

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL;  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK;  
GYPSY & TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT:  
ISSUES & OPTIONS REPORT 1**

**(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council has published for consultation the Issues and Options Report for a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) as part of its Local Development Framework. The consultation period ended on 24<sup>th</sup> November and therefore an Officer response has been sent, in order to safeguard Huntingdonshire's interests. Cabinet are asked to endorse the Officer response.

**2 THE MAIN ISSUES FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

- 2.1 The document covers the period to 2021 and is the 1st stage of Issues and Options, covering the general approach to site selection criteria. A 2<sup>nd</sup> Issues & Options Report will be published later, taking into account the results of participation on the first stage, and will look at site options which meet the identified criteria.
- 2.2 South Cambridgeshire has a high recorded level of Gypsies and Travellers. In July 2005 there were 291 caravans on authorised private sites and 183 on unauthorised sites. The largest concentrations of caravans are to the north of Cambridge, in the parishes of Milton, Cottenham and Willingham.
- 2.3 The DPD will provide general policies for the period to 2021 but only allocate sites to meet demand up to 2010, by taking into account the Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment which has identified a need for 110 – 130 additional pitches between 2005 and 2010.
- 2.4 The East of England Regional Assembly is currently working on a single policy review of the Regional Spatial Strategy which will apportion to each district the number of additional pitches for the period to 2021.
- 2.5 In terms of the criteria used to select appropriate sites, it is generally a matter for South Cambridgeshire and its communities to consider how and where within the District the identified needs should be accommodated. For Huntingdonshire, the main issue is that South Cambridgeshire should meet the needs which arise within its borders. The presence of large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers within parts of South Cambridgeshire, as with East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, points to the special character of those areas which is where Gypsies and Travellers wish to locate. Huntingdonshire, in contrast, has far fewer. For

comparison, the Needs Assessment for 2005 – 2010 is just 15-25 additional pitches, pointing to a clearly lower level of need.

- 2.6 South Cambridgeshire has put forward two Options:
- a) to provide additional pitches to meet the identified need
  - b) to provide pitches for only a proportion of the identified need identified to 2010 on the basis that the District already provides a large number of authorised sites.
- 2.7 If Option b) were to be adopted, South Cambridgeshire would be looking to satisfy its needs beyond its boundaries. Given the high level of need also identified in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, it is possible that Huntingdonshire would be seen as an opportunity to accommodate South Cambridgeshire's needs.
- 2.8 It is important that the principle is established that needs should be met where the need arises. Gypsies and Travellers will not wish to be provided with pitches outside the general area within which they wish to locate. Any attempt to accommodate away from those areas which, by their special nature are where Gypsies and Travellers wish to locate, will fail and simply perpetuate the problem of unauthorised encampments.
- 2.9 South Cambridgeshire should therefore be advised that it should meet the needs within its area by allocating sufficient sites to meet the identified need in those general locations where the need arises.

### **3 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees:

That South Cambridgeshire be informed that it should meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers by allocating sites to meet the identified need and not to seek to meet South Cambridgeshire's needs in other Districts.

#### **Background Papers:**

- South Cambridgeshire District Council, Gypsy and Traveller DPD, Issues & Options Report 1 (General Approach) October 2006.
- Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment, May 2006.
- East of England Regional Assembly, Project Plan for a Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England to Address the provision of Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites, July 2006.

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