



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 11 January 2017

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Leader

“Could the Leader of the Council please inform me why I had to learn of his unexpected resignation from The Hampshire Chronicle website? I believe all staff were informed by email and could I please be informed why councillors were not extended the same courtesy?”

Reply

“A personal statement was issued to those that I felt needed to be notified directly, expecting that it would reach a wider audience promptly.

Staff were provided with a copy of my announcement by the Interim Managing Director after it was made public.”



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“The 2013 Stanmore Planning Framework Report identified the community need for family housing. With the proposal for future WCC housing to be developed in the Valley area of Stanmore, can the Portfolio Holder please confirm whether as part of the planning application it will have a local letting policy of up to 50% of the scheme as New Queen Gate/Stanmore Lane did, to ensure local people have access to these new homes?”

Reply

“Council policy allows for the use of local lettings plans to address specific local pressures in some circumstances. The Council obviously has to balance local need with wider housing demand across the district and therefore local lettings plans are not automatically applied to all new housing developments.

The Council has yet to determine whether a ‘Local Lettings Plan’ should apply to part or all of the rented housing on the proposed Valley development in Stanmore. A report on this issue will be considered by Cabinet (Housing) Committee later in 2017. Before this, officers will liaise with local members to review the appropriateness of such an approach for the Valley.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Read

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

"Does the Portfolio Holder believe that our adoption this year of a "zero tolerance" regarding fly-tipping is showing success in terms of:

- An increased number of successful prosecutions; and
- A reduction in the number of fly-tipping sites.

Further does the PH continue to believe that the change in regime at the HWRC sites has had little impact on the amount of fly-tipping around the district?"

Reply

"Yes, the number of fly tip prosecutions has increased. The Neighbourhood Services Officer carrying the specialism for fly tip enforcement had four successful prosecutions in 2016 as opposed to one in 2015. The most recent prosecution was last week when the perpetrator was found guilty of fly tip offences and fined £5,400 (inclusive of costs).

To date we have had a 100% success rate with fly tip prosecutions and I believe that is largely due to the professional approach of front line officers investigating incidents and the follow up action involving senior officers who review cases before deciding whether formal action can be taken and is justified in the circumstances.

It is too soon to say whether our robust approach to fly tipping has resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents overall. In order to enable us to review the position moving forwards the Neighbourhood Services Officer dealing with this matter is working with colleagues in the Contract Management Team to produce data for 2016, which will form the baseline, so we can measure how the situation develops and changes this year and beyond.

There appears to be a gradual rise in the fly tipping of DIY waste such as plasterboard, bathroom items and rubble, bricks but I cannot say whether this has any correlation with recent changes made by the County Council in relation to the operation of their waste and recycling centres."



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Hiscock

To: The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Professional Services

“Would the Portfolio Holder clarify his recent remarks suggesting that the Air Quality in the City of Oxford had deteriorated since the introduction of Park and Ride in Oxford?”

Reply

“I did make reference to Oxford in comments I made recently regarding air quality issues but in relation to pedestrianisation rather than park and ride.

Data pertaining to air quality in Oxford is available on their website. Some of these documents reference the fact that despite taking action to tackle air quality Oxford continues to suffer from a higher number (and severity) of 'hot spots' compared to Winchester and in many areas report levels of NOx which are above the legal limit.

Since they embarked on a programme of pedestrianisation they report a decrease in CO2 levels by about one third. However given pedestrianisation is arguably one of the most substantial measures available, which can have a range of implications, the fact that it has resulted in lowering levels by only one third means that a pollution problem remains. To this end therefore pedestrianisation has not succeeded in resolving the air quality issue in Oxford.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Leader as Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Policy

“Could the Portfolio Holder please detail how the Chancellor's recent Autumn Statement will affect the Council?”

Reply

“The Autumn Statement and subsequent Provisional Settlement confirmed the four year settlement already published in 2015. It confirmed the phasing out of many of the grants paid to local government including Revenue Support Grant. Winchester City Council, along with other Districts, is expected to fund its services from locally generated sources in the future.

Also confirmed were changes to the New Homes Bonus Scheme which will be reducing from payments for 6 years after a new home is created, to 4 years. In addition a growth assumption, currently 0.4%, is now included below which no new homes bonus is payable.

