

OPEN SESSION: There were two members of public present, neither of whom wished to address the Council.

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Tim Ward, Town Mayor  
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor  
Cllr Andrew Briers  
Cllr Hilary Edge  
Cllr Christine Ford  
Cllr Anne Murphy  
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly  
Cllr Tony Ring  
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine  
Cllr Michael Thierry  
Cllr Angela Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk  
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk  
Student Advisors Katherine Grubb and Rachel Carr

### **C/6127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Heron, Loose and Treleaven.

### **C/6128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none declared at this time.

### **C/6129 POLICE REPORT**

Sergeant Helen Mitchley from New Forest West Neighbourhood Policing Team reported on crime statistics for the previous year and the last quarter.

In response to a question, she stated that approximately 20% of reported crimes have a positive resolution in terms of, for example, a summons, caution or charge. Often there are no lines of enquiry as crimes are reported too long after the event for any evidence to be captured. In Hampshire, there had been an 8% increase in crimes recorded, compared to the national average of 14%. In relation to crimes of violence against a person, a high percentage of these were domestic incidents and involved no bodily injury; there were very few public order incidents in the town.

In response to a question about vehicles parking on the pavement, she said that both the local authority and the Police had some powers to deal with this if vehicles are causing an obstruction. This is not a priority for the Police, but the neighbourhood team is currently working with the enforcement officers in areas around schools and will respond to specific reports if resources allow.

On the subject of ongoing issues at Carvers Recreation Ground, Sergeant Mitchley said that they would like to deal with this positively and robustly. They were working closely with the

Council to discuss options and would be more involved in events in the future. It was noted that in the last three months, there had been three reports of antisocial behaviour and two of criminal damage.

There had been an uplift of PCs to the neighbourhood team, there were now three based in Ringwood, in addition to four PCSOs. All work the same shift pattern, which is set based on demand. However, they do have flexibility to alter hours in the short term, for example to attend events or to concentrate on a local operation. If long term changes are required, this can take three months to effect.

It was noted that discussions are ongoing with regard to the effectiveness of CCTV in the town, but that it remained difficult to determine how often incidents that are captured result in a positive resolution.

*With the agreement of Members, agenda item 6 was brought forward.*

### **C/6130**

#### **SITE 12 (Office/Gym), FOREST GATE BUSINESS PARK**

Members considered a request from the applicant's agent to amend the Council's observation to allow this planning application (18/10083) to be determined under delegated powers (*Annex A*).

The agent, Mr Adam Bennett from Ken Parke Planning Consultants and applicant, Mr Paul Meyer from GP Commercial Investments Ltd were in attendance.

The Town Mayor reported that the Planning, Town & Environment (PT&E) Committee had recommended Refusal (2) when it had first considered this application on 2 February, but when amended plans were considered at the last meeting on 6 April, this had been amended to Refusal (4), which meant that the application would have to be considered by the District Council's Planning Committee on 9 May. The reason for amending the observation was that information was not available on the justification for the significant reduction in the number of parking spaces proposed, which was almost half of the number required by the District Council's Parking Standards.

On receipt of the letter from the applicant's agent, in line with Standing Order 44 (relating to the rescission of previous resolutions), four Members had requested that the observation be reconsidered to give the applicant an opportunity to provide further detail.

Mr Bennett explained that there were contractual issues relating to the site and that if a decision could not be made quickly, the gym operator could pull out of the agreement. This could result in the site sitting undeveloped for an indeterminate period and a loss of economic benefit to the town. There was a need for the building to be complete by December.

The NFDC Parking Standards require 68 parking spaces for the gym and 17 for the offices. However, the applicant had provided information to show that the operation of the proposed gym is very different to a swimming pool or health club (to which the same standard would apply) and that it was unlikely that there would be more than 25 people using the gym at any one time. Usage data from other clubs had been submitted to support this. Hampshire Highways was satisfied with this evidence and had therefore reduced the requirement to 30 spaces for the gym and 17 for the offices, a total of 47. 40 of these spaces would be provided on site, and it was proposed to provide the additional 7 spaces in the recently approved overflow car park a short distance away. Hampshire Highways was satisfied with this arrangement. The applicant, who is also the owner of the site and has an office on site, intends to control the overflow parking with an automatic number plate recognition barrier. It was also noted that the roads on the industrial estate would not be adopted by HCC and

would be managed by the businesses on site (through a management company). The intention was to prevent parking along one side of the road with double yellow lines.

