

CABINET MEETING – 16 July 2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I									
Title of Report: Sunderland Accommodation Assessment for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople									
Author(s): Deputy Chief Executive									
Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcomes of an assessment which has been undertaken to consider the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the City. The study was undertaken jointly with South Tyneside and will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.									
Description of Decision: It is recommended that Cabinet approves the findings of the accommodation assessment to allow for the needs identified to be planned for through the formal Local Plan process.									
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes/No									
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework									
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: The decision is required to provide essential evidence to support progression of the Local Plan to proceed to its next stage (publication) in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Development Scheme.									
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: There are no alternative options. The Council has to ensure that Local Plan policies are developed with up to date evidence, in line with the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework.									
Impacts analysed: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Equality</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="border: none;">Privacy</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; text-align: center;">n/a</td> <td style="border: none;">Sustainability</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="border: none;">Crime and Disorder</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; text-align: center;">Y</td> </tr> </table>		Equality	N	Privacy	n/a	Sustainability	Y	Crime and Disorder	Y
Equality	N	Privacy	n/a	Sustainability	Y	Crime and Disorder	Y		
Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes/No Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes/No	Scrutiny Committee								

**SUNDERLAND ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT FOR GYPSIES,
TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE****REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE****1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcomes of an assessment which has been undertaken to consider the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the City. The study was undertaken jointly with South Tyneside and will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the findings of the accommodation assessment to allow for the needs identified to be planned for through the formal Local Plan process.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), including the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of specific policies in the Framework for Traveller Sites.
- 3.2 Local Planning Authorities are required, through the NPPF and Planning Policy for Traveller sites to set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In addition to identifying actual plot/pitch requirements over the plan period the local plan process must also ensure that appropriate sites are identified to accommodate these requirements, in order for the plan to be considered deliverable and sound.
- 3.3 The most recent needs assessment was carried out in 2009 and needed to be updated in order to ensure the evidence base which Local Plan policies are based upon is robust and current, (particularly in relation to accommodation needs). This current assessment has assessed the needs up to 2036 (to cover both Sunderland and South Tyneside's Local Plan periods), however it is recognised that this assessment will require updating throughout the plan period.

4.0 THE ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The assessment was undertaken in April 2014 by consultants Opinion Research services (ORS). In order to provide thoughtful consideration of the issues by a wide range of key stakeholders, ORS conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with the Council's Portfolio Holder for Health, Housing and Adult Services, Council Officers and a representative of the Showman's Guild of Great Britain (Northern Section).
- 4.2 In order to explore any cross boundary issues and ensure compliance with the duty to cooperate, council officers from the other Tyne and Wear authorities were also interviewed. Themes covered in the interviews included, the need for additional accommodation provision and facilities, travelling patterns, the availability of land, accessing services and work being undertaken to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 4.3 Household survey (due to the travelling nature of the Travelling Showpeople they are not on site all year) interviews were achieved with 52 travelling showpeople residing in Sunderland, from yards at Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring and Washington. As no Gypsies and Travellers live on-site within Sunderland, interviews could not be conducted with this group in the city. However, during the study period an unauthorised encampment of Gypsies and Travellers at Seaburn allowed for a number of interviews to take place.

5.0 FUTURE SITE PROVISION

- 5.1 To identify future need, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' requires an assessment for future pitch and plot requirements, but does not provide a suggested methodology for undertaking the calculation. However, the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case the key issue for residential pitches is to compare the supply of pitches available for occupation with the current and future needs of the households.
- 5.2 The following tables give a breakdown of the pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers until 2036 and plot requirements for Travelling Showpeople until 2036 as assessed by the study.

5.3 Gypsies and Travellers

Please refer to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 9.2.

		2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	2028-2036	Total 2013-2036
Gypsies and Travellers	Permanent provision	0	0	0	0	0
	Transit/stop-over provision	10	0	0	0	10

5.4 The assessment concluded that Sunderland has no requirement for any permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches. However, the city does encounter unauthorised encampments from time to time, which tend to be formed by households in transit and not seeking permanent accommodation, (these encampments can increase in size due to extended family members who normally reside in permanent dwellings within the city taking up residence on the unauthorised encampment for some duration of the stay).

5.5 The evidence suggests that, given the scale of the encampments by households in transit, the city has a clear need for a transit site or a stop-over place, which would need to be at least 10 pitches. The assessment goes on to recommend that due to the short period of time most unauthorised encampments are in place for, a stop-over place may be more effective in meeting needs and less expensive to maintain.

5.6 Work has been undertaken to identify an appropriate stop-over place/site, which has involved a city-wide search. This has been based upon criteria set out in DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, to ensure any identified site is sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Further consideration is currently being given to the city-wide list to enable a stop-over place to be identified and a report on this will be presented to the September Cabinet meeting.

5.7 Travelling Showpeople

The needs of Travelling Showpeople are different to those of Gypsies and Travellers. Please refer to the definition of Travelling Showpeople in paragraph 9.3

		2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	2028-2036	Total 2013-2036
Travelling Showpeople	Permanent provision	13	5	6	10	34

- 5.8 The assessment concluded that Sunderland has a requirement for 34 plots for Travelling Showpeople until 2036. The period 2013-2018 provides for any concealed households (households living within another household who wish to form their own separate family unit but unable to do so due to lack of space on sites), which should be accommodated for as soon as possible.
- 5.9 In developing Local Plans, local planning authorities are required to identify and keep up-to-date a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against those locally set targets and a supply of specific deliverable sites or broad locations to meet needs, where possible, for up to 15 years. As the permanent requirement relates only to Travelling Showpeople, it will be these needs which form part of the five year and 15 year land supply.
- 5.10 An initial starting point would be to consider safeguarding existing authorised Travelling Showpeople sites, to ensure that existing needs continue to be met. The identification of such sites should take into account where the need arises and the capacity of local infrastructure to determine the most appropriate broad location to commence site search. It is recommended that any future site search for Travelling Showpeople should focus on a broad area in proximity to the existing Travelling Showpeople sites, as the evidence indicates that they want to remain together.

6.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 6.1 The decision is required to provide essential evidence to support progression of the Local Plan to proceed to its next stage (publication) in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Development Scheme.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

There are no alternative options. The Council has to ensure that Local Plan policies are developed with up to date evidence, in line with the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Financial Implications

Costs in terms of consultant's fees have arisen from developing the evidence base, however these can be contained within the allocated Local Development Framework budget.

8.2 Human Rights

The assessment has been viewed in the context of The Human Rights Act 1998 and any policy derived from this assessment will take account of the Act.

8.3 Equalities and Diversity

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are recognised as minority groups and as such meeting the identified needs will promote equality and diversity. Any policies formulated from this evidence will be subject to a full equalities assessment to ensure that the needs of these groups are taken into consideration, the actual or potential effects of the policies are understood and where possible, any negative impacts are addressed.

8.4 Environment and Sustainability

All matters contained within the City's emerging Local Plan must by law promote sustainable development and be subject of a separate Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment.

8.5 Crime and Disorder

The provision of a dedicated transit site/stopping place should reduce the number of unauthorised encampments within the city.

9.0 GLOSSARY

9.1 A 'pitch' means a pitch on a 'Gypsy and Traveller' site and a 'plot' means a pitch on a 'Travelling Showpeople' site (often called a yard). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for 'Gypsy and Travellers' and mixed-use plots for 'Travelling Showpeople', which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

9.2 Gypsies and Travellers: Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

9.3 Travelling Showpeople: Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants, more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The background paper taken into account to produce this report is the South Tyneside and Sunderland Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment, compiled by Opinion Research Services April 2014.

