

COUNCIL UPDATE 11.2024

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP)

I had a meeting on 4th November to review actions on the HIP for the unparished area of Ashford Central.

- New cyclist signage at Mill Court / Mace Lane has been requested and is scheduled to be installed once streetlight upgrade work has been completed.
- Speed management on Godinton Road by physical means rather than a lower speed limit is on hold following assessment of impact of traffic reduction following the bus gate camera becoming operational.
- School “Keep Clear” markings are to be considered for Godinton PS in Lockholt Close.
- Dover Place “Keep Clear” signage has been approved and the timetable for delivery is awaited.
- Signage for the Atherton Way Cycle path will not be taken forward by KCC as the route has not been adopted.
- Barriers for pedestrian safety at the Lidl / Barrow Hill Roundabout are being assessed by highways officers.
- I have requested a yellow box junction at the junction of Station Road / Beaver Road / Victoria Road to be brought forward ASAP. It is supported by the s106 for the former B&Q development but the residential development has been delayed due to the Stodmarsh SSSI nutrient / phosphorus neutrality issue.
- An extension to the double yellow lines in Heathfield Road has been requested at a point where passing is (particularly for emergency vehicles) is problematic.

KENT & MEDWAY BETTER MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

The Network met on 5th November. Its focus was on Education, key issues included.

- We heard from Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT – the mental health trust) which runs the Kent & Medway Recovery & Wellbeing College. It is free for 18+ residents who feel that attending the Recovery College will support them. It provides free and health and wellbeing educational courses (no clinical intervention) across several venue partners in Kent plus by zoom. Students do not need to have a mental health diagnosis and is free to anyone who feels they would benefit. It includes courses on personality disorder. Parents can attend. Courses are in community buildings not a clinical setting.
- NE London Foundation trust & Kent & Medway Community Health Foundation Trust provided a summary of the mental health support within schools. At primary schools it includes anxiety and healthy eating, and the team will work with parents. At secondary schools the

offer is extended to cover bullying, bereavement, smoking and drug and alcohol misuse. Full details at <https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-medway>. Vaping is becoming a much higher profile and KCC have set up a working group as it is recognised as a need that now needs to be addressed.



Calls to Kent School Health: 0300 123 5205 and select option two

- Discuss any concerns (general or emotional health) you have for a child or young person.
 - Provide advice on appropriate referrals.
 - Provide support strategies if a referral isn't appropriate at that time.
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- Poverty and financial hardship can prevent families from affording learning materials, or even transportation to school. Children in low-income households may also face pressure to contribute to family income, which interrupts their education. The digital divide creates a significant barrier, especially in an era where education is increasingly reliant on technology. Students without access to computers or the internet are disadvantaged, especially when schools shift to remote or blended learning models. All of these issues create mental health pressures on the pupils.

ENTRY EXIT SYSTEM (EES)

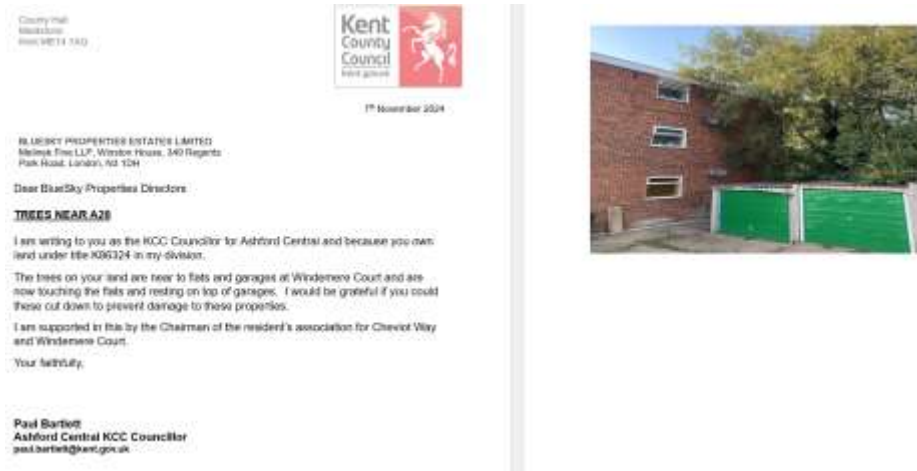
This was discussed at KCC on 7th November. The EES scheme was no implemented on its start date of 10th November with no date for its implementation due to lack of readiness. KCC will continue to ensure that it is prepared for the system when it is eventually brought in. The problem stems from the lack of space at Dover which means that iPads and handheld devices must be used rather than conventional booths that are used at Eurotunnel – these iPads are not robust or reliable enough to be used.