It was noted that the applicant had worked with NFDC to address concerns and the Planning officer was now satisfied with the application. If the Town Council did not agree to change its observation, the application would be considered by the NFDC Planning Committee on 9 May, with a recommendation for approval.

The following points were raised by Members:

- The relevance of the gym usage figures was questioned as they related to gyms that had been open for less than a year and showed average usage across the week and not peak usage on weekdays.
- There was already an issue with parking on the estate with vehicles parking on the roads, as the Lidl car park was often full and some other car parks were full despite not all units being let.
- There was a need to consider the views of residents, and the precedent that would be set if the observation were amended.

The Council's observation also raised a concern about the height of the proposed building. The Local Distinctiveness SPD advises against an increase in larger buildings at odds with the town's roofscape and valley landscape. The case had been argued for the height of the Premier Inn, to be built on the adjacent site, as it was a landmark location. However, Members of the PT&E Committee were of the opinion that this should not set a precedent. The fourth storey would rise to 14.5 metres, with the Premier Inn being 13.7 metres.

Mr Bennett explained that the fourth storey would be set back and it would read as a three storey building. In the main, it would be significantly lower and narrower than the Premier Inn and be subservient to it. He disagreed with the Planning officer's estimate of 12 metres and said that the height to the top of the third storey railings would be 10.2 metres.

After a lengthy debate, during which all matters were carefully considered, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the request to amend the Council's observation on planning application number 18/10083 for proposed office and gym at Site 12 Forest Gate Business Park be not supported, and the observation agreed by PT&E Committee on 6 April remain unchanged.

|                      |
|----------------------|
| <b>ACTION</b> J Hurd |
|----------------------|

#### **C/6131**

#### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **C/6132**

#### **RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 be received, and the recommendation therein be approved.

**ACTION C Wilkins**

**C/6133**

**PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Ward presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018 be received.

**C/6134**

**POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Rippon-Swaine presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 be received.
- 2) That the financial regulations be adopted.
- 3) That the HALC Membership document be approved.

**ACTION C Wilkins**

**C/6135**

**STAFFING COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk presented the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 (*Annex B*).

Members also considered the Town Clerk's report on oversight of staff pay (*Annex C*).

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 be received, and the recommendations therein be approved.
- 2) That the following principles regarding changes to staff pay be approved:
  - (i) Changes to the rates of pay agreed by NJC should continue to be applied automatically to Council staff whose pay is specified by reference to the NJC scale;
  - (ii) Council staff whose pay is specified by reference to a range of points on the NJC scale should continue to receive a single increment on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year except for individual cases where one or more of the following circumstances applies:
    - a. Their employment with the Council commenced less than six months previously;
    - b. Their existing pay point is at the top of the range for their post;
    - c. Their performance has been judged (by their line manager or by the Staffing Committee) to be unsatisfactory;
    - d. The Staffing Committee has resolved that exceptional circumstances justify the award of more than one increment.

**ACTION C Wilkins**

## **C/6136**

### **COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

The Town Mayor reported the following:

- 1) The barrier in Mansfield Road had now been replaced and the pavers at the junction of Kings Arms Lane and High Street had been replaced. In future, all highway defects should be reported to the Deputy Town Clerk and a schedule would be updated on a monthly basis and reported to Planning, Town & Environment Committee.
- 2) Progress was being made by Go New Forest on the Ringwood page of its website, but further input was required from councillors. Cllr Thierry suggested including a potted history of the town. Event organisers would soon be able to inform Go New Forest of events, for inclusion on the website.
- 3) It was hoped to arrange a councillors' tour of Council land with the Grounds Foreman. Members were asked to confirm to the Town Clerk which of the suggested dates of 9 May, 13 June or 11 July (early evening) would suit them.

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>ACTION All Councillors</b> |
|-------------------------------|

## **C/6137**

### **REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND STUDENT ADVISORS**

Cllr Murphy reported on her attendance at the New Forest Association of Local Councils meeting on 19 April.

