

# Agenda Item IMD2

## INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2019/02

<b>TITLE</b>	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Traveller Local Plan: Issues and Options Consultation
<b>DECISION TO BE MADE BY</b>	Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning - Stuart Munro
<b>DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME</b>	18 February 2019 FF12 at 14:15
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers, Director of Locality and Customer Services - Sarah Hollamby

### OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Traveller Local Plan has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways agrees that Wokingham Borough Council submit the comments contained in Appendix A as this council's response to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's consultation on the Traveller Local Plan Issues and Options consultation

### SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) is preparing a Traveller Local Plan, which will set out how the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and Boat Dwellers will be addressed.

The Issues and Options consultation represents the first stage in the preparation of the plan and its purpose is to scope out, and seek views on, the issues that should be covered by the plan as well as to seek views on potential options for addressing these issues.

The report provides a summary of key aspects of the consultation, with a recommended response to all issues attached in Appendix A.

Issues covered in the consultation include:

- A proposed vision and potential objectives for the plan;
- Potential spatial options for accommodating Gypsy and Traveller pitches, Travelling Showpeople plots, and Boat Dweller moorings;

- Potential for transit site provision
- Design policy considerations;
- Site size considerations;

The draft response provides views on a range of these issues, including the need for RBWM to plan for both the planning need and wider cultural needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

## Background

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) is producing a Traveller Local Plan (TLP) which will set out how the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and Boat Dwellers will be addressed.

Prior to the current consultation, RBWM undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise in July/August 2018. This involved writing to a number of stakeholders, to invite views and suggestions on the availability and deliverability of potential sites for Traveller pitches and plots. At that time, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) provided the following response:

*Thank you for notifying Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) of the call for sites exercise being undertaken to support the forthcoming Traveller Local Plan. Whilst WBC do not have any suggested site promotions, we welcome the exercise as a positive step towards identifying land to meet identified needs where they arise within RBWM.*

*WBC notes that Councils can often find it difficult to encourage a good range of private sites to be promoted for Gypsy and Traveller use. WBC would expect RBWM to bear in mind that it is open to them to consider the purchase of additional land to be allocated to meet its identified need should there be a shortage of private sites put forward.*

The current Issues and Options consultation (hereafter referred to as 'the consultation') represents the first formal stage in the preparation of the plan and its purpose is to scope out, and seek views on, the issues that should be covered by the plan, as well as to seek views on potential options for addressing these issues.

Following this consultation, RBWM expects to consult on a draft plan in autumn 2019, with a view to the plan being adopted by 2020/21.

## Analysis of Issues

The recommended response to the questions set out in the consultation is provided in Appendix A to this report. A supporting analysis of main issues is set out below.

### Gypsies and Travellers

The government's planning policy for Travellers is set out in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (PPTS). This requires local planning authorities to make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.

The PPTS provides definitions of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Travellers which lead a nomadic lifestyle fall within these definitions. Gypsy and Traveller Households which are settled, that is they do not lead a nomadic lifestyle, fall outside the PPTS definition. The needs of these households is considered under the

government's National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> which states that the housing needs of different groups including Travellers, should be addressed.

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been undertaken in support of the RBWM TLP. This identifies the following needs for RBWM:

	<b>Need in the period 2013/14 – 2032/33</b>	
	<b>Cultural need</b>	<b>Of which: PPTS need</b>
Gypsy and Traveller pitches	90	26

The main questions posed regarding Gypsies and Travellers in the consultation are whether the plan should seek to address only the 'PPTS need' or whether the full 'cultural need' should be planned for. It also seeks views on which of the following options for delivering pitches should be supported:

- Do nothing
- Allocate small new sites across RBWM
- Allocate larger new sites across RBWM
- Allocate some existing unauthorised sites across RBWM
- Expand existing council Gypsy and Traveller sites in RBWM
- Provide pitches as part of large housing developments in RBWM

It is clear that the NPPF and PPTS requires consideration of the accommodation needs of both Gypsy and Traveller households meeting the PPTS definition, and those households which are culturally Travellers.

On this basis, WBC considers that, with the exception of the 'do nothing' option, all options should be explored by RBWM to meet its identified need in full. Additionally, WBC reiterates its previous comments that it is open to RBWM to explore the purchase of additional land that could accommodate Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

WBC further considers that the need requirement for the plan should be the larger cultural need and not just the PPTS need as this is consistent with national policy and the duty on local housing authorities to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to a district with respect to sites for caravans. The needs of 'cultural' Gypsy and Travellers have not been addressed in RBWM's wider Borough Local Plan which has been submitted to the Secretary of State and is currently at examination. This underlines the need for the TLP to plan for these needs.

In addition to the permanent need for additional pitches, the consultation also seeks views on whether provision should be made for a transit site or temporary stopping place. A transit site is a permanent site used to provide only temporary accommodation for their residents e.g. for people passing through an area. A stopping place is similar to a transit site, but is generally more informal with minimal facilities and usually used for shorter periods of time. The benefit of these sites is that they can minimise incidents of unauthorised encampments on private land. Additionally, having available transit or stopping place sites also provides additional powers for local authorities to move on unauthorised encampments where they do occur. WBC welcomes the opportunity for additional discussions to explore whether a transit site could be found, subject to this not unduly compromising RBWM's ability to meet its permanent needs.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF paragraph 61,

### Travelling Showpeople

The GTAA identifies the following need for Travelling Showpeople:

	<b>Need in the period 2013/14 – 2032/33</b>	
	<b>Cultural need</b>	<b>Of which: PPTS need</b>
Travelling Showpeople	16	14

WBC's response sets out that RBWM should again seek to meet this need in full and that all options – namely authorising existing unauthorised sites, identifying new sites – should be explored to seek to achieve this.

### Boat Dwellers

The GTAA also looked into the needs of boat dwellers within RBWM. Estate managers of moorings and marinas across the borough were contacted and interviews undertaken with a small number of houseboat dwellers. The study was unable to identify any need for additional houseboat moorings and recommended additional evidence gathering. WBC therefore has no comments on this issue until such time as additional evidence is available, at which point it would welcome further discussions with RBWM.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Not relevant	Not relevant
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Not relevant	Not relevant
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Not relevant	Not relevant

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None anticipated

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
If RBWM is unable to meet its identified needs in full, it is likely that WBC will be approached to accommodate any unmet need.

<b>SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
<b>Director – Corporate Services</b>	No comments received
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	No comments
<b>Leader of the Council</b>	No comments received

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Appendix A – WBC full response RBWM Traveller Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation document available at: <a href="https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201041/traveller_local_plan/1404/issues_and_options_traveller_local_plan">https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201041/traveller_local_plan/1404/issues_and_options_traveller_local_plan</a>

<b>Contact</b> James McCabe	<b>Service</b> Place Commissioning
<b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 908 8333	<b>Email</b> james.mccabe@wokingham.gov.uk