

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 07 February 2023

TITLE	Proposed permanent Gypsy Traveller site at Western Drive in Hengrove			
Ward(s)	Impacting on all Wards citywide as people relocate, with the greatest potential impact on: Hengrove & Whitchurch Park Ward.			
Author: Ian Bowen	Job title: GRT Service Coordinator			
Cabinet lead: Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member Housing Delivery and Homes	Executive Director lead: Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration			
Proposal origin: Councillor				
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet				
Purpose of Report:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a brief overview of the current demand for permanent pitches under the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2020) and potentially opportunities to expand site provision. To provide information and recommendation about a new potential permanent Gypsy and Traveller site in Bristol. 				
Evidence Base				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within Bristol City Council’s Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2020) (Appendix A1.1 below), there is a requirement to increase the total number of Gypsy and Traveller (GT) pitches in Bristol as summarised in table 1 below: We currently have 12 permanent pitches in the city, but the requirement is that our number of Gypsy Traveller pitches rise by an additional 24 permanent pitches by 2024, increasing to a total of 32 additional pitches by 2036. Need for Show Persons pitches to rise by an additional 8 permanent pitches by 2024. 				
	Current number of pitches provided	Additional pitches required by 2024	Additional pitches required by 2036	Total pitches in Bristol by 2036
Gypsy Traveller	12	24	8	44
Show People	8	8		16
Table 1				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gypsy Traveller Groups are known to suffer some of the highest levels of discrimination and hate of any ethnic group in the UK. A survey carried out by The Traveller Movement in 2017 found 91% of the 199 respondents had experienced discrimination and 77% had experienced hate speech or hate crime. 				

The provision of Local Authority Gypsy Traveller sites within existing neighbourhoods is known to be one of the best ways of reducing hate towards Gypsy Travellers, while having little to no impact on the area. (see also Appendix A1.2 for further background information about inequalities and disadvantage faced by Gypsy Traveller Communities)

3. The purpose of this report is to: recommend a potential new Gypsy Traveller site at **Western Drive** in Hengrove (see also Appendix A1.1 and A1.3 below).
4. **Western Drive:**

The site could accommodate between 6 and 8 pitches depending on design. If built as a **Gypsy Traveller site**, each pitch would contain hardstanding for living vehicles and driving vehicles, a small area of planting, grass or garden and individual (semi-detached) amenities buildings containing shower room and toilet (combined or separate), kitchen/laundry room plumbed for a washing machine, sink and electric cooker and electric hook ups.
5. The GRT Team have discussed this site with our preferred housing provider, who currently manages the permanent Gypsy and Traveller site at Rose Meadow View, Ashton Vale, who have described the Weston Drive site as a “perfect” Gypsy Traveller site location. Their reasons for this are that the site it is a small, flat, accessible piece of land close to local schools, healthcare, retail outlets and other amenities. It is close to other neighbourhoods, which presents opportunities for social integration, but it is not immediately visible from other existing houses, allowing some privacy for site occupants. It has good road and bus links and is in an area of development that may afford employment opportunities for site residents. Gypsy Traveller sites around the UK are often placed in out of the way locations that show a lack of care and empathy towards Travellers; the location of this site demonstrates the value placed on including Travellers and the contribution that they can provide in the heart of the city.
6. Site development would be funded by application to Homes England through their main Affordable Homes programme and in accordance with their Capital Funding Guide. The full development costs of the site would be met by our preferred housing provider with elements built in to include community spaces and local area development identified in appendix A1.3. Funding bids would also include enabling fees to BCC to cover project management, consultation and market engagement with local residents and Travellers. In order to access Homes England funding, our preferred provider would require a minimum sixty year lease on the site although a break clause would be included in the lease in case of any performance issues.
7. The pitches delivered on this site will count towards the Council’s affordable housing delivery target and the Council’s Housing Requirement. It will see the delivery of an affordable housing solution to address the City’s needs, through a route that would not otherwise be forthcoming on this site.
8. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently announced a new Traveller Site Fund for 2022/23 with £10 million for the provision of new and refurbishment of existing traveller sites across England. If funding is made available for new site developments in 2023-24 an application for funding will be considered.
9. Site charges per pitch will be capped at Local Housing Allowance levels.
10. The proposed use of the land as a Gypsy Traveller site will be subject to confirmation from the Council’s property services team that the land is surplus to requirements and may be re-purposed for use as set out in this report.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**That Cabinet:**

1. Approve use of the vacant land identified at Western Drive Hengrove, BS14 0AF, shown in appendix A1.2 to be used for the development of a permanent Gypsy Traveller site, subject to planning consent.
2. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration to take all steps required to apply for, accept and spend funding and implement use of the vacant land identified at Western Drive Hengrove as outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment: Briefly outline how this aligns to the Corporate Strategy.