Cllr Edge asked for an update on the proposed new street light in Gorley Road. Cllr Thierry had been informed that this would be installed by the summer.

Cllr Wiseman had attended the Ringwood Society meeting on 19 April and reported that the design of the Friday's Cross sign had now been agreed. She had noticed that two of the lamps on the Jubilee Lamp were tarnished. She also reported that the dragons teeth on the junction of Moortown Lane/Long Lane had been replaced by the gas company at different heights.

Cllr Briers asked if the Jubilee Lamp could be cleaned in time for the Royal Wedding event.

Student Advisors Katherine and Rachel said that this was their penultimate meeting, and they hoped to bring Tom to the next meeting as he would become a Student Advisor in the next school year. They asked that in future correspondence be directed through the students directly as some messages to teachers had been lost in translation.

Cllr Ring reported that he had spoken to some residents of Bickerley Terrace/Riverside who had been happy to receive the Town Clerk's letter about the proposal to improve the access road. He also reported on the Twinning Committee and said that recent social events had raised sufficient funds in order to ensure its survival.

*With the agreement of Members, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 9pm.*

Cllr O'Reilly reported that there appeared to be a rat infestation in some areas of Ringwood.

Cllr Day had attended the British Liver Trust Charity Auction at the Meeting House, which had raised £1,700.

**C/6138**

**REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

District Councillor Rippon-Swaine reported that there had been some democratic changes at the District Council, with the addition of two new scrutiny panels for environment and community. The number of meetings of these panels had been reduced to four per annum, and therefore there was no additional cost resulting from this change.

County Councillor Thierry had received correspondence from the Leader of the County Council informing him of the amount of money that had and would be invested in the town; he offered to circulate this to councillors on request. Cllr Wiseman referred to the proposed closure of Christchurch Road for 16 days in June and asked if anything could be done to prevent large vehicles using local roads rather than following the lengthy diversion route. Cllr Thierry said that he would speak to the officer responsible for the scheme about the possibility of reducing the duration of closure.

**C/6139**

**FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

|                                   |         |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2018  |
| Planning, Town & Environment      | 10.00am | Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2018     |
| Policy & Finance                  | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2018 |
| Full Council                      | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2018 |

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.12pm.

APPROVED

*30<sup>th</sup> May 2018*

TOWN MAYOR

Annex A to Planning, Town Environment Committee Minutes 6th April 2018  
**Ringwood Town Council - Planning Observations - NFDC**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Site Address</b>   | <b>Proposal</b>  | <b>Observation</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
|---------------|---|--|--------------------|--|
| 18/10083      | Former Wellworthy Site Off Christchurch Road, Wellworthy Way, Ringwood. | Four-storey building for use as gym and offices; associated car parking to include the use of 7 car parking spaces within the overflow car parking; access and landscaping | Refusal (4)        | The Committee maintained its view that parking was a significant concern. The Planning Officer's original report indicated that 79 spaces were required, according to the adopted Parking Standards SPD. The earlier application proposed 44 spaces and this amended application proposes 40 on site and 7 allocated in the overflow car park. This was seen as a regressive step. Members did not agree with the Planning Officer's comments that 'there is sufficient capacity in the over flow car park without compromising car parking within the business park' and drew on their local knowledge of the area, indicating that the parking arrangements would be inadequate. Cars are parked on the roads currently and the under provision of spaces would exacerbate parking issues in the area. They did not agree that it was acceptable to rely on an overflow carpark, which has already been designated for use by Premier Inn and can be used generally by other users of the site. In addition, 6 of the spaces proposed adjacent to the access points, may be difficult to utilise. The Committee maintained its objection to the height of the building. At 14.5m, it was too tall and the design was |

1 - Recommend Permission, but would accept officer's decision 2 - Recommend Refusal but would accept officer's decision 3 - Recommend Permission 4 - Recommend Refusal 5 - Will accept officer's decision

06 April 2018

A

| Number | Site Address | Proposal | Observation | Comments  |
|--------|--------------|----------|-------------|---|
|        |              |          |             | <p>bulky and overbearing in the context of its position on the estate. There was concern that the approval of the height of the adjacent Premier Inn application should not set a precedent. It had been argued that the height of Premier Inn was acceptable due to its positioning at the 'gateway' to the site. However, the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness SPD advises against an increase in larger buildings at odds with the town's roofscape and valley landscape. Members wished to support the Landscaping Officer's view in respect of space for sufficient planting of trees and shrubs to be possible.</p> |

