

In certain circumstances Councillors may be granted a dispensation which enables them to take part in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. As Proper Officer of Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council it is my duty to consider any Councillor's application for dispensation. The rules on applying for dispensation are set out in the Parish Council's Standing Orders at item 7.

I have received a written request from Cllr. King-Wilson for dispensation to be permitted to take part in the wider discussions regarding the Plaistow & Ifold Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. King-Wilson is the landowner of the Brownfield Site referenced in the draft Plan at policy EE 4. The formal address being Little Springfield Farm, Plaistow Road, Ifold, RH14 0TS. Redevelopment of this site is supported by the Parish Council, as outlined at Policy EE 4.

The ground on which Cllr. King-Wilson has asked to be permitted to take part in the wider discussions regarding the Neighbourhood Plan is "*a dispensation is in the interest of persons living in the council's area*" (Standing Order 7(h)(ii)).

My consideration and decision in relation to this matter is in respect of this meeting only.

In reaching my decision I have taken advice from Surrey & Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) and had regard for all the criteria to be applied in determining dispensation requests.

Dispensation was primarily introduced to prevent meetings becoming inquorate, because the number of persons prohibited from participating, due to their disclosable pecuniary interest, would be too great. This is not the case here. Plaistow & Ifold Parish Council has 11 Members and only Cllr. King-Wilson has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the Neighbourhood Plan. There is only one apology for tonight's meeting; therefore item 13 - Consider for ratification amended Neighbourhood Plan – can be transacted without frustration.

The Neighbourhood Plan is a contentious document, which elicits strong opinions both within the public arena and the Parish Council itself. As Clerk, it is my duty to ensure that the Parish Council maintains public confidence in the decision-making processes regarding The Plan. A challenge could be raised if any Councillor with a vested personal interest in any policy of The Plan is able to participate in discussion and/or voting rights. I am also required to be mindful of the possible outcome of the proposed vote. Cllr. King-Wilson has cited that "*a dispensation is in the interest of persons living in the council's area*". However, it is my view that their interests are represented in the decision-making

process by the other ten Councillors, who I am confident will undertake their obligations correctly and represent the interests of all Parishioners in the whole Parish Council area.

I therefore refuse Cllr. King-Wilson's dispensation request for these reasons.