

**COTTENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**AGENDA REPORTS PACK**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

## Item 14P/242.

**Cottenham Parish Council**  
**Planning Meeting Minutes**  
Held in the Village Hall, Lambs Lane, Cottenham  
On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 7.30

**Present: Cllrs Mudd (Chair), Berenger, Collier, Collinson, Heydon, McCarthy, Morris, Richards and Jo Brook (Clerk)**

**14P/232. Any Questions from the Public or Press – Standing orders to be suspended – none.**

**14P/233. Standing Orders re-instated - Chairman's Introduction and Apologies –** The Chair mentioned the Traveller Consultation deadline; the report will need to go on the next agenda. Apologies accepted from Cllrs Bolitho and Nicholas.

**14P/234. Declarations of Interest** *To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting – none.*

**14P/235 Minutes –** Amendment made to those present – Cllr Ward should read Cllr Richards. Resolution that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October be signed as a correct record. **RESOLVED.**

### **14P/236. Planning Applications for consideration**

- S/2297/14/FL – Erection of first floor extension to side of dwelling, 13 Pelham Way, Cottenham – CPC recommends approval.
- S/2240/14/FL – Demolition of conservatory. Two storey rear extension and single storey lean-to and infill rear extensions. Internal alterations, 24 High Street, Cottenham – CPC recommends approval.
- S/2308/14/FL – Erection of dwelling following demolition of existing storage building, 40 Church Lane, Cottenham – Clerk circulated a letter received from 3 residents objecting to the height and scale of the building. Additionally the application states that there are no trees on the site which is incorrect; there are mature trees in situ. Cllr Collinson pointed out that the building is outside of the village framework. Concerns raised about increased traffic on Church Lane and how the Lane is extending. The plans were considered unclear and there was a lack of detail with the application. CPC recommends rejection on the following grounds:
  - The building is outside of the village framework
  - It is adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary which is there to preserve the open nature of the back of the High Street
  - The design is overbearing in scale and bulk
  - Vagueness of the drawings provided and no Design & Access statement

### **Decisions made by SCDC**

#### **Approvals**

- S/1919/14/FL - Replace existing 15m pole and antennas (17.7m to top) with new 15m pole and antennas (17.5m to top), and replace existing equipment cabinet with new equipment cabinet, Watsons Yard, 172 High Street, Cottenham
- S/0451/14/FL – rear two storey extension, 106 Histon Road, Cottenham

#### **Rejections**

- S/1700/14/FL – Single storey side extension, 86 Rooks Street, Cottenham

**14P/237. Date of next meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.**

**14P/238. Close of meeting – 8.10pm.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair) Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Item 14P/243

[S/2481/14/FL](#) – Garage conversion with new roof and porch, 70 High Street, Cottenham

[S/2501/14/FL](#) – Dwelling and access (revised), 71 High Street, Cottenham

[S/2089/14PJ](#) Change of use from Office (B1) to residential (C3), Unit 15, Watsons Yard, High Street, Cottenham

### Tree Orders

309 High Street, Cottenham – 3 Yew trees - reduce height by 1/3<sup>rd</sup>. 2 Walnut trees – reduce height by 1/3<sup>rd</sup>.



### 3. Trees Location

If all trees stand at the address shown in Question 1, go to Question 4. Otherwise, please provide the full address/location of the site where the tree(s) stand (including full postcode where available)

Unit:  House number:  House suffix:

House name:

Address 1:

Address 2:

Address 3:

Town:

County:

Postcode (if known):

If the location is unclear or there is not a full postal address, either describe as clearly as possible where it is (for example, 'Land to the rear of 12 to 18 High Street' or 'Woodland adjoining Elm Road') or provide an Ordnance Survey grid reference:

Description:

### 4. Trees Ownership

Is the applicant the owner of the tree(s):  Yes  No  
If 'No' please provide the address of the owner (if known and if different from the trees location)

Title:  First name:

Last name:

Company (optional):

Unit:  House number:  House suffix:

House name:

Address 1:

Address 2:

Address 3:

Town:

County:

Country:

Postcode:

Telephone numbers

Country code:  National number:  Extension number:

Country code:  Mobile number (optional):

Country code:  Fax number (optional):

Email address (optional):

### 5. What Are You Applying For?

Are you seeking consent for works to tree(s) subject to a TPO?  Yes  No

Are you wishing to carry out works to tree(s) in a conservation area?  Yes  No

### 6. Tree Preservation Order Details

If you know which TPO protects the tree(s), enter its title or number below.

