

Motion to Council – provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites

It is recognised that the County Council has a long-standing policy of seeking to identify locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites in order to better manage unauthorised encampments.

The press announcement in January regarding HCA Grant Funding, in which it quoted the Uddens Plantation site was unfortunate, as it came during the period of Public Consultation. This has caused considerable unrest in the community as it appeared to be sidestepping the normal processes in determining whether an individual site could meet the strict 'very special circumstances' criteria set out in the recently published ... *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* guidance notes. Can Members be assured that there is no 'Done Deal' in the case of the potential site at the Uddens Plantation.

The Council has received a 6,000 signature petition today and heard from industry regarding concerns about the impact on the adjacent trading estate and new industrial site at Blunts Farm proposed in the East Dorset Core Strategy.

All Dorset Councils have been working together on a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Site Development Plan Document. It is understood that the funding is not site specific at this stage and could be deployed towards provision of suitable alternative sites, should they emerge, at other locations across Dorset. Can Members therefore be assured that despite the potential Uddens Site being identified in the DCC submission to the HCA for Grant Funding, that the County remains open minded in its quest to identify suitable alternative transit site provision elsewhere in the County.

I will pause for the assurances sought to be confirmed by officers.

Therefore Chairman, in taking into consideration the concerns raised and the assurances received from officers I propose the following motion to Council:

That signatories to the Uddens Site petition be reassured that grant funding is not site specific and that any misunderstanding in this regard both at Committee and in the media are regretted. That alternative transit site provision via the Local Planning Authority DPD, continue to be actively sought across Dorset, and that the legitimate concerns of residents and industry are given due consideration before any final recommendations are brought to this Council.

Thank you Chairman
26.04.2012