1 - Recommend Permission, but would accept officer's decision 2 - Recommend Refusal but would accept officer's decision 3 - Recommend Permission 4 - Recommend Refusal 5 - Will accept officer's decision



FAO: Mrs Jo Hurd  
Ringwood Town Council

BY E-MAIL - [jo.hurd@ringwood.gov.uk](mailto:jo.hurd@ringwood.gov.uk)

13<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**Your ref: 18/00083**  
**Our ref: AB/4732**

Dear Jo

**Re: Planning Application Ref. 18/00083 – Site 12, Forest Gate Business Park - FORMER WELLWORTHY SITE OFF CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, WELLWORTHY WAY, RINGWOOD - Four-storey building for use as gym and offices; associated car parking to include the use of 7 car parking spaces within the overflow car parking; access and landscaping**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on Wednesday in relation to the application at Site 12; Forest Gate Business Park (18/10083 – Four Storey Building for Use as a Gym and Offices).

As you are aware, New Forest District Council recently re-consulted with Ringwood Town Council on the application, following the submission of amended plans and information by the Applicant. These details were provided to resolve concerns which were raised during the determination process about the level of parking provision for the site and landscape treatment following comments from the Council's Landscape Officer.

A revised briefing note was prepared by Richard Natt to the Town Council which confirmed that the plans now submitted overcome the issues which had been raised and as a result the intention was to recommend the application for approval; to be determined this week. Unfortunately, following receipt of the latest comments from the Town Council this is not currently possible.

The Town Council had, when first responding to the application, stated that it objected to the development on two grounds; parking and the design, height and position of the building, but that it was willing to accept a decision made by NFDC Officers under delegated powers. The Council and the Applicant thereafter worked proactively together to resolve the concerns with a view to reaching an approvable consent. The

second consultation sent to the Town Council was on the basis that the scheme was now at a stage where it could be approved; it was not anticipated that the Town Council would seek to change its recommendation so that Officers could no longer determine this under delegated powers.

With the Town Council issuing its response on 6<sup>th</sup> April this unfortunately left no time for the matter to get on to the committee agenda for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April. We liaised with the Council to see if anything could be done to get the item on the agenda but, as I am sure you are aware, the agenda is finalised in advance of the meeting to allow members of the public to be appropriately informed of the items being heard and to give chance for speakers to register an interest on the items if they so wish.

As we stand at present therefore the application would need to be heard at the 9<sup>th</sup> May committee meeting.

Delaying the consideration of the application until this meeting and a decision thereafter creates a significant problem contractually for the Applicant. The additional 4-week delay puts the Applicant at significant risk of having one of their proposed operators; of the gymnasium, pull out of the contract and seek another opportunity elsewhere. Losing out on this operator would put significant doubt on the ability of the project to be brought forwards in the manner proposed and would result in the site sitting undeveloped for a further indeterminate period; and also a loss for Ringwood Town of the local economic benefit which is to be derived from the delivery of this facility. It is certainly neither in the Applicant nor the Town Council's interests to have this site sitting vacant and undeveloped. In order to ensure the contract the Applicant needs to be able to achieve a consent and make a commencement on the site as soon as possible; a months delay would significantly prejudice this.

We have discussed this with Richard Natt and Steve Clothier at NFDC and it has been suggested that we speak with you to see if the Town Council would consider altering their recommendation to allow the application to be determined under delegated powers.

This does not mean however that the concerns that the Town Council have regarding the application are simply being pushed to one side; we are not asking that the Town Council change their recommendation to recommend approval; but rather that the professional recommendation of the Council's Officers is followed in this case.