### 7. Identification Of Tree(s) And Description Of Works

Please identify the tree(s) and provide a full and clear specification of the works you want to carry out. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. You might find it useful to contact an arborist (tree surgeon) for help with defining appropriate work. Where trees are protected by a TPO, please number them as shown in the First Schedule to the TPO where this is available. Use the same numbers on your sketch plan (see guidance notes).

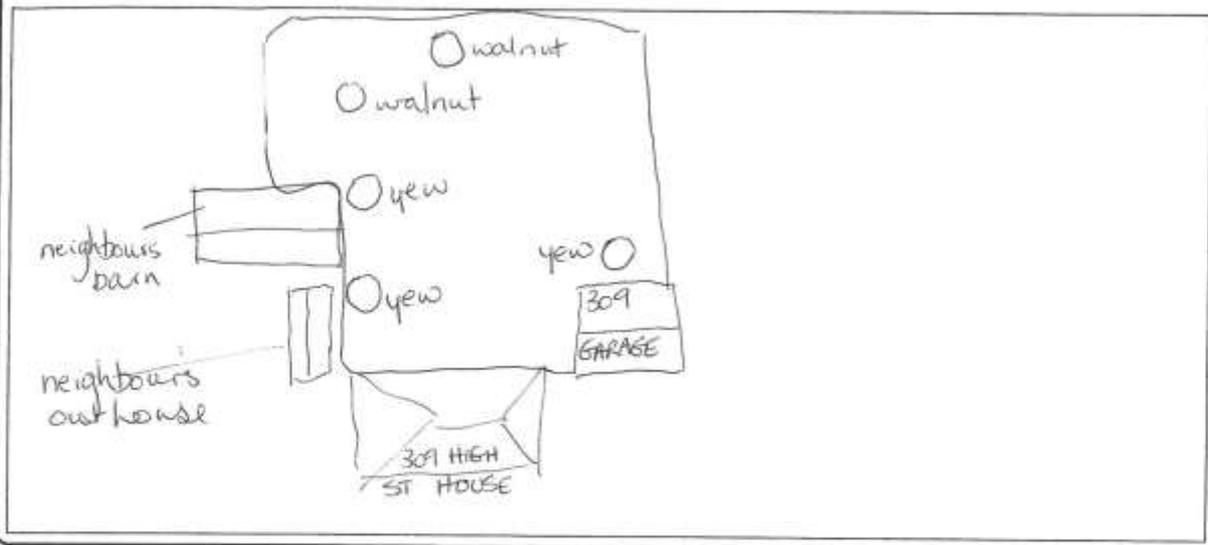
Please provide the following information below: tree species (and the number used on the sketch plan) and description of works. Where trees are protected by a TPO you must also provide reasons for the work and, where trees are being felled, please give your proposals for planting replacement trees (including quantity, species, position and size) or reasons for not wanting to replant.

E.g. Oak (T3) - fell because of excessive shading and low amenity value. Replant with 1 standard ash in the same place.

3 YEW TREES. SEEKING PERMISSION TO REDUCE TREES BY 33%

2 WALNUT TREES. SEEKING PERMISSION TO REDUCE TREES BY 33%.

## 7. Identification Of Tree(s) And Description Of Works continued ...



## 8. Trees - Additional Information

Additional information may be attached to electronic communications or provided separately in paper format.

### For all trees

A sketch plan clearly showing the position of trees listed in Question 7 must be provided when applying for works to trees covered by a TPO. A sketch plan is also advised when notifying the LPA of works to trees in a conservation area (see guidance notes). It would also be helpful if you provided details of any advice given on site by an LPA officer.