I asked in the debate to ensure that surplus space the IBF in Sevington is NOT used as a holding area for lorries as part of the reliance plans for Brock/EES. There is enough confusion for lorries currently accessing the IBF using inappropriate rural roads and we don't want to add to this issue in the light of the impending planning consent for the IBF's ongoing use. On the day

after the meeting, the Port of Dover received agreement to clear cars at the Western Docks as well as coaches.

BLUESKY PROPERTIES

I have written to BlueSky Properties regarding the trees touches the flats at Windermere Court and now touching the roofs of the garages.



Since writing to them BlueSky has placed the land on the market.

S106 AGREEMENTS

Councillors discussed the Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2023/24 on 13th November.

- Items of interest included the s106 for 19/01232/AS on 21.2.24 (Land southwest of junction of, Bullfinch Avenue, Finberry) which provides £49,149.45 Towards provision of pavilion or alternative indoor and outdoor sports facilities at Mersham Sports Club and £27,342.00 towards investment at Mersham Millennium Green with £20,475.00 towards maintenance thereof.
- S106 funding has been used to support the creation of 'The Arts Box' which is a converted shipping container into an arts and creative hub on the grounds of the Repton Community Centre. The hub provides Repton Community Trust with a dedicated space and tools for people to access art and creative activities to enhance well-being, meet new people, and support recovery from mental ill health. The Arts Box now have an Art Therapist in residence working with local families to provide individual therapy, group workshops, and activities – including activities varying from creative workshops, music, song writing, educational sessions to spoken word. I attended its opening.



- £82,576.39 has been applied from Pluckley Brickworks / Station Garage development (ref 14/01116/AS) towards Highworth School phase 2 extension.
- Ashford Hospital (Kings Avenue) ref 09/00962/AS has £44,353.61 unspent contribution towards cost of improvement to bus services. I have asked this to be used towards providing a Sunday service for the G Line.

KENNINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Council heard from Chief Inspector Sarah Rivett on 13th November. The target number of beat officers for Ashford is 12 and Kent Police have recruited 80%. A recent e-scooters day of action resulted in 6 being seized – further days of action are planned. Victim based crime has fallen by 55% – Kennington is a safe place to live.

GRANTS AVAILABILITY

Councillors were given a presentation on grants available on 14th November.

- Each member has an annual £3k community grant they can allocate to ward groups. I have allocated this for 2024/25 to the village hall, Mersham Brownies and Mersham School PTA.
- Capital expenditure grants of up to £10k are available; the total pot is £100k and this is spent for 2024/25.
- Strategic grants are given to prescribed organisations to keep them going including the Ashford Volunteer Centre, Ashford Advice, Sk8side, Willesborough Windmill and Ashford Mediation Service.
- Community events grants of up to £2k per event; the total pot is £20k.
- The UK Share Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund is a government scheme administered by ABC. It is for community assets and £30k is unspent for 2024/25. Applications to grantsandfunding@ashford.gov.uk.