In order to allow the Town Council to consider this request we have responded below to each of the concerns which have been raised

#### **(1) Car Parking**

The Town Council will be aware that at the time the application was submitted the proposals sought to deliver 44 spaces on site. This level of provision was below the 79 spaces which Hampshire CC Highways originally considered necessary in order to comply with parking standards; which was later revised to a requirement of 47 spaces following discussions with the Applicant and understanding of the uses proposed. The 47 spaces comprise 32 spaces for the gym use (25 for patrons

and 7 for staff) and 15 for the offices. Hampshire County Council consider that this level of provision is appropriate given the likely nature of cliental for the proposed gym facility and given that it is unlikely more than 25 persons will be utilising the facility at any one time; particularly during working hours. The gym is modest in scale and delivers just workout space and two modest sized fitness studios for classes and does not as a result substantiate the same requirements for parking that the leisure centres, such as David Lloyd and Ringwood Leisure Centre do. The range of activities on offer is much lesser and there are no extra sports pitches, pools or otherwise which themselves significantly increase occupancy rates and thus parking need; it is this manner of use which would justify the higher parking requirement originally suggested. The parking requirement for the gym was discussed with Hampshire CC and has been formally agreed upon. The requirement for the office spaces is based on national standards for the number of spaces required which correlates with the gross internal floorspace of the offices. This is again more than sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed occupants, or similarly any other occupying office use.

During the course of conversations with NFDC Officers it was considered that the site would benefit from an amendment to the landscaping scheme; the result of an increase in the area of soft landscaping being the loss of four parking spaces from the site. The amended scheme therefore delivers 40 spaces on plot and it is proposed that it will have the use of 7 spaces within the overflow parking area. The 40 spaces provided on the site are apportioned to the proposed uses on the following basis – 16 for use of the offices and 25 for the use of the gym, in addition to the 7 proposed for the use of this site within the overflow car park.

As the Town Council will know, the overflow car park area was provided as part of the application for the Premier Inn hotel. The hotel itself provides for much of its parking needs on its plot, but there was a need for further parking spaces in order to meet NFDC parking standards. The hotel required a total of 84 spaces to be policy compliant. The approved scheme provides 109 spaces in total, comprising 68 spaces on its plot and 41 within the overflow parking area; the result being that the hotel required 16 of the 41 spaces within the overflow area, leaving 25 spaces unrequired and for general use of the estate.

These 25 spaces are not required by any of the existing businesses or facilities on the site – this is simply a supplemental facility to cater for any exceptional demands and was provided as a benefit as part of the Premier Inn scheme. It is entirely reasonable therefore for the proposed development on Site 12 to seek to make use of 7 of these 25 spaces – still retaining 18 spaces for general use. The 7 spaces within the overflow area will be sign posted and utilised by staff – providing the spaces on site for the use of gym patrons. Staff will, as is common practice, be encouraged to travel to work by sustainable transport means; walking, cycling or use of public bus services if at all possible, which will reduce any strain upon this provision.

It is recognised that the Town Council have seen some sporadic parking on road within the estate in recent times; this is almost inevitable at a time when the estate

is still not complete, and tradespersons and contractors are going to and from the site.

It is anticipated that when the site is completed this will not occur; particularly with the overflow parking which will be available – delivering 18 spaces which are not required by any of the existing or proposed uses. There is no question that these will be available.

There is in particular some sporadic parking at present where due to the development taking place on the Millstream Trading Estate, parking for that site is being off-set on to the Forest Gate Business Park as the closest location for unrestricted parking. This is not indicative of any parking problem on the Forest Gate site and will be resolved once the development is complete.

Each of the individual businesses on site has delivered a level of parking to meet the NFDC parking standards. These sites are not under strain in terms of their parking demand and as Richard Natt cites in his briefing note, there is superfluous parking availability on these premises.

Both NFDC Officers and Hampshire CC have confirmed that they support the parking strategy proposed and the application has been recommended for approval following the changes made. There is no salient reason to maintain an objection on parking grounds and this is certainly not something which Committee Members could hold an objection to at any Planning Committee meeting. As is very normal practice both David Groom and Steve Clothier would be mandated to make clear to members that they would not be able to uphold any objection on parking grounds and would be at significant risk of a costs award against the Council at appeal if a refusal were motioned on this basis.

## **(2) Height and scale of the building**

The proposed building stands at a maximum height of 14.5m to its ridge. This is at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level where a pod of development is recessed significantly from the north-west and south-west facing elevations with the total area of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor element comprising approximately 25% of the floorplate of the building – this is a modest element which will not read significantly from the street scene due to its set-back. The building in the main reads as 3 storeys in height having an area of roof garden at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor plate level. The building in the main therefore reads at 10.2m in height with a glazed balustrade sitting above this at a height of approximately a further metre; 11.2m in total.