All of these announcements were already built into the Council's financial projections and reinforce the imperative that we find new and innovative ways of generating income to ensure that we continue to deliver the services required by our residents.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Cutler

To: The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Estates

“Several recent developments, such as Knowle village and the Taylor-Wimpey part of West of Waterlooville have very poor broadband speeds, but fall outside the Hampshire Superfast Broadband scheme. What is the Council doing to put pressure on BT OpenReach to improve capacity on these developments and what steps have been taken to ensure that all new developments have high quality provision of superfast broadband?”

Reply

“It is accepted that new developments should have broadband provision built in alongside other services such as gas and electricity, in order to meet the needs of modern society and indeed Policy DM16 (Site Development Principles) in Local Plan Part 2, which should be adopted shortly, states that high speed broadband connection, or provision for its future connection, will be sought in association with all new residential and business developments. The inclusion of this policy aligns with guidance for local planning authorities produced by Hampshire County Council. They have also published guidance for developers which highlights the benefits and opportunities for delivering broadband infrastructure on new developments across Hampshire.

There may be a small number of developments which have not been provided with high speed broadband by the developer due to their age, and which fall outside the scope of the Hampshire Superfast Broadband programme. Officers are investigating with the Hampshire Superfast Broadband team whether such developments can or will be covered in other ways. For example, in Knowle village, BT Openreach’s own commercial roll-out will facilitate high speed broadband in the area. Officers are liaising with Openreach regarding timescales for this work.

Winchester City Council contributed £139,000 to the Hampshire Superfast Broadband programme over three years from 2013. The full programme was estimated at the outset at £20 million. The Council also assists with local communications, planning and tenant negotiations around cabinets as they are upgraded. Members might wish to note that only around one third of those who now have access to upgraded cabinets have contacted their Internet Service Provider to take up the high speed service. Recent press releases from Winchester City Council have sought to increase this take up (eg www.winchester.gov.uk/news/2016/dec/making-superfast-broadband-winchester/) and local Members can play an important role in spreading the word.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

"Please could the Portfolio Holder give us details of recent surveys that include the Winchester District, and those in which the City Council participates, together with their results?"

Reply

"I'm delighted to say that our District has been doing rather well recently.

On 13 March 2016 Winchester was named the Best Place to Live in Great Britain by the Sunday Times poll. As well as factors around housing, health and employment, the article referenced the vibrant culture of the district, with its busy festival and events calendar and high standard of quality food and drink and local heritage and leisure opportunities.

On 17 December 2016 the 'Best place to Live in Britain' accolade was reiterated in a new survey conducted by Halifax, citing Winchester has having the 'the number one local authority for best quality of life'. As well as the 'outdoor spaces, 'community spirit' and the good health and sound average income of the residents, the article headlined the presence of 'the largest farmers' market in the UK, one of Europe's grandest cathedrals and dozens of upmarket shops and restaurants'.

On 19 December The Daily Telegraph followed up their coverage about the above announcement with a feature article named '10 reasons why Winchester is Britain's Best Place to Live'. The reasons were: 1. Ancient treasures 2. Good architecture 3. Easy to reach 4. Unique shops 5. Creative inspiration 6. St Cross Hospital (Keats Walk) 7. Jane Austen 8. Great places to stay 9. Thriving foodie scene 10. Wonderful walks.

In addition I am also very pleased to say that the City Council has yet again improved its score in the comprehensive and independent 'Best Companies to Work for' survey which provides staff with an opportunity to give detailed independent feedback on their employer.

Winchester District is a great place to live and work. The City Council, its staff and its elected Members, do their bit alongside many others including Parish Council to achieve help these results and I am proud of those efforts."



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Bell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Cabinet paper on Air Quality CAB2869 includes under 8.11 (possible future measures) the very important Supplementary Planning Document on Air Quality. Although the paper has not been amended as requested, I understand that this measure has been accepted and will go forward currently. Please can you confirm that this is the case and the SPD on Air Quality is now in progress?”

Reply

“Following the discussion about such a measure at Cabinet, I asked officers to include an action to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the draft Air Quality Action Plan. This will be published within the week for consultation, in preparation for adoption by Cabinet in March 2017.

It is my expectation that the SPD will be developed by officers throughout 2017, drawing on models of good practice from other areas of the country, and formally approved by April 2018.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Thacker

To: The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Estates

“Can the Portfolio Holder give us up to date figures relating to tourism performance in Winchester, and confirm how this has enhanced the local economy in the district?”

Reply

“The most recent Economic Impact of Tourism study for Winchester showed that total spend by visitors in the District had increased by 2.2% in 2015 to £358 million.

