

Report of the Chair

Special Scrutiny Programme Committee - 10 September 2014

SCRUTINY OF GYPSY & TRAVELLER SITE SEARCH PROCESS – TO REVIEW EVIDENCE BASE AND TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS

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| Purpose | The committee will discuss progress of the scrutiny review and further work. |
| Content | The report provides a summary of evidence gathering to date. |
| Councillors are being asked to | Consider and agree next steps in the scrutiny process. |
| Lead Councillor(s) | Councillor Robert Smith, Vice-Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee. |
| Lead Officer & Report Author | Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A series of special meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Committee have been held to review the process adopted to date in the search for a second gypsy and traveller site.
- 1.2 The committee's role has been to consider whether the process, leading up to the report to Council on 21 October 2013, was robust. The committee is looking at the quality of that process, and may identify any learning points about the process, and recommend any changes for the future as appropriate.
- 1.3 Over the course of 6 meetings the committee has gathered evidence for this work, and has reached the point where next steps need to be agreed in order to conclude the scrutiny review.

2. Summary of Evidence Gathering

- 2.1 The first three meetings enabled the committee to hear from officers involved in the process who provided:
 - an overview of the process and legal framework;
 - information on the criteria for site selection and site sieve process, the consultation process / outcomes, and the role of officers

The following officers appeared before the committee:

- Jack Straw (Chief Executive)
- Reena Owen (Corporate Director)
- Patrick Arran (Legal Services)
- Emyr Jones (Planning Services)
- Dave Turner (Estates)

2.2 The committee then, over the last three meetings, took evidence from members of the public and other councillors not involved in the committee. The following appeared before the committee at their request:

- Tony Beddow
- Keith Jones
- Cllr Uta Clay
- Cllr Penny Matthews
- Cllr Jennifer Raynor
- Hilary & Tom Jenkins
- Phillip Robins
- Lawrence Bailey
- Cllr Chris Holley

2.3 In addition the committee has had access to various key documents, including:

- 2009 Court Judgement in case between City & County of Swansea and Christine Joyce (and others)
- City & County of Swansea Gypsy Traveller Policy – June 2009

Cabinet Reports / Minutes:

- 11 March 2010 – Report on the New Provision of a New Gypsy and Traveller Site
- 26 August 2010 – Report on Member Task & Finish Group to identify Potential Gypsy Traveller Sites
- 5 July 2012 – Report on Member Task & Finish Group to identify Potential Gypsy Traveller Sites
- 1 November 2012 – Approach to the Identification of Additional Gypsy Traveller Site Provision
- 23 July 2013 – Gypsy Traveller Additional Site Provision – Next Steps

- Gypsy & Traveller Site Task & Finish Group Reports / Minutes

- Two Independent Review Reports – 2012:
 - internal: Report of Head of Housing & Community Regeneration – Independent Management Review of the Processes used to Identify a Shortlist of Potential Locations for a new Gypsy & Traveller Site

- external: Report by Geoff White, Head of Planning, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council – Review of the Site Selection Process for Potential Sites for a Gypsy and Traveller Site within the City & County of Swansea
 - 21 October 2013 Council Report / Minutes – Gypsy & Traveller Site Provision
 - Extract from Housing Needs Assessment 2013
 - Other information published on council web pages – www.swansea.gov.uk/sgtsreport
- 2.4 An evidence pack has been circulated to committee members and is also available on the council website - <http://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=188&Year=0&LLL=-1>

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 The committee is asked to consider and agree next steps in relation to this scrutiny review that will lead to the committee drawing conclusions from this work.
- 3.2 Members of the committee may wish to:
- reflect on the sessions held so far
 - consider whether further evidence is needed

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Date: 4 September 2014

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Debbie Smith

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley