

Ringwood Town Council Meeting 28th October 2009
– a Report from District Councillor Chris Treleven

1) New Forest District Sites and Development Management Plan – the next steps

Full Council now having adopted the approved Core Strategy (the first Council in Hampshire so to do), work is underway to allocate suitable sites for development and to produce a quite different framework for assessing individual planning applications. The role of your Town Council is particularly important in this work, for two reasons:-

Firstly, in suggesting sites compatible with the broad aims of the Core Strategy . You should have received already an invitational letter on this..

Secondly, in following through in practice the different approach that Development Management brings to the determination of planning applications compared with the current Development Control methods. Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine will be able to provide more details as the new approach evolves in the coming months. Suffice it to say at this stage that Development Management looks at what an application is trying to achieve in fulfilling the agreed aims of local development, whereas the existing Control method relies more in looking up prescriptive policies in the Local Plan.

2). “Local Distinctiveness”

As a parallel and supportive exercise to the above Plan, on-going District Council work seeks to give local communities a pro-active role in describing the essential features and local character of their Town landscape which should be respected and enhanced by future planning decisions. The involvement of the Councillors (of all tiers), local organisations and individuals with planning officers is intended to lead to a Planning document (“SPD”), which will be robust enough to defend appeals against “inappropriate” development, such as the perceived “garden grabbing” in the past. The pilot study in New Milton looks most promising, and will be followed by Lymington and then Ringwood next year.

3). Gateway project – S.W.Corner of Furlong Car Park

An update on a suggested viable proposal will be given to the local Councillor group in two weeks time. The recession particularly in the development/property market has caused the delay in coming up with a solution that makes economic sense for the tax-payer.

4) Parking matters

It is now possible to use a mobile phone to pay for parking in the District car parks in place of coins in the meter. Details on the Forest web Home Page.

Our Parking enforcement has now taken up available powers to prevent ad-hoc parking alongside dropped kerbs, which have been the cause of much householder and wheelchair/buggy user frustration in the past.

5) Traffic Management measures –

The many parking/pedestrian crossing issues currently with us - particularly those related to our Schools - will be assessed for realistically achievable action, at the informal Ringwood Members group on Thursday (29th) here. (PTO)

Other topics include a very recent letter from the Highways Agency on their current thinking on the A31 congestion solutions. (They seemed to have given up hope on achieving a fourth lane over the River before 2012, and are considering a lane “gain” from the existing road system west of Town exit, with or without closing West St. More later on the future consultation with us all)

6) Bournemouth Airport Noise Action Plan – Consultation Draft

The District Council commented, mostly adversely, on the above plans, particularly on the scope the operators have in increasing (by up to 3x) the number of night flights. These operations particularly affect the area to the south and east of Ringwood, and our objections were broadly in line with the carefully considered responses of both Sopley and Burley Parish Councils, as well of course as those of the National Park Authority.

(crt 27.10.09).