

Councillor John Hague

M Saville

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26<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Dear John

**Gypsy Traveller Task & Finish Group**

As we have discussed, there is a very serious concern that the decisions made by the Task and Finish Group have to be based on sound principles with logical reasons for the exclusion of sites during the consideration process.

Any challenge by the Gypsy Traveller community, and there may well be one, is more likely to be successful if it cannot be demonstrated that due consideration has been given to all sites.

The sites eliminated to get down to the shortlist of five, can be demonstrated to have been properly considered. The reasons given by Members at the last meeting for discounting the Penlan and Llansamlet listed sites are not sound and will not stand scrutiny if a challenge process is forthcoming.

It will be far more sensible to look at all five sites whilst on the site visit. This will add very little time to the overall exercise and will demonstrate that sites have not been excluding unnecessarily or arbitrarily.

It will still be for Members to report back to Cabinet with their views on the options available but Members and yourself will be much less likely to a successful challenge at a later date.

Equally, the Gypsy Travellers have to be involved at some stage. Leaving that to the Planning application stage would probably be seen as "unfair". If members ultimately decide to develop a site which they won't use, the entire exercise will have been a failure. Members may feel unable to accommodate any preferred site identified by the Travellers but at least it could be demonstrated that they have been part of the process and consulted.

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It is not appropriate to take the Gypsy Travellers on the Council bus to view the sites as Members may wish to take advice from officers during the course of the visits, but they really should be involved around the table before options are forwarded to Cabinet.

As I say, this will safeguard yours and the members position as far as possible and I would urge you to take the professional advice and modify the approach.

Yours sincerely

**REENA OWEN**  
**DIRECTOR**