

 <b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2009		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	Temporary Gypsy & Traveller Site Update	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Satnam Kaur - Interim Head of Housing Strategy	
<b>Service Area</b>	Housing Strategy	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	All	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	N/A	
<b>Background Papers</b>	None	

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director	12.8.09	Bill Hunt
Chief Executive	12.8.09	Chris Elliot
CMT	12.8.09	
Section 151 Officer	12.8.09	Mike Snow
Legal	12.8.09	Peter Oliver
Finance	12.8.09	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	12.8.09	Cllr Grainger
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report.  N/A		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	Yes/No	
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made in identifying a temporary site to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy & Travellers.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the work that is ongoing to identify a suitable site.
- 2.2 If Committee Members are aware of any other sites then please make a recommendation to Officers.

## 3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Government requires that all Local Authorities should ensure that there is adequate accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers in their area.
- 3.2 That once a site has been identified there will be financial implications for the Council in relation to the provision of the site, services to the site and the management of such a site.

## 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 No alternatives have been considered as this is a Government requirement.

## 5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 At this stage, the report has no financial implications. However, once a potential temporary Gypsy and Traveller site is found and has been given Planning Permission, consideration will need to be given to funding. It should be noted that discussions have taken place with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) regarding the funding of any new Gypsy & Traveller sites. Although the funding available is predominantly allocated to bids for permanent sites, it was indicated that consideration would be given to a bid for a temporary site if it was innovative in nature.
- 5.2. The running costs of any site would need to include the cost of waste collection and the provision of portaloos. There would need to be some management costs – not permanent management-for regular visits and collection of any charges, plus a contingency for any clean up costs should it be necessary on the Travellers leaving the site.
- 5.3 It is hoped that a temporary site will help to move Gypsy and Travellers on from illegal encampments on unauthorised sites and reduce the costs associated with such encampments. However, there is no guarantee of this.
- 5.4 Until a suitable site has been identified it is not known what the additional running costs of a site would be. Whilst some income could be charged it will not be easy to collect and it is by no means certain that it will cover any expenditure. It will be necessary to ascertain that the revenue and capital funding is agreed before embarking on the provision of sites, and that a detailed review is undertaken when specific proposals are brought forward.

## 6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

6.1 The CLG required each Housing Authority in England and Wales to undertake an assessment to provide information on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers for Sub-Regional and District level Planning Policy in accordance with the Housing Act 2004, Planning Circular 1/2006.

6.2 The objective of the assessment was to:

- a) Establish the current numbers, cultural background, location, tenure and family composition of the existing Gypsy and Traveller population.
- b) Estimate their unmet housing accommodation needs, both immediate and over a 5 year timescale, in terms of additional number of pitches required for each category and location of site.
- c) Identify, where possible, aspirations and perceptions, in relation to alternative types of site, the range and quality of facilities, access to services and questions of security, harassment, health and disability.

## 7. **BACKGROUND**

7.1 In the West Midlands Region six Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) were carried out in 2007.

7.2 The identified need for WDC was assessed through the GTAA undertaken by the South Housing Market Area Partnership. The assessment found that there was a requirement for 11 permanent pitches and 15 temporary pitches.

7.3 Within Warwick District at present there are no authorised permanent or temporary, privately or publicly owned sites for Gypsy and Travellers,

7.4 There is however, one existing authorised site for show people within the District, at Lowsonford, which has 5 yards. This site is understood to be currently occupied.

7.5 A WDC Corporate Working Group was set up in the summer of 2008 to discuss the criteria to be used in identifying a temporary site.

7.6 The group membership was as follows:

- Head of Housing & Property Services
- Head of Housing Strategy
- Head of Planning
- Head of Legal Services
- Head of Cultural Services
- Head of Environmental Health
- Head of Neighbourhood Services
- Community Services Manager

7.7 The group met twice and using the criteria for a permanent site as set out in Circular 1/2006 Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites, as a guide, set the following criteria for a temporary site:

- Good access to the road network
- Avoiding areas with a high risk of flooding
- Near to a readily available source of water

- Near to an electric supply

7.8 National Policy also states that before Green Belt locations are considered all alternative options should be fully explored.