ABC CABINET

The Borough Council cabinet met on 14th November. Key issues discussed included:

- The Borough Council has generated additional income of £300k from increased illegal unreported and unregulated fishing checks.
- £0.9m will be invested in redeveloping a brown field site at Ninn Lane to provide 40,000sqft of new light industrial units. We did hear that property income of £600k has been lost by increased voids at Elwick/International House and not light industrial units such as Ninn Lane.
- The Civic Centre relocation will start with the offices in December 2024 with the Civic Suite and Monitoring Centre moving “during 2025”. The date when the Customer Contact Centre will move is to be advised.
- The council has purchased 16 street residential properties in 2024/25 this follows a change in policy by the old government (which the new government is continuing with) that 100% of right to buy receipts being able to put to new properties. There has been a reduction in RTB receipts recently, but this is expected to increase in the short term before the new government returns the RTB discount to the lower levels that applied in 2012.
- The Council has made a loss related from the closure of the UBS Multi-Asset Income Fund of £680k in September 2024 (23% of the Council’s original investment of £3m). This is being covered by Council earmarked and general reserves (total sum £36m). The point I raised was about the governance concerning the closure and how the Council agreed to the UBS decision without challenge.
- The Council’s rent charging policy is to be amended to enable those tenants using temporary accommodation to apply the 2024 Local Housing Allowance rates in place of the 2011 rates.
- ABC Council Tax is expected to rise by 2.99% (£5.62 pa). A 1% increase in pay costs results in £200k on the ABC budget. The effect of the employer’s NIC on ABC is £678k (KCC £9.5m). Councils are yet to receive clarity from Government on how they will be ‘protected’ from the employer NIC, funding has been ‘set aside’, it is not yet clear where this money will come from, and the Government has not ruled out redirecting cash from local government funds elsewhere. The rise in employers’ NICs will have a significant impact on public health services, including sexual health and addiction services, health visitors and school nursing. While the NHS has been given an exemption to the NIC increase, health services commissioned outside the NHS have not.
- People with dementia may be eligible for a council tax reduction from Ashford BC if they have a dementia diagnosis. A registered medical professional, such as a GP or specialist consultant, must provide a written diagnosis of dementia and confirm that it's causing "severe

mental impairment". If there are two people living in a house and one suffers from dementia, then the single person discount may apply meaning your council tax is reduced by 25%. This reduction in council tax is not means tested and is open to all. You can ask ABC to backdate your council tax reduction but there is no policy on how far back they will go – I suggested 6 months is reasonable.

FINBERRY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cllr Liz Wright and I met with Beth Peel of Ashford Volunteer Centre to discuss potential and pitfalls for the Parish Council on 15th November. Key issues included:

- Dedicated officer time is essential to deliver the project successfully.
- Input will be needed on design at an early stage eg what lighting is needed depends on how the hall will be used. This design process should include the community.
- The Borough Council should consider what is provided nearby in the Borough so there is no duplication.
- Clear segregation of responsibilities between the ABC (who has a legal duty under s106) and the Parish Council (who does not have to be involved and may need an inducement) is required.
- The project is demanding and needs willingness from all stakeholders – it would be very easy to put this into the long grass (Crest would be delighted!)

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP)

The Partnership met on 19th November. I presented an opportunity for Ashford to host an event call "Hurried Steps" on or around International Women's Day on 8th March 2025. It consists of 5 actors recounting real stories of violence against women and girls (VWAG). It will be followed by a discussion of local experts and members of the audience including a information disseminated by VWAG support groups. There will be three performances in Kent and the question I put is whether Ashford or Tenterden wanted to be part of this or not; the cost is £2,780.

The results of the Youth Participation Survey were presented. The survey was to identify the services offered and what they needed. The biggest problems are crime and violence – feeling safe (an online perception), "nothing to do" and more lighting in alleyways. They loved the shopping!

Two new PCSO are joining Ashford Police in January, one new beat officer has recently joined.

Martyn's Law requires certain venues and events to take steps to reduce the risk of physical harm in the event of a terrorist attack is expected to be passed

into law by the anniversary of the Manchester attacks on 22nd May 2025. There will be a two-year period for organisations to be ready.

