

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL:
NOTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF
THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION
& INVESTMENT BOARD**

25th August 2021

Attending: Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)
Cllr. Bartlett
Cllr. Clokie
Cllr. Ovenden
Cllr. Shorter

Also in attendance Cllr. Iliffe

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Corporate Property and Projects
Commercial Development & Regeneration Manager
Estates Manager
Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure
Head of Corporate Policy, ED & Comms
Communications & Marketing Manager
Head of Service Port Health
Economic Development Manager
Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development)
Head of Finance and IT
Member Services & Ombudsman Liaison Officer

	ACTION
<p>1. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett declared that he was a Member of Kennington Community Council and that he had written the Central Ashford Community Forum's response to a planning application on land next to Mabledon Avenue.</p>	
<p>2. Notes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board held on 29th June 2021 were agreed and confirmed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>3. Ashford Indoor Bowls Club</p> <p>Members agreed that the Bowls Club should be encouraged to grow and sustain their membership base and to become more open to the community in general. Any club subsidised by the Council should have an open membership and embrace access</p>	

<p>by the general public. The Estates Manager confirmed that the Bowls Club had CASC status (Community Amateur Sports Club) which was the equivalent of charity status for a sports organisation. The Principal Solicitor advised that it would not be appropriate to adopt the approach taken to the S2 site as the Community Uses agreement was not wholly transferrable, although some of the principles could be adapted for the Bowls Club facility at Victoria Park. Officers advised that at a recent meeting Bowls Club members had indicated a willingness by the Club to adopt a more proactive approach going forward.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That a Service Level Agreement be put in place, led by Cultural Services; b) That the lease be offered on reduced terms for a period of 2 years, subject to measured and tangible improvements in membership, led by Corporate Property; c) That interim progress reports be received from the Indoor Bowls Club by Cultural Services; d) That these arrangements be scrutinised and reviewed at 2 years by both the Cultural and Corporate Property Services. 	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Culture, Tourism & Leisure</p>
<p>4. Carlton Road Business Park – Unit Lease</p> <p>Members discussed the commercial arrangements of the current tenants of the site, as well as the future viability of their operation. Officers explained that they were seeking to assist in the creation of jobs and opportunities in Ashford, although it was recognised that this could be a risky inward investment opportunity. Members supported a cautious approach, with the offer of a further 3 months' occupancy, and an emphasis on keeping the Tenancy at Will status.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>To allow the current tenant to continue their occupancy but review their progress in 3 months' time to see how much they had been able to grow the business and their level of turnover.</p>	<p>Estates Manager</p>
<p>5. Land at Mabledon Avenue</p> <p>The Estates Manager introduced this item and highlighted the key points within the report.</p> <p>Members supported the recommendations and considered that this would be a sound investment. It was noted that the price of land per acre was very high, but it was accepted that this was the</p>	

<p>current state of the market for parcels of land in the town centre.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>That officers be authorised to pay a figure not exceeding the sum agreed by the Board for the site. Cultural Services to explore the opportunity for this piece of land to be incorporated as part of the overall cycling and walking strategy.</p>	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Culture, Tourism & Leisure</p>
<p>6. NCP Car Park Lease</p> <p>The Estates Manager introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key issues within the report.</p> <p>Members were in support of the recommendations.</p> <p>Agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Officers negotiate a surrender of the lease back to the Council at a figure not less than agreed by the Board in a full and final settlement of all liabilities to the Council; (b) A surrender agreement be expedited at the earliest opportunity; (c) The Parking, Transport and Highways Team develop their plans to take over the management of the car park at the appropriate time, and report further on potential tariffs and their rationale for further consideration. 	<p>Estates Manager & Head of Community Safety & Wellbeing</p>
<p>7. Elwick Site Update</p> <p>The Head of Commercial Property and Projects introduced this item and highlighted the main points within the report. The Principal Solicitor gave advice on the various elements of the proposed supplemental agreement.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>Members noted the progress on reaching agreement on the terms of the supplemental agreement.</p>	
<p>8. Investment Opportunity in Town Centre</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Property and Projects gave a verbal update on this item. He advised Members of an opportunity to acquire a key town centre site.</p> <p>Members discussed this opportunity in some detail and the</p>	

<p>Deputy Chief Executive advised that new guidance from the PWLB meant that a loan could be obtained, provided the site was acquired for regeneration purposes. However, if purchased to operate as currently, the Council would jeopardise its ability to access PWLB funding for any purpose. If this project were to continue it would be necessary to provide a clear strategy for future use in order to manage this risk. It was agreed that further information was required on a potential tenant for the site and officers were asked to follow up on this question.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>That Officers continue to investigate this opportunity and provide further information at future meetings. This should be a regular item at ERIB meetings for the time being in order to keep this key site in mind.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Property & Projects/Economic Development Manager</p>
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>7th September at 10am in the Council Chamber.</p>	

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