

MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

AT ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT

Present: Richard Lavender (Chair), Peter Corr, Richard Stafford, Andrew Osborne, Katie Hodson, Hugh Summerfield, Jo Rossi, Maria Callow, Hannah Clayton-Peck, Matt McLoughlin, Darrell Healey GSE (guest)

Apologies: Graham Galpin, Heather Grigson, Julie Anderson, Philip Carter, Annette Bunn

Actions

An exceptional meeting was requested by AO for 3:15 to present the “**Ashford is Changing**”, AO and HC-P gave a very good interactive presentation, which gave all members an opportunity to interact with suggestions ideas and concerns regarding the Town Centre.

HC-P noted all comments made and it was agreed that there is a big challenge in getting Ashford as an area and the Town Centre to where we think it should go.

The overriding concern appeared to be personal safety after 6 pm.

A full list of suggestions will be made available by HC-P

It was agreed that all group members would be invited to the Public Launch, date to be announced. RL thanked everyone for their input.

At the start of the meeting RL welcomed Darrell Healey from GSE who proceeded to give a presentation on the Waterbrook development (a copy attached to the minutes). After the presentation, DH answered questions from the group.

DH said that the Highways England had requested a delay in the signalisation of the Orbital Park roundabout due to the current M20 J10a works.

The first commercial property to be built will be the Jaguar Landrover motor sales showroom and garage.

RL explained to the group that they were right to notice a building footprint at the current chamber location and confirmed that negotiations have been taking place between DH and JJ regarding a possible re-location.

RL also explained that the current Chamber entrance would need to be changed once the Orbital signalisation commences. This would be a new route to the upper car park from the first roundabout along Waterbrook Avenue.

MM on behalf of Ashford College could be interested in a couple of small units on Waterbrook Park and RL suggested he discuss directly with DH RL then thanked DH for coming along to give the presentation.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the July meeting were agreed as being a true record and were signed by RL.

1.1 Matters arising

There were no matters arising

1.2 Action list review

RL said he had passed on to the chair of the NKEDG details of the Youth Trust and their possible interest in going to the meetings.

Broadband update – HCP has agreed to update on broadband at the October meeting.

2. Chairman’s briefing:-

RL said that due to packed agenda for today there was nothing of importance to communicate. The next Board Meeting is on 27 September and any items of interest will be discussed at the October meeting.

3. Round table discussions

PC – parking at the Outlet is on schedule and 725 new spaces will be available from the 4 October. There is some new signage to go in. New Town Road is on schedule. 30% of the quota of new brands has already been achieved. At the moment there are no major issues. RL, not to sound like a cracked record asked if any progress had been made on the Stour tunnel. PC said an amount has been agreed re the pedestrian tunnel to the town centre and hopefully all relevant parties will agree this shortly.

KH – the space in the Commercial Quarter is filling up well.

MM – enrolments are going well and a couple of rooms, i.e. the board room and a meeting room have been converted into classrooms. There opportunities for apprenticeships. The Ashford Campus is hoping to become a Construction Centre of Excellence

There is a quarterly meeting with ABC relating to phase 1A. Ashford college is up for the design awards.

Hadlow has an office now in the Romney Marsh Resource Centre. A solution is being sought as to how funding can be made available to Marsh students to enable them to get to college in Ashford. RL said he would be discussing this topic at the next RMP and Ed/Business sub committee.

Hadlow College has invested in George Jessel Farms Invicta Vineyards at Canterbury and MM will keep us posted on progress.

AO – There is an evening event on the 2 October on Ashford town centre. On the 6 October there will be a discussion on the Mecca bingo site and Vicarage Lane.

The ‘snow dogs’ project was a big risk for ABC to do but it has been very successful.

AO and HC-P confirmed that invitations will be going out to all AEDG members for the “Ashford is Changing” public debate.

No-one else at the meeting had anything further to add

Date of next meeting Thursday 18 October 2018 at 4pm
Please let Lynda know if you are unable to attend