CHURCH ROAD, SEVINGTON SOUTH

I have reported the speed limit sign which has been knocked off its post (ref 840694) and nearby fly tipping (ref 21962070)



Damaged sign



Flytipping

HYPER ACUTE STROKE UNIT (HASU)

I have been seeking further assurance over the scheme to deliver a HASU at the WHH by EKHUFT. EKHUFT has proposed changes to the design of the unit at WHH to consider learning from COVID and to improve access for patients. This involves including an assessment bay so patients can be admitted straight to the HASU rather than Emergency Department – this is the same solution as Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells and Darent Valley have developed in their HASUs and is extremely successful. This means the designs will change significantly to incorporate this additional area. The Integrated Care Board have given approval for detailed designs to be scoped and costed and requested a further review to be undertaken when scoping was complete.

SCHOOL BUS IN MERSHAM

The KCC Public Transport Team has provided with the following information:

We have recently reviewed transport in this area as part of a retendering exercise, as the previous contracts serving Mersham, Aldington and Smeeth had reached their natural expiry. As part of this review, we established that the number of children assigned to each contract had reduced significantly, so we have now been able to accommodate all children onto one vehicle.

The new timetable has meant a longer journey for some students, particularly those from Mersham who had previously enjoyed a more direct route, but the journey is still under an hour and is considered reasonable. Continuing to provide two vehicles from this area would not be an efficient use of funds and cannot be justified.

We understand there has also been some punctuality issues in the morning, with the operator not keeping to the stated timings. This has added to the concerns raised by parents, but we are in contact with the operator, and this is being monitored closely.

I can confirm that the Operator has offered parents of Mersham children the option to be collected from the A20 bus stop, which would allow for a later pickup. In the afternoon, the operator would not be happy to drop them off on the A20 on safety grounds as there is no suitable crossing point.

STONESTREET SOLAR – OPEN FLOOR HEARING

The Planning Inspector held an “open floor” hearing on 19th November. It was an opportunity for anyone have their say about the planning application. I took the opportunity to speak about ABC Policy ENV10 which covers solar development. The policy provides:

- That does not result in significant adverse impact on the landscape, natural assets or heritage assets.
- That does not generate unacceptable level of traffic.
- That does not cause a loss of amenity (visual impact, noise or disturbance) to nearby residents.

My points were therefore:

- ABC guidance specifies a maximum period of only 25 years so the 40-year term is not acceptable.
- This application does not provide for sufficient gap between the solar panels to support biodiversity.
- The development will become a significant or defining characteristic of the village and North Downs ANOB. Guidance says that large scale PV should avoid landscapes designated for their natural beauty.
- Development it is partly on Best and Most Valuable Land which is unacceptable.
- Guidance requires the height to be 900mm above ground level. This condition is not met.
- National Policy Statement at Para 2.51.5 requires existing hedges and established vegetation to be retained which is not the case with the application as presented.

- National Policy Statement Para 2.54.7 requires the cumulative effect on the local road network to be considered by the highway authority to protect the residential amenity impact of access routes. Bank Road and Laws Lane in Mersham are both single tracks.

TRANSPORT SEMINAR

I attended a transport seminar at County Hall on 20th November. Key issues included.

- KCC offer free safe road users courses for Yr 7 and Yr 9 pupils plus young drivers and passenger courses. Details at saferoadusers@kent.gov.uk. Uptake is as follows.

Address	School Name	Type of School	General Contact Email	To date			Last Yr		
				RS 7	RS 9	YDF	RS 7	RS 9	YDF
	Chilmington Green School	Secondary	info@chilmingtongreenschool.org.uk						
	Higworth Grammar School	Secondary	office@higworth.kent.sch.uk						
	Hornwood School and Sixth Form	Secondary	info@hornwood.kent.sch.uk						
	The John Wallis Church of England Academy	Secondary	office@johnwallisacademy.org						
	The North School	Secondary	hts-office@swale.ac						
	The Norton Knollsport School	Secondary	information@nks.kent.sch.uk						
	Towers School and Sixth Form Centre	Secondary	reception@towers.school						
	Wye School	Secondary	office@wyeschool.org.uk						

- KCC have made no reduction in the budget for crash remedial works and there has been a moderate increase in central government funding for this. This, and s106 budgets if applicable, means that parishes are encouraged to bring schemes forward in their Highways Improvement Plans.
- KCC have £12m of capital funding and £0.7m of revenue funding to identify spaces on their highways network to provide electric vehicle charging points. It is expected that this will contrate on terraced areas with parking on-street. The criteria will ne power supply, parking (bearing in mind that some spaces will become dedicated for EV which may be outside people's homes and will need to shared – no hogging!) and local buy in.