1. CYP1: Child Friendly City – Allowing formerly transient and unsettled children a permanent base will allow them the best possible start in life.
2. CYP2: Supporting to Thrive – A permanent home will allow families to access and benefit from services such as Family Hubs, Youth Zones, Children’s Centres, etc.
3. HCW2: Mental Health and Wellbeing – GRT groups are known to have the worst mental health outcomes of any ethnic group and the highest rates of suicide. A permanent base will allow stability from which to access support services.
4. HC1: Housing Supply – A permanent site would allow an affordable and available housing option for a diverse group.
5. HC5: Community Participation – A permanent base will make sure that Travellers can actively participate in their community and in the life of the city.

City Benefits:

- BCC recognises the importance of ethnic Gypsy Travellers and cultural Travellers to the make up of our diverse and inclusive city.
- BCC demonstrates ongoing support towards ethnic Gypsy and Traveller communities and Show People.
- BCC is able to take a practical lead on demonstrating challenge towards prejudice and discrimination faced by Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) communities and the growing rise of “Gypsyism” across Europe.
- BCC to comply fully with the recommendations of the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2020.
- Site will provide an increase in the number of affordable homes across the city.
- Site will provide a safe base for Travelling communities from which they can access education, health and social services.
- A settled location will contribute to improved health, social, educational and financial outcomes from Travelling communities.
- To reduce the isolation felt by Travelling communities.
- Reduction in numbers of unauthorised encampments of Gypsy Travellers across the city.
- Building on goodwill already established between BCC and Travelling communities through existing sites.
- Practical use of currently vacant land.
- Further develop partnership relationships with housing associations and other organisations providing supported and managed housing projects.
- Providing Gypsy Traveller and Show People with an address from which they can: register for taxes including Council Tax, register for a GP surgery, health visitors, dentistry, school and other services, register for benefits and provide a base from where they can access services, register to vote.
- Health and safety: Provision of fresh water and waste disposal. There is a strong evidence base showing that travelling communities are known to have amongst the poorest health outcomes and lowest life expectancy of any communities within the UK. A site that provides basic amenities as well as allowing registration with health professionals will help demonstrate that the Council is doing all that it can to meet the basic needs of and social responsibilities towards all communities.
- Provide a safe environment away from the side of the highway.

- Reduction in enforcement costs to BCC and better use of BCC officers' time as there will be less people to "move on".
- Reduce safeguarding risk issues to vulnerable adults, children and young people.
- To lessen the number of complaints received from members of the public about unauthorised encampments.
- Demonstrate that BCC is committed to supporting vulnerable people.

Consultation Details:

An initial information letter is ready to send out to local residents, business and ward members following acceptance that the report can be presented to cabinet. The site is on the border of 2 wards and nearest addresses that may be impacted by the site have been identified (400 properties).

Background Documents:

Bristol City Council (2020). *Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment* – July 2020. [file \(bristol.gov.uk\)](http://file.bristol.gov.uk)

Sweeney, S. and Dolling, B. (2021). *Last on the list: An overview of unmet need for pitches on Traveller sites in England*. Brighton: Friends Families Travellers – January 2021 [Availability-of-pitches-on-Traveller-sites-in-England_FINAL.pdf \(gypsy-traveller.org\)](http://Availability-of-pitches-on-Traveller-sites-in-England_FINAL.pdf)

The National Policy Advisory Panel on Gypsy and Traveller Housing (2021). *Places We're Proud Of*. Places We're Proud Of by Rooftop Housing Group - Issuu

Dept for Communities and Local Government (2009). *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites - Good Practice Guide* – May 2008. London: DCLG [designinggypsiesites.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://designinggypsiesites.pdf)

House of Commons (2019). *Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*. House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee. London: UK Parliament. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/full-report.html>

Revenue Cost	£TBC	Source of Revenue Funding	G/F
Capital Cost	£TBC	Source of Capital Funding	Homes England
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice:

This reporting is seeking authority to use the vacant land identified at Western Drive Hengrove, for the development of a permanent Gypsy Traveller site, subject to planning consent.

There are no revenue implications to the council as the new site will be run and managed by the Register Provider. The site development would be funded by application to Homes England through their main Affordable Homes programme. There may be some capital contributions (match funding) required in relation to obtaining the Homes England Funding, which will have to go through the appropriate governance for approval, but at this stage these costs will not be known until the funding application has been considered.

Funding bids would also include enabling fees to Bristol City Council to cover project management, consultation and market engagement with residents and Travellers.

Finance Business Partner: Archa Campbell – 11th January 2023

2. Legal Advice:

Roma, Gypsy and Irish travellers are protected under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty will be engaged in this decision. There is no legal duty to provide pitches anymore as this was removed by Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. However, there is a power to provide them under s 24 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

Legal Team Leader:

Kate Meller – Solicitor – Interim Team Leader, 20 January 2023

3. Implications on IT:

I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader:

Alex Simpson – Senior Solution Architect, 28 November 2022

4. HR Advice:

There are no HR implications evident

HR Partner:

Celia Williams – HR Business Partner – Growth and Regeneration

EDM Sign-off	Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	30 November 2022
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes	14 December 2022
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	9 January 2023

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal <u>Appendix A1.1:</u> Background to Bristol City Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2020) <u>Appendix A1.2:</u> Western Drive Hengrove, BS14 0AF background information	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	No
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO

