

Ringwood Town Council

Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1AT

Tel: 01425 473883

www.ringwood.gov.uk

SUMMONS

Dear Member

24th October 2024

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council at the Forest Suite, Ringwood Gateway on 30th October 2024 at 6.00pm.



Mr C Wilkins
Town Clerk

AGENDA

At 6:00pm,

1.* **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There will be an opportunity for public participation for a period of up to 15 minutes at the start of the meeting (Note: This item may be deferred to 7.00pm at the discretion of the Chairman, if there are no members of the public present at 6.00pm. but there are at 7.00pm)

2. To receive Apologies for Absence

3. To receive Declarations of Interest

4. **STRATEGY REVIEW**

To consider the Town Clerk's report and review the Council's strategy (*Report A*)

At not before 7:00pm;

5. **GRANT AID AWARDS**

- a. To present certificate for the Grant Aid award of £500 to ERRFC towards the costs of green & energy efficient equipment
- b. To present certificate for the Grant Aid award of £500 to Ringwood Veterans towards the costs of communication and IT
- c. To present certificate for the Grant Aid award of £600 to STARF towards the cost of its Financial Inclusion Advisor role

6. To receive a report from Ringwood Police

7. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 25th September 2024

8. To receive Minutes of Committees and approve recommendations contained therein:
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces DATE :- 2nd October 2024
Planning, Town & Environment DATE:- 4th October 2024
Staffing DATE:- 16th October 2024
RECOMMENDATION:- S/0121 Personnel Management Matters – see separate agenda item
Policy & Finance DATE:- 23rd October 2024
RECOMMENDATION:- F/6352 Treasury Management – see separate agenda item

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

To consider a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee on 23rd October 2024 to endorse the Investment Strategy & Policy (*Report B*) (*F/6352 refers*)

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE

To consider the Town Clerk's report (*Report C*) in relation to the recommendations from the Staffing Committee on 30th October 2024 (*S/0121 refers*)

11. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

To appoint Cllr Thierry to the Policy and Finance Committee and consider making this a standing agenda item

12. PUBLICATION OF MEMBERS' MEETING ATTENDANCE DATA

To consider the Town Clerk's report (*Report D*)

13. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

To receive a report from Cllr Briers (the Council's representative on the Steering Group) or Cllr Swyer (deputy) on project developments

- 14.* To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may desire to lay before the Council

- 15.* To receive Reports from County and District Councillors

- 16.* To Receive Reports from Ringwood Town Councillors

17. Forthcoming Meetings – to note the following dates:

Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 1 st November 2024
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 6 th November 2024
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 20 th November 2024
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 27 th November 2024

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider exclusion of the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), to transact business for which publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature

19. LEGAL MATTERS

To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on legal matters

20. FOOTBALL SITE LEASE

To consider the Town Clerk's report (*Confidential Report E*) and approve the lease and authorise the use of the Council's seal to execute it

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk, on 01425 484720 or chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Council Members:

Chairman: Cllr Rae Frederick, Town Mayor
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Glenys Turner
Cllr Becci Windsor

Officers:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk

TOWN COUNCIL

30th October 2024

Strategy Review

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 Since adopting a strategy for the first time in October 2022, the Council has reviewed it once and it is appropriate to do so again every year; ideally shortly before the budget for the following year is prepared.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The strategy is a statement of members' agreed aims for the following year and the two following it. It serves to guide officers in their allocation of staff time and attention and council funds (within agreed budgets). It is therefore a very important annual opportunity for members to consider and express their preferences and priorities.
- 2.2 The fundamental premise underlying the strategy is that members (not officers) decide **what** the council should do and **when** it is going to do it but officers (not members) decide **how** this will be done and **who** is going to do it. Officers are responsible for reporting back to members if they conclude that the available staff resources are insufficient or that budgets are insufficient or incorrectly balanced to achieve the strategic goals. Officers should then present options and/or recommendation for change. Members can then consider these and/or adjust the strategy appropriately.
- 2.3 Much of the day-to-day work of the Council and its officers consists of routine public services and reacting to various kinds of problems, reports, events and requests which cannot be planned for in any detail. There are also many relatively modest or short-term actions which cannot sensibly be included in a strategy document. Necessarily, therefore, the strategy only mentions a small number of large, high-priority initiatives. It should be understood that staff will continue to work on the other matters not mentioned, but will refer to the strategy document when advising members and when allocating discretionary resources.
- 2.4 The current strategy document is attached. Since this was adopted, circumstances have changed somewhat. As to capital projects, the main changes are:
- Completion of the football facilities development project has been delayed.
 - The cemetery memorial wall project has been cast into doubt.
 - The grounds maintenance facility project has needed a re-design.
 - New Forest District Council has brought forward a proposal to improve access at Poulner Lakes.
 - Veolia Environmental Trust has awarded the Council a grant to implement part of the Carvers Masterplan.

