



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED**  
**All**

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**  
**Economic Development Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

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**Review of the process by which sites for new authorised gypsy and traveller sites within Leicester have been identified and to make recommendations**

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**Report of Cllr Sue Waddington, chair of the Scrutiny Commission**  
**Jerry Connolly, Scrutiny Support Officer**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To review the process by which Gypsy and Traveller sites have been identified by the City Council  
To make recommendations on potential sites  
To report the findings to the City Mayor

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Mayor invited Cllr Waddington, chair of this Scrutiny Commission, to review:
- the way in which three sites for authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites within Leicester had been identified
  - the suitability of the sites themselves; and
  - to make recommendations on these and other possible sites which could be delivered in the timescale
- 2.2 The Commission held four hearings and took verbal and written evidence from a wide range of agencies, groups and individuals. Members of the Commission also went on a number of site visits, to assess the proposed sites, other long-listed sites and sites which had not been short or long listed.

**3. Conclusions**

- 3.1 The Council is to be commended for its efforts to meet its responsibilities to provide housing for distinct groups whose ethnicity and rights are set out in a wide range of anti-discrimination legislation.

- 3.2 Gypsies and Travellers suffer disproportionately high levels of homelessness, unemployment, ill-health and poor access to education and training.
- 3.3 The evidence base for the housing need was sound despite observations that information on specific gypsy and traveller housing needs should be updated, and indicates that further sites may need to be identified within the city to meet demand in the future.
- 3.4 The waiting list of 80 families for sites on the Meynell's Gorse site (reported at the Commission meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012) was much higher than Commission members might have been led to expect from the 2007 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
- 3.5 The Commission scrutinized the process by which 350 sites were identified within the city, and then examined, graded and filtered, and concluded that it was a thorough exercise of investigation, and cooperation involving the planning and housing departments.
- 3.6 In addition to considering the process by which the three sites were selected from the list of 350, the Chair and some members visited those sites, the long listed sites and some additional sites - a total of 15 sites visits (including Meynells Gorse) and met with gypsies and travellers living on authorised and unauthorised sites.
- 3.7 The members considered if the sites were suitable, taking into account their proximity to residential, leisure and commercial developments; actual and potential screening; access; size; condition; use of the sites at present; and if there are existing plans for the development of the sites for other purposes such as housing.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 1 Redhill Way is considered suitable for use as a permanent site for up to 10 pitches. It is a large site, well screened from all angles, not too close to residential streets, and access is not a problem. There are formal and informal footpaths on the site and at least one of these should be maintained for the use of local people
- 2 Greengate Lane is considered suitable for use as a permanent site for about 6 pitches because of its size. The site is well screened, has good access, is not near existing large housing developments and is not visible from the nearest residential areas in Glebelands and Birstall. Account was taken of its proximity to the new Ashton Green development, but this was not seen as an impediment to the location of a site. The site as designated is not considered big enough for 10 pitches though there is a possibility it could be extended in the future.

- 3 Beaumont Way was not considered suitable for a site. It is much too small and exposed. It would not allow any privacy for the occupants and would be very difficult to screen. The site adjoins a public park and is opposite the leisure centre and shopping centre. These mixed uses would not be compatible with a travellers' site. The access road is also too narrow.
- 4 Of the five long listed sites, only one was considered suitable. The four others, Strasbourg Drive, Butterwick House, Heacham Drive and Montrose Road were very close to housing developments and were very exposed and would be difficult if not impossible to screen. In some cases access would be a major problem and the land was also being used for other recreational purposes. It is recommended that these sites should not now or in the future be used for traveller and gypsy sites.
- 5 We also looked at the Ratby Lane site which could be suitable but for the access problems. A new and expensive access road from the roundabout (in the county) would be required and the County Council is likely to object as they have done in the past, meaning that there would be insufficient time even if an appeal was successful to provide an access route within the two year requirement. The land is also tenanted by a farmer.
- 6 The Chair also visited five of the sites suggested by Liz Kendall MP as alternatives, in other parts of the City. Unfortunately none of these were suitable or available for development as travellers sites in the next two years, but three of them might be considered in the future as part of a comprehensive development.
- 7 However we strongly recommend that Hoods Close, Thurcaston Road, be considered as a transit site for gypsies and travellers. It is a strong contender in that it is not near residential developments and is of an appropriate size and nature to be used as a transit site for about six pitches
- 8 The land on Hoods Close is flat and there is suitable access. It has been a popular stopping off place for travellers and gypsies in the past. If this site is to be considered as a transit site, consultations will need to be carried out with the nearest residents and users of the industrial site, including Biffa, but should not require a new wide ranging consultation process.
- 9 When designing new sites it is necessary to take into account the number and size of pitches required for different family groups. Some larger and smaller pitches may be necessary. We therefore recommend that the designs already prepared for the sites be revised after consultation with the prospective tenants from the traveller and gypsy communities.
- 10 Consideration should also be given to the fact that some gypsies and travellers are horse owners and will wish to keep their horses reasonably close at hand. It

is possible and usual for land to be rented from local farmers for the horses, although horses are also tethered at the road side near the Meynell's Gorse site. While the new sites may not be big enough to accommodate horses, providing a stable on one site for use when horses are sick should be considered.

- 11 The gypsies and travellers themselves want sites located the in area of the City designated for the proposed sites. Redhill Way, Greengate Lane and Hoods Close are acceptable locations for the gypsies and travellers consulted by the Chair of the Commission. The Beaumont Way site was not acceptable to them.
- 12 In view of the hostility and difficulties that gypsies and travellers are experiencing at the moment (being moved on and being the target of some aggression etc) they have asked for a refuge (tolerated site) until the permanent ones are ready for use. It is recommended that consideration be given for a temporary site to be established in the short term. This could be on one of the selected sites while work is on-going on the others.
- 13 Good management of sites including Meynells Gorse is essential for the security and peace of mind for the tenants and the settled communities in the areas. Attention should be paid to refuse collection and disposal; the tidiness of the public areas on the sites; and the safety of children, including traffic calming measures on roads running into and through the sites. Should incidents of antisocial behaviour occur they should be treated in the same way as in other Council Housing areas in the City.
- 14 Considerable opposition to the three proposed sites has been expressed by residents living in the Beaumont Leys, Abbey and Birstall areas. Some of their objections have been related to planning restrictions on green wedge sites, which should be carefully considered by the Planning Committee, if they are presented with planning applications relating to sites in the green wedge.
- 15 If future sites are required in the City we recommend that these be located outside the areas of the sites approved in this process( Beaumont Leys and Abbey wards). However no other suitable land for sites is currently owned by the City Council which is available for use in the next two years. Therefore advance planning will be required to use council land or acquire land for sites over a longer time period. This could be part of the future planning designation process and local plan.
- 16 Future consultations about the location of gypsy and travellers sites should involve both the settled and the travelling communities in order to develop better understanding and less confrontation between different communities, perhaps through the GATE project.

- 17 We further recommend that the work of MATU is reviewed to determine how well it has performed since its establishment. The service should be scrutinised by the Adult and Housing Scrutiny Commission in the near future.
- 18 The same Commission should also consider reviewing the management and needs for improvement at Meynells Gorse and the plans for management of the new sites, with the aim of securing safe environments and appropriate health, housing, education and social services for the tenants.

## **5 Report**

- 5.1 This Review was started at the invitation of the City Mayor, whose letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012 set out a series of requests to the Commission. They were to:

- Carry out a detailed review of the three proposed sites
- Consider any aspects of these sites which make them unsuitable
- Consider whether there are any appropriate sites in other parts of the city available within the timescale.

The full text of Sir Peter Soulsby's letter forms Appendix 1 of this report.

- 5.2 The scoping document for the Review set out some further tasks for the Commission. They included:

- the policy framework within which the proposals were prepared and brought forward,
- the processes by which sites (both long and short lists) were identified and prioritised,
- the further consultations which have taken place and the timetable for publishing the proposals and seeking planning permission
- the likely impact of creating the sites as proposed

- 5.3 There is a clear overlap between the Mayor's request for a report and the scoping of the review agreed by the Overview Scrutiny Commission. Special meetings of the Commission took place on:

28<sup>th</sup> March 2012  
11<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
14<sup>th</sup> June 2012

- 5.4 The Review has been designed to take in as wide a range of views as possible. This included local residents and Councilors, MATU and the GATE project, Birstall Parish Council and the County Council, both through its own scrutiny

function and Birstall CC Roger Wilson. The Commission is grateful for the co-operation of the City Mayor, his direct team and a wide range of officers within the planning and housing departments.

- 5.5 The review included evidence-gathering sessions at Commission meetings on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 11<sup>th</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> May. The meetings were outside the normal cycle of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Select Commission and run as a separate series of dedicated meetings to make sure as wide a range of evidence as possible was taken, against a background of a high level of public interest.
- 5.6 Additionally, a number of visits were made to look at the proposed sites. These visits took place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April and Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April. A site visit was also made to the one authorised gypsy and traveller site within the city boundary – at Meynell's Gorse.

