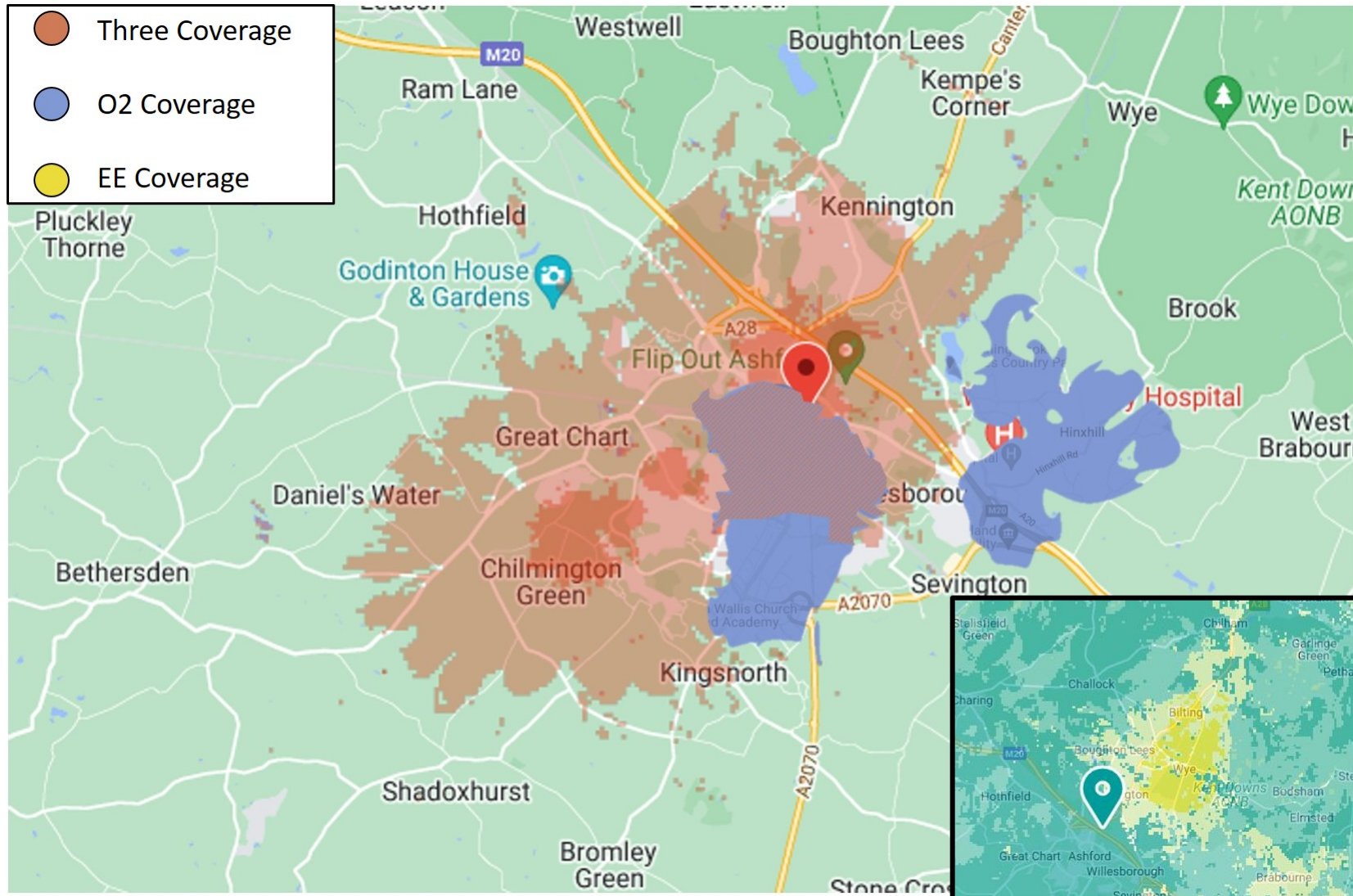


Figure 6: Ashford Borough 5G coverage map, Three, O2 & EE websites as of 25 August 2022

Appendix F: broadband coverage below the USO across Kent

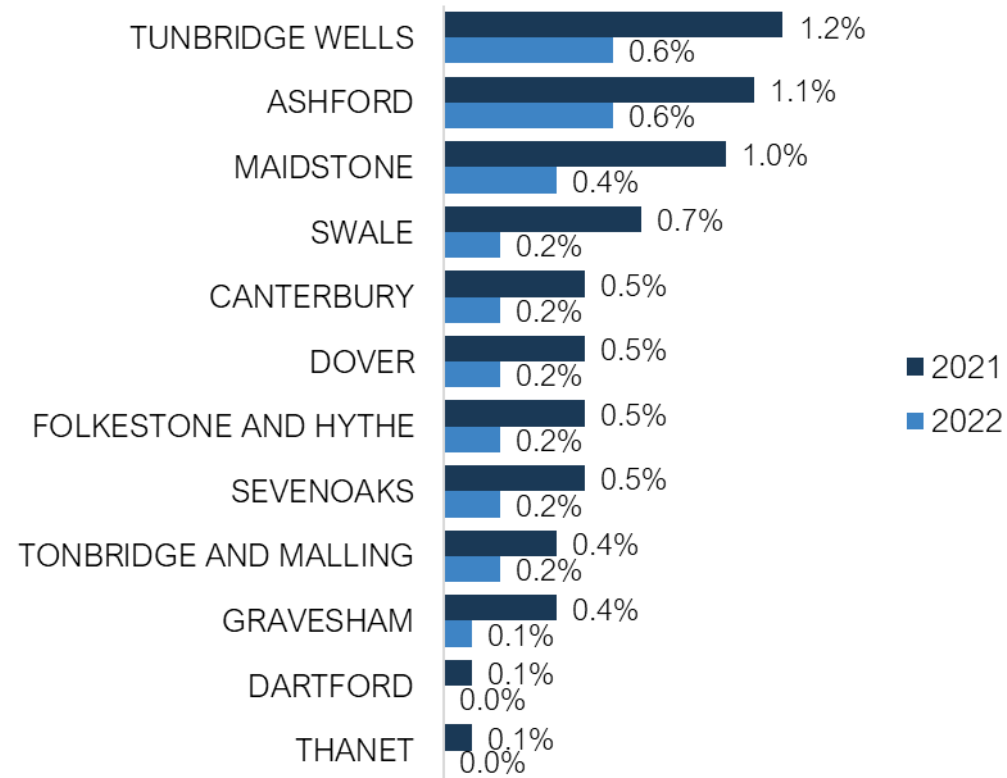


Figure 7: Proportion of households below the USO in each local authority area in Kent in January 2021 and 2022, KCC Research

