KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of A meeting of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 13 February 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr A H T Bowles (Vice-Chairman), Mr M J Fittock, Mr M J Harrison, Mr S J G Koowaree and Mr F Wood-Brignall

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Pereira, Kent Fire and Rescue

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr W Forrester (Head of Gypsy & Traveller Unit), Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. A DVD Presentation on Fire and Safety ("Friend and Enemy")
(Item. 4)

(Mr John Pereira, Kent Fire and Rescue Services was present for this item together with Mr Joe Jones of the Canterbury Gypsy Support Group)

(1) Mr Pereira said that the DVD demonstrated the close working and cooperation which the Fire Service was developing with the gypsy community in order to address Fire and Safety issues.

(2) During the course of discussion Mr Pereira said that there had been considerable interest in the work which the Kent Fire and Rescue Service was doing in collaboration with the gypsy community in order to address fire, health and safety issues. Leaflets and other forms of communication and education had been used in the past but since the introduction of the DVD it was believed this was the best way in which to communicate these important messages.

(3) Mr Pereira said that the DVD was being made available as widely as possible and that could be readily edited so its messages could be targeted at a wider audience ie those who use caravans for leisure purposes and the operators and residents of caravan leisure and holiday parks.

(4) The Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board placed on record its thanks to Mr Pereira for attending the meeting and for his thought provoking presentation.

2. Minutes of meeting - 5 December 2008
(Item. 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. South East Plan Partial Review On Gypsy And Traveller Pitch Allocation: Progress Report

(Item. 6 – report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) This report updated the Board on what had happened since the consultation on the four different distribution options across all South East authorities, and the next stages of the process.

(2) The Regional Planning Committee at its meeting on 28 January 2009 had considered this matter in some detail and decided to recommend Option D to the Regional Assembly which would be meeting on 4 March 2009.

(3) During the course of discussion Members expressed some scepticism as to whether Option D would in fact provide and deliver all the outcomes were expected of it. It was also said that there was a question mark around whether Option D would be agreed by the Regional Assembly.

(4) Following further discussion the Board noted that following the meeting of the Regional Assembly it was expected there would be a consultation exercise undertaken lead by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) on a single option and this would be undertaken from mid May through to mid July. Once that Committee had been completed it was expected the Examination in Public on the partial review would take place in the autumn of this year and that the incorporation of the relevant decisions on pitch allocations and other matters into the South East Plan was expected to be signed off by the Secretary of State in spring 2010.

4. Rents on Public Sites Managed by KCC

(Item. 5 – report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) This report detailed proposed increases in rents on KCC managed traveller sites from 1 April 2009. During the course of discussion Mr Fittock placed on record his congratulations to officers in achieving an appropriate rental level that was both cost effective and reasonable in terms of affordability.

(2) Following discussion the Advisory Board agreed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services be advised that the Board endorses the recommendations set out in the report in regard to new rents to be introduced from 1 April 2009, and that licensees be advised of the increases within the required 28 days notice in advance of that date.