### For works to trees covered by a TPO

Please indicate whether the reasons for carrying out the proposed works include any of the following. If so, your application must be accompanied by the necessary evidence to support your proposals. (See guidance notes for further details)

1. **Condition of the tree(s)** - e.g. it is diseased or you have fears that it might break or fall:  Yes  No  
If YES, you are required to provide written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information from an appropriate expert.

2. **Alleged damage to property** - e.g. subsidence or damage to drains or drives.  Yes  No  
If YES, you are required to provide for:

#### Subsidence

A report by an engineer or surveyor, to include a description of damage, vegetation, monitoring data, soil, roots and repair proposals. Also a report from an arboriculturist to support the tree work proposals.

#### Other structural damage (e.g. drains, walls and hard surfaces)

Written technical evidence from an appropriate expert, including description of damage and possible solutions.

The yews encroach on my neighbours property and also shed copious amounts of poisonous berries which are a danger to young children.

### Documents and plans (for any tree)

Are you providing separate information (e.g. an additional schedule of work for Question 7)?  Yes  No

If YES, please provide the reference numbers of plans, documents, professional reports, photographs etc in support of your application. If they are being provided separately from this form, please detail how they are being submitted.

The yew trees have been cut back by 25% of the crown twice (see copies of previous consent letters). This has cost just under £1000 on each occasion. The yews are extremely hardy and have rapidly grown back. I now seek permission to reduce them further, by 33% not of the crown but of the whole trees. The walnuts have become very wild and high and I should also like to reduce those by 33% of the trees.

### 9. Application For Tree Works - Checklist

Only one copy of the application form and additional information (Question 8) is required. Please use the guidance and this checklist to make sure that this form has been completed correctly and that all relevant information is submitted. Please note that failure to supply precise and detailed information may result in your application being rejected or delayed. You do not need to fill out this section, but it may help you to submit a valid form.

#### Sketch Plan

- A sketch plan showing the location of all trees (see Question 8)

#### For all trees

(see Question 7)

- Clear identification of the trees concerned
- A full and clear specification of the works to be carried out


#### For works to trees protected by a TPO

(see Question 8)

Have you:

- stated reasons for the proposed works?
- provided evidence in support of the stated reasons? in particular:
  - if your reasons relate to the condition of the tree(s) - written evidence from an appropriate expert *NA*
  - if you are alleging subsidence damage - a report by an appropriate engineer or surveyor and one from an arboriculturist. *NA*
  - in respect of other structural damage - written technical evidence *NA*
- included all other information listed in Question 8?


### 10. Declaration - Trees

I/we hereby apply for consent/give notice for tree work as described in this form and the accompanying plans and additional information.

Signed - Applicant:

*Ella Hughes*

Or signed - Agent:

*[Signature]*

Date (DD/MM/YYYY):

17/9/14

(This date must not be before the date of sending or hand-delivery of the form)

### 11. Applicant Contact Details

Telephone numbers

Country code:	National number:	Extension number:
01954	250412	NA
Country code:	Mobile number (optional):	
	07771867615	
Country code:	Fax number (optional):	

Email address (optional):

*ella-m-reid@msn.com*

### 11. Agent Contact Details

Telephone numbers

Country code:	National number:	Extension number:
Country code:	Mobile number (optional):	
Country code:	Fax number (optional):	

Email address (optional):

Electronic communication - if you submit this form by fax or e-mail the LPA may communicate with you in the same manner.  
 (Please see guidance notes)



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

## Response form: Consultation: planning and travellers

We are seeking your views to the following questions on proposed changes to planning policy and guidance, to:

- ensure that the planning system applies fairly and equally to both the settled and traveller communities
- further strengthen protection of our sensitive areas and Green Belt
- address the negative impact of unauthorised occupation

And

On proposed planning guidance on assessing traveller accommodation needs and use of Temporary Stop Notices.

### How to respond

**The closing date for responses is 23 November 2014.**

This response form is saved separately on the DCLG website.

