

**Draft Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Area (2) Committee Meeting held on Monday 9 June 2008 at The Memorial Hall, Wootton Bassett, commencing at 7.00pm.**

**Present:**

Chairman: C. Wannell

Councillors: A.M. Bucknell, G.R. Greenaway, M.E.M. Groom, M.P. Hatton, J. Lay, P.S. Roberts, W. Roberts, S.J. Still, A.M. Wannell

**Other Members Present**

Councillor: R.L. Tonge

**County, Town and Parish Council Representatives:**

Mrs V. Stubbings - Broad Town Parish Council  
Mrs J. Stratton - Wootton Bassett Town Council

**Officers Present:**

W. Gubbins (Corporate and Member Support Manager), A. Lowe (Spatial Plans Officer), L. Robertson (Head of Policy and Performance), L. Tilsed (Spatial Plans Officer) and J. Watling (Democratic Services Manager)

**CR3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors C. Berry, T. Clements, P. Doyle.

**CR4. Public Question/Receipt of Petitions**

The Chairman received a Petition from a resident prior to the start of the meeting, and further signatures were being obtained outside the hall during the meetings. The Petition that was received at the meeting contained 63 signatures to the following statement:

“Petition against proposed sites Wootton Bassett for use by the Gypsy and Traveller Community”.

**CR5. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CR6. Chairman’s Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:



- a) The Chairman asked the meeting to share his commiserations for the families and friends of the three members of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment who had recently lost their lives in service in Afghanistan.
- b) The Chairman explained that as the number of people wishing to attend the meeting now exceeded the maximum permitted under the Fire Regulations, it would be necessary to hold two sessions rather than a single meeting. The same presentation would be made to both parts of the meeting.

## **CR7. Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision**

Consideration was given to Report No. 5 (circulated with the Agenda) which introduced the Gypsy and Traveller Issues and Options Consultation, set out the background to this issue and the potential for addressing the needs in the short term and advised on the long term future for dealing with the issue within the Local Development Framework Process.

The Head of Policy and Performance gave a presentation regarding gypsy and traveller site provision covering the following issues:

- The number of pitches required
- The location of current pitches in Wiltshire
- Unauthorised sites
- Policies regarding the provision of sites for gypsies and travelers
- Public sites being considered for the location of a gypsy and traveller site
- The assessment process
- Timeline for site provision

The Committee was also informed that the Government had now stated that 48 pitches (as opposed to the original proposal of 24 pitches) were required in North Wiltshire.

It was noted that privately owned sites could also be considered if put forward by landowners. Any private sites put forward would be subject to a separate consultation process at the end of the summer.

Members of the public then asked questions and made comments on the proposals put forward in the consultation document. Details of the two question and answer sessions are attached in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Committee discussed the following matters:

### **First session:**

- The present situation is being forced upon the Council by central government;
- Some of the more publicised troubles tended to relate to the seasonal itinerant traveller rather than those on a permanent site;

- Notwithstanding the very impressive turnout and contribution of local residents, it was important for residents to maintain their lobbying of councillors, and to attend meetings at which decisions are being made; and
- The lack of transparency and supporting information behind the decision of the South West Regional Assembly in raising the target number of pitches in Wiltshire from 24 to 48.

Following the presentation of the Head of Policy and Performance, and having heard the views of local residents, it was **RESOLVED** that

1. **Neither of the two sites suggested for Wootton Bassett in the consultation paper are suitable for further consideration, and the Executive is recommended not to consider them further.**
2. **As the Council's representative on the South West Regional Assembly, Mrs M.E.M. Groom be asked to obtain further information about why the proportion of sites for Wiltshire had both doubled, and increased out of proportion when compared with other areas.**

### **Second session**

Members were conscious that their discussions and voting should properly reflect the content of the second session, and although many of the questions and comments contained similar matters to those in the first session, a further debate was held, and the following matters were raised, in addition to those in the first session.

- Many of the sites were in urban areas, simply because the land which is in public ownership tends to be in urban areas; and
- The sites suggested by local residents, i.e. at both sessions, should be looked at further as part of the "call for sites".

Following the presentation of the Head of Policy and Performance, and having heard the views of local residents, it was **RESOLVED**:

**To arrive at the same conclusions as for those minuted in respect of the first session.**

The first meeting started at 7pm and finished at 8.10pm. Approximately 250 members of the public were present.

The second meeting started at 8.20pm and finished at 9.40pm, when there were approximately 130 members of the public present.