Ashford Borough Council

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Ashford Borough Council held on Microsoft Teams on the **4th March 2021.**

Present:

Councillor C K Knowles (Deputy Mayor in the Chair);

Cllrs. Anckorn, Barrett, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Blanford, Buchanan, Campkin, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Farrell, Feacey, Forest, Harman, Hayward, B Heyes, T Heyes, Howard, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Michael, Mulholland, Ovenden, Pauley, Pickering, Rogers, Shorter, Spain, Sparks, C Suddards, L Suddards, Webb, Wedgbury, White, Wright.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Members observed a period of silence in respect of the late Ian Kirkland, former Director of Community Services at Ashford Borough Council, as well as all those who had passed away during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Member Services Manager (Operational) then read prayers which had been supplied by the Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend John Emmott.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Cornish, Link, Walder.

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Director of Law and Governance, Director of Finance and Economy, Head of Finance and IT, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Planning and Development, Accountancy Manager, Civic Engagement Officer, Member Services Manager (Operational).

253 Exempt or Confidential Items

The Deputy Mayor asked whether any items should be dealt with in private because of the likely disclosure of Exempt or Confidential information. There were none.

254 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Sevington Parish Council and Kennington Community Council.	260
	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he lived close to the land mentioned at Sevington.	265
Campkin	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council.	260

Chilton	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Stanhope Parish Council.	260
Feacey	Made a Voluntary Announcement as Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	260
Forest	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he provided services to the Ashford Volunteer Centre.	260
Harman	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council.	260
Hayward	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Stanhope Parish Council.	260
Iliffe	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Kennington Community Council.	260
Knowles	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Tenterden Town Council.	260
Ledger	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Shadoxhurst Parish Council.	260
Ovenden	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Wye Parish Council.	260
Rogers	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council.	260
Shorter	Declared an ‘Other Significant Interest’ as a grazier of part of the Park Farm Buffer Zone land and would not take part in the debate or any vote on this item.	265
Wedgbury	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council and a paid Trade Union representative.	260
Webb	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Director of the Ashford Volunteer Centre and President of the Ashford Sea Cadets.	260

255 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 10th December 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

256 Announcements

(a) The Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor advised that he was there today on behalf of the Mayor of Ashford, Councillor John Link, who was unable to be present as he was recovering from his recent hip operation. He had spoken to him earlier that day and was pleased to let everyone know that the operation was successful and Mr Mayor was now out of pain and getting back on his feet. He had even been trying to walk around his garden! The Mayor had wished to pass on his thanks to Members and Officers for all the good wishes and kind words sent to him and he looked forward to joining everyone again for the next Full Council Meeting in April.

During the Mayor's absence the Deputy Mayor advised that he had undertaken a few tasks on his behalf including attending the funeral of a past Mayoress, Beryl Harrington, and would be attending the Ashford Rotary Club meeting which would be taking place the following week.

(b) Leader of the Council

The Leader said that he firstly wanted to express the Council's condolences to all who had lost friends, family and loved ones during the tragic coronavirus pandemic. This dreadful disease had adversely impacted on so many lives and he knew that all would be extremely pleased to see the number of cases falling, not just in Ashford but also across the entire country. It was heartening to know that the new vaccines, which had been developed at pace, were now being rolled out in a programme which was a great credit to our Nation. Whilst they now had the road map out of lockdown, and could begin to see brighter times ahead, all still needed to be cautious.

As all would know, the local economy and retail market in particular, had been hard-hit by the pandemic. However, there had been two recent bits of good news locally with *Made In Ashford* and the rural town of Tenterden both receiving national recognition. *Made in Ashford* had won The Good Retail Awards' Retail District Award for 2021. The shop, in Park Mall, had been championed by the Council, and was recognised for its innovative ways of adapting during the pandemic. Despite difficult circumstances, the shop had a good year in 2020, boosting their social media following and updating their website to increase their ability to sell online which meant they could continue to trade through the lockdowns. One of the award judges described *Made in Ashford* as "a breath of bright, rainbow-coloured air", whilst others praised the innovations made, such as holding online markets and releasing free craft downloads, which had increased the profile of the shop and its crafters. *Made in Ashford* followed in illustrious footsteps as the winners of the 2020 award were Greenwich Market. In addition, Tenterden had been named the UK's third best High Street in a national survey by retail experts and analysts Harper, Dennis and

Hobbs. The research looked at a thousand shopping areas across the country, taking into account several factors. These included the availability of essential stores, the vacancy rate and how well the area's shops met customer needs. To come third in the final league table out of over 1000 locations was a remarkable achievement. The town ranked higher than any other in Kent. The report noted that shopping areas like Tenterden had "outperformed city centre destinations as consumers' shopping habits had become very localised as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic". Areas which had previously ranked highly, such as larger shopping centres or city centres, had taken a fall down the league table, replaced by smaller towns and shopping areas, likely as a result of the coronavirus restrictions. He wanted to pass on congratulations to all the traders in Tenterden, and their colleagues at Tenterden Town Council for their hard work in this achievement.

The Leader advised that the Ashford Port Health Service was due to go live from April and would hopefully become fully operational in July. This complex project was being replicated across the country where other Border Control Posts were being built and introduced in response to the UK leaving the EU. The Council had made great strides in recruiting to the Port Health Service, making more than 50 job offers and from the 8th March they would have 50 staff to induct, train and bring up to speed. A further 50 staff were planned to be recruited between now and July. In addition, a website and branding was being designed in house, IT infrastructure and software was being procured and all of the necessary policies and procedures were being put in place to ensure they were ready ahead of the launch. He was sure that Elected Member colleagues would join him in personally thanking all of the Officers, not only for all they had done during the pandemic, but for how they had risen to the many challenges involved in setting up this new Border Facility at Sevington. The facility covered 93 hectares and would be one of the biggest such facilities in the UK, with the Council set to play a vital role in making a success of the country's new trading arrangements with the EU. The Border Control Post would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It was estimated that around 124,000 checks a year would be carried out at Sevington and it had been built alongside the multi-million pound civil engineering project at Junction10A of the M20. Traffic management measures were in place to minimise any disruption this activity would have for local residents. Running the Border Control Post was a big undertaking and the Council had been successful in securing financial and practical support from the Government in setting it up. The creation of new inland border facilities after Brexit was of national importance and the site at Sevington was a key part of the national plan. Ashford was ready to play its part and would soon interview for and appoint the new Head for this facility. Accordingly, he had appointed his Deputy, Councillor Paul Bartlett to be the Portfolio Holder working with the new Head of Service, the Government and other agencies. The new service was an exciting challenge for the Council. While the scale of the task was testing, they were fully committed to implementing the changes that were necessary and meeting their responsibilities. He was heartened by the support being provided by Government Minsters and the relevant senior Civil Servants, not only from a financial perspective, but also in practical terms in designing and implementing this service in just a few months. He was sure Ashford would rise to the challenge before it and provide this nationally strategic service.

Finally, the Leader said he wanted to mention another success story. Even during this restrictive time of the pandemic the Council had pressed on and bought two apartment blocks. These were being built on the Panorama site and would provide affordable housing for key workers. Only that past Monday they had been successful in securing a

£1.29m grant from Homes England for the first completed block. They would of course be applying again once the second block was completed.

257 Licensing Committee – 19th January 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on the 19th January 2021 be approved and adopted.

258 Regulatory Committee – 19th January 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on the 19th January 2021 be approved and adopted.

259 Cabinet – 17th December 2020 and 25th February 2021

(a) Cabinet – 17th December 2020

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 17th December 2020 be received and noted.

(b) Cabinet – 25th February 2021

Resolved:

That subject to the expiry of the period by which decisions arising from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th February may be called in, i.e. 10th March 2021:-

(i) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th February 2021 be received and noted with the exception of Minute No. 236.

(ii) the recommendations in Minute No. 236 be deferred for consideration as part of the agenda item dealing with the Budget and Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22.

260 Council Tax 2021/22 Resolutions and General Fund Budget and Minute Number 236/2/21

The Leader of the Council proposed:-

“That the budget recommendations as set out in Minute No. 236 of the Cabinet and the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2021/22 be approved”

This was seconded.

The Leader also advised that in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.4A a recorded vote was required to be taken on the budget recommendations and any amendments moved and seconded during the debate.

The Deputy Mayor then invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report on that Committee's scrutiny of the Cabinet's initial budget proposals.

Councillor Ovenden said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Task Group had scrutinised the Council's draft 2021/22 budget over four meetings. These well attended sessions yielded much information on the financial and resource challenges facing the Authority and the Task Group focussed on a number of key risks relating to the achievability of next year's budget. The economic impact of Covid-19 on Local Authorities was yet to be fully determined as national restrictions continued. This had created some uncertainties for the Council's budget for the next financial year. Despite this there was a confidence that the Council's draft budget was as sound as it could be at this time and able to deliver the Council's Recovery Plan, whilst also ensuring that there were sufficient reserves to mitigate any economic risks to the budget. The sessions were well attended by both Officers and Members alike and he wanted to thank everyone who attended and partook in the process. The Task Group had made various recommendations which were all accepted by the Cabinet and brought forward so he was confident that the draft budget was achievable.

Councillor Michael said he wanted to ask what had happened to the strategy, to replace Council Tax with investment income? Longer serving Members might recall that this strategy, not a vision, was an argument used to justify the proposal to set up an investment company, with the comment that ultimately ABC Council Tax would reduce to zero through the huge earnings from investments. Things started well, with two years of zero increase, but then maximum increases had followed year on year. He asked if the Budget was really meaningful to the needs of the wider residents, who were struggling to make ends meet, and though the ABC take was a small part of the Council Tax, every little bit counted for them. Given present times, he asked if the Budget had focussed on maintaining core public services only, with non-core items such as property investment and grandiose projects being placed on hold so that available monies were used more judiciously? Over recent years he had experienced how difficult it had become to get telephones answered, and this was prior to Covid-19. He was concerned that with staffing levels already down to the bone, this budget would suck away at the marrow of existing staffing levels, and that Officers would become more distant from customers. He said that digital transformation must not replace human contact. He believed the budget contained no staff salary increases, so he asked what risks there were to the Council of good people leaving. Finally, Councillor Michael said, in his view, the investment strategy that was seen as the panacea to shrinking Government Funding and reducing Council Tax, had failed, because six years down the line this strategy continued to see Council Tax rising not shrinking. He said he had reservations on this Budget and its direction.

The Leader of the Council said he did not really recognise what Councillor Michael was saying on the whole. This Council did not pursue maximum Council Tax

increases and were the lowest Council taxing Authority in Kent and one of the lowest in country. Because of this fact, the Government allowed Ashford to have a £5 per year increase. As a Council, Ashford had been very prudent over the last 15 years and had always delivered a balanced budget. Along with the rest of the world, they were currently dealing with a global pandemic and this had been handled in an exemplary way. Fortunately, he had instructed Officers to create an Economic Resilience Reserve back in 2016, at that time chiefly in response to the outcome of the EU Referendum, which had over time increased to £2.9m and had served them so well during this pandemic. The Property Company was doing very well, but anyone in business would know that you rarely made vast profits in the early years as you built the business up and he was sure that in the fullness of time the Company would deliver significant returns for the people of this Borough. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, through its Task Group, had thoroughly scrutinised the draft budget. They had already heard from the Chairman at this meeting and he could assure everyone that they were certainly not slow at coming forward. They had made several recommendations again this year and these had been embraced by the Administration. Therefore, he thought it was a very sound budget, in tough times and he could not agree with what Councillor Michael had said.

Councillor Farrell said he wished to move an amendment to the draft budget. The pandemic and the response to it over the last year had changed everyone's lives. However he considered that young people, without the vote, were entitled to feel more disenfranchised than anybody else. Indeed research conducted by the British Science Association found that 9 in 10 young respondents thought that scientists (89%) and politicians (92%) were not talking directly to item when discussing Covid-19. This was something he thought all could sympathise with, and this would have been compounded by a sense of hopelessness and lack of influence over their lives. He thought the future of a generation was in the balance and whilst they recognised and welcomed some of the steps taken in the previous day's budget, this did not go far enough and the Labour Group thought that this Council should go further. 5% mortgages would not mean anything to young people who were out of work and whilst it was right to turn 'Generation Rent' in to 'Generation Buy', they must first stop 'Generation Universal Credit'. This Council's own Cabinet had received a report on the 25th February confirming that the Borough had a higher youth unemployment than both the county and national averages and urgent steps were needed to address this. As we moved to the alleged new phase of this pandemic, it would be important to quickly recognise the effects of prolonged lockdown and home schooling on the youngest generation. There were growing concerns about just how damaging the last year had been not only for education but also the social development and emotional wellbeing of young people. So further investment was needed to mitigate that harm, investing what they could, where they could through services that met the needs of young people. Much of the discussion over the next few months would rightly focus on how they closed the attainment gap that grew by the day and ensure that young people caught up academically, but the charity Young Minds had conducted a survey of over 2000 young people which found that 69% of respondents described their mental health as being 'poor'. This was in September before a further two lockdowns, after initially being told in March 2020 that this would be a three week lockdown to flatten the curve, protect the NHS and save lives. All were now familiar with statistics relating to infection rates, hospital admissions and testing, but the mental health toll of this pandemic was yet to receive such focus. Throughout the pandemic they had been looking at figures such as cases per 100,000, with drastic action being taken at 300/400 cases per 100,000. The current

national Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) rate per 100,000 was over 4600 and the Royal Society Of Psychiatrists had said that the situation threatened a crisis that could plague childrens' mental health for years to come. With the strategy to respond to Covid-19 constantly changing, was it not right that this Council's response to its impacts did as well? Whilst this budget amendment would not solve the issue, or even touch the sides of the problem, it would demonstrate to young people that they had listened, learnt from their experiences and done what they could to increase funding in this way. Many projects in the Borough rightly already received special project status such as work to rebuild the lives of Syrian Refugees, Dark Skies or even Queen Marie of Romania, but they believed this Council had a duty to invest in the lives of the next generation of the Borough and he looked forward to cross party support for investing in young people. Councillor Farrell therefore moved the following motion – "That the Borough Council use the Unearmarked Reserve of £679,000 (Cabinet Minute 146, 26th November 2020 - MTFP refers), to commission provision, in conjunction with schools, statutory service providers and the third sector, to work with young people in providing activities to facilitate discussions on mental health and wellbeing, preventing medical interventions where possible. Commissioned provision will seek to engage the Borough's young people in transferable soft skill development for employment and recruitment process proficiency. Programmes will seek to mitigate the economic scarring impacts of pandemic lockdowns and begin to address Ashford's youth unemployment crisis."

This was seconded by Councillor Anckorn.

Councillor Bell said he understood where Councillor Farrell was coming from with his amendment, but he would be loathed to support something as definite as that put forward. He said he would be minded to propose an alternative amendment later on in the debate to recognise the issue of mental health amongst the young and give the Cabinet the opportunity to analyse and understand the extent of the problem and what the Council could actually do about it, in conjunction with other relevant bodies.

Councillor Spain said he would like to thank the Councillors who had brought this amendment forward and he urged fellow Councillors to put aside party differences and support it. He considered definite action was needed and he would be against vague commitments as suggested by Councillor Bell. He thought that younger residents had a right to see this Council act in their favour and he believed this amendment was necessary and proportionate to support young people at this incredibly difficult time.

Councillor Campkin said that as somebody who suffered from depression he would like to support this and not have it taken off the table and sent back to the Cabinet to be decided on by a smaller, one party group.

Councillor Wedgbury said that this was a very difficult and important issue and to have this put upon the Council with no notice made it very difficult to understand if it was the right thing to do or not. He therefore considered that the issue should be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee separately to the budget process. The sums involved meant that this should have been presented far earlier than this evening's meeting and therefore he did not feel that he could support it at this stage.

Councillor Bartlett said that he wanted to draw colleagues' attention to a debate that had been had earlier that day at KCC on this very issue. They had received a presentation from the Kent and Medway CCG saying that they had begun work on a project to review the correct support at the right time for those living with mental health needs. Some of the issues the NHS would be looking at included reducing unnecessary admissions to hospital, reducing the lengths of stay in hospital by providing greater support in more appropriate settings, increasing supported discharges and support to those returning home and supporting carers in the community amongst many other things. So there was clearly a big project that had been started by the NHS in Kent and Medway to look at this issue and he thought this was the correct place for this issue to be addressed, along with KCC. Confident in that knowledge that the right partners would be looking at this, he did not feel able to support this amendment.

Councillor Wright said she also wanted to raise the issue of apprenticeships. Many small businesses in the Borough were taking on apprentices, underwritten by the Government, and as a larger employer she hoped that the Council would also take on as many apprentices as possible as finding employment would be crucial in helping young people get back on their feet. She knew there were a lot of community initiatives addressing the question of mental health in the youth who had had such a terrible time during this pandemic, and she said she would support this amendment and hoped that the Council would do all it could to help with co-ordinating those efforts.