This is part of a continuing upward trend since the establishment of the Destination Management Partnership (DMP) for Winchester and the Heart of Hampshire in 2011, with a total increase of 49%, driven by a growth in the staying visitor market. Increasing the number of overnight stays has been a key aim for the tourism team since 2008. Staying visitors spent in total £80.6 million on their trips in 2015, up by 6.3% on 2014.

This increase in overnight visitors includes a rise in visitors from overseas of 9.2%, reflecting the improved profile of Winchester. Joint campaigns and press activities are now increasingly undertaken in partnership with Visit Britain. A notable example is the current Jane Austen campaign which has seen unprecedented coverage nationally (eg Radio 4, Songs of Praise, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Sun, Heat magazine and iMagazine) and internationally (the New York Times mentioned the *Rain Jane* trail last weekend). Further international media familiarisation trips are currently in preparation for 2017.

Compared to 2014, the volume of day trips has fallen by 3.6%, although day visitor trip expenditure continues to hold up against previous year. This is good news, in terms of reducing vehicle movements to and around Winchester whilst successfully encouraging visitors to spend more during their time here - an estimated £279.6 million in 2015, up 2.0% compared to 2014. The sectors in the city which benefit most from visitor spend are retailers (£104 million direct revenue from visitors – a 72% increase since the DMP was created) and restaurants (£83 million). Accommodation providers and attractions each receive an estimated £29 million in direct revenue.

With the visitor market peaking at Christmas and in the summer, my Portfolio Plan for the year ahead will see an increased focus on the ‘shoulder’ seasons (spring and autumn) so that local businesses benefit throughout the year from this important economic sector.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Elks

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Heath and Wellbeing

“Following representations from residents across the city and the whole district, could you please give some indication of the frequency of the leaf clearing programme across our streets? A road in Abbots Barton, up to Friday 6th December, had not been swept since early 2016. The information on the council’s website does not give residents in many roads any information because their streets are not mentioned.

Could you please also state the response time expected to respond to resident’s phone calls in respect of this matter? They are being told a 3 working day response. This is not being achieved.”

Reply

“The leaf clearing programme for streets in Winchester district commences at the start of November and continues to the end of December. This programme is specifically for roads in a leafing priority list which is agreed with the contractor each year. These roads have been identified as requiring additional street cleaning over and above the 13 weekly standard sweeping schedule due to the number of trees and historic leafing issues previously identified, however it does not apply to rural lanes.

There is no specified frequency in the contract for the number of attendances required however the contractor aims to make 3 complete passes during this period and all roads are to be completed by the end of December.

There are 18 roads in Abbots Barton which are on the priority list.

In addition a hit squad is in place to deal with urgent ad hoc requirements for leaf clearing which are due to the random nature of leaf fall and climatic effects. There were 6 roads / link paths that came up as an issue for Abbots Barton that were assigned to this hit squad. One, Colley Close, has been an issue and the contractor has been requested to re-attend. However over all the leaf clearing for the Autumn of 2016 has been an improvement on the previous year.

A review is now taking place of the leafing work carried out and the priority list for 2017 is being amended based on experience so that the programme can be further improved in the coming Autumn. This is being carried out taking in to consideration any budgetary implications.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Griffiths

To: The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Professional Services

"Can the Portfolio Holder explain what the impact of the new car park charging schedule will be in terms of congestion and air quality?"

Reply

"The revisions to the proposed charging schedule increase pricing differentials between city centre and inner ring car parks, whilst freezing again the price of Park and Ride tickets. The purpose of these changes is to provide a real incentive for drivers to think about the car park best suited to the purpose of their visit, and to make an economic decision which to some degree reflects the impact their choice will have on the environment.

The Park and Ride service is very suitable for many types of visits and I am keen to encourage its use. This should reduce the need for people to bring vehicles into the one-way system and within the designated Air Quality Management Area. In combination with the parking 'app' currently being developed in partnership with Winchester Business Improvement District, it should also reduce the frequency with which drivers have to hunt for available spaces when car parks in the central area are operationally full much of the time. The choice remains for shorter duration stays in the centre, which people will be able to choose for the occasions when it is essential.

It is very difficult to predict with accuracy the impact of this measure alone on air quality. The City Council controls some policy levers but many are the responsibility of national Government or in the hands of the consumer. The new Air Quality Action Plan is published for consultation next week and will set out a range of actions designed to improve air quality in the city. The Council will continue to monitor emissions levels, and the Plan allows for the introduction of further measures if statutory air quality targets are not likely to be met by 2020."



