

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held on Wednesday 26 February 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 5.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blacklock (Chairman); Councillors; Barrott, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Mrs Bunker, Copping, Ms Dean, Mrs Falp, Mrs Gallagher, Gifford, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson, Mrs Knight and Weber.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors; Caborn (Deputy Leader) and Mobbs (Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brookes.

108. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Barrott substituted for Ms Dean, Mrs Bunker for Guest, Mrs Knight for Edwards and Weber for Weed.

109. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 110 - Item 4 – Gypsies & Travellers Preferred Options for Sites Consultation - Call-in of Executive Decision

Councillors Mrs Bromley and Mrs Falp declared interests because two of the sites were in their Wards.

Councillor Mrs Blacklock declared an interest because she had received a telephone call from a landowner regarding one of the sites but she had not discussed the Call-In report with them.

110. **GYPSIES & TRAVELLERS PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR SITES CONSULTATION – CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION**

On 12 February 2014, the Executive made decisions on a report: item 10 "Gypsies & Travellers Preferred Options for Sites Consultation". In accordance with the Council's call in procedure, three or more Councillors called in the decisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

On 16 February 2014, Councillors Mrs Bromley, Mrs Falp, Heath, Kirton and Mrs Mellor called-in the decision stating the following as their reasons:

- The time scale of six weeks for consultation was not sufficient for a decision as important as this. 12 weeks should be the minimum to allow constructive dialogue from across the District;
- Concern on only eight sites being consulted. At least ten should be consulted on so to prevent the need to consult again should any, most or all of the sites are found to not be possible due to consultation results; and

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- Would sites currently being suggested then be compulsory purchased if the land owners changed their mind about being willing to consider their site.

On 16 February 2014, Councillor Mrs Higgins also called in the report with an additional concern: "the proposed sites were all to the south of the four towns, which she felt was unfair". She felt that they should be spread around the District. The Green Belt argument failed as a gipsy site can be put/planned for a tiny bit of Green Belt.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Blacklock, requested a summary of the Call in reasons from Councillors Mrs Higgins and Mrs Falp. Councillor Illingworth arrived during these discussions.

Councillor Boad proposed that Members agreed recommendation 2.1 (iii) which would allow the decision to be debated in full at Council. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs Gallagher.

Councillors sought clarity on a number of issues from the Senior Planner present, Lorna Coldicott. These included confirmation that six weeks consultation time was the minimum requirement and that Parish and Town Council were able to call special meetings if necessary. Ms Coldicott advised that Parish and Town Councils were always given extra time to submit their comments, if they requested it.

With regards to the Compulsory Purchase element of the report, Councillor Caborn reiterated that this would only be used as a last resort and needed to be included to prove the Council's intent to any potential Inspector, should it be necessary.

Councillor Gifford supported the proposal to refer the decision to Council, to allow all Members to have their say and to avoid a duplicate debate.

RESOLVED that in respect of the resolution 12 February 2014 made by the Executive on the "Gypsies and Travellers Preferred Options for Sites Consultation", the decision be referred to the Council for debate.

(The meeting finished at 5.20 pm)