

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2008

PRESENT: Councillors Chittenden, English, Harwood, Horne, Lusty, Marchant, Moriarty, Robertson, Mrs Stockell, Thick, Verrall and J A Wilson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Williams

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apology for Absence was received from Councillor Moriarty.

28. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Wilson was substituting for Councillor Moriarty.

29. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Williams.

30. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

31. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

32. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

33. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed.

34. PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE SOUTH EAST PLAN: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

The Group considered the Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Services regarding the response to be made to SEERA on its consultation on the Partial Review of the South East Plan relating to the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

An update to the Report was circulated at the meeting, setting out a further option (Option E) which was being proposed by Kent County Council at a meeting of the Kent and Medway Joint Member Steering Group on 10 November. The principal characteristics of Option E are as follows:-

- a. It still allows for a significant element of regional re-distribution (50%) as with Option C
- b. In contrast to Options C and D, it uses Option A as the starting point (i.e. need where it arises) rather than Option B (need distributed within Kent according to 6 defined sustainability criteria devised in consultation with Kent authorities)
- c. In contrast to Options C and D, the element of the regional re-distribution which 'comes back' to Kent is distributed using the 6 defined sustainability criteria rather than the 2 criteria used by SEERA.

The outcomes of the approach of Option E are that:-

- a. It gives a higher degree of emphasis to meeting need where it arises than Option C (or D). This could help to reduce a risk that provision is made in districts/boroughs in Kent where it is not needed and insufficient provided where it is needed.
- b. By not starting from Option B, it takes less account of sustainability criteria (i.e. the actual constraints that would limit an individual authority's ability to find sufficient suitable sites).
- c. It overcomes the anomaly in Option B that 50% of Kent's need is distributed within the county according to 6 sustainability criteria but that the element of the regional re-distribution that 'comes back' to Kent is distributed according to 2 criteria used by SEERA.

The Group discussed the various options available. Two members felt that Option B was the most appropriate due to the emphasis on environmental constraints. The Group agreed that their recommendation should take account of whatever decision was made at the Kent and Medway Joint Member Steering Group.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be recommended to respond to the consultation as follows:

- i. That for Gypsy and Traveller provision, Option C for a provision of 32 pitches be supported,
- ii. That the Group will support Cabinet should Option E be agreed at the Kent and Medway Steering Group and Cabinet are minded to support this Option;
- iii. That for Travelling Showpeople provision, Option A for no provision of pitches be supported;
- iv. That, in addition, support be expressed for both the principle of taking account of sustainability factors and a degree of rebalancing, in determining the distribution of pitch requirements;

- v. That the Partial Review makes the best use possible of available evidence in determining the general level of need for transit pitches without further delaying the Review, and allow the exact location of the requirement to be determined at the local level. Furthermore, that SEERA be urged to undertake a regional scale study of transit patterns consistent with the above. The Kent advice did not propose a need for strategic transit sites in Maidstone borough and this advice continues to be supported.

25. DURATION OF MEETING

6.00 pm to 6.55 pm.