

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

---

**REPORT TO:** Housing Portfolio Holder

13 June 2012

**AUTHOR/S:** Housing Director

---

### **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERNAL REVIEW**

#### **Purpose**

1. To inform the Portfolio Holder on the outcome of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment internal review.
2. This is a not a key decision, because it is reporting the findings of a study.

#### **Recommendations**

3. That the Housing Portfolio Holder approves Option A to accept the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2011 as part of the evidence base to inform Council planning framework.
4. This includes the correction to the cumulative total of new pitches estimated for South Cambridgeshire, taking the forward projection of future need from 2021 to 20 pitches down from 47.

#### **Background**

5. In 2006, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment was completed for nine districts including the seven districts in the Cambridge sub-regional housing area. This was based on primary research (interview surveys) and secondary data (caravan counts, census etc). It focused on need over the period 2005 to 2010.
6. The result was a highly respected methodology to assess the future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and figures presented as evidence to the single-issue review of the (then) regional spatial strategy (RSS).
7. In 2010 work started to update this assessment, to ensure the districts involved had an up to date assessment of need (as required by the Housing Act 2004), and figures for 2011 onwards, which could also be used to assist the local plan making process.
8. The County Council Research Group were asked by the Cambridge Sub Regional Housing Board to carry out the update to the assessment as part of the regular Strategic Housing Market Assessment work they already carry out. The study took account of CLG Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance (2007), and the DCLG consultation paper 'Planning for Traveller Sites' (2011) that was available at the time (note the final Planning Guidance was published in March 2012).
9. Rather than complete a primary research project again the research was carried out as a desk top exercise drawing on known data to refresh the figures identified in the 2006 study. This is a technique supported by the relevant Communities and Local Government guidance. The process of desktop analysis of the various data sources

is set out in the report itself. The emerging analysis was further developed with input from the Traveller Liaison Officers and detailed scrutiny of the methodology by the Chief Planning Officers group representing all of the districts in the study. In addition the modelled outputs were triangulated against the known historic patterns of need. In this way a high level of robustness has been achieved in the study.

10. The assessment work covered nine districts:

- Cambridge City
- East Cambridgeshire
- Fenland
- Forest heath
- Huntingdonshire
- Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
- Peterborough
- South Cambridgeshire
- St Edmundsbury

11. The study was presented to the Housing Portfolio Holder in October 2011 and was referred back to officers for further scrutiny before it could be adopted by the Council. All of the other eight districts have now formally adopted the study.

### Considerations

12. The Accommodation Needs Assessment is the work of an independent researcher and would form part of the evidence base for the plan making process. The delivery options open to the Council will be considered when this research is interpreted for the local planning policy. The report states “The figures provided are not intended to be taken as targets...Any such targets are a matter for local policy makers.”

13. The core data used to inform all Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessments is drawn primarily from the annual caravan counts which are governed by CLG guidance. In addition the local knowledge of Traveller Liaison Officers is used to inform assumptions regarding turnover and arising need. The 2006 Cambridge Sub Region Traveller Needs Assessment carried out by Anglia Ruskin University has also been used.

14. These sources give the following supply and needs figures.

Backlog of Need at 2011		
Heading	Figures	Notes
<b>Supply</b>		
Current Supply	245 pitches	Based on caravan counts and adjusted by local multipliers based on local knowledge. E.g. number of caravans typically found –on a pitch in the District.
<b>Current Need</b>		
Need arising from unauthorised pitches	4 pitches	Based on local caravan counts and local knowledge.
Need arising from overcrowding	1 pitch	Based on assumption of 2% overcrowding on public sites (29 pitches) drawn from 2006 GATANA and local knowledge
Need arising from temporary permissions	65 pitches	Data from Caravan Count and Planning Information.
Total Current Need (backlog)	69 pitches	Figures add up to 70 but included rounded figures so readjusted to 69

15. Having established the core supply and needs figures the following calculation has been carried out.

Need 2011 to 2016		
Heading	Figures	Notes
Backlog (annualised)	14 per annum	69 divided by 5 (years)
Newly arising need due to population growth	9 per annum	Core data drawn from Traveller education Service & modelled. Equates to 3.6% growth which is close to the 3.3% identified in the 2006 Cambridge study.
Total demand	23 per annum	
Supply from turnover	10 per annum	Based on an assumption of 4%. This figure is drawn from local knowledge.
Shortfall 2011 to 2016	65 pitches	Annual shortfall of 13 multiplied by 5 years

16. Given the current number of pitches with temporary permissions at 69 an overall backlog of 65 seems appropriate. Other emerging need is being met by turnover.
17. For future years an assumption is made that the backlog has all been cleared by 2016. This increase in total supply means that the application of the 4% turnover assumption gives an increased annual supply of 12 pitches per year (the study assumes 10). This increased turnover figure is implied by the 2011 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment but is not carried forward into the tables showing future need. No other authority in the study area is affected by this clarification.
18. When matched against the anticipated increase in pitches needs in future years the following emerges.