On the resource side, it has emerged that, after a long period of remarkably low staff turnover, the Council will need to recruit several new members of staff over the next 12 months. This will cause disruption and a temporary loss of capacity whilst new incumbents settle into their roles. It also appears that budget pressures have been more acute than anticipated and this is not likely to change within the strategy period. The strategy needs to take account of these factors if it is to be realistic.

- 2.5 Officers have therefore prepared the attached draft update of the strategy. This is intended to assist members' deliberations, not constrain them. Members are

encouraged to consider carefully if it truly reflects their wishes and priorities and to adjust it where it does not.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are respectfully invited to discuss and, if possible, agree their most important priorities for financial year 2025-26 and, if practicable, the two years following as well.

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk



Ringwood Town Council – Strategy 2023-2026

VISION

Our Council tightly focussed on helping our market town to thrive by improving the things that matter most to Ringwood residents, businesses and visitors

TODAY
Ringwood Town Council is known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer

<p>Y3 – 2025-26 Identify gaps in open space provision and options to fill them</p>	<p>Y3 – 2025-26 Plan celebration of Market Charter anniversary in 2026</p>	<p>Y3 – 2025-26</p>	<p>Y3 – 2025-26</p>
<p>Y2 – 2024-25 Complete new grounds department facility Agree management plan for every open space</p>	<p>Y2 – 2024-25 Inaugurate a new event specifically to support town centre retail businesses Agree advance plan for major events</p>	<p>Y2 – 2024-25 Promote/facilitate a business community network</p>	<p>Y2 – 2024-25 Identify needs of growing population and gaps in provision</p>
<p>Y1 – 2023-24 Complete football pavilion Complete Columbarium Agree strategic plan for Carvers Complete our Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>Y1 – 2023-24 Recruit local businesses to provide stalls at events in place of businesses from out of town</p>	<p>Y1 - 2023-24 Identify priorities & present weaknesses Agree a communications strategy</p>	<p>Y1 – 2023-24 Explore scope for improving major development decisions Develop Thriving Market Place concept</p>
<p>Improving our facilities, services & green spaces</p>	<p>Developing events</p>	<p>Improving communication with residents and businesses</p>	<p>Implementing our Neighbourhood Plan</p>

THE FUTURE
Ringwood Town Council is

- Known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, Looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer.
- The first point of contact for all local public services in Ringwood
- Proactively engaging local people about issues that matter to them
- providing valued support to Ringwood businesses and the local economy

ENABLERS and DISRUPTORS
Skills of councillors and staff - We will encourage more training and improve our performance management processes. [Events Management Sub-Committee](#).
Volunteers. Neighbourhood Plan
Budget pressures and inflation – We will review our budgetary control and management of reserves



Ringwood Town Council – Strategy 2025-2028

VISION

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TODAY

Ringwood Town Council is known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer

<p>Y3 – 2027-28 Further implementation of Carvers Masterplan</p>	<p>Y3 – 2027-28 Explore options for further development of events</p>	<p>Y3 – 2027-28</p>	<p>Y3 – 2027-28 Review Neighbourhood Plan in light of Local Plan changes</p>
<p>Y2 – 2026-27 Identify gaps in open space provision and options to fill them Further implementation of Carvers Masterplan</p>	<p>Y2 – 2026-27 Hold celebration of Charter Market’s 800th anniversary</p>	<p>Y2 – 2026-27 Explore social media options</p>	<p>Y2 – 2026-27 Identify needs of growing population and gaps in provision</p>
<p>Y1 – 2025-26 Develop management plans for open spaces Proceed with Carvers Masterplan and cemetery development plans Proceed with new grounds department facility</p>	<p>Y1 – 2025-26 Organise celebration of Charter Market’s 800th anniversary Review options for Skate Jam</p>	<p>Y1 - 2025-26 Publish quarterly newsletters Encourage staff and members to undertake training through our Council Hive subscription</p>	<p>Y1 – 2025-26 Promote Thriving Market Place design</p>
<p>Improving our facilities, services & green spaces</p>	<p>Developing events</p>	<p>Improving communication with residents and businesses</p>	<p>Implementing our Neighbourhood Plan</p>