Councillor Ovenden said that whilst he thought this was the right idea, he also thought it was being posed at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons to the wrong people. The Member who had put it forward was also a Member of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group and he considered that would have been the correct place to pose any question over whether the budget was right or wrong. Instead however, Political motivation had put it here at Full Council and for that reason he could not support the amendment at this time, even though he supported the motives behind it. He agreed it was an issue worthy of further discussion, but that the proper amount of time should be afforded to examine it properly, rather than rushing it through tonight for Political motives.

Councillor Howard said he also supported the meaning behind this but thought that the amount of money and the timing were all wrong. He worked in a school and saw the effects and potential effects every single day and his heart supported the aims of what was being said, but there were too many question marks over the wording of this particular proposal. He thanked Councillor Bartlett for his summation of what had happened at KCC earlier that day and thought this should be taken back to either the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny, with a view to buying in to a project that tackled the problem as a whole and to be led by the experts in the field.

Councillor Shorter agreed that raising this point tonight was the wrong place and time and it would have been more appropriate to discuss this during the budget scrutiny process. The principle of supporting those struggling mentally or in getting jobs was absolutely right and proper, but this proposal did not reflect that the Council was already doing a significant amount in this area already. The Council had Officers who were specifically employed, trained and tasked to work with the DWP and those who were finding it difficult to get employment, supporting them in that process and helping them with their mental health as well. The Council had also supported the

development of the local college and put a significant amount of money in them coming to Ashford. This was a focussed attempt to raise skillsets in the Borough and support the youth. Turning to apprenticeships, he said it was again important to understand what the Council already did. They already employed a number of apprentices and took on graduates and developed them in to skilled professionals. The premise of supporting people who were struggling was right and proper but to try and pitch this in at this stage of the budget process was ignoring what the Council was already doing and totally inappropriate.

Councillor Pickering said he wanted to confirm that the Council employed significant numbers of apprentices and graduate trainees and the Council believed strongly in this. They had also recently been awarded 11 Kick Start placements for young people to get work/life experiences at Ashford Borough Council. These were all initiatives looking after the young people of the Borough.

Councillor Lyn Suddards said she was really disappointed and shocked by the reaction to this proposed amendment. She honestly thought that there would be widespread support for using an unearmarked reserve in this way. The proposed wording allowed for a broad brush approach and for any funds to be spent in a wide range of areas and she failed to understand why bringing it in at this stage should somehow render it less valid and she was shocked for it to be accused of being a Political tool. They had only recently heard that youth unemployment in Ashford was as high as it was. At 11% this was higher than more or less anywhere in the country so now was the perfect time to bring this to everyone's attention and giving the Council, across all parties, an opportunity to show their commitment to the youth of Ashford who had experienced a terrible time and no-one knew what was going to transpire over the next year or so. She urged colleagues to do a bit of soul searching and support this.

Councillor Charles Suddards said he would also support this proposed amendment. The amount of money was a specific one, already within the budget. There was nothing to prevent the commissioning process being referred to other Committees or bodies, but this would present an opportunity to have an open debate about what to do with this sum of money rather than it being spent discretionally behind closed doors. He hoped that the hidden victims of the pandemic, the young, would be supported by supporting this amendment.

The Leader of the Council said that in his view there was not one person at this meeting who would not have had the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone in their minds and hearts during this tragic period. Many had lost loved ones and knew the prevailing conditions of the lockdown which had seen people lose their jobs and suffer with their mental health. However, as had been said, this was not the time or place to bring this up and if those Members doing so had felt so strongly about it, it should have been tabled during the budget scrutiny. There was already a lot going on and this Council would continue working with a whole range of people on youth unemployment and youth mental health in particular. This Council had an Ashford Living Wage which was already higher than both the National Minimum Wage and indeed higher that the London Living Wage. The Ashford Apprentice Wage was in fact higher that the National Living Wage. He therefore did not think this Council should be lectured about the youth as they cared deeply and passionately about them. With regard to the question of unearmarked reserves, he thought if this year had proven anything it was that reserves were vital and the Council had only been

able to ride the storm so far because they were in a sound financial position with healthy reserves. Any discussions on future provision of this type would not take place behind closed doors. It would all be tabled in proper reports to the appropriate Committees at the right time in a through and measured way. He was therefore not able to support this proposed amendment.

Councillor Iliffe said that whilst he agreed with the sentiments of the motion, he also agreed that the timing and way this had been done was wrong. The most effective way would have been through budget scrutiny. He had been a member of the Task Group and would have welcomed a longer debate, with Members from all parties, on this issue and to have time to formulate an appropriate recommendation. He asked the Mover of the amendment why he had not done that.

Councillor Harman said she agreed with the points raised by colleagues from all parties apart from the one proposing this amendment. She wanted to point out that this was clearly Political point scoring as the wording of this amendment had already appeared on the Ashford Labour social media channels, which she found offensive. This was the type of Political point scoring that was the reason why Members from her Group did not stand for either of the two main national parties.

As a point of order, Councillor Wright wished it to be noted that not all other Groups on the Council opposed this proposed amendment.

Councillor Anckorn, as seconder of the proposed amendment had reserved the right to speak. He said he was incredibly disappointed by the tone of this debate from some of the Conservative and Ashford Independent Councillors. He thought this was an incredibly important issue and whilst it was easy to give out platitudes about it, the pandemic had been a once in a century shock that needed to be acted on now. Some Members had said that this had been put forward for Political reasons, but he was on this Council because he cared about Ashford and the young people of Ashford. If he wanted to purely advance a Political career, there would be far easier ways of doing that than working hard as a local Councillor. As Members would have seen, youth unemployment in Ashford was now at 11%, above both county and national averages, and now was the time to react and face a crisis that could affect a whole generation of young people. He worried deeply about young people who were leaving education and what prospects they would have. Being unemployed was a horrible experience that he would not wish on anyone and when he had left education it was incredibly disheartening having done everything you had been told for years in education and applying for many jobs, sifting through trying to find any opportunities that were out there and being rejected. Feeling unwanted in that way took a mental health toll, and the current situation and the economic shock they had experienced was going to make that even harder. It would be important to support young people who wanted to contribute positively to society and the recovery from the pandemic and that is what this proposal was all about.

Councillor Farrell, as mover of the proposed amendment, then summed up the debate on this amendment. He said he thought it was perfectly right for Councillors to bring amendments to the budget forward in this way at the budget setting meeting of Full Council and he was sure that the Council's Legal Advisor would have pointed out if he had got that wrong. Reflecting on the debate so far he said that there had been a general tone of trying to 'kick this issue into the long grass' because it was too difficult a one to deal with. There had also been points about KCC and the NHS

leading on this, but the key words in his proposed amendment had been about preventing medical intervention. If the NHS had already had to get involved, this would suggest that problems had already become so serious that they would be at acute service level – this was about prevention. In addition the NHS would not provide transferrable skills for employment which this proposal was seeking. He thought the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments were somewhat bewildering. When he joined this Council he expected to attend Political meetings so he could not understand certain Members' surprise that they were at such meetings. He thought it was always interesting when Members came up with reasons not to do something, but saying that it 'did not go far enough' whilst actually voting to do nothing. Comments about this proposal not reflecting what the Council was already doing missed the point, as this was a proposal to amend a line in the draft budget, creating an envelope for future spend. Comments about the Ashford Living Wage and Ashford Apprentice Wage were welcomed, but these were not much consolation to anyone not working for Ashford Borough Council. This was about supporting more young people in to employment. This was not about lecturing, it was about raising an issue of importance to their residents and it he thought it was regrettable that an issue of that importance was being treated in such a manner. With regard to criticism about this appearing on social media, he said that he thought it was important to engage with residents on the issues that they cared about. They had voted for him to take up this job and wanted to hear about what he was doing to put their priorities forward. What could be more transparent than that? In conclusion he said if only the Administration had been as keen to turn down the £10,000 grant to the Ashford Conservative Association, as they had been to shut down this budget amendment for the future generations of this Borough.

