

EXTRACT FROM SCRUTINY COMMISSION MINUTES

7 NOVEMBER 2007

Transit and Stopping Place Provision for Gypsies and other Travellers.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the decision to submit a non-site specific application to the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) for a grant to develop a transit site for Gypsies and other travellers and to consult on three possible sites. A copy of the report, marked 'E', is filed with these minutes.

Mr John Legrys attended the meeting as a local member. He acknowledged the need for the Council to find a suitable site but expressed concerns about the suitability of the proposed sites. He also expressed concern about the consultation process which he considered to have been somewhat limited as it had not included some parish councils and travellers groups who were affected by the proposals.

In response to questions the Director of Corporate Resources advised the Commission as follows:

- (i) the original non-site specific bid had not succeeded. The Council had been advised of the decision by GOEM in June 2007. The announcement of a second round of funding had been made at a late stage. The deadline for the current round was 30th November 2007 and the Cabinet would be considering the outcome of the consultation on 23rd November. The outcome of the bid would be known by April 2008. This tight timetable was one of the main reasons for a shorter than normal consultation period.
- (ii) Since 2004, the County Council had been in discussion with District Councils with a view to identifying possible transit sites. To date not one site had been identified by the District Councils. It was acknowledged that further work needed to be undertaken at district council level.
- (iii) The criteria for selection of sites were based on government guidance and a further issue had been included relating to the "impact on local communities".
- (iv) Discussions had recently commenced with British Coal about potential sites but to date no response had been received.
- (v) The Cabinet had, following representations, decided not to proceed with the proposed site at Lockington and Hemington.

- (vi) A considerable number of well-argued responses had been received as a consequence of the consultation exercise.

In the ensuing discussions the following comments were made by members:

- there was a clear need to identify appropriate transit sites if illegal encampments are to be dealt with;
- District Councils be urged to identify appropriate sites in preparing their local development frameworks;
- the issue of the effect on local properties resulting from the identification of possible transit sites needed to be considered;
- the lessons learnt from the current consultation process be noted and incorporated in any future consultations.

RESOLVED:

That the information now provided be noted and the views now expressed be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet.