

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE	On or after 31 st December 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2730
TITLE:	Lower Bristol Road Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Scheme	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: Draft Pitch Allocation Scheme		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The way social housing is allocated is key to creating communities where people choose to live and are able to prosper. The Gypsy and Travellers Pitch Allocation Scheme sets out how the permanent pitches will be allocated within the Lower Bristol Road site in Bath. It is based upon similar principles to the Homesearch Allocation Scheme which is the scheme that allocates social housing, and gives priority to people with a local connection and the most housing need.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the proposed Pitch Allocation Scheme contained in Appendix 2 is adopted.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There will not be additional revenue cost of managing the allocation scheme, including prioritising applicants and the marketing of pitches, as these will be met within the existing resources of Housing Services. However, in line with the existing policy the Council will charge the Housing Association for each let agreed; this fee at present is £60. There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The scheme has been written having regard to, and informed by, the following relevant legislation and statutory guidance:
- (1) Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Localism Act 2011),
 - (2) Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulation 2006 (SI 2006 No. 1294).
 - (3) Human Rights Act 1998
 - (4) Allocation for Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England. June 2012.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council is required to adopt and publish a housing allocations scheme which articulates how social housing, including the permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches, is allocated.
- 5.2 The proposed allocations scheme, attached in appendix 1, has been designed, where possible to mirror the existing Homeseach Scheme which sets out how traditional social housing is prioritised and allocated. The Pitch Allocation Scheme is therefore based upon the principles of balancing assessed housing need, time on list and choice. This type of scheme is known as a choice based lettings scheme.
- 5.3 Applicants who apply to go on the waiting list will be placed into one of three groups, A, B & C, where A is the highest priority. When a pitch becomes available applicants who are on the waiting list can then express an interest in the pitch. It will then be offered to the household in the highest group, and if more than one household is in the same group, time on list. It should be noted that the Council reserves the right not to nominate. The three bands cover the following categories:
- a) Group A – local households who have a priority need;
 - b) Group B – local households who do not have a priority need;
 - c) Group C – households who are not local to Bath & North East Somerset
- 5.4 The scheme provides a number of measures to ensure that the community is sustainable, including, but not limited to, restricting the site to Gypsies or Travellers who are in need of a pitch; are eligible for accommodation in the UK; requiring references; excluding households with a history of unacceptable behaviour and a quota system to ensure that up to 75% of pitches are available to households with dependent children. The scheme also provides a mechanism for households to appeal against any decision of the Council.

- 5.5 The transit pitches are not subject to this scheme and will be managed and let directly by Elim Housing on a “first come” basis.
- 5.6 An equalities impact assessment has been completed as part of the development of the proposed allocations policy. The assessment did not suggest any amendments.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The Council is required to adopt and publish a housing allocations scheme which articulates how social housing, including gypsy and traveller pitches, is allocated. The implementation of this policy will ensure that these allocations create a balanced community where people choose live, make the best use of the available pitches and ensure that those in greatest need are prioritised.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 None

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer.
- 8.2 The scheme has been based upon the existing Homeseach Scheme which was developed with a significant amount of internal and public consultation. This adapted scheme has also been informed by consultation with the Corporate Gypsy & Traveller Working Group; the Housing & Major Projects Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel and Elim Housing Association.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing, 01225 477949.
Background papers	None
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