Appendix G: Project Gigabit Kent Public Review outcome map

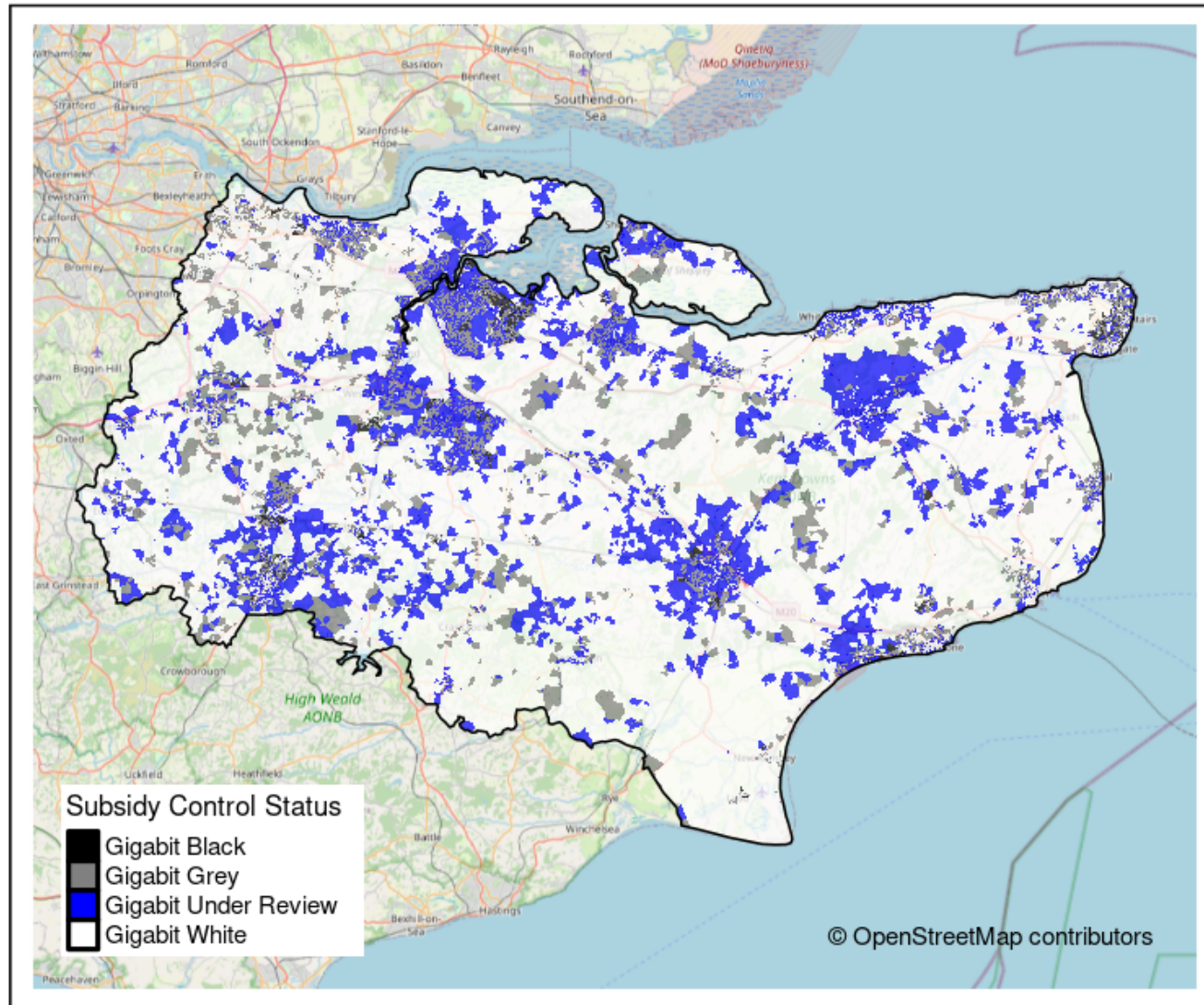


Figure 8: Project Gigabit Kent Public Review outcome postcodes map, gov.uk, Kent Public Review closure notice – 26 July 2022

