

KENT INVICTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Minutes of the Ashford Economic Development Group
Held on
Thursday 14 April 2016
At
Ashford Business Point

Present: Heather Grigson, Peter Corr, Richard Alderton (guest), Terry Botfield, Richard Stafford, Malcolm Vint, Mandy Bearne, Bryan Hall

Apologies: Andrew Osborne, Hugh Summerfield, Jo Fowler, Graham Galpin, Linda Marsh

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| 1. | <p>Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true copy and signed by TB</p> | |
| 1.1 | <p>Matters Arising RS to do an EPC presentation in the future – the date is to be arranged</p> | RS/TB |
| 2. | <p>Chairman’s Comments and Report A28 – there has been a public consultation regarding the changes to the A28. There are some issues about road closures during the work. It has been suggested that information on possible road closures be included on the KICC bulletins that go out to members regularly. It will help to keep businesses informed of any interruptions that could affect business. Victoria Road – TB asked if there were any questions /comments on the Victoria Road proposals. Everyone was generally in support of the development of homes, a hotel, food stores, a brewery and a visitor attraction centre but there was some concerns regarding lack of parking. Barretts – the jaguar/landrover dealer has put in plans for a new showroom at Sevington as the current place on Ashford Orbital is not big enough to store all the vehicles. Everyone was mainly in support of this but the roundabout is a cause for concern as it is already difficult exiting from Waterbrook Avenue.</p> | |
| 3. | <p>Ashford Development Plans Update from Richard Alderton RA feels that Ashford is being turned around with a farmers market in the centre on a regular basis. There are some new businesses coming in to Park Mall</p> <p>The Commercial Quarter – an application agreement is due either today or tomorrow. Buying International House was a bold move by ABC</p> <p>Elwick Place – there is planning permission for a hotel, eateries and a cinema. They are due to start on site mid-summer 2016 with completion due Christmas 2017 There may be some apartments built at a later date on land in Elwick Road towards the station end.</p> <p>Designer Outlet – the 106 agreement is near completion and work on phase 1 is</p> | |

due to start spring 2017 with completion hopefully spring 2019

College – the contractors are on site now.

J10a – this has been a long time coming but it is finally getting there. The best guess on delivery is 2019. BH asked if there was going to be traffic lights on J10a – RA replied it is not on the cards at the moment.

Jasmin Vardiman – they are looking for a more low key industrial unit

Chilmington Green – the 106 agreement is nearly in place. There will be four developers involved with this project.

Ashford International - work needs to be done so that the new Eurostar trains can come into the station. Some money has come in through LEP but a bit more is still needed. Talks are going on with Eurostar at the moment to ensure that they still come in to Ashford station albeit with the old style train. There are to be announcements from Eurostar in the summer regarding the level of service.

Victoria Way – on the north side there will be an Aldi store and a brewery whilst on the south side there will be accommodation. It will help to re-invigorate Victoria Park

Finberry – this development is coming along nicely. There will be 1,100 new houses eventually. It will feel more like a community once the school and shops are there.

Conningbrook Lakes – a second builder is in the process of signing up.

TB thanked RA for the update

4. **Portfolio Reports**

PC – January to March the traffic through has gone down but otherwise it is like for like on other years. Sales are up by 9%. The centre would like to see an increase in foot-fall. Foreign visitors average about 5%

HG – nothing to report

RS – only things you cannot get on line are going into shops i.e tattoo artists, barbers etc. The market is busy but stocks are still low. The EU referendum is causing uncertainty.

MV – mad start to the year as people are trying to beat the tax changes. More stock seems to be coming on to the market but will possibly be a year of two halves depending on how the vote goes. Prices have bottomed out.

BH – B2B is the next KICC big event with all the stands being sold. BH said it would be very good if ABC could send someone in for the winning bid. Membership reps. Are trying to get in to larger organisations as we already have a lot of small businesses as members.

MB – reached the end of the year and achievements are good to average with 46 new companies coming in to Kent. Ashford rated fair to middling with 3 new companies coming in to Ashford. There has been an increase in demand for property in the area and supply has reduced rapidly. Foreign owned clients may go into another European country depending on the vote. There is a shortage of incubator space. An updated ‘Kent Property Market’ report is available on line now.

Date of next meeting – 19 May 2017