Responses should be sent to [PPTS@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PPTS@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

Written responses may be sent to:

Owen Neal  
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Consultation  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

# About you

## i) Your details:

Name:	
Position:	
Name of organisation (if applicable):	Cottenham Parish Council
Address:	
Email:	clerk@cottenhampc.org.uk
Telephone number:	

## ii) Are the views expressed on this consultation an official response from the organisation you represent or your own personal views?

Organisational response

Personal views

## iii) Please tick the box which best describes your organisation

Local/ District Council

Unitary Authority

County Council

Parish/ Town Council

Traveller

Public

Representative body/ voluntary

sector/ charity

Non Departmental Public Body

Other

(please specify):	
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## Would you be happy for us to contact you again in relation to this questionnaire?

Yes

## Questions

Please refer to the relevant parts of the consultation document for narrative relating to each question.

### Ensuring fairness in the planning system

**Question 1: Do you agree that the planning definition of travellers should be amended to remove the words or permanently to limit it to those who have a nomadic habit of life? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Permanent or semi-permanent occupation of a site often leads to speculative attempts to develop an unauthorised site, often with retrospective planning applications in an attempt to raise the value of a site. Favourable treatment of such applications creates resentment in the settled community. But solutions are needed both for travellers who for reasons of advanced age or genuine ill-health require sites on which to live in a similar style to those who continue to travel; and an adequate supply of transit sites across the country is also required.

**Question 2: Are there any additional measures which would support those travellers who maintain a nomadic habit of life to have their needs met? If so, what are they?**

Yes

Comments

A quota of small transit sites is required across the country, possibly on brownfield locations, to avoid further pressure on a small number of over-developed sites and green belt land; the sites need to be small to allow traveller choice of location and neighbours.

**Question 3: Do you consider that:**

**a) we should amend the 2006 regulations to bring the definition of “gypsies and travellers” into line with the proposed definition of “travellers” for planning purposes?**

Yes

Comments

Consistency avoids planning loopholes.

and

**b) we should also amend primary legislation to ensure that those who have given up travelling permanently have their needs assessed? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Some form of “mediated” assessment involving representatives of the traveller communities is required to assess properly serious ill-health or genuine age-based needs

## Protecting sensitive areas and the Green Belt

**Question 4: Do you agree that Planning Policy for Traveller Sites be amended to reflect the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework that provide protection to these sensitive sites (set out in para. 3.1 of the consultation document)? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Sensitive sites need protection but an adequate number of transit sites needs to be available within all geographic areas and over-reliance on a small number of over-developed existing sites in an area is not acceptable. In areas where enough brownfield sites are not available some compromises on protection of sensitive land will be needed.

**Question 5: Do you agree that paragraph 23 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites should be amended to “local authorities should very strictly limit new traveller sites in the open countryside”? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

An unintended consequence of this could focus any further settlement on already overdeveloped sites

**Question 6: Do you agree that the absence of an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites should be removed from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites as a significant material consideration in the grant of temporary permission for traveller sites in the areas mentioned above (set out in para. 3.7 of the consultation document)? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Temporary permissions often lead to development “creep” as the planning system is exploited and conditions ignored.

**Question 7: Do you agree with the policy proposal that, subject to the best interests of the child, unmet need and personal circumstances are unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm so as to establish very special circumstances? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Unmet need and personal circumstances should not create special circumstances that outweigh harm to greenbelt or similar land. Best interests of the child need to be genuine, rather than preference for attendance at a particular school or GP practice as equivalent services are universally available within UK.

## Addressing unauthorised occupation of land

**Question 8: Do you agree that intentional unauthorised occupation should be regarded by decision takers as a material consideration that weighs against the grant of permission? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Intentional unauthorised occupation should weigh against any grant of permission for travellers just as it does for intentional unauthorised development by a member of the settled community.

**Question 9: Do you agree that unauthorised occupation causes harm to the planning system and community relations? If not, why not?**

Yes

Comments

Unauthorised occupation costs taxpayer money, and creates unfairness in the planning system.

