

Review Title: **Boat Dwellers & River Travellers Task and Finish Group Review**

Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel: **Housing & Major Projects Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel**

Panel Chair & Vice Chair: **Cllr Appleyard & Cllr Hartley**

Policy Development & Scrutiny Project Officer(s): **Donna Vercoe / Emma Bagley**

Supporting Service Officer(s): **Samantha Jones / Ann Robins / Mark Minkley**

Process for Tracking PD&S Recommendations - Guidance note for Cabinet Members

The enclosed table lists all the recommendations arising from the above Policy Development & Scrutiny Review. Individual recommendations are referred to the relevant named Cabinet Members (or whole Cabinet in the case of a whole Cabinet referral) as listed in the '**Cabinet Member**' column of the table. Cabinet members are requested to seek help from your relevant service Officers within your portfolio to help complete the Rationale for your response. A copy of this has also been forwarded to your appropriate Lead Officer. In order to provide the PD&S Panel with a Cabinet response on each recommendation, the named Cabinet member (or whole Cabinet) is asked to complete the last 3 columns of the table as follows:

Decision Response

The Cabinet has the following options:

- **Accept** the Panel's recommendation
- **Reject** the Panel's recommendation
- **Defer** a decision on the recommendation because a response cannot be given at this time. This could be because the recommendation needs to be considered in light of a future Cabinet decision, imminent legislation, relevant strategy development or budget considerations, etc.

Implementation Date

- For 'Accept' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be implemented.
- For 'Defer' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be reconsidered.
- For 'Reject' decisions this is not applicable so write n/a

Rationale

Use this space to explain the rationale for your decision response and implementation date. For accepted recommendations, please give details of how they will be implemented.

Recommendations from the Boat Dwellers & River Travellers Task and Finish Group Review

Recommendation	Cabinet Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group (TFG) recommend that to inform future council policy direction a full in-depth study/ review on Boat Dwellers and River Travellers within our area should be undertaken, using the supporting evidence and findings contained within this report as a baseline for further investigation.</p> <p>This should include the following:-</p> <p>1.1 The definition used by the TFG as part of their investigations should be consulted on as part of the next phase of in-depth review work and for consideration for future B&NES wider policy definition. This should include conversations with all the different Authorities within the AINIA (The Association of Inland Navigation</p>	<p>Cllr Ball Cllr Allen</p>	<p>Defer</p>	<p>Review April 2014</p>	<p>This is a significant piece of work, likely to need co-ordination and a good deal of officer time. It is not clear at this stage which team has capacity to lead such a piece of research. It is likely that this project would need to be delivered by a dedicated post, with further input from several teams across the Council. Should this work go ahead, the recently published 'Bath and North East Somerset Gypsy, Traveller, Boater, Showman and Roma Health Survey 2012-2013' includes valuable information and should be taken into account as supporting evidence.</p> <p>See above recommendation. This is also a significant piece of work.</p>

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<p>Authorities) to agree a standard terminology. This would ensure that all stakeholders know what and about whom everyone is talking with the consequent benefits of there being shared common language.</p> <p>1.2 That the best practice methods undertaken by both Oxford Council (mooring policy and partnership work) and Wiltshire Council (which hasve linked its policies directed towards River Travellers with those towards gypsy travellers) be introduced in order to inform future policy direction.</p> <p>The Council should work together with them and any other interested neighbouring authorities to build a consistent approach through the development of a liaison committee or similar forum. This should be co-ordinated with our current Gypsy and Traveller Strategy Group work.</p>	<p>Cllr Ball</p>	<p>Defer</p>	<p>Review April 2014</p>	<p>This is linked to Recommendation 1 above and relies on dedicated officer time. In order to address the need for better partnership working, members agree that a liaison or reference group should be established by the Strategy & Performance team, consisting of representatives from boat dwelling and riverside residences, the CRT, River Regeneration Trust, elected members and relevant officers. The aim of the group would be to create an arena where issues of concern can be raised and solutions identified.</p> <p>(Note: it is members' understanding that the Wiltshire officer with particular responsibility for canal and river issues sees his remit as working to reduce the impact of river-dwelling on householders on the river banks rather than people living on the water. There does not seem to be a best practice approach to working with this group in Wiltshire.)</p>