These figures mean little in isolation, so it is necessary to compare this to the heights of the neighbouring approved; and in the case of the Colten Care site, completed, buildings. The approved Premier Inn is also 4 storeys in height, albeit for almost the full length of the building. The hotel stands at 12.4m to its eaves at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level and stands at a total 16.2m to its ridge – significantly higher in both regards than the proposed building on Site 12. The Premier Inn sits at the head of the road on entering the Forest Gate Business Park and thus in urban design terms a larger building was justified in this context. The proposed building for site

12 will sit comfortably alongside this and does not compete with it in height. It is much lower order, reading in the main at 10.2m in height, substantially lower. The Colten Care building is 3 storeys in height and stands at 13.7m in height to its ridge; again, substantially taller in the main than the proposed building for site 12. In this context the building proposed is perfectly reasonable in terms of its scale and in no uncertain terms is not out of character.

NFDC Officers have not raised any concern with the height or design of the building at any stage. Richard Natt has confirmed this within both briefing notes. Having regard for the design of the surrounding buildings; which are all of a relatively similar material palette and linear rectangular form; respective of their location on a business park, the building will sit comfortably and appropriately on the site. There really are no reasons to object in this regard. Design is of course a very subjective matter, but National Policy sets out the baseline considerations in this regard and it would not be reasonable to refuse planning consent for a building which is very similar in its character to what has already been approved on the business park.

We hope that the comments above make the details of the application a little clearer for the Town Council and that, as a result, consideration can be given to changing the recommendation which has been put to the Council to allow Officers to determine the application under delegated powers. As detailed, delaying consideration of the application will seriously prejudice its delivery and the site coming forwards in a reasonable timeframe; clearly not in anyone's interest.

As discussed with you, I know that Steve Clothier and Richard Natt will be more than happy to talk to Councillors should there be a desire for a conversation and similarly we will be happy to answer any further queries.

Given that we are making this approach to you on the basis that time is very precious to the Applicant in terms of being able to deliver this project, we would very much appreciate a response to this request next week. If any application documents are required to facilitate this reconsideration, please let me know and we can coordinate these being provided.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Adam Bennett.

Adam Bennett BA (Hons)  
Town Planning Consultant

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor  
Cllr Anne Murphy  
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly  
Cllr Christopher Treleaven

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk

**S/0001  
ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Treleaven was proposed by Cllr Day and seconded by Cllr Murphy. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr. Christopher Treleaven be appointed Chairman of the Committee.

*Cllr. Christopher Treleaven took the Chair.*

**S/0002  
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none; all members being present.

**S/0003  
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Day declared that he would not participate in any discussions or votes concerning the meetings administrator since she is a personal friend.

The Town Clerk declared a personal financial interest in respect of item S/0005. Members were satisfied that, even so, there was no need for the committee to seek further independent advice on this matter.

**S/0004  
REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED POLICIES**

The Town Clerk reported that staff concerns about the current Appraisals Policy had been prompted him to seek advice from Ellis Whittam (the Council's adviser on employment law and human resources management). That firm had offered to review all the Council's employment-related policies and suggest updates to reflect current law and best practice. This offer has been accepted and is likely to result in simpler and clearer versions of the Staff Handbook and Members' Handbook.

Members noted that periodic review of such policies is normal practice among all employers and there is no need for every review and every change to be scrutinized and approved by members. However, it is important that staff are properly consulted and the members are informed about changes in general terms and given the opportunity to see the detail of these if they wish to.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk:  
(i) consult Council staff members about proposed changes to policies which affect their employment before such changes are brought into effect and

# B

- (ii) report to the Policy & Finance Committee when changes are made to such policies and explain how councillors can obtain copies.

**ACTION C Wilkins**

**S/0005**

## **OVERSIGHT OF STAFF PAY AND BENEFITS**

The Town Clerk referred Members to the report on the provision of parking clocks to Town Council staff circulated with the agenda (*Annex A*). Members discussed the possibilities of (i) withdrawing this benefit when the current clocks expire or (ii) retaining it for current staff but withdrawing it for future recruits but concluded in both cases that the likely adverse impact on staff morale and goodwill would outweigh the modest saving achieved. However, members felt that this ought to be kept under review since the cost is likely to increase faster than general inflation over time and that in the meantime staff be informed that it is a discretionary concession. Members also felt that the value of the benefit ought to be taken into account when recruiting in future.

