

## **CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**

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

**HELD AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON THURSDAY 27  
SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 4.30 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor N S Bradley (Chair) presided

<b>Councillor(s):</b>	<b>Councillor(s):</b>	<b>Councillor(s):</b>
A C S Colburn J W Jones	E T Kirchner	M Thomas

**Officers:**

R Owen, E Jones, A Kirczey, S Malough, M Saville, D Smith, S Willingale and J Tinker

9. **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G D Walker.

10. **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.

11. **MINUTES**

**AGREED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Gypsy and Traveller Task and Finish Group held on 19 July 2012 be accepted as a correct record.

12. **MATTERS ARISING**

It was stated that the Chair and Officers had met representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller Community in order to inform them of the assessment process currently ongoing and to discuss their potential site requirements. The feedback received from this meeting would be incorporated into this exercise.

13. **DISCUSSION OF SHORTLISTED SITES**

E Jones explained to the Group that the filtering process had been undertaken on all available Council owned sites. It was stressed that all the tranches were subject to the same stringent filtering mechanism and that a consistent, accountable and transparent assessment approach was maintained throughout.

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The following stages of the filtering process were explained via a wide range of A1 Plans:

**Stage 1 Site Filtering: Identification of Constraints**

- 1) Council land ownership as at December 2010
- 2) Extract initial constraints (e.g.):
  - Environmental designations
  - Flooding
  - Contamination
  - Strategic Employment Sites
- 3) Council land ownership as at December 2010 excluding land with identified initial constraints

Following the completion of this exercise 1006 sites were identified.

**Stage 2 Site Filtering: Key Site Specific Constraints**

Sites were then assessed via agreed constraints (e.g.):

- Site size (more than 0.5 ha)
- Highway issues
- Leasing issues
- Vacant sites (No buildings on site)

Following the completion of this exercise 19 sites were identified.

**Stage 3 Site Filtering: Application of Appropriate Legislation/Guidance**

Sites were then assessed via local and national policy provisions:

- Appreciation of Policy HC9 (Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites) of the Unitary Development Plan
- Welsh Government Circular 30/2007
- Welsh Government Draft Site Design Guide

Following the completion of this exercise 5 sites were identified.

Members questioned the reasons why this work had to be undertaken. The following justification was provided:

- Identified need established within the Housing Accommodation Needs Assessment

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- Imminent introduction (2014) of the Housing White Paper whereby there will be a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsy and Travellers
- The need to identify suitable provision within the forthcoming Local Development Plan (up to 2025)

Potential site size requirements was discussed and the need to accommodate for future expansion. It was established that both a permanent and transit site were required. It was queried how the filtered sites conformed to the provisions of the Unitary Development Plan.

It was confirmed that no changes had been made to the legislative framework since this process had been undertaken and therefore if the assessment was repeated the same conclusions would be reached. Members requested that a flowchart be prepared in order to clearly highlight how this process had been carried out. It was suggested that a workshop be organised for all Members in order for them to be able to appreciate the full mechanics of the assessment.

It was stated that the sites are yet to be considered by the utility companies given the confidential nature of the work. This could be done either informally prior to the consultation exercise or will automatically be undertaken as part of the planning application stage.

It was recognised that the Gypsy and Traveller community should be consulted throughout the process. Human Rights issues was queried and it was felt that an Equality Impact Assessment would need to be undertaken..

It was suggested that an independent Head of Service would undertake a review of the process to ensure that there is an extra level of transparency. In addition, an external auditor (potentially a planner from an adjoining authority) would be appointed to review the application of all appropriate guidance/legislation as part of the assessment. If necessary a final meeting of this Task and Finish Group could then take place to assess these findings. However, if their conclusions would confirm the assessment of the Group then the five sites would be submitted to Cabinet and Council and be subject to a consultation exercise.

**AGREED** that the final stages in this procedure as outlined above be accepted and agreed.

The meeting ended at 5.50 p.m.

**CHAIR**