

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**Cllr Dennis King**Borough Councillor for Higham Ward
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Mr Adrian StanfieldDirector of Central Services and
Monitoring Officer
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling. Kent ME19 4LZ11th May 2026

Dear Adrian,

**General Purposes Committee 10th June 2026
Request for dispensation – Code of Conduct**

You have requested that I write to you as Monitoring Officer in support of an application for dispensation, to enable me to participate in any Council Planning Meeting, which will may be considering developments in Higham Ward, particularly those which have been identified in the Tonbridge & Malling Draft Local Plan.

My principle concern in raising this request relates to a development allocation in the Draft Local Plan designated TO1. This allocation which is situated in Higham Ward proposes the construction of 1671 houses across 2 large areas, which are directly adjacent to each other. The 2 sites are proposed to accommodate 750 houses and 911 houses respectively.

In total area TO1 equates to 74 hectares or 183 acres of open farmland. This allocation would be the largest single development in Tonbridge & Malling. Despite the possibility that there may be more than one application for sub-units of this area the resulting development when completed will function as one working development and would consequently have serious wider implications for infrastructure requirements across Higham, North Tonbridge, the Wider Tonbridge area and even beyond the boundaries of TMBC.

Given that my home is situated next to the north east corner of one of the plots making up area TO1, I feel that I need to seek a dispensation for any suggested conflict of interest before any related application to any part of TO1 comes before committee. However, the larger of the 2 areas making up TO1, known as Grange Farm, is separated by Higham Lane from the area where I live. I am therefore seeking dispensation to enable me to participate as the local member for Higham Ward as a voting member and with the opportunity to speak in committee on that basis. I will lay out my reasons to support this.

Yes, my property does abut to the north-east corner of the land which is allocated in the TMBC Draft Local Plan to hold 750 new homes. It is debateable whether the development will have a positive or negative effect on the value of my property. The main impact would be likely to be one of inconvenience during the construction phase. However, this effect is likely to be felt over a much wider area, given the scale of the works involved and the inevitable pressures on the roads with general disruption across Higham and beyond. The question to be asked is on what basis, such as distance from the development, would we draw the line? Given that I have no intention of moving from my home, I feel that the issue in my case is academic.

Members may be aware that in the course of the recent Regulation 18 consultation the responses from Higham residents represented the largest volume of submissions from any ward in Tonbridge & Malling. In fact this single ward represented circa 20% of the total overall number. This reflects a significant interest and level of engagement by residents in regard to the TO1 proposal, irrespective of how close they live to the site(s).

Given that I have been aware of the possibility of this development for many years and have fielded many question and queries from residents over the years, I feel that Higham residents would consider it a serious democratic deficit if I were not able to be seen to be part of the decision making process as their councillor. I believe that Higham residents would consider that it is very reasonable for the dispensation to apply and I also believe that I could easily demonstrate this to be the case. By contrast, should I not be able to be present in the chamber I believe that my residents would reasonably feel that they would be disadvantaged. My main concern remains my ability to represent my community during a period of significant change.

As I have outlined above TO1 is a very large-scale development the impacts of which are much wider than the Higham area. There would be very significant infrastructure implications affecting Tonbridge and the wider area, particularly when considering the reality of the TMBC and TWBC local plans considered together. This development must be considered from the wider holistic perspective.

Finally, I would like to point out to the committee that my situation is not unique. There will be other members who live close to large developments. As indeed they did when submitting responses to the Draft Local Plan. Therefore, there is the issue regarding where we draw the line in identifying any potential conflict of interest and the need to ensure a high level of councillor participation.

I respectfully ask the General Purposes Committee to give me the dispensation to proceed to participate in the forthcoming Higham applications on an equal footing.

Yours Sincerely,

Dennis King