



TRADING AND ENTERPRISE BOARD

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber - Ashford Borough Council on
Tuesday, 12th March, 2024 at 2.00 pm.

The Members of the Trading and Enterprise Board are:-

Councillor Betty (Chair)

Councillors Harman, Ovenden, Walder

Councillor Bell (Observer)

Agenda

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1. Apologies/Substitutes	
To receive Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) and the Terms of Reference of this Board.	
2. Declarations of Interest	3 - 4
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	5 - 8
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 28 th November 2023.	
4. Exclusion of the Public	
To consider passing the following resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting: That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item as it is likely that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the	

proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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| 5. | A Better Choice for Property Ltd - Project Update - Redevelopment of Swanton House | 9 - 120 |
| 6. | A Better Choice for Property Ltd - Portfolio Update | 121 - 124 |

4th March 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Government Guidance on DPI is available in DCLG's Guide for Councillors, at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, and a copy can be found in the Constitution alongside the Council's Good Practice Protocol for Councillors dealing with Planning Matters. See <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/2098/z-word5-democratic-services-constitution-2019-constitution-of-abc-may-2019-part-5.pdf>
- (c) Where a Member declares a committee position or office within, or membership of, an outside body that has expressed views or made representations, this will be taken as a statement that the Member was not involved in compiling or making them and has retained an open mind on the item(s) in question. If this is not the case, the situation must be explained.

If any Member has any doubt about any interest which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democracy as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

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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 **28th November 2023**.

Present:

Cllr. Betty (Chair)

Cllrs. Harman, Ovenden, Walder.

Apologies:

Corporate Director of Housing, Customer, Technology and Finance (in her Capacity as Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Communications and Marketing Manager.

Also Present:

Cllr. Feacey (in his capacity as Chair of Ashford International Development Company).

Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Economic Development, Head of Strategic Projects (in his capacity as Director of Ashford International Development Company), Service Lead Finance, Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Operations Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Principal Solicitor (Property and Projects), Member Services Manager.

Huw Evans, Matt Spry – Quinn Estates.

211 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 12th October 2023 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

212 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.

213 Ashford International Development Company (AIDC) – Progress Report

The Head of Strategic Projects and Matt Spry of Quinn Estates introduced the exempt report which provided an update on plans for the Ashford International Studios/Newtown Works site. Drone footage of the site was shown and progress made to date was outlined together with a number of recommendations for this Board to agree to be passed to the Cabinet/Council.

During the debate, Officers responded to a number of questions on: - enabling works; residential units; the college and studios proposals; the planning process and nutrient neutrality; design and build costs; and the wider issues around the Levelling Up Funding that had been secured for the site. It was noted that with regard to recommendation (iii) an increase of a further £122k bring the total to £944k had been proposed by AIDC.

Recommended:

- That
- (i) Councillor Betty, (as Chairman of the Trading and Enterprise Board), be appointed to represent the Council at Shareholder Meetings of the Ashford International Development Company.**
 - (ii) the above Member be delegated authority to approve amendments to the scheme design outlined in the report and any other minor amendments to the design or specifications to the project, subject to planning permission and/or listed building consent as applicable being sought and obtained in due course. More material or significant amendments should come back to this Board and/or the Cabinet.**
 - (iii) the release of an early advance of infrastructure funding for the redevelopment of the residential element of the scheme to the value of £0.944m, be noted.**
 - (iv) the proposed variation to the Development Loan Agreement for further funding of £210k for the design changes now required be noted and approved, and the initial project milestone dates for the residential phase be amended to March 2024 from April 2023.**
 - (v) it be agreed that working capital of £47,500 be provided to reduce immediate pressure on the Company.**

- (vi) **the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete all necessary legal documents to give effect to the above.**

214 A Better Choice for Property Ltd – Drawdown of Equity Funding

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the report which outlined the annual review of Council equity to be invested into A Better Choice for Property Ltd (based on 20% of net interest receivable by the Council from the Property Company).

Resolved:

That the drawdown of funding and subsequent share issue of 47,642 shares, with a value of £1 per share, be endorsed.

215 A Better Choice for Property Ltd – Portfolio Update

The Operations Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), introduced the report which provided an update on the property portfolio, encompassing rental income, void levels and arrears for the period of August to November 2023. He advised that a review of rental levels was due in January/February 2024. He advised that the rental market remained buoyant with all units currently full and arrears remained extremely low.

Officers advised that the Property Company would be giving a presentation to all Members prior to the 14th December Full Council Meeting, providing details of the operation, objectives and activities of the Company. Members said this was welcomed.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

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Agenda Item 5

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

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