**Question 10: Do you have evidence of the impact of harm caused by intentional unauthorised occupation? (And if so, could you submit them with your response.)**

Yes

Comments

**Unauthorised occupation costs taxpayer money, creates unfairness in the planning system, encourages civil disorder and can increase crime rates as shown by these extracts from news bulletins related to Smithy Fen, Cottenham over the last decade.**

Smithy Fen only came to national attention in 2003 when 800 predominantly Irish travellers flooded into the area and the 11-acre site swiftly expanded to a 20-acre settlement without planning permission.

Homeowners in the area complained of intimidation and threats, thefts, having vehicles driven at them and faeces and other objects being thrown into their gardens.

Tension between the villagers of Cottenham and travellers escalated in 2004 after the murder of a postman at a local pub, the Chequers.

Residents claimed the killer was one of the Irish travellers, possibly after a dispute over a card game.

... said a police inspector had spoken to him about the murder at the Chequers pub in the village, indicating the finger of suspicion pointed at a member of the travelling community.

He said: "The inspector told me that there were 27 people altogether in the pub that night and all had been identified and interviewed. Twenty five of them were travellers. Of the two that were not, one was Peter Stone and the other was the landlord.

"There's a killer on the loose in the community of Cottenham. Fact. The fear of crime and of a murderer in the community is a real issue.

"Smithy Fen continues to be a no-go area. People of Cottenham won't go down there for fear of crime and intimidation."

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2004** ... and his wife ... are among 1,000 of the 2,300 families in Cottenham prepared

to withhold their council tax over the failure of the local authority to crack down on the burgeoning travellers' site at Smithy Fen.

This is not an ordinary row over travellers and gypsies. There have been travellers in Cottenham for 40 years, living happily in the village as its prosperity grew, thanks to the burgeoning high-technology industries in and around Cambridge.

But when the Irish travellers began arriving, the long-established residents of Smithy Fen blockaded the land. When that failed, many sold up, accepting the generous offer made by the new arrivals.

The tax rebels accuse the council of doing nothing as the 11-acre legitimate site has grown to 20 acres without planning permission. The Irish travellers have bought another 30.5 acres.

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2004** The Gypsy site at Smithy Fen in the pretty Cambridgeshire village of Cottenham has been home to dozens of traveller families for many years, the two communities living peaceably together.

But when travellers began to arrive from Ireland at Easter 2003, the sheer numbers of those trying to live on the site posed a problem. Many of the long-term residents, who were predominantly English, were forced out and began using land next to the site without permission.

This in turn angered locals, and what appeared to be a classic confrontation between an angry populace and travellers evolved into a High Court row, with the latter winning the latest round on Monday.

The disagreements between the village and the travellers developed slowly. At first, people complained of an increase in crime, noise, litter and general nuisance. Last November, there were suggestions that travellers had been involved in the unsolved murder of a postman.

In 2005, 22 families lost a High Court appeal against eviction from 13 plots on the site and were given 12 months to leave.

In 2006 it emerged the council had spent close to £1million unsuccessfully trying to evict the travellers.

**30<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

Seventeen illegal plots at Pine View in Smithy Fen, Cottenham, are being cleared of all caravans and buildings.

There are 50 legal plots and 58 illegal plots on the camp and Pine View is the first site to be cleared so the area can then be levelled.

Clearing the site, including making it difficult for people to reoccupy the pitches, is expected to cost South Cambs District Council £80,000.

The High Court granted an injunction on land at Pine View in June 2006 and a deadline was set for the travellers to clear the land by 7 October.

When this did not happen, the council authorised officers to take enforcement action.

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009** A TRAVELLER family has been jailed for living illegally on the controversial Smithy Fen site in Cottenham, Cambridgeshire.

..., ..., ... and ... each got four months in prison for contempt of court after breaching injunctions imposed in 2007.

They were living on part of the site at Cottenham and were sentenced on Monday for failing to comply with court orders barring residential occupation.

Although High Court judge ... said the family only moved on to Plot 4 - Victoria View, Smithy Fen, last December or January - it was highly likely they knew their occupation was unlawful.