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<p>1.3 That the Council investigates and identifies the barriers to services and facilities for vulnerable people along the waterways</p> <p>These findings could feed into the work the Council is doing on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Review, the Homelessness Strategy and the Gypsy and Travellers Strategy work but would be important in their own right.</p>	Cllr Allen	Defer	Review April 2014	<p>Again, this recommendation requires a significant commitment of officer time. We will defer a wholesale review but will respond to the elements picked up in the G&T Health assessment and continue to work with our NHS colleagues in the CCG to reduce health inequalities for Boat Dwellers.</p> <p>The Corporate G&T Group is a multi-disciplinary panel that aims to identify the issues faced by G&T households and to develop appropriate responses to address these issues. It should be noted that the group is not at this stage focusing on development of a strategy. However, the Planning Service, in liaison with the Corporate G&T Group, is currently preparing a statutory plan to address Traveller accommodation needs</p>
<p>1.4 That the Council continues to establish open- ended dialogue between boat dwellers and the Council, to establish clear communication channels.</p> <p>This should investigate whether improvements can be made to:-</p> <p>a.) Our current B&NES Website, to improve access to key information for Boat Dwellers, for example; greater advertisement of the Council Connect</p>	Cllr Tim Ball	Agree	December 2013	<p>Members recommend that, in order to establish clearer lines of communication, one officer is identified as a single point of contact for all issues relating to boat dwelling. This officer would be responsible for ensuring that information on the Council's webpages is updated (with updates provided by the relevant team or officer) and would act as a contact point for in-person queries.</p> <p>Housing Services to improve access to information on housing standards and</p>

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<p>service.</p> <p>b.) Relations with the Canal & River Trust. (such as the opportunity to use their notice boards to advertise Council services)</p> <p>c.) The communications between local Ward Councilors and Boat Dwellers resident in their wards.</p> <p><i>Financial Assessment:</i></p> <p>There are no direct and specific financial implications at this stage. However, any costs associated with the specific delivery of the in-depth study/ review such as during the consultation/ engagement stage of the work could also look to the funding available through the agreed River Corridor Fund allocation.</p> <p>Therefore consideration will need to be given to the amount of officer time from all departments, functions and teams to achieve this. There is also the possibility that future resources could be shared with our neighbouring local</p>	<p>Cllr Paul Crossley</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>First meeting by January 2014</p>	<p>housing options. Web pages and a range of printed information to be developed specific to boat-dwellers' needs (a)</p> <p>Members also recommend that, once the River Regeneration Trust has secured accommodation, this be developed into an information leaflet point for all waterways related issues (b).</p> <p>Strategy & Performance to lead high-level cross-party group, as detailed above at 1.2, to develop a coherent approach to this. Also, link to Recommendation 2, below. See 1.2 above.</p> <p>See note above re the role and remit of the Wiltshire officer.</p>

