

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 19th February 2014

Present: Councillor Mike Tebbutt (Chair)
Councillors Terry Freer, Scott Edwards, Ruth Groome, Ellie Manns, Paul Marks, Alan Mills, Cliff Moreton and Jan Smith

Also Present: Councillors David Bishop, June Derbyshire, Maggie Don, Shirley Lynch, Margaret Talbot and Derek Zanger.
(not including speakers)

13.PP.42 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dearing.

It was noted that Councillor Marks was acting as a substitute for Councillor Dearing.

13.PP.43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:-

Councillor Tebbutt as a member of Desborough Town Council.
Councillor Mills as a member of Rothwell Town Council.
Councillor Moreton as Ward Councillor for Slade Ward.
Councillors Smith and Groome as members of Burton Latimer Town Council

13.PP.44 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held on 30th January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13.PP.45 MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

SITE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT – GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS CONSULTATION

A report was submitted which informed members of the results of the Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Options consultation, and which sought agreement to a way forward for meeting needs in Kettering Borough to 2031.

Fourteen people attended the meeting and addressed the Committee under the Council's Right to Speak Policy. Comments made for each site are summarised below:

Black Paddock, Braybrooke

Speakers:

Karen Stanley

Marie Jessop (Braybrooke Parish Council)

Katherine Cadbury (Harrington Parish Council)

Councillor Alan Matthews (Northamptonshire County Council)

Councillor David Howes (Kettering Borough Council)

- The site does not score highly under the criteria for sustainability and fails to meet requirements
- A precedent could be set for more sites to be developed
- Assessment should be decisive and proportionate across the entire county as national planning policy states that no community should be overwhelmed
- Of 11 permanent sites and two under construction in the Borough, nine are in close proximity to Braybrooke
- There are 21 other pitches located within 250 yards of the site
- Up to 28 people are living on three pitches with no sanitation as the sites are temporary
- 95% of sites within Daventry district border the parish of Braybrooke
- Most of the traveller pitches in the Borough are situated within nine square miles and are not spread fairly throughout the Borough
- There is a lack of control over traveller development
- Neighbouring parishes in Daventry district are also affected (Arthingworth and Great Oxenden)
- Provision should be made for gypsy/traveller accommodation in the plans for the new urban development at East Kettering
- Costs of bringing forward a site should not be a consideration
- The consultation process was not fair or balanced

- Decisions should not be based on the number of objections
- The Council is not acting in compliance with its own constitution in taking into account the views of local people
- Consultation meetings were well attended by residents of Braybrooke and neighbouring villages
- The demographic make-up of Braybrooke has changed and now reflects an older age group
- The Borough Council should finance the cost of bringing forward traveller sites
- The issues were first discussed over 30 years ago

Highcroft Farm, Broughton

Speakers:

Simon Merryfield

Andrew Stephenson (on behalf of Walter Hoyland)

Simon Mead (Walgrave Parish Council)

Alan Lodge (Pytchley Parish Council)

Hillary Bull (Broughton Parish Council)

Councillor James Hakewill (Kettering Borough Council)

- Bus service 304, which served the site, was withdrawn after just 30 days of operation
- The footpath to Broughton is partial
- The distance to shops and school exceeds 2km
- Heritage of the site should be taken into account
- Site is isolated on a noisy and dangerous red route (A43) with no sewerage system
- Water and electricity supplies to the site require upgrading
- An Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary as the site contains rare wildlife and, following an ecological walkover of the site, may be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in the future
- The family residing at the existing gypsy and traveller site in Broughton are in favour of the proposed site at Highcroft Farm and have built up a good relationship with the community
- Wildlife could still be protected if the site was developed
- There is a water main running near to the site and sewage can be dealt with using a technical solution
- The proposal is in contravention of policy 17 of the existing Core Spatial Strategy and policy 31 of the emerging plan
- Census data suggests that only 24% of the travelling community are mobile with the majority living in settled communities
- The junction with the A43 is notoriously dangerous and an estimated 120 extra traffic movements would go through Pytchley and the dangerous crossroads, placing children at risk

- The cost of making the Pytchley Road/A43 junction safe will make the proposal unviable
- Pytchley School is at capacity, is unable to expand, and would be unable to offer places to travellers
- Comments made by Broughton Parish Council during the consultation should be revisited
- Two sites will not enhance integration
- The site would be a dominant feature in the landscape and highly visible
- The A43 is due to be dualled, which will make access to and from the site even more dangerous
- Many pitches on the existing site at Broughton are vacant and the site is untidy
- As there is no bus service, there will be undue reliance on motor vehicles which is contrary to policies 9, 13 and 17 of the Core Spatial Strategy
- Option 2 better suits the wishes of residents and the Highcroft Farm site should be deleted
- The use of the site for gypsy and traveller accommodation will require the family currently resident on the site to be evicted from their home
- The local MP is bringing forward a private member's bill regarding the application of planning laws to traveller accommodation

Scott Road Garages and Crown Street, Kettering

Speakers:

Lesley Thurland

Cllr Mike Brown (Kettering Borough Council)

Cllr Bill Parker (Northamptonshire County Council)

