

**Draft Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Corsham Area (4) Committee held on Tuesday 10 June 2008 at 7.00pm in the Town Hall, Corsham**

**Present:**

Councillor E Marston (Chairman)

Councillors JM Hartless, HT Jones, C Reid and RL Tonge.

**County/Town/Parish Council Representatives:**

Councillor M Simpkins          Corsham Town Council

**Officers Present:**

J Densham (Democratic Services Assistant), L Pullin (Democratic Services Officer) and L Robertson (Head of Policy and Performance)

**Others:**

J Stacey (WCC Community Planner)

**CO03. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Banks.

**CO04. Public Questions/Receipt of Petitions**

There were no public questions or petitions.

**CO05. Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**CO06. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CO07. 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;



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- The location of current pitches in Wiltshire;
- Unauthorised sites;
- Policies regarding the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers;
- Public sites being considered for the location of a gypsy and traveller site;
- The assessment process; and
- 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 question and answer session are attached in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Committee discussed the following matters:

- The Government wishes us to consider the public sites before the private sites as these sites will be more controllable;
- Whether the authority can appeal the decision to double the number of sites it is required to provide (Wiltshire County Council are currently considering the issue and will advise if there are grounds to proceed);
- The Panel accurately observed that the authority's analysis of the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites was flawed due its dependence on historic data; however, the Panel have provided a crude solution by doubling the number of sites required;
- Given the resource expended on the survey that analysed the District's Gypsy and Traveller provision, an Appeal should be a made as no objective evidence has been supplied to support the decision;
- Areas of outstanding natural beauty would not be exempt from the process of selection;
- The use of any area of outstanding natural beauty would be on such a small scale so would not affect the landscape character;
- It is a condition of the Planning Permission that any site sold on should be bought by a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community;
- It is the role of the Liaison Service to alert the Authority of pitches that are sold on to members outside the Gypsy and Traveller community; however, in reality this situation would be rare;

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- Currently there is one private site that may be considered for use; and
- Councillor Reid expressed the view that two of the sites in Chippenham, Hardens Mead and Long Close sites are unsuitable as a Gypsy and Traveller sites.

### **Resolved that**

- 1) That the Committee declined to express a view;  
and
- 2) The Committee note, with concern, the increase in the numbers of pitches and hope that the Executive will, in due course, revisit this issue with the South Western Regional Assembly.

The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 7.45pm.  
There were 7 members of the public present.