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ENABLERS and DISRUPTORS

Skills of councillors and staff – Officers will review staff roles and responsibilities and propose changes required by this updated strategy.
Events Management Sub-Committee. Volunteers. Neighbourhood Plan – We will monitor our enhanced CIL receipts and prioritise their use
IT and staff changes – Allow time for recruits and new infotech to settle in **Falling non-precept revenue** – ???

REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 23rd OCTOBER 2024**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL TREASURY MANAGEMENT****1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Town Council has a treasury management policy which was last updated in November 2023. The policy governs the way in which Council funds are managed.
- 1.2 The cash balances held by the Council at the end of March 2024 amounted to £699,967 and with the first instalment of the precept later in April, cash balances increased to around £885,000. Whilst this is below the peak achieved in 2023/24 as a result of the football project, cash balances remain reasonably healthy.
- 1.3 A working balance of between £50,000 and £100,000 is maintained in the main imprest account with a further target of £50,000 held in an interest bearing instant access business account, but the bulk of funds which are not immediately required are currently invested with the CCLA.
- 1.4 The Treasury Management policy has been in place for just over 5 years and this report summarises the performance in that time and makes recommendations for some amendments to the Treasury Management Policy.

2. INVESTMENTS WITH THE CCLA

- 2.1 The CCLA was created in 1987 following the introduction of financial services regulation, although the organisation can trace its origins back to 1958. It is one of the largest UK charity fund managers and manages funds solely for Churches, Charities and Local Authorities. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, the CCLA currently manages funds in excess of £13.9 billion
- 2.2 The Town Council began investing funds with the CCLA at the end of 2018/19. In that year, funds had generated interest payments of £1,508. In the first full year using the CCLA facility, interest receipts of £3,353 were generated.
- 2.3 Interest rates have increased from historically very low levels and the CCLA continues to provide a return on investment at levels that the banks will not match. Interest generated in 2023/24 increased to £42,714, up from £17,280 in the previous year and just £427 in the year before that. However, with recent reductions in cash balances and the predicted reduction in interest rates, the prediction for the current year is that interest receipts will drop to £23,000.
- 2.4 Interest on funds held in the business instant access account with Lloyds Bank is very modest by comparison and amounted to £447 in 2023/24.
- 2.5 As a fund manager, rather than a bank, the CCLA is a more secure investment option than any single financial organisation. Any funds that are invested through the CCLA in the deposit fund are held on the investor's behalf by the constituent banks and in the unlikely event that anything causes the CCLA to go into liquidation or otherwise cease operating, the investments remain secure.
- 2.6 It was previously noted that the CCLA have an additional facility, the Local Authority Property Fund, in which funds are invested for growth in the longer term. The LAPF may offer a higher, if riskier, return on investment. However, consideration of such a scheme is only permitted by the treasury management policy if tied to a wider investment strategy in pursuit of specific planned future capital projects.
- 2.7 The LAPF is not recommended at this time but, whilst it is outside the parameters of the current treasury management policy, it may be a useful facility in future to help grow funds for a specific purpose.

3. Treasury Management Policy Statement

- 3.1 The current treasury management policy statement was approved in 2021 and updated in 2022 to allow the RFO delegated authority to transfer funds of up to £100,000 between accounts. This was to allow for payments on the football development project which may require settlement before approval to move necessary funds could be sought from this committee. This delegated authority is to be reviewed on completion of the project.
- 3.2 No further changes to the treasury management policy statement are being proposed at this time.

4. RECOMMENDATION

It is **recommended** that:-

- 4.1 Members endorse the Treasury Management Policy.