The judge said: "The orders of the court are meant to be obeyed and not to be ignored with impunity."

He also found travellers ... and ... guilty of contempt for remaining on Plot 8. However, because the ... have two young children and ... recently had a serious operation, he gave them a four-month prison sentence, suspended for four months.

The same order was made for ..., also because she has children. He also found four other travellers who have left the site guilty of contempt of court.

..., ... and ... were given three months in prison, suspended for 12 months on condition that they do not return to the site.

In the case of ..., he took the "exceptional course" of making no order against her, despite finding her guilty of contempt of court.

He said he had "particular difficulty" dealing with the case of ..., who had claimed to have the honest belief the council was going to remove the caravan.

..., ... and ... were each given 28 days to have their static caravans sold, removed, or demolished.

... and ... will also have to leave the site, or run the risk of facing renewed proceedings.

The injunctions were made in 2007 after a legal fight by travellers to live on the site was fought unsuccessfully all the way to the Court of Appeal.

..., the district council's portfolio holder for planning, said: "This has been a long and complex process and I hope that today (Wednesday, 01 April) sees its conclusion.

"We believe that planning laws apply to everyone - only in their consistent application can we see the fairest outcome for the whole community. In flouting the injunction on this land, the defendants have shown contempt for the court and this has been recognised in today's decision.

"We would much rather not have to take these steps to defend the land in question, but the message today sends is that we will do so if necessary."

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2009** ARMED police were called in to restore order at the Smithy Fen travellers' site after a series of large-scale fights broke out between rival groups.

The trouble started in the early hours of yesterday at a confirmation party held at the Chequers pub in Cottenham, which saw travellers from Billericay in Essex join those from the local area.

It is believed the celebrations spiralled out of control and a brawl spilled into the street.

Police said they were called to the pub at 12.25am after reports of 10 people fighting.

Nobody wanted to make a complaint and officers left the scene, but they were called back to the Smithy Fen site at 1.45am after around 20 people were seen fighting in the

street.

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2010** A farmer told of his outrage at being repeatedly denied planning permission to build a home for 13 years – while a neighbouring illegal travellers' site was allowed to flourish.

Weary ..., 46, has been living in a mobile home on his 47-acre farm in Smithy Fen near Cottenham, Cambs., since 1998 while applying to build a modest bungalow.

But despite having tended cattle on the site since 1992, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has refused planning permission for a permanent residence three times.

Over the same period the Smithy Fen travellers site next door – just half a mile away – has boomed and was home to more than 800 illegal travellers at its peak in 2003.

While the 11-acre legitimate travellers site grew to 20-acres without planning permission, Bruce has repeatedly been told his three-bed property is not suitable for the farm.

Seven unlawful plots at Smithy Fen currently remain occupied without planning permission, featuring semi-permanent structures.

**10<sup>th</sup> September 2013** Yesterday's raids were on camps and houses in London, Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Essex, the West Midlands, Nottingham and Ulster. The operation was led by Cambridgeshire Police, who arrested four of the men at the Smithy Fen travellers' camp in Cottenham

Police investigating thefts of "priceless items" from museums and auction houses in England have arrested 19 people in dawn raids.

Officers from 26 forces and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (Soca) were involved in the operation.

Searches have taken place in London, Sussex, Cambridgeshire, the West Midlands, Essex and Northern Ireland.

The raids are in connection with the theft of Chinese artefacts and a rhinoceros horn in 2012.

Six burglaries took place over a four-month period, police said.

Three happened at Durham University's Oriental Museum, one at Gorrings Auction House in East Sussex and one each at Norwich Castle Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge in April last year.

Although much of the stolen property was recovered, several high-value items are still missing.

So far, eight people have been convicted and jailed for a total of more than 40 years for their roles in the break-ins.

Hundreds of officers were involved in the raids early on Tuesday.

Five men - aged 20, 31, 35, 53 and 54 - and two women, aged 28 and 54, were arrested in London.

Four men - aged 24, 41, 44 and 56 - were arrested in Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, after police broke down the door of a mobile home at Smithy Fen travellers' site.