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Hutchison

To: The Leader

"What criteria does the Council use to judge whether its consultations are significant and of value in developing policies?"

Reply

"We value any input from the public and stakeholders, and the type of engagement used and the subsequent input received will vary depending upon the type and nature of the project or topic of consultation. Input in relation to a specific project such as a flood alleviation measure or a transport scheme will be very different to that for the Council's Strategy. As such we have no specific criteria for devising consultations or against which we judge success, as each will be individual and specific to the project concerned.

The Council currently does not undertake a statistically significant residents' survey. However, officers try to ensure that consultations are as accessible as possible to ensure wide representation and to prevent vocal minorities from overly dominating the results of consultations. Where possible and if the response size allows, weighting is applied to consultation results to reflect the district's demographics which goes some way to provide confidence in the data's validity.

The Council invited the Local Government Association to review its approach to communication and engagement at the end of last year. The LGA's final report recommended that the Council re-introduce a statistically valid residents' survey, as well as identify clear success measures and evaluation metrics from major consultation projects. Both these recommendations will be implemented and go towards supporting our already thorough approach to consultation and engagement."



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Leader

“Could you please update the Council on the progress of the land acquisition from Tesco?”

Reply

“I am very pleased to confirm that the City Council completed the purchase of the Garrison Ground from Tesco on 16th December 2016.

The acquisition of this land will safeguard site for sport and leisure purposes and increase the range of options available for the Council to consider in relation to the precise location of a new leisure centre.”



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QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Estates

“I would firstly want to express my strong support and great thanks to the Portfolio Holder for driving forward the refurbishment work to the Casson Block and in particular the idea of commissioning a high quality piece of art work for the rather neglected corner in front of the Manow Thai Restaurant.

Could he briefly explain how this art project fits into the wider aspirations this Council has to support and promote the arts across the District?”

Reply

“The main part of the project to enhance the Casson Block on St George’s Street was completed before Christmas. This included two new terraces, paving, lighting and a handrail. Some remaining works, including cleaning of the front of the building and the installation of planters, are to take place this month. The air quality monitoring box will also be removed in favour of a newer, smaller model further up the road. The final element of the project is the commissioning of a new piece of public art to be placed in the old fountain area to the rear of the Hampshire Chronicle building. Consultation activities took place earlier today in order to refine the artist’s initial proposals.

The installation of public art at the Casson Block is part of a wider plan to promote and celebrate the cultural richness of Winchester, for the benefit of all who live, work or visit here. As part of this, the Council seeks to make the most of opportunities to use our streets and open spaces as settings for new work. These aspirations are set out in the Council’s Cultural Strategy, the title of which - [Culture, Innovation and the Winchester Economy](#) – reinforces the role played by our creative and cultural sector in supporting the business life of the District.

Other projects currently in hand across the District include the commissioning of public art worth £500,000 at West of Waterlooville; the annual distribution of cultural grants to support a range of festivals, projects and events, and the development of a creative enterprise centre at Barfield Close.”



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QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Could I be informed which ward in the Winchester District had the most cases of fly tipping in 2016? Where did Southwick and Wickham ward figure in this list?”

Reply

“The majority of fly tip cases tend to be within the southern parishes and most commonly within Southwick, Denmead and Durley. There has also been a problem with a site situated within the South Downs National Park near Droxford.

Historically the Neighbourhood Services Team did not hold a specific break down of the number of incidents of fly tipping by parish so I cannot, at present, provide a specific figure for Southwick and Wickham. However work is now being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Services Officer dealing with fly tipping, in conjunction with the Council’s Contracts Management Team, to produce data for 2016 which will be the baseline for measuring how the situation develops and changes across the District during 2017 and beyond.

What I can add is that Southwick is part of an ongoing pilot project run in conjunction with HCC and Southwick Estate whereby cameras are situated in laybys within the area to deter fly tipping and capture evidence, such as registration numbers of vehicles, where incidents do still occur. This information is useful and can help us instigate action against those responsible. We are pursuing a case of fly tipping in this area which is currently with our Legal Team with a view to bringing a prosecution. I understand that in the roads where the cameras have been placed (along with ‘CCTV in operation’ type signs) the number of fly tipping incidents appears to have reduced.”



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QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Please could the Portfolio Holder provide details of the progress made regarding the Open Space in Abbots Barton intended for community use in mitigation for the Hillier Way development?”

Reply

“A community engagement event will take place on 25th February 2017. A number of possible mitigation options will be presented and the community will be invited to provide feedback.

