

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 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: Councillors Mrs Hyde and Mrs Wilding, District/County Councillor Saunders, 15 members of the public and the Clerk

---

**260. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Cooper. District Councillors Street and Mrs Turner were unable to attend as they had been called to a meeting at the District Council regarding the new Central Bedfordshire Authority.

**261. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

**262. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr John Clarke, Littlebury Close

Mr Clarke advised that he had produced approximately 3000 fliers regarding the gypsy and traveller site consultation, and thanked the residents who helped to distribute them around the town. He advised that Teasel would be holding an open meeting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm to formulate their response. BBC Look East and Anglia TV have been advised of the situation regarding the site. He expressed concern over comments made by District Councillor Street in the recent edition of the Biggleswade Chronicle which referred to two sites being dropped from the consultation process, in that it was misleading. He has spoken to Councillor Street who will be placing an article in the paper to retract his comment.

Mr Mick Haskell, Ivel Way

Mr Haskell also expressed concern over Councillor Street's comments. He explained that he felt putting a gypsy and traveller site in the area suggested between the A1M, A507 and Baldock Road would prevent the employment development from going ahead, as suggested in the recent District Council employment site consultation. He stated that there was no history of gypsies and travellers in Stotfold. The town cannot absorb a gypsy and traveller site as Stotfold already has inadequate infrastructure, such as no high school, no town centre. The money to be used to provide the site should be put into improving the infrastructure for the town.

Mrs Lucy Clarke, Littlebury Close

Mrs Clarke expressed concern over the potential view from the A1M as it overlooks the suggested site. At the public consultation/drop in session held by Vision 21 it was unclear exactly where the site would be positioned within the 44 acres, and how big each pitch would be,

although thought it would be approximately the size of the Council Chamber. It is therefore very difficult to comment on highway issues. She expressed concern that the authorised site may become unauthorised, as the Government encourages expansion of sites. She also felt that some of the points raised at the public consultation/drop in session were racist. Mrs Clarke also had concerns about the litter this site might generate, and also the fact that Stotfold has no resident police force.

The Chairman advised that the pitches would probably be in the region of six to eight times the size of the Council Chamber. Pitches have to be big enough for two trailers, plus vehicles and an amenity room housing bathroom, living room, storage, etc.

**263. TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE MID BEDS GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Members were previously provided with copies of the relevant section of the consultation document and copies of letters of objection from residents.

The Chairman had produced a draft response document which was to be used as a start for the meeting. Members were invited to add to it or take away any section they felt shouldn't be included.

Members went through each section of the document and gave the comments from residents and copies of their letters due consideration. Amendments, additions and extractions were made to the draft response document and it was:

**Recommended** that the amended draft response document be presented to a Special Council meeting for approval prior to being submitted to Vision 21/Mid Beds District Council.

In conjunction with the gypsy and traveller consultation, Members were then asked to consider the Draft Development Management Policy. The District Council have asked the Town Council to make comment on the document, as future planning applications will be judged using the policies set out in the document.

After careful consideration of each proposed policy it was:

**Recommended** that the Council supports the Draft Development Management Policy that will set the criteria to enable the District Council to determine planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller development, with an amendment to point number 2 to read '*...and safe vehicular access to and from the public highway ...*'; and pointing out that we don't agree with point number 10 referring to the provision of play areas as this is seen as discriminatory as the same play provision is not given to other areas in the town.

**264. OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY**

Following the recent full Council meeting a Public Meeting has been organised for Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008, 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall for members of the public to give their views on the gypsy and traveller site consultation. Notice will be given in this week's local newspapers and posters are being displayed all around the town. The updated draft response document will be used to encourage views from residents at the Public Meeting, and a PowerPoint presentation of the document will be put together to assist residents. A record of numbers present will be

taken, and residents wishing to speak will be asked to announce their name and street where they live prior to speaking.

Views collected from this meeting will be taken to the Special Council meeting taking place on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 for Councillors to consider prior to amending, approving and submitting our response to the District Council in time for the deadline of the 7<sup>th</sup> January.

Thanks were given to residents for their hard work in carrying out thorough investigations for their responses, and thanks were also given to Councillor Collier for producing the draft response document to assist Members in considering the Council's response.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 9.26pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**