The schedule of visits was:

20<sup>th</sup> April 2012

- Meynell's Gorse (existing authorised site)
- Greengate Lane 0201
- Beaumont Way 0187
- Red Hill Way 1506

26<sup>th</sup> April 2012

- Hoods Close/Thurcaston Road 2631
- Strasbourg Drive Open Space 1459
- Butterwick House 2058
- Heacham Drive 0707
- Cottage farm, Ratby Lane 0417
- Montrose Road 1067

- 5.7 . Additionally, Cllr Waddington visited traveller sites in the north west of the city to take views from gypsies and travellers. On 30<sup>th</sup> May Cllr Waddington also visited five sites from the list suggested by Liz Kendall MP in Leicester South and Leicester East.
- 5.8 As a point of context a large number of documents and reports were accessed as part of the review. They are available online through the link <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/housing/about-us/gypsy-and-traveller-sites/downloadable-documents/>.

The references numbers against each site in 5.6 (above).

## Policy framework and identification of the sites

- 5.9 The Council's Strategic approach to meeting Gypsy and Traveller needs derived from requirements under the Homelessness Act and the previous Government's approach to resolving gypsy and traveller issues that were not being resolved across the whole country.
- 5.10 That approach required councils to co-operate to review Gypsy and Traveller needs. This work was done with county and districts by consultants (who involved G and T's and to whom the findings were presented).
- 5.11 This was published and led to a statement of numbers of sites required going in the Regional Plan which in turn informed the Leicester City Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/plansandguidance/ldf/ldfcore-strategy/>)
- 5.12 The coalition government scrapped regional plans, but kept the Core Strategy. The core strategy says:

*"The Accommodation Needs Assessment established a requirement for 24 residential pitches, 10 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and three plots for travelling showpeople by 2012 to meet the need arising in the City, in addition to the existing provision.*

*"An ongoing increase in pitch provision of 3% compound growth per year for household increase and 1.5% growth per year for Travelling Showpeople is assumed. The identification of sites will be a matter for the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies."*

- 5.13 The search for new authorised gypsy and traveller sites within the city boundaries was framed by a number of complex issues. These included a lack of new authorised sites, both temporary and permanent, for gypsies and travellers.
- 5.14 The unmet need for gypsy and traveller sites was identified through a [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment](#). This link is to both the full report and the executive summary which were published in March 2007. The GTAA report was the basis for the needs statement embedded in the LDF core strategy.
- 5.15 The GTAA report (Par 3.4) cited the Commission for Racial Equality report which reminded local authorities of their obligations towards Gypsies and Travellers, referencing the Race Relations Act and the identification of Romanies and Irish travellers as distinct ethnic groups under the legislation.

5.16 One outcome of the failure to provide authorised sites is the constant movement of travellers from unauthorised sites, making access to education and health services much more difficult.

5.17 Health issues included stress and stress-related illnesses caused by the uncertainty of the lifestyle on unauthorised sites and the fear of attacks on encampments by unknown assailants, probably from the settled community.

(A separate review of economic development and employment issues being undertaken by this Commission identifies young Irish/Romany travellers as having the highest NEET (not in employment, training and education) for young people in the city).

5.18 The GTAA assessment, by Birmingham University, identified a need for 24 pitches between 2006 and 2011, up to 20 further transit caravan sites and three pitches for showpeople families. Between 2011 and 2016 a further 15 permanent pitches were thought to be needed. The figures took into account the City Council's only authorised gypsy and traveller site at Meynell's Gorse

5.19 Since the publication of the report no sites had been developed, or even identified, by Leicester City Council. The lack of authorised sites had led to a number of unauthorised camps within the city. Evidence to the Commission suggested a strong connection between the lack of authorised sites and the high numbers of unauthorised sites being established.

5.20 The lack of authorised sites has also made it harder for the authorities, whether it be the police, city council agencies or MATU, the Multi-Agency Traveller Unit to take effective legal action against travellers on unauthorised sites because the GTAA had set out a needs framework for gypsies and travellers.

5.21 It should be noted that gypsies and travellers, who have been subject to widespread adverse comments, have human rights. Their position can be summed up by a report to Leics County Council Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012:

*"Gypsies and travellers have been present in the UK for over 500 years, but in today's society are the most deprived minority group in England. One of the most severe and detrimental forms of this disadvantage is that over a quarter of the community are homeless due to the intense shortage of legal sites on which to reside."*

5.22 Recognition of those rights, and the GTAA, started the process by which a number of sites were identified. The timescale and various processes involved in the development of the proposals are summarised in Appendix 2.



5.23 Bids by the City Council and Framework HA for funds to establish authorised pitches within the city were approved in April 2011 and the search for sites started at that point. Criteria used to assess 350 Council-owned sites included:

- Flood risk
- Availability
- Site visits; and
- biodiversity/archaeology/built environment

Other criteria included:

- sites have potential to be well screened with fences and hedges to ensure privacy
- impact on neighbours
- good access to facilities including a local centre and primary school
- safe pedestrian and vehicle access onto site
- close to main road network
- sites capable of providing a satisfactory living environment for tenants
- site large enough to accommodate up to 10 family pitches
- sites are available in the short term.

5.24 This work ran until September 2011 was led by the planning and housing departments and led to the drawing up of a very long list of potential sites. These can be found on the City Council's web site through the link referenced in 5.6 above.

5.25 When considering the sites' development national guidance on site development was used. This 70-page guide, published by the Department of Communities and Local Government, set out a framework for the development of individual authorised sites for both permanent and temporary accommodation. (A link to the full document is contained in the section on key documents in section 8 below).

5.26 It has been used by City housing and planning staff to help identify, then design, possible sites, though the guidance stressed that local authorities and registered social landlords needed to take decisions on design on a "case by case basis, taking into account local circumstances such as the size, geographical and other characteristics of the site or prospective site and the particular needs of the prospective residents and their families."

GCLG Good Practice Guide Par 1.12

5.27 The guide referenced the need for easy access to health, education and other local amenities. It adds: "Easy access to local services and to, and to social

contact with other residents in the community, should help deal with the myths and stereotypes which can cause community tension and instead encourage a greater sense of community with shared interests.”

(GCLG Good Practice Guide par 3.2).

- 5.28 It offers guidance on site layout, access and orientation for permanent sites - and again says there should be consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community “can be particularly valuable and ensure best and most convenient use of available space.”
- 5.29 The guidance is clear that the sites are for housing rather than employment. Employment areas would need to be separate from housing. It adds: “This also applies to the inclusion of space for keeping animals.
- 5.30 “Where there is a demand for space for animals and where the site provider is satisfied that it may be reasonable and practicable to include this, a grazing area for horses and ponies could be provided to reflect the cultural use of the horse as a traditional means of transport.
- 5.33 The risk of a traveller development site flooding was one of the criteria used eliminate potential sites from the selection process. The Environment Agency has published a flood risk map for Leicester. It can be accessed through the link:  
  
<http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=458500.0&y=304500.0&topic=floodmap&ep=map&scale=8&location=Leicester,%20City%20of%20Leicester&lang=e&layerGroups=default&textonly=off#x=458024&y=303611&lg=1,&scale=8>
- 5.34 Further comments on both the generality of the Council's approach, and comments on specific site selection, were made by LE4 Action, a campaign group set up to oppose the site proposals, and Liz Kendall MP, who wrote a paper proposing that other sites in other parts of the city should have been properly considered by the City Council.
- 5.35 The LE4 Action presentation to the Commission meeting of April 16 forms Appendix 5. Also within this Appendix are notes from the Commission meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> May at the Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre which summarises a range of comments and objections from residents.
- 5.37 A special joint meeting of the Abbey and Beaumont Leys ward meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March and chaired by the City Mayor. Attended by around 600 people, a significant police presence and video recording of the meeting helped to keep order.

- 5.38 A note of this meeting is contained in Appendix 5, along with a note of evidence from the LE4 Action Group, which was set up to oppose the proposals and mobilise opposition to them.
- 5.41 Some objectors raised the possibility of higher levels of criminality stemming from residents on the sites. The Commission heard evidence from Leicestershire Constabulary that levels of criminal behaviour associated with the Gypsy and Traveller communities are no greater than other similar communities.
- 5.42 One of the main objections, raised by the LE4 Action Group, County Cllr Roger Wilson and others, was that the development proposals were within green wedges, designed to protect open spaces from over-development.
- 5.46 Further information on concerns for the preservation of green wedges and the respect of existing planning frameworks can be found through the link <http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s30225/G%20district%20council%20consultation%20jelson%20blaby%20appx.pdf>
- 5.47 The City Council's own strategy on the creation and preservation of Green Wedges is contained in the Core Strategy (4.4.88), which says; "In most cases green wedges...extend beyond the City boundary through green wedge allocations in adjoining districts.
- 5.48 "This gives them a strategic importance as they connect the City to the surrounding Leicestershire countryside. Their value lies as open space for leisure or recreational purposes, as land of ecological significance."
- 5.49 Green wedges are not green belts, however. They have a level of protection from development below that of Green Belt land, and this was reported in evidence to the Commission.
- 5.50 And while Green Wedges have a degree of protection, proposals can be taken in conjunction with other requirements and strategies.
- 5.51 Having received a huge amount of written material, members also visited all the short-listed sites, plus a previous major proposal by the city council which was withdrawn in 2007.
- 5.52 These consisted of eight sites which were considered suitable for development, plus the Ratby Road site and the established permanent site at Meynell's Gorse. The Chair also visited five sites proposed by Liz Kendall MP.
- 5.53 Members felt the Meynell's Gorse site needed improvements and have recommended that the Adult and Housing Scrutiny Commission review the situation.