Appendix H: Openreach exchanges FTTP upgrade map

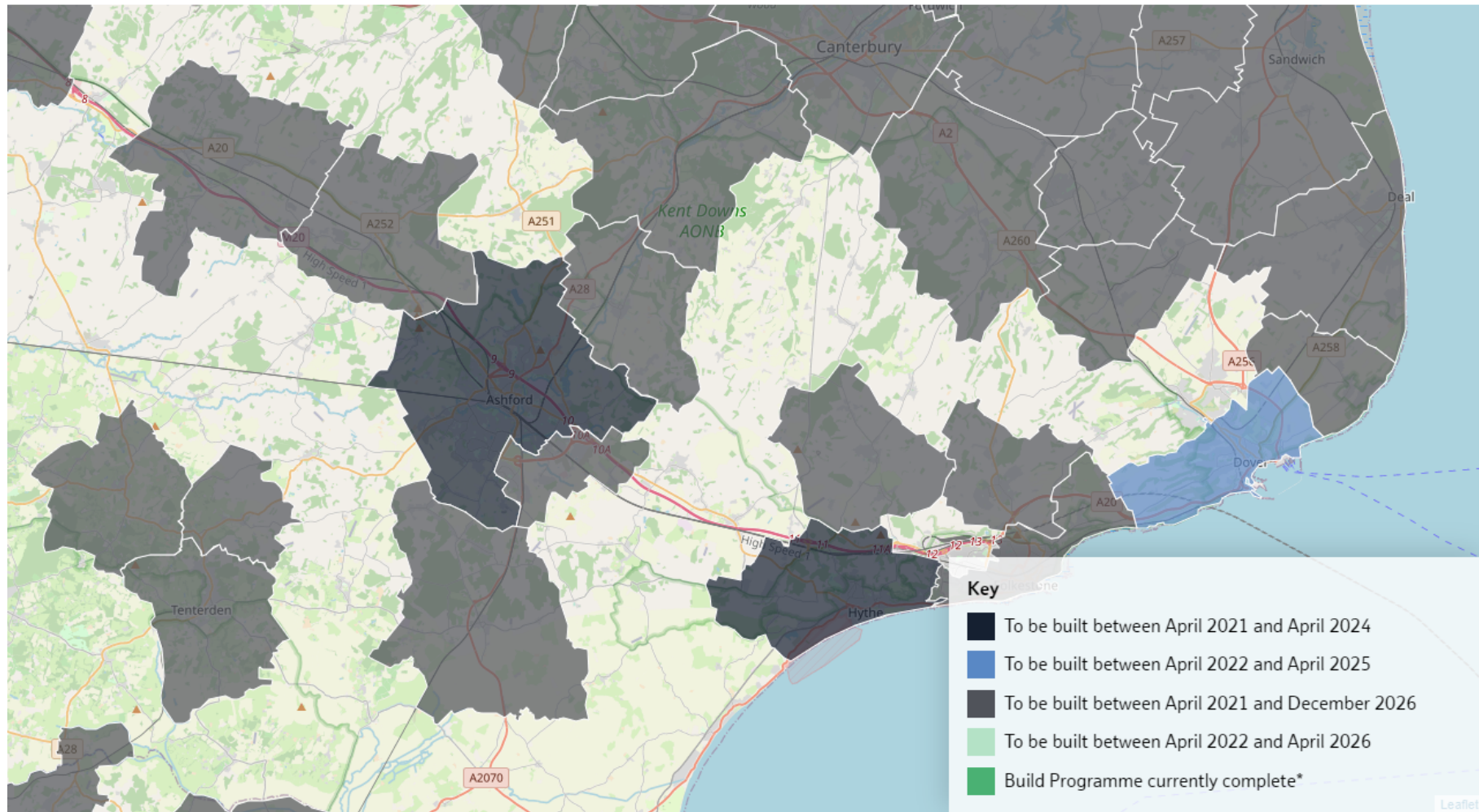


Figure 9: Openreach When and Where rollout plans, Openreach – 26 August 2022



Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 29 September 2022

Report Title: Graduate Planner Programme

Report Author: Simon Cole, Assistant Director of Planning & Development

Job Title:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Neil Bell

Portfolio Holder for: Planning & Development

Summary:

In recent years, the Planning & Development service has run a graduate planner programme, which recruits graduates to work within the service on a 2 – 3 year fixed term contract.

During their contract, the graduate planners experience working within the Planning Applications, Strategic Sites and Spatial Planning teams, whilst studying towards their Chartered Town Planners Masters.

This report sets out the details of the graduate planner programme and some of its recent successes.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None

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

- I. Note the contents of the report and success of the graduate planner programme.**

Policy Overview: None.

Financial Implications: None. The graduate planner positions are funded through the Planning & Development service budget. Any Masters apprenticeship training for planning graduates is funded through the Apprenticeship Levy.

Legal Implications: Not applicable.

Equalities Impact Assessment: Not required as no policy changes proposed.

Data Protection Impact Assessment: None.

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite) Not applicable.

Statement):

Sustainability Implications: Not applicable.

Other Material Implications: None

Exempt from Publication: **NO**

Background Papers: **None**

Contact: Simon Cole, Assistant Director Planning & Development
simon.cole@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330642

Agenda Item No.

Report Title: Graduate Planner Programme

Introduction and Background

1. This report is to inform the Cabinet about the Graduate Planner programme that has been successfully running for a number of years within the Council's Planning & Development service.
2. In recent years, the Planning service has recruited a number of planning graduates, which are employed to work within the service on a 2 – 3 year fixed term contract.
3. As part of their contract, the graduate planners have experience working in the Strategic Sites, Spatial Planning (planning policy work), and the Planning Application (Development Management) teams.
4. Typically each graduate would normally spend around 8 - 12 months in each of the areas, to get an understanding of the type of work within each team and build up the relevant skills. During these timeframes, the graduates gain the relevant experience to assist in producing useful outputs for the teams and department as a whole.
5. Work within each of the teams includes:
 - Handling their own case load of planning applications
 - Validating planning applications
 - Working on strategic planning matters, such as larger projects, like the South of Ashford Garden Community, and
 - Working on preparing planning policy documents and guidance.

Benefits of graduates

Grow your own planner approach

6. The graduate scheme has enabled the Council to work towards a 'grow our own planners' approach, by identifying and recruiting staff at the start of their careers and supporting their professional development within a supportive and professionally interesting environment.
7. Officers' experience over recent graduate recruitment has strongly indicated that this has proven to be a successful way of identifying talented individuals, at the start of their careers, to contribute significantly to the Planning Service in both the short term and the long term. Recruitment exercises have been successful with good quality fields of candidates to choose from and, in the main, the appointed graduates have worked well and contributed to the output of the service whilst expanding their own professional experience.

Resourcing

8. Recruitment in the planning industry has been particularly challenging in recent times. Coupled with a significant turnover of staff in the Planning service in last couple of years, this has led to a greater reliance on external consultants to support the provision of day to day services.
9. The graduate planner programme can help to reduce this reliance on external consultants, by providing resource to assist with the work of the Planning service.
10. The fluid and flexible nature of the graduate programme, also means that graduates can easily transition between the teams to help address the resource pressures. This ensures a continuing, good quality range of experiences and opportunities whilst working within the planning service at the Council.

Masters Apprenticeship

11. Where required, the Council also sponsors the graduates through a part-time Masters Apprenticeship in Town and Country Planning. This apprenticeship is accredited with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and helps the graduates on the pathway towards becoming a Chartered Planner.
12. To work towards this apprenticeship, the graduates have day release to study one day a week, during the 2 year Masters course, at London South Bank University.
13. Giving the graduates the opportunity to study for a Masters, provides them with the technical knowledge and understanding of the planning system, whilst also giving them the real-life experience of applying it to the work that the Council does as Local Planning Authority.

Previous graduates

14. A number of previous planning graduates have secured permanent posts in the Planning & Development service, following their graduate programmes and have offered excellent service during their time here. This includes several Planning Officers within the Strategic Sites teams, and a Deputy Team Leader in the Spatial Planning Team.
15. The success and career growth of these former graduate planners provides clear evidence that engaging bright and committed graduate officers at the start of their planning careers, can provide the Council with a source of highly capable officers, who might otherwise be extremely difficult to find in a crowded and limited market.

