

Ringwood Town Council Meeting 24th September 2008
– a Report from District Councillor Chris Treleven

1) South East England Plan 2006-26

NFDC is preparing its response to Government modifications/acceptance of Plan (for Cabinet 1st Oct.) In summary draft, we accept (minimum) housing targets, Green Belt and green open space policies, but oppose re-awakening Dibden Bay marine site and lack of infrastructure to match the proposed major developments in South Hants areas.

2) NFDC Core Strategy – submission (to Government) document

Following Cabinet approval, this will go out for public representations Nov.7th to Dec.11th Essentially, Strategy seeks to set out the why, what and where development should or should not take place over the plan period. Must not contradict SE Plan in terms of strategy, but can take further. E.g. SE Plan says not less than approx 200 new dwellings p.a., and NFDC is proposing a 20% increase on this to meet local affordable housing needs across the District. Employment land to be safeguarded, even some expansion. As no major development planned (unlike SE Dorset and parts of South Hants), not likely we will get much funding for significant infrastructure such as new roads or rail links.

3) National Park Core Strategy (plus Management Plan+ Recreation Strategy)

Draft versions out now for consultation (until Oct. 31st). Much contention regarding horse keeping and dog walking. And affordable housing. District Councillors – particularly (but not only) those with Wards partly or wholly in National Park – are invited to internal meeting Oct. 13th to help formulate NFDC response to NPA.

In spite of my 18 month long attempts to keep NFDC and NPA plans in harmony by working together at Member and Officer level, I have to report that NPA issued their draft plans as a *fait accompli*, with no prior opportunity for NFDC to comment.

4) 2009/10 Council Budgets

Process now starting, which will be difficult in present circumstances – much reduced Government ‘grants’, large drop in planning and other income (e.g. Land Searches, parking, leisure facilities), but increases in fuel costs and concessionary travel.

5) A31 Traffic Management

Highways Agency (DeptTrans, not HCC) is bidding for Gov’t money to start feasibility study of improvement/modifications to junctions between A31 flyover at Salisbury Rd and Ashley Heath roundabout. Measures needed because of increasing congestion. As a stand-alone idea, neither Highways Agency nor Police are in favour of 50mph limit Picket Post westwards, having carefully analysed accident record. Shame for my constituents and me in Ringwood East who would like this!. Nevertheless, might re-appear again in conjunction with the above-mentioned congestion management plans.

6) SW Corner – Furlong Car Park – renewal of Public Buildings.

Draft ideas from Officer team to be discussed soon with local District Councillors (first). Not now my specific project, but hope for environmental improvements, pedestrian ‘friendliness’ and retention of much liked trees and green area in front of Meeting House.

7) New Permitted Development rules

As from Oct 1st, greater freedom to extend houses and outbuildings should be possible without need for planning permission. Privacy, overlooking and road safety not to be compromised, however. Anticipate more work for Planning Dept as residents will enquire what's now allowed. Constructing guide notes to help.

8) Long Stay Car Parks – new 3 monthly clock.

In addition to £80 pa paid in one go, now proposing 3month for £20 clock as well to ease cash flow management problems of households, particularly just after Christmas when parking clocks start! Also should help employees working only part year such as summer season.

9) Current Pedlars Walk repairs – the steep slope problem.

Supporting strongly your Town Council in pressing Sainsbury's Agent, via NFDC Property services, to solve this paving slope problem, which is particularly difficult for disabled people.

10) Council Leadership

Following retirement of Mel Kendal as Leader, Council needs to elect a new Leader next month.

(Enough for now – CRT Sept 23rd)