

Register of Pecuniary Interests – Dispensations

Councillor Mrs E Gill - Dispensation

The dispensation applied for concerns an item relating to the designation of a Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum and its designated area coming before the Planning Committee meeting of the 24th August 2016 in a situation when Councillor Mrs Gill might have to withdraw from the meeting as she is a member of the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum.

The rationale is that if a Neighbourhood Plan were to eventually be adopted it could contain policies which benefit individuals who reside in the area it covers and therefore it can be argued that Members who are involved in decision making have an interest in the matter which benefits them to a greater degree than the whole population of the Borough. The next question to consider is what type of Interest a Member might have. Under the Code we identify two types of Interests, Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI). DPIs are defined in legislation and are broadly connected to financial matters e.g. employment, interests in contracts, ownership of land or ownership of shares. NPIs are defined in the Code as an interest in a matter which reasonably be regarded as affecting a Member's well-being to a greater extent than the majority of Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of a ward or electoral area for which a Member has been elected.

The Council's Monitoring Officer's view of the matter is that Councillor Mrs Gill would not have a DPI because at this moment in time no specific property is being considered and there are various other steps to go through before a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted. However he did believe that she may have a NPI. This is on the basis that if the recommendations are approved then it can be said that she could potentially benefit if a Neighbourhood Plan is eventually adopted. This approach has been adopted by other local authorities who have considered the issue of Neighbourhood Plans and whether Members living in the proposed areas have any form of Interest.

Therefore, the Council's Monitoring Officer has granted Councillor Mrs Gill a dispensation under paragraph 12.1 of the Code of Conduct for Members to remain in the room when the item is considered and, participate in any debate relating to this item and vote on the item.

This dispensation applies only for the duration of the Planning Committee to be held on the 24th August 2016. The reason for this approach is that if there are future considerations of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan we should consider the implications of possible Interests on a case by case basis rather than giving a blanket at present as we may find that circumstances warrant a different approach.

