

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Economic Development Portfolio Holder
LEAD OFFICER: Director of Planning/Director of Housing

11 June 2015

GYPSY & TRAVELLER ISSUES UPDATE

Purpose

1. To update the Portfolio Holder on the range of issues and actions relating to the Council's services in relation to Gypsy and Traveller community in the District.
2. This is not a key decision because it is for information only.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder notes the contents of this report.

Considerations

4. Information is provided in this report to update the Portfolio Holder on the latest situation regarding Gypsy and Traveller Site Planning Applications, the refurbishment of the Whaddon site, the appointment of two new posts to address Gypsy and Traveller issues, and the commencement of Gypsy and Traveller Task & Coordination Group.

Development Control Update

5. In 2015 five pitches were granted permanent planning permission on appeal at Smithy Fen Cottenham, and temporary planning permission for 1 pitch was granted on appeal at Wimpole. There are four other pitches with temporary planning permission, which expire between 2015 and 2018.
6. At time of writing there is one pending application, for changes to an existing site at Chesterton Fen Road for nine pitches. There is also an outstanding planning appeal for one pitch at Willingham.

Refurbishment of Whaddon Site

7. Following lengthy delays, out of SCDC's control, further discussions were held with the HCA who agreed to extend the time allowed to finish the project until December 2015. Rose Builders were appointed as the contractors and following clearance work, they started on site on 23 March. As we still have some residents living on the site, building is being done in two phases. Phase 1 of the project is now well underway, the old buildings have been demolished and building of the new pitches has begun. The programme is on track and assuming no unforeseen circumstances arise, we anticipate phase 2 starting in late summer at which time the current residents will move onto their new pitches. Completion of phase 2 is anticipated for the middle of December.

New Posts in planning and Housing

8. As previously reported, two new posts are being created, to address Gypsy and Traveller issues. These are a Traveller Sites and Projects Officer (in the Housing

department), and a Traveller Planning Liaison and Monitoring Officer (in the Planning and New Communities Department). The recruitment process is ongoing, however it is hoped that the post in Housing will be filled in the next few weeks.

Gypsy and Traveller Task & Coordination Group

9. It was agreed previously that in order to ensure effective coordination within the Council, work would be overseen by a Gypsy and Traveller Task & Coordination Group, with input from a range of services across the Council. The group has now convened and will meet as needed to achieve effective coordination.

Options

10. There are no options as this report is for information only.

Implications

11. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial

12. None.

Legal

13. None

Staffing

14. None.

Risk Management

15. None

Equality and Diversity

16. None.

Climate Change

17. None

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

18. None

Effect on Strategic Aims

19. None.

Background Papers

None

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