

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO
AUTHOR/S:

Travellers' Consultative Group
Travellers' Liaison Officer

Date: 20th October 2003

TRAVELLERS' OFFICER'S GENERAL REPORT

Purpose

1. This report has been written to update Members about the above-stated group on the current work of South Cambridgeshire District Council with local travellers.

Background

2. South Cambridgeshire District Council is required by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to undertake a Travellers' Count twice per year. This takes place on a set date in January and July every year and the results are submitted to the ODPM.
3. Below is a table that sets out the results from the South Cambridgeshire Travellers' Count that was carried out on 16th July 2003.

Date	Total number of caravans in South Cambridgeshire	Total number of families	Total number of adults	Total number of children
July 03	440	209	453	244

4. These figures include numbers that were counted at both authorised and unauthorised encampments.

Complaints about illegal encampments

5. Since the last Travellers' Count, The Travellers Officer has received approximately 45 complaints of illegal encampments that needed attention and investigation. In all of these cases, the Travellers Officer was successful in moving these encampments on within 1 week of his initial visit.
6. The main source of complaints this summer were generated by a Traveller's Religious Festival that was held on Ministry of Defence land at Oakington Airfield. Cambridgeshire Police estimated that approximately 600 caravans arrived on this site over the weekend of 19th July.
7. This event generated a huge number of complaints to both the Travellers Officer and the Police, however, good partnership working between SCDC, the Police and the

Ministry of Defence ensured that this event was kept controlled and the site was clear by Sunday 27th July, within 1 week of the first complaint being received.

8. This event had a knock-on effect around South Cambridgeshire as these travellers dispersed into local villages. This generated further complaints from local villagers and businesses, however, all of these were also dealt with successfully.

Blackwell Site Re-development

9. The tenders for the development work have now been received by Cambridgeshire County Council and the project is being led by Beverley Jones, of its property and procurement section.
10. At the time of this report, Health and Safety check are being carried out before the successful tender is announced.
11. The first phase of the work is due to start in Mid-November and the current completion date for this project is Mid-March 2004. SCDC Traveller's officer and wardens will continue to act as Site Managers for this project and liase with the County Council.

Occupancy and Management of Blackwell and Whaddon Sites

12. Over the past 3 months both of these authorised sites have continued to be fully occupied.
13. There has recently been a problem with rubbish dumping at the Blackwell Site, however, this problem is always rectified when we supply a skip on the site.

Newly Appointed County Council Travellers' Officer

14. Cambridgeshire County Council now has a new Travellers Officer in post at their Shire Hall Office. Steve Flude, who previously worked for Cambridge City Council, started this post on Monday 6th October and takes over the role from Gill Prangnell.
15. The South Cambridgeshire District Council Travellers Officer will continue to work with the County Travellers Officer to ensure that Travellers work around the District is co-ordinated and effective.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

Contact Officer:

Mark Barron, Travellers' Liaison Officer – Tel: 01223 724146