Future Need - 2016- 2021	
Supply (assuming backlog met in previous 5 years)	310
Newly arising need per annum (based on traveller education data of 3.6% growth within this period)	11
Supply from turnover per annum (4% assumption)	12
Need for new pitches	0

Future Need - 2021-2026	
Supply	310
Newly arising need pa (based on traveller education data of 5% growth within this period)	16
Supply from turnover per annum (4% assumption)	12
Need for new pitches	4 pa or 20 in time period

Future Need - 2026-2031	
Supply (assuming need for new pitches identified for 2021-2026 is met)	330
Newly arising need pa (based on traveller education data of 3.6% growth within this period)	12
Supply from turnover per annum (4% assumption)	13
Need for new pitches	0

19. In addition to meeting the current backlog by 2016 the assessment identifies a need for an extra 20 pitches by 2026 ideally by 2021. Following the statistical clarification

noted above this is less than the 47 pitches originally identified in the study document.

20. The same methodology has been applied to all other districts in the study. Where differences occur it is as a result of differing local conditions. For example, Fenland have a similar base profile to South Cambridgeshire with 210 pitches. They do not however have as large a backlog of temporary permissions and are able to meet the projected growth in household formation from annual turnover and are not therefore anticipating a need to increase their current provision.
21. The Council has already secured with Cambridge City Council funding of £500,000 from the Homes and Communities Agency to assist with bringing a suitable site or sites forward to help meet this need identified for the District.

## Options

### **Option A**

22. To accept the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment as part of the evidence base to inform Council planning framework providing the correction to the cumulative total of new pitches estimated for South Cambridgeshire is noted, taking the forward projection of future need from 2021 to 20 pitches down from 47.

### **Option B**

23. If the Council does not wish to accept this study then it still has a requirement in law to have an up to date reassessment of accommodation needs for Gypsy and Travellers in the district. The only option would therefore be to commission a separate independent study. This would have the disadvantage of:
  - Adding delay to the completion of the Council's planning policy development and leaving the Council vulnerable to successful legal challenge.
  - Would cost at least £6000 to re run a desk top exercise. A full primary research study could cost at least £14,000.
  - Is likely to return a similar figure given the same statistical data sets as the study already completed.
  - There would be a disparity across the sub region as the other local authorities have already adopted the County Council led Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.

## Implications

24.
 

Financial	None unless the decision is taken not to accept the study in which case costs of £6,000 - £14,00 would need to be incurred.
Legal	The Accommodation Needs Assessment is a legal requirement under the Housing Act 2004.
Staffing	None
Risk Management	It is prudent for the Council to base its planned for provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites on the best assessment need available to avoid the risk of unauthorised encampments and potential legal action.
Equality and Diversity	Gypsies and travellers are the largest minority group within the District.

Equality Impact Assessment completed	
	Not applicable
Climate Change	None

### Consultations

25. The Accommodation Needs Assessment was developed in consultation with specialist officers from all nine districts and Chief Planning Officers from all of the districts.
26. The author of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment has been consulted on the statistical correction noted at point 16 above and he accepts the validity of this statement.

### Consultations with Children and Young People

27. None

### Effect on Strategic Aims

28. ***Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.***

***We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.***

The Council's vision within the Gypsy & Traveller Community Strategy is to "*ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities enjoy equality of service and are part of cohesive communities within which people from different backgrounds participate together and share equal rights and responsibilities.*" The Accommodation Needs Assessment provides a robust assessment to help inform future policies to address the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the District.

### Conclusions / Summary

29. This report summarises the key findings within the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment 2011. Council officers have now had the opportunity to further investigate the robustness of the research and recommend that the study be accepted on the proviso that the correction to the forward projection of future need of 20 pitches down from 47 is accepted.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Cambridge Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) 2011

**Contact Officer:** Stephen Hills – Housing Director  
Telephone: (01954) 713412