

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 13th December, 2007.

Present: Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer(Chairman), Cllr Julia Roberts(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Mrs Liz Nesbitt, Cllr William Woodhead

Officers: Mike Batty, Roger Tait, Rosemary Young(DNS), Satnam Singh, Simon Lee (PPSU), Andy Bryson, Paul Hutchinson (RES), Daniel Ladd, Peter Mennear, Judith Trainer, Sarah Whaley (LD)

Also in attendance: Margaret Reynolds (Travellers Education Support)
Cllr R Cook

Apologies: Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mohammed Javed,

HCS 29/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

HCS 30/07 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd November 2007 for approval - To follow**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

HCS 31/07 **Travellers Transit Site Selection Review**

Members of the Committee were presented with background information in relation to the Traveller Transit Site Review by Margaret Reynolds from Travellers Education Support.

It was highlighted that Travellers were made up of two distinct groups; English Gypsies and Travellers of Irish heritage of which Stockton's majority were the latter. It was pointed out that these two groups should be provided for separately as they did not generally mix.

Margaret Reynolds also discussed in detail various aspects of the Traveller culture and how this should be taken into consideration when Stockton were considering the course of action to take when proceeding with this review, in particular:-

- diversity of the two distinct traveller groups
- issues associated with sites that are too large
- benefits of smaller encampments
- security in relation to the caravans which are occupied by Travellers
- historical attitudes from local communities
- issues within families and the problems this causes for future settlement
- amenities and schools to be considered

Further discussion included the approach other authorities had taken within the Tees Valley which were considered to be successful.

Questions were invited from the Committee and further discussion took place relating to the following issues:-

- houses bought by Travellers/importance of permanent addresses
- school preference
- traveller culture.

Following this information, Members discussed the possibility of providing for smaller sites rather than one large one.

Members discussed issues surrounding the funding deadlines for the provision of a site. The Head of Community Protection stated that the terms for making a bid indicated that spending of any funding received may need to be by March 2009.

Members of the Committee were presented with a number of potential sites to consider for the Transit Site by Planning Services. A short list was agreed and a site visit was to be arranged at a later date. In addition to this Officers agreed to review the list of potential locations with the view to accommodating smaller sites.

The Committee discussed the best approach for consultation. It was agreed that local Members and local residents be added to the consultation list.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. the Committee investigate the option for multiple Traveller Sites due to the evidence provided.
2. site visits to be arranged/short listed at a later date.
3. the information be noted.

**HCS
32/07**

Work Programme

The members of the Committee were presented with the Project Plan.

At a previous meeting members had requested that further information be brought to the Committee to identify the budget setting process in relation to the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service. The Finance Manager informed Members that the setting of the Medium Term Financial Plan would proceed as normal including a Members seminar in January and agreement by Council in February next year.

CONCLUDED that the Project Plan be agreed.