

Simon Emerson Bsc Dip TP MRTPI
C/O Rob Middleton
Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Swan Lane
Long Stratton
NORWICH
NR15 2XE

Tel 01508 533806
agregory@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Please ask for Tim Horspole

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Dear Mr Emerson

South Norfolk Council's Gypsy and travellers Site DPD: Suspension of Examination

Following the exploratory meeting (29 March) leading council members and I have, informally, been considering the concerns you have with the Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD. Their immediate response is the decision as to whether to request the withdrawal of the DPD will inevitably have consequences. Many of these consequences will have financial implications for the Council as well as implications for both the settled and travelling community. The submitted DPD has been, as was stated at the exploratory meeting, produced with the benefit of very extensive consultations over a period of four years. It is, therefore, important that members undertake soundings from their local communities on the issues you raise, in particular your opinion on the site selection criteria.

One practical difficulty arises from the need for the decision as to request withdrawal needs to be taken by a meeting of Council. The next scheduled meeting is not until 10 May 2010. Arranging a special meeting before then is likely to be difficult as members will be spending a great deal of time on election related work for their political parties. In addition, members are very concerned at the potential timing of a decision with the general election. They would prefer to take a decision with a clearer indication of what national political context policy is likely to be in the near future.

Furthermore, on an issue raised at the hearing, The Health and Safety Executive has still not conformed its position with regard to the safety zones for the oil depot at Stanfield Road, Wymondham. The lack of this information means it is impossible to judge whether the proposed allocation falls within such a zone. It also has not allowed the Council to reach an agreed position with Goff Petroleum.

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DX 130080 Long Stratton 2
Textphone 01508 533622
Emergency out of hours service 01508 533633
Freephone 0808 168 3000 (Planning)



Given the complexity of these issues and, in addition, the lack of updated material from the HSE I would like to request an extension in the deadline for the suspension of the examination. I would respectfully request that the suspension continues for a further six weeks (until 24 May 2010).

Yours sincerely

Andrew Gregory
Director of Planning, Housing and the Built Environment
Planning and Housing Policy