

**Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the  
Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on Microsoft Teams on  
Friday 16 October 2020 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

**Board Members**

Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Chairman) – Leader, ABC  
Rt Hon Damian Green MP  
Cllr Paul Clokie – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Property, ABC  
Cllr Neil Shorter – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, ABC  
Mr Mike Whiting – Cabinet Member for Economic Development, KCC  
Mr Michael Payne – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, KCC  
Barbara Cooper – Corporate Director - Growth, Environment and Transport, KCC  
Paul Harwood - Highways England  
Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive, ABC  
Michael Claughton, Chairman, Ashford Access Group  
Graham Razey, CEO, East Kent College

**Non Board Members**

Cllr Peter Feacey, ABC  
Cllr Brendan Chilton, ABC  
Cllr Dara Farrell, ABC  
David Smith, KCC  
Rebecca Anderson, KCC  
Ben Lockwood, ABC  
Paul McKenner, ABC  
Jo Fox, ABC  
Lorna Ford, ABC  
Andrew Osborne, ABC  
Christina Fuller, ABC  
Jeremy Baker, ABC  
Dean Spurrell, ABC  
Charlotte Hammersley, ABC  
Len Mayatt, ABC  
Gilian Macinnes, ABC  
Simon Cole, ABC  
SallyAnne Logan, ABC  
Keith Fearon, ABC

**Also Present**

James Seymour and Nathan Burns – Natural England (for item 3)  
Haroon Chughtai and Kyle Cliff – Department for Transport (for item 2)

## Apologies

Tim Reid, Stephen Gasche, Matt Hogben, Rebecca Spore, Chris Moore

Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all those present to the Virtual meeting being held on Microsoft Teams. He reminded all present that the meeting was expressly confidential.</p>	
2.	<p><b>MOJO Site</b></p> <p>Haroona Chughtai (HG) and Kyle Cliff (KC) of the Department for Transport gave a presentation on the work being undertaken on the site.</p> <p>HG explained that she was responsible for the delivery of the site at Sevington and several other sites in Kent and was working in consultation with KCC and Kent Police. The objective was to have a site which would enable freight to be kept flowing when the transition period with the EU ended on 1 January 2021 and to this end the DfT was also working with HMRC and Defra.</p> <p>In terms of the remaining parcel of land, the Chairman advised that the ABC Council had considered a Petition which was seeking to protect that land from development and explained that this had been supported by the Council at its meeting on 15 October.</p> <p>KC displayed site plans and summarised how the site was intended to operate. In response to a question he explained that he was on site at least once a week and was in regular communication with local residents and was dealing with any issues of concern that they raised.</p> <p>Tracey Kerly (TK) asked about the role of the Waterbrook site. HC said that the Waterbrook site was operated by HMRC and that it was not intended that it would operate in tandem with the Sevington site.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked both Haroona and Kyle for attending the meeting.</p>	

3.	<p><b>Stodmarsh Nitrate Neutrality</b></p> <p>James Seymour (JS) from Natural England outlined the background to the current position in terms of the steps they were taking to achieve nitrate neutrality at the site in Stodmarsh. He explained that following a legal case in 2018, Natural England had now changed their advice and if a Local Plan or project might create a potential pollution issue, then they would have an objection. Evidence had been collected which supported their position but they had developed a toolkit which developers and local authorities could use to mitigate such potential problems.</p> <p>Damian Green (DG) said that he believed that the position being taken by Natural England could bring it into conflict with the Government’s housing objectives and furthermore it was difficult for local authorities to remedy the problem as the disposal of waste water was not one of their responsibilities. JS said that local authorities and developers could plan for remedial measures but these had to be in place prior to the first occupation of new dwellings.</p> <p>Barbara Cooper (BC) said that the current situation was frustrating and explained that it was an issue which was common to a number of local authorities in Kent and was especially problematic in terms of ‘live’ planning applications. Mike Whiting (MW) explained that he believed that a more strategic approach needed to be developed to help resolve this situation.</p> <p>TK said that ABC were happy to help in terms of finding a solution but considered that this was needed as a matter of urgency. JS thanked the Board for their views and agreed to raise this with his Directors and the DCLG.</p> <p>Simon Cole (SC) explained that a meeting of the Ashford Water Group had taken place which was comprised of all key stakeholders, although Southern Water had not been present. ABC intended to secure external specialists who could advise and bring forward potential solutions and he suggested that the Board may wish to hear from them at the next meeting.</p>	

4.	<p><b>Ashford College</b></p> <p>Graham Razey (GR), CEO of East Kent College Group gave a presentation on the college following its transfer to the East Kent College Group. He explained that the Group was comprised of 6 colleges, 4 Business Units and a Trust. The Group had in the region of 1400 staff and a turnover of £63m.</p> <p>In terms of the Ashford offer, he said that he believed that there was a huge potential for growth and said that a Local Board was in place to take forward the development of the college. In addition to the Phase 1A site (which they now referred to as Phase 2) the college were also looking at establishing a site on the former Newtown Works development, particularly in respect of creative arts. In response to a question he indicated that the College wished to take forward both Phase 2 and the Newtown Site at the same time and funding would be sought via the LEP. He said that there was a need for the College to be in a position to provide technical and vocational training to support local industry.</p> <p>The Chairman said that ABC were available to help the College if needed. Michael Cloughton advised that Ashford Access had members who would also be able to help and agreed to contact GR outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Graham Razey for the presentation.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Town Centre Reset</b></p> <p>Andrew Osborne (AO) gave a presentation on the Town Centre Reset and explained that the document had been discussed with both Officer and Members at ABC and the purpose of it was to provide a clear strategic direction for the town centre.</p> <p>The initial area of focus would be down Bank Street and County Square and Elwick Road and the document would be presented to the ABC Cabinet in November.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Eurostar</b></p> <p>AO gave an update on Eurostar services and explained that as passenger figures were 90% down they had taken the decision to not stop at Ashford or Ebbsfleet until 2022. Eurostar had however indicated that it was their intention to reinstate the services when demand returned and they had agreed to meet regularly with ABC and to share passenger</p>	

	numbers.	
7.	<p><b>Big 8 Project Updates</b></p> <p>The report enclosed with the agenda set out the latest position on progress in respect of the new Big 8 projects.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Watching Brief Projects</b></p> <p>The report enclosed with the agenda set out the latest position in respect of the Watching Brief projects.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>Friday 19 February 2021 at 10.00am Friday 16 April 2021 at 10.00am</p>	

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services  
Tel: 01233 330564 Email: [memberservices@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@ashford.gov.uk)  
Minutes are available on: <http://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>