

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD

Committee Members present: B Collier (Chairman)
Mrs S Bundock Mrs A Clarey
Mrs D Haslett-Saunders S Hayes

Also present: The Clerk

242. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Cooper.

243. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

MATTERS ARISING

244. To receive a presentation from Cliff Andrews, Environment Team Leader, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), on developing a Green Infrastructure Plan for Mid Bedfordshire and to seek this Council's support (see minute 234)

The Clerk has provided information to Cliff Andrews as requested.

245. To consider the Mid Beds District Council Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Issues & Options Consultation (see minute 239)

The District Council have responded to our query as to why landowners/developers are able to submit completely new site allocations at the second phase of the Development Plan process. They explain that after the original call for sites the Council continued to receive requests from developers and landowners asking if other sites could be submitted. As a significant period of time had elapsed from when sites were submitted and the last consultation took place, the Council decided it would be appropriate to undertake a 'last call' for sites during the consultation period. Approximately 70 additional sites and proposals were subsequently put forward, and therefore a supplementary round of consultation was required in order to ask the public their views on these additional sites.

It is considered that the approach taken by the Council to have two 'calls for sites' will have given developers and landowners ample opportunity to submit their sites for consideration and so the risk of previously unidentified sites coming forward at a late stage can be minimised as much as possible.

In regard to our concern that the consultation on the latest round of sites was not as widely advertised as the previous one, the advice that the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Government regulations stipulate standards on the way in which consultation on these types of documents takes place. The Council's approach to consultation, through the talktomidbeds programme, has far exceeded the minimum requirements. The current consultation has followed a very similar approach to the first round of consultation and allows

people to get involved via the web, the exhibitions, the hotline or by postal packs. The process has been widely publicised, on the Mid Beds webpages, the Horizon magazine, the talktomidbeds website, local print and broadcast news coverage. Nearly 2,000 emails and 500 letters were sent out to those who said they wanted to be kept informed about the progress on the site allocations DPD. Over 70 local businesses and local organisations were approached to display posters about the exhibitions.

Information on monitoring the number of visitors to the website and the return of completed surveys is available from the Clerk.

Our response to the latest round of site submissions has been forwarded.

CORRESPONDENCE

246. Talktomidbeds – Draft Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document

Correspondence has been received to advise of a forthcoming consultation on gypsy and traveller site allocation. The District Council has been preparing a Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) to allocate enough land for 22 pitches for local gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople across the district.

Two rounds of Issues and Options consultations have taken place on sites submitted for consideration, with over 4000 people responding. The District Council are now putting forward 7 sites in the district to provide the required 22 pitches. The proposed sites are located in the following settlements:

Sites for Gypsy and Travellers

Land North of West Drive, Arlesey (6 pitches)

Land North of Arlesey Road, Stotfold (5 pitches)

Oak Tree Nursery, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote (2 pitches)

1 Old Acres, Barton Road, Pulloxhill (8 pitches)

Hermitage Lane, Greenfield (1 pitch)

Land at Potton Gypsy Site (0 pitches – this is proposed as an extension to enable reconfiguration of the existing site)

Site for Travelling Showpeople

Kennel Farm Holding, Off Dunton Lane, Biggleswade (6 pitches)

The District Council will be undertaking consultation on the DPD for six weeks from the 29th September until 10th November. Further details will be circulated towards the end of September.

Resolved that the Clerk research the Roundtree Foundation website regarding issues on travellers sites. This website gives arguments that may be useful when giving our comments on the forthcoming consultation.

It was further

Resolved that the Clerk obtains a map or list of where other gypsy and traveller sites are in Bedfordshire and in particular Mid Bedfordshire. This may be useful when submitting our comments as it may show an unfair concentration of sites in this particular area.

247. North Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan: Stakeholder Workshop

An invitation has been received to attend the stakeholder workshop for the North Herts GIP being held on Thursday 9th October at the North Herts District Council Offices in Letchworth at either 2pm or 7pm. Councillor Mrs Clarey may attend the afternoon session if her diary permits.

248. TO APPROVE EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CLERK IN BOOKING THE CHAIRMAN OF THIS COMMITTEE AND THE ASSISTANT CLERK ON THE TALK TO MID BEDS BRIEFING ON THE FORTHCOMING CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

As a Town Council we have been invited to nominate two people to attend a briefing on the consultation process, being held on Thursday 25th September at the District Council offices. This will provide an introduction into the draft DPD, the proposed sites that are being put forward and the consultation process. As members of the public will come to Councillors and the Council offices for further clarification, it is important that a member of the Council and a member of staff are fully equipped with all the relevant information. The Clerk is unable to attend but the Assistant Clerk is able to attend in her place. Due to the timescales and the limited spaces available, the Clerk has booked the Chairman of this Committee and the Assistant Clerk on the briefing.

Resolved that the executive action taken by the Clerk in booking the Chairman of this Committee and the Assistant Clerk on the Talk to Mid Beds briefing on the forthcoming consultation process for gypsy and traveller sites on Thursday 25th September be approved.

249. TO CONSIDER CONTENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The current Terms of Reference were previously provided for Members.

Resolved that the heading of the draft Terms of Reference template be approved, with points on the current Terms of Reference to be added, plus those submitted at the meeting, and duplicated terms deleted. An updated Terms of Reference sheet is to be presented to the next meeting of this Committee for approval.

250. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

Councillor Mrs Clarey circulated the copy of the Town Plan Questionnaire which will be going to press following this meeting. The questionnaire will be delivered by the middle of October and would hope that all questionnaires would be returned or collected the week after, or by the beginning of November at the latest. She reiterated the request for people to deliver and collect the questionnaires.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 7.30pm

CHAIRMAN

DATED