

Ringwood Town Council - Annual Meeting - 24th June 2009
- a Report from District Councillor Chris Treleven

1) Public Examination – NFDC Core Strategy 2006-26

The public examination of the ‘spatial vision’ for our District for the 20 year period has now been completed, and the appointed Inspector intends to report his conclusions in the early Autumn. He can find our Core Strategy “unsound” (i.e. undeliverable, or incompatible with other established national and regional plans), acceptable but with modifications, or acceptable without alteration. My money is on the second of these, and if this turns out to be the case, the modified Strategy will be adopted forthwith. There are no surprises likely for Ringwood.

The next stage will be the preparation of the “Sites and Development Management” plan document, when specific sites for development/change/retention will be proposed for consultation. Town and Parish Councils will of course be involved, as will potential developers, conservation groups, other Agencies (eg Highways) and indeed individuals.

The finalised plans from this process have of course to be compatible with the adopted Core Strategy and will also go to Public Examination.

2) A31 – Highways Agency Report on Improvements

During the above Public Examination, the Highways Agency produced a supporting paper, outlining their plans to develop an extra lane to the westbound carriageway of the A31 between the Ringwood Flyover and the Verwood junction. The feasibility of this depends on closing West St and competing for approx. £10million of funds from those designated to enable the 2012 Olympics to be adequately serviced.

This proposal is specifically designed to address safety and congestion problems.

However, the project could be at risk from delays arising from environmental considerations relating to the River Avon, or excessive time being spent on West St. closure consultations.

3) Branch Railway Lines

Members will have been intrigued to read that the Association of Train Operating Companies have suggested that the old Ringwood-Brockenhurst branch line is the 9th most viable possibility nationally as a candidate for re-opening. However, apparently, the cost of the necessary infrastructure would have to be borne from new local Developers’ Contributions! Bearing in mind the route, don’t hold your breath!

(crt 23rd June)