

MINUTES OF THE ASHFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2016

AT ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT

Present: Richard Lavender (Chair), Andrew Osborne, Jo James, Graham Galpin, Bryan Hall, Hugh Summerfield, Chad Nwanosike, Paul Nixon

Apologies: Malcolm Vint, Richard Stafford, Heather Grigson, Annette Bunn, Joanne Fowler, Mandy Bearne, Peter Corr

		Actions
1.	Minutes of the Last Meeting These were agreed as being a true record and signed by RL	
1.1	Actions from Minutes RL still to organise a date with RS to give and update on the EPC as group were keen to keep abreast with this HS was concerned that he did not take in all the information from JF's presentation. The group all agreed it was difficult to understand it all and it was suggested that JF be asked to come back and update in a few months.	RL
2.	Chairman's Report RL said it is important that as a group we decide where we are going and establish what we want to achieve as a group. The AEDG represents the local businesses and it is the role of the group to move forward on issues brought to the AEDG's attention by these businesses, through AEDG to the local authority, KICC if a county issue or to BCC if a higher issue. Future presentations will include Simon Cole from ABC on the 14 July who will talk about the local plan. RL said he would try to arrange for someone from South East Water to talk to the group about the proposal for non-domestic water supplies going out to the market. RL will also arrange for RS to give a presentation on EPC RL then asked JJ to give an update on the Chamber – JJ reported that last year had been a good year for the Chamber and for the first time we had a turnover of over £1 million. Some improvements to the building have been carried out from the profit including fitting new windows and having new heaters installed. Overall there was a 6% growth in membership and the events and events management side have had a good year. There has been a rise in the number of export clients we have on our books. How the current year goes will depend on the EU vote. If the vote is for leaving the EU there is bound to be some uncertainty and it is up to the Chamber to try and raise business confidence. Everything is going well with the LEP and numbers in KMED have increased. Local growth fund 3 is now out and all districts have been putting forward their business cases. There are two areas in Ashford that are under consideration – the spurs and the Ashford Town Centre Regeneration	

3. Group Reports

Transport and Infrastructure – RL asked at what point have Finberry got to put traffic lights on the roundabout at the end of Waterbrook Avenue. Chad thought it was once they got to about 800 houses which is still some way off. AO/GG said they would find out and report back next month.

Local Transport Plan 4 could impose a speed limit down the bypass.

Local plan 2017 A28 link between Pound Land and Park Farm roundabout ?????

JJ said the A28 duelling of Chart Road was still causing concern with businesses. JJ has asked Damian Green if he would come along to the next meeting – looking at a date in July. Issues revolve around car parking, lorries parking on the estate and the state of the road.

Business Finance – there are some new banks to the area including Handelsbanken and Metro.

HS said the grant application procedure was not very helpful. RL and HS to have a meeting regarding this.

PN reported that secondary lenders seem to be taking over and banks are being cut out. Banks have the money to lend but no-one to lend it to. Everything seems to be based around affordability not security.

Local Authority

RL told the group he had been forwarded a letter regarding problems for the business commuter being unable to get train tickets in the morning. AO said he had a copy of the original email and was dealing with the issue and would follow up with Richard Dean tomorrow and bring a response back to the group.

The Draft Local plan is now on line and open for comment until the 10th August.

AO said the Draft Plan allowed for 3,900 plus 12,600 new units with 11,100 jobs.

Areas designated are Kingsnorth, Kennington and Eureka Park. With Commercial sites at Waterbrook, Sevington, Eureka Park, Newtown Works and Henwood.

Planning Committee meeting this evening to discuss Victoria Way where 660 units are being recommended for permission.

The Commercial Quarter will be submitting a Plan in July.

Also to be discussed is the expansion of the cinema at J9.

Sevington development has now been approved.

There will be consultation around the new Community Infrastructure Levy

Meeting closed at 17:35

Next Meeting - Wednesday 14 September at 4pm

AO