

# **URGENT VIRTUAL GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2015**

**Councillors Present:** Jeff Beck (Vice-Chairman), Graham Bridgman, James Cole, Barry Dickens, Lee Dillon, Rick Jones, Anthony Pick and Quentin Webb (Chairman)

**Also Present:** Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter and Chris Bridges

### **PART I**

#### **17 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Jeff Beck and Anthony Pick declared an interest in Agenda Item 3, and reported that, as their interest was personal and prejudicial but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, they would not take part in the discussion or vote on this matter.

#### **18 Request for a Dispensation**

*(Councillors Jeff Beck and Anthony Pick declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 3 by virtue of the fact that they were two of the Members that had applied for a dispensation. As their interest was personal and prejudicial they took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).*

The Committee virtually considered a report (Agenda Item 3) which pertained to an application for a dispensation from Councillors Adrian Edwards, Anthony Pick, Lynne Doherty, Mike Johnson, Jeff Beck, James Fredrickson and Jeanette Clifford to speak and vote on Item 15 (A339/ Fleming Road Junction Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)) at the Full Council meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

The Monitoring Officer recommended that all Members that applied were granted a dispensation to speak and vote on this item at 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Full Council meeting on the basis that the interest was an 'Other Interest' and not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. The potential for bias was limited in that the land, which was the subject of the CPO, was to be surrendered shortly after the relevant paperwork was completed.

All three Independent Persons (IPs) were consulted. Two of the IPs concurred with the Monitoring Officer while the third felt that a dispensation should not be granted:

1. Lindsey Appleton concurred with the view of the Monitoring Officer and stated that the potential for bias was limited in reality and she would be minded therefore to allow a dispensation in this case.
2. James Rees concurred with the view of the Monitoring Officer.
3. Mike Wall disagreed with the view of the Monitoring Officer and stated that 'On balance I would refuse dispensation. As there is an issue with perception and public confidence is relevant.'

Barry Dickens (Parish Council Representative) was of the view that the citizens of Newbury were best served by their Town Councillors having dispensation to participate and vote on Item 15 at Full Council on 10 December 2015. He felt that this dispensation should also apply to any further discussion on the subject covered in Item 15.

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Councillors Graham Bridgman, Rick Jones, Lee Dillon, James Cole and Quentin Webb concurred with the view of the Monitoring Officer that a dispensation should be granted and stated that it should be applied at this meeting and any future meetings where this CPO was discussed.

**RESOLVED that :**

- a Dispensation be granted;
- the dispensation permits Councillors Adrian Edwards, Anthony Pick, Lynne Doherty, Mike Johnson, Jeff Beck, James Fredrickson and Jeanette Clifford speak and vote on items pertaining to A339/ Fleming Road Junction Compulsory Purchase Order;
- the dispensation be granted for the meeting on 10 December 2015 and any other meeting that discussed (in the sole opinion of the Monitoring Officer) the same issue or matters arising from the same issue.

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....