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Your ref:
My ref: DNA/CD

Dear Matt

First Detailed Proposals Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs for the Regional Spatial Strategy – Submission of the 4/4 Authorities in Dorset (Dorset County Council, Borough of Poole & Bournemouth Borough Council)

I am writing on behalf of the 4/4 authorities in the Dorset Sub-Region to submit the First Detailed Proposals on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs for the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Sub-Region of Dorset. This includes the First Detailed Proposals which sets out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs for the period 2006-2026. This is backed up by the Accommodation Needs Assessment carried out by Anglia Ruskin University. We would like to stress the following:-

- It is the priority of the local authorities in Dorset to address demand for unauthorised families and the First Detailed Proposals therefore extract this need from the overall figures. This reflects the need for the local authorities in Dorset to respond to Government policy on Transit Site and Temporary Stopping Place Provision. The study highlights the marked seasonal differences in the level of unauthorised camping and different travelling patterns for Gypsies and Irish Travellers and New Travellers respectively. The estimated pitch numbers therefore take account of the need to provide for peak seasonal demand and, in particular, pitches to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers who may visit the County for events such as The Great Dorset Steam Fair.
- Notwithstanding the clear priority to address the demand of unauthorised families, it should be noted that the Mannings Heath residential site in the Borough of Poole represents an existing resource which could be enhanced in the future to meet need arising from housing transfer and other sources of need.
- The technical study has uncovered a potential net demand from Gypsies currently living in housing who would wish to transfer to sites. Anglia Ruskin University recognised however that the survey of housed Gypsies was relatively small and there was a reluctance to equate a stated preference with real demand. Further work has been commissioned and is currently being carried out by Anglia Ruskin University on behalf of Bournemouth and Poole. Furthermore, the estimated demand for housing transfer is based upon best estimates of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population which, in the absence of accurate census data, can only at this stage be speculative. We would ask you therefore to view these pitch numbers with extreme caution. We would also wish to stress that this demand would be generated from an urban area which the study recognises is heavily constrained.

- Pitch numbers identified in the family formation calculation seek to take into account the estimated population growth for the Gypsy and Traveller community over the life of the Regional Spatial Strategy. These are calculated at 1.5% and 2% for unauthorised numbers to take into account the relatively high proportion of single males in the New Age Traveller community in Dorset. No growth has been applied to the 100 pitches required by the Steam Fair and 3% and 4% have been applied to the remaining supply and demand figures.
- We would ask that the pitch numbers outlined should be subject to continuous monitoring and regular 5 year reviews. This would take into account variations in travelling patterns, the outcome of the 2011 census and, further, in depth work on demand for transfer from conventional housing to caravan pitches and the impact of any additional authorised site provision on travelling patterns.
- We are aware of the research on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government carried out by the Universities of Birmingham, Salford and Sheffield Hallam into the consistency of Accommodation Needs Assessments for Gypsies and Travellers. Their final report provides advice to regional planning bodies to address any inconsistencies. We believe that the Dorset study has been particularly comprehensive in identifying need and has left no fundamental gaps in data. We would therefore urge the South West Regional Planning Board to **ensure that the outcomes of all “Accommodation Needs Assessments for Gypsies and Travellers” in the South West are adjusted in accordance with the advice included in this research report. This adjustment is to ensure that there is, subject to availability, a consistent application of the numbers of pitches for each Local Authority area.**

It is worth making clear the stage that has currently been reached by each of the three 4/4 authorities in their formal consideration of these proposals.

The First Detailed Proposals were considered by the Dorset and South Wiltshire Planning and Transportation Liaison Committee and the South East Dorset Strategic Planning and Transportation Joint Committee on 27 February and 6 March 2007 respectively. These two bodies have the power only to make recommendations to their member authorities. Both recommended approval of the First Detailed Proposals but the latter, wished to advise the Regional Assembly of their concerns on the social and environmental constraints created by Government policies. They also wished to draw attention to the practicalities and impossibilities of delivering specific sites and the difficulties of enacting what is proposed.

Dorset County Council's' Cabinet received a report on 7 March 2007 and endorsed these First Detailed Proposals, noting the additional recommendation of the South East Dorset Joint Committee. At the Borough of Poole, the portfolio holder has “signed off” the proposals as a recommendation to Full Council on 10 April 2007. Bournemouth's Cabinet will receive a report on 28 March but there is a “call in period” until 7 April. The Boroughs will contact you separately to advise of their decisions.

I hope this First Detailed Proposal meets the needs of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy but if you do require any further information or clarification, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ayre
 Head of Environmental Business Support
 on behalf of:-
 Dorset County Council, Borough of Poole & Bournemouth Borough Council