Current and future graduates

16. Following a successful recent recruitment process, two new graduate planners were recruited in the graduate programme in summer 2022. The new graduates have started their programme within the Planning Applications

team, working on validating planning applications, before progressing to manage their own caseload of planning applications.

17. It is expected that the graduate planner programme will become an annual recruitment exercise, as either existing graduate contracts end or graduates have either been promoted internally or moved on to employment elsewhere.
18. Opportunities to expand and enhance the graduate experience are also being considered including partnering with a local private planning consultancy to enable the potential to give public and private sector graduate planners the chance to experience the 'other side' of the industry so that the particular challenges of each can be better appreciated.

Next Steps in Process

19. Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the recent successes of the graduate planner programme.

Conclusion

20. A graduate planner programme has been successfully running within the Council's Planning & Development service for a number of years.
21. The graduate programme has given the Council the ability to work towards a 'grow our own planners' approach, by recruiting individuals into the Council at the start of their careers in planning. It also provides the graduates with 'on the job' training and experience working within the different teams in the Council's Planning service.
22. Since the inception of the graduate planner programme, a number of previous graduates have then gone on to secure permanent posts within the Planning & Development service. Experiences from this graduate programme has clearly shown the importance of the programme by providing the Council with highly capable officers from the start of their careers.

Portfolio Holder's Views

23. I fully support and endorse the graduate planner programme. The graduate programme offers the Council the perfect opportunity to establish a 'grow your own planner approach', to give the graduates the chance to experience the work that the Council does and provide a meaningful contribution to the work of the Planning service, within a supportive, interesting and varied work environment.

Contact and Email

24. Simon Cole, Assistant Director of Planning & Development

simon.cole@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330642

This page is intentionally left blank

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in Committee Room 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **6th September 2022**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Feacey, Forest – ABC.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Cllr. Forest attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Link.

Mr. S Campkin – KCC.

Mrs A Hicks, Mr A Rogers – KALC Representatives.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Cornish, T Heyes, Link – ABC.

Mrs C Bell, Mr D Robey, Mr C Simkins – KCC.

Also present:

Cllr. Wright – ABC.

In Attendance:

Safety and Wellbeing Manager – ABC, Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader, Member Services Manager – ABC

Strategic Resilience Manager – KCC Highways and Transportation, Highway Manager – Ashford – KCC

131 Declarations of Interest

Mr Bartlett	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he lived adjoining the Sevington Inland Border Facility site.	136
Feacey	Made Voluntary Announcements as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG and Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	

132 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 7th June 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

133 Highway Works Programme Update Report

The Highway Manager - Ashford – KCC introduced this item. She gave further updates in that: - resurfacing at School Road, Charing had been postponed until 2023 due to adjacent roadworks and that drainage works at Coopers Lane, Mersham, Spelders Hill, Brook and Boldshaves Lane, Ashford had all now been completed.

A Member asked for an explanation on what was meant by “Road N6 tie-in with Ordinance Way’ at Repton Park, as detailed on page 24 of the report. It was agreed that the Highway Manager would find out and report back to the Member concerned outside the meeting.

The Chairman noted references to street lighting works at ‘Ashford Road’ on page 18 of the report and asked if he could be provided with some clarity on the location as there were a number of this road name in the Borough. The Highway Manager said she would clarify and report back to the Chairman.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

134 Parking and Waiting Restrictions Update Summary

The Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader introduced this item, which update on schemes currently being progressed by the team at ABC, and drew Members’ attention to the key points within the report. As an update she advised that both Park Mall and Victoria Road car parks were now open and the refresh and repaint of signs and lines was scheduled for Friday 9th September.

A Member asked about progress on the new parking bays outside the Sorting Office in Tannery Lane. The Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that there were no delays and activity was ongoing. Drawings had been produced and they were now waiting to instruct a Road Safety Auditor. Once signed off the consultation process would commence. KCC had been engaged throughout and there were no causes for concern. Recruitment for the vacant Technical and Transport Officer post had recommenced. It would be advertised internally first, and if necessary through an external process.

In response to a question the Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader said that she would provide an update on the re-opening dates for Edinburgh Road Car

Park and the upper levels of Park Mall when known. Meetings were planned with Corporate Property and ensuring ongoing safety was the primary concern.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

135 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

136 Operation Brock/Operation Brock Zero

The Strategic Resilience Manager – KCC introduced his confidential report which gave an update on Operation Brock and recent activity over the summer months, including a response from the Secretary of State for Transport. He explained the detail which was confidential and agreed to circulate a version that could be shared with the public as he knew this was an area of interest for constituents.

In response to a question the Strategic Resilience Manager advised that he was meeting with National Highways later that week and he would raise the issue of when the M20 (Junctions 8-9) would be fully re-open to three lanes and 70mph, and report back with an answer. The Chairman asked if the issue of 'spring cleaning' the M20 and A2070 for litter could also be raised and co-ordinated.

Resolved

That 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: <https://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

This page is intentionally left blank

Trading and Enterprise Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, on the **6th September 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Shorter (Chairman for this Meeting)

Cllrs. Forest, Pickering.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bell, Ovenden

In Attendance:

Cllr. Feacey

Also Present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Customer, Technology and Finance (in her Capacity as Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Interim Service Lead for Finance, Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Executive Assistant to the Directors, Member Services Manager.

126 Election of Chairman

Resolved:

That in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Shorter be elected as Chairman for this Meeting.

127 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he was Chairman of the Ashford International Development Company Ltd.	130

128 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 28th June 2022 be approved and confirmed as a correct record, subject to noting the following Post Meeting Note under Minute No.66: -

“The Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd) apologised for the lateness of the Valuation Report but said that he had advised at the time of commissioning that this body of work would take at least a month to deliver.”

129 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

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

130 A Better Choice for Property Limited – Site Acquisition

Officers introduced the confidential report which set out the Property Company's proposal to acquire a site and develop it.

Responses were given to specific questions on the scheme details and financial information. There was also a focus on the risk elements of the proposal and the advice of Officers within the report and the Board indicated that they were supportive of the acquisition and the principle of the development.

A Member said he did have a concern about the Council's potential exposure levels and wanted to place that on record.

The Board considered it would be prudent for the Company to consider setting up a subsidiary development company, specifically for the development, and indicated that should the Company decide to take this forward this Board would look upon that favourably as it would ultimately need Member approval via Full Council.