- 5.54 Further representations were made in a detailed paper by Liz Kendall MP, who set out in clear terms the concerns of her constituents. She also presented to the May meeting of the Commission a detailed critique of the site selection process (see Appendix 7) and offered a range of alternative sites in other constituencies within the city.
- 5.55 Her proposals, and further comments from the planning department, are in the table in Appendix 8. They do not offer immediate opportunities for development, according to the officers' response which was confirmed by the Chair after her visit.
- 5.56 What has not been considered in any detail is the possibility of a privately owned authorised site through the purchase of land and the application for planning permission by a Gypsy or Traveller family.
- 5.57 This mechanism has been used to successfully produce significant numbers of permanent sites in mainly rural communities – farmers have sold land and the new purchaser has applied for planning permission.
- 5.58 Data provided by MATU say that all sites produced throughout Leicestershire since the publication of the GTAA have been generated by private proposals. No pitches are social rented housing.
- 5.59 The greatest gaps between pitch requirements and delivery are NW Leics (25) and Leicester (24). Greatest allocations have been provided within the Blaby and Harborough districts; these have produced allocations 39 and 15 respectively above the suggested GTAA requirements. Leicester and Oadby and Wigston are the only authorities not to have provided any pitches following the GTAA assessment.
- 5.60 It has been suggested that private land sites may be used to develop Gypsy and Traveller sites in Leicester, but land prices in an urban environment are much higher than rural land prices. Advice is needed by those families who would prefer to purchase suitable land.

### **Multi-Agency Traveller Unit (MATU)**

- 5.61 MATU, the [Multi-Agency Traveller Unit](#), was set up by the City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Districts and Rutland County Council, with the remit, among other things, to:
- Minimize conflict between the settled, business and traveller communities by information and education
  - Protect the rights of those in the Traveller and Settled communities to enhance the quality of life.

- 5.62 MATU provided information about the level of unauthorised sites within the city of Leicester, and comparisons with other districts within Leicestershire.
- 5.63 Those statistics form Appendix 3 of this report. They show the comparatively high levels of unauthorised camps and formal action taken by MATU against gypsies and travellers within the city.
- 5.64 Since 2009 59% of all notices served and two-thirds of all summonses served involved sites within the city. Unauthorised sites within Leicester represented 31% of all such sites within the MATU area over the last three years. Most of these were in the Abbey and Beaumont Leys area.
- 5.65 North West Leicestershire experienced more unauthorised camps than Leicester, but the level of action was far lower than within Leicester. By further contrast, Oadby & Wigston Council saw just two unauthorised camps, and no eviction notices were served either there or in Rutland.
- 5.66 A breakdown of year-by-year incidents involving unauthorised sites within the city, broken down by ward, can be found in Appendix 4.

## **6. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1. Financial Implications N/A**

### **6.2 Legal Implications N/A**

## **7. Other Implications**

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	<b>YES</b>		
Policy	<b>YES</b>		
Sustainable and Environmental	<b>YES</b>		
Crime and Disorder			
Human Rights Act	<b>YES</b>		
Elderly/People on Low Income			

## **8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972**

The Good Practice Guide for the design of gypsy and traveller sites (produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government).

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/designinggypsiesites>

Leicester and Leicestershire [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment](#).

Leicester City Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy

(<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/plansandguidance/ldf/ldfcore-strategy/>)

## **9. Consultations**

- Birstall Parish Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- County Cllr Roger Wilson
- Liz Kendall MP
- LE4 Action Group
- Members and Residents within the Abbey and Beaumont Leys wards
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Multi Agency Travellers Unit (MATU)
- Planning officers within the Leicester City Council Economic Development department
- Leicestershire Constabulary
- Housing staff within Leicester City Council
- Framework Housing Association
- Community Healthy Living Project
- The GATE project

## **10. Report Author**

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

**Letter from Sir Peter Soulsby to Cllr Sue Waddington**

23rd March 2012 .

Dear Sue



**RE: Gypsy and Traveller Consultation**

For years Leicester has experienced problems with unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments and trends show that the north west of the City, in and around the Abbey and Beaumont Leys Wards particularly, is worst affected. I am in no doubt that the matter of unauthorised encampments has a significant impact on local communities, and therefore am committed to addressing the matter.

As you know, the Council is currently consulting on proposals to establish a number of small dedicated authorised Gypsy and Traveller camps in the City. These proposals have generated a significant level of public interest so far.

I have personally taken the opportunity to review the initial responses to the consultation and have carefully considered the many comments and questions raised with me so far.

Whilst I can assure you that a detailed and thorough analysis of all of the comments made through the consultation process will be conducted, I would also like to invite you and your Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission to consider the matter in more detail.

Having looked at the information generated so far it is clear to me that such a review, independent of the Executive, would provide a sound basis upon which any future decisions about the proposals for authorised encampments can be considered.

Particularly, a final decision would benefit greatly from (i) a detailed review of the three proposed sites, (ii) consideration of whether there are any aspects of these sites that make them unsuitable, and (iii) consideration of whether there are any realistic alternative sites elsewhere across the City that are available and can be delivered in the required timeframe. The latter could, if you thought it appropriate, go beyond the consideration of Council owned sites that were originally considered.

To enable such a review to take place I intend to extend the consultation for a further three months, meaning that the consultation will now end on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012. I look forward to receiving your report and recommendations. I will seek to ensure that you have the full cooperation of colleagues and all relevant Council Officers on this matter but do let me know if there is any particular information or support that you need.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter Soulsby  
City Mayor

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## Appendix 2

### Timeline for the development of proposals for gypsy and traveller sites

Feb 2006	Government Circular 01/2006 published. Included requirement to produce Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
April 2007	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) published – jointly with County & District Councils and Rutland. Identified level of need for new sites.
Mar 2009	Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) adopted. Requires local authorities to make provision for the minimum additional pitch requirements in their Local Development Framework documents (i.e. Core Strategy).
2009/2010	Numerous meetings throughout the year with Beaumont Leys Ward Councillors to address issues of unauthorised encampments in Beaumont Leys area and potential for additional authorised site provision.
Nov 2010	Core Strategy adopted. Contains numerical requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and criteria-based policy against which any planning applications can be assessed. It was anticipated that the identification of specific sites would be done through a separate Site Allocations Development Plan Document – which at that time was expected to be adopted in 2013. Core Strategy Policy was subject to Examination in Public and approved by Government-appointed Inspector.
Feb 2011	Leicester and Leicestershire Sub-Regional partnership produced Local Investment Plan (LIP) – to provide strategic framework for co-ordinating and concentrating partner investment across the sub-region. The LIP included amongst its investment themes a Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Sites Theme. The aim of this theme is to achieve appropriate provision of good quality sites with residential and transit pitches in suitable locations, responding to the diversity of those using the sites.
Mar 2011	Framework Housing Association expressed interest in applying for HCA grant funding for provision of new Gypsy and Traveller sites provision within the City. City Council support Framework bid.
Apr 2011	Deadline for Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Investment Programme 2011/2015 bids. Cabinet approved the mix/type of affordable housing being sought by the City Council, including Gypsy and Traveller provision, on 11/4/11. City Council submit bid to HCA for £270,000 for 6 authorised pitches. Framework Housing Association also submit bid for £1.3m for 15 pitches in the City.
Apr 2011	Assessment of nearly 350 Council owned sites began. All sites assessed against Core Strategy criteria. Multi-stage assessment process consisted of : 1) Desk-based assessment

	<p>2) Assessment of flood risk  3) Availability assessment  4) Site visits  5) Assessment of biodiversity/archaeology/built environment</p> <p>Site visits undertaken between May and September 2011.</p> <p>Work led by Planning and Housing, with input from MATU, Property, Highways and Conservation/Archaeology officers.</p>
Summer 2011	Continued complaints about unauthorised sites, and the tolerated Greengate Lane site (including from Birstall Parish Council). Meeting held by Liz Kendall MP.
June 2011	In response to issues at, and complaints regarding, the tolerated Greengate Lane site, officers begin to explore means of bringing forward potential new Gypsy and Travellers sites in advance of Site Allocation document adoption date
28 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2011	Report to Planning for People not Cars Priority Board. This outlined the report that would be taken to Cabinet in November, and that a shortlist had been drawn up – without identifying the shortlisted sites
Nov 2011	<p>Report taken to Cabinet identifying shortlist of 8 sites plus 7 sites with longer-term potential (as part of other comprehensive developments).</p> <p>Recommendation that sites be taken forward as planning application(s) as identifying them through Site Allocations document would take too long, as it is not expected to be adopted until end of 2013 at earliest, which would mean the immediate need for new sites could not begin to be met until after that date. In addition, if the HCA funding bid was successful the funding opportunity would be lost.</p> <p>Cabinet identified 3 preferred sites from the possible shortlist and recommended to proceed with the consultation on these only.</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2011	Briefing with Councillors Cassidy and Dempster to discuss consultation strategy
Dec 2011	Indicative site design work undertaken to inform indicative numbers of pitches and suggest possible layout and form of sites. Includes meeting with MATU to discuss initial designs and visit to authorised site in County.
10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2012	HCA announce that both City Council and Framework Housing Association have been successful with their funding bids.
23 <sup>rd</sup> Jan 2012	Briefing by Mayor to Beaumont Leys and Abbey Councillors and the Office of Liz Kendall, MP
31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2012	Report taken to Cabinet outlining proposals for consultation.
16 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2012	Consultation launched at public meeting organised by Liz Kendall, MP.