STONESTREET SOLAR – CONTRUCTION TRAFFIC HEARING

I attended the Specific Issue Hearing on 21st November. It covered the issues relating to the impact on the community of the 12-month construction of the PV units and related traffic. Dashcam footage was shown on the impact of Goldwell Lane, but the Inspector asked to see footage of Laws Lane (but not Bank Road). My concern is with how the roads connecting Mersham and Aldington will be affected.

A limited amount of traffic will have to use the local roads in Mersham because the internal haul road will not be able to access the sites near Bank Road and Laws Lane. Traffic will travel along Bank Road from Bank Farm access. The applicant said it will be held at the Bank Farm access until the carriageway is clear. I think that this will result in an unacceptable impact on

the highway safety because Bank Road is a narrow single-track road, and any movements of large vehicles will prevent other vehicles to use the road. I asked that the use of Bank Road could be notified ahead of use so that local traffic from Mersham can be directed along Frith Road. Laws Lane is different as it is proposed that construction vehicles would only move across the road in two places – but why are multiple crossing places needed within 200 yards? There are concerns about the closure of the nearby Byway as it is a well-used equestrian route which needs to be protected so they can be used during construction.

The Inspector asked that the Considerate Construction Scheme to be adopted and there will be liaison with the community during the construction. Maintenance (and repair) of verges is a worry as there will be movement of large vehicles, it was proposed that the verges and roads are to be surveyed so they can be protected from further deterioration. I will ask in my updated submission that this is extended to the drainage ditches that are part of the highway.

REPTON ROADS

The main spine roads have been adopted by KCC and they are working with the developers to remediate the minor roads. It is anticipated the rest of Repton Park will be adopted in the early part of 2025.

CENTRAL FORUM

The Forum met on 25th November, primarily to discuss planning applications.

1. 1-11 New Rents – Application to Part Demolish. The forum was concerned that there might be ongoing delays over the delivery of the proposed hotel (ref 20/00947/AS for a 92-bedroom hotel). The reference for demolition is PA/2024/1930.
2. 54 High Street / 2 North Street. The forum was concerned over the state of the building and how it has been allowed to deteriorate. Previous suggestions were that some part of the ground floor could be used by Youth Services (flats on the ground floor are not feasible for residential use in a high street setting). Immediate action is required due to its listed status. The application is PA/2024/2088.
3. Land adjacent to The Range - Ecological Management Plan. The Forum was concerned about over development of the site and increase of traffic on an important gateway site. The reference is OTH/2024/2063.
4. Chart Road – Former Lipscomb. An application has been submitted for archaeological investigation; the Forum would like to know more about the intentions for the site. The reference is PA/2024/2158
5. A28 Dualling – The Forum agreed that they would wish to be heard when the appeal against determination is held as a public hearing. The reference is PA/2024/2122.

6. 34 New Apartments on Beaver Road. The Forum has agreed that they would attend the South Ashford Forum on Wednesday 27th. The reference is PA/2024/2033.

The Forum has agreed to provide some feedback on the Makers Market in that a greater range of food offerings, antiques and DIY tools would be welcome. They would welcome a further meeting with the Council to discuss this and other issues such as parking.

A question was raised about the Clocktower on the Newtown Works. I was later able to confirm with Cllr Feacey that estimates are being sought to refurbish the property. Here are some pictures about the state it is in:



STONESTREET SOLAR – BATTERY UNITS

A briefing on batteries was arranged by the Aldington and Mersham Support Group on 26th November for me, Linda Harman, Clair Bell, Katie Lam and Sojan Joesph. A map showing the location of battery units in Mersham are shown below.