Resolved:

- That (i) the outline Business Case for the purchase of the site of the proposed development detailed at Appendix A of the report be noted.**
- (ii) the drawdown of up to £8m be approved, to purchase the site and achieve a new planning application, and stabilisation of the Grade II listed building on site, before the redevelopment can start**

Recommended:

- That (i) Council agree the extension of the Company's loan facility by £55.7m, allowing the TEB to consider a further application for funding a scheme.**
- (ii) the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**
- (iii) subject to the decision of the Company Board, authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, to oversee the setting up a Subsidiary Development Company, specifically for this development if deemed necessary.**

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the 27th July 2022.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)
Cllr. Forest (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Ovenden, Webb (ex-officio).

Apologies:

Cllrs. Feacey, L Suddards, Heritage Development Officer.

Also Present:

Tourism and Heritage Manager, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Civic Officer, Member Services Manager.

1 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 27th April 2022

- 1.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 27th April 2022 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

2 Review/Evaluation of Ashford Celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

- 2.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager and Civic Officer had submitted a summary and evaluation report of the Platinum Jubilee weekend's events (2nd – 5th June 2022) and the Ashford Tree Trail. The Leader said what the Council had put on had been a very impressive series of events and he thought all should be quietly proud of that. He had already expressed his thanks to the key staff involved in the weekend, including Aspire, but wanted to reiterate those thanks on behalf of this Committee. The Mayor said it had been such a memorable weekend and the three main events had all been a joy to behold. She also thanked all those, from inside and outside the Council, who had worked so hard or contributed to making the weekend so successful.

Recommendations:

- That (i) **for business continuity, the Council should aim to establish a cross department working group for all future major events of this type, including potential anniversaries in 2024 and notable events of national importance.**

- (ii) a **Communications Officer be assigned to manage social media for the duration of each such event, to avoid missed PR opportunities.**
- (iii) **an additional communications budget be considered for media planning, paid advertisements, photographer, videographer and live streaming of events.**
- (iv) **the installation of annual festive bunting and festoon lighting in Civic Park, the Memorial Gardens and other appropriate locations such as the town centre, be considered.**
- (v) **the challenges of delivering such events if it wasn't for the generous sponsorship and in-kind support of local businesses, community groups and colleagues such as Aspire, be acknowledged.**

3 Evaluation of 'All Change for Ashford' (Railway Theatre Project)

- 3.1 An evaluation report of this project had been submitted. The Leader said he had been delighted to receive this report and the accompanying CD and he wanted to promote it more widely. This project appeared to have been a real success, particularly given the delays from conception to delivery given the pandemic. Enthusiasm had been maintained and that was to organisers' credit. In response to a question, the Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that she would see if more copies of the CD could be obtained for distribution.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

4 Celebrations of 180 Years of the Ashford Railway – 19th/20th November 2022

- 4.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager introduced the report which outlined planned events by AIMREC to recognise the anniversary of the South Eastern Railway arriving in Ashford in November 1842. A provisional programme of events across different venues in the town centre and Newtown had been drawn up to take place over the weekend of 19th/20th November 2022.
- 4.2 The report also drew attention to AIMREC's 'Ashford 180 Community Model and People's Library' project. This sought to create a scale model of the Ashford Railway Works, incorporating oral histories and a unique audio-visual record. They were seeking funding so Members and/or the Council may receive requests. The Leader reiterated that such requests should be directed towards the main Community Grants fund, rather than individual Ward Member grants.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

5 Virtual Heritage Plaque Scheme – Verena Holmes

- 5.1 The report advised that the plaque to Ms Holmes had been launched on 23rd June, to coincide with her birthday and International Women in Engineering Day. Work on another six plaques that had previously been agreed by this Committee was also underway.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

6 Civic Office Update (including Remembrance 2022)

- 6.1 The Civic Officer had submitted a report giving an update on activity in the Civic Office including the Mayor's Civic Service which had taken place on the 17th July; Flag Raising events both past and upcoming; Remembrance 2022 and the rearranged REME Freedom of the Borough Open Weekend and Parade, provisionally planned for February 2023 (dependant on operational commitments).
- 6.2 With specific reference to Remembrance, the Member Services Manager advised that there had been an initial meeting on this with the new Ashford Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL). It had been positive with the Legion endeavouring to take back a lot of the elements of responsibility for this event include appointing a dedicated Parade Marshal. The Council ideally wanted to revert to being a facilitator, with the RBL leading the preparations and getting the event they wanted. The Council would still be assisting with everything, including seeking a better audio solution to allow everybody to better hear the service. These would be complemented with a livestream. The Leader said that the audio was vitally important and the Committee supported a slightly increased budget to ensure this was done properly.
- 6.3 The Leader advised that Councillor Peter Feacey had been appointed as the Member Champion for the Armed Forces and Military Covenant, but he was also seeking senior member of the Armed Forces to assist him in this role. The Board agreed this way forward.
- 6.4 A Member recommended that some of smaller services and ceremonies attended by the Mayor could be live streamed or recorded to ensure maximum coverage. There were some wonderful events happening, but they sometimes got lost in the shuffle due to a lack of coverage/attendance.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the report be received and noted.**
- (ii) **the Council continue to fly the NHS flag on the 5th July annually as a thank you to the NHS, but an annual ceremony is no longer required as a matter of course.**

7 Events Calendar

- 7.1 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. The also now included dates that were part of Ashford's Events Framework. Members were encouraged to input with any events that they were aware of for addition to the calendar.
- 7.2 The Leader said it was important to include events happening in Tenterden as there was a lot happening there. The Tourism and Heritage Manager mentioned 'Tenter-dine', an emerging event between 14th and 23rd October, promoting local restaurants and food experiences, and the Council would be helping to promote that.

Resolved:

That the Events Calendar be received and noted.