## Appendix 3

### Unauthorised camps within Leicestershire and Rutland since 2009

LAA area	Total no. of camps	No. of direction notices served	No. of summonses served	No. of orders served	No. of S61 evictions	%age of unauthorised sites that required formal action
<b>Leicester</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>56.8</b>
Blaby	15	0	0	0	4	26.7
Charnwood	23	2	1	1	1	13.0
Hinckley & Bosworth	23	4	1	1	3	30.4
Harborough	18	0	0	0	2	11.1
Melton	35	4	3	3	2	17.1
NW Leics	83	16	8	6	6	26.5
Oadby & Wigston	2	1	1	1	0	50.0
Rutland	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31.2</b>

## Appendix 4

### Unauthorised camps within Leicester, by Ward, between 2009 and March 2012

WARD	NO. OF CAMPS					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL	%AGE
ABBEY	7	10	7	3	27	36.5
ABBEY/BL	2	0	0	0	2	2.7
AYLESTONE	1	3	3	0	7	9.5
BEAUMONT LEYS	1	8	13	1	23	31.1
BELGRAVE	0	1	0	1	2	2.7
BRAUNSTONE PARK/ ROWLEY FIELDS	4	0	0	1	5	6.8
CHARNWOOD	0	0	0	1	1	1.4
COLEMAN	1	0	0	0	1	1.4
EYRES MONSELL	0	1	0	0	1	1.4
HUMBERSTONE/ HAMILTON	0	1	0	1	2	2.7
RUSHEY MEAD	0	0	2	0	2	2.7
WESTCOTES	0	0	1	0	1	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>

Source (Appendix 3 and 4): MATU

## Appendix 5

### **LE4 Action Group note of objection and notes from meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March**

I am a member of the campaign group LE4 Action who are promoting awareness of the proposals to site three Gypsy and Traveller Sites in the north of the City. Our group is not against the provision of legal encampments per-se but we are concerned why these camps are proposed to be concentrated within a two mile radius of each other.

I have written separately to Councillor Waddington setting out my objections to the three currently proposed sites and my letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> April is included as part of the Agenda Reports Pack. I don't propose to repeat the content of that letter in full at this meeting but if you have not already read it I would ask that you please do so.

One of our principal concerns relates to the clear inconsistencies in the way in which the 350 sites have been assessed.

Two of the sites at Redhill Way and Greengate Lane are designated as green wedge and form part of the City's strategic green network and where there is a planning presumption against development. The explanatory text to saved Policy GE06 of the Local Plan says that their value lies as open space for leisure or recreational purposes, as agricultural land, as land of ecological significance and as land providing separation between existing settlements.

It also says that "The City Council will seek to protect and enhance Green Wedges and to improve non-vehicular access to them". If you examine the list of 350 sites there are a large number of instances where this designation alone has been sufficient to warrant their exclusion at the Desk-based Assessment Stage. So why have these two sites been dealt with differently?

The site at Beaumont Way is allocated in the Local Plan as a Potential Development Area with the protection of saved Policies PS09 and PS09b and is reserved for community, leisure or business uses associated with the adjacent Leicester Leys Centre.

Again, there are other sites that have been discounted as being unsuitable purely on the basis that they have existing or proposed community, leisure or business uses so why is this site any different.

These policy restrictions will be material considerations in the determination of any future planning applications on these sites.

I have attended all the public meetings including the one at Astill Lodge in February with Liz Kendall when the Mayor first publicised his proposals to around 30 or so residents.

The large turnout of residents at the abandoned meeting at the Tudor Centre, at Leicester Leys Leisure Centre and the Birstall Social Club was overwhelmingly opposed to these sites.

*Of course, any site will always be controversial but it seems that these are not even popular with those that they are intended to provide for. It is interesting to note the*

consultation responses from Travellers themselves which were reported to you at your meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> April when they said;

- They had not been consulted about the site proposals and have had no input into proposals for the sites in terms of size, location, layout, amenities and numbers on the sites.
- They also had no input into the social mix of the sites. There were many different groupings of Gypsies and they had different traditions and not all would be compatible on the same site.
- They shared the concerns of local residents, that the sites would attract increased numbers of travellers to the city, that there wouldn't be enough work, and that local crime rates would increase..
- The proposals as they stand will lead to problems both on and off the sites.
- They suggested that new sites would (in an echo of other concerns by those living in settled communities) bring more gypsies to the area, there wouldn't be enough work, and that local crime rates would increase.
- The no horse rule on the proposed sites would be an absolute deal-breaker and would stop them from using any of the sites. Horses were part of their economy and their culture, and rather than giving up their horses travellers said they would revert to living on grass verges.

*You have been tasked with a responsibility on behalf of your residents to carry out a detailed review of the three proposed sites, to consider whether there are any aspects of these sites that make them unsuitable and to consider any realistic alternative sites elsewhere across the City. I understand that you have visited the other five sites that were short-listed but hope that that is not indicative that you view these pretty much as a fall-back position.*

Of the 350 sites there are clearly a large number that are sequentially preferable for a number of reasons. There are previously developed or brownfield sites, there are committed development sites where it is suggested pitches could come forward as part of a comprehensive development scheme and there is at least one site that has been previously considered suitable for use as a travellers site.

I would also ask why only Council owned sites have been considered. Why not privately owned, vacant sites that could be compulsory purchased? Travellers themselves have bought up parcels of land elsewhere with the express purpose of using these for pitches. Have the Council explored with them the possibility that they may already own land that could be suitable and available?

*I and other residents have asked the Mayor on numerous occasions why these three sites are proposed in this one area of the City. His response has consistently been that there is a long history of Gypsy and Traveller activity in the North West of Leicester which dates back over many generations and relates to seasonal work on farms. The ultimate decision on where these sites are to be provided should be based on a sound, transparent and comprehensive assessment not some fanciful notion that the travellers while away balmy summer evenings bringing in the sheaves. I hope you will agree.*

## **Appendix 6**

### **Notes of meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Introduction.

This joint Abbey and Beaumont Leys ward community meeting was held to provide an effective vehicle for a high profile public event to allow for consultation on proposals to locate three new Gipsy and Traveller permanent sites in North West Leicester.

It was originally planned to have two meetings to discuss the issue, one for each ward. However, due to concerns about the safety of the large numbers of members of the public at the meeting the matter was not discussed formally at the Abbey Ward meeting.. That meeting was adjourned.

A similar meeting was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the Christ the King Church in Beaumont Way. Following discussions with the City Mayor's Office and with Councillors from each Ward it was recognised that this venue would be too small and that meeting was also deferred.

It was subsequently agreed that a joint meeting of the wards in a suitably large venue would be the best way of meeting the requirements of communities who wished to comment on the proposals.

The Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre, with seating for 600, was selected as the biggest and most convenient location, and 12<sup>th</sup> March was set for the meeting. Around 600 members of the communities potentially affected by the proposals attended the meeting.

### **The site proposals**

Sir Peter Soulsby, City Mayor, introduced the proposals, which outlined potential sites at:

- Greengate Lane;
- Beaumont Way; and
- Red Hill Way.

The City Mayor also outlined the following:

- There is one authorised site within the city, with 21 pitches at Meynells Gorse.
- This site is for permanent residents only and has few vacancies per year; there is a waiting list to go onto the site.
- It had been established for around 40 years with very little problems associated with the site.
- Collection of rent and community charge from travellers on the Meynells Gorse site was 93.6% - in line with collection rates across the rest of the city.
- The proposals for new sites were in response to a high number of unauthorised camps which had been set up in the city.

- Around 90 had been set up in three years between 2009 and 2011, with 70% in the North West of the city.
- Unauthorised sites were often occupied by families passing through over a short period or by local families seeking a permanent site.

It was outlined that without spaces being available on authorised sites it is legally more difficult for Police and the Council to move unauthorised sites.

It was considered that the establishment of new authorised sites – accommodating both permanent and temporary residents – would be the best option to deal with the current situation.

The sites were chosen in the area because it was the one which historically, over decades, had been most affected by unauthorised camps. Factors taken into account when identifying the potential sites included:

- Potential to be well screened to ensure privacy
- Impact on neighbours
- Impact on ecology
- Safe pedestrian and vehicle access; and
- Availability

A search of around 350 Council-owned sites had taken place within the city.