The Town Clerk also sought members' views about member oversight of staff pay and benefits generally (especially the awarding of increments and specifying terms on recruitment). Cllr. Day said that members had been advised previously that the automatic awarding of increments is a provision of the Green Book and therefore not amenable to further scrutiny. Members also felt that their direct involvement in the recruitment of the Town Clerk and the involvement of the Policy & Finance Committee in considering recommendations in respect of other recruitment provides a sufficient degree of oversight and control

- RECOMMENDED:**
- (i) That the provision of parking clocks to council staff should continue on the present basis but that staff be informed that this is a discretionary benefit;
  - (ii) That recommendations for the pay and benefits for new staff be subject to approval by the Policy & Finance Committee at each future recruitment but that current arrangements continue in all other respects.

**ACTION C Wilkins/J Hurd**

**S/0006**

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITES MONITORING**

The Town Clerk explained that all applicants for Council jobs are asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information Form but the anonymised data thus collected is not otherwise collated at present. Advice has been obtained from Ellis Whittam that the Council is not obliged to collect this information but doing so may be useful in defending potential discrimination claims particularly in respect of recruitment. The Town Clerk observed that the data is only likely to be useful in practice if it is collated and preserved in some accessible format.

- RESOLVED:** That Council staff involved in recruitment:
- (i) continue to request equal opportunities monitoring information (in a suitable format) from all job applicants; and
  - (ii) give thought to how that information received in response can best be collated or preserved to ensure that it is useful in practice.

**ACTION C Wilkins/J Hurd**

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 6.55pm.

**Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.**

*RECEIVED*  
*25<sup>th</sup> April 2018*

*APPROVED*

*TOWN MAYOR*

*COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN*

*DRAFT*



25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Oversight of staff pay

1. Introduction and reason why decision required

The Staffing Committee has identified a need to clarify the council's controls over changes to staff pay.

2. Background information, options, impact assessment and risks

2.1 For some time the Council has:

2.1.1 Paid staff by reference to the NJC scale; assigning each post either to a single pay point on that scale or to a specified range of pay points (with the result that changes to the pay rates agreed at NJC are automatically applied to Council staff);

2.1.2 For posts assigned to a range of pay points, awarded a single "increment" (that is movement up one point on the scale) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April each year unless and until the top point on the scale is reached; and

2.1.3 Reviewed the relevant pay point or range of points whenever an employee has requested a "re-grade".

2.2 It emerged at the recent Staffing Committee meeting that members were under the impression that the practice described in paragraph 2.1.2 above is mandated by the "Green Book" (a set of standard employment terms negotiated between local government employers and trades unions that are incorporated into this council's employment contracts by reference). However, that is not the case and there is nothing in the Council's current contracts of employment requiring it either. There is nothing inherently improper in the practice but good governance requires that it be approved by members after a properly informed and conducted debate and that approval be recorded in writing. It is undesirable that a practice having such implications for the use of public money should rest on unwritten tradition (especially one possibly based on a misunderstanding).

2.3 The Staffing Committee was not minded to propose any substantive changes to current practice but considers that expressing that practice in writing presents an opportunity to specify clearly a few desirable points of detail.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

***Whether to approve the following principles regarding changes to staff pay:***

***(i) Changes to the rates of pay agreed by NJC should continue to be applied automatically to Council staff whose pay is specified by reference to the NJC scale;***

***(ii) Council staff whose pay is specified by reference to a range of points on the NJC scale should continue to receive a single increment on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year except for individual cases where one or more of the following circumstances applies:***

***a. Their employment with the Council commenced less than six months previously;***

***b. Their existing pay point is at the top of the range for their post;***

***c. Their performance has been judged (by their line manager or by the Staffing Committee) to be unsatisfactory;***

**C**

***d. The Staffing Committee has resolved that exceptional circumstances justify the award of more than one increment.***

For further information, contact:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk  
Direct Dial: 01425 484720  
Email: [chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk](mailto:chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk)