

## CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

### MINUTES OF THE GYPSY TRAVELLER SITE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

HELD AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2012  
AT 9.00 A.M.

**PRESENT:** Councillor J B Hague (Chair) presided

<b>Councillor(s):</b>	<b>Councillor(s):</b>	<b>Councillor(s):</b>
A C S Colburn J Evans	R L Smith	P M Matthews

**Officers:**

E Jones, A Kirczey, M Saville, D Smith, P Williams, S Willingale and J Tinker.

21. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were given.

22. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

23. **MINUTES**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Gypsy Traveller Site Task and Finish Group held on 7 December 2011 be accepted as a correct record.

24. **PROVISION OF A NEW GYPSY SITE AND TRAVELLER SITE: ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

E Jones presented the Assessment Update Report which provided an overview of progress in the assessment of filtered Gypsy and Traveller sites. Following on from the initial assessment of the suitability of all land under Council ownership, a total of nineteen sites remained in the process (as identified within Appendix 1). It was verbally amended that the electoral division for Site 19 should be Penderry rather than Llansamlet. These sites had been further refined utilising a stringent filtering mechanism based on relevant Welsh Government guidance which resulted in five realistic site options being presented. These sites were assessed for their relative accessibility to key services as well as infrastructure and potential environmental impacts, all of which were detailed in the report.

Minutes of the Gypsy Traveller Site Task and Finish Group  
(08.03.2012) Cont'd

Given the confidential nature of this exercise it was recommended that consultation with the statutory consultees or other third parties would not take place at this stage. It was deemed suitable for this work to take place during the detailed planning application stage. It was emphasised that if Members disagreed with the suitability of the remaining sites then any of the others discounted earlier could be reconsidered.

The pros and cons of the five sites were discussed and their suitability assessed. It was considered appropriate by Members that three sites go forward as being considered suitable. The least preferred sites were not considered suitable given concerns regarding loss of potential capital receipts on a large scale housing allocation and the proximity to an existing Gypsy and Traveller site. The Head of Service recommended that members visit all five sites for completeness before finalising their thoughts.

E Jones stated that the Authority had an obligation to consult with representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and the Group considered it appropriate that the preferred sites be presented.

It was queried why a certain site within close proximity to Site 5 had been rejected. It was recommended that Member site visits would take place to the preferred site options.

The Group agreed that consultation with statutory consultees would take place during the planning application stage. Reference was made to Appendix 2 of the report which detailed the likely work required (sketch layouts etc) prior to being able to present a planning application.

Pitch size requirements were discussed ranging from a need for permanent or transit site (or both). D Smith, the Legal Officer, clarified that at the start of this process this Task and Finish Group were charged with finding alternative site provision which included a range of possible sites - permanent, transit or emergency.

Reference was made to Appendix 3 of the report which detailed approximate costings for site provision.

It was established that the filtered sites would have to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal whilst sites within the catchment of the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site may have to be assessed via the EU Habitats Directive.

It was queried whether planning permission would now be sought for all remaining sites. It was clarified that in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Gypsy and Traveller Task and Finish Group, that a report would be prepared for consideration by Cabinet on the filtered sites options which would then subsequently be reported to Council recommending that one or more sites should be taken forward to the planning application stage.

P Williams outlined the accommodation needs assessment. It was calculated that in the next five years there would be a need for an extra four pitches on the unauthorised site and six on the Ty Gwyn site. Associated work was also being undertaken with the Education Section.

It was queried how many sites had been identified both in Carmarthenshire and Neath Port Talbot Council areas. The provision within these areas were broadly identified and discussed.

The Group considered it appropriate for all Members to undertake the site visits and that they would remain open-minded in looking for a transit site.

**AGREED** that:

- (1) Site visits be undertaken to the sites as discussed.
- (2) Confirmation be sought why a certain site within close proximity to Site 5 had been discounted.

The meeting ended at 9.40 a.m.

**CHAIR**