

**Agenda Item 11**

**Addendum**

**DRAFT Action Notes from a meeting of the LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TASK FORCE held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009**

		Action	
		By	Date
	<p>LDF Task Force Members in attendance: Cllrs D Gale (Chair), N Aldis, A Bastable, R Drinkwater, J Lewis, K Matthews</p> <p>Other non-Task Force Members in attendance: Cllrs L Birt, F Chapman, A Graham, H Harper, D Jones, K Keen, J Lawrence, A Lewis, S Male, T Nicols, P Penman, T Rogers, J Street, C Turner, B Wells</p> <p>Members of the public in attendance: Mr &amp; Mrs Clarke (for item 4)</p> <p>Officers present:</p> <p>Richard Fox      Head of Development Plan</p> <p>Simon Andrews      LDF Team Leader</p> <p>Pru Khimasia      Senior Planning Officer</p> <p>Fiona Webb      Heritage &amp; Design Team Leader</p> <p>Mark Saccoccio      Luton/South Beds LDF Team Leader</p> <p>Chris Mollart-Griffin      Highways Development Control Team Leader</p> <p>Richard Guise      Consultant, Context 4D</p> <p>Andrew Davie      Development Control Manager (North)</p>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>		
	No apologies had been received		
<b>2</b>	<b>Notes of Meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009</b>		
	Re Item 5 East West Rail Link – page 2.4 3 <sup>rd</sup> bullet point re rowing lake. Members suggested that the notes be altered to reflect that the rowing lake is one of		

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	<p>a number of obstructions, and not the only obstruction.</p> <p>With this amendment the notes were approved as a correct record.</p>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Members Interests</b>		
	There were no personal or personal and prejudicial interests declared.		
<b>4</b>	<b>Report of the Regional Single Issue Review of Gypsies and Travellers</b>		
4.1	The chairman read a statement on the status of the LDF Task Force and public involvement in it. A request to attend the meeting had been received from a member of the public, and an exception was made to the usual custom which allowed Mr & Mrs Clarke from Stotfold to attend to hear the debate about Gypsy and Traveller issues. The order of the agenda was altered to allow this item to be discussed first.		
4.2	PK presented an outline of the Executive report which relates to the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the draft policy H4 on Gypsies and Travellers. The document is out for consultation with a deadline of 22 <sup>nd</sup> May to respond.		
4.3	<p>The Proposed Changes document ratifies the following changes (as recommended by the Independent Panel following the Examination in Public). :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of pitches in the East of England by 2011 from 1,187 to 1,237.</li> <li>• Include provision for transit sites for 160 pitches</li> <li>• Include provision for Travelling Showpeople for 148 pitches</li> </ul>		
4.4	<p>Elements of the Proposed Changes that relate to Bedfordshire and Luton are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase from 85 to 105 pitches across Bedfordshire by 2011</li> <li>• A combination of South Beds and Mid Beds figures as the figure for Central Bedfordshire.</li> <li>• 3% compound growth in G&amp;T pitches</li> <li>• Bedfordshire and Luton are required to provide 10 transit pitches</li> <li>• Requirement to provide accommodation for Travelling Showpeople.</li> </ul>		

