

**Notes of a meeting of the  
Ashford Strategic Delivery Board  
Friday 26 October 2018 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

**Board Members**

Cllr Gerry Clarkson (Chairman) – Leader, ABC  
Rt Hon Damian Green MP  
Cllr Paul Clokie – Portfolio Holder for Planning, ABC  
Cllr Graham Galpin – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Property, ABC  
Cllr Mark Dance - KCC, Cabinet Member for Economic Development  
Barbara Cooper – KCC, Director – Growth, Environment and Transport  
Paul Harwood - Highways England  
Tracey Kerly, ABC

**Non Board Members**

Cllr Neil Shorter, ABC  
Cllr Aline Hicks, ABC  
Paul Kent, Southern Water  
Simon Sharp, Southern Water  
Stephen Gasche, KCC  
Matthew Hogben, KCC  
Victoria Seal, KCC  
Richard Alderton, ABC  
Simon Cole, ABC  
Christina Fuller, ABC  
Paul McKenner, ABC  
Jessica Brown, ABC  
Danny Sheppard, ABC

**Apologies**

Cllr Mike Whiting, KCC  
Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, Hadlow Group  
Chris Moore, Homes England  
Rebecca Spore, KCC  
Lois Jarrett, ABC  
Charlotte Hammersley, ABC

Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all those present and advised of a change to the order of the Agenda.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Station Spurs</b></p> <p>Stephen Gasche (SG), of KCC introduced this item. He advised that the problems being experienced by the new Eurostar trains at Ashford International Station were not related to the new signalling project, which had been successfully completed back in April, but with a conflict of power systems. A huge amount of work was going on behind the scenes between Network Rail, Eurostar and High Speed 1 in order to identify the most appropriate solution to remedy the problem. It was hoped that a decision would be taken in December as to the best solution in order for the work to be completed, fully tested and operational by April 2019. SG hoped to be in a position to give a more detailed update at the next Board meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019.</p> <p>Both the Chairman and the MP stressed the importance of this project for Ashford and the desire not only to retain international train services, but to increase them. The Board considered it would be good if the completion of works could coincide with announcements about Eurostar's new timetable.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Provision of Waste Water Infrastructure – Planning for Ashford Borough's Housing Growth - Update</b></p> <p>Paul Kent (PK), of Southern Water, gave an update on progress since the last meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018. He advised that they had made a fair amount of progress in the last quarter including working with the developers' chosen third party supplier for waste water – IWNL. With regard to the programme for completion for the Chilmington Green connection, PK advised that they had been examining this closely with ABC and been able to reduce the target date for completion by three months. Indeed, they were looking to try and shave even more time off.</p> <p>Whilst the permanent connection for Chilmington Green had been the priority, they were also beginning to focus on the other developments nearby. PK advised that a large</p>	

	<p>pumping station would be built at the edge of the Chilmington Green development that would also be able to link in to other developments. It was also likely that they would be able to complete works without the need for tankering, which was extremely welcome news.</p> <p>Cllr Shorter (NS) reiterated that the focus would shortly be moving from Chilmington to other areas in Ashford, although there did remain a risk of delay in the Chilmington project if a full Environmental Impact Assessment was deemed necessary.</p> <p>Simon Sharp (SS) said he would appreciate a follow up meeting with the Chairman on their business plan and, if it was possible, he would like to include the MP in that also.</p>	<p><b>Southern Water</b></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Town Centre Place Making</b></p> <p>Cllr Clarkson (GC) advised that he has asked for Town Centre Place Making to be the main focus of this meeting. A lot of work was already going on behind the scenes since this project had been made a priority earlier in the year. Several key projects were under consideration and moving ahead at pace. The target was to have built out and completed these by the end of 2021/22 and whilst that was an ambitious target, the Council was determined to meet it.</p> <p>Richard Alderton (RA) gave a presentation updating on progress with Town Centre Place Making since the last Board meeting in July. This captured the range of work that had already happened or was underway under the different workstreams and via the Council's Ashford Town Centre Place Making Board. More specifically, he gave a presentation on the draft options for the former Mecca Bingo Hall/Vicarage Lane car park site and initial design work undertaken by Ash Sakula Architects.</p> <p>Board Members expressed their strong interest in the emerging proposals from Ash Sakula which, if pursued, would of course be subject to a detailed design and planning application in due course. The concept of a town square enjoying new views of the church and which could be 'discovered' by locals and visitors alike, as well as a tree-lined section of Station Road, were seen as potential highlights.</p> <p>Cllr Galpin (GG) advised that the BBC Children in Need's Rickshaw Challenge would be coming to Ashford on its first night on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November and broadcasting live from Ashford Town Centre. Along with the increased visitor</p>	

