

**Notes of a Meeting of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board
held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ashford on
Friday 21st April 2023 at 10.00am**

Present:

Board Members

Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Chairman) – Leader, ABC
Cllr Peter Feacey - Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance, ABC
Cllr Matthew Forest – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation, ABC
Cllr Neil Shorter - Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Digital, ABC
Mr David Brazier – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, KCC
Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive, ABC
Paul Sayers - East Kent College
Richard Penn – Area Manager, Environment Agency
Shona Johnstone – Homes England
Sandra Norval – Southern Water

Non Board Members

David Smith, KCC
Karen Frearson, KCC
Ben Lockwood, ABC
Simon Cole, ABC
Charlotte Hammersley, ABC
Andrew Osborne, ABC
SallyAnne Logan, ABC
Shaun Meyer, ABC
Chris Dixon, ABC
Dean Spurrell, ABC
Danny Sheppard, ABC
Jonathan Rutland, Chilmington Green School
Beth Walker, Chilmington Green School

Apologies

Damian Green MP, Cllr Nathan Iliffe, Cllr Noel Ovenden, Derek Murphy, Simon Jones, Paul McKenner, Huw Evans.

Item	Notes	Action
1.	Welcome The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting. He advised that as was his last Board meeting as Chairman and Leader of ABC, he hoped colleagues would indulge him	

	<p>for a few moments whilst he reflected on the background and achievements of this Board.</p> <p>He ran through the inception of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board and his aim for it to act as a vehicle for delivery and change by getting the key players from all of the relevant organisations around one table and driving change together. The importance of this Board in changing mindsets and actually delivering projects (initially the Big 8, but many more in addition) and enabling other developments, should not be underestimated.</p> <p>He wanted to thank all involved for their contributions, particularly over the last 10 years. When one considered what had been achieved in that time he thought it had been quite remarkable and he knew this would continue in to the future.</p>	
2.	<p>Notes of Previous Meeting – 23rd September 2022</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
3.	<p>South of Ashford Garden Community Update – including new Secondary School</p> <p>Jonathan Rutland (JR) gave a presentation on Chilmington Green Secondary School. This included: - an introduction to United Learning; an overview of the new school itself including the temporary site at Jemmett Road; a timetable for opening on site and increasing roll numbers; the school's ethos and educational offer; local links; the school building itself; sustainability and energy use; and the school's role at the heart of the growing Chilmington Green community.</p> <p>Cllr Neil Shorter (NS) thanked JR for his presentation and reminded colleagues that the whole ethos of Chilmington Green and the wider South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) was to do things differently. The concept was to get as much in place as possible before residents started to move in and, whilst there had been some challenges along the way, this was still the correct concept. He reminded of the importance of enabling easy access to both the primary and secondary schools for residents and for the secondary school to take its place as a hub within the community.</p> <p>JR confirmed that although the initial focus was getting people to the temporary site safely, they were working with KCC on safe routes (walking and cycling). He also confirmed that it was very much their intention to embrace sustainability in everything that they did, including extra-</p>	

	<p>curricular activities and community use. Those plans would develop when they were active on site.</p> <p>Simon Cole (SC) then gave a more general update on development at the South of Ashford Garden Community. This included updates on: - Chilmington Green, Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green; sustainable transport projects; the Garden Community Room; early community development; the strategic park (Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Park); health provision; and the next steps.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked both JR and SC for their presentations. He wanted to acknowledge the support of Homes England, whose financial support had helped this development enormously. He hoped this was a demonstration that this Borough had delivered when it received grants and funding.</p> <p>There was some discussion about highway improvements at the A28 and how these were becoming more critical as development continued. It was also noted that ancillary roads to the development were beginning to take a level of construction traffic that they were not originally built to take, and there needed to be more consideration of that ‘unintended consequence’.</p> <p>NS mentioned health provision and how it was currently difficult to establish exactly what would be needed across the SAGC and he hoped this Board could perhaps become the avenue to improve the strategic relationship with healthcare providers.</p>	
4.	<p>Ashford College (including Phase 2 Update)</p> <p>Paul Sayers (PS) of East Kent College gave a presentation on progress at Ashford College. This included: - the recent OfSTED inspection; involvement in the ‘Ashford Unframed’ mural project; the new engineering learning lab; partnering with Brompton; and a more detailed update on Phase 2 include programme details and expected outcomes.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked PS for his presentation. He said the story of the College continued to be such a positive one and a real success story.</p> <p>Sandra Norval (SN) of Southern Water advised that they were undertaking an educational project around water efficiency in industry and wondered if there were opportunities to work together, particularly with the plumbing students at the College. PS said this certainly sounded like</p>	

	something they could work together on.	
5.	<p>Newtown Works</p> <p>In the absence of Huw Evans who had been taken unwell, Ben Lockwood (BL) gave a presentation updating on the Ashford International Studios at Newtown Works. This included: - a site timeline and overview; details of the 2020 planning application currently being delivered; the Ashford International Development Company (AIDC); demolition of the existing sheds; archaeology; drainage works; Section 278 works; detailed design; sales and lettings; and work with the college.</p> <p>Cllr Peter Feacey (PF), Chair of the AIDC, said there was a lot of community engagement ongoing and this would be vital. It was important to take the people of South Willesborough along with the project and the Company had offered £3k to contribute towards the local community event that summer as a goodwill gesture. This was supported by the Board.</p>	
6.	<p>Stodmarsh Update</p> <p>SC gave a verbal update on this issue. He advised that the ABC Cabinet had received a report at its March meeting which advised of the Council's proactive work to deliver strategic nutrient mitigation. This was in the form of identifying suitable land in the Borough for strategic wetlands, which could generate off-site nutrient mitigation that could then be secured by developments, allowing them to be granted planning permission. This work had progressed and the report had also outlined what a future Nutrient Neutrality Supplementary Planning Document was likely to cover. A draft document would now be published and consulted upon once appropriate. SC considered this whole issue demonstrated Ashford's ethos of acting proactively and 'doing something' to resolve problems, rather than sitting around and waiting for things to happen.</p> <p>The Chairman said that ABC had taken the lead on this issue and continued to do so. This had been recognised by the Government and, for a variety of reasons, he looked forward to the development of strategic wetlands in the Borough.</p> <p>SC said it was important to take the opportunity to remind colleagues that ABC would need the help of its partners to resolve this issue.</p>	

7.	<p>Project Updates</p> <p>The report enclosed with the agenda gave the latest position on progress in respect of the core projects.</p> <p>These were noted.</p>	
8.	<p>Close</p> <p>In closing, the Chairman said that whilst Elected Members may come up with many ideas, it was the Officers that delivered, and he wanted to thank Tracey Kerly and her Management Team colleagues at ABC. He again thanked all who had attended this Board over the years and had made things happen.</p> <p>PF said that on behalf of this Board and ABC Member colleagues he wanted to thank Cllr Clarkson for his leadership over the years and thought that the achievements of this Board were a demonstration of the legacy he would leave behind.</p> <p>TK said she had worked with Cllr Clarkson for a number of years and it had been such a productive period. With regard to this Board in particular, without him in the Chair none of the successes would have been achieved. She was grateful to him and hoped that the groundwork had now been set to continue in the same direction in to the future.</p> <p>David Smith said, on behalf of KCC, it had been a real pleasure to work with Cllr Clarkson over the years and the best way he could describe it was “a real ride”! He wished him all the best for the future.</p>	
9.	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>TBC</p>	

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