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4.5	<p>Officers recommendations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept the additional requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.</li> <li>• Accept a split of pitches between the former Mid Beds and South Beds areas, (as outlined in the Panel report, of 30 and 50 pitches respectively).</li> <li>• Reject the overall figure for Central Bedfordshire, continue with separate LDFs for the former Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire areas.</li> <li>• Note the 3% growth rate but support flexibility</li> <li>• Accept the transit requirement for Bedfordshire and Luton. (It was pointed out that 10 transit pitches could reconcile the requirement for 45 emergency stopping places recommended by the GTAA)</li> <li>• Accept policy H4A and the figure for Travelling Showpeople accommodation as a minimum.</li> </ul>		
4.6	<p>Members questioned the rationale for allocation for the region and asked for the formula used to be explained/expanded upon.</p> <p>Officers did not have the formula to hand, but were happy to circulate it in advance of the Executive Meeting.</p> <p>At the last Executive there was debate and discussion on the increase in pitches and it was resolved that clarification would be sought from Go East for the reasons for the increased figures.</p> <p>RD – stated that she could not support the proposed changes without the requested clarification.</p>	PK	
4.7	<p>Officers outlined that at the Examination in Public, Gypsy &amp; Traveller groups argued that the figures did not go far enough and underestimated need. The Panel was minded to accept this view. In addition, for the former Mid Beds area, the Panel were minded to increase figures to provide an additional 2 pitches to alleviate pressure on the neighbouring authority, South Cambridgeshire .</p>		
4.8	<p>Members asked how the proposed growth rate relates to the national figure. Officers outlined that the 3% growth rate reflects/accords with national growth rates. Officers reminded members that the Bedfordshire &amp; Luton needs assessment suggested 6.9% growth.</p> <p>Members requested that Officers do further work on projected population growth to see how the 3% compares to the growth rates of the settled community.</p>	RF	

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4.9	There was a discussion on what qualifies a pitch. Officers outlined that a pitch is the space needed by a household. On average there are 1.7 caravans per pitch. Pitches generally consist of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and an outbuilding.		
4.10	Members asked whether what constitutes a pitch could be defined in the DPD, therefore setting the maximum number of caravans on pitch – RF advised Members that this can be done when dealing with a planning application. Officers clarified that the Council can impose conditions, on planning applications, but it can be more difficult to control number of visitors. Land owners/site managers may wish to impose their own controls.		
4.11	Members asked how to govern the size of pitches. Officers explained that this can be dealt with in DPD and individual allocations.		
4.12	Members suggested that the Council should recommend limits on the density of caravan sites to avoid oversubscription of utilities for example, limiting the number of caravans using one drain. If the Council does not make recommendations on number of caravans per pitch, they should recommend to the Executive that they suggest a pitch size.		
4.13	KM emphasised the need to be aware of consequences of defining the size of a pitch . Too many controls on pitch size could result in an increase in the number of pitches required. The best time to define pitch size is through the DPD.		
4.14	TN suggested that Central Beds state where the size of a pitch is significantly above the average i.e. enough space for a notional 1.7 caravans a pitch, the Council should limit the requirement to provide transit pitches. This issue could be handled in the DPD.		
4.15	JL asked for assurances that previous conclusions regarding sites would not be overturned. KM outlined that it would be a mistake for Task Force to give such assurances, in light of the decision to delay the process and look for additional sites. This was emphasised at the Executive meeting, that no specific assurances could be given.		

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4.16	<p>Members asked for an assurance that there would be needs assessment post 2011. This would be acceptable provided the needs to 2011 are met. It was outlined that the Council would be in a difficult position if the LDF was not in conformity with the East of England Plan. The only way to challenge the Secretary of State would be by judicial review.</p> <p>Secretary of State has powers of direction to intervene and determine the location of the pitches required, so there are quite serious sanctions if Central Beds does not comply.</p>		
4.17	<p>TN outlined the more immediate impact of not meeting the agenda. In the event that Gypsies and Travellers purchase land and apply for planning permission, planning permission may be refused but could subsequently won on appeal on the basis that the Council are not working towards making provision. It would be better to have an allocation agreed.</p>		
4.18	<p>Members asked for clarification about the paragraph in Policy H3 <i>'Local Development Documents should consider the need for rural exception sites and alteration of Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, to meet the required provision'</i>. Officers outlined that where a proposal may not ordinarily meet planning conditions, but there was a local need, exceptions can be made. This would apply to the LDF plan making process rather than planning applications.</p>		
4.19	<p>The visitors Mr &amp; Mrs Clarke left the meeting.</p>		