8 Civic Awards Update – 23rd September 2022

- 8.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager and Leader gave a verbal update on this item. The Platinum Jubilee Civic Awards would take place on Friday 23rd September at Chart Hills Golf Club, Biddenden. This had last taken place in 2018 to mark end of the First World War and before that in 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The aim of the Awards was to recognise unsung community heroes in the Borough who went above and beyond, selflessly helping the lives of others. Nominations for the Awards had opened on the 16th June and were due to close on the 3rd August. The Awards had been widely publicised via Leader's briefings, media releases, boosted social media posts, traditional posters and flyers, a promoted page on the website, and emails and contacts made with key partners.
- 8.2 To date a number of quality nominations had been received with more expected before the deadline. The Civic Honours and Awards Panel would meet in early August to judge the awards and decide the winners. Six key business sponsors had also been secured and entertainment was being provided by Kent Music School. The awards themselves were being designed by a local glass artist, Annie Ross, who had produced the 2018 award.
- 8.3 A photo of the example award was displayed – a glass sculptured lime tree on an oak base, with a brushed platinum plaque and ABC and Queen's Jubilee

badges. It was agreed that the award looked better without the green colouring to the glass. Both shortlisted and winning candidates would have their details included in an official Civic Awards bound book and it was planned that a tree would be planted for every nominee in the new Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

9 New 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park'

- 9.1 The Leader gave a verbal update advising that the Cabinet Office had responded to the Council's request and given authority to use the name 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park' for the new park at Chilmington Green (working name Discovery Park). This was actually seen as a better name than the one originally suggested. Now that the Council had that permission, it had the option to use that name if it wanted to and the Full Council could be asked to agree that at a later date.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Board is currently scheduled for Wednesday 26th October 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

This page is intentionally left blank

Compliance and Enforcement Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held on Microsoft Teams on the **26th July 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman);

Cllrs. Feacey, Forest, Shorter, Spain.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bartlett, Buchanan.

Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Team Leader Planning Enforcement.

Also in attendance:

Cllrs. Burgess, Ledger, Ovenden.

Team Leader Environmental Enforcement, Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement, Senior Planning Lawyer, Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1. Notes of the Meeting of 26th April 2022

1.1 The Board agreed the notes as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Cllr. Shorter declared that the landowner for his small holding had received a Community Protection Warning. Cllr Shorter said that he had no pecuniary interest in the matter.

3. Environmental Crime Enforcement in Ashford

3.1 The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key points within the report. The Chairman said that the work of the team was greatly appreciated by Members and by the public.

3.2 The Chairman asked whether the Council was using social media to publicise prosecutions to the maximum effect to act as a deterrent. The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager confirmed that officers were working with the communications team to ensure that appropriate coverage was given on social media and that the public were alerted to actions taken by the Council on environmental crime enforcement.

- 3.2 A Member commented that frequent fly-tippers were using more sophisticated methods to avoid identification. The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement confirmed that tippers were often using different and previously unseen vehicles, but more cameras were now in use to assist local police in identifying offending vehicles.
- 3.3 A question was asked about liaison with Neighbourhood Watch who were very active on this issue. It was considered that it would be valuable to combine knowledge. The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement confirmed that officers were in touch with the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, but that further work could be done in this area, and he would follow up on this.
- 3.4 A Member asked about the mystery blue vehicle which had been involved in fly-tipping and whether there should be a public appeal to identify the vehicle. The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement said he would speak to the communications team about publicising this issue more widely.
- 3.5 A Member said he had sympathy with some individuals who declined to give evidence against fly-tippers because of fear of retribution. He also pointed out that, whilst publicity through social media was important, there were some people who were still not engaged with social media and that it was important to continue to place articles in the Ashford For You magazine, which was distributed to every household in the Borough. This may provide information to those people who did not access social media.
- 3.6 The Chairman concluded by once again thanking the team for their work, and reiterating his desire to see more enforcement publicity through social media and other avenues.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

4. Anti-Social Behaviour in Ashford - Update

- 4.1 The Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced this item and drew Members attention to the highlights within the report.
- 4.2 The Chairman thanked the team for their hard work and the results this quarter. Another Member added his congratulations to all involved, and also highlighted the funding agreed by Cabinet as proactive action to contribute towards the reduction of ASB in the Borough.
- 4.3 A Member asked about the term 'cuckooing' and the Safety and Wellbeing Manager explained that it was a term for a drugs related offence whereby a vulnerable person's property was taken over to commit a crime.
- 4.4 The Chairman said that he would like to see more results on social media, and asked officers to pass on his request to the communications team. The Safety and Community Manager said that results had been publicised in the

past but she would ask communications officers to refresh and re-share results.

- 4.5 Members discussed the problem of one particularly loud nuisance vehicle disrupting Council meetings, especially in summer when the windows were open. The Safety and Community Manager said that the Monitoring Centre reported any nuisance vehicles to the Police and they could be stopped and fined. She said that she would ask the Monitoring Centre and Police to try and identify this particular vehicle. A Member said that he had approached the local MP with a request that the Council should be included in the Government's pilot scheme to trial acoustic cameras, but unfortunately this request had not been successful. Another Member pointed out that it was still not possible to report noisy vehicles online, and this needed to be provided as an option for residents. The Safety and Community Manager said she would follow up on this point. A Member considered that it was extremely dangerous to have vehicles speeding around in the undercroft as there were young people in the area and they could get hurt.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

5. Planning Enforcement Update

- 5.1 The Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement introduced this item and highlighted the key points in the report.
- 5.2 The Chairman raised the question of sufficient resourcing within the team, and said that the team must have resilience to accommodate turnover. He urged officers, including the Assistant Director of Planning and Development, to discuss this with him if it was considered that further resources were required. The Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that there was commitment to fill the current vacancy and this was considered a priority. A consultant had now bedded into the team and was providing cover for more senior-level work.
- 5.3 The Chairman congratulated the team on their current achievements and said he would like to see more publicity on social media. The Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement said that publicity of this kind of enforcement action was not always a straight-forward matter as taking action against local residents was sometimes seen as controversial and could raise strong feelings within communities.
- 5.4 The Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement said that some of the graphs in the report were from the last quarter due to a delay on the new computer system. A Member questioned why there had been no planning comments on the system the previous Monday, and the Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement said she would take up the matter with the Planning Business Manager. The Chairman asked for himself and the Assistant Director of Planning and Development to be included in any correspondence on this subject.

