



PRCC.04 14/15

Committee: Prosperous Communities

15 July 2014

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Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – Challenge and Improvement Task Panel Feedback

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report has been prepared by the Challenge and Improvement Task Panel to provide elected members with feedback. The Task Panel were asked to review the Central Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment brief, methodology and robustness of the need figure for the number of new pitches identified for West Lindsey in the Assessment.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

As at 3 of June meeting

1. That, based on the findings of the Task Panel, members of the Prosperous Communities Committee accept the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and that the "need" figure for the number of new pitches identified is robust.
2. That members recommend to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Team that, in line with the findings of the GTAA, when identifying sites for allocation, the extension of existing sites is considered a priority as part of meeting the housing needs of the gypsy and traveller community.
3. That members require officers to enter into detailed discussions with

neighbouring authorities to ensure that as much as possible is done to share the provision of pitches across district/council boundaries where necessary and to bring a further report when progress has been made as part of the Local Plan process.

Alternative recommendations:

1. That the conclusion of the Task Panel be noted as the evidence base which will inform the development of the gypsy and traveller planning policies for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.
2. That the Committee require officers to continue to work with the Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team and other neighbouring councils to ensure that the location of gypsy and traveller sites are fairly and equitably distributed across Central Lincolnshire and other neighbouring council areas.
3. That a further report is brought back to the Prosperous Communities Committee outlining the criteria to be put forward in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan for the location of sites and pitches in the planning policy on gypsy and traveller accommodation in Central Lincolnshire..

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no legal implications in regards to accepting the needs figure in regards to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation provision.

Financial : FIN 10/15

There are no financial implications

Staffing :

There are no staffing issues as a result of this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

The Council has a duty to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller groups and this evidence base is a statutory requirement, which will need to be considered when determining planning application and in the selection of any future sites.

Risk Assessment :

Understanding the needs of our Gypsy and Traveller communities is a legislative requirement and a component of the Local Plan Allocations Document. The Planning Inspector is expecting conclusion of the document as part of the Core Strategy/Local Plan evidence base.

The Core Strategy/Local Plan will be at risk if the evidence base is not completed and the subsequent site allocations made within the defined period.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

N/A

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Paper G [Prosperous Communities Committee Reports - 4 February 2014 | West Lindsey](#)

Call in and Urgency:**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes**No****Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes**No****1. Introduction**

1.1. This review was requested by Prosperous Community Committee on 4 February 2014. The Committee requested that a C & I Task Panel be established to review the brief, methodology and robustness of the “need” figure for the number of new pitches identified for West Lindsey in the Central Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013 (GTAA). This task panel was then asked to report back to the Prosperous Communities Committee on the 4th of June.

2. The Task Panel

2.1. The task panel met on the 2nd of April and the 9th of April to consider the issues raised, relating to the Central Lincolnshire GTAA by the Prosperous Communities Committee. The task panel was attended by Councillor Curtis, Councillor Howitt-Cowan, Councillor Dobbie and Councillor Strange. Officers in attendance were Suzanne Fysh (Head of Development and Neighbourhoods) and Andy Gray (Housing and Communities Team Manager)

- 2.2. The task panel was provided with information relating to the original consultancy brief, the DCLG guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments and the Central Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- 2.3. The task panel was asked to report back to Prosperous Communities Committee with its recommendations which are shown below.
- 2.4. The panel was assured that the GTAA followed the DCLG appraisal methodology and formed a robust assessment of need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in the District.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That, based on the findings of the Task Panel, members of the Prosperous Communities Committee accept the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and that the "need" figure for the number of new pitches identified is robust
- 3.2. That members recommend to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Team that, in line with the findings of the GTAA, when identifying sites for allocation, the extension of existing sites is considered a priority as part of meeting the housing needs of the gypsy and traveller community.
- 3.3. That members require officers to enter into detailed discussions with neighbouring authorities to ensure that as much as possible is done to share the provision of pitches across district/council boundaries where necessary.

4.0 Additional Information/Guidance

- 4.1 Since the meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee on 3rd June 2014 where this item was discussed and a decision on the recommendations deferred, meetings have been held on an informal basis in order to assist councillors understanding of the issues involved.
- 4.2 The GTAA is required to inform the development of policy which will be included in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. It is not in itself policy nor will it be adopted as policy in its own right. It is part of the evidence base which will inform the development of a criteria based policy for the allocation and development of sites for gypsy and travellers across Central Lincolnshire.
- 4.3 At the Task Panel and at the meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee members have been asked to assure themselves that the evidence collected to inform the GTAA was done in a verifiable and recognised manner which conformed with the guidance issued by government. This they did and recommended to the Prosperous Communities Community that the GTAA followed DCLG appraisal methodology and formed a robust assessment of the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation across the District and indeed Central Lincolnshire as a whole.
- 4.4 Clearly at this stage in the Local Plan process councillors are not being asked to identify where in Central Lincolnshire sites to accommodate the need for gypsies and travellers should be located. This is a matter for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan which will have regard amongst other things to the statement in the GTAA that the

needs for gypsy and traveller accommodation does not need to be met where it arises. Further work is currently underway by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan team to review this need as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. .

- 4.5 Given the importance of the issue to councillors further reports on gypsy and traveller accommodation and the location of that accommodation will be brought to the Prosperous Communities Committee as the policy develops through the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan process.
- 4.6 In view of the further work which needs to be done by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team on this issue is it perhaps not appropriate to recommend specific location characteristics for gypsy and traveller sites at this stage; acknowledging the work which has been undertaken and requiring the Prosperous Communities Committee to be involved in the development of policy in this area should be sufficient.
- 4.7 Therefore and in order to assist councillors deal with this issue an alternative set of recommendations are proposed below should councillors not feel able to accept those in the original report.

5.0 Alternative Recommendations

1. That the conclusion of the Task Panel be noted as the evidence base which will inform the development of the gypsy and traveller planning policies for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.
2. That the Committee require officers to continue to work with the Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team and other neighbouring councils to ensure that the location of gypsy and traveller sites are fairly and equitably distributed across Central Lincolnshire and other neighbouring council areas.
3. That a further report is brought back to the Prosperous Communities Committee outlining the criteria to be put forward in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan for the location of sites and pitches in the planning policy on gypsy and traveller accommodation in Central Lincolnshire..