

Subject: Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 14th October 2009

Report of: Director of Business

Portfolio Holder: Regeneration

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform and seek views on the proposed Regional Spatial Strategy policies for Gypsies and Travellers; Travelling Showpeople and Parking Standards

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-
- Delivering quality Services to our customers
 - Delivering regeneration across the Borough
 - Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
 - Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe
 - Promoting the Borough
 - Providing value for money services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The views of this Council may not be accepted by the Examination in Public Panel or the Secretary of State.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (Regional Spatial Strategy) was adopted in September 2008. It forms part of the Development Plan for Rossendale and sets the framework for the preparation of Local Development Framework documents including the Core Strategy.
- 4.2 At the Examination in Public into Regional Spatial Strategy in 2007 4NW accepted that there was a need to undertake further work into a range of issues. Most of these have subsequently been left to the future Integrated Regional Strategy to resolve but it was considered urgent work was required on Gypsy and Traveller provision. The opportunity was also taken to review Regional Parking Standards. The policies proposed will have an important impact on future planning in the Borough.
- 4.4 The Partial Review consultation runs from a 12 week period closing on 19th October. Following this an Examination in Public will be held in March 2010.
- 4.5 Three draft policies are proposed:
- L6 on the Scale and Distribution of Gypsy and Travellers Pitch Provision
 - L7 on the Scale and Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Plot Provision
 - T2 Managing Travel Demand plus Table 8.1 Parking Standards.

A link to the draft policies is on the final page of this report and copies are available on request from the report author.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 4.6 Policy L6 addresses the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and their partially nomadic lifestyle. It sets out the provision of new pitches/plots that each District in the North West should make for the period up to 2016 with guidance for beyond this period. The document also sets out policy guidance for preparing LDF documents and considering planning applications.
- 4.7 Policy L7 deals with the similar but different accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople (i.e., fairground/circus workers who travel during the period March-October but need a place to live and space for their equipment during the winter months)
- 4.8 The policies follow national guidance in Circular 01/06 that advises that a positive approach to plot provision is required, both to meet the needs of the individual groups and to limit illegal encampments. To meet specific lifestyle requirements this requires consideration of sites that enable both residential and business use to occur and may be sited in locations that wouldn't normally be considered for residential use.
- 4.9 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA) have been undertaken throughout the Region including Lancashire with a further review recommended for 2013. The Lancashire Study (May 2007) shows that there is

considerable unmet demand in the County and that some Districts, such as Hyndburn, are providing more than their fair share of provision. It did however conclude that there was no evidence of a need for new sites in Rossendale.

- 4.10 Development of the policy has proved controversial regionally. An earlier draft of the policy did not provide any sites in Rossendale. However following representations from a number of bodies regionally 4NW have taken the approach that nearly all Districts should be required to provide a minimum of 10 plots. This is on the basis of equity between Districts and requests from the Gypsy community. The methodology behind this approach is however not clear. The actual location of sites would be left up to individual Districts through their Local Development Frameworks (LDF's).
- 4.11 The table below details the level of Gypsy and Traveller plot provision proposed across Lancashire as set out in the GTAA (Gypsy and Traveller Area Assessment), January Partial Review informal consultation and the current consultation.

	Current Provision	GTAA Provision	January 09 Consultation	Current Consultation
Blackburn with Darwen	48	69-83	60	45
Hyndburn	104	30-33	45	10
Burnley	0	5-7	20	15
Pendle	0	2	20	20
Blackpool	51	25	10	0
Fylde	2	1	10	15
Wyre	0	0	10	15
Lancaster	142	35	45	40
Chorley	0	0	10	10
Preston	12	20	45	20
South Ribble	0	0	10	10
Ribble Valley	4	-	10	10
Rossendale	0	0	10	10
West Lancashire	0	16	20	15
Totals	363	203	320	230

- 4.13 The current proposal in Policy L6 is that Rossendale accommodate 10 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travelers for the period up to 2016. No provision is proposed in the Borough for Travelling Showpeople (Policy L7).
- 4.14 No evidence is provided for the Gypsy and Traveller apportionment to Rossendale. The Council should object to its proposed allocation on the basis of the GTAA research and the ability of the Borough to provide this number of pitches. It will then be up to the Inspector at the Examination in Public and ultimately the Secretary of State to decide whether to impose an allocation figure upon the Borough.

Regional Parking Standards

- 4.15 The Regional Parking Standards are considered to be non-controversial. New standards are required following the expiry of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan in September 2008 when the current Regional Spatial Strategy was adopted. They only apply to parking attached to buildings, not to on or off street car parks and bays though it suggested that local authorities take an integrated approach to car park management.
- 4.16 The proposed standards adapt the accessibility based approach that has been successfully used in Lancashire for a number of years and would mean very little practical change. The new approach is essentially: *Step 1*-Ranking broad locations by their accessibility – Category A centres like Manchester City Centre that have excellent bus/rail/tram access get less parking on new developments than larger towns (Category B) and rural areas and small towns (Category C) and *Step 2*-use of a questionnaire to assess the accessibility of the individual site as some have good bus/cycle access and others don't.
- 4.17 The Partial Review covers a much broader range of land uses than the very limited range in the current Regional Spatial Strategy. The standards are the same or slightly more generous than those currently used. There are concerns relating to lack of clear standards for hospitals. There are also seems to be an error in the standard for Use Class C2 (Residential Uses) where it appears that the standards for Category A are more generous than for Categories B and C. Some standards will still need to be developed locally. There would be great value in 4NW developing a web based system for development management officers to calculate standards easily, such as that currently used in Lancashire.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 Any provision of sites for the Gypsy and Travellers community may result in a financial opportunity cost to the Council as use for this purpose would forfeit sites which may have other commercial uses. However the recommendation does not propose that such sites be provided.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The current consultation on the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is the final opportunity to comment prior to the issues being examined in front of an independent panel

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1 No Human resource implications. Preliminary Equalities screening would be required if sites were provided because of the potential benefits to the Gypsy and Traveller community.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople can be a controversial topic. No evidence is provided for the number of sites allocated to Rossendale and the numbers do not accord with the findings of the Lancashire GTAA. If any site proposals do come forward they can be addressed on a site by site basis using existing Government guidance in Circular 01/06.

8.2 Policy L7 on Travelling Showpeople does not allocate any sites in Rossendale and is considered acceptable.

8.3 The new Parking Standards (Policy T2 and Table 8.1) are considered to be acceptable subject to the observations made above. A link to the draft policies is on the final page of this report and copies are available on request from the report author.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That members agree to the following response to 4NW:

- Objection to Policy L6 on the basis that there is no evidence to support the allocation of 10 permanent and 5 transit plots.
- Accept Policy L7 dealing with Travelling Showpeople
- Accept Policy T2 and Table 8.1 while making observations on the Residential Home Standard, lack of guidance on hospitals and the value of an electronic calculator.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Regeneration Manager and key team members; Development Management colleagues

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes / No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes / No

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes / No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes / No

Contact Officer	
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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review	<i>One Stop Shop</i>

Link to Policies and Parking Standards

http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.co.uk/downloads/Sustainability_Appraisal/4NW%20Partial%20Review.pdf