



**Policy, Finance and
Development
Committee**

**Tuesday, 29 March
2016**

Matter for Decision

**Title: North West Leicestershire District Council Gypsy and Traveller Site
Allocation Consultation Document**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** North West Leicestershire has published a Consultation Paper in relation to the preparation of a new Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Development Plan Document for North West Leicestershire district.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Members note the comments set out in paragraph 3.3 of this report as Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's formal response to the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Consultation Paper.

3. Information

- 3.1** North West Leicestershire District Council is preparing a new Local Plan. The Plan will cover the period to 2031. North West Leicestershire, like all local planning authorities, has a duty to assess, identify and plan to meet the district's housing needs including those of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. They intend to plan for the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the production of a specific Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) separate from the Local Plan. The DPD will identify new sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in a sustainable way with the aim of balancing the accommodation needs of these groups and the protection of the natural and built environment. The consultation document seeks views on how they might best meet these needs.
- 3.2** The approach North West Leicestershire has set out in the consultation document follows the guidance contained in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG August 2015). North West Leicestershire is using the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Refresh (2013) as the evidence for the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Showpeople plots in the district between 2012 to 2031. However, they acknowledge that in light of the revised definition of "traveller" and Travelling showpeople" in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites the assessment of the number of pitches and plots required could change. They make reference to the collaborative work currently being undertaken with other authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area to update pitch and plot target evidence. This would see the production of a new Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment for the majority of the Housing Market Area (Hinckley and Bosworth is undertaking its own study). Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is one of the authority partners in this evidence gathering study.

- 3.3** Oadby and Wigston Borough Council acknowledge and support North West Leicestershire District Council's present proposed approach to meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as it reflects current national guidance. However, once new evidence of local needs emerges through the production of a new Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment, North West Leicestershire District Council will need to plan for the appropriate level of need as evidenced by this new study. It should be explicitly stated in paragraph 3.3 of North West Leicestershire District Council's consultation document that it will use the updated evidence study to inform the pitch and plot targets to be contained in the proposed Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AT)	CR3 Political Dynamics – The Duty to Co-operate requires all Council's in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area to co-operate over strategic planning matters. The Strategic Planning Group and Member Advisory Group are in place to facilitate this process.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.