Each site would take 6-10 pitches, would be securely fenced with gate controlled access to and from the site. Each pitch would contain a small amenity building (bathroom and kitchen), mobile home or chalet if permanent and a large caravan for transit families. There would be space for a touring caravan and two cars or vans.

The sites would be managed by the City Council and Framework Housing Association. Subject to planning permission, work on the first site would start by the end of the year and take up to a year to complete. Central Government is providing £1.5m of funding for these sites.

It was confirmed that consultation on the proposals had been extended to 13<sup>th</sup> April. There had been around 600 responses so far and further information about the proposals was available online at [www.leicester.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersites](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersites)

The City Mayor said he was aware that a number of representations were being made by residents of Birstall, outside the city. He recognised that these representations were equally important to those within the city because the sites would equally impact on them.

In terms of publicity, the City Mayor stated that over 5,000 leaflets had been distributed within the last week and local media had been effective in highlighting when the meeting would be taking place.

While he considered sites needed to be provided he was not necessarily convinced the proposals were the only or the best sites. It was stated that the sites were not confirmed

at these locations and that the final decision would be taken after the consultation process had been concluded.

### **Responses to the presentation**

There were around 50 responses within the meeting. The following were among the main points made during an extensive question and answer session and the points below are summaries of the main points raised.

- The consultation period should be extended to at least six months. This was supported by other members of the audience
- Why can Gypsies and Travellers not live in houses?
- Extra provision within the city would not reduce number of illegal encampments. It might even increase the number of illegal sites as more Gypsies and Travellers would be attracted to the city by the extra sites.
- The sites would cause serious ecological damage – other sites had seen trees pulled down, horses put into neighbouring fields and rubbish was a significant problem.
- Greengate Lane is a Green Wedge.
- Animals were banned from the sites (although domestic animals would be allowed).
- The sites were too concentrated in a single area/ward (with other parts of the city ignored).
- Site would become ghettos and “no-go” areas.
- The consultation was a “sham” because decisions had already been made to develop these sites.
- The sites would have an economic impact on nearby residents - in particular affecting house prices. Would home-owners be compensated?
- Use the Government grant to install bollards down the side of roads to stop unauthorised camps.
- Sites were associated with increased local crime rates. Local shopkeepers were concerned and some were “terrified” by both current and potential future levels of crime.
- Police did not treat such crime as a priority.
- The sites, once established could each be doubled in size.
- What would happen to those Gypsies and Travellers currently on unlawful sites if those sites were developed as new legal sites?



- Local education and other resources would not be able to take the strain of extra children who would be on the sites as part of the families attracted to the area.
- There was concern about traffic and pedestrian safety on at least one of the existing temporary sites. This would include reviewing the safety of children going to local schools.
- Birstall residents needed to be further consulted.
- Why not look for one large site?
- It was asked how many sites within the city had been investigated, and there were demands, if necessary under Freedom of Information requests, for information on how the sites had been investigated and which criteria had been used to reject some sites and identify the three sites within the consultation. It was suggested the full list of sites which had been investigated be published, and the interest of those responsible for taking decisions on selection of the sites.
- There should be a zero tolerance policy to illegal camp sites.
- But moving families required somewhere for them to move to.
- Too much land on Beaumont Park was being taken up by a series of local activities, including football club, speedway track and associated parking. The site proposed there would make this worse.
- Developers of the Ashton Green project should be consulted about the site proposals for the area.
- It was questioned whether the city council and housing association would provide effective 24-hour site management. Leicestershire County Councillor Roger Wilson said he supported the comments made by Birstall residents about the proposals. He said the City Council should review its green wedge policies which ensure communities are separate and distinct to make sure they are not being compromised. Cllr Vi Dempster said that as Beaumont Leys Ward Councillors every summer we have numerous complaints every single weekend about illegal camps. When the City Mayor had asked Councillors to identify local issues illegal encampments were raised. These proposals are a genuine consultation to respond to that concern.

Jerry Connolly  
19<sup>th</sup> March 2012

## **Appendix 7**

### **Evidence from Liz Kendall MP**

Letter to Scrutiny Commission: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (extract)

As the Member of Parliament for Leicester West, my job is first and foremost to champion the views of my constituents and to ensure that these are listened to and acted upon.

Since my election in May 2010, I have worked very closely with my Councillor colleagues in Beaumont Leys and Abbey wards to press for a solution to the long standing and difficult issue of unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites, which are a major concern for many of my constituents.

When Leicester changed to the new structure of a City Mayor, the ward Councillors and I all stressed that this should be a top priority for the new administration. I am pleased that Sir Peter Soulsby has shown a willingness to take action on this issue.

However the Council's current proposals to develop authorised gypsy and traveller sites at Greengate Lane, Beaumont Way and Red Hill Way raise a number of serious questions, problems and concerns. There are three primary reasons why I believe they must be reconsidered:

- First, the proposals do not form part a comprehensive, city-wide solution for what I have always believed is a city-wide issue.
- Second, there has been insufficient consideration of viable alternative sites in other parts of the city, including sites that are not currently owned by the Council.
- Third, my constituents have raised a series of questions and objections about the proposed sites, which have yet to be adequately addressed by the Council.

On the selection process undertaken by the council, it is clear that the vast majority of sites that have been ruled out would be entirely inappropriate for the development of gypsy and traveller pitches.

However, even by the council's own selection criteria, there are serious questions about why at least 19 sites in other parts of the city have been excluded from consideration. I strongly urge members of the Scrutiny Commission to visit these sites to see for themselves whether the sites should have been ruled out of the consultation process.

Furthermore, including private sites in the selection process would have enabled the City Council to cast a much wider net, bringing additional brown field and inner city sites into play and opening up a wider variety of options. So far, no clear explanation or evidence has been provided as to why private sites have been excluded from the process.

As well as considering factors such as biodiversity, size, access, local facilities, screening and flood risk, my constituents strongly believe that additional issues should have been factored into the Council's selection process. These include the proximity between sites and existing levels of public concern about them.

Many of my constituents also believe more should have been done in the selection process to assess the impact these sites will have on the local environment, economy and public services.

The views of gypsies and travellers must also be heard as part of the consultation process. Evidence already provided to the Scrutiny Commission suggests that the Council's current proposals would not be acceptable to at least some parts of the traveller community.

I have compiled a paper highlighting the concerns of my constituents in more detail. I hope it will inform your final report for the City Mayor, which I look forward to reading. I believe that a solution, incorporating the development of much needed new gypsy and traveller sites, can be achieved. But this will only be possible if a city-wide approach is taken to tackling a city-wide problem, and if local residents' views are at the heart of the decision making process.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this issue further, and I thank you once again for the important work you are doing.

With best wishes,  
Liz Kendall  
MP for Leicester West

## **Further note of evidence from Liz Kendall MP (extract)**

### **Context**

Unauthorised traveller encampments are a serious and long-standing issue for our city. Since my election in May 2010, I have worked very closely with the ward Councillors of Abbey and Beaumont Leys to highlight the concerns and problems experienced by our constituents. Alongside the ward Councillors, I have listened to residents' concerns and pressed for action from the City Council.

When Leicester changed to the new structure of a City Mayor, the ward Councillors and I all stressed that this issue should be a top priority for the new administration. I am very pleased that Sir Peter Soulsby has shown a willingness to take action on this issue. However the current proposals have raised a number of very serious problems, questions and concerns.

### **Concentration of Sites in the North West of the City**

#### **a. The views of my constituents**

Amongst my constituents' top concerns is a deep sense of unfairness that all three sites proposed in the Council's consultation are within the same part of the city. The sites are in the very communities that have been most affected with the problems associated with unauthorised encampments.

Many of my constituents feel at their wits end and extremely angry that after many years, of dealing with the consequences of unauthorised encampments, the only option they are being offered is to have all of the authorised sites situated in their local community.

It is not just residents within settled communities that have raised concerns about concentrating all of the sites in this area. There have also been objections from within the gypsy and traveller community.

This point is reflected by Mrs Walker in the Summary of Submissions from Gypsy and Traveller Families. Mrs Walker felt that the proposal to put sites so close together in such a small area had worsened relations between the settled communities and gypsies and travellers where there hadn't been problems previously.

On this point, I would also like to refer the Scrutiny Commission to the survey conducted by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham in April 2007 of which you are aware.

This study found considerable ethnic and cultural diversity within the gypsy and traveller community, and that whilst some of the different groups and individual families enjoy living near each other, others do not. I am therefore concerned that the City Council's current proposals fail to recognise or understand the consequences for the local gypsy and traveller population of locating the sites so closely together.

#### b. Effectiveness of sites in other areas

The reason given by the Council for putting all three sites in the North West of the City is that this is where the majority of unauthorised camps occur and that developing sites elsewhere would not be effective.

However, no evidence has been presented to support the contention that sites outside the North West of the city would be any less effective. Even if it was the case that travellers continued to establish unauthorised camps in one part of the city while authorised sites were vacant in another, it is my understanding that the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows the police to compulsorily move travellers on if there is an available pitch elsewhere within the city boundary.

#### C Patterns of unauthorised encampments

My understanding is that the figure of 70% of unauthorised encampments in the North West of the City is based on information collected between the 26th January 2009 and the 23rd January 2012.

Many of my constituents believe that unauthorised encampments have decreased in other parts of the city over the years although there is a concentration of unauthorised encampments during the stated period on Goose Island, Aylestone Road, which is obviously outside of the North West of the city.

Whilst I am informed that there are issues with the quality of older data, I would encourage the Scrutiny Commission to look into the claim that unauthorised encampments have reduced in other wards, and if so, why?

This would obviously increase the percentage of those in Abbey and Beaumont Leys, even if the actual number of unauthorised camps in my constituency remained constant.

### 3 Site Selection

#### a. Restricting the search to Council owned land

The inclusion of private sites in the selection process would have enabled the City Council to cast a much wider net, bringing additional brown field and inner city sites into play and opening up a wider variety of options.

A stark illustration of this can be found by looking at the area of land adjacent to 11 Bath Street (UPRN 2740 relates to the Council owned land). This Council owned land was understandably ruled out of consideration as it is a highly visible, exposed site.

However, directly behind it lies a large stretch of (partially concreted) open land, which benefits from mature trees that act as a natural screen. This could be a potential site for the development of gypsy and traveller pitches. Details of the site can be seen at Appendix C (*editorial note – see the following Appendix on further site evaluations*)

I have not been able to explore the viability of acquiring this land, nor have I identified whether there are existing plans for its development. I draw attention to the private land

adjacent to UPRN 2740 simply in order to illustrate the potential for land outside of Council ownership. There may well be other similar sites, which could and should be explored.

It is often argued that the acquisition of private land for the purposes of traveller sites would be a lengthy, complex and costly process. These factors must of course be born in mind.

However, the Council should provide a full cost-benefit analysis on this option. So I would be grateful if the Commission could determine whether the Council has assessed the potential for compulsory purchase orders as well as the purchase or long term lease of land already on the market?

What would the costs be, and the timescale involved? Has the Council considered the option of using a small allocation from the capital budget in order to purchase private land? Has the Council also explored the possibility of looking at how the gypsy and traveller community themselves could help finance such an initiative?

b. Application of site selection criteria in the assessment of Council owned land

I welcome the fact that in assessing its own plots, the Council has considered issues such as biodiversity, size, access, local facilities, screening and flood risk. However, even by the City Council's own criteria,

I believe some sites may have been ruled out when they could be just as suitable (and in some cases more suitable) as the sites put forward for consultation. The way in which three of the criteria have been applied are particularly open to question.

First, privacy and screening. No formal mechanism was adopted for assessing whether a site could be adequately screened off. This issue was left to the discretion of examining officers and, having seen some of the sites, I believe the decisions that have been made are subjective and potentially open to challenge.

In addition, numerous sites have been ruled out because they are overlooked even when the overlooking properties are some distance from the potential site. Yet a decision has been taken to allow the development of the Red Hill Way site despite the fact that there are three story buildings and an elevated busy road in much closer proximity.

Second, ruling out the use of larger, planned development sites. Many of these appear to be ideal for gypsy and traveller sites. Officers say such sites would need to be part of a wider comprehensive development. However, in many cases pitches could be located at the edge of these sites without compromising the development of the wider area (indeed Officers themselves acknowledge that pitches could be established on these sites).

I would also point out that this is the exact position taken by the Council when enquiries have been made about why Greengate Lane has been included in the consultation when it is so close to the Ashton Green development.

Third, biodiversity. Numerous sites have rightly been ruled out because of their impact on biodiversity and the environment. Yet a decision has been taken to allow development on the green wedge and green stepping stones at Greengate Lane and Redhill Way, in spite of stated Council policy.

c. Omissions in Leicester City Council's criteria for site selection

My constituents strongly believe additional issues should have been factored into the Council's decision making process on site selection. These include the proximity between sites and existing levels of public concern about them.

Many of my constituents also believe more should have been done in the selection process to assess the impact these sites will have on the local environment, economy and public services (I return to this point in 4, below).

d. Potentially viable sites ruled out in the selection process

At (Appendix 9, below), you will find a list of 19 sites in other parts of the City which were ruled out during the Council's selection process. For each of these sites, I have commented as to why the decision to rule them out may be open to question.

Some of these sites have been visited by my team. Whilst we have not conducted a comprehensive search and evaluation, I believe many of these sites have the potential to be developed for gypsy and traveller pitches. I strongly urge the Commission to visit these some of these sites and provide feedback on its findings as a matter of priority.

4. Other concerns raised by my constituent

a. Economic Impact

There are very real and widespread concerns about the potential economic impact of the Council's current proposals at a time when local residents' incomes are already being squeezed and people are deeply concerned about their household budgets.

My constituents are genuinely fearful that the Council's current proposals would reduce their property values and increase their insurance premiums for their homes and their cars.

Many of my constituents feel that adequate answers have not been given about these concerns. I would encourage the Council to provide evidence on these points as soon as possible.

b. Fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour

I believe it is completely unacceptable to stereotype gypsies and travellers as being more likely to take part in crime or anti social behaviour, just as it would be unacceptable to stereotype the behaviour of any other ethnic group. Prejudice must have no place in our city.

However, many of my constituents have told me of the difficulties they have experienced with unauthorised encampments including fly tipping, bonfires and

hazardous driving and of their concerns that these problems could increase if the Council's proposals go ahead. These views must be listened to and heard.

c. Local public services

There are also widespread concerns about the impact the Council's proposals could have on the provision of local services. For example, whilst distance from the nearest school was considered in the selection process, there has been no assessment of the availability of school places.

I have been contacted by the Chair of Governors at Glebelands Primary School, who has expressed concern that the school may not be able to offer sufficient places in some year groups for the additional children that the sites could bring to the area.

Again, I do not feel that adequate evidence has been given about this important point and would request that the Commission presses the Council for further information.

d. Effectiveness of sites in reducing unauthorised encampments

Many of my constituents remain unconvinced of the impact that authorised sites will have on unauthorised encampments. They want robust and clear information on how an increase in the supply of authorised sites will reduce the occurrence of unauthorised camps.

Without this, there is space for uncertainty and in some cases, cynicism, leaving some of my constituents to draw the conclusion that the Council's proposals will have no impact on unauthorised encampments.

e. The prospect of these proposals attracting more Travellers to the City

Whilst the vast majority of traveller caravans nationally (80%) are on authorised sites that have planning permission, I understand that there are still around 3,000 caravans on unauthorised sites, which are either sites developed without planning permission or encampments on land not owned by travellers. Locally, I understand that there are 80 families on the waiting list for Meynells Gorse.

It is clear that demand for sites far outstrips supply both at a local and national level. Given this imbalance, and the lack of action taken by many other local authorities across the country, many of my constituents are concerned that Leicester City Council's proposed sites will simply increase the number of travellers to Leicester

f. The prospect of transit sites becoming permanent sites

There is a widely held concern that transit sites will quickly fill up, unintentionally becoming permanent sites, thus removing the capacity to deal with unauthorised encampments. This is a major concern for many of my constituents.

It would therefore be very helpful if the Scrutiny Commission would explore the evidence relating to this issue.

g. Planning issues



I am aware of a number of technical objections which could impede the successful navigation of these proposals through the planning process if any of them are put forward.

I understand that investigations are already underway so as to confirm whether the Redhill Way Site is protected by a covenant. There are also a number of ways in which the three proposals seem to conflict with wider planning policy and this has been effectively described by my constituent, Terry McGreal of the LE4 Action Group.

I refer you to his submission to the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission, which can be found at Appendix F.

#### h. Impact on other developments

Numerous sites have been ruled out in the selection process because the Council says they should be included in wider, comprehensive development (see 3b above).

However, this same rule has not been applied to Greengate Lane, despite the fact that Ashton Green has an outline plan for the development of 3000 houses as well as the development of industrial infrastructure. I understand that Ashton Green is now at the stage in which expressions of interest are being sought, and many of my constituents have rightly asked how this development will be affected by the proposed authorised traveller sites.

I would like to know whether the Council has spoken to potential developers of Ashton Green about the impact of its proposals, and what their response has been.

#### i. Consultation process

Many of my constituents have expressed concerns about the way in which the consultation process has been conducted. Some of the most common issues raised are:

- The lack of collaboration with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that a mechanism was in place to allow people from the county to contribute their feedback from the outset.
- An insufficient number of residents included on the Council's direct mail distribution list.
- A lack of consultation with the Gypsy and traveller community themselves. In particular I would like to highlight the evidence given by Mrs Walker who – in addition to concerns about concentrating the sites so closely together (see 3a above) says that the Council's proposal to ban horses from the authorised sites would be a 'deal breaker' for the Gypsy and traveller community.

#### j. Greengate Lane has become an authorised site "site by the backdoor"

The site on Greengate Lane has long been seen by my constituents as an "authorised site by stealth". Initially, residents were informed that a family would be able to stay on

the site as a temporary measure until their situation stabilised as one of the family members was suffering from severe ill health.

