

## **Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee – 15 February 2005**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee** held on **15 February 2005** when there were present:

Cllr P A Capon  
Cllr T Livings

Cllr R A Oatham  
Cllr P F A Webster

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr T G Cutmore

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Scrutton	- Head of Planning Services
S Neville	- Residential Service Unit Manager
M Martin	- Committee Administrator

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

### **Resolved**

That Cllr P F A Webster be appointed as Chairman of the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee.

## **2 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Sub-Committee noted the Terms of Reference as follows:

“To undertake a review of the policy framework and service response in respect of gypsies and other travellers and to report back to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee”.

## **3 PLANNING FOR GYPSY & TRAVELLER SITES – ODPM CONSULTATION PAPER – DECEMBER 2004**

The Sub-Committee considered the officer Briefing Note to which had been attached the main parts of the draft Circular which comprised a review of the guidance contained in DoE Circular 1/94 “Gypsy Sites and Planning”.

The Sub-Committee accepted the officer statement that:-

“It is absolutely clear from the draft Circular that where a need is recognized, Development Plan Documents (DPD) must identify suitable locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Therefore, where a need is identified and a Local

Authority does not allocate a site or sites, there is every likelihood that decisions on sites may be made, either by a DPD Inquiry Inspector, or via a Planning Appeal.”

Furthermore the Sub-Committee drew particular attention to the following extracts from the draft circular:-

“Local planning authorities should not refuse private applications on the grounds that they consider public provision in the area to be adequate, or because alternative accommodation is available elsewhere on the authorities’ own sites or because the applicant has no local connection. But they are entitled to refuse private applications in locations that do not comply with planning policies, especially where the authority has complied with this guidance and proceeded properly to ensure needs identified by local housing assessments are being met.”

“In deciding where to provide for Gypsy and Traveller sites, local planning authorities should first consider locations in or near existing settlements with access to local services eg shops, doctors and schools.”

The Sub-Committee felt that the tone and flavour of the Consultation Paper from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister meant that it would be highly likely for this Council to have more Gypsies/Travellers and their sites in many parts of Rochford District and that the intrusion would be likely to cause concern and anger from a great majority of residents.

For this reason the Sub-Committee urged full debate involving all Members of the Council, to which the Gypsy Council should be invited to provide a speaker and the Standards Board for England be invited to send a representative.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, taking into account the ODPM’s deadline date for consultation of 18 March 2005, officers determine the best way forward for ensuring that all Members of the Council are given the opportunity to debate the issues raised by this consultation paper.
- (2) That the Gypsy Council be invited to provide a speaker to take part in the debate and the Standards Board for England be invited to send a representative to the meeting. (HPS/HHHCC)

The meeting commenced at 10 am and closed at 10.17 am.

Chairman .....

Date .....