

Call-in of Cabinet decision: Options for a transit site within Walsall

Ward(s) Pleck

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew, Deputy Leader & Regeneration

Related Portfolios: Councillor Perry, Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities
Councillor Chatta, Personnel & Business Support
Councillor Craddock, Health & Wellbeing

Report:

In line with the provisions contained within Part 4.5 of the Walsall Council Constitution the decision of Cabinet regarding 'Options for a transit site within Walsall' has been "called in".

The reason for the call-in is:

'In the public interest, following significant concerns expressed by members of the local community, we would like to call this decision in to understand how the Cabinet took into account the following issues in making their decision:

- The consultation that took place? – how were local residents in the Pleck Ward, including those living close to the proposed site and Ward Members and Member of Parliament consulted and how were these views taken into account;*
- The impact of the health of the GRT community - the site is located next to a major cross roads that suffers from congestion. We are concerned as GRT communities are recognised as a group that suffers from health inequalities and this site will potentially expose them to high levels of air pollution. The UE Working Group criteria recommended avoiding sites with 'air/ground pollution'.*
- The impact on schools and other local services - The UE Working Group recommended that a transit site 'should not overload schools', however, there is significant pressure on local schools in the area and the addition of more children would increase this pressure.*
- The impact on the economy - What assessment was made of the impact on the local economy? The local community is concerned that there will be a potential negative impact on local businesses and property prices.*
- The impact on community cohesion - Pleck Ward is one of the most diverse wards in Walsall. The potential for tension between local communities and*

the GRT community is significant. The addition of this site could potentially exacerbate the challenges with community cohesion in this area. The members would like to see the risk assessment done that covers these issues.

- *The impact on neighbouring residents - the UE Working Group recommended that a transit site 'be situated away from local housing estates'. Why was this recommendation disregarded?*
- *Site is too small – transit sites need to be able to accommodate largest encampment (30 caravans)*
- *The perceived political nature of this decision by the local community.*
- *What other sites were put forward to the cabinet to make a choice – how many sites were put forward in the Walsall North Constituency and in the Aldridge Brownhills Constituency.'*

A copy of the received call-in notice, Cabinet decision and Cabinet reports are appended to this report. Also enclosed is a copy of the final report and recommendations of the Unauthorised Encampments Working Group.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to review the decision taken in the light of the call-in. The Committee is able to make recommendations to the Executive on alternative courses of action should Members wish to do so.

Recommendation:

That Members consider the call-in and consider whether they wish to make any recommendations to the Executive.

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Documents

Appendix 1 – 'Call in' Notice

Appendix 2 – Cabinet Decision on proposals

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Report on proposals