From this point, there has been a widespread perception that the Council were “bringing in a site by the back door” and that local residents were not being listened too. The current proposals have simply confirmed and reinforced residents’ worst fears and their lack of trust in the process.

## 5 Conclusion

In this submission, I have highlighted some of the major concerns my constituents have raised about the City Council’s current proposals.

My constituents are deeply unhappy with the current proposal to put all three sites in the same area. They do not believe these proposals are the right ones to tackle unauthorised encampments and are extremely anxious about the sites, citing widely held fears including falling property values, rising insurance costs and an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour.

I was very pleased when I learnt that the City Mayor had invited the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission to take a fresh look at this issue.

I hope the Commission’s report goes some way in answering many of the issues I have raised within this submission.

Of all the issues I have raised, the most important for me is that you reconsider both private and Council sites from across the city during your investigation. A good place to start would be by visiting some of the 19 sites I have highlighted in Appendix X.

I firmly believe that a solution, incorporating the development of much needed new Gypsy and traveller Sites, can be achieved. But this will only be possible if a city-wide approach is taken to what I believe is a city-wide problem, and that local residents’ views are at the heart of the decision making process.

In your submission to the City Mayor, you can play a vital role in helping us along this road.

## Appendix 8

List of potential sites identified by Liz Kendall MP, and departmental responses and observations. Also a comment on the Ratby lane site visited by members during the second day of site visits.

### Further Site Assessment Information Requested By Scrutiny

At the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012 to discuss the City Council's proposals for potential new Gypsy and Traveller sites, further information was requested on:

- 1) 1 privately owned site & 19 Council-owned sites suggested by Liz Kendall MP
- 2) Site 0417 at Ratby Lane
- 3) Site 2631 at Hoods Close

This table summarises (without the photographs) information on

1. Potential sites identified by Ms Kendall
2. Reason for initially removing the site from further consideration
3. Ms Kendall's comments
4. Further planning team response

It also discusses the sites referred to as a privately-owned site and the Ratby Lane and Hoods Close sites.

Site identification/ ward	Reasons for not considering further	Ms Kendall's submissions	Further departmental response
Land off Bath Street Rushey Mead	N/A	This site not in council ownership could be suitable	<p>This site is located off Bath Street, adjacent to a residential estate, a factory and a number of residential units. The site has planning permission for a development of approx. 160 houses, which has been recently renewed, indicating the owners intention to proceed with development as proposed.</p> <p>For information, it has been estimated that purchasing a 0.6ha area to accommodate a site would cost approximately £1m and</p>

			purchasing the whole site might cost up to £11m.
Land at Peebles Way Rushey Mead  UPRN: 1182	Not assessed	This land appears to be large enough to accommodate a pitch whilst maintaining privacy as long as the right screening was in place. Properties only directly overlook the land from the west as roads act as a break to the south and east. Mature woodland could already act as a screen. This is not dissimilar in characteristics to the Redhill Way site put forward in the consultation.	The area forms part of Appleton Park. Any development of the site would require the removal of a large area of mature woodland, of high amenity and biodiversity value.
Dorset Street / Brandon Street – Land adjacent Junior School UPRN: 0461 Latimer	Highly visible exposed site	Whilst this is not the strongest site for potential pitches, Brandon Street acts as a barrier between the site and the houses to the north and there only appears to be two houses to the west, which are not facing the site. The school is to the East and each of these sides could potentially be screened.	This is a large site which forms an urban park, with a children's play area and sports pitches. It appears to be well used as well as in close proximity to the school and houses. Any potential pitches would have to be located near to Dorset Street or the access road needed would take up a considerable part of the park. Screening would be required not just to the school and houses, but to the rest of the park.
Former allotments, Barkby Road UPRN: 0118	Sale of site close to completion	This has the potential to be a decent site for a gypsy and traveller	The land is subject to sale for commercial use, which is anticipated to provide an estimated further 100 jobs in

Rushey Mead		pitch. I would appreciate further details on the sale of this land. As it is yet to be sold, can this decision be reversed? Perhaps only some of the land could be sold?	the area.
Manor Farm (part) UPRN: 0958 Humberstone & Hamilton	Large development site, Gypsy and Traveller pitches could be developed but only as part of a long term comprehensive development.	This appears to be an ideal site for Traveller pitches. I see no reason why it was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately, without jeopardising wider development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site	The site is an allocated housing site which is to be sold to a developer for private housing development. The site was assessed as only having potential for development as a Gypsy and Traveller site as part of a long term comprehensive scheme.  Gypsy and Traveller sites need to be carefully integrated into surrounding areas to minimise the potential for conflict with other users. This includes future users on large development sites like this. This is not possible at the current time on this site without firm proposals for how the rest of the site would be laid out and developed.
Manor Farm Housing site, Keyham Lane UPRN: 2479 Humberstone & Hamilton	Planning permission granted for an alternative scheme.	This appears to be an ideal site for traveller pitches with good access off Thurmaston Lane. I see no reason why it was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately without jeopardising wider	This land forms part of a site which has been partially implemented for a comprehensive housing scheme. A two phase approach has already been agreed. Phase 1, the northern area has been constructed and Phase 2 has been granted permission in outline and provides no opportunity for the incorporation of a Gypsy and

		development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site	Traveller site at this advanced stage of planning. Any changes to this scheme would incur significant delays.
East Hamilton Housing – Phase 2 Keyham Lane UPRN: 2480 Humberstone and Hamilton	Large development site, Gypsy and Traveller pitches could be developed but only as part of a long term comprehensive development.	This appears to be an ideal site for Traveller pitches with good access off Burdock Close. I see no reason why it was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately without jeopardising wider development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site	<p>The site is an allocated housing site which is to be sold to a developer for private housing development. The site was assessed as only having potential for development as a Gypsy and Traveller site as part of a long term comprehensive scheme.</p> <p>Gypsy and Traveller sites need to be carefully integrated into surrounding areas to minimise the potential for conflict with other users. This includes future users on large development sites like this. This is not possible at the current time on this site without firm proposals for how the rest of the site would be laid out and developed</p>
Manor Farm – development site, Keyham Lane UPRN: 2481 Humberstone and Hamilton	Large development site, Gypsy and Traveller pitches could be developed but only as part of a long term comprehensive development.	This appears to be a strong contender as it is on partially concreted land with the potential for complete privacy and good access from Collin Grundy Drive. I see no reason why this site was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately without	<p>Permanent development of part of this site was considered unacceptable without firm plans for the rest of the site as it would be either highly exposed or have a major impact upon the future layout of any comprehensive scheme.</p> <p>Gypsy and Traveller sites need to be carefully integrated into surrounding areas to minimise the potential for conflict with</p>

		jeopardising wider development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site.	other users. This includes future users on large development sites like this. This is not possible at the current time on this site without firm proposals for how the rest of the site would be laid out and developed.
Land at Hamilton Lane UPRN: 2758  Humberstone and Hamilton	Large development site, Gypsy and Traveller pitches could be developed but only as part of a long term comprehensive development.	This appears to be an ideal site for Traveller pitches. It has excellent access from Hamilton Lane and complete privacy with good access. I see no reason why it was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately without jeopardising wider development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site.	This site has now been disposed of to the neighbouring school for use as a play area and wildlife site.  Additionally, the site is on the Historic Environment Register due to its archaeological value as an example of a “ridge and furrow” field system which is deemed to be of regional importance. The site has therefore been allocated in the local plan as being “open space” with the presumption that development would not be acceptable.
Whittier Road surplus land, Saffron Lane UPRN: 2784 Freemen	Large development site, Gypsy and Traveller pitches could be developed but only as part of a long term comprehensive development.	This appears to be an ideal site for Traveller pitches. I see no reason why it was ruled out. Pitches could, it seems, easily be established on some of this land immediately without jeopardising wider development. I strongly advise the Scrutiny Commission to visit this site	The site was assessed as only having potential for development as a Gypsy and Traveller site as part of a long term comprehensive scheme.  Gypsy and Traveller sites need to be carefully integrated into surrounding areas to minimise the potential for conflict with other users. This includes future users on large development sites like this. This is not possible at the