7.9 The Group identified possible available land across the District. This was prioritised by land that was owned by WDC, then Warwickshire County Council (WCC) land before looking at land in private ownership. The reason for this was to try and keep to a minimum any associated cost once a site had been identified. For example, the cost of having to acquire land to set up a site would be more costly than being able to identify suitable land already in WDCs ownership.

7.10 The sites listed below were identified as potential temporary sites by the Group:

- Land East of Cubbington, Lillington Road
- Old Sewage Works, Harbury Lane
- Campion Hills
- Wasperton (Lay-by)
- Bubbenhall (former lay-by)
- A46, Leek Wotton
- Europa Way
- Crew Lane
- Harbury Lane (adjacent to the Hangers site)

7.11 More detailed investigations into these sites proved less than successful and a further 2 potential sites were identified, , the Guide Dogs for the Blind site at Bishops Tachbrook, and land located near to the A46/M40 (junction 15).

7.12 The table below lists all the potential sites that have been explored and the progress made to date.

Name of Site	Owner of Site	Greenfield/Brownfield	Potential Suitability
Land East of Cubbington, Lillington Road	Cubbington Freeholders	Green Belt	<b>Discounted.</b> WCC is currently leasing this land. Lease ends 2010. Site being used as a salt store and WCC will be looking to extend the lease to retain its current usage. This site may have contamination issues due to its use as a salt store.
Old Sewage Works, Harbury Lane	Private Landowner	Brownfield	<b>Discounted</b> The sewage works, flooding issues, and the nearby private caravan site render this site unsuitable.
Campion Hills	Warwick District Council	Brownfield	<b>Discounted.</b> Too urban in location.
Wasperton (Layby)	Warwickshire County Council	Brownfield	<b>Some potential.</b> Contact made with Highways Dept at WCC awaiting contact to discuss feasibility of using site for gypsy and travellers. Currently being used to store road materials.
Bubbenhall (former layby)	Not known	Green Belt	<b>Some potential.</b> Contact made with Highways Dept at WCC. Awaiting further contact from WCC to discuss this as a possible site. Early indications are that this may be unsuitable due to its location.
A46, Leek Wootton spur	Private Landowner	Green Belt	<b>Some potential.</b> Still progressing
Europa Way	Private Landowner	Brownfield	<b>Discounted.</b> Already identified in Local Plan as possible housing site and carried forward in the Core Strategy as a preferred option. Concerns also about the location being too close to urban areas.
Harbury Lane (adjacent to the Hangers site)	Not Known	Brownfield	<b>Some potential,</b> though there may be issues around the site having to be used for leisure purposes as part of S106 contribution.
Guide Dogs for the Blind, Bishops Tachbrook	Unknown	Brownfield	<b>Discounted</b> - Non starter as planning application submitted for re-development of site.
A46/M40 – Junction 15	Private Landowner	Green Belt	<b>Some potential.</b> Currently being used as a works compound for construction workers working on the new bypass. Due to be returned to Landowner late 2010. Site meets many of the criteria

			required and has a number of facilities. However, inconclusive information as to the level of noise pollution. In order to further assess its suitability WDC Noise Pollution Team have advised that actual readings need to be taken in the "real world", i.e. once the construction works have been completed.
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7.12 As can be seen from the table, a number of sites have been considered and some discounted for the reasons outlined above. The A46/M40 site has the most potential however this is not immediately available and further investigations are needed to establish its suitability in terms of noise pollution. Other sites that have been identified as having some potential also have associated issues which may make them unviable. Currently, there are no other sites identified.

7.13 If Committee Members are aware of any other sites then please make a recommendation to Officers.