



**Minute Extract from Joint Strategic Committee – 7 January 2014**

**JSC/083/13-14      A countywide approach to improving the management of  
Unauthorised Encampments**

Before the Committee was a report by the Strategic Director (JM), copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The report proposed that Adur and Worthing Councils (“the Councils”) work in partnership with the other Local Authorities in West Sussex to jointly fund the provision and running costs of a Transit Site for Gypsies and Travellers.

The Committee were informed that currently there were no public transit sites in West Sussex and, without such a site, the powers open to Sussex Police to move unauthorised encampments on was very limited. It was noted that Adur and Worthing Councils have been at the forefront of seeking a solution to this problem.

Early in 2013 all the West Sussex authorities jointly commissioned an independent study into the pros and cons of providing a Transit Site in West Sussex. The Study recommended that the West Sussex authorities should develop a Transit Site as a County-wide resource; that the partners, together with Sussex Police, develop a holistic, multi-agency way of managing both the Transit Site and unauthorised encampments; and that the West Sussex approach should be based on the East Sussex model.

The Committee were advised that unauthorised encampments cost the Councils both financially and their reputations.

Members expressed their reluctant support for the proposals as they were going to cost the Councils a significant amount of money. However, it was acknowledged that the proposals would return savings in the long term.

Concerns were expressed about the capacity of the transit site and the continued cost to the Councils of clearing up after unauthorised encampments. Officers advised that the experience of authorities with transit sites is that they rarely fill up but in the unlikely event that it did, the police would then be unable to use their powers. It was noted that the evidence suggests Hampshire, Dorset and East Sussex are progressively getting fewer unauthorised encampments since establishing transit sites.

Members expressed their gratitude to Chichester District Council for taking a lead on this and acknowledged the importance of working in partnership to tackle this issue.

**Decision:**

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

- (i) agreed that Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils should enter into a multi-partnership arrangement for the effective management of unauthorised encampments across West Sussex;
- (ii) agreed that the Strategic Director (JM), or successor post, be given delegated authority to agree the details of the multi-partnership arrangements with counterparts across West Sussex;
- (iii) noted that the proposed Transit Site is located in Chichester District and that West Sussex County Council will be responsible for the management of the site once developed;
- (iv) agreed that Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils shall contribute up to £15,000 each to the running costs of the Transit Site and that this becomes part of the base budget for both Councils from 2015/16 onwards;
- (v) recommended to Adur District Council the inclusion in the Capital Investment Programme 2014/15 a sum of up to £162,500 as the Councils contribution to the capital costs of the Transit Site to be funded from the Capacity Issues Reserve;**
- (vi) recommended to Worthing Borough Council the inclusion in the Capital Investment Programme 2014/15 a sum of up to £162,500 as the Councils contribution to the capital costs of the Transit Site to be funded from the Capacity Issues Reserve.