For further information please contact:

Rory Fitzgerald, Finance Manager or

Tel: 01425 484723

rory.fitzgerald@ringwood.gov.uk

For further information please contact:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk

Tel: 01425 484720

Chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Recommendations from Staffing Committee

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 The Staffing Committee met on 16th October and agreed two recommendations to the Council which now require decision. See minute reference S/0121 but the recommendations were:

“That the selection panel for the role of Finance Manager be comprised of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Chair of Policy & Finance Committee plus 2 additional councillors to be appointed by Full Council.

That a Task and Finish Group be formed to conduct a review of the organisation, looking at structure, roles, nature of work, skills required and prioritising roles to be filled.”

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The first recommendation is self-explanatory. There is a degree of urgency about this matter since officers need to proceed with the recruitment without delay if an appointment is to be made in time to allow for an effective handover to the new incumbent before the present incumbent leaves. Accordingly, if members find the first recommendation acceptable, the two additional councillors required to complete the panel need to be appointed at this meeting.
- 2.2 Officers have concerns about the second recommendation. First, it is not felt to be consistent with the proper allocation of roles and responsibilities as between members and officers (see especially paragraph 2.2 of the separate report about Council Strategy in this respect). Secondly, for an exercise of this kind to be worth doing, a significant commitment of time and attention from both members and officers would be needed. These are not available at present unless withdrawn from other matters which have hitherto been regarded as priorities. Finally, the likely effect on staff morale should not be under-estimated. The pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness in the use of staff resources in public service is entirely commendable but it tends to cause uncertainty and turmoil which worries staff – tending to increase absences and staff turnover. The last-mentioned, do not serve the interests of effectiveness or efficiency. Given the managerial changes which are inevitable anyway, adding further uncertainty and change would be particularly unwelcome at this time.
- 2.3 If the council concludes that a member-led review of staffing of the kind envisaged by the second recommendation is appropriate now despite officers' concerns, it is respectfully suggested that before the group is established and members appointed to it, there should be further discussion with officers about
- The precise scope of the review and especially which roles can be excluded from it
 - The respective roles of officers and members in undertaking the review
 - Terms of reference for the review
 - Which other tasks are to be set aside for the duration of the review

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

- 3.1 **Members are respectfully invited to consider the first recommendation from the Staffing Committee and, if thought fit, appoint two councillors to join the recruitment panel.**

3.2 Officers respectfully recommend that members reject the second recommendation from the Staffing Committee or, failing this, agree arrangements to consult with officers about how best to carry it into effect.

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484721
Email: jo.hurd@ringwood.gov.uk

TOWN COUNCIL**30th October 2024****Publication of members' meeting attendance data****1. Introduction and reason for report**

- 1.1 Data on members' attendance at meetings is collated by officers but not presently published (other than in the minutes of individual meetings). It was suggested at a recent meeting that members desired an opportunity to review possible publication of this data on the Council's website.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The publication of attendance data is not required by the transparency code but many town and parish councils choose to publish it voluntarily anyway, often in a statistical form. Because there is no legal obligation, what exactly is published would be for members to decide. For example, this could simply be a running total of meetings attended published every month or the annual publication of the percentage of meetings attended calculated by reference to the theoretical total possible. Doing this would involve officers in additional work but not enough to be a significant consideration provided members agree clear guidance on precisely what data is to be published and when.
- 2.2 Publication of the data would, in principle, serve the interest of transparency, one of the seven principles of public life (aka the Nolan Principles). However, statistics published without context could give an incomplete or even misleading impression. Some councillors are appointed to more committees or other bodies than others. Some councillors are also members of other authorities whilst others are not. There is more to the role of councillor than attending meetings anyway. For all these reasons, attendance at this Council's meetings would be a very crude measure of councillor service.
- 2.3 A further complication and issue to consider is whether regard should be had to the tendering (and acceptance) of apologies for absence. It could hardly be treated as if it amounted to attendance but should it count for nothing? (Members should also remember that leave of absence can be granted for specified periods relieving the recipient of all duty to attend. How, if at all, should this be reported when it arises?)
- 2.4 Another complication would be which types of meeting to include in the data. Presumably, it would include meetings of the full council and each of its committees (which officers tabulate at present) but should sub-committees, working parties and task and finish groups (which are not) be included as well? What about meetings of bodies to which councillors are appointed as representatives (about which officers are not necessarily even informed at present)?

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

- 3.1 Should information about members' attendance at meetings be published on the Council's website?**
- 3.2 If so, what data and when?**

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk

Direct Dial: 01425 484720 Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk