

Public

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL SERVICES** held on 31 October 2016 at County Hall, Matlock

**PRESENT**

Cabinet Member – Councillor A Botham

Observers – Councillors D Collins and I Ratcliffe

**109/16      CHANGE OF USE OF LAND AT ASHBOURNE** Approval was sought to grant consent to Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) to formally identify Derbyshire County Council owned land at Watery Lane, Ashbourne as a location suitable for satisfying the local needs for accommodating gypsies and travellers in the new Local Plan for Derbyshire Dales.

Part of the land was currently in use as a household waste recycling centre (HWRC) but an area was unused as it had been retained for possible expansion of the recycling centre and it was the line of the route identified as suitable for a new 'Ashbourne By-Pass' should this ever be constructed. There were no immediate plans by the Council to expand the (HWRC) into this area. For many years there had been local pressure for the new road but thus far there had been no firm plans for its construction.

In January 2015 the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group was successful in obtaining planning consent on part of the land for a change of use to a traveller site. Subsequently, the County Council had met with the Liaison Group in order to establish what process would need to be followed in order to enable the site to be developed as such. It was the intention of the Liaison Group to provide four pitches on the site for use by a particular family group which had been identified as needing provision in this area of Derbyshire. The aims of the Liaison Group were supported in principle by both DDDC which was the housing authority responsible for responding to the family's housing needs and by the Council which was the land owner.

The Council had recently granted consent for DDDC to carry out an environmental survey on the site. Depending upon the results of the survey, more environmental investigation might be identified as necessary. In addition, if the site was to be developed a suitable design would need to be undertaken, utility and access issues resolved and a detailed planning application submitted indicating what, if any, mitigation measures would be taken to ensure that any environmental concerns could be addressed. Further

investigations may also be required into whether the site was blighted by any new road schemes currently being considered.

DDDC had been assembling the data required in order to fulfil its responsibility for producing a revised Local Plan. It was a requirement of National Planning Policy that provision was made for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The recent Derbyshire Gypsy and Traveller Assessment Report (DGTAR) (2014) advises that there was a need for 6 pitches in the Derbyshire Dales area in the period 2014-2019 with an additional requirement of 1 pitch every 5 years until 2034. There was potential on the site at Watery Lane, Ashbourne to accommodate the 6 traveller pitches currently identified as being needed. DDDC had therefore requested that the Council consented to 0.3 ha area of the land at Watery Lane, Ashbourne being formally allocated in the Local Plan in order to accommodate the needs identified in the DGTAR.

As the environmental reports and other investigations had not yet been completed it was proposed that at this stage that should consent be granted to DDDC formally allocating 0.3 hectares of this land as a traveller site in the Local Plan, it should be in principle only and made clear that the Council would be under no obligation to fund or organise the development; that the developing body would have to ensure that planning consent was obtained and that all environmental recommendations were fully complied with. In addition, the Council would wish to retain the freehold of the land so a suitable lease would have to be negotiated which would require that a future management plan for the traveller site be agreed.

Mr Albert Golding, representing Ashbourne Town Council and Mr John Youatt, a local resident attended the meeting and the Cabinet Member invited them to make representations relating to the proposal. Mr Golding provided details of the history of the planning application and subsequent meetings and decisions of the District Council. The Town Council expressed their concern regarding the proposal and requested that consideration of the report be deferred pending the outcome of the District Council's Ecological Survey.

The Cabinet Member thanked Mr Golding and Mr Youatt for their contributions. However, he suggested that their comments and concerns would serve more purpose if they were directed at the District Council rather than this Cabinet Member meeting. With regard to the decision, Councillor Botham re-iterated that granting approval to identify the land as a suitable location within the Local Plan did not commit the County Council at this stage, to granting a lease for its use as a traveller site.

**RESOLVED** to agree to Derbyshire Dales District Council formally identifying County Council owned land as a location suitable for satisfying the local needs for accommodating gypsies and travellers in the new Local Plan for Derbyshire Dales.