	<p>numbers Ashford was already seeing as a result of the Snowdogs project, this would be another good opportunity for the town to show itself positively on a national platform.</p> <p>In response to questions about the recently received petition calling for the former Mecca Bingo building to be converted into a theatre, GC advised that this would be responded to in the proper way at Council. Related to this, the Council had already commissioned work to look at opportunities for providing a new indoor, multi-purpose performance space within the town and outcomes from that work would help to guide future plans.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Commercial Quarter</b></p> <p>Paul McKenner (PMcK) advised that the resurfacing of the International House car park had been completed and the additional public realm works were continuing. The planning application for the Coachworks would be coming to the Planning Committee soon and the only remaining issue to progress was the footbridge across the river and how that would complement the one already planned at the Kent Woolgrowers site.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Newtown Works</b></p> <p>PMcK gave a confidential update on the landowner's current progress in securing a third party purchaser for the site. It was expected that there would be progress on this in the next couple of weeks, when a wider update would be able to be issued.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Elwick Place</b></p> <p>PMcK advised that the centre was due for its official opening on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December, which would include the unveiling of the market gates and etchings. Practical completion was therefore ahead of schedule for 7<sup>th</sup> December, with the completion of the car park to take place the week before in order to allow for some testing. The unveiling of the Queen Marie statue would take place the following week (15<sup>th</sup> December), with a delegation from the Romanian Royal Family and other dignitaries.</p> <p>GC advised that they were also looking to use the date of the statue unveiling to award the first recipient of the newly created Ashford Ambassador Scheme. This would be Liliana Ţoriou of the Romanian Cultural Institute, for her work in bringing the statue to Ashford.</p>	

	<p>NS asked if KCC Highways could do all they could to ensure that the Shared Space area was looking its best for these two weekend events in December. These were important and potentially high profile events for the town and first impressions would really count and some of the 'black top' repairs that had taken place in the vicinity of the new development did need some attention. He accepted the point previously made on developer funding, but these developments would bring significant income to Ashford.</p> <p>GC advised that ABC was confident that the eateries would be fully taken up in due course. There was an element of 'chicken and egg' in that when the centre was open and there was a 'buzz' around the place, there would be no shortage of companies willing to come on board.</p> <p>On a general point the Board considered that this project was one of Ashford's huge successes. It was high quality, delivered on-time and under budget. Working relationships with the developer had been excellent and all involved had been successful in their desire to deliver something special.</p>	<p>KCC Highways</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Ashford College</b></p> <p>Mark Lumsdon-Taylor had given his apologies for the meeting but the project was on schedule with Phase 1A construction works scheduled to commence on site in July 2019 and to open to students in September 2020. The Group's focus in recent months had been the Ofsted inspections at their West Kent Campus, but results had been excellent.</p> <p>GC advised that the Council would be placing one of its town centre Christmas trees outside the main entrance to the College which he hoped would be a mutually beneficial location.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Designer Outlet Expansion</b></p> <p>Tracey Kerly (TK) advised that the work continued at a good pace and to plan. The new car park was open and already being well used during the half-term holidays. In response to a question Matt Hogben (MH) confirmed that the Newtown Road works would be complete by the end of November and the road would be reopened on time. Whilst the road works were always going to cause disruption, it was considered that the initial level of complaints had reduced significantly and the area had coped reasonably well.</p>	

10.	<p><b>Chilmington Green</b></p> <p>TK advised that both progress on site and working relationships with the developers were good. Houses were now being constructed and first occupations were expected for early Summer 2019. New applications were also being progressed.</p> <p>With regard to the A28 improvements, talks continued between KCC and the developer in order to secure the LEP funding and guarantee the project costs. It was hoped that this would be concluded in the coming weeks.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Garden Communities – Funding Bid to MHCLG</b></p> <p>RA advised that ABC was keen to put together a bid for funds to further progress its work in this area and deliver new garden communities in Chilmington and south of Kingsnorth. ABC was, as ever, keen to collaborate and work in partnership and would need support from its partners in the bid. In principle backing had been received from KMEP/SELEP but was also needed from this Board and DG as the local MP. The detailed bid would be shared in due course and both the Board as a whole, and DG signified their support for the bid and that the figure requested should actually be higher than that stated in the papers. It was noted that the department was now known as MHCLG rather than DCLG and this would need to be reflected in the bid documents.</p>	<b>ABC</b>
12.	<p><b>Junction 10A</b></p> <p>Simon Cole (SC) advised that the funding agreement for the scheme was now complete and forward funding from MHCLG had now been received. Paul Harwood (PH) said that work was ongoing and all on schedule. All were aware of the need to carefully co-ordinate the works with others happening on the M20 and to be cognisant of the effect a no-deal Brexit may have on that stretch of motorway from March 2019.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Jasmin Vardimon</b></p> <p>Christina Fuller (CF) advised that the project was on schedule with a planning application due imminently. Barbara Cooper (BC) said that KCC was working with JV on their bid to the Arts Council. The KCC contributions would have to go through their capital programme, so any support from relevant Members would be welcomed.</p>	

14.	<p><b>Victoria Park</b></p> <p>CF reported that work was ongoing with the design team to agree a revenue and capital position within the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). There had been an extensive consultation with local residents and stakeholders which had shown the desire for additional elements and a need to extend the original bid to meet those demands. These included a café/community hub, additional lighting and safety elements and further car parking. The proposed bid was therefore approx. £500k higher than the original, and ABC would be making a contribution of more than £1m along with the £3.7m being sought from the HLF.</p>	
15	<p><b>Conningbrook Country Park</b></p> <p>CF advised that as part of the masterplanning process for the site they were looking to address the issue of the KCC owned Depot which appeared to be a prime site for a potential community hub. There had been positive meetings with 'The Education People (TEP)' (KCC's Education Company) with a view to being able to provide some sort of Water Sports Centre on the site, close to the lake.</p> <p>GC said that whilst there had initially been some discussions about ABC acquiring the KCC Depot site, this was always with the aim of being able to work in partnership to deliver something that complemented all uses and added to the overall offer at the site. He considered it was not really important who owned the building if the objectives were met and he welcomed the comments made about improved collaborative working.</p>	
16.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019</p>	

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services  
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