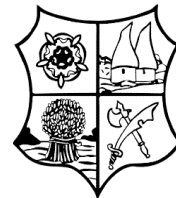


ALTON Town Council



Telephone (01420) 83986
www.alton.gov.uk
info@alton.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Leah Coney

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

1st February 2024

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to an **EXTRA-ORDINARY** meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 28th February 2024 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Annette Eyre

Councillor Graham Hill

To: All Town Councillors

Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor John Chubb
Councillor Mark Boyce-Churn
Councillor Annette Eyre
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Graham Hill
Councillor Matthew Kellermann
Councillor Nick O'Brien
Councillor Barbara Tansey
Councillor Janice Treacher
Councillor Peter Wadman
Councillor Jonathan Waugh

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2024**

TOWN HALL, ALTON

AGENDA

1. To elect a Town Mayor for the period from 1st March – 29th May 2024
2. To receive the Town Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office
3. To elect a Deputy Town Mayor for the period from 1st March – 29th May
4. Apologies for absence
5. Town Mayor's announcements
6. Minutes of the last meeting held on the 7th February 2024 for approval.
7. Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensations - Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter
8. Questions to the Council. Members of the public are invited to make representations.
9. Response to Local Plan
10. Alton Neighbourhood Plan – To approve the removal of site allocations from the Plan
11. Planning Application: Palace Cinema
12. Landlords Consent: Installation of a stairlift at the Assembly Rooms – Dementia Friendly

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
EXTRA-ORDINARY FULL COUNCIL – 28th FEBRUARY 2024**

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

**ITEM 1: TO ELECT A TOWN MAYOR FOR THE PERIOD 1ST MARCH TO 29TH MAY 2024
FOR DECISION**

Following the resignation of The Mayor, on 13th February it is necessary for the Council to elect a Mayor to cover the period from 1st March until the Annual General Meeting which will take place on Wednesday, 29th May 2024.

In accordance with Standing Order 8 “Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.”

RECOMMENDATION: The Council is requested to elect a Mayor (Chair) of the Council for the period 1ST March to 29th May when the Annual General Meeting will take place.

**ITEM 3 TO ELECT A DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR THE PERIOD 1ST MARCH TO 29TH MAY
2024 FOR DECISION**

The Town Council, in line with Item 1 on the Agenda will need to elect a Deputy Town Mayor again for the period 1st March to 29th May 2024 and the procedure to be followed will be in accordance with Standing Order 8 as detailed above but will include that in the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council is requested to elect a Deputy Town Mayor (Chair) of the Council for the period 1ST March to 29th May when the Annual General Meeting will take place.

ITEM 8 RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL PLAN FOR DECISION

Members in considering its response to the EHDC Local Plan Regulation 18 (2024) engaged consultants Oneill Homer to assist with the preparation of that response producing a draft response for consideration by Council. Following the receipt of the draft response a councillor briefing session with the consultant has taken place which afforded councillors the opportunity to further review, comment and amend prior to the draft response being tabled at this meeting. In summary, Alton Town Council wishes to raise objection to the draft Local Plan as it is presented. The explanation for the objection is detailed in the appended Draft Response but the focus is concentrated on the following areas:

- The incorrect placement of Alton as a stand-alone tier one settlement
- The resulting distribution of housing numbers across the settlements
- The overall quantum of housing advocated in the plan
- The inclusion of a 22% buffer without justification
- The omission of capacity testing to obtain the numbers on each proposed site
- The lack of brownfield first approach

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve Alton Town Council’s response to the EHDC Local Plan Regulation 18 (2024) as tabled.

**ITEM 9 ALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: TO AGREE THE REMOVAL OF SITE
ALLOCATIONS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR DECISION**

At the Full Council meeting on 1st February 2023 (Minute ref 188/2023 refers) Alton Town Council Resolved to commence on a full review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan; re-appointing the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ANPSG) and consultants Oneill Homer to undertake the review. Over the last 12 months the ANPSG have been gathering research and undertaking public engagement sessions to scope and draft the revised Plan which will be tabled for Town Council approval on 4th April prior to formal public consultation commencing 26th April.

The Steering Group has been meeting every two weeks for the last 12 months with regular attendance from members of the Planning Policy team at EHDC and the Council's appointed Planning Consultants O'Neill Homer. Two public engagement sessions in May and September 2023 were well attended with details of the outputs of the sessions published on the Town Council website. As part of the engagement sessions, rich content for the plan review was supplied by the local community, including views on potential policies for design, climate change, local green spaces, transport, active travel, community facilities and comments on the outputs of the Steering Group's scenario planning exercise to start the conversation about site allocations.

Subsequent to the public engagement EHDC indicated to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in October 2023 that it should be looking to allocate a minimum of 700 homes within the Neighbourhood Plan, with the Local Plan seeking to allocate a strategic site of around 1,000 homes in a satellite village outside of the Neighbourhood Plan boundary at Neatham Down. The Steering Group had concerns over the constraints of the site at Neatham Down, given it would create a car dependent community, disconnected from the existing town and would need significant infrastructure within the site which would not benefit the wider town. As such, the Steering Group sought to consider whether the Alton Neighbourhood Plan could provide a solution in order to negate the need for a satellite village workshopping the proposed scenarios, engaging with developers and land promoters to develop proposals further, in preparation of justified site allocation policies to include for testing with consultees through the statutory Regulation 14 consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan, scheduled for April 2024.

Unfortunately, EHDC officers and councillors have indicated that they have concerns about the Neighbourhood Plan progressing in this way. EHDC has suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reconsiders its position and either allocates no housing in the neighbourhood plan; a portion of the 700 figure given by them to the Neighbourhood Plan (falling within the existing settlement boundary) or the full 700 figure but not a higher number (beyond a modest buffer).

