

**APPENDIX 2 TO ITEM 7 OF THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER
ADVISORY BOARD – 22 JULY 2009**

Item 3

RSS Partial Review: Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Joint Member Steering Group: 13th July 2009

Subject: RSS Partial Review: Current Position

Summary

This report updates the Joint Member Steering Group (JMSG) on the current position regarding the South East England Partnership Board's partial review of the South East Plan on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation

Background

1. At its final meeting on 4th March 2009 the Regional Assembly agreed the content of the partial RSS review submission to Government. The details of this are set out in the next agenda paper (Item 4a).

2. This followed the public consultation on Issues and Options conducted between 1 September 2008 and 21 November 2008. Public response was sought primarily by means of a structured questionnaire. There were local consultation events across the region, a regional stakeholder workshop, Gypsy and Traveller focus group sessions, and a MORI poll of 1,000 residents. 9 of 27 local events were held in Kent and Medway - more than in any other County. These comprised exhibitions in 6 towns and 3 stakeholder meetings across the GTAA areas.

3. Representations from individual Kent and Medway local authorities were submitted as a result of the consultation on options. Shortly before most local authorities responded a meeting of the JMSG took place on 10th November 2008. This provided a useful exchange of views and understanding of where each local authority stood although no unified view on the options consulted on by SEERA was reached.

4. There was significant variation in the responses from Kent Districts and Medway Council to the consultation options. The total number of additional pitches across Kent implied as a consequence of Districts' responses falls well short of any of the totals for Kent and Medway associated with the approaches taken in the region's consultation options (see Appendix 1) or its current preference. The County Council's response at that time suggested an alternative option which would provide for the higher rate of regional redistribution contemplated by SEERA's options but involving an alternative basis for pitch distribution in Kent.

Current Position

5. The regional planning body's proposals for the number and distribution of pitches for both Gypsies and Travellers accommodation and Travelling Showpeople have been submitted to Government. Consultation by Government began on 8th June and runs to **1st September 2009**.

Next steps

6. Following consideration of the representations received a Government appointed independent Inspector will hold an Examination in Public from **2nd to 5th February 2010**. At the request of the Inspectorate this is later than the original programme which had envisaged an EIP in Autumn 2009.

7. It is assumed that the Panel report can therefore be expected in the Spring/early Summer of 2010. Allowing for publication and consultation on any Proposed Changes, final publication setting out pitch numbers and their district by district distribution of pitches to be provided is unlikely before late 2010.

8. For Members' information.

Strategy and Planning Division/ Gypsy and Traveller Unit:
Kent County Council

On behalf of the Kent Authorities RSS Review Officer Working Group

APPENDIX 1

Table 3: Kent Authorities' Responses to the Autumn 2008 Consultation

| <i>District/ GTAA area</i> | <i>Preferred option</i> | <i>Additional pitches 2006-2016</i> |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Ashford | A | 20 |
| Maidstone | C | 32 |
| Tonbridge & Malling | C* | 10 |
| Tunbridge Wells | A | 11 |
| West Kent GTAA | | 73 |
| Sevenoaks/ Sevenoaks GTAA | C | 14 |
| Dartford | C | 17 |
| Gravesham | D | 12 |
| Swale | B | 31 |
| Medway | # | # |
| North Kent GTAA | | 60 |
| Canterbury | A | 32 |
| Dover | A | 6 |
| Shepway | A | 2 |
| Thanet | A | 5 |
| East Kent GTAA | | 45 |
| | | |
| (Kent & Medway) | | (192) |
| | | |
| Kent CC – 'Option E | | 241 |
| | | |
| Regional Option A/B for Kent and Medway | | 320 |
| Regional Option C for Kent and Medway | | 241 |
| Regional Option D for Kent and Medway | | 281 |

Note:

Option A = based on 'needs arising established by GTAAs with no redistribution to the rest of the region.

Option B: with the same total provision figure for the county as Option A, with no redistribution to the rest of the region but with distribution of pitch numbers in Kent and Medway based on sustainability (environmental and planning) criteria.

Option C: the higher regional redistribution option with internal (Kent and Medway) distribution of pitch numbers based on Option B.

Option D: the lower regional redistribution option with internal (Kent and Medway) distribution of pitch numbers also based on Option B.

see paper for Item 4a for further details.

C* = An alternative Option C devised by Tonbridge and Malling BC but based on the internal distribution in Option A not B.

Medway Council was of the view that *'insufficient evidence exists to justify a specific requirement for additional pitches in Medway'*

There is a substantial shortfall between the summation of these preferences and either of the regional options providing for regional redistribution (between 49 and 89 pitches) and even more so in relation to the needs based total (128 pitches).