

**Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the  
Ashford Strategic Delivery Board held on Microsoft Teams on  
Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

**Board Members**

Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Chairman) – Leader, ABC  
Rt Hon Damian Green MP  
Cllr Matthew Forest – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Tourism and Leisure, ABC  
Cllr Nathan Iliffe – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Property, ABC  
Mr David Brazier – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, KCC  
Mr Derek Murphy – Cabinet Member for Economic Development, KCC  
Simon Jones – Corporate Director - Growth, Environment and Transport, KCC  
Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive, ABC  
Paul Sayers - East Kent College  
Richard Penn – Area Manager, Environment Agency  
Shona Johnstone - Homes England

**Non Board Members**

David Smith, KCC  
Rebecca Anderson, KCC  
Matt Hogben, KCC  
Ben Lockwood, ABC  
Tracey Butler, ABC  
Paul McKenner, ABC  
Simon Cole, ABC  
Charlotte Hammersley, ABC  
Andrew Osborne, ABC  
Jo Fox, ABC  
Thomas Jenkins, ABC  
Dean Spurrell, ABC  
Linda Stringer, ABC  
Danny Sheppard, ABC.

**Apologies**

Rebecca Spore, Victoria Thistlewood, SallyAnne Logan.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action</b>
1.	<b>Welcome</b>  The Chairman welcomed all those present to the Virtual meeting. He asked attendees to consider if they would like	

	to continue meeting virtually or revert to in person in the future. There was a preference for face to face meetings from those present.	<b>CH/DSH</b>
2.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b>  Noted.	
3.	<b>Ashford College – Update on Capital Project</b>  Paul Sayers (PS) of East Kent College, gave a presentation updating on Phase 2 of the Ashford College development as well as the continuing progress at the College itself. The presentation included updates on: - the very positive OFSTED monitoring visit in January 2022; a positive visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury; investment in new engineering equipment with a focus on energy efficiency; working with others on the Newtown Works and Brompton projects; and a detailed update on Phases 2 (which would now include Phases 2A and 2B happening simultaneously as one £9m project with the building foundations already in place).  The Chairman thanked PS for the presentation. He thought the fact at Phases 2A and 2B could happen together, with a view to full opening in September 2023, was splendid news. This was all pivotal in raising the skills levels in the Borough and supporting other developments coming forward.  Tracey Kerly (TK) asked if there were any plans to phase opening if there was a delay in construction of one of the phases. PS said this is something they would be discussing with the contractors as part of their panel interviews as it was obviously be preferable if necessary.	
4.	<b>Jasmin Vardimon</b>  David Smith (DSm) gave an update on the development of a new 29 unit estate at Henwood Industrial Estate, which included the new facility for the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company. The focus was on occupation by cultural or creative industries and at present all 29 units were either sold or under offer – along with Jasmin Vardimon Dance Studio, this also included Kent Music and others.  The only slight hiccup had been with UK Power Networks and their connection of the additional electricity capacity required. This was now due to be completed within the month. He advised that he would bring photos of the interiors and exteriors to the next meeting, once all	

	<p>decorating was complete.</p> <p>The Chairman said he was extremely pleased to hear of the developments. He hoped that the estate could be given a new name that would befit its connection to creativity and the arts. DS<sub>m</sub> advised this was being looked in to, along with the naming of the new internal road to the facility which they were looking to name after someone with a musical background locally. Simon Jones (SJ) advised that they were also looking at installing some brown road signs on nearby roads to identify the location of this facility.</p> <p>TK asked if ABC could be provided with a schedule of the occupiers/leaseholders of the 29 units. It was confirmed that this would be done through the respective Property teams at KCC and ABC.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Project Green - Brompton</b></p> <p>The Chairman introduced this item and said the Borough had been extremely fortunate to attract the Brompton development in competition was larger northern cities. It was an extremely ambitious and exciting project, but thanks to the support of many agencies they had been successful so far.</p> <p>Paul McKenner (PMcK) gave a presentation updating on the project, including a CGI ‘walk-through’ of the proposed facility and surroundings as well as a television news interview with Will Butler-Adams, CEO of Brompton Bicycles. The presentation included: - the context of this project along with others happening in the town centre; the site location and constraints; the existing marshland and the development of a wetland solution and other flood mitigation measures including the added benefit of a 61 acre Country Park; development of cycle routes; potential site access from the highway; and an explanation and visuals of the three phases of the development. The presentation also focussed on the overall benefits of the project, not least in terms of jobs, ecology, environment, sustainability and a boost to Ashford’s visitor economy. The timescale for the development aimed at start on site in Spring 2023, completion of the first phase by Summer 2025 and then a year for Brompton to fit out the facility and transition their operations with a view to the first phase being fully open and up and running by 2026/27.</p>	

6.	<p><b>Newtown Works</b></p> <p>The Chairman advised that this project was currently at a delicate stage of the negotiations and therefore this would come back to a future meeting once final agreements had been reached. He assured that the project was proceeding at pace, including the due diligence around the Levelling-Up funding.</p>	PMcK
7.	<p><b>Project Updates</b></p> <p>The report enclosed with the agenda set out the latest position on progress in respect of the Priority Projects and the Watching Brief projects, for noting.</p>	
8.	<p><b>AOB – Shared Prosperity Fund</b></p> <p>Charlotte Hammersley (CH) advised that the Government had announced the allocation UK Share Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) the previous week and Ashford had been awarded just over £1m over three years. UKSPF sought to replace the EU structural funds and allow Local Authority led investment in the local community. She explained the criteria and process for spending the funding, including the setting up of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) where there would be a role for partners to play in properly directing this funding. CH said that recent consultation work and the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan stood ABC in good stead to understand what was needed and wanted locally and to shape the direction of the LIP and the spending of the funding.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that given current economic uncertainties and the cost of living crisis, he was considering ring-fencing the money generated from the £5 a year increase in Ashford’s proportion of the Council Tax for the next four years. This would be used to begin building a reserve to sit alongside the UKSPF funding, which could be spent in the Borough on aiding people having difficulties with the changing economic climate. This was an emerging idea and something he had to discuss further with Cabinet and Officer colleagues.</p> <p>Board Members welcomed the funding and proposed approach, but did have some concern over the potential level of bureaucracy involved. It was considered that this was an issue across Government funding streams and that Localism as a concept would only truly work if Local Authorities were given genuine autonomy to spend such funding. Damian Green (DG) said this was something he was cognisant of at a Government level and he was looking</p>	

	to compile a dossier of evidence of such micro-management from Whitehall. He encouraged anyone with any examples of this to pass them on to him.	
9.	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022  Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022  Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023  Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023</p> <p>All at 10am</p>	<b>DSh</b>

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services  
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