Put simply the battery units are similar, but on a much larger scale, to those used in mobile phones. They store energy collected from the photovoltaic units ready to be sold at a time when there is demand from the national grid. The battery units proposed to be used are at risk of “thermal runaway”; they are phosphate and are at risk of explosion and producing toxic fumes covering an area of up to 250m, in addition to fire risk.

The road infrastructure is not designed to provide access to large industrial developments such as Stonestreet Solar by Kent Fire and Rescue Service. There is no acknowledgement in the Development Consent Order (DCO) that each of the batteries are independent; a potential problem for Kent Fire and Rescue Service who has only a fraction of the number of fire units needed if several of the batteries combust at the same time. There should be two access routes to each battery and routes to get a fire unit to any of the batteries is extremely tortuous and creates a red flag for safety issues.

Battery fires cannot be put out and the only current advice is to prevent the fire from spreading as the fire needs to be allowed to burn out. A lot of water is needed to do this and the DCO only provides for the standard amount of water in each tank which is not sufficient.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

Councillors had a meeting on 26th November about funding that is anticipated for next financial year from the EPR system. This is a tax levied on those who produce items that cannot be put in the green recyclable bin now, particularly soft plastics used for packaging, which currently goes back to a supermarket. The extent of the payment has not yet been published but the idea is that ABC will receive a sum which is intended to be used for separation of these soft plastics at the recycling plant to avoid the need for residents to take them back to the supermarket.

COUNCIL TAX

KCC met on 27th November to discuss the draft budget for 2025/26. Much of the debate has been spent discussing how much council tax should rise (2.99% core increase, 2% ASC Precept is allowed by government). Fire authorities will now be able to increase by the higher of 2.99% or £5 (this will be of real benefit to fire authorities). Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be able to increase their precepts by £14 (higher than the £13 which has been available to PCCs in the past two years).

Funding for local authorities (not Parish Councils) for the increase in employers' National Insurance Contributions will be announced alongside the provisional settlement. Funding will only be for the direct costs affecting local authorities (i.e. not for third-party costs).

Not enough of the discussion has been focused on how residents can manage their liability, and which Council should pay the costs of managing the various discount schemes. **Everyone should be aware of the following.**

- Challenge your Council Tax band. There are 8 bands from the cheapest A to the highest H. Your band depends on how your property was valued in 1991. You can submit an application for it to be reviewed at www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band
- You can claim support for your tax – students in full time education are exempt, low-income households can claim support at www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction The reduction is up to 100% and each council runs its own scheme – Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance and Personal Independence Payments could increase the size of any reduction.
- You might be able to claim a reduction by a band if you or someone you live with is disabled. You need to prove you have an extra room that you need for a disabled person or there is extra room in your house for wheelchair access.
- Those who live alone can claim a 25% reduction. This can also apply even if there is more than one person in your house as some adults are disregarded. These include if they are under 18, in full time education / apprenticeships, with learning difficulties or have a severe mental impairment (e.g. diagnosed dementia). If one resident in a two-person household meets the qualifying threshold – you must apply to the council ASAP as it is not always the case they will accept backdating.
- Pensioners with the guaranteed part of pension credit are eligible for a reduction of up to 100%. Again, you need to make a direct claim with the Council.
- Empty or unfurnished property may qualify for a discount but if it has been empty for at least a year it could be subject to a premium.
- Annexes are exempt if they are joined to your home, if it is self-contained and is occupied by a relative.

ABC have officers who can advise you call them on 01233 331111 or email on welfare@ashford.gov.uk.

Welfare Intervention Officers

If you are struggling to understand any of the following issues, the Welfare Intervention Officers are here to help you with:

- Council Tax advice, including Council Tax debt advice
- Help to claim Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit
- Help to claim Discretionary Housing Payments or Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Payments
- General housing advice, including advice regarding rent arrears
- Referrals for homelessness advice
- General advice around all welfare reform such as the benefit cap, Universal Credit and other benefit changes

For help please contact us today: welfare@ashford.gov.uk



KALC – ASHFORD AREA COMMITTEE

The Committee met on 27th November. Key issues included.

