

## Report of Kerrie Murray Principal Housing Advisor Leeds Housing Options

### Report to Neil Evans Director Resources and Housing

**Date: 21 September 2018**

**Subject: Gypsy Traveller Services Resources**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): <b>All</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. The Council's Core Strategy sets out the need to deliver 62 accommodation pitches for the Gypsy and Traveller community by 2028. This figure includes 25 Local Authority-managed pitches and 9 Negotiated Stopping Pitches.
2. In 2011 Leeds in response to a Scrutiny Board Enquiry Leeds started to consider negotiated stopping. Primarily this was with a core group of Leeds families for time periods of up to 28 days. The approach has subsequently extended out to Travellers who are passing through the city to support the Councils Core Strategy and wider Traveller Strategy.
3. A Negotiated Stopping Policy has now been approved and implemented. The existing Traveller team have managed the process as an additional responsibility.
4. In July 2018 Kidacre Park will open to accommodate 8 families. Tenants will sign a Tenancy Agreement which sets out the rights and responsibilities of our tenants and Leeds City Council as the landlord. A Rent Agreement is in place for Kidacre Park which reflects the provision. The rental income of will be between £49,730 and £ 61,942 per annum based on full occupancy levels and number of caravans per pitch. The site will be managed by the existing Gypsy Traveller Team as an additional responsibility.

### Recommendations

5. Approve the re-grading of three C1 Housing Advisor post holders to C3 Housing Advisor (Gypsy Traveller Services).

6. The role of C1 Housing Advisor (Gypsy Traveller Services) has been evaluated and secured C3 grading. In acknowledgement of the increased responsibilities, which are now clearly undertaken, agreement of one year's back pay from April 2017.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1** Approve the regrading of three C1 Housing Advisor post holders to C3 Housing Advisor ( Gypsy Traveller Services)
- 1.2** To ensure that the Council has officers in post who can effectively manage Kidacre Park home to 8 Gypsy and Traveller families.
- 1.3** To ensure that the Council has officers in post who can manage the city wide Negotiated Stopping Policy.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1** The Council has experienced significant challenges in recent years relating to the cycle of unauthorised encampments by a group of Leeds based 'roadside' Gypsies and Travellers. The cycle of unauthorised encampment and eviction also failed to meet the housing needs of the Gypsies and Travellers and adversely affected local settled communities who lived in close proximity to where the unauthorised encampments took place.
- 2.2** A Scrutiny Inquiry was carried out in 2010/11 concerning better meeting the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The inquiry report was published in January 2011 and made 12 service improvement recommendations. The first two recommendations related to increasing the provision of both permanent and temporary pitches.
- 2.3** The Council has calculated, as part of the Leeds Core Strategy, that there is a need for 62 additional pitches (comprising 28 private/25 public/9 temporary stopping) by 2028. A number of sites have been identified through the Site Allocations process; development of these will be dependent on the submission of successful planning applications and funding.
- 2.4.** Kidacre Park Travellers site will be open in July 2018, allocation of the 8 pitches will need to commence approximately two weeks prior to site completion.
- 2.5** The Council's Negotiated Stopping Policy has been approved which commits to 9 negotiated stopping places being available subject to a number of criteria being met.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1** Leeds Housing Options has three C1 Housing Advisor posts who are responsible for the day to day operational housing management function for all Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision. This function extends to the management of all unauthorised encampments across the city.

- 3.2** These three officers have been instrumental in efficiently managing existing accommodation in a highly challenging environment. The successful development of Kidacre Park will be a further addition to this role.
- 3.3** These three officers have been instrumental in efficiently managing unauthorised encampments across the city in a highly challenging environment. The implementation of the Negotiated Stopping Policy will be a further addition to this role.
- 3.4** The expanded responsibilities from April 2017 have included: lead responsibility for a portfolio of 48 units across 3 sites; lead responsibility for the management of unauthorised encampments; environmental management of green spaces and adjoining land, regular updates to service management. Their expanded role warrants the proposed re-grading to C3.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.2** The report has been shared with Trade Union colleagues via email for comments regarding the report and its recommendations, no issues of concern were raised.
- 4.3** At JCC Union Representatives asked that the post was subject to job evaluation but raised no concern regarding the regrade to C3.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

An Equality Impact screening exercise is attached to this report.

### **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

The Best Council Plan vision for Leeds to be the best city in the UK; one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist. We want Leeds to be a city that is fair and sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all with a council that its residents can be proud of; the best council in the country.

The development of pitches for Gypsy and Travellers is a key requirement in the Local Authority's Core Strategy, the completion of Kidacre Park contributes to this by providing 8 pitches for families. The commitment of the Local Authority to provide accommodation which reflects the diversity within the city is a key contributor to successfully implementing the objectives of the Best Council Plan:

- Being and feeling safe and feel safe
- Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
- Live in good quality, affordable homes within clean and well cared for places
- Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
- Enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts
- Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

The Council aims to ensure all its existing and any new housing stock is managed efficiently and best use is made of the limited resource.

Kidacre Park represents the commitment to managing and sustaining provision. The Council will receive a rental income of between £49,730 and £ 61,942 per annum based on full occupancy levels and number of caravans per pitch.

There is sufficient budget to increase the proposed posts. The posts will support the new provision being effectively managed hence ensuring that the site is sustainable whilst maximising rental income. The approach of using Negotiated Stopping does present an opportunity to reduce costs, both the legal cost of court and the clean-up costs when occupants are abiding by a contract of responsibility. The proposals therefore represent 'invest to save' interventions.

The increased cost in 18/19 would be £2,940 for the full financial year for three officers.

The back dated payment for 12 months would be £2,887 in total.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

The proposal set out in the report represent a significant operational decision and are not subject to call in.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

None identified.

### **5. Conclusions**

The Core Strategy has set out how the Council will meet the accommodation need of its Gypsy and Traveller community.

The Local Authority has provided Kidacre Park to support the housing need of 8 Gypsy and Traveller families, the site will be ready in July 2018.

A Negotiated Stopping Policy is operationally in place.

A draft forward plan has been proposed on how and when the Council will provide a further 17 pitches before 2024, a total of 4 sites across the city.

The post holders have been instrumental in achieving these outcomes and their expanded service role warrants the proposed re-grading to C3.

#### **Recommendations**

Approve the regrading of three C1 Housing Advisor post holders to C3 Housing Advisor (Gypsy Traveller Services).

The role of C1 Housing Advisor (Gypsy Traveller Services) has been evaluated and secured C3 grading. In acknowledgement of the increased responsibilities, which are now clearly undertaken, agreement of one year's back pay from April 2017.

### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.