- 5.5 A Member asked why there were so few items under anticipated prosecution this quarter. The Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that there were no details on anticipated enforcement action this quarter, but on anticipated prosecutions instead as the new system was set up differently. A Member asked why there were no updates on previous cases for Ward Members, and the Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement said it was difficult to update on open cases due to the number, but it was hoped that the new system would be able to provide this in due course. The Chairman asked the Deputy Team Leader Planning Enforcement to email him and the Ward Member concerned with this information. A Member pointed out that it was important not to lose the flow of data, and reminded Members that this Board monitored data for the whole Borough and not for individual wards. He wished to see missing sections restored to quarterly reports.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

6. Date of Next Meetings

- 6.1 25th October 2022 at 10am

Councillor Bell (Chairman)
Compliance and Enforcement Board

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of a Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the **2nd August 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Barrett (Chairman);
Cllr. Feacey (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Blanford, Campkin, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apologies:

Climate Change Manager, Strategy and Policy Development Manager, Waste & Recycle Education Officer.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Forest, Ovenden, Walder, Wright.

Director of Place, Space and Leisure, Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation, Housing Development & Regeneration Manager, Project Manager Carbon Neutrality, Member Services Officer.

1. Declaration of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Feacey made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.
- 1.2 Cllr. Walder made a Voluntary Announcement, as her husband worked for the GEAPP Project.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1 There were some amendments to be made to the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th May 2022:
 - The Director of Place, Space and Leisure (recorded as previous job title Head of Environment & Land Management) was not present at that meeting and had given her apologies.
 - The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager had been present at the meeting.
 - A Member asked that point 3.2 ('A Member asked whether there was current consideration of LPG/diesel combined vehicles') be amended to clarify that this was referring to waste collection vehicles, and not vehicles

in general.

- A Member asked for an update on Item 3 – ‘various events were planned for the coming year, with an education campaign on plastics in July’. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation advised that she would ask for an update and feedback to Members about this.

3. Decarbonisation Update

3.1 The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality introduced this item and gave a verbal update to the Committee that covered the following subjects and points:

- Carlton Road Business Park – A Contractor had been appointed. Scope of project altered so instead of exporting all energy generated by the panels back to the grid, each unit would now be powered individually. In addition, more panels would be used to power the Aspire site.
- Stour Centre solar array – Feasibility study had been completed with results showing that majority of the power generated would be taken up by the Stour Centre. Survey reports showed that even if there was surplus energy, the Civic Centre electrical system was far too outdated to be incorporated. Next stage was to have designs made and submit planning permission.
- Ellingham Industrial Estate - Quotes received for the feasibility studies and the Building Maintenance team were reviewing those. The re-roofing project would likely sit with Building Maintenance. A project group would assess how to tackle the project as a whole – specifically looking at options of decanting tenants or carrying out the work with them in situ, due to the identification of some asbestos. Pending the results of a heat decarbonisation survey, PIDs would be written to agree funding, after which a project timeline be decided. Likely to be a 2023/4 project.
- International House - Re-roofing project due to start spring next year. (More info in PSLCSF section)
- Acquisitions - Continuing work with GIS and the Land Mapping Commission to identify the factors e.g. grid connections, car parks, areas of biodiversity etc. and what ABC control over the land is.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) - An opportunity to gain grant funding to retrofit a significant proportion of housing stock and take them up to an EPC rating of C. Have identified around 750 eligible homes. Will be working with a company called Turner & Townsend alongside energy company EON. The project aims to retrofit social housing in the EPC band D category and lower, adopting a fabric first approach. If successful, the bid could provide 50% match funding and could bring forward work already planned within HRA (Housing Revenue Account) budgets, making a significant impact on our asset decarbonisation plan by

front-loading activity in years earlier than planned. A core group of officers have been assembled to work on this bid, with submission opening in October and decisions given in February 2023. If successful, work must be completed by March 2025 to complete the work.

- Green Heat Network Fund - application window open until 2025 and had met with KENSA who manufacture/supply ground source heat pumps/install heat networks to discuss a possible strategy. Suitable sites for GSHP networks would be identified. A standalone bid would probably not be viable this year as it required significant planning, unless it could be tied into the SHDF bid/Ellingham project.
- Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (PSLCSF) - This fund provided grants to source industry experts to devise heat decarbonisation plans. ABC had successfully secured £11,400 to develop detailed heat decarbonisation surveys for International House and the Julie Rose Stadium. Working with APSE to carry out the work, and will tie in with the re-roofing project currently underway at International House. Initial discussions between APSE and ABC project group scheduled for later this week. March 2023 was the deadline to complete the surveys. Possible that a ground source heat solution may be a pathway to decarbonise those sites, but interventions would be evidence led, so this can't be guaranteed at this time.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) –
PSDS1 Tenterden Leisure Centre (project change from funds left from Stour Centre project). Air Source Heat Pump that supplies heat to new Air Handling unit is partially commissioned. Air handling unit 90% assembled, awaiting commissioning and heat on this week or next.
PSDS3 Contract with Alliance Leisure (procurement partner) being signed. Awaiting full scheme design details from Leisure Energy for Civic Centre, and Tenterden Leisure Centre.
PSDS3b Another round of PSDS coming. Applications open in September and requirements are to have feasibility complete or be at a stage in the procurement process where ready to appoint a contractor. Looked at current projects and none fit this category –therefore highly unlikely ABC will be bidding for this round of funding.

3.2 The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- The Director of Place, Space and Leisure mentioned the possibility that street cleansing vehicles could draw power from the Carlton Road site, and she would pick this up with the Project Manager Carbon Neutrality outside of the meeting. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation added that planning restrictions may need to be reviewed in line with opening times of the site. The Chairman highlighted that it was logical to use excess power generated at these types of sites in this way.

- The leisure centres would be run exclusively on green power once the new systems were fitted.
- The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality advised that the verbal update would be summarised within the Minutes. The Chairman suggested meeting with key officers to disseminate the information that they received, including how to circulate to Parishes. A suggestion had been made that the Chairman deliver a blog, and this would be picked up by the Climate Change Manager when she returned from leave. A Member with experience of blogs offered her assistance with delivering the blog and added that the focus be broadened to ensure rural areas are encompassed.
- A Member asked what was the likelihood of the electrical system in the Civic Centre being updated. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation explained that the long term future of the Civic Centre was being considered, as the electrics were just one aspect of the costly improvements needed. The Chairman added that once all the final estimates were received, a thorough evaluation would be undertaken to reach a decision.
- The Chairman asked about the SHDF and the Housing Development & Regeneration Manager advised that an update would be given at the next meeting, although the result of the bid would not be known until February 2023.