A recorded vote was then taken on Councillor Farrell's amendment. The Members voted as follows: -

For: Councillors Anckorn, Campkin, Chilton, Farrell, Spain, C Suddards, L Suddards, Wright. **Votes For 8**

Against: Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Feacey, Forest, B Heyes, T Heyes, Howard, Iliffe, Knowles, Krause, Michael, Mulholland, Ovenden, Pickering, Rogers, Shorter, Sparks, Webb, Wedgbury, White.
Votes Against 27

Abstentions: Councillors Harman, Hayward, Howard-Smith, Ledger, Pauley
Abstentions 5

Councillor Barrett had left the Meeting by this point.

The amendment was lost.

Councillor Bell said that bearing in mind the validity and importance of the concern about the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and the economic challenges he moved "that the Council refer this issue to the Cabinet, to analyse and research this issue to see what it can do, in conjunction with other bodies such as KCC and the NHS, to make a meaningful difference". He would be more than happy for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to also be involved in this process, as well

as any Member who was interested, but the Cabinet would be the right place for it initially.

This was seconded by Councillor White.

Councillor Michael said that the suggestion that nothing was being done at the moment was clearly wrong. There were many local, county and national agencies that were working on these issues and he believed that rather than going off at a tangent and trying to agree something specific tonight, the Council needed to be working with those other agencies to find out what and where they could add value to what was already being done. He therefore thought this motion had some validity and he would support it.

Councillor Bartlett said it was quite right to say that there was a lot of work going on with other agencies, and indeed by this Council, to address this NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) position in Ashford. He wanted to share a few of the projects KCC were working on with Ashford Borough Council including: - exploring using vacant and available town centre community space to assist with delivering NEET programmes; engaging with the employment market to create more mentoring and work experience opportunities for young people; actively lobbying within the business sector and the DWP to acquire additional funds and resources for education and training opportunities; and encouraging housing developers to create training and apprenticeships within the Borough. This was just a flavour of a few of the projects currently being worked on and whilst of course more could always be done, he absolutely supported the desire of this motion to bring this subject to the relevant Members for further analysis, and to familiarise those colleagues who did not seem to know what this Council was already doing.

Councillor Blanford said she was pleased to support this proposed amendment and she hoped that the issue could be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before being decided by the Cabinet, to enable a cross party approach.

Councillor Ovenden said he supported what had been said by Councillors Michael and Bartlett and noted that Councillor Michael himself had done some wonderful work with young people. The proposed way forward would allow the proper time to be taken and for the issue to be dealt with properly.

Councillor Wright said that speaking from her experience of co-ordinating the Ashford Holiday Kitchen Project throughout the pandemic, a number of community groups had got together and provided food boxes and thousands of hot meals for families in Ashford, but they could not have done it without some sort of co-ordination. This was why she had supported the original amendment. It was important that someone from the youth and community section of the Council was involved in a co-ordination role to get the best out of the youth activities that were already going on.

Councillor Spain said that there was an opportunity to go above and beyond here. It was not true to say that Councillors did not know what was already going on, but they could go beyond that with an unearmarked amount of money. How it occurred, he personally did not mind, but now was the time to get together. If it had to be done in a different way, and some Councillors did not like that this had come to the budget setting Full Council meeting as it did at other Authorities, then that was fine, but the

important thing was actually doing something with that money for the benefit of young people.

Councillor Farrell said it was certainly true that Councillors at other Authorities regularly voted on budget amendments at Full Council meetings and whilst he was disappointed that the original amendment had fallen he would be supporting this amendment. He thanked Councillor Anckorn for assisting him to bring this issue forward. It had been an attempt to provide a budget envelope for greater activity – not to say that no activity was happening, but to add to it and recognise the 11% youth unemployment. Being above those local and national averages it was clear that whatever they were doing was not enough, so he was pleased that this was going to be addressed. After being accused of bringing this forward inappropriately, thanks to Cllr Anckorn and himself, he was now confident that action was going to take place and he looked forward to seeing where that money was going to go.

Councillor Forest said it was important to recognise the contribution of the voluntary and third sector. The Council had awarded more than 48 community grants to organisations since the start of this pandemic, and even more important than the money was building relationships with those organisations. Council Officers now had a closer relationship with that sector than ever in the past and those conversations would continue. It was also important to avoid duplication and sometimes an over-keenness to throw money at something ended up with spending money on the same thing twice and nobody benefitted from that.

Councillor Clarkson said he welcomed this debate and many of the points raised. Many Councillors already worked passionately to assist people. He said he would be quite happy for this issue to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Cabinet and he supported this proposed amendment as opposed to the first one moved.

Councillor Bell, as mover of the proposed amendment, then summed up the debate on this amendment. He agreed that Councillors from all parties should be able to debate and contribute to this and therefore agreed that it should go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Cabinet. Given the importance of this issue he considered this was the correct way forward.

A recorded vote was then taken on Councillor Bell's amendment. The Members voted as follows: -

For:	Councillors Anckorn, Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Blanford, Buchanan, Campkin, Chilton, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Farrell, Feacey, Forest, Harman, Hayward, B Heyes, T Heyes, Howard, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Michael, Mulholland, Ovenden, Pauley, Pickering, Rogers, Shorter, Spain, Sparks, C Suddards, L Suddards, Webb, Wedgbury, White, Wright.	**Votes For 40**
Against:	None	**Votes Against 0**
Abstentions:	None	**Abstentions 0**

Councillor Barrett had left the Meeting by this point.

This amendment was carried and would be added to the substantive motion.

Councillor Chilton said that he wanted to ask a few questions on the general budget papers. Firstly, as a Member of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, he wanted to thank the Officers for the superb work they had done in pulling the budget together. However, a year ago, the Leader had written to the Secretary of State with all other Leaders of Kent Authorities requesting additional help to mitigate the impact of the loss of income due to Covid-19. The letter contained the following phrase – "we consider the support provided so far to be insufficient". Throughout the last year he had asked at virtually every Cabinet and Council meeting for an update on the lobbying efforts that had taken place to secure the extra funds that this Council required, and at every meeting he had been told "we have not heard back yet". So, he wanted to ask - had the Council heard back yet and if they had not he considered that the £1.5m they had not got was due to the inaction of this Administration. He also wanted to ask about the Council Tax and the 2.99% increase proposed this year which was the largest percentage increase of any Borough in Kent. Did the Leader consider that at this time, when household budgets were tight, when people had lost their jobs and many were living on furlough and struggling generally, that Council Tax should be increasing? Was it not the case that if they had secured the money they said they would from Government, that this proposed increase would not now be before the Council? The Council Officers had not only had to deal with Covid-19 this year, they had also had to deal with the challenges of Stodmarsh as well as the new responsibilities of the Port facility and whilst Councillors were ready to applaud and laud their efforts, when it came to pay that was not quite the case. The Medium Term Financial Plan assumed a pay increase for Officers, yet the final draft budget that Members were being asked to vote on at this meeting assumed a pay freeze – factoring in inflation this amounted to a pay cut and he wanted to ask Members, particularly those who were also KCC Councillors, why they thought it was appropriate to award their staff a 2% pay increase whilst Ashford staff had to have a freeze? He understood there was a District Deal with KCC but it was quite clear which side was benefitting the most from that deal. Councillor Chilton said he also thought they should examine the issue of staff cuts. The Portfolio Holder said at the Cabinet when the draft budget was presented last November that there would be no redundancies and staff would have opportunities to be redeployed, but after the budget scrutiny process it appeared they did have an opportunity to be redeployed – to the dole queue, because there were going to be job losses as a result of this budget. He therefore wanted to ask the Portfolio Holder was it that he wasn't in full knowledge of his budget, or was he wilfully misleading Members of this Council? In addition, rents were going up – this would hit those on the lowest incomes, whilst at the same time housing budgets were being cut by up to £300,000. The budget had been built on pre-Covid assumptions with capital projects going ahead in the town centre when they knew the nature of employment and retail was going to be fundamentally altered forevermore as a result of the pandemic and the Council's commercial strategy was facing severe problems given Government announcements in respect of Public Works Loans. He asked if this budget was really building the foundations for a strong and prosperous future for Ashford, or simply delaying difficult decisions? He suggested it was the latter. Finally he wanted to thank his colleagues for bringing forward what he thought was a very sensible and well thought out amendment to this budget. It was unfortunate that some Members of this Council regarded it as some sort of Political attack or having Political motives and he had to say, particularly to some of the Ashford Independents, that it may come as a surprise to them but they were not part of the Administration, they were in fact in

Opposition. Perhaps some of them questioned that sometimes in the way their Leader asked them to vote. He concluded that in his view this budget was not a budget for Ashford or one that would deal with the problems presented by Covid-19. Things would cost more under this Administration and the Tories and he would therefore encourage colleagues to vote down this budget.

