

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 28 MARCH 2012**LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON GYPSY AND
TRAVELLER SITES****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Commission of consultations being undertaken by Leicester City Council on the possibility of establishing authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites and to offer the Commission an opportunity to comment on the proposed response of the County Council, which will be considered by the Cabinet on 3 April 2012.

Background

2. Leicester City Council have begun consultation on establishing more authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites to help prevent unauthorised camps. Unauthorised camps are a particular problem in the north west of the City and a cause real concern for local residents. The City Council believes that by proposing authorised sites it is responding to local residents' concerns about unauthorised camping. At present, the City has one authorised, Council managed site, at Meynells Gorse. This site is full, meaning that a number of local Gypsy and Traveller families have no legal permanent place to live. When there are no spaces available on authorised sites it makes it more difficult for the Council and the Police to move Gypsies and Travellers on from unauthorised camps. The provision of new authorised sites, for both short and long stays, would help to address this.
3. Three potential sites have been identified as follows:-
 - Greengate Lane;
 - Beaumont Way; and
 - Red Hill Way.

These sites in the north west of the City are close to the County boundary and may impact on the Birstall and Bradgate Electoral Divisions. Further details on the consultation and proposals can be found on the Leicester City Council website and relevant extracts are attached as appendices to this report.

Consultations

4. The City Council is currently engaged in a consultation exercise. Whilst no formal consultation meetings have been arranged for residents in the County who may be affected by the proposals, County residents had the opportunity to attend a public consultation meeting which was arranged to enable a discussion of the proposals. This meeting was held on Wednesday 14 March and preceded the meeting of the Bradgate, Rothley, Mountsorrel and Birstall Area Forum.

County Council response

5. The Cabinet at its meeting on 3 April 2012 will be considering a formal response to the consultation. At the time of circulation of these papers the Cabinet report was not available and it will be circulated to members shortly.

Recommendation

6. The Commission is asked to consider the proposed County Council response to the consultation and indicate, what if any, further comments it would wish the Cabinet to consider.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Alerts procedure

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Extract from city Council Wesbite

Appendix 2 – Overall Plan of Gypsy and Traveller sites

Appendix 3 – Plan of Individual Gypsy and Traveller sites

Equal Opportunities Implications

Through their policies and land allocations, LDFs have significant implications for disadvantaged people living in Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work, whether that is shaping policy, delivering services or in relation to their own employees. The general duty states that a public authority must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation etc
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations.

The Equality Act outlines nine 'protected characteristics' (previously known as 'equality strands') to which the general duty applies. One of the nine is 'race'. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised under English law as distinct ethnic minority groups and are therefore legally entitled to protection. There is also protection under the Human Rights Act.