

Chairman's Announcements

Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Wiltshire Council is preparing a plan that will identify land for gypsy and traveller sites and include a policy for assessing the suitability of other sites the Council is asked to consider through the planning application process.

Wiltshire Council has a responsibility to plan for the housing needs of everyone in the Wiltshire community. This doesn't just mean providing a range of types and sizes of houses available to rent or to buy. There is also a responsibility to plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people.

The number of gypsies and travellers in Wiltshire has been increasing in recent years.

The consequence of not addressing this growing accommodation need could be increased tension between the settled and travelling community and discrimination towards the gypsy and traveller community.

An 8 week consultation on the issues and general approach to identifying land for new gypsy, traveller and show people sites is to start on Tuesday 6th April until 5pm on Friday 4th June 2010. This is the first stage in the process of preparing a Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

The purpose of the consultation is to:

- Discuss the ISSUES around providing new sites.
- Develop a METHOD for assessing what is a good location for new sites.
- Invite LAND to be put forward to be considered as possible new sites.

All information relating to the consultation will be available from the end of March on line at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersitesallocationsdpd, in the main Council offices in Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge and available at local libraries.

If you would like to discuss the issues involved in this consultation in more detail drop in events are being held at the following locations between 4pm and 8pm:

Neald Hall, Chippenham
Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes
Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury

Wednesday 5 May 2010
Tuesday 11 May 2010
Thursday 13 May 2010

Consultation on the Review of Special Educational Needs Provision

Over recent months Wiltshire Council officers have worked with schools, parent representatives and other people to review Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in the county.

The review relates to the whole of Wiltshire. It is not a cost cutting exercise; the purpose is to more effectively use available resources. The review considers:

- special school provision
- specialist provision that is part of mainstream primary and secondary schools
- SEN support services for schools

A document has been written that sets out what the review has shown and what the Council would like to do in the future. This will now be shared with a wide range of people who are invited to respond to say what they think about what the Council's proposals. The publication date is late February 2010. Those being contacted include: parents and carers of children with special educational needs, schools, Diocesan authorities, other Local Authorities, and Trade Unions. As soon as the document becomes available it is also being circulated to Parish Councils, through the Area Boards network, and it will also be available on the Wiltshire Council website.

Any questions about the proposals or the consultation process can be sent in the first instance to Tracy Gates, SEN Project Officer, tracygates@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 756170.

There are opportunities available to meet with officers to discuss the proposals:

- Devizes School, Devizes Monday 29 March 7pm
- Sheldon School, Chippenham Wednesday 21 April 7pm
- Kingdown School, Warminster Thursday 22 April 7pm
- Salisbury City Hall, Salisbury Tuesday 4 May 7pm
- St.John's Parish Church Centre, Trowbridge Friday 7 May 10am.

(The evening meetings are preceded by meetings for school staff and school governors.)

The closing date for the consultation is 12 noon Monday 24 May 2010. The content of the consultation responses will be made available to the Elected Members of Wiltshire Council who will make decisions in relation to the proposals.

Most of the proposals that may be subsequently agreed by Elected Members are designed to come into effect from September 2011. An individual plan will be put in place for any individual child or young person affected by any changes.

Flooding - Northern Operational Flood Working Group

The new flooding legislation means that Wiltshire Council has the responsibility for putting in place local strategies for managing flood risk.

To this end Wiltshire Council has set up two operational flood working groups one in the north and the other in the south of the County. As part of the work of these groups they have been collating information on flooding and drainage issues from highways and drainage teams around the county which are currently being loaded onto our GIS system.

The operational flood working groups are concerned that Parish & Town Councils may have additional information of which they have little or no knowledge of and are hoping that the town and parish councils will assist with gathering this information. They would welcome information on ALL types of flooding within their areas highway, agricultural and residential both inside and out.

The Area Board would like to invite each town and parish council to identify areas which flood or have previously flooded and any documentary evidence (preferably photographic) to support this.

The Community Area Manager will arrange for the distribution of flooding packs to all parish councils.

As part of this survey, two flood fairs for town and parish councils will be held the first of which at the Olympiad Leisure Centre, Chippenham on 14th April, 10.00am to 2.00pm. Refreshments and a buffet lunch will be provided. The second fair date is yet to be arranged and will be in the south of the county.

The purpose of the flood fair is to raise awareness of flooding and drainage issues and to encourage local communities to consider how flooding would affect them and what steps they could take to mitigate the effects of flooding.

Speakers from the Environment Agency, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, National Flood Forum, the Met Office and Wiltshire Council Emergency Planning Team will be undertaking presentations. The event will also include displays of flooding related equipment used by the various agencies to deal with drainage and flooding, Wessex Water PLC & 365 (Drainage Company) will also be in attendance.

Invitations will be sent shortly to all town and parish councils.