

NOTES OF GIPSY AND TRAVELLER ASSESSMENT PANEL MEETING ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 10AM.

Present: Andy Keeling (chair), Mat Bagley, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Introductions were made around the table.

Background

The [REDACTED] family have been living at 269 Greengate Lane since January 2009 and have tolerated use of this site. A planning application has been submitted by Framework Housing Association to redevelop and manage the land at Greengate Lane for use as a six pitch permanent traveller site. The outcome of the planning decision is likely to be known on 16th October. There is also an unsafe building on the Greengate Lane site and vacant possession is required in order to demolish this building. Some funding from Risk Management has been made available to pay for demolition of the unsafe building. The [REDACTED] family have been offered alternative accommodation at Meynells Gorse while the building is demolished, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

In order to reach a decision Andy asked the relevant service leads for their views.

Property Services (land-owning Division)

A paper outlining the chronology of the main events was circulated by [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] outlined the main points within it.

MATU – Mat Bagley

Mat circulated a document entitled “Travellers Assessment” and a report from the Specialist Community Nurse – Travelling Families.

Mat explained that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There is no electricity on the site although the City Council have provided toilet facilities. The site has always been fairly messy and there have been issues with fires on the site. Complaints have been received from other residents about the general untidy appearance, noise from dogs, bonfires, horses tethered, encroachment on to adjacent land and businesses being run from the site.

Housing [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The issue has always been finding a site big enough. There are currently available two adjacent pitches, each of which is 200 square meters in area. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

The facilities at Meynells Gorse include amenity blocks with toilets and washing facilities and mains electricity, [REDACTED].

There is a significant waiting list for pitches on Meynells Gorse, but these two adjacent pitches have

been retained in order that they can be made available to the family. There are no other traveller sites within the city at present.

Health issues [REDACTED] **(Lead Specialist Nurse for Travelling families)**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Housing Development [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] explained that the council was working in partnership with Framework Housing Association to develop the first of what is expected to be several additional traveller sites within the city. The council has undertaken a detailed exercise over the last two years aimed at identifying land owned by the council that might be utilised as traveller sites. From a total of 350 plots of land, the council identified two plots where it was felt appropriate to proceed further. The land where the family are currently encamped is one of those identified.

The site, which is currently the subject of a planning application by Framework, will comprise accommodation for 6 families. Although it will be managed by Framework, the council will have nomination rights in respect of travelling families on the council's waiting list for accommodation.

The planning application is expected to be approved in mid-October.

Funding for the site is only available for a limited period and the development must be completed by March 2015.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] asked why Framework were developing a six pitch site, when they had been led to believe that the site would be a small family pitch. It was explained by [REDACTED] that this was in line with the latest government guidelines for G&T sites and that the City Council had used a consistent approach across all of its sites.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] explained that the City Council is trying to address some of the anti-social behaviour problems on Meynells Gorse by the use of CCTV. The residents of Meynells Gorse who complain about the anti-social behaviour are very reluctant to come forward to make complaints. It was noted that there has always historically been a relatively low turnover of plots on the site.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] asked why there were not any transit sites in the City. [REDACTED] said that this is something that the City Council are looking into.

The meeting adjourned for Andy Keeling to consider his decision.

Decision

When the meeting re-convened Andy Keeling said that the issue was complex and made up of a difficult set of circumstances; that the [REDACTED] issues are significant and it is evident that [REDACTED] needs access to an electricity supply.

It was acknowledged that the family have been based in Leicester for 18 years so feel settled and have children in a local school. He noted the family have been tolerated on the Greengate Lane site for much longer than anticipated and that this had raised their expectations. In addition, the length of time in residence has meant that a large amount of possessions have been accumulated by the family.

The City Council wants to develop the Greengate Lane site for the benefit of the wider travelling community and there is a limited period in which to do so. Whilst the council understands and takes account of the needs of the family, those needs cannot be considered over and above the needs of the wider gypsy and traveller community.

It was noted that the [REDACTED] They will be allowed to remain on the land until the end of October, but if they have not moved by that time the City Council will look to evict them. In the meantime the Council will try and provide every assistance and this 6 week period will give them time in which they can organise the move of their property and vehicles.

The City Council will try and offer all the help it can to the family and will also look at the possibility of the family returning to the Greengate Lane site once the Housing Association has developed it. The problem of where the family would be placed during the period of development was still to be resolved, but the offer of a place at Meynells Gorse would be kept open as an option for them. The

City Council is currently reviewing its pitch allocation policy. The City Council will also be having discussions with the Housing Association

██████████ asked if the pitch at the top end of Greengate Lane was an option for them to move to, but the land is not vacant at the moment so this was not felt to be a solution.

Andy Keeling said that it did not seem possible to resolve the issue of an interim site for the family at the moment, but that the Council would look to helping the family as much as possible in the interim and in finding a long term prospect.