4. Ground Source Heat Pumps - A Future Solution?

4.1 The Development & Regeneration Manager introduced this item and said that the Project Manager Carbon Neutrality had touched upon this topic during her Funding Update, for the bidding rounds for this type of heating system. He then gave a comprehensive presentation to the Committee, which covered the following topics/themes:

- Background – prioritisation of our activity
- How do Heat Pumps work
- Benefits of Heat Pumps
- High Level Benefits
- Potential applications - scalability
- Commercialisation Opportunities

4.2 The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- A Member spoke about a visit he and some colleagues had made to Gravesham Borough Council where they had observed Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP's). He highlighted that the technology was established and proven effective, and he felt was an exciting opportunity for the Council. It also had the potential to deal not only with net zero objectives, but also cost of

living crisis.

- The Chairman asked about the cooling element of the Pumps. The Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the passive form to action was very simple and inexpensive, but thought was being given to how best to install the active version in the future.
- The presentation highlighted a proposal that ABC become an energy company and it was important to ascertain that in this scenario, the Council would distribute the heat but the cost of powering the pumps would be for the residents to choose and go out to market for their supply, which essentially could make the system greener over time.
- In response to a question asking whether the heat could be stored or continuously flow through the network, the Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the heat would continue to flow. The ultimate aspiration was to connect residential and industrial buildings into the network to enable it to feed any surplus from them through the system. There were methods to collect it using a heat battery, which would store the heat.
- Regarding losses over distance, it was explained that this was not an issue, because the pipes buried in the ground were collecting and retaining energy along the system. A borehole depth could be between 60 to 200 meters.
- Rural connectivity was discussed and the potential for properties that were currently not on the grid. In areas where new development was intended, there could be a planning requirement to install boreholes for GSHPs.
- A Member commented that the GSHP scheme was established and worked extremely well in Scandinavian countries, whilst Air Source Pumps were not as productive in terms of being expensive, noisy, unsightly, and planning approval could be contentious. She added that ABC Officers had made great progress with this.
- The Chairman asked about price comparisons between this scheme and a Gas Central heating system. The Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the costs were not dissimilar, but the upfront pumps costs were slightly greater, but then there was then a saving over time on maintenance and upkeep. A big advantage was that it could be retrofitted into properties, alongside the existing heating system and hot water system. A Member asked whether a Supplementary Planning Document could be a requirement that GSHP's installed on all new builds. The Director of Place, Space and Leisure explained that the Planning Service were looking at drafting an SPD for climate change and as part of that would look to the market to ensure the viability. It was highlighted that from 2025 all new builds would not include Gas fired boilers, so alternatives would have to be sourced. Some developers may favour Air Source Heat Pumps since the initial cost was lower.
- In response to a question asking how many houses each borehole would serve, the Development & Regeneration Manager confirmed that one would

serve three houses, so the proportionate cost was £7000. A cheaper solution could be a provider of the infrastructure who then sold that heat energy to residents, and they could then connect to the service for a one off fee. Multiple boreholes would be necessary for a larger housing development. The installers considered the geology and boreholes were constructed to last 100+ years. They needed adequate spacing and areas that were predominantly clay were considered favourable. There was minimal visual impact on the landscape, since they were similar to manholes on the ground.

5. Solar Go - design and purpose

- 5.1 The Vice-Chairman introduced this item concerning the Solar Go project, that had been compiled after reviewing the KCC project called Solar Together, and was a Councillor led initiative for an ABC led Solar PV Grant Scheme, devised by Cllrs Barrett and Feacey. They had identified that a saving of approx. £350 per year on an average house could be made. The proposal was that a grant of £2,000 per household be made available (up to 100 properties max) to enable them to use towards the cost of installing solar PV panels. He then opened the presentation up to the Committee for their views.
- 5.2 The Chairman voiced his support of the project and advised that out of 36,000 properties in the Borough, Solar PV uptake via the Solar Together scheme had been in in the region of 180 households. Therefore, there was still lots of work to do in this area and it was hoped that this pilot scheme would increase the uptake.
- 5.3 Members praised the idea and hoped the number of households the grant was available to could increase following this pilot scheme. The Vice-Chairman added that this was in effect a subsidy, since the scheme would generate energy that could be fed back into the grid. Approx. 500,000 acres of roof space in the UK were available for Solar PV. A Member spoke about the possibility of households joining together to install an inverter for the panels.
- 5.4 The Director of Place, Space and Leisure voiced some concern regarding the scheme being open to employees and Members, since this could be perceived that ABC were potentially looking to benefit themselves. She also suggested payment upon invoice rather than payment upon receipt, because this would avoid applicants having to find the entire cost and contractors inspecting the panels before any payments being made, and payment could also then be made directly to the contractor. Furthermore concerning the Council Tax band A-D criteria; she proposed using the EPC rating of properties instead, since the Fabric First concept was a priority. The Vice Chairman responded to those queries and explained that the scheme was open to all residents paying Council Tax and it was felt that it was unfair to exclude employees and Members, if they met the criteria. A Member agreed that there was no need to omit anyone, so long as they fit the criteria. Ultimately, the goal was to put as many panels on as many roofs as possible. He agreed that payment upon invoice was a good suggestion and the project

team would explore that. He explained that to avoid placing barriers in people's way, they would keep the Council Tax banding criteria.

- 5.5 The scheme would need to be promoted via more traditional methods, as well as social media, to ensure all residents were aware, and the period for advertising be sufficient before the scheme was opened to applications. A Member suggested setting up Parish Workshops, to ensure those not able to navigate the forms are able to submit their applications.
- 5.6 The Chairman observed that the Committee welcomed the pilot scheme and approved for the Project Team to take it forward. He agreed with the suggestion to issue payment upon invoice, to the contractor. He added that the scheme would hopefully be over-subscribed, and a discussion would then be needed as to next steps going forward.
- 5.7 The next step now was for the report to be submitted into the Cabinet process, as a recommendation from the Climate Change Advisory Committee firstly to CBM, and then to Cabinet.

6. Further Project Updates

- 6.1 Big Green Week was a national initiative running from 24th September to 2nd October following Central Government's expectation that District Councils would help to boost carbon reduction in the population by around 30-35%. ABC were arranging events throughout the Town Centre and had been liaising with County Square, Park Mall and various suppliers. Green companies would be invited to come and promote themselves and their products, as part of the Green Agenda and Members were encouraged to attend events throughout the week.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services:
Telephone: 01233 330491 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on:
www.ashford.gov.uk/committees

This page is intentionally left blank