

Minutes of the Ashford Economic Development meeting

Held on 21 June 2018

At Ashford Business Point

Present: Richard Lavender (Chair), Graham Galpin, Andrew Osborne, Heather Grigson, David Jackson, Richard Lloyd, Julie Anderson, Malcolm Vint
Maria Callow, Mat McLoughlin, Katie Hodson,

Apologies: Richard Stafford, Peter Corr, Hugh Summerfield, Philip Carter, Jo Rossi, Annette Bunn, Hannah Clayton-Peck, Catherine Igoe

RL introduced and welcomed Mat McLoughlin of Hadlow/Ashford College to the group. Mat will alternate with Tracey-Ann Barker from Ashford College, ensuring there is a two way flow of business/education needs at the table.

| | | Actions |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Minutes of the last meeting There was one amendment to be made in the minutes under AO's briefing and the minutes were then signed by the Chairman | |
| 1.1 | Matters Arising There were no other matters arising | |
| 1.2 | Action List Review A date for the up-date on broadband is still to be arranged. We now have 2 representatives from the college who will be doing alternate months so apprenticeships will be coming up again shortly. JA told the group about a Construction Youth Trust in the North Kent area. RL is to contact CH with the possibility of them joining the NKEDG | H C-P RL |
| 2. | Chairman's briefing RL reported that the CEO and Chairman had been invited to Westminster regarding the new third runway for Heathrow. It had been passed by the cabinet but needs to go to Government within 21 days. It is expected to go through the House reasonably unopposed. Letter JJ wants distributed to group, re:- Business Summit in July. Cummins House Old REME Barracks temporary accommodation until phase 1a completed and phase 2 will start later in the year. | |
| 3 | Round Table MC – all going well. Uplift in positive news regarding position of big 8 but no feed-back on how people feel about being in Ashford and how they connect. Local businesses are connecting with students. AO/GG – Brewery, Snowdogs | |

Place making board exploring 4 or 5 things around Ashford BC
Stakeholders conference to be held in October
There is a resident's survey taking place shortly.

JA – Feedback from the KCFG is there are lots of opportunities but people being played off one against the other, resulting in a lot of extra work and quotes being reduced

There is work out there and there is a lot of enquiries and estimating going on.

RAP are doing a lot with E K College. Did a presentation with 16 year olds and got them interacting, so much so that they wanted another session.

JA is now going back on a monthly basis

Katie and Mat will report next month

AO – briefed on presentation by Edge with Canterbury Christchurch regarding engineering manufacturing companies in the area. RL will discuss with Tim Alan

Brief on Innovation Investment Scheme.

RL suggested Tudor Price from the Business Hub attend a future meeting with update of facility.

There followed a lengthy discussion on education after RL asked a question regarding Construction wet trade apprentice training course's that had been cancelled for students from the Marsh Academy.

DJ – reported that there were another 24 weeks of roadworks left
Trade is solid but behind by 2% with footfall down 6% but these figures were expected with the works going on.

The brand mix has improved in preparation for opening of new development.

Seems more people will go to the outlet centres rather than to the high streets

HG – Workload is continuing to be busy and this is possibly because of all the housing numbers that have to be met across the country, incoming work mainly in the residential area sector. Tendering for projects is very competitive, nothing unusual, it does appear to be tighter than ever however.

Some larger developers are considering their options outside of London; this is being reflected in some companies setting up offices in Kent, Essex, Berkshire etc.

R Lloyd – environmentally there is no recycled material available. There are 2 main problems – no demolition being carried out at the moment and companies are battling for the same materials, when any becomes

available. RL asked if this was a blip or to do with building on green land as opposed to brown field sites. Possibly?

GG – resources and planning – not enough planning officers and unable to recruit them.

There is a question around what to do with Vicarage Lane. There is a new multi story car park going behind the bowling alley.

There is a planning meeting tonight in which the KWG site and phase 2 of Elwick Road will be discussed

MV – stock is virtually non existant expecially for letting. Residential sales are a bit slower. Rents around Ashford are very high. There has been a 20% rise in the last 12 months on 2 bedroom flats.

4 Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting was closed at 5.40pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING 19 JULY AT 4pm