

MINUTES OF THE ASHFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP

HELD ON THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2017

AT ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT

Present: Richard Lavender, Heather Grigson, Jo Rossi, Graham Galpin, Hannah Clayton-Peck, Hugh Summerfield, Richard Stafford, Annette Bunn, Richard Lloyd, Peter Corr

Apologies: No apologies were received

	Actions RL/PC
<p>Peter Corr gave an update on the Outlet Centre before the minutes were agreed as he had a prior engagement.</p> <p>A contractor has been appointed and it is hoped that work will commence in November. The food court will close on the 7 January. January will see the main tent being dismantled and a start will be made on the new southern car park. There will eventually be 2 exits from the centre. There will be a bus service bank holidays and Saturdays from the town centre to the outlet centre and railway station.</p> <p>There is a 30% pre let for the new units and the centre currently has 100% let. PC suggested a discussion with RL regarding placing an information hoarding at the site to keep everyone up to date with developments. RL to contact PC</p>	
<p>1. Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as being a true record and signed by RL</p>	
<p>1.1 Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising</p>	
<p>1.2 Action List Review</p> <p>GG arranging for Police and Crime Commissioner to give a presentation – arrangements for this will be carried forward to the next meeting</p>	
<p>2. Chairman's Report</p> <p>RL reported that the Chamber has passed it's ISO 9001-2015 audit and the BCC accreditation.</p> <p>ABC are supporting 'Scale up Ashford' whereby they are sponsoring 6 local companies to expand their business. They went through a selection process with other companies and Forza Industries, Red Alert, AES Engineering, Directline Structures, Medash Signs and Visart were the ones chosen. The Chamber is running this for ABC</p> <p>It is the AGM next Friday – please make sure you book your place</p> <p>JJ has now made Tudor Deputy CEO</p> <p>The Dover Harbour Board development was discussed at the last board. The Chamber supports the development and taking sand from the Goodwin Sands however, the Chamber has no comment regarding any environmental issues and has supported on a business need only.</p>	

LTC – the process is now moving forward but financial support is now needed for the project.

The Construction Expo was excellent. There are lots of things happening in north Kent.

RL asked what is happening in New Town as all the signs have gone and everything seems to be at a stand still. It seems that there is a contamination problem that has put the project on hold. The model railway has pulled out because of the same problem. Hannah is to get a more comprehensive update.

HCP

3. ABC Discretionary Business Rate Relief

See attached leaflet.

RS gave a summary of his take on this and the group discussed this at length. It was felt that the total sum in the pot did not amount to a great deal, however every little helps and the proposal put forward by ABC was fully supported in its entirety.

RL will forward a letter of support or fill in the on-line questionnaire

RL

4. Round Table

HG – Is the 40mph speed limit on the 2070 working? It was felt that this would not work until average speed cameras were in operation

LTC – this is an amazing project with 2 tunnels 16m in diameter

There are some concerns regarding the new design for the junction at Elwick Road, however we will wait and see how it operates once completed.

HG raised the subject of Trafalgar House whereby the apartments above the empty shops have been bulk rented by a London Borough Council and the residents are causing a considerable amount of disturbance to local businesses in the area.

Is this something ABC were aware of and if so what are any safeguards on future developments like this being used to house London overspill.

GG/HCP

JR – there are 116 office properties available and 94 industrial units. JR will summarise this in a short presentation at the next meeting.

HCP – There is an investor breakfast at ABC on the 27 October. RL asked if this was for invited guests only as he was not aware and had not been invited, HCP said that she would get an invite sent

HCP

Broadband would be discussed as a future presentation, date to be arranged.

HS – reminded everyone about the Canterbury Festival and said it was well worth a visit

HS also pointed out the need to take a serious look at the design of current houses being built around Ashford. He considered they were ugly and out of character with their local counterparts.

RS – the new commercial units that are to be built in New Romney are already spoken for.

RS also highlighted the current staff shortages within many businesses.

RLI – pointed out that the T charge in central London comes into force with effect from Monday 23 October. This has been introduced with virtually no

warning and will have a massive impact on the haulage business as well as unaware motorists (see attached document).

RL thanked everyone for the lively meeting and their contributions.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm

Date of next meeting Thursday 16 November at 4pm

Please let Lynda know by lunchtime on Wednesday 15 November if you are unable to attend