

MAGOR WITH UNDY TOWN COUNCIL
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Langley Close and Dancing Hill - Gypsy Traveller Pitch Identification Process

Magor with Undy Town Council submit this representation focussing on the process undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council and lack of consultation regarding the identification of potential sites for provision of Gypsy and Traveller Pitches.

From the details of the process executed by officers of Monmouthshire CC we conclude that the identified sites presented for consideration at the Peoples Scrutiny Meeting of 19th July 2023 were arbitrary. The site descriptions are subjective and failed to attend to an objective scrutinization in their selection.

The scoring/weighting of RAG assessment is not shared and there are clear and apparent failings in this assessment. The RAG assessment of the sites are littered with inconsistency in relation to the categorisation. We refer in particular to clear similarities between Langley Close, Garthi Close and Rocklea in regard to Green Infrastructure where Langley Close was afforded a 'Green' rating while Garthi Close and Rocklea were rated 'Red'.

Travelling Ahead feedback in the RAG details Dancing Hill as 'Red' when the same issues are recorded in respect of Langley Close

Why is only Dancing Hill categorised as RED when the same issues are stated for Langley Close? I.e. negatives: both close to existing homes, both close to M4 (with consequent noise and pollution); and positives: both are larger sites and so some flexibility.

We question under what criteria those categorisations were reached.

We are very concerned with the fact that a Member workshop/s appears to have been used to "filter out" sites, where members were asked for their views. Which members sat in these workshops and did they include members who were equipped with a 'local knowledge' and experience of the locations of the sites that were selected, if not, we submit that the decision making was somewhat less than well-informed. Furthermore, did this process comply with constitution.

It is a matter of record that 'Travelling Ahead' in representation of Gypsies and Travellers have rejected each of the sites identified as being unsuitable for their needs and requirements. In that regard why did Monmouthshire CC continue with this process.

At the Peoples Scrutiny Meeting of 19th July 2023 multiple and detailed concerns about the integrity of the process, perceived inconsistencies, and erroneous information were raised together with site specific feedback from residents, communities and their representatives. Detailed contributions from local elected members were presented.

It was resolved that option 3 ***"To not recommend any of the pieces of land to cabinet to formally consult upon"*** would be recommended to the Cabinet Meeting of 26th July 2023.

At the Cabinet Meeting of the 26th July 2023 the recommendation of the Peoples Scrutiny Meeting was largely ignored where Cllr S Birch announced that the sites at Mansion Heights and Mitchell Troy were being removed from consideration consequent to access issues **(the RAG had not identified this)**. Cllr Birch continued that the sites of Langley Close and Dancing Hill would remain and require 'further work' without explanation of what that 'further work' would entail and to defer to Cabinet on 06th September 2023. This announcement further demonstrates the inefficiency of the process under which Monmouthshire CC identified land for this consideration.

In respect of the announcement by Cllr Birch concerning the access issues at Mitchel Troy and Mansion Heights we question this as similar access issues exist at both Dancing Hill and Langley Close.

Was this an autonomous decision made by Cllr Birch, if not, who were involved in arriving at this decision and when and how?

While the focus of this representation concentrates on the perceived flaws and considerations of the process under which the sites were selected we would also wish to point out that the Town Council is representative of the communities of Magor and Undy. The local infrastructure and accessibility, the environmental impact and the over-development of limited availability of our Amenity Land and Green Open Spaces gives rise to serious concerns. We look forward to the Cabinet Meeting of 06th September 2023 and trust that due process will be followed in addressing these concerns.

Cllr Carole Hopkins (Mayor)

William S Lewis
Clerk to Council.