

# REPORT TO CABINET

**REPORT OF:** Councillor Francis Cartwright  
 Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
 Councillor Paul Carpenter  
 Corporate Governance and Housing Portfolio Holder

**REPORT NO:** PLA 845

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Local Development Framework: Gypsy and Traveller Sites</b>	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Key Decision	
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Cllr Frances Cartwright Economic Development Portfolio Holder Cllr Paul Carpenter Corporate Governance and Housing Portfolio Holder	
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<b>INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below: n/a	Full impact assessment Required: No
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>		
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	Cabinet Report PLA 658 dated 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2007	

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet endorses Option 3 for progressing provision of allocated sites for Gypsy and Travellers accommodation as set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 To consider options for progressing provision of allocated sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers in the District in light of recent developments at national and regional level.
- 2.2 The identification of sites to provide accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers would contribute to the Quality Living Priority Theme through the provision of housing to meet the needs of all residents.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

#### **Introduction**

- 3.1 Consultation on possible options for the location of Gypsy and Traveller site(s) was undertaken during August and September 2007. The consultation was intended to form the first stage in identifying Gypsy and Traveller site allocations for inclusion in the wider Site Allocation and Policies DPD. The consultation document identified 19 potential sites across the District: seven located at, or in close proximity to, Grantham, three at Stamford, four at Bourne and five at Market Deeping.
- 3.2 These 19 sites had been shortlisted following an assessment of a number of sites against a set of criteria derived from the factors, identified as being important in deciding the allocation of sites, contained in Circular 01/06 (Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites).
- 3.3 At the end of the consultation period, 21,274 individual representations had been received from 3,411 people and organisations: all the sites attracted a degree of objection.
- 3.4 To assist the process of considering the issues raised by the representations and to provide advice on sites to be taken forward to the next stage in light of current and future needs, consultants specialised in Gypsy and Traveller issues and site identification were appointed. Of the 19 potential sites, 9 sites were assessed by the appointed consultants as suitable for further consideration when measured against key criteria including location, inappropriate adjacent uses, sustainability, highways access and impact on landscape character. It should be noted that representations made on behalf of the landowners during the consultation process indicated that none of the 9 sites were available for the proposed use.
- 3.5 Since the site options consultation the level of outstanding need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation has been revised through the Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and the contribution of 15 pitches made by a site at Grantham, granted planning permission on appeal, to meeting the identified need. The unmet need for the 5 year period to 2012 stands, therefore, at 6 pitches; however, it would be appropriate to anticipate future need as far as possible and make allowance for it in any selection of sites as this would reduce the chances of requiring an almost immediate need for a further round of site selection and consultation. The need for the period beyond 2012 (i.e. to 2017) has been estimated applying a standard rate of growth compounded over the 5 years and stands at 5 pitches. This gives a total estimated need of 11 permanent pitches to be provided by 2017.

#### **Recent Developments**

- 3.6 In recent months there have been a number of developments at national and regional level relating to Gypsy and Traveller provision which have potential implications for the way in which the Council takes forward the issue of identifying sites.

- 3.7 On the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) revoked Regional Strategies, thereby removing the framework of Gypsy and Traveller pitch numbers required to be provided for in local authority areas, and allowing councils to decide for themselves how many pitches are necessary in their area according to local need and historic demand.
- 3.8 Interim advice from CLG on assessing the appropriate level of site provision indicates that existing GTAAs would form a good starting point for assessing or reviewing the level of provision but that local authorities are not bound by them.
- 3.9 The Government has also announced its intention to revoke Planning Circular 01/06 and replace it with light touch guidance outlining a council's statutory obligations. The timetable for replacing the Circular has not been announced, although it might be expected in late autumn, and the implications of any revised guidance on needs assessment, criteria for identifying suitable locations for site provision etc. are not known. As referred to earlier the guidance provided by Circular 01/06 was the basis for selecting the criteria on which potential site options were shortlisted and assessed.
- 3.10 In terms of funding to bring forward authorised sites, the Government have withdrawn the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant Programme and has recently announced that the proposed New Homes Bonus scheme, which will give incentives to local authorities to deliver new housing, will include authorised traveller sites. The detail of the scheme's operation is to be set out in a public consultation later in the year.

### Options

- 3.11 Taking account of the above, the following options would appear to be open to the Council at this time:

Option No.	Option	Risks
1	Continue with process of identifying site(s) for inclusion in Site Allocation and Policies DPD on basis of work done to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility that potential site options identified will not 'fit' with revised guidance, with consequential risk of DPD being found unsound. This could result in additional work or work having to be repeated with implications for DPD adoption timetable</li> </ul>
2	Rely on Core Strategy Policy H4 and sites coming forward via submission of planning applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not accord with apparent intent of CLG guidance to provide authorised sites where there is local need to do so</li> <li>• Without planned provision outstanding need may not be met.</li> <li>• Increased risk of unauthorised sites in inappropriate locations</li> </ul>
3	Suspend process of identifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would enable identification of</li> </ul>

	sites(s) to await revised planning guidance and details of financial incentive scheme for site provision from CLG	sites to be made in the knowledge of most up to date national planning guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May still lead to need to make provision through allocation of sites which would require preparation of a separate Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD with associated cost implications</li> </ul>
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3.12 Having considered the above options and potential impacts that may arise from each it is considered that Option 3 would be the most appropriate course of action to follow at the present time.

3.13 If the Cabinet decide to support either Options 2 or 3, then all those who have previously commented on the Gypsy and Traveller potential site options would be advised of this.

#### **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 These are set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This will depend on the option supported. Costs associated with the preparation of the Site Allocation and Policies DPD have been identified within the Planning Policy budget for 2010/11 and indicative budget for 2011/12. The preparation of an additional DPD would have additional cost implications for which budget provision has not currently been identified.

#### **6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)**

6.1 The risk implications are as set out in paragraph 3.11.

#### **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Policy H4 of the Submission Core Strategy, off which the allocation of sites would 'hang', or planning applications considered, has been the subject of an initial equality impact assessment. This concluded that there would not be any differential impact from the application of the policies and that a full assessment was not required.

#### **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None arising from this report.

#### **9. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER**

9.1 I have no specific financial comments to make in respect of this report

## **10. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER**

- 10.1 The need for sites has been established. The statutory requirement for specific provision through the Regional Strategy has been removed. The options available are subject to change depending on the revised planning guidance. No timetable for that guidance has been established. If the option of suspending the current site allocation process pending further guidance is chosen, the Council will be obliged to rely on the Core Strategy Policy H4.