

CABINET MEETING – 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

- 1. From Mr Blott to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure, Councillor Bower**

THE FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

Through Individual Cabinet Member Decision ICM/021/210814 you drew down fifty thousand (£50,000) from the Local Plan Reserve for the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. As this is a large sum of money, please will you let us know how the money will be spent?

Previous studies by Baker and Pter Brett Associates failed to consult all stakeholders who might be affected by their reports. Their studies also included factual errors leading to invalid conclusions and recommendations.

If some of this money is to be spent employing consultants, please can you also let us know how you will ensure that:

- all relevant background and historical information is fully considered
- all information presented is factually correct
- all stakeholders are consulted, including the settled community who might be affected by conclusions and recommendations
- there is an effective process for updating GTTA site requirements and allocation numbers.

QUESTION ONE

Question from Mr Blott to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure, Councillor Bower

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Blott,

The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document (DPD) will be prepared in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012; the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012).

Under Regulation 18 "Preparation of a Local Plan" of the 2012 Amendment Regulations it is a requirement to invite stakeholders that may have an interest in proposed plan to make representations about what the plan ought to contain. This will involve a six week period of public consultation which will allow stakeholders to

check, challenge and gain clarification regarding the evidence as well as the policy and site options being prepared as part of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD. Further details regarding the timescales for the preparation of the DPD and the consultation will be reported through Local Plan sub-committee meetings.

The work undertaken to date to identify the accommodation needs for Travellers was undertaken between June 2012 and April 2013 in partnership with coastal West Sussex Authorities and the South Downs National Park under the Duty to Cooperate. The technical work has created a baseline upon which further updates can be undertaken and for wider consultation to be based.

In answer to your initial question, the £50,000 will be used for the initial costs of the DPD preparation including further technical work (evidence base updates to include the assessment of accommodation need and as well as transport and environmental impact); two rounds of public consultation and the Examination in Public process. The approved ICM provides a budget for the preparation of the DPD.

Work is beginning to take place, as part of the early stages of DPD preparation, to identify the gaps in the available data and which pieces of work require the commissioning of consultants. Where consultants are commissioned they will be provided with a robust brief to ensure that all relevant background and historical information is fully considered. This process will be supported through a consultation process with officers within the council who have in depth knowledge of the planning history of sites. Furthermore, the project management of consultants will ensure that the final report presents factually correct data.

As mentioned above, it will be important to ensure that the data and methodologies used for the technical work (including the process for updating the GTAA and pitch/plot targets) is checked and challenged through public consultation. This early stakeholder engagement, focusing on what the plan contains, will therefore be an important fact checking exercise and will also allow stakeholders to be consulted upon the emerging conclusions and recommendations. Parish and Town Councils have been asked and will be asked again for their comments and potential sites for Travellers. Arun operates a system of a 'call for sites' where any landowner or developer can present sites to the council at any time for future development. If you are aware of any suitable public or private sites within Arun (outside of the National Park) please let us know.

I hope that this response explains the processes and costs involved in the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD and assures you that public consultation will be integral to the preparation of a robust evidence base to support the preparation of sound policies.

Councillor Bower also made reference to a recently issued consultation document from the Government which might have an effect on emerging policies as the definition of travellers was going to be re-defined.