As a point of order, Councillor Rogers said that the Ashford Independent Group did not have a Party Whip and had never been told how to vote.

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Chilton for his very heated speech, but suggested that in the words of Taylor Swift “you need to calm down!” There were a number of half-truths and inaccuracies in what had been said. There was no commitment to a pay rise in the Medium Term Financial Plan, this was a figment of Councillor Chilton’s imagination. In terms of Government support for the Council, there were references to this in the Budget Monitoring report that had come to the Cabinet the previous week and they had pretty much broken even – so the Government had played its fair part in helping and the Council was very grateful for what they had received. In terms of the percentage increase to the Council Tax he thought Councillor Chilton was being deliberately misleading on the simple basis of arithmetic. If you had a small charge, a relatively small increase could be a larger percentage and this was the case for Ashford’s Council Tax charge, but it was still the lowest in Kent and there was no other way to spin that. With reference to staffing levels, it was true that they had had to make some very difficult decisions over the last year. They had looked for savings, vacant posts that could be removed and other savings in order to keep the lowest Council Tax in Kent. This did not just happen without hard work by Officers, but also the Administration and the support of most of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members as well. In conclusion, he thought a large part of what Councillor Chilton had said had been a bit of a rant, but he thought he had rebutted most of the points made.

As a point of order, Councillor Chilton said that the Medium Term Financial Plan had indeed accommodated for a percentage increase to staff pay. Councillor Bell said it had been increment increases rather than pay rises.

Councillor Lyn Suddards said she found it quite baffling that the Leader had begun the meeting by thanking and recognising the staff for the way they had managed the pandemic and the efforts made, but now Councillor Bell was poking fun and making smug remarks about Councillors who were speaking up for staff. She found it difficult to compute being at meetings where Members were patting everyone on the back and saying what a good job everyone had done whilst proposing a pay freeze, which amounted to a pay cut without a cost of living rise. She thought this was an absolute outrage and she would be voting against the budget on that premise alone. She supported the staff at ABC and whilst the people at the top of the pay scale might be able to afford it, the people at the bottom certainly could not.

Councillor Pickering said that wanted to clarify one point. Negotiations on staff pay were still ongoing with the staff representatives so no decision on this had yet been made.

Councillor Spain said that he totally agreed with Councillor Lyn Suddards in that he found it extremely frustrating that Council Officers had received a lot of praise, which they fully deserved, but were having their pay frozen. Notwithstanding the comment

that negotiations were still ongoing, the budget had been built with a freeze. They should have been at the point where the budget could award them a pay rise at least in line with the cost of living increase. Other Districts across Kent had been able to do this and some of the Councillors at this meeting had voted for a 2% increase for KCC staff. So there would be KCC staff, living in the Ashford Borough, who may be able to afford the Council Tax increase, whereas this Council's own hard working staff may not. He therefore could not support this budget.

Councillor Ovenden said that the Budget Scrutiny Task Group had been clearly told by the Portfolio Holder and the Officers that the draft budget had been based on a staff pay freeze, because one had to take a base point somewhere, but that may not be the case going forward as it was still under discussion.

Councillor Bartlett, as seconder of the original motion had reserved the right to speak. He said much had been said about the way this budget had been presented and he found the Political points that had been made as an element of point scoring did not reflect well on the quality of debate at this Council. He was very comfortable with the budget. He had attended most of the Budget Scrutiny meetings and he felt the quality of the interrogation had been of the highest quality. He felt that the budget was robust and he urged colleagues to support it.

The Leader, as mover of the original motion then summed up the debate.

A recorded vote was then taken on the substantive motion moved by the Leader, with the amendment proposed by Councillor Bell and agreed by the Council. The Members voted as follows: -

For:	Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Bell, Bell, Blanford, Buchanan, Burgess, Clarkson, Clokie, Dehnel, Feacey, Forest, Harman, Hayward, B Heyes, T Heyes, Howard, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Knowles, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland, Ovenden, Pauley, Pickering, Rogers, Shorter, Sparks, Webb, Wedgbury, White	**Votes For 31**
Against:	Councillors Anckorn, Campkin, Chilton, Farrell, Spain, C Suddards, L Suddards, Wright.	**Votes Against 8**
Abstentions:	Councillor Michael	**Abstentions 1**

Councillor Barrett had left the Meeting by this point.

Resolved:

That (i) the Budget for 2021/22 as recommended by the Cabinet in Minute No. 236 be approved.

(ii) that the issue of the mental health and wellbeing of young people be referred to the Cabinet, to analyse and research the issue to see what the Council could do, in conjunction with other bodies such as KCC and the NHS, to make a meaningful difference.

(ii) the formal Council Tax resolutions set out below be approved.

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1. It be noted that on **26 November 2020** the Cabinet calculated:

   a. The Council Tax Base for 2021/22 for the whole Council area as 45,173 (Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")) and,

   b. for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached **Annex A.**

2. that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£7,792,350** (**Annex C**).

3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

	£	
(a)	104,528,094	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
(b)	94,452,980	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
(c)	10,075,114	being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act).
(d)	223.03	being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
(e)	2,282,764	being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Annex A).
(f)	172.50	being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.(Annex B).

Annex A
Part of the Council's area (i.e. tax base for parished areas – Band D equivalent properties).

PARISH	LOCAL TAX BASE	PRECEPT
Aldington & Bonnington	621	38,855.00
Appledore	337	26,000.00
Bethersden	713	39,000.00
Biddenden	1,100	55,505.34
Bilsington	148	6,348.00
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,046	26,280.00
Brabourne	594	40,000.00
Brook	153	11,500.00
Challock	491	21,000.00
Charing	1,283	155,371.00
Chilham	731	38,113.33
Crundale (PM)	89	200.00
Egerton	509	24,294.00
Godmersham	167	6,358.00
Great Chart with Singleton	2,437	265,938.00
Hastingleigh	109	3,800.00
High Halden	755	33,054.00
Hothfield	253	13,000.00
Kenardington	108	6,200.00
Kennington	3,531	100,000.00
Kingsnorth	4,285	243,302.30
Little Chart	138	6,222.00
Mersham	588	26,500.00
Molash	106	4,250.00
Newenden	100	5,124.00
Orlestone	589	20,272.00
Pluckley	464	47,595.00
Rolvenden	689	30,486.00
Ruckinge	342	10,500.00
Sevington	579	15,000.00
Shadoxhurst	558	19,500.00
Smarden	627	32,695.96
Smeeth	354	23,738.00
South Willesborough & Newton	1,187	42,945.00
Stanhope	752	17,800.00
Stone	206	5,500.00
Tenterden (TC)	3,577	603,839.00
Warehorne	150	5,000.00
Westwell	493	25,895.00
Wittersham	530	33,150.00
Woodchurch	821	25,420.00
Wye with Hinxhill	1,009	127,213.00

