

Ringwood Town Council Meeting 13th January 2010

– a Report from District Councillor Chris Treleaven

1) Audit Commission Annual Report on NFDC performance

The independent Audit Commission recently reported for the year 08/09 that “Overall, the Council is continuing to perform well, and compares well with other District Councils nationally”.

The Council has also been subject to the new Comprehensive Area Assessment procedure, and has been also judged to “perform well” in terms of managing performance, use of resources, managing finances and governing the business. (on a personal note, in view of the misleading and inaccurate comments made on Planning and Transportation, I doubt that this Assessment exercise is worthwhile).

2) Traffic Management Plans for this year

The trial of the proposed Hightown Rd cycle and pedestrian crossing (near Quomp) is now part of the Management programme for 09/10, in addition to the already agreed management measures for the Southampton Rd improvement plan.

3) Town Access Plan

The County –led development for improved access for residents and visitors to our Town centre and other public facilities has received suggestions following invitation to members of all three Councils. A first meeting to consider these and other possibilities has been organised for January 28th. The object is to prioritise agreed improvements, with the intention of using (mainly) Developers’ Contributions to implement them. One priority will no doubt be for a crossing somewhere along Christchurch Rd.!

4) A31 :-

As Members will know, the Highways Agency is looking to re-align the westbound lanes between the Town centre slip road and the Verwood turn. One possible scheme includes closure of West St exit to the A31, whilst another has no such a closure. In one HA communication, reference is made to the possibility of a speed restriction on the A31 to allow improved safety for drivers entering and leaving the Town Centre slip road junctions. We will hear more of the consultation agenda in February.

5) National Park Authority – new Core Strategy now published for pre-submission consultation.

Although the Park Authority has no local accountability in the way the District (and County) has, it is interesting to note that they have substantially revised their own draft Core Strategy in the light of the strong protests from local people. The new version does not contain plans for ‘road charging’, and the horse-keeping policies have reverted substantially to those that were in place for many years when the District was responsible for the whole area. More emphasis is placed on the social and economic needs of the 35,000 people who live and/or work in the Park, for example by encouraging those businesses which have a low environmental impact. Recognition is made of the need for the Authority to work with other local organisations to achieve their generally accepted aims and objectives, particularly with the County and the Parishes.

(crt 12.01.10).