

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....21st July 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Travellers Site Selection - Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented an update on the actions that had arisen from the Review of Traveller Transit Site Selection undertaken by the Housing and Community Safety Committee on 14 February 2008.

It was explained that following a marked increase in Traveller activity within the Borough and the continued cost of dealing with unauthorised encampments, Cabinet had agreed to establish a Travellers Transit Site subject to the availability of 100% Government grant funding. In February 2008 Cabinet received a report from the Housing and Community Safety Committee which concluded that there were no suitable locations for a travellers site within Council ownership and resolved that further work was required to identify alternative sites, including any not in Council ownership, which met the criteria for the funding.

The Housing and Community Safety Committee report also outlined that a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) had been commissioned jointly with the other four Tees Valley Authorities. A draft report was received from GTAA in March 2008, which included a number of assumptions, and ongoing discussions were being held between Local Authorities and the consultants to clarify. Revised assumptions had been agreed and the consultants were subsequently remodelling the need for existing and future provision. This provision was being overseen by the Tees Valley Heads of Housing Group.

Members were informed that timescales for the current round of Gypsy & Travellers Site Grant required submission of an application by the end of July 2008, and the criteria which applications would be considered against were noted. It was explained that the identification of suitable sites had proved difficult, and while Land and Property staff had reviewed and considered a number of sites outside of Council ownership, consideration of these sites against the criteria for funding would mean they would be unlikely to be appropriate. Only one potentially suitable site

where the owners were willing to discuss disposing of their interest for this purpose has been found. However, this was in the same geographical area as the site deemed unsuitable by the Scrutiny Review (Bowesfield Lane).

It was explained that work was ongoing investigating alternatives. This included consultation with all Members on potential sites in their Ward and also commissioning Lamb & Edge to undertake a further search.

Work was also underway to draw up proposals for refurbishment of the Council's existing travellers' site at Mount Pleasant Grange. It was anticipated that the total value of the proposal would be of the order of £250,000 to £300,000, based on works to bring all pitches up to the 'decent standard' for Council housing, improved perimeter security for the site and an additional pitch.

RESOLVED that an application for building refurbishment works at the Council's existing site be submitted and a further report into the provision of an additional traveller site be received in autumn 2008 following receipt of a needs assessment report and further site considerations.

3. Reasons for the Decision

In order to make best use of the opportunity to bid for the current round of Gypsy and Traveller Grant.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Tuesday 29th July 2008

Proper Officer  
23 July 2008