

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

28 September 2007

HAMPSHIRE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ASSESSMENT - UPDATE

Report by the Strategic Housing Officer Group on behalf of the Joint Authorities Gypsy and Traveller Panel and Area Sub Groups

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members:

- (1) Endorse the area groups' work to date;
 - (2) Request that the three area groups continue to work up proposals jointly in relation to the Regional Assembly requirements; and
 - (3) Authorise the Director to submit the three area group findings to the Regional Assembly together with the technical arguments against imposing a regional formula as explained in paragraph 9.
-

BACKGROUND

1. Association authorities have a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Panel engaged in work across the mainland authorities with the Isle of Wight involved but treated as a separate area for regional planning purposes. The Panel provided a full background report to the Association meeting in March 2007 highlighting the Regional Assembly request for the Hampshire authorities to make a joint submission for gypsy and traveller accommodation.
2. At the March meeting Association Members voiced their concerns about the gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment provided by the consultants David Couttie Associates (DCA). Members also approved the current arrangements for making recommendations to the Regional Assembly as part of the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy. These arrangements include the Joint Member Panel working through 3 area groups which as far as possible are developing joint proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation for each area.
3. Subject to individual authority approval, the three area groups will make their proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation to the Regional Assembly by the Assembly deadline of 15 October. The Joint Panel met on 17 September to review progress.
4. This report provides an update to the information provided in March 2007 and a brief summary of developments in the three area groups as a background to an oral update from the Chair of the Strategic Housing Officers Group following the Panel meeting. The report also recommends that the Association supports representations to the Regional Assembly about the working of the Regional Assembly's formula which appears to require more caravan pitches than our own joint accommodation assessment.

UPDATE SINCE MARCH 2007

5. The report to the Association in March drew attention to the many problems created by unauthorised encampments. Since then examples this summer include:
- 24 caravans on land at Basing Road, Old Basing
 - 20 caravans on land at Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh
 - 22 caravans at Langstone Road, Havant
 - 15 caravans at St Georges playing fields, Havant
 - 23 caravans on highway land on the A31 at Four Marks.
6. The following figures show the number of recorded unauthorised encampments which have occurred on County, Unitary, District Council and private land in Hampshire over the last two years.

Area	2006	2007 (until 1st Sept)
County Council	70	47 (138 caravans)
District Land	51	30 (206 caravans)
Private	41	29 (316 caravans)

The 'Private' figures are only those sites about which the County Council is notified, so the actual figures may be higher.

7. As the March report made clear, the statutory powers of the local authorities and police in dealing with unauthorised encampments will be greatly enhanced by provision of adequate accommodation in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy now being developed by the Regional Assembly.

UPDATE FROM THE SUB GROUPS

8. All the sub groups agree that while there have been a number of reservations expressed about the findings in the DCA report, it provides a foundation from which future surveys will benefit as experience in this particularly difficult field of housing needs assessment grows.

(a) **North:** (Basingstoke and Deane – Hart – Rushmoor)

This group has agreed the distribution of permanent sites identified in the accommodation assessment which states that 2 pitches are needed in Basingstoke, 7 pitches in Hart and there is no requirement for Rushmoor. The group agrees the need for one transit site and is working on precise proposals.

(b) **West:** (Southampton – Test Valley – Eastleigh – New Forest and New Forest National Park Authority)

The Group accepts the need for 17 permanent pitches and transit provision within the area. A significant proportion of the land in this group's area is in the New Forest National Park, but the Group agrees that the accommodation need can be met outside the National Park.

- (c) **South:** (Havant – Gosport – Portsmouth – East Hampshire – Winchester – Fareham)

This large group has not yet reached a consensus and work is not complete.

IMPACT OF REGIONAL FORMULA

9. The Regional Assembly's Planning Officer has issued a statement showing that the regional formula appears to require more caravan pitches than our own accommodation assessment for the mainland. It is recommended that the Association asks the Strategic Housing Officer Group to prepare the technical arguments opposing the application of the regional formula to Hampshire.

KIM CARRON
Head of Housing Strategy, Gosport Borough Council

Date: 18 September 2007
Annex: 0
Contacts: Kim Carron - tel: 023 9254 5669 email: kim.carron@gosport.gov.uk
Barry Jordon Davis - tel: 01962847315 email: barry.jordan.davis@hants.gov.uk

Gypsy and Traveller Assessment update/reports