**24<sup>th</sup> June 2014** 'Boutique' drug dealers have been growing cannabis in a shipping container in a Breaking Bad-style first for Cambridgeshire – but police swooped on the 'skunk farm' on a travellers' site in Cottenham.

Like a scene from the US TV drama, which sees drug dealers 'cooking' crystal meth in a trailer, the container was discovered off a dirt road amidst piles of rubbish and dumped

children's toys on the edges of Smithy Fen.

Officers were on the sparsely populated travellers' site on another, unrelated job when they spotted a light coming from the metal box in Park Lane, off Setchel Drove, on the outskirts of the village.

Suspicion was raised it was being used to grow cannabis, and the officers swiftly obtained a warrant.

**Question 11: Would amending Planning Policy for Traveller Sites in line with the proposal set out in paragraph 4.16 of the consultation document help that small number of local authorities in these exceptional circumstances (set out in paragraphs 4.11-4.14 of the consultation document)? If not, why not? What other measures can Government take to help local authorities in this situation?**

Yes

Comments

Current government guidance which says districts should make allocations according to need is fundamentally wrong, as it simply continues to concentrate travellers in their current locations.

This means that those districts that have no travellers now, will have no identifiable need, and therefore they don't need to make any provision.

In contrast, those districts with established traveller sites will almost inevitably face claims that there is further need.

Districts that can show that they have met their objectively identified need, should not be obliged to make further provision.

**Question 12: Are there any other points that you wish to make in response to this consultation, in particular to inform the Government's consideration of the potential impacts that the proposals in this paper may have on either the traveller community or the settled community?**

Yes

Comments

We make the case that, having an over-developed site, we have more than met our need, and should not be obliged to make further allocations.

Additional transit sites away from areas with over-developed sites would ease the inevitable pressure on the existing over-developed sites, and allow those with genuine need, due to age or ill-health, to remain on those sites and obviate misguided attempts to force such travellers to adopt a "fully-settled" life-style.

# Draft planning guidance for travellers (Annex A)

**Question 13: Do you have any comments on the draft planning guidance for travellers (see Annex A of the consultation document)?**

Yes

Comments

1 Any assessment of traveller accommodation needs should not be distorted by the existence of over-developed sites in a particular area (“need follows need”). A more uniform geographic availability of sites, especially for transit use, would reduce this over-dependence on a small number of sites, especially when, for reasons of reduced mobility or serious ill-health, the nomadic aspect of the traveller life-style cannot be sustained.

2 There is a dual challenge in assessment of need.

- Local authorities with minimal or no provision are not motivated to demonstrate an implied need or make any provision for transit sites that may lead to evidence of real need.
- Local authorities with established provision often find existing provision concentrated on a small number of over-developed sites which, by enforced mixing of traveller cultures, leads not only to increased disruption but also evidence of further need, albeit mostly for diverse smaller transit sites.

All the while, further state-subsidised provision creates tension in both the settled and traveller communities.

3 Establishing demand by extrapolation from existing numbers is unfair and unobjective and fails to predict likely reality. The Cottenham experience of the recent decade was instigated by a change in, and rigorous enforcement of, the law related to travellers in Ireland. The consequent 2003 influx overwhelmed and disrupted the existing community at Smithy Fen. Few, if any remained, of those whose needs might have been assessed a few years earlier. A broader multi-scenario approach – from “none now / lots in future” to “lots now /none in future” - is more likely to yield a better balanced outcome for all areas. This may need modest increases in provision, especially of small transit sites on brownfield land, even in areas where no provision is currently made.

4 As before, incremental approaches to demand prediction will fail to alleviate the problem of over-developed sites. Absence of provision could be a better indicator.

5 All means of accelerating and reducing the costs of interventions in unlawful land occupancy or development are welcomed.

## About this consultation

This consultation document and consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent and, where relevant, who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed the Consultation Principles? If not, or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process, please contact CLG Consultation Co-ordinator.

Department for Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

or by e-mail to: [consultationcoordinator@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultationcoordinator@communities.gsi.gov.uk)