Significant discussions have taken place with the 6th Winchester Scouts regarding their possible use of some of the land for a new Scout hut and ancillary area. Early discussions have taken place between development management and the Scouts relating to the proposed Scout building.

In addition, some clearance work on the land known as L4 has started, to give a better understanding of the available space.”



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QUESTION 17

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that the introduction of the Article 4 in Stanmore has stopped further right to buy family housing becoming HMO's?”

Reply

“The Article 4 removing the ability to change single family houses to Houses in Multiple Occupation, without having to apply for planning permission from the Council, came into effect in May last year. This now means that any house, regardless of whether it was subject of right to buy, needs consent from the Council to become a new HMO.

Any application for change of use to HMOs will be assessed against emerging Local Plan Policy WIN9. In the case of Stanmore, survey data suggests the total number of properties in HMO use now exceeds 20% of the total number of premises. This means that any new proposal would be contrary to our policy unless the continued use of the property, as a single family house, was already seriously compromised because of the domination of existing HMOs.

To date one application for a new HMO has been received since the Article 4 became effective and it was refused on policy grounds.”



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QUESTION 18

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Leader

“Does the Leader share my concerns that whilst the High Street Market was re-configured to avoid the pinch-point in front of Laura Ashley the benefits were then negated by a pedlar positioning himself virtually permanently in that position causing significant disruption to the movement of pedestrians through this critical route to the Cathedral and High Street during the Christmas period.

What measures if any are being considered to avoid this situation occurring this year?”

Reply

“The Pedlars Act 1871 requires pedlars to apply for an annual certificate from the Police in order to operate as a pedlar, when the Police must be satisfied that the person is over seventeen years of age, is a person of good character, and in good faith intends to carry on the trade of a pedlar. As such the Police are the regulatory authority for pedlars, not Winchester City Council.

A pedlar is defined in the Act as ‘any hawker, pedlar, petty chapman, tinker, caster of metals, or other person who, without any horse or other beast bearing or drawing burden, travels and trades on foot and goes from town to town or to other men’s houses, carrying to sell or exposing for sale any goods, wares, or merchandise, or procuring orders for goods, wares, or merchandise immediately to be delivered’

A pedlars certificate differs from a street trading license insofar as the pedlar, to be held as such, must be a mobile trader i.e. they move about and should not remain static in a single place other than to conduct a sale to a customer. Clearly there is a degree of pragmatic latitude afforded when determining whether a pedlar is complying with the definition of being mobile, but they should, when asked by a police officer or local authority officer, move on. As such, if a pedlar is causing a demonstrable disruption as suggested by the Council question, they can be legitimately asked to move on and remain mobile.

In answer to the question I do share the Councillor’s concerns and where such a pedlar is found to be causing a disruption they should be moved on accordingly.”



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Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 19

From: Councillor Cutler

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Will the Portfolio Holder explain to Council her strategy for preventing the continued illegal expansion of residential mobile homes at Wickham Court and Firgrove Lane in Boarhunt, which threatens to double the population of a small village which has virtually no community facilities or services?”

Reply

“The planning history for Wickham Court and Firgrove Lane in Boarhunt are complex and the Portfolio Holder has hosted a number of meetings, with one on site attended by her and Local Members, and Officers from both Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council.

In respect of Wickham Court, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services refused an application for a lawful development certificate for the stationing of holiday caravans for twelve months of the year together with a maximum of 30 caravans for residential occupation (this is an increase from 18 already permitted on the site) This was subject to an appeal considered by a Government appointed Inspector who decided that the occupation of 30 caravans for residential use was not a material change of use of the site and would not have an effect on the local infrastructure. The Inspector therefore concluded that an increase from 18 to 30 residential units would not materially exceed that which could arise from the present lawful use of the land and hence allowed the appeal.

This means that Wickham Court has a lawful use for about 123 units, with 30 of those for permanent residential occupation following the appeal decision.

The site in Firgrove Lane (known as The Piggeries) has been subject to continued enforcement investigations, and recently an enforcement notice was issued in respect of a brick building built for residential occupation. This is the subject of an appeal. There are also 3 current planning applications for a number of gypsy pitches at the site. The assessment of these applications will be made in accordance with national and local planning policy which relate to such developments along with any other relevant planning considerations and I cannot pre-judge what the outcome of these applications will be.

The Council's emerging Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document will also assess whether sites should be allocated or safeguarded for traveller use, and will be subject to public consultation.”