

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	09 November 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2322
TITLE:	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD): Issues and Options consultation paper and 'Call for Sites'	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: Draft Consultation Document		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 As Local Housing Authority, the Council has a duty to assess the housing needs of the district. The Housing Act 2004 extended this duty to the specific requirements of gypsy and traveller communities. The assessment undertaken in 2007 determined that the district by 2016 required 22 permanent and 20 transit pitches, and for travelling showpeople one yard. The draft Core Strategy Policy CP11 has been framed with regard to this assessed need of the district and to assist effective delivery a DPD is now proposed, as follows.
- 1.2 The Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) is a formal planning document prepared by the Council which allocates land for the development of authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the District. The Issues and Options paper seeks public comment on how sites should be allocated for development as Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showpeople yards. The Call for Sites seeks information on potential land for allocation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet:

- 2.1 considers any comments made by the PT & EPDS at its meeting on the 8th;
- 2.2 agrees that the Issues Paper incorporating a Call for Sites is approved for public consultation; and
- 2.3 agrees that the public consultation is undertaken over an extended period of 8 weeks to run from late November 2011.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD is being prepared within the agreed budget for 2011/2012. This budget enables the DPD to progress in line with the work programme in the adopted Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 The progression and eventual adoption of the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD will demonstrate the Council's commitment to the provision of sites to meet local need. The allocation and development of sufficient sites will also enable the Council to redirect households travelling through the District to legal transit sites. This will reduce the need for enforcement action by the Council and its associated costs.
- 3.3 Identification of suitable allocation site(s) will have longer term financial implications because there is a cost to the establishment of sites.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 4.1 Allocating land for the travelling communities to develop authorised sites will meet the Council's requirements to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. The development of authorised sites should improve the life chances of the travelling community as well as improving community cohesion.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The purpose of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document is to allocate sufficient land to develop authorised sites for accommodation by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Bath and North East Somerset District does not currently contain any permanent authorised sites, although a site has been granted temporary planning permission in Whitchurch. The Council is currently working towards producing a new Corporate Policy on Gypsies and Travellers and the Site Allocations document will relate to that policy's aims to oversee the process of site allocation and development.
- 5.2 The Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) is currently at Issues and Options stage. This is the first stage of public consultation seeking to agree the way and form in which sites should be provided, and to ask the public to identify potential land for allocation.
- 5.3 The content of the Issues paper follows the Draft Core Strategy Policy CP11 which sets out the criteria against which land will be assessed for development. From these criteria the consultation paper asks a series of questions about the form of development, including site tenure and mixed-use site provision.
- 5.4 The Council has committed through the Draft Core Strategy to provide **22 permanent pitches** and **20 transit pitches** for Gypsies and Travellers, and **1 yard** for Travelling Showpeople. These figures are derived from the Council's evidence base, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment carried out in 2007, which sets out local need including projected family growth.
- 5.5 The scoring matrix (as included at Appendix A of this note) weighs each of the issues relevant to site allocation in order to objectively identify the most suitable,

sustainable sites. The matrix was developed based on national planning guidance, weighting particular matters, for example protection of the Green Belt, more heavily to reflect their relative importance.

- 5.6 The period of consultation will also include a 'Call for Sites' which asks the public to put forward any land they consider suitable for allocation as Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites. Any land coming forward as part of this process will be considered for allocation against the site criteria, and assessed against the scoring matrix. A review of Council-owned land is also underway to assess local assets for their potential allocation as part of this process. The results of that review will be taken into account alongside any land coming forward from the public.
- 5.7 There will be subsequent public consultations later in 2012 on the proposed sites to be allocated.
- 5.8 This report will be considered by PTE & PDS at its meeting on the 8th November and any comments will be reported to the meeting.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 The statutory duties of the Council include the Single Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups in the course of developing policies and delivering services. Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as distinct ethnic groups and are protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Issues and Options consultation paper was carried out using corporate guidelines and in consultation with an Equalities Officer. The overall impact on equality strands was considered to be positive, however opportunities for improvement were raised as actions. The actions arising from this have been considered and will be incorporated into the next consultation document, the Options Paper. The Equalities Officer was also consulted on a draft version of the consultation paper and comments arising from this were incorporated into the current draft version.

8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 The recommended actions are a key part of the Council's Local Development Scheme and the commitments agreed through the Draft Core Strategy. An extended consultation period of 8 weeks is considered appropriate to ensure the Christmas period does not disadvantage those wishing to comment on the document.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 *Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Parish Council; Town Council; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Youth Council; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Charter Trustees of Bath; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

10.2 It is recommended that the consultation period run for an 8 week period from late November 2011. A series of manned drop-in events will be held to encourage public participation and to draw together local aspirations, opportunities and concerns. These events will be geared towards gathering contacts and evidence to inform future drafts of the document. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging on a face to face basis with the local travelling community and representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community through direct on-site contact by the Council officers.

10.3 Consultation will also include:

- Local press and media coverage
- Feature article in Connect (sent to all households)
- E-consultation
- Email to all consultees listed on the Local Development Framework (LDF) consultation database and known interest groups
- Newsletter / leaflet / poster distribution and advertisement
- Display boards
- One to one meetings with key stakeholders

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	David Trigwell: Divisional Director - Planning and Transport 01225 394125
Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
Background papers	West of England Gypsy Traveller Accommodation (and Other Needs) Assessment (GTAA) (2007)
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	