In addition, there have been representations made by two groups of people within the town who have concerns about the potential inclusion of South Alton and Holybourne within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. This presents a difficulty for the Steering Group as they believe that either a portion of, or the full allocation of, 700, does not work for Alton. With the sites available, it is an insufficient number to be viable for developers to provide the infrastructure and community facilities required for the town which can only be realised with delivery at scale. On the other hand, there are insufficient sites available within the neighbourhood plan boundary without allocating at least part of South Alton and/or Holybourne as part of the 700 number. The original scenario 1 (brownfield town centre) has been rendered undeliverable in the numbers originally conceived. These were predicated on the redevelopment of some of the parking areas in the town centre potentially through a Neighbourhood Development Order and in accordance with national policy, supported by the community at the engagement stages, to place brownfield redevelopment above greenfield. This could have potentially been achieved with the repurposing of some parking in the town centre with a greater focus on active travel. However, the allocation of a satellite village, with residents dependent upon car use to access the town centre for local services and shopping, rendered this unachievable. For a car dependent community such as Neatham Down, if access to Alton High Street proved difficult with a car, they would just go elsewhere along the A31.

It is not the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan to be divisive, nor to create an environment where sectors of the community are seemingly “pitted” against each other, nor see the Plan shaping the town in such a way that it detracts from its future vibrancy and vitality. Neighbourhood Planning is designed to bring the community together, with a shared vision for the future development of the town.

As such, it is with regret that the Steering Group is recommending to the Town Council, that site allocations are removed from the Neighbourhood Plan review on the basis that within the constraints they have been directed to work within by EHDC, the result would simply be more housing for the town without the required infrastructure.

The community and the Steering Group have committed an immense amount of time and resource to the development of the reviewed NP Plan and the conversation about site allocations should not detract from the valued inputs made to date in respect of the work undertaken to refine the other draft policies in the plan ready for the Regulation 14.

As such the Neighbourhood Plan will not be looking to promote development but using the evidence and community input it has gathered over the last 12 months it will seek to influence and control development where it does come forward, through its design policies, its climate change policies, protection for Local Green Spaces and biodiversity and its policies on parking and transport. The Draft Pre-submission Plan will be provided to Councillors ready for the April Full Council.

RECOMMENDATION: The Town Council is thereby requested to agree the removal of site allocations from the draft Neighbourhood Plan in order to allow the draft plan to be finalised.

ITEM 10 PLANNING APPLICATION: FORMER PALACE CINEMA FOR DECISION

The applicant has submitted a new planning application (32440/008) which states: *As per the previous application, the application is for the conversion and alteration of the existing building to provide 6 residential flats (four one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units).* And which seeks to address the EHDC Notice of Refusal dated 6th October 2023 for planning application 32440/007.

Alton Town Council’s response to Planning Application: 32440/007 was:

No Objection with comments:

1. Members wished to see a condition to install obscured glazing in the windows on the elevation overlooking the velux windows of the neighbouring property.
2. Members also wished to ensure the Fire Officer was consulted as there was a concern over safe pedestrian access in the alleyway alongside the bins

Members will recall that the applicant and owner of the former Palace Cinema, Mr Raj Jeyasingam addressed Councillors (at the meeting on 1st November 2023) regarding the Refusal Notice which had been issued by EHDC on planning application 32440/007 dated 6th October 2023 which stated Planning Permission was refused for the following reason(s):

In this new application the applicant has sought to address Alton Town Council’s comment as follows:

Comment (1)

1. In this submission the windows on the north-east elevation have either been removed, obscure glazed, reduced in width or increased in height to minimise overlooking from these windows. It is not to be forgotten that these windows due to the thickness of the existing walls are recessed considerably more than a new build standard window, further restricting views out.
2. The level of privacy to be awarded to this “shared external amenity space” is also contested. It is clearly not private as it is overlooked by the dwellings of 62, 60 and the rear raised terrace of 64-66 Normandy Street.

3. Furthermore, the space approved was not approved as private garden areas, rather simply amenity grass land with bin and cycle store amongst dwellings like any residential housing estate, with a pedestrian route to the main road and vehicles accessed off the private road to the rear.

Comment (2)) the applicant has responded:

1. Policy TR3 and Policy HO2 of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan requires adequate off street storage facilities for household waste and cycle storage. The proposal includes sufficient bin and cycle storage to serve all the proposed residential units. This would be in the form of an internal bin-store located within the ground floor lobby area.

Members are therefore requested to consider their response to the Planning Application 32440/008 in terms of whether the applicant has satisfied the **No Objection with comments** previously submitted (given this new application is the same as the previous one) or not and thus whether the comments can be removed.

RECOMMENATION: Members are requested to consider their response to Planning Application 32440/008

ITEM 10 LANDLORDS CONSENT: INSTALLATION OF STAIRLIFT AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS FOR DECISION

A further approach has been received from Dementia Friendly Alton (DFA) to be granted Landlords Consent for the installation of a stairlift at the Assembly Rooms to ease and assist with access to the first floor for their members and any other visitors to the facility. Members will be aware that Dementia Friendly had previously advised that they had secured a grant for £5,000 from Screwfix (Agenda papers of 1st November 2023 refers), however this was for toilet refurbishment. The current refurbishment works being undertaken at the premises have included toilet refurbishment without the need to draw down the grant. Screwfix have agreed with Dementia Friendly that the grant allocated can be diverted and used for the purpose of installing a stairlift providing Landlords Consent is obtained.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to grant Landlord's Consent to Dementia Friendly Alton for the installation of a stairlift at the Assembly Rooms