

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....15th January 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 and The Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, 2012

The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Local Development Document (LDD) would, when adopted, form part of Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan which would provide the local policy basis for the determination of planning applications within the Borough.

The LDD was being produced as a result of national planning policy contained within Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which required local authorities to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites against locally set targets. Failure to provide allocations to meet the identified need would make it far more likely that the Council would lose appeals if planning applications were refused, resulting in additional costs and piecemeal development of Gypsy and Traveller sites. It was also likely that the Regeneration and Environment Local Development Document would be found unsound if the Council did not identify a site allocation in the Local Plan.

The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD would make provision for the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers within Stockton-on-Tees Borough through the allocation of sites based on the need for pitches identified within the Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Update, 2012. The intention of the document was not to identify a site for the Council to develop and run but to allocate suitable land for such a use should members of the Gypsy and Traveller community choose to do so.

The Stockton-on-Tees Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

Assessment Update, 2012 formed the part of the evidence base for the LDD and identified a need for 26 pitches within the Borough until 2027. This study updated the findings of a Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (TVGTAA) which was published in 2009 and identified a requirement of 34 pitches for the Borough until 2021.

The LDD required a period of public consultation before it could be moved on to the next stage in production. The report sought the agreement of Cabinet for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD, Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment and the updated Needs Assessment to be made available for a period of public consultation.

The LDD set out Council's approach to allocating sites within the Borough and included consideration of issues relating to the need for transit pitches and accommodation for Travelling Showpeople, although it was not proposed to allocate transit pitches or plots for Travelling Showpeople at this stage. The main focus of the document was upon the provision of permanent residential pitches due to the need identified within the 2012 GTAA Update.

The LDD provided details of the minimum requirements for an acceptable residential pitch and sets out a number of options for the distribution of sites within the Borough. The Council's preferred option for site allocations was informed at a Member's policy briefing on 29 October 2013 and involved the allocation of one larger site of up to 15 pitches and the remaining need of 11 pitches provided on smaller sites.

6 site options for allocation were detailed within the LDD, which was attached to the report, and were as follows:-

Land to the rear of Roddmere, Yarm Back Lane, Stockton  
Land on Frederick Street, Stockton  
Land between Bowesfield Crescent and the River Tees, Stockton  
Land on Mill Lane, Billingham  
Land on Eltham Crescent, Thornaby  
Land between the River Tees and Thornaby Road, Thornaby

These included one privately owned site and 5 Council owned pieces of land that had been shortlisted through a technical assessment of sites. The document also included an invitation to landowners, or those with an interest in an area of land, to submit sites for consideration as an allocation.

The sites identified within the LDD were options for potential allocation

and were not all required to meet the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Other sites may be submitted during the consultation period and the boundaries of some or all of the current site options may be reduced, or otherwise altered, as a result of further assessments prior to the next stage of the LDD. Similarly, the potential yield figures included within the LDD for each site are an indication of the expected potential of each site. Some sites, if developed, may provide less pitches than the estimate.

Following endorsement by Cabinet and Full Council, the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 together with the supporting documents and assessments would be made available for a period of public consultation scheduled to commence on 3 February 2014 for a period of 6 weeks, closing on 17 March 2014.

During the period of public consultation, the Council would seek to involve the statutory consultees, members of the public and other stakeholders through:-

- The provision of a public notice;
- Publishing any relevant documents on the Council's website
- Making information and relevant documents available in Planning reception and in all libraries in the Borough
- Writing letters and emails to everyone on the Local Development Framework Consultation Database, informing them of the process for getting involved
- Writing and distributing press releases to local media;

It was considered necessary to take further steps to ensure that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities were involved in the consultation and a consultation strategy had been developed in association with officers from the Communications and Policy, Improvement and Engagement teams.

Following the public consultation period, the comments received would inform the further development of the document and the selection of the preferred site/s for allocation. The next stage of the document was Publication and it was expected that the Publication Draft of the LDD would be released for public consultation in July 2014 with adoption of the final document being in May 2015.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations LDD Regulation 18 Consultation Draft 2014 and its associated

assessments (Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)) for a period of public consultation be endorsed;

2. The findings of the Stockton-on-Tees GTAA Update 2012 be endorsed as the evidence base for the LDD;

3. Any further changes to the documents prior to the consultation period be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport.

3. Reasons for the Decision

1 & 2 to obtain Members' agreement to the policies contained in the LDD and part of the evidence base for the LDD prior to them being part of a public consultation exercise. 3 to ensure that the public consultation period will not be delayed by the need to agree further changes to the documents through the Cabinet process.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

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

N/A

Proper Officer  
17 January 2014