- It is unrealistic to identify sites to 2031 and it would be better to identify until 2022 only
- Neither site meets policy criteria and would detract from the local residential character of the area
- The Scott Road Garages site is better suited to affordable housing and would be of more benefit to the town, having been already earmarked for this purpose to meet affordable housing targets
- The Crown Street site would not sit comfortably in the street scene and would not respect or enhance the character of the local area
- There would be a big impact on both roads as a result of large vehicles and caravans negotiating the streets, which are relatively narrow and usually contain parked cars
- 83% of the objections overall were from residents in the Crown Street and Scott Road areas
- Gypsies and Travellers have a right to a family life and to choose where they live

- The sites would not strengthen cultural qualities in the area
- There is a lack of community support for the two sites
- 400 objections were received from residents in the vicinity of the Scott Road Garages site, which is mainly houses, bungalows and flats and there would be a loss of privacy due to the proximity of boundaries
- Cleveland Avenue is the main route into the Brambleside estate and further housing is planned in close proximity to the proposed site
- When the A43 forms part of the Weekley/Warkton Avenue into the East of Kettering development, this will mean the Scott Road Garages site would be locked into the centre
- Romany gypsies and Irish travellers do not tend to travel frequently
- Planning permission would be required to run a scrap metal business from the site

The report was updated at the meeting in respect of a number of written submissions that had been received in respect of the Black Paddock, Highcroft Farm, Scott Road and Crown Street sites, including a letter from Harborough District Council in respect of the Black Paddock site.

The issues contained in the submissions were summarised. A presentation was then given which covered some of the issues raised in more detail. The presentation gave general background information to all sites under consideration and included maps, aerial views and photographs.

In consideration of the three options presented to the Committee, members felt that to identify suitable sites to 2031 was too optimistic, as it was impossible to second-guess what the situation would be with regard to need, changes in legislation etc. that far into the future. It would be more logical to identify sites to 2022, given there was a large amount of development due to take place in the Borough which might bring forward more sites for consideration, subject to negotiation with developers. Additionally, government policies might change which could affect the number of pitches required to be identified.

Members agreed that suitable sites should be identified to 2022. Each of the six sites under consideration was then debated as follows:-

Woodcroft, Desborough (1 pitch)

As this site already benefited from temporary planning permission and compared favourably to other sites, it was agreed it should be included as an allocation for permanent use.

Black Paddock (3-4 pitches)

This site was at present a temporary site. During discussion, members felt that given the level of objections and the concentration of gypsy and traveller sites in the area, this site should not be allocated as a permanent site unless, as a result of further detailed evaluation, it became apparent that other potential sites were not viable or realistically deliverable. Consequently, there was a need to retain Black Paddock as a potential option in terms of meeting Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in the Borough, until the deliverability of other sites has been conclusively determined.

Highcroft Farm, Broughton (8-10 pitches)

Members noted that an ecological survey and more detailed assessment was required for this site, before its suitability for gypsy and traveller accommodation could be accurately determined. Concerns expressed by speakers were also noted in respect of highways and road safety; education; noise; drainage; the impact on cultural heritage and the impact on facilities and infrastructure. However, subject to further assessment, it was felt this site should be retained as a potential allocation.

Scott Road Garages (6-7 pitches)

It was felt that, as the site had already been identified on 30th January 2014 as suitable for affordable housing, for which the Borough had a deficit, it should be discounted.

Crown Street (1 pitch)

This site was felt to be unsuitable for gypsy and traveller accommodation for a variety of reasons including location, impact on visual amenity and difficulty of completing vehicle movements with large vehicles/while towing. The use for gypsy and traveller accommodation was also felt to be out of keeping with the character of the area and the site was therefore discounted.

Land at Junction 4 of A14, Rothwell (up to 15 pitches)

It was noted that this site had some potential to be considered as an employment site in the future and that there was a significant shortfall in local employment even though there was a large amount of planned housing growth in the area. The site was constrained by flood risk and accessibility. It was also situated at one of the entrances to the town and the costs

associated with providing suitable access to the site and alleviating the flood risk could be considerable, with the potential to make the site unviable. However, it was felt that, subject to further assessment to conclusively determine the viability and deliverability of the site, it should be retained as a potential allocation.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the results of the Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Options consultation be noted;
- (ii) the site with temporary planning permission at Woodcroft, Desborough be identified within the emerging policy as a site allocation for a permanent pitch.
- (iii) subject to more detailed assessments being carried out to establish their viability and deliverability, the following sites be identified to offer sufficient pitches to meet the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation for the period to 2022:-
 - Highcroft Farm, Broughton (8-10 pitches)
 - Land at Junction 4 of the A14, Rothwell (up to 15 pitches);
- (iv) the following sites be discounted:-
 - Scott Road Garages, Kettering (6-7 pitches)
 - Crown Street, Kettering (1 pitch); and
- (v) The Black Paddock site at Braybrooke (3-4 pitches) be considered for allocation as a permanent site, subject to the outcome of the assessments in (iii) above, and the need to provide further pitches to meet the Council's requirements to 2022; and
- (vi) a series of new criteria be developed to be used in assessing sites submitted as planning applications, the criteria being presented to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Not Voting 2)

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.52 pm)

Signed:
(Chair)

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