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040321

Table B
Billing Authority share of Council Tax including Parish Precept

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	41.71	48.67	55.62	62.57	76.47	90.38	104.28	125.14
Appledore	51.43	60.01	68.58	77.15	94.29	111.44	128.58	154.30
Bethersden	36.47	42.54	48.62	54.70	66.86	79.01	91.17	109.40
Biddenden	33.64	39.25	44.85	50.46	61.67	72.89	84.10	100.92
Bilsington	28.59	33.36	38.12	42.89	52.42	61.95	71.48	85.78
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	16.75	19.54	22.33	25.12	30.70	36.28	41.87	50.24
Brabourne	44.89	52.38	59.86	67.34	82.30	97.27	112.23	134.68
Brook	50.11	58.46	66.81	75.16	91.86	108.56	125.27	150.32
Challock	28.51	33.27	38.02	42.77	52.27	61.78	71.28	85.54
Charing	80.73	94.19	107.64	121.10	148.01	174.92	201.83	242.20
Chilham	34.76	40.55	46.35	52.14	63.73	75.31	86.90	104.28
Crundale (PM)	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.75	3.25	3.75	4.50
Egerton	31.82	37.12	42.43	47.73	58.34	68.94	79.55	95.46
Godmersham	25.38	29.61	33.84	38.07	46.53	54.99	63.45	76.14
Great Chart with Singleton	72.75	84.88	97.00	109.13	133.38	157.63	181.88	218.26
Hastingleigh	23.24	27.11	30.99	34.86	42.61	50.35	58.10	69.72
High Halden	29.19	34.05	38.92	43.78	53.51	63.24	72.97	87.56
Hothfield	34.25	39.96	45.67	51.38	62.80	74.22	85.63	102.76
Kenardington	38.27	44.65	51.03	57.41	70.17	82.93	95.68	114.82
Kennington	18.88	22.03	25.17	28.32	34.61	40.91	47.20	56.64
Kingsnorth	37.85	44.16	50.47	56.78	69.40	82.02	94.63	113.56
Little Chart	30.06	35.07	40.08	45.09	55.11	65.13	75.15	90.18
Mersham	30.05	35.05	40.06	45.07	55.09	65.10	75.12	90.14
Molash	26.73	31.18	35.64	40.09	49.00	57.91	66.82	80.18
Newenden	34.16	39.85	45.55	51.24	62.63	74.01	85.40	102.48
Orlestone	22.95	26.77	30.60	34.42	42.07	49.72	57.37	68.84
Pluckley	68.39	79.78	91.18	102.58	125.38	148.17	170.97	205.16
Rolvenden	29.50	34.42	39.33	44.25	54.08	63.92	73.75	88.50
Ruckinge	20.47	23.88	27.29	30.70	37.52	44.34	51.17	61.40
Sevington	17.27	20.15	23.03	25.91	31.67	37.43	43.18	51.82
Shadoxhurst	23.30	27.18	31.07	34.95	42.72	50.48	58.25	69.90
Smarden	34.77	40.56	46.36	52.15	63.74	75.33	86.92	104.30
Smeeth	44.71	52.16	59.61	67.06	81.96	96.86	111.77	134.12
South Willesborough & Newton	24.12	28.14	32.16	36.18	44.22	52.26	60.30	72.36
Stanhope	15.78	18.41	21.04	23.67	28.93	34.19	39.45	47.34
Stone	17.80	20.77	23.73	26.70	32.63	38.57	44.50	53.40
Tenterden (TC)	112.54	131.30	150.05	168.81	206.32	243.84	281.35	337.62
Warehorne	22.22	25.92	29.63	33.33	40.74	48.14	55.55	66.66
Westwell	35.02	40.86	46.69	52.53	64.20	75.88	87.55	105.06
Wittersham	41.70	48.65	55.60	62.55	76.45	90.35	104.25	125.10
Woodchurch	20.64	24.08	27.52	30.96	37.84	44.72	51.60	61.92
Wye with Hinxhill	84.05	98.06	112.07	126.08	154.10	182.12	210.13	252.16
Unparished Area	115.00	134.17	153.33	172.50	210.83	249.17	287.50	345.00

Annex C

Council Tax Charge per Band

PARISH	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Aldington & Bonnington	1,301.86	1,518.85	1,735.82	1,952.80	2,386.75	2,820.72	3,254.66	3,905.60
Appledore	1,311.58	1,530.19	1,748.78	1,967.38	2,404.57	2,841.78	3,278.96	3,934.76
Bethersden	1,296.62	1,512.72	1,728.82	1,944.93	2,377.14	2,809.35	3,241.55	3,889.86
Biddenden	1,293.79	1,509.43	1,725.05	1,940.69	2,371.95	2,803.23	3,234.48	3,881.38
Bilsington	1,288.74	1,503.54	1,718.32	1,933.12	2,362.70	2,792.29	3,221.86	3,866.24
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	1,276.90	1,489.72	1,702.53	1,915.35	2,340.98	2,766.62	3,192.25	3,830.70
Brabourne	1,305.04	1,522.56	1,740.06	1,957.57	2,392.58	2,827.61	3,262.61	3,915.14
Brook	1,310.26	1,528.64	1,747.01	1,965.39	2,402.14	2,838.90	3,275.65	3,930.78
Challock	1,288.66	1,503.45	1,718.22	1,933.00	2,362.55	2,792.12	3,221.66	3,866.00
Charing	1,340.88	1,564.37	1,787.84	2,011.33	2,458.29	2,905.26	3,352.21	4,022.66
Chilham	1,294.91	1,510.73	1,726.55	1,942.37	2,374.01	2,805.65	3,237.28	3,884.74
Crundale (PM)	1,261.65	1,471.93	1,682.20	1,892.48	2,313.03	2,733.59	3,154.13	3,784.96
Egerton	1,291.97	1,507.30	1,722.63	1,937.96	2,368.62	2,799.28	3,229.93	3,875.92
Godmersham	1,285.53	1,499.79	1,714.04	1,928.30	2,356.81	2,785.33	3,213.83	3,856.60
Great Chart with Singleton	1,332.90	1,555.06	1,777.20	1,999.36	2,443.66	2,887.97	3,332.26	3,998.72
Hastingleigh	1,283.39	1,497.29	1,711.19	1,925.09	2,352.89	2,780.69	3,208.48	3,850.18
High Halden	1,289.34	1,504.23	1,719.12	1,934.01	2,363.79	2,793.58	3,223.35	3,868.02
Hothfield	1,294.40	1,510.14	1,725.87	1,941.61	2,373.08	2,804.56	3,236.01	3,883.22
Kenardington	1,298.42	1,514.83	1,731.23	1,947.64	2,380.45	2,813.27	3,246.06	3,895.28
Kennington	1,279.03	1,492.21	1,705.37	1,918.55	2,344.89	2,771.25	3,197.58	3,837.10
Kingsnorth	1,298.00	1,514.34	1,730.67	1,947.01	2,379.68	2,812.36	3,245.01	3,894.02
Little Chart	1,290.21	1,505.25	1,720.28	1,935.32	2,365.39	2,795.47	3,225.53	3,870.64
Mersham	1,290.20	1,505.23	1,720.26	1,935.30	2,365.37	2,795.44	3,225.50	3,870.60
Molash	1,286.88	1,501.36	1,715.84	1,930.32	2,359.28	2,788.25	3,217.20	3,860.64
Newenden	1,294.31	1,510.03	1,725.75	1,941.47	2,372.91	2,804.35	3,235.78	3,882.94
Orlestone	1,283.10	1,496.95	1,710.80	1,924.65	2,352.35	2,780.06	3,207.75	3,849.30
Pluckley	1,328.54	1,549.96	1,771.38	1,992.81	2,435.66	2,878.51	3,321.35	3,985.62
Rolvenden	1,289.65	1,504.60	1,719.53	1,934.48	2,364.36	2,794.26	3,224.13	3,868.96
Ruckinge	1,280.62	1,494.06	1,707.49	1,920.93	2,347.80	2,774.68	3,201.55	3,841.86
Sevington	1,277.42	1,490.33	1,703.23	1,916.14	2,341.95	2,767.77	3,193.56	3,832.28
Shadoxhurst	1,283.45	1,497.36	1,711.27	1,925.18	2,353.00	2,780.82	3,208.63	3,850.36
Smarden	1,294.92	1,510.74	1,726.56	1,942.38	2,374.02	2,805.67	3,237.30	3,884.76
Smeeth	1,304.86	1,522.34	1,739.81	1,957.29	2,392.24	2,827.20	3,262.15	3,914.58
South Willesborough	1,284.27	1,498.32	1,712.36	1,926.41	2,354.50	2,782.60	3,210.68	3,852.82
Stanhope	1,275.93	1,488.59	1,701.24	1,913.90	2,339.21	2,764.53	3,189.83	3,827.80
Stone	1,277.95	1,490.95	1,703.93	1,916.93	2,342.91	2,768.91	3,194.88	3,833.86
Tenterden (TC)	1,372.69	1,601.48	1,830.25	2,059.04	2,516.60	2,974.18	3,431.73	4,118.08
Warehorne	1,282.37	1,496.10	1,709.83	1,923.56	2,351.02	2,778.48	3,205.93	3,847.12
Westwell	1,295.17	1,511.04	1,726.89	1,942.76	2,374.48	2,806.22	3,237.93	3,885.52
Wittersham	1,301.85	1,518.83	1,735.80	1,952.78	2,386.73	2,820.69	3,254.63	3,905.56
Woodchurch	1,280.79	1,494.26	1,707.72	1,921.19	2,348.12	2,775.06	3,201.98	3,842.38
Wye with Hinxhill	1,344.20	1,568.24	1,792.27	2,016.31	2,464.38	2,912.46	3,360.51	4,032.62
Unparished Area	1,260.15	1,470.18	1,680.20	1,890.23	2,310.28	2,730.34	3,150.38	3,780.46

CALCULATION OF THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND COUNCIL TAX AT BAND D		
	£	£
Gross Expenditure - General Fund	69,296,410	
Gross Expenditure - HRA	32,948,920	
Parish Precepts	2,282,764	
		104,528,094
Less Gross Income	(87,504,890)	
		(87,504,890)
NET EXPENDITURE		17,023,204
Government Grant	(946,480)	
New Homes Bonus	(1,908,220)	
Retained Business Rates	(4,093,390)	
		(6,948,090)
BUDGET REQUIREMENT		10,075,114
Less Parish Precepts		(2,282,764)
Council Tax Requirement		7,792,350
Council Tax Base		45,173
Band 'D' Council Tax		172.50
Average including Parishes		223.03

REVENUE BUDGET				
SUMMARY				
Actuals 2019/20 £	Budget 2020/21 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Service	Budget 2021/22 £
1,409,723	1,367,810	1,391,710	Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communi	1,173,200
(978,623)	(1,778,020)	(763,610)	Corporate Property & Projects	(1,275,200)
3,641,761	3,658,460	3,498,210	Finance & IT	3,269,790
1,792,111	860,250	1,227,230	Housing General Fund Services	914,200
765,152	427,600	2,002,290	Community Safety and Wellbeing	711,520
76,808	197,340	112,430	HR & Customer Services	155,350
1,516,343	1,425,830	1,340,280	Legal & Democratic Services	1,233,590
3,512,553	3,342,230	4,378,330	Culture	3,208,300
5,238,038	5,453,140	5,286,860	Environmental & Land Management	4,744,550
1,839,412	2,174,920	2,955,450	Planning	2,168,090
18,813,278	**17,129,560**	**21,429,180**	**Service Expenditure**	**16,303,390**
(4,934,028)	(2,587,480)	(3,182,340)	Capital Charges & Net Interest	(2,187,810)
264,151	270,500	270,500	Levies	276,000
2,341,946	1,154,910	1,007,800	Contribution to/(from) Balances	348,860
16,485,347	**15,967,490**	**19,525,140**	**ABC Budget Requirement**	**14,740,440**
			Income	
(277,324)	0	(3,066,420)	Government Grant	(946,480)
(5,697,644)	(4,991,320)	(4,991,320)	Retained Business Rates	(4,093,390)
			Business Rates S31 Grants	
(2,954,410)	(3,053,420)	(3,053,420)	New Homes Bonus	(1,908,220)
(7,592,465)	(7,922,750)	(7,922,750)	Council Tax	(7,792,350)
(36,496)	**0**	**491,230**		**0**

261 Appointments Committee – 18th December 2020 and 20th January 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Appointments Committee held on the 18th December 2020 and 20th January 2021 be received and noted.

262 Standards Committee – 25th January 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 25th January 2021 be received and noted.

263 Annual Report of the Council's Monitoring Officer 2020

Resolved:

That the Annual Report of the Council's Monitoring Officer 2020 be received and noted.

264 Programme of Meetings 2021/22 and 2022/23

Resolved:

That the Programme of Meetings for 2021/22 and 2022/23 as appended to these Minutes be adopted.

265 Notices of Motion

Councillor Wedgbury introduced a Notice of Motion that he had given pursuant to Procedure Rule 11 and was detailed on the Agenda for the Meeting.

He said that hundreds of people from across the Borough used the land in question for exercise, picnics, walking the dogs and sports and leisure. A recent decision taken by the Council had created an inconsistency and this motion addressed and corrected that inconsistency, which there should not be in Council policy. There had also been a consultation from the Department for Communities and Local Government which closed this week of which the residents of St Michaels had recently had a taste, whereby any person (or developer) can allege that a Council owned piece of land (including Parish Councils) was underutilised and should therefore be developed for flats and houses. There was an option for compulsory purchase if they got their way. He therefore moved the following Motion - “That the Park Farm Buffer Zone be considered for designation as a green buffer area as part of the next review of the Local Plan, protecting it from development in perpetuity, in the same way that was agreed for the land at Sevington at the Full Council meeting in October 2020.”

This Motion was seconded by Councillor B Heyes.

The Leader of the Council said that there was no inconsistency as indicated in the Motion. With regard to the desire to protect the Park Farm Buffer Area in perpetuity, the Council were simply not able to create future planning policy through a Motion at a Full Council meeting. Any future planning policy that sought to protect the area from development would need to be evidenced and justified as part of a Local Plan review. This would include public consultation on emerging proposals, and also specific evidence as to why this area should be protected or designated for a certain role. The position would then be assessed by a future Planning Inspector, independently appointed by Government. One of their central considerations would be whether the emerging policy was consistent with national planning policy. He therefore proposed that this request be put to the Cabinet and the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group for due consideration as they moved forward to revise the Local Plan. He found it difficult to understand the linking of this request in any way to what was happening at Sevington. He wanted to point out that this was a site that was already in the Council’s Local Plan for employment use and it was intended to have large storage buildings on that site. However, the United Kingdom Government intervened and purchased the site for use as a major Inland Border Facility and issued a Special Development Order. This large Inland Port facility would be functioning 24/7 - 365 days a year with some 5,000 HGV lorries a day being processed. This was a huge undertaking and it was important that they continued to work with the UK Government to hopefully create a buffer zone on this Government owned land, in an effort to protect and mitigate the impact from the operation of this facility on the lives of the local residents. He therefore repeated his

proposal that this request be put to the Cabinet and the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group for due consideration as they moved forward to revise the Local Plan.

This was seconded by Councillor Harman. She thought this was an inappropriate proposal to bring to Full Council, talking about one specific piece of land in the Borough. This needed to be considered in the context of the Local Plan so that any policy that was devised could be applied across the board. Otherwise every single Councillor would bring forward their particular piece of land that they felt was important to Full Council meetings for consideration.

Councillor Farrell said he agreed that Full Council was not the appropriate forum to consider individual pieces of land and the Council had a full array of Committees and Task Groups, and indeed a Local Plan process to do this. He thought it was inappropriate to try and score Political points at this meeting of the Full Council and he would therefore be supporting the Leader's proposal.

Councillor Wedgbury, as mover of the original motion then concluded the debate. He said he felt it had been right to bring this motion forward as the land in question was immediately behind the land referred to at the lorry facility which had already been protected. This land enjoyed a huge amount of use from people across the Borough, particularly from South Ashford, and therefore he felt it was appropriate.

Resolved:

That the Motion be referred to the Cabinet and the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group for due consideration as they moved forward to revise the Local Plan.

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MAY 2021

M	3	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	4	Selection & CR 6pm
W	5	
Th	6	**KCC/PCC Elections**
F	7	
M	10	
Tu	11	O&S
W	12	
Th	13	JCC 2.30pm
F	14	
M	17	
Tu	18	
W	19	Planning
Th	20	Council
F	21	
M	24	
Tu	25	TEB 10am
W	26	
Th	27	Cabinet 6pm
F	28	
M	31	**BANK HOLIDAY**

JUNE 2021

Tu	1	Joint Transport 5pm
W	2	
Th	3	
F	4	
M	7	
Tu	8	O&S
W	9	
Th	10	
F	11	
M	14	
Tu	15	Audit 5pm
W	16	Planning
Th	17	
F	18	
M	21	
T	22	
W	23	
Th	24	Cabinet 6pm
F	25	
M	28	
Tu	29	
W	30	

JULY 2021

Th	1	Selection and CR 6pm
F	2	
M	5	
Tu	6	
W	7	
Th	8	JCC 2.30pm
F	9	
M	12	
Tu	13	O&S
W	14	Planning
Th	15	Council
F	16	
M	19	
Tu	20	
W	21	
Th	22	
F	23	
M	26	
T	27	
W	28	
Th	29	Cabinet 6pm
F	30	

AUGUST 2021

M	2	
Tu	3	
W	4	
Th	5	
F	6	
M	9	
Tu	10	O&S
W	11	
Th	12	
F	13	
M	16	
Tu	17	
W	18	Planning
Th	19	
F	20	
M	23	
Tu	24	TEB 10am
W	25	
Th	26	Cabinet 6pm
F	27	
M	30	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	31	

SEPTEMBER 2021

W	1	
Th	2	
F	3	
M	6	
Tu	7	Joint Transportation
W	8	
Th	9	JCC 2.30pm
F	10	
M	13	
Tu	14	O&S
W	15	Planning
Th	16	
F	17	
M	20	
Tu	21	
W	22	
Th	23	
F	24	
M	27	
Tu	28	Audit
W	29	
Th	30	Cabinet