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<p>authorities such as Wiltshire Council who currently have a dedicated officer for liaising with their local Boat Dwellers.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>B&NES Council should not support recommendations to endorse the Canal River Trust Mooring Strategy, until and unless we have been assured they are compliant with their legal obligations under the Equality Act and will not conflict with Council policy.</p> <p>This would need to be timely to feed into the current Mooring Strategy that is being developed and before there is any endorsement of the draft Memorandum of Understanding developed between the Council and the Canal & River Trust which was presented to the Housing & Major Projects Panel in November 2012.</p> <p>Financial Assessment:</p> <p>No direct financial implications as can be met within existing resources.</p>	<p>Cllr Tim Ball</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>January 2014</p>	<p>This recommendation could be addressed through the strategic group set out at Recommendation 1.4 above.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Future B&NES Council spatial planning requirements to deliver more dwellings, which have so far been increased through major housing developments, should also include the needs of people living on the waterways in Bath & North East Somerset.</p> <p>This should include the following:-</p> <p>3.1 Further investigations to determine the feasibility of all major developments along the river or canal incorporating a pontoon landing stage with ready access to potable water and 240volt power as well as in close proximity to a public footpath, highway and waste disposal for use by River Travellers (RU3 & RU4) for a maximum 2-day stay and policed by Canal & River Trust as part of an approved Mooring Strategy in B&NES. These will also serve as short-stay visitor moorings.</p>	<p>Cllr Tim Ball</p>	<p>Defer</p>	<p>September 2014</p>	<p>This would ideally entail including the existing boat dwellers in contributing to the accommodation supply (ie the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study). This should be achieved via the revised West of England SHMA currently underway. However, there is no commitment to allocating any resources to boat dwelling issues in any of the other WoE partner LA's, so inclusion in the SHMA is not possible. A different approach will be needed, which will require officer time commitment.</p>
<p>3.1 Further investigations to determine the feasibility of all major developments along the river or canal incorporating a pontoon landing stage with ready access to potable water and 240volt power as well as in close proximity to a public footpath, highway and waste disposal for use by River Travellers (RU3 & RU4) for a maximum 2-day stay and policed by Canal & River Trust as part of an approved Mooring Strategy in B&NES. These will also serve as short-stay visitor moorings.</p>	<p>Cllr Tim Ball</p>	<p>Defer</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>This can only be included if CLG endorses this as an acceptable part of the Housing supply. Unless 'development' (as defined under the Town & Country Planning Act) is involved to create permanent moorings, this approach cannot easily be monitored or controlled. Agreement from CRT to police moorings also needs to be agreed.</p> <p>ACTION : raise this issue with CLG and CRT</p>

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<p>3.2 Request that all off-line marina and mooring basin developments incorporate a maximum 14-day stay pontoon for River Travellers (RU3) for a minimum of three average length narrow boats as part of the planning approval process and policed by Canal & River Trust as part of an approved Mooring Strategy in B&NES. These are in addition to short-stay visitor moorings.</p>	Cllr Tim Ball	Reject		<p>In response to 3.1, if development is involved, as defined under the Town Planning Act, then this could be implemented through the Placemaking Plan currently under preparation. However consideration of this in the Placemaking Plan is dependent on the output of the Mooring Strategy.</p>
<p>3.3 Determine whether all off-line marina and mooring basin developments can or could reasonably be required to include a minimum of 10% of total berths to be allocated to Boat Dwellers whether or not they are RU1, RU2, RU4 or RU5.</p>	Cllr Tim Ball	Reject		<p>There is currently no Planning Policy document or mechanism in place to enable this.</p>
<p>3.4 To determine the scale and scope of the need and numbers of types of moorings and establish the current and further demands of moorings in the B&NES area. This will need to be timed to feed into the Mooring Strategy which is currently being developed.</p> <p>Financial Assessment: No direct financial implications as can be met within existing resources. Therefore</p>	Cllr Tim Ball	Defer	<p>Review April 2014</p>	<p>See 3.2 This requires significant officer time. See Recommendations 1 and 1.2.</p>

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<p>consideration will need to be given to the amount of officer time from all departments, functions and teams to achieve the above investigations.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The findings within this report support the work of the River Corridor Group's (now the River Regeneration Trust) future vision of regenerating the river. We recommend that the planned future B&NES River Strategy includes:-</p> <p>4.1 The consideration of the needs and issues of our local Boat Dwellers and River Travellers within its initial evidence base.</p> <p>4.2 Representation from the Housing & Major Projects Panel on The River Regeneration Trust (formerly the River Corridor Group) to ensure clear lines of communication between the Council and the Trust.</p> <p>Financial Assessment: No direct financial implications as can be met within existing resources.</p>	<p>Cllrs Simon Allen & Tim Ball</p> <p>Cllrs Ben Stevens & Tim Ball</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p>	<p>April 2014</p> <p>December 2013</p>	<p>NOTE: as at August 2013, there is no plan to develop a River Strategy, though this is anticipated for the future.</p> <p>This could be considered for inclusion in the next Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Discussions should be held with the RRT to explore the need for Housing & Major Projects Panel members to be included in the membership. There are currently 4 Elected Members on the RRT Board; none are H&MP Panel members.</p>