

**MINUTES OF THE ASHFORD ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2015
AT
ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT**

Present: Terry Botfield (Chair), Brian Hall, Liz Harrison (Guest) Jo James, Annette Bunn, Paul Nixon, Clare Clifford, Kate North, Heather Grigson, Michael Kolnberger, Malcolm Vint, Linda Marsh

Apologies: Richard Lloyd, Mandy Bearne, Hugh Summerfield, Jo Fowler, Richard Stafford, Graham Glapin

	Actions
<p>1. New AEDG Members The meeting was opened by TB welcoming Annette Bunn from Rift Group to the committee TB reported that Geoff Hilton had now retired from the committee</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Last Meeting These were agreed as being a true record.</p>	
<p>2.2 Matters Arising There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>3. Chamber Update JJ gave an update on the Chamber saying that she had a good team and everything seems to be going well with a positive variance on the first quarter of £26,000 JJ said that it has been put to the government that LEP be disbanded and she and Jeff Miles had been to London to try to get the Politician on side. KMEP – this covers the growth and supporting of Kent businesses. Operation stack was discussed at the last meeting. Although it affects the whole country the government have focused on the migrant issue. A survey on operation stack has been done for background information. A solution has been put forward with a potential site for 4,000 lorries JJ reported that the Chamber had won the bid for the Growth</p>	

Hub.

4. Broadband

Liz Harrison from KCC gave a presentation on the broadband roll-out. (copy of the presentation is attached)

5. Chairman's Report

Ashford Market Planning Application – KICC needs to respond regarding this application by the 4 October. TB will respond accordingly.

6. Portfolio Reports

Construction – report attached

The trend is that growth is continuing. HG said there seems to be a lot of money out there.

SME's – AB reported that funding is getting easier but there is still a way to go. There is still a real shortage of commercial property. KN said that Locate in Kent has half the number of properties that they had twelve months ago.

PN reported that Handels Banken is moving in to Ashford.

Santander want to grow from 7 to 11

NatWest is becoming more active in the area.

There is plenty of money out there. Asset Finance is particularly strong at the moment. Business finance has become easier to get but it is still tough for new companies.

KN reported that the Commercial Quarter land is being taken.

Elwick Place application is going in this week.

The Outlet Application will be going in front of the September committee next Wednesday. Locate in Kent has moved to Ashford.

HG had nothing to update on however there is to be a big debate on the 5 November re congestion and operation stack will be part of the debate. Kent will benefit from the fact that operation stack is now a general problem.

MV reported that the Kent market continues to grow. From the 1st October it will be a legal requirement for landlords to

make sure all rental properties have smoke alarms and co2 detectors fitted on each floor of the property.

LM updated on membership and events by saying that north Kent was growing strongly and west and east Kent were now doing well. Ashford and Canterbury are the two problem areas and these areas will be targeted over the next few weeks. Events are going extremely well.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm

Date of next meeting 15 October 2015