- Adam Mckinley explained the changes to the warden scheme following the consultation on the service. Ashford Borough has 2.5 FTE and they will cover in the town Beaver and Bockhanger. They will help with housing, anti-social behaviour, community group/events support, safeguarding referrals from trading standards, NHS and adult social care (ASC) and fly tipping.
- Kent Police are planning extra staffing over the Christmas period, with increased foot patrol in retail areas and an increased presence during nighttime economy in the lead up to the festive period. They will continue to hold community engagement events with some being specifically related to the protection of Women and Girls from violence.
- The infrastructure requirements in the Ashford Local Plan were discussed and how planned new growth is accompanied by infrastructure at the right time and in the right place to meet additional needs. Infrastructure includes transport, telecommunications, water supply waste management community facility such a health, education and cultural facilities and flood management. The Local Plan should set out the contributions. The new National Planning Policy Framework will encourage data centres etc to be delivered by Ministers. Green Belt policies will be decided nationally not locally. Discussions on Ashford infrastructure will be held after the initial public consultation (known as Regulation 18) and up to the final consultation (Regulation 19) i.e. between August 2025 and January 2026. This infrastructure must be necessary for the development to be acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and reasonably related in scale to the development.

- KALC AGM included the following resolution from Ashford “Planning authorities at district and county level should be required at an early stage to discuss the needs and desires of Parish Councils and their existing residents when formulating developer S106 contribution requirements.”
- The government’s planning inspector has approved plans to build 655 new homes north of Possingham Farmhouse as an extension to Chilmington Green. The application was rejected by ABC. It is thought the government inspector’s decision may have been swayed by Angela Raynor’s announcement that 150,000 new homes must be built each year in England. A breathtakingly incoherent decision as the Possingham developer is not required to contribute to NHS services in the area.

IBF PLANNING APPLICATION BY DfT

The DfT has submitted to ABC an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion in relation to the retention of the IBF and Border Control Post (BCP). The reference is OTH/2024/2051; the deadline for comments was 29th November. The key issues noted include:

- The IBF is 50m east from Ashford’s Green Corridors Local Nature Reserve.
- DEFRA checks in connection to live animals (dogs, cats, ferrets – pets or for commercial purposes, rodents, rabbits, birds, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles and domestic equidae (horses, ponies, donkeys and mules), animal products and food and feed of non-animal origin will be undertaken.
- Security fencing is 2.1m.
- Lighting columns are up to 12m in lorry parking and 8m in staff parking.
- CCTV are 8m high.
- Applicant to demonstrate that the November 2020 construction of the IBF has been properly assessed for its historic impact.
- The impacts on soils and agriculture result from the construction needs to be scoped out.
- A comparison of the impact from the IBF/BCP compared to the abandoned Stour Park scheme (14/00908/AS) to be provided.
- No additional construction/demolition works are anticipated.
- The application should include details of vehicular, pedestrian and cycling accesses. This should include the wider impact on the road network including the local and national road network; I have asked the list of roads to be extended to include Church Road (Sevington South) and Kingsford Street.

- Details of any additional drainage strategies for both surface and foul water to minimise impacts of lorry movements to Bybrook WWTW is referred to.
- 800 jobs have been provided at the IBF, a 1.1% increase to the total number of jobs in Ashford which is beneficial as Ashford has a higher unemployment rate of 5.7% (southeast average 3.1%).

I have asked for two additional points to be considered:

- On Para 6.2.4 the transport assessment should include Church Road (Sevington South) and The Street/Kingsford Street in Mersham as there are ongoing issues with errant lorries trying to access the IBF by inappropriate route. The latest was on 28th November.



- In Para 6.3.4 the air quality assessment should include Cheesemans Green Lane (noting that the visual impact will be assessed from Cheesemans Green Lane referred in 6.7.1.).

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