OCTOBER 2021

F	1	
M	4	
Tu	5	
W	6	
Th	7	
F	8	
M	11	
Tu	12	O&S
W	13	Planning
Th	14	
F	15	
M	18	
Tu	19	
W	20	
Th	21	Council
F	22	
M	25	
Tu	26	
W	27	
Th	28	Cabinet
F	29	

NOVEMBER 2021

M	1	
Tu	2	
W	3	
Th	4	
F	5	
M	8	
Tu	9	O&S
W	10	Planning
Th	11	JCC 2.30pm
F	12	
M	15	
Tu	16	
W	17	
Th	18	
F	19	
M	22	
Tu	23	TEB 10am
W	24	
Th	25	Cabinet
F	26	
M	29	
Tu	30	Audit

DECEMBER 2021

W	1	
Th	2	
F	3	
M	6	
Tu	7	O&S
W	8	Planning
Th	9	Council
F	10	
M	13	
Tu	14	Joint Transportation
W	15	
Th	16	Cabinet
F	17	
M	20	
Tu	21	
W	22	
Th	23	
F	24	OFFICES CLOSED
M	27	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	28	**BANK HOLIDAY**
W	29	
Th	30	
F	31	

JANUARY 2022

M	3	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	4	
W	5	
Th	6	
F	7	
M	10	
Tu	11	
W	12	
Th	13	JCC 2.30pm
F	14	
M	17	
Tu	18	Licensing/ Regulatory 10am/10.30am
W	19	Planning
Th	20	
F	21	
M	24	Standards
Tu	25	
W	26	
Th	27	Cabinet
F	28	
M	31	

* No O&S meeting in January due to Budget Scrutiny

FEBRUARY 2022

Tu	1	
W	2	
Th	3	
F	4	
M	7	
Tu	8	O&S
W	9	
Th	10	
F	11	
M	14	
Tu	15	
W	16	Planning
Th	17	
F	18	
M	21	
Tu	22	TEB 10am
W	23	
Th	24	Cabinet
F	25	
M	28	

MARCH 2022

Tu	1	Joint Transportation
W	2	
Th	3	Council (C Tax)
F	4	
M	7	
Tu	8	O&S
W	9	
Th	10	JCC 2.30pm
F	11	
M	14	
Tu	15	Audit
W	16	Planning
Th	17	
F	18	
M	21	
Tu	22	
W	23	
Th	24	
F	25	
M	28	
Tu	29	
W	30	
Th	31	Cabinet

APRIL 2022

F	1	
M	4	
Tu	5	
W	6	
Th	7	
F	8	
M	11	
Tu	12	O&S
W	13	Planning
Th	14	
F	15	**GOOD FRIDAY**
M	18	**EASTER MONDAY**
Tu	19	
W	20	
Th	21	Council
F	22	
M	25	
Tu	26	
W	27	
Th	28	Cabinet
F	29	

MAY 2022

M	2	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	3	Selection & CR
W	4	
Th	5	
F	6	
M	9	
Tu	10	O&S
W	11	
Th	12	JCC 2.30pm
F	13	
M	16	
Tu	17	
W	18	Planning
Th	19	Council
F	20	
M	23	
Tu	24	TEB 10am
W	25	
Th	26	Cabinet
F	27	
M	30	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	31	

KEY

O&S - Overview and Scrutiny

JCC - Joint Consultative Committee

School Holidays

C
040321

MAY 2022

M	2	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	3	Selection & CR
W	4	
Th	5	
F	6	
M	9	
Tu	10	O&S
W	11	
Th	12	JCC 2.30pm
F	13	
M	16	
Tu	17	
W	18	Planning
Th	19	Council
F	20	
M	23	
Tu	24	TEB 10am
W	25	
Th	26	Cabinet
F	27	
M	30	**BANK HOLIDAY**
T	31	

JUNE 2022

W	1	
Th	2	
F	3	
M	6	
Tu	7	Joint Transportation
W	8	
Th	9	
F	10	
M	13	
Tu	14	O&S
W	15	Planning
Th	16	
F	17	
M	20	
T	21	Audit
W	22	
Th	23	
F	24	
M	27	
Tu	28	
W	29	
Th	30	Cabinet

JULY 2023

F	1	
M	4	
Tu	5	
W	6	
Th	7	
F	8	
M	11	
Tu	12	O&S
W	13	Planning
Th	14	JCC 2.30pm
F	15	
M	18	
Tu	19	
W	20	
Th	21	Council
F	22	
M	25	
T	26	
W	27	
Th	28	Cabinet
F	29	

AUGUST 2022

M	1	
Tu	2	
W	3	
Th	4	
F	5	
M	8	
Tu	9	O&S
W	10	
Th	11	
F	12	
M	15	
Tu	16	
W	17	Planning
Th	18	
F	19	
M	22	
Tu	23	TEB 10am
W	24	
Th	25	Cabinet
F	26	
M	29	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	30	
W	31	

SEPTEMBER 2022

Th	1	
F	2	
M	5	
Tu	6	Joint Transportation
W	7	
Th	8	JCC 2.30pm
F	9	
M	12	
Tu	13	O&S
W	14	Planning
Th	15	
F	16	
M	19	
Tu	20	
W	21	
Th	22	
F	23	
M	26	
Tu	27	Audit
W	28	
Th	29	Cabinet
F	30	

OCTOBER 2022

M	3	
Tu	4	
W	5	
Th	6	
F	7	
M	10	
Tu	11	O&S
W	12	Planning
Th	13	
F	14	
M	17	
Tu	18	
W	19	
Th	20	Council
F	21	
M	24	
Tu	25	
W	26	
Th	27	Cabinet
F	28	
M	31	

NOVEMBER 2022

Tu	1	
W	2	
Th	3	
F	4	
M	7	
Tu	8	O&S
W	9	Planning
Th	10	JCC 2.30pm
F	11	
M	14	
Tu	15	
W	16	
Th	17	
F	18	
M	21	
Tu	22	TEB 10am
W	23	
Th	24	Cabinet
F	25	
M	28	
Tu	29	Audit
W	30	

DECEMBER 2022

Th	1	
F	2	
M	5	
Tu	6	Joint Transportation
W	7	Planning
Th	8	Council
F	9	
M	12	
Tu	13	O&S
W	14	
Th	15	Cabinet
F	16	
M	19	
Tu	20	
W	21	
Th	22	
F	23	
M	26	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	27	**BANK HOLIDAY**
W	28	OFFICES CLOSED
Th	29	
F	30	

JANUARY 2023

M	2	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	3	
W	4	
Th	5	
F	6	
M	9	
Tu	10	
W	11	
Th	12	JCC 2.30pm
F	13	
M	16	
Tu	17	Licensing/Regulatory 10am/10.30am
W	18	Planning
Th	19	
F	20	
M	23	Standards
Tu	24	
W	25	
Th	26	Cabinet
F	27	
M	30	
Tu	31	

* No O&S meeting in January due to Budget Scrutiny

FEBRUARY 2023

W	1	
Th	2	
F	3	
M	6	
Tu	7	
W	8	
Th	9	
F	10	
M	13	
Tu	14	O&S
W	15	Planning
Th	16	
F	17	
M	20	
Tu	21	TEB 10am
W	22	
Th	23	Cabinet
F	24	
M	27	
T	28	

MARCH 2023

W	1	
Th	2	Council (C Tax)
F	3	
M	6	
Tu	7	Joint Transportation
W	8	
Th	9	JCC 2.30pm
F	10	
M	13	
Tu	14	O&S
W	15	Planning
Th	16	
F	17	
M	20	
Tu	21	Audit
W	22	
Th	23	
F	24	
M	27	
Tu	28	
W	29	
Th	30	Cabinet
F	31	

APRIL 2023

M	3	
Tu	4	
W	5	
Th	6	
F	7	**GOOD FRIDAY**
M	10	**EASTER MONDAY**
Tu	11	O&S
W	12	
Th	13	
F	14	
M	17	
Tu	18	
W	19	Planning
Th	20	Council
F	22	
M	24	
Tu	25	
W	26	
Th	27	Cabinet
F	28	

MAY 2023

M	1	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	2	
W	3	
Th	4	ABC Elections
F	5	
M	8	
Tu	9	
W	10	
Th	11	
F	12	
M	15	
Tu	16	
W	17	
Th	18	Selection & CR
F	19	
M	22	
Tu	23	
W	24	
Th	25	Council
F	26	
M	29	**BANK HOLIDAY**
Tu	30	
W	31	

KEY

O&S - Overview and Scrutiny

JCC - Joint Consultative Committee

School Holidays