

## Scrutiny briefing note

This briefing provides an update to the Economy Scrutiny panel since the last update was provided on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020, it contains the latest position as at March 2021.

### Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Designated Stopping Place Update

At a meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 Cabinet received a paper outlining several recommendations to make progress with the Council's duty to assess the needs of gypsies and travellers in the area, and towards meeting the requirements of the Local Plan. At the meeting Cabinet resolved to:

- 1) *Instruct the Director of Resources and Governance to undertake technical assessments of the following sites and refresh those where technical assessments have already been carried out:*
  - *Land of Former Nunsthorpe Youth Centre (demolished)*
  - *Land at Winchester Avenue / Torksey Drive and Toynton*
  - *Land under Cleethorpes Road Flyover West*
  - *Wellington Street Car Park*
  - *Garibaldi Street Car Park*
  
- 2) *Upon receipt of technical assessments delegate authority to the Director of Resources and Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing, to commence a Public Consultation exercise on the said sites, subject to such assessments.*
  
- 3) *Instruct the Director for Resources and Governance to update Cabinet by way of a further report on the results on the consultation exercise.*

Further to this mandate, technical consultation ran for five (5) weeks from 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The outcome of Technical Consultation would inform the second part of the Cabinet mandate regarding Public Consultation.

However, following a meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 where Cabinet considered a review of the Local Plan, which it is estimated will take at least two years, it became evident that there was an opportunity to provide an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and this could be conducted ahead of the Local Plan review. Understanding the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities would inform the type of site required, allowing the Council to provide an evidence-based response using the most up to date information.

Economy Scrutiny were updated at the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 that the GTAA assessment was being undertaken and that the results of Technical Consultation were paused, subject to the outcome of the GTAA.

The GTAA was conducted by Opinion Research Services using a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites, yards, and encampments. The aim of the assessment was "to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in North East Lincolnshire". The report provides credible

evidence to aid the implementation of Local Plan Policies and the provision of pitches and plots, if/where appropriate, for the period 2021 to 2035 to cover the Local Plan period.

The outcome of the technical consultation concluded that none of the five sites are suitable without significant mitigation to overcome issues. Key issues included flood risks, significant concerns from the Police, and lack of appropriate vehicular access. Alongside that, we also now have the outcome of the GTAA review, summarised below, therefore our intention is to make further recommendations to Cabinet in June 2021 that amends the current course of action and replaces with a revised set of actions.

## **Summary outcome of GTAA**

Permanent need;

The assessment demonstrated that there are five (5) Gypsy or Traveller households in North East Lincolnshire that meet the planning definition. Findings showed that there is a need for no pitches for households that meet the planning definition as there are currently four (4) vacant pitches at the MH site to meet any current and future need from family members. There are also two (2) vacant pitches currently being used as private transit pitches for family members. There is a need for no pitches for undetermined households as interviews were completed with all Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in North East Lincolnshire. There are no Travelling Showpeople identified in the area, therefore there is no current or future need for additional plots.

Transient need;

Due to low historic numbers of unauthorised encampments, and the existence of private transit pitches, the assessment recommends that there is no need for a formal public transit site currently. It is recommended that a review of unauthorised encampments could be undertaken on a Lincolnshire-wide basis to establish whether there is a need for investment in any new transit provision or emergency stopping places, or whether a managed approach is preferable.

The report also recommends that no change to current arrangements should take place during the COVID-19 outbreak as this may impact the traveling arrangements. Therefore, the Council can explore an approach where 'negotiated stopping agreements' should be considered whereby caravans can be directed to a suitable piece of ground for an agreed and limited period, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the Council and the temporary residents regarding expectations on both sides.

## **NEXT STEPS**

It is intended that Cabinet will receive an update in June 2021, covering the outcome of the technical consultation and outlining the recommendations of the GTAA and future need.

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