

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
20 MARCH 2017	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Irene Walsh, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environmental Capital	
Contact Officer(s):	Adrian Chapman – Service Director, Adult Services and Communities	Tel. 863887

REVIEW OF EMERGENCY STOPPING PROVISION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS WITHIN PETERBOROUGH

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Adult and Communities Scrutiny Committee	Deadline date : N/A
<p>The Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee strongly endorses and recommends the Task and Finish Group report for approval by Cabinet, and request that Cabinet seriously considers the recommendations within the report to try to alleviate any future issues caused by, and increases in, unauthorised encampments. The specific recommendations from the report are as follows:</p> <p>Recommendation 1 Based on the number of unauthorised encampments across the city and the findings from the investigation it is recommended that the council provide four Temporary Stopping Places across Peterborough. Temporary stopping places should be properly planned and controlled, and their occupation time limited.</p> <p>Based on the limitations experienced with the existing Emergency Stopping Place it is recommended that full planning permission is secured for the Temporary Stopping Places to allow the sites to be used for more than the current 28 days limit.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 It is recommended that the Growth and Planning Team identify council land which is suitable for redevelopment and use for stopping places.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 It is also recommended that as well as investigating council owned land the Growth and Planning Team identify land suitable for purchase, if necessary under compulsory purchase.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 That the Growth and Planning Team identify land suitable for leasing with a view to purchase at a later date should the site be successful as a Temporary Stopping Place.</p> <p>The Growth and Planning Team should review land available by the end of April 2017, to report back the findings to the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee in June 2017.</p> <p>Recommendation 5 The Task and Finish Group recommend that the Growth and Planning Team review the Local Plan with regards to provision in the city for transient gypsies and travellers.</p> <p>Recommendation 6 To distribute a flow chart to all councillors which details the process of dealing with unauthorised encampments from assessment to removal.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2017.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the recommendations made by the Adults and Communities scrutiny committee following a cross party task and finish group review regarding provision of emergency stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.4: *To promote the Council's corporate and key strategies and Peterborough's Community Strategy and approve strategies and cross-cutting programmes not included within the Council's major policy and budget framework.*

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
---	-----------	---	------------

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 At its meeting on 20 July 2016 the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee (now the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee) recommended that a cross-party task and finish group be established to review emergency stopping place provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Peterborough.
- 4.2 The task and finish group investigated the current provision of and future needs for transit or temporary stopping places across Peterborough. The group reviewed key documents from the last task and finish group review in 2014 as well as information from other local authorities and key witnesses.
- 4.3 During the review the task and finish group identified the need for additional Temporary Stopping Places in Peterborough and investment into the current Emergency Stopping Place adjacent to the Dogsthorpe Triangle. After discussions it was agreed that a permanent transit site was not the best option for Peterborough, but instead a number of well-managed, properly planned, controlled and time-limited stopping places that would provide the best solution to help with the management of unauthorised encampments limiting the current impact on local communities and providing a more appropriate temporary stopping place for Travellers.
- 4.4 The group also noted that land which would be suitable for these sites owned by the local authority is very limited. The task and finish group's recommendations therefore include investigating all options available in terms of converting, purchasing or leasing land.
- 4.5 Full details of the task and finish group's work and their recommendations are contained in the full report attached at Appendix A.
- 4.6 Separate to the task and finish group's review, work is continuing to review and enhance the approach the council and police take to managing unauthorised encampments. Whilst we act promptly, we are keen to ensure that we are making full use of all and every available power to prevent negative impacts in residential or business areas, public open spaces and close to amenities. The provision of additional Temporary Stopping Places and the outcomes of the review of management arrangements will complement one another to ensure Peterborough has as robust a process in place as possible.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The task and finish group spoke with key witnesses and received information from other local authorities. No formal consultations have taken place at this time.
- 5.2 The full report from the task and finish group was debated at the Adults and Community Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 March 2017.
- 5.3 Consultation would be required if Cabinet approves recommendations contained in the report. The change in use of the current Emergency Stopping Place to a Temporary Stopping Place would be subject to public consultation as full planning permission would be required. Use of any land identified and deemed suitable by the council would also be subject to public consultation.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 Providing additional stopping place provision would assist with the management and moving on of unauthorised encampments within community settings. The provision of new stopping places, if approved, will run alongside the review of enforcement powers, both of which will significantly reduce the impact unauthorised encampments can sometimes have on local communities.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To assist with the moving on of authorised encampments limiting the impact unauthorised encampments have on local communities.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 A range of alternative options were considered by the task and finish group, although the conclusion of that was that Temporary Stopping Places provided the best arrangements for Peterborough.
- 8.2 Doing nothing was not considered an option, due to the ongoing costs and impact unauthorised encampments can have on local communities in Peterborough.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The recommendations made by the Adults and Communities Scrutiny committee have financial implications for the council. If land is identified as being suitable for either purchase or lease as a Temporary Stopping Place funding would need to be identified. In addition, the conversion of the existing Emergency Stopping Place at Dogsthorpe to a Temporary Stopping Place will also require investment to bring it up to a reasonable standard.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

- 10.1 Review documents produced by the 2014 Task and Finish Group
- 10.2 Peterborough Local Plan
- 10.3 Dealing with illegal encampments: A summary of Available Powers, *Department for Communities and Local Government*.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A - Task and Finish Group Report

This page is intentionally left blank