			<p>current time on this site without firm proposals for how the rest of the site would be laid out and developed.</p> <p>Additionally this site and Site UPRN 2421 are located in an area where there is a lack of capacity in the road network. Both Heathcroft and Neston Road are estimated to be at capacity for the number of dwellings served by them and significant works to improve and traffic calm these roads would be required, incurring prohibitive costs and meaning that development is unlikely to come forward in the short term (under two years).</p>
<p>High View Close UPRN: 2753 Humberstone &amp; Hamilton</p>	Proposed sale	<p>As this site, or part of it, has potential for Gypsies and Traveller Pitches, could part of the land be held back from sale? How advanced are proposals to sell the land to form a business park</p>	<p>This is an allocated industrial site, the majority of which is to be sold for industrial uses to promote economic growth.</p> <p>In any case, the site was considered unlikely to be viable for residential purposes as it is on an old landfill site at which methane gas has been found.</p>
<p>West of Brewer Close UPRN: 0276 Rushey Mead</p>	Highly visible exposed site	<p>This site was ruled out as it was deemed highly visible however my staff have visited the site and we believe that measures could easily be taken to ensure privacy. The site is very large with a school to the west, and some houses to the north</p>	<p>This site is an urban park with a children's play area adjacent to a school. There are a number of pedestrian routes crossing the site. Screening would be required from all directions and it is unlikely that this could be achieved without the development taking on a form which is out of keeping with the open nature of the park and its existing use.</p>



		and south but none of these would be difficult to screen. This site could be reconsidered	Additionally, access would have to be taken from a residential cul-de-sac which would not be suitable for a large increase in traffic, especially larger vehicles.
Gelert Avenue Open Space, Dakyn Road UPRN: 0567 Thurncourt	Exposure and lack of screening	This is another large section of land with Gelert Avenue and Dakyn Road acting as a barrier to the houses on the West and South. Additional screening could be established along these roads. There is a screened off football pitch to the north and a park entrance to the East. I think it's very much open to question to rule this site out on the grounds of exposure and lack of screening alone."	This site is located to the North of Gelert Road and is an area of highway verge and open space. It is very open, especially at the junction with Dakyn Road. As such, the site was deemed to be unsuitable due to the proximity of it to the highway and residential properties and that it would be difficult to ensure privacy.  Additionally however, most of the site is at risk of flooding from the Dakyn Road flood storage area to the North. Gypsy and Traveller Sites are classified as being "Highly Vulnerable" or "More Vulnerable" to flood risk and so should not be located in areas at risk of flooding. The area of the site which is not at risk of flooding is to the West, where it is more visible and exposed at the junction of Dakyn Road and Gelert Avenue.
Sonning Road Open Space, Featherstone Drive UPRN: 0891 Eyres Monsell	Highly visible exposed site.	My team have visited this site and we cannot work out why it was ruled out on the grounds that it is highly exposed. It is a large patch of land with good access roads. Whilst there are a	This site is considered to be a highly visible exposed site due to the number of residential properties which back on to it and the presence of a well-used play area and pedestrian route. Any site would therefore require considerable screening which isn't

		<p>small numbers of houses overlooking the site from the east, screening could easily provide for privacy</p>	<p>currently present.</p> <p>There are however two further issues with the site. Firstly, it is the site of a Saxon burial ground. The archaeological implications of this aren't currently fully known, but parts of the site have previously been used for gravel extraction, which would have removed any archaeology in the worked areas. The rest of the site is unlikely to be suitable for development without an investigation and mitigation measures are likely to be required.</p> <p>Secondly, the access to the site from Sonning Road, on the edge of the city, is not in the City Council's ownership, and so there would be additional complications to secure a right of access, which is likely to incur significant cost and time delays.</p>
<p>Land between Troon Way &amp; Nagle Grove UPRN: 1076 Rushey Mead</p>	<p>Site overlooked and impact of traffic along residential street</p>	<p>This is another large stretch of land, which has been visited by my team. We fail to see how screening could not be used to preserve privacy given the limited number of houses that overlook the land. Another concern here was the impact of traffic on residential streets. It may be possible to</p>	<p>This site is an area of open space which includes a play area which is widely used by residents of the housing to the East. There are a number of well used paths along the North, West and South boundary of the site and it is proposed to upgrade these as part of a planning submission on the adjacent site.</p> <p>A Troon Way access is unlikely to be possible and the other accesses are off</p>

		<p>create and an entrance to the site from Troon way but even if this were not the case, there are multiple existing access points onto the site with fairly direct entry gained from Badminton Road. Part of this site at lease should be reconsidered and it may be appropriate for members of the commission to visit the site.</p>	<p>residential cul-de-sacs which are unlikely to be suitable for the larger vehicles which would use the site.</p> <p>Additionally, the site is at risk of flooding so residential development is unlikely to be considered acceptable and caravans are considered to be at heightened risk.</p>
<p>Land at Neston Gardens UPRN: 2421 Freemen</p>	<p>Lack of vehicular access to site</p>	<p>My team have visited this site and think it makes for a very good location for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Planning officers acknowledge that this has potential to be well screened from the railway and adjoining residential properties and could be a very distinct site if an access solution could be found. Whist Cairngorm Close may be unsuitable for large vehicles, access could be gained from Cheviot Road or a purpose built access road could even be build from Heathcoat Road along the land at UPRN 2784. I</p>	<p>There is no direct access to the site by vehicle, and there is a wider issue of the road network in the surrounding residential estate being at capacity and so requiring significant works before being suitable for any future developments, especially ones which may require larger vehicles (This also applies to Site UPRN 2784). This would incur high costs and make development in the short term very unlikely.</p>

		think this site has real potential and should be visited by the Scrutiny Commission	
Site of Mundella School, Wycombe Road UPRN: 2809 Charnwood	Exposure and lack of screening from new housing development on part of site.	I would welcome further details on how the housing development will impact on privacy as this appears to be a good, brown field site that needs to be developed.	A Local Housing Association development of social housing has been constructed to the West of the site, and the remainder of the site has been earmarked to help deliver further social housing. The bidding process has begun with Registered Social Landlords being invited to express an interest. The development of the site is therefore well progressed.
Montrose Road Play Area, Saford Road/Wigston Lane UPRN: 1066 Aylestone	The accessible parts of the site are overlooked.	This is a large piece of land and it is unclear why some parts are accessible whilst other parts are not. I would welcome further explanation as the North West of this land would appear to make for a good site	This site is a large area of open space which includes a number of children's play areas and other sport equipment. The part of the site to the North is therefore not easily accessible due to the locations of the play areas and sports equipment. The areas of land which are accessible, to the South of the site are immediately adjacent to existing residential properties and are overlooked and unsuitable for development.  Access to the site would need to be via Montrose Road, and would involve the removal of mature trees.
Land at the rear of Conaglen Road, Soar Valley Way UPRN: 1377 Aylestone	Vehicular access is through long residential streets.	This appears to be an ideal site which is large enough to be screened off from residential properties to the north and to the	Further work has been done to assess potential accesses as part of looking at options for the wider site – not all of which is in City Council ownership. Access from Soar Valley Way or Lutterworth

		<p>east. I would very much encourage detailed work to be undertaken so as to identify whether an access solution can be found.”</p>	<p>Road is unlikely to be feasible without a comprehensive scheme due to the likely cost of highway works. Access from Franklyn Road would be via the adjacent site and so would require a comprehensive scheme. Access from Conaglen Road would be the only option but there are concerns about the impact on residential properties.</p> <p>The site is also designated as part of a Local Wildlife Site due to its biodiversity value.</p> <p>A Gypsy and Traveller site in isolation, without the rest of the adjoining land coming forward for other development would be unsuitable – as the pitches would be exposed, or it would have a major impact upon the future layout of any comprehensive scheme in terms of access arrangements etc.</p>
<p>Victoria Road East Open Space UPRN: 4192 Humberstone &amp; Hamilton</p>	<p>Highly Visible Exposed Site</p>	<p>Main roads act as a barrier to the north and west of this site and there are limited properties to the south and east. There may be scope to reconsider feasibility of screening?”</p>	<p>Whilst this site is located at some distance from residential properties, it is highly visible, both from the houses across Victoria Road, and from traffic and pedestrians travelling along Victoria Road and Gypsy Lane. Additionally, the main footpath to The Towers Hospital site, which is in the process of being redeveloped and converted into a residential development, runs through the site, and this</p>

			<p>area has been incorporated into that development as part of the open space for this new community.</p> <p>Access is also likely to be an issue with Victoria Road (A6030), a busy main road, and so the only option would be access from Gipsy Lane which would be close to a major junction.</p>
<p>Land off Ratby Lane UPRN: 0417 New Parks / County</p>	Access.	N/A	<p>This site is located on land to the North of Scudamore Road and West of Ratby Lane, half in the City and half in the County. It was previously ruled out due to access issues.</p> <p>Access would be very difficult to establish. There is no access from Scudamore Road, short of purchasing and demolishing an industrial premises and Ratby Lane falls within the County, so extensive negotiations are likely to be required to secure an access. There is an existing access which serves the two farms on the site, but it is not wholly within the ownership of the City Council, and the County Council are unlikely to approve its use on a bend on Ratby Lane which is heavily used by high speed vehicles.</p> <p>The local Highway Authority advise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City and County policy advises against new or intensified uses of A</li> </ul>

			<p>and B roads where the speed limit is over 40mph or there are safety concerns. (Ratby La is the B5380 with a 60mph speed limit and there has been a recent fatal accident near to this site).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is likely that right turns into and out of the site may need to be physically prevented to avoid queuing which would require alterations to the highway which may include widening the carriageway.</li> <li>• Permission has been granted in outline for a large residential and commercial development to the North of the roundabout, which is likely to increase pressure on Ratby Lane.</li> </ul> <p>The City Council owns land to the roundabout to the North, but the County Council's permission would still be required. As the roundabout is on an embankment, the cost of any new access, which would have to be built to adoptable highways standards, would be high. Unless the pitches were built on the part of the site close to the roundabout, a long access road would also be required, which</p>
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			would further increase costs. The access would also have an impact upon the potential future comprehensive development of the whole site.
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