

Report of the Chair

Special Scrutiny Programme Committee – 8 December 2014

EVIDENCE SESSION: SCRUTINY OF GYPSY & TRAVELLER SITE SEARCH PROCESS

Purpose	The eighth evidence session will focus on discussion of the role of the Housing Needs Assessment in the process.
Content	The report provides a background / introduction to the evidence session.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information gathered as part of the committee's review of the process, and ask questions.
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Robert Smith, Vice-Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since February 2014 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.

2. Further Evidence Sessions

- 2.1 As agreed by the committee in September arrangements have been made for the committee to hold further meetings in order to:
 - a) seek further information about the consultation that was undertaken with the local gypsy and traveller community and how it fed into the decision-making process;
 - b) explore consideration given to existing economic regeneration / development plans in the site selection process;
 - c) better understand the role of the Housing Needs Assessment in the process.
- 2.2 The last meeting on 26 November focused on a) and b) above.

3. Evidence Session – 8 December

3.1 This session will enable the committee to discuss and better understand:

a) the role of the Housing Needs Assessment in the process.

The committee was particularly interested how the needs assessment was developed and its influence on the site search process.

The committee is interested in the use of assessments as a basis for decision-making about the long term, how and when needs were calculated, and the value of the Housing Needs Assessment to the process.

The following will be present to assist the committee for this discussion and any questions:

- Peter Williams (Strategic Planning & Enabling Manager) – Lead Officer
- Lee Morgan (Head of Housing)
- David Evans (Housing Business Manager)

3.2 Those attending have been asked to indicate whether there are any specific documents which would benefit the committee so that consideration can be given to making copies available to committee members at the meeting.

3.3 As agreed at the last meeting a letter has been sent to Councillor Nick Bradley requesting his attendance at this meeting. Subject to his availability the evidence session will also enable members to hear from Councillor Bradley as one of the 'lead' cabinet members at the time, particularly his views on the process as chair of the 2nd Gypsy & Traveller Site Task & Finish Group. This will help the committee to better understand the events of this period, including consultation that was undertaken with the gypsy and traveller community during the process.

4. Final Session

4.1 To complete the evidence gathering a final session will take place with the Chief Executive, Director – Place, and Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement to address some of the key issues that have emerged during the review, and deal with any outstanding questions. A date for this meeting is to be confirmed.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Appendices:- None