



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE EASTLEIGH BOROUGH DRAFT TRAVELLING COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT 2014-2029

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

Eastleigh Borough Council is currently consulting on a draft of their Travelling Communities Development Plan Document (DPD) 2014-2029. The DPD is based on a study jointly undertaken with Southampton City Council in 2014, and identifies the need for: 15 permanent pitches; 5 transit pitches; and 7 pitches for travelling showmen, between 2014 and 2029. Whilst a number of pitches are close to the District boundary, there are no significant causes for concern to the City Council and it is therefore recommended that no objections are raised to the soundness of the Plan.

This report also includes a brief up-date on the position in respect of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, which was in part subject of an Examination between 10- 13 November 2014.

DECISION

That Eastleigh Borough Council be advised that the City Council raises no objection to the draft Travelling Communities Development Plan Document- 2014 -2029

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

All councils are required by the Housing Act 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework to plan to meet the identified accommodation needs of the local travelling communities. Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) is therefore consulting on a draft Development Plan Document, which sets out the identified needs of the travelling communities together with a spatial strategy for meeting those needs, both in the short and longer terms, up to 2029. The consultation period ends on 2 February 2015, and EBC expects to be in a position to publish a 'pre-submission' draft of the Plan in the summer of 2015, with the Examination in the autumn, and adoption early in 2016.

Eastleigh Borough Council undertook a Joint Study with Southampton City Council in 2014 to identify the requirements for permanent and transit pitches for the travelling community, together with an assessment of the needs of travelling showmen. This study identified the need for EBC to provide: 15 permanent pitches between 2014-2029; 5 transit pitches; and 7 pitches for travelling showmen. This is broadly in line with the wider Forest Bus study into the needs of the travelling community, which the City Council (and Eastleigh) was a party to. Unlike this Council, Eastleigh included unauthorised sites in their assessment of need, and therefore if an unauthorised site becomes permanent then it will have met that need.

Eastleigh is proposing to meet the permanent pitch requirement by making 7 pitches (which are currently unauthorised) permanent, and by allocating two new sites for 5 and 4 pitches respectively. Three of the proposed sites are of potential interest to the City Council as they are close to the District boundary.

Firstly, there is an unauthorised single pitch to the north of Hill View Caravan Park, which is just off of the Winchester Road, and south of the District boundary at Colden Common, which it is proposed be made permanent. Secondly, a single permanent pitch is proposed on another unauthorised site immediately adjoining Stroudwood Road which forms the District boundary at Lower Upham. Lastly, a new site for 4 permanent pitches is proposed at Cockpit Farm Durley Road, Horton Heath. The policy which allocates the latter requires a hedge and native trees to be planted along the SE and NE boundaries, so it should not have any undue impact on the open character of the area. None of these proposed sites would appear to have any direct impact on residential properties in the District and, with the screening proposed, should not cause any environmental harm to the area.

The Plan is based on credible evidence, and is therefore justified, it would appear to be deliverable, so it is considered effective, and the DPD is consistent with national policy, and so therefore appears to meet the tests of soundness. As there are no issues of soundness which the City Council might wish to raise, it is recommended

that the City Council should formally write to Eastleigh Borough Council to advise them that it does not wish to raise any objections at this stage of the Plan preparation process, but would reserve the right to do so if the strategy should materially change.

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011- 2029 was subject of an Examination which ran from 10 to 13 of November 2014. Because from the outset the Inspector had concerns regarding the soundness of the Plan's housing provisions, the Examination was split into two parts with the first sessions aimed at exploring the soundness of the spatial strategy. Only if this was found to be basically sound would the Examination proceed to consider site allocations and development management policies. It would have been in this subsequent session that the issue of the Botley bypass would have been considered, to which this Council has formally raised objections relating to issues of soundness.

The Inspector's preliminary conclusions were that, if the Examination proceeds, then the Plan is likely to be found unsound, in that it fails to effectively address the Borough's housing needs and supply. Therefore, the Borough Council was given the chance to consider its position and whether it wanted to revise or withdraw the Plan. To address the Inspector's concerns would require EBC to undertake significant areas of additional work, as the Inspector expressed serious concerns about the assessment of housing need in the Borough, particularly the estimates of the need for affordable housing. There were also reservations regarding the delivery of a number of the sites which raised issues about the adequacy of the Borough's 5 year land supply.

The Inspector also suspended the Examination into the CIL schedules until there is more certainty over the spatial strategy.

On 18 December 2014, the Borough Council resolved that the Planning Inspector be formally requested to submit his report on the Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, in the knowledge that this would find the Plan not to be sound. It has resolved to begin work on a new Local Plan for the period 2011- 2036. It is not known whether any new Plan will incorporate the Travelling Communities DPD or whether this will continue to be progressed separately.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

Consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Built Environment.

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
NOTICE**

n/a

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

None.

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 29.01.15

Councillor Victoria Weston – Portfolio Holder for Built Environment