

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Social Services

To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 13 February 2009

Subject: **SOUTH EAST PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW ON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCH ALLOCATION: PROGRESS REPORT**

Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: This report updates Board Members on what has happened since the consultation on four different distribution options across all South East authorities, and the next stages of the process.

Regional Planning Committee recommendations

1. The attached report was presented to the Regional Planning Committee, when they met on 28 January 2009.
2. The Regional Planning Committee agreed most of the attached report, and in particular decided to recommend Option D to the Regional Assembly, which meets on 12 March of this year. The attached report makes clear that this was the most favoured of the four options, overall.

What this would mean for Kent and Medway

3. Option D would produce the following distribution of further pitches for Kent and Medway, to be completed by 2016. The first figure is the further pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. The second is those for Travelling Showpeople.

Ashford	30	2
Canterbury	30	3
Dartford ⁵	22	6
Dover	23	2
Gravesham	12	1
Maidstone	35	2
Medway	30	2
Sevenoaks	19	1
Shepway	12	1
Swale	28	2
Thanet	17	2
Tonbridge and Malling	18	1
Tunbridge Wells	14	1
Kent and Medway	290⁴	26⁵

Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers

4. The Regional Planning Committee decided to recommend that 1,064 further pitches be provided for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2006-2016 in the South East, which is the figure broadly supported (and is in Kent and Medway) by the Accommodation Assessments carried out from 2005 onwards.

Pitches for Travelling Showpeople

5. They decided to recommend that the number of additional pitches for Travelling Showpeople should be 26.

Transit site provision

6. However, the Regional Planning Committee decided not to follow the attached report and decided to recommend that numbers of pitches for transit use should not be specified in the South East Plan, but should be based on a bottom-up approach. The exact text of the recommendation on this is still awaited, and will be reported to Members at the meeting on 13 February.

Overall implications for Kent and Medway

7. The 290 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are thirty fewer than the 320 pitches identified as the total need in Kent and Medway between 2006 and 2016. The pitch numbers for Travelling Showpeople are 16 higher than the number identified as needed. So the net effect is 14 fewer pitches overall, including thirty fewer pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

8. However, the 290 pitches is about 90 pitches more than the total of all the preferred options put forward by Kent and Medway Councils in response to the consultation carried out last autumn. It is 48 more than Option C of the last consultation exercise, and 48 more than Option E which was KCC's preferred redistribution option.
9. The distribution across Kent and Medway from Option D is also different. There are some council areas which would finish up with higher numbers and some with fewer. The table below shows what the distribution would be with each of the options consulted on last autumn.

Table 1: SEERA Consultation: Options A – D: Kent and Medway area

District/ GTAA area	Additional pitches				Range within A – D
	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	
Ashford	20	32	28	30	12
Maidstone	48	39	32	36	16
Tonbridge & Malling	14	20	14	17	6
Tunbridge Wells	11	15	11	13	4
West Kent GTAA	93	106	85	96	21
Sevenoaks/ Sevenoaks GTAA	57	22	14	18	43
Dartford	33	27	17	22	16
Gravesham	16	13	10	11	6
Swale	64	31	20	25	44
Medway	12	32	24	28	20
North Kent GTAA	125	103	71	86	54
Canterbury	32	33	26	30	7
Dover	6	24	20	22	18
Shepway	2	13	9	12	11
Thanet	5	19	16	17	14
East Kent GTAA	45	89	71	81	44
Kent & Medway	320	320	241	281**	79
South East Region	1064	1064	1064	1064	0

** Note that the difference between the 281 above and the 290 in the latest Regional Planning Committee report is due to a revised baseline for existing provision. Work is still going on over this, and the 290 may well be revised back down to 281.

Next Stages

10. The Regional Assembly next meets on 12 March and will consider whether to adopt the recommendations from the Regional Planning Committee.
11. Following that, there is expected to be a consultation, led by the Government Office for the South East, on a single option, from mid-May to mid-July. The Advisory Board will be closely engaged before KCC responds to this consultation, as promised at the last Board meeting.

12. Once that is complete, it is expected that the examination in public on the partial review, chaired by planning inspectors, will take place in the autumn.
13. The incorporation of the relevant decisions on pitch allocations and other matters into the South East Plan is expected to be signed off by the Secretary of State in Spring of 2010.

Recommendations

14. I recommend that this report is noted.

Background Papers

The attached paper to the Regional Planning Committee

Bill Forrester
Head of the Gypsy and Traveller Unit

01622 221846