

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet  
Cabinet Member Communities  
Cabinet Member Health and Social Care  
Cabinet Member Regeneration  
Planning Committee

**DATES:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009  
25<sup>th</sup> February 2009  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2009  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2009  
11<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**SUBJECT:** Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review draft policies for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

**REPORT OF:** Charlie Barker – Strategic Director of Health and Social Care  
Andy Wallis – Planning and Economic Regeneration Director  
Bill Milburn - Environmental Protection Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Jim Ohren, Principal Manager, Health and Social Care ☎ 934 3619  
Alan Young, Strategic Planning and Information Manager ☎ 934 3551

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

This report summarises the findings of Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment together with the emerging requirements of the Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy. It examines the likely implications for Sefton in relation to future additional permanent and transit pitch provision and meeting the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It seeks delegated authority for the relevant Directors to make representations on behalf of Sefton Council to the Regional Spatial Strategy Partial review consultations and subsequent Examination in Public.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

A decision is required in order to ensure that the relevant Directors have authority to make representations on behalf of the Council and to guide the preparation of the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Planning Committee and Cabinet Members note the report and recommend that Cabinet:

- 1) Note the report and the need to incorporate in the Council's Core Strategy under the Local Development Framework additional Gypsy and Traveller and potentially Travelling Showpeople pitch provision in line with the assessed need as identified in the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, other relevant studies and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy policies.
- 2) Authorise the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Health and Social Care and the Environmental Protection Director, to respond on behalf of Sefton to the consultations around the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review policies on Gypsy and Traveller permanent and transit pitch provision and provision for Travelling Showpeople.
- 3) Note that further research work will be needed to identify suitable sites and engage in consultation work.
- 4) Agree to further reports being submitted as details emerge as a result of discussions with sub regional and regional partners.

**KEY DECISION:** Yes

**FORWARD PLAN:** Yes

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** N/A

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

None

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Budget/Policy Framework:** None

**Financial:** Exact costs are unknown at this time but work to identify sites may require specialist advice and consultation work not currently accounted for in budgets. Purchase of new sites is likely to be covered by a 100% Government grant although availability is not guaranteed. Running costs are not met by Government grant.

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				

<b>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:** N/A

**Risk Assessment:** N/A

**Asset Management:** N/A

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS** N/A

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People	✓		

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – Salford University Housing and Urban Studies Unit - 2008  
 Partial Review of the RSS - Interim Draft Policy for Gypsies and Travellers – 4NW - 2009  
 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance – DCLG, Oct 2007

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The assessment of accommodation and related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has become an important focus in the Government's attempts to foster, build and maintain sustainable and inclusive communities. Under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 local authorities were required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 introduced a specific duty for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their localities.
- 1.2 Up until the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 local authorities had a legal duty to provide sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers. This Act removed the obligation for site provision and, as a result, along with a change in the use of land and more land being identified for housing, there are now too few sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers that need site provision. Consequently, the lack of permanent and transit sites throughout the country has forced Gypsies and Travellers to camp wherever they can and caused significant levels of overcrowding on authorised sites.
- 1.3 A lack of authorised sites and stopping places has led to a level of tension within some local communities as well as inappropriate accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) seek to explore the accommodation options that are available to these communities and Travelling Showpeople, and look at what the current needs for different types of accommodation and site provision. This includes looking at the needs, demand, preferences and aspirations of the Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople residing in, travelling to and travelling through the local areas both now and over the coming years.
- 1.4 GTAA's are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform housing and planning strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced have a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB) for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority in light of the GTAA's produced and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region. The local planning authority's Core Strategy sets out the number of pitches required and Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites. The appropriate inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (if need is demonstrated) pitches within DPDs will be fundamental in order for such DPDs to be considered sound.
- 1.5 The regional dimension is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network. All authorities across the country are expected to respond to accommodation need where a need has been identified.
- 1.6 The duty under the 2004 Housing Act for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers came into force on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2007. In pursuance of this statutory duty Sefton along with Liverpool, Wirral and Knowsley commissioned a Merseyside Accommodation Assessment from Salford University. This was funded by a grant from the Government. (St Helens took part in a separate GTAA covering the Cheshire area and West Lancashire in the Lancashire study). This study followed a North West GTAA (May 2007), which found a need for 37 additional pitches between 2006-2016 and no need for Travelling Showpeople pitches. At the same time, the Showmen's Guild, Lancashire Section, commissioned "The Accommodation Situation of Showmen in the Northwest" as they were concerned that a GTAA might not focus adequately on their needs, and this was later supplemented by "The North West's Travelling Showpeople's Current Base Location,

Preferred Base Locations and Operating Patterns". Sefton Council was not formally consulted on either the methodology or findings of these two studies.

- 1.7 Salford University completed the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in February 2008.
- 1.8 The main aim of the Merseyside GTAA was to produce an accommodation needs assessment capable of disaggregation to local authority district level with a comprehensive assessment of existing and future accommodation and wider service needs within each local area. Within this broad aim there were several objectives:
- To produce detailed information about local Gypsies and Travellers in relation to their demographic profile, household formation, current accommodation needs, accommodation related service and support needs and barriers to accessing services.
  - To assess the current and potential future accommodation needs within the Merseyside Study Area
  - To generate reliable estimates of future accommodation need.

## **2.0 THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE GTAA**

- 2.1 Salford University took into account the fact Gypsies and Travellers live in different ways. Some live settled in houses, some are nomadic and some are semi-nomadic, travelling for certain periods out of the year. In line with guidance by central government the assessment was conducted through the following phases:

Phase 1: Collation and review of existing information and literature.

Phase 2: Consultation with various stakeholders

Phase 3: 72 face-to-face interviews with local Gypsies and Travellers

## **3.0 KEY FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The Merseyside GTAA has a number of sections which provides extensive information on a range of factors:
- Analysis of the demographics and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population
  - Analysis of local authority sites
  - Related analysis of Gypsies and Travellers in houses
  - Analysis of unauthorised encampments
  - Housing-related support issues
  - Employment, education and health issues
  - Accommodation histories, intentions and travelling
  - Household formation and accommodation preferences and aspirations
  - Accommodation of Travelling Showpeople
  - Estimated need for additional residential accommodation
  - Estimated need for additional transit accommodation
- 3.2 An Executive Summary of the Merseyside Assessment is attached to this report for information (Appendix 1).
- 3.3 The GTAA makes a series of 36 recommendations for the Partner Authorities, which recommends action on a number of issues, which are:
- Strategy, systems and policy framework
  - Accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers
  - Communication and engagement

- Developing accommodation
- Health and housing-related support issues
- Travelling Showpeople accommodation

3.4 The majority of these recommendations emphasise the need for joined-up working to resolve Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues.

3.5 One particular issue flagged up in the report with relevance to Sefton is the isolation of the Sefton site at Broad Lane, Formby. This, and other matters relating to the existing site, will be considered by officers in conjunction with the corporate Sefton Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group, chaired by Cabinet Member (Communities). The Council has been successful in bidding for grant funding from the Government to improve the facilities on the Broad Lane site in recent years.

3.6 However, the main requirement for a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is to provide an estimate of the need for additional accommodation required for Gypsies and Travellers, and this is the principal focus of this Cabinet Member/Cabinet report.

3.7 Within the Merseyside GTAA accommodation need has been identified at a sub-regional and a local level. This has been done on a 'need where it is seen to arise' basis. Hence, when a quantum of need is identified as part of an assessment covering more than one local authority the need is not apportioned equally amongst the authorities concerned. Rather, it is allocated to the district from where the need is identified as arising. On this basis if a local authority has an existing site or Gypsy and Traveller community it will, in all probability, generate an identified need allocated to that local authority. (This is discussed again in paragraph 4.11. (2) below).

### 3.8 Permanent Pitches

3.8.1 The table below provides the distribution of extra permanent pitch provision required from 2006-2016 as found in the Merseyside GTAA:

Authority	Current provision	Additional residential pitch requirement (2007-2012)	Additional residential pitch requirement (2012-2016)	Total additional residential pitch requirement (2007-2016)
Knowsley	0	4	1	5
Liverpool	14	11	3	14
Sefton	16	12	4	16
Wirral	0	9	1	10
Study Area	30	36	9	45

3.8.2 The above table relates to permanent pitch provision. In the GTAA recommendations are also made to provision for transit pitches and provision for travelling show people:

### 3.9 Transit Pitches

3.9.1 The GTAA makes the point that although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, if only to visit fairs and family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base and Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments commonly experience the worst conditions. The GTAA found an additional need for 10 transit pitches across the Merseyside study area. The GTAA did not specify transit need on a district level, but said that transit provision may need to be implemented in all local authority areas and that the most practical transit site size was 5 pitches. It also said that the partner authorities are in an ideal position to plan, devise and implement a network of transit provision between the local authorities.

### 3.10 Pitches for Travelling Showpeople

- 3.10.1 The GTAA found no identified need for Travelling Showpeople within the sub region. However, it did note that there is a need to address the needs of Travelling Showpeople in each sub-region by an informed understanding of the circuit of Fairs and working patterns, and that patterns should be monitored as sub regions cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. The full findings of the two studies prepared by the Showmen's Guild in co-operation with the 4NW have not yet been supplied to Sefton.
- 3.11 It is advised in the report that the results of the apportionment (of permanent pitches) as detailed above should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Merseyside sub-regional area. It is recommended that decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities, sub-regional bodies and the Regional Planning Body – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability.
- 3.12 Accordingly, the Merseyside Chief Executives and Leaders meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008 agreed that the Merseyside local authorities work together with sub regional bodies to agree the distribution and numbers of future pitch provision.

## **4.0 REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY**

- 4.1 In paragraph 1.4 above mention is made of the fact that the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority in light of the GTAAs produced and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region.
- 4.2 A partial update of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West commenced with a Partial Review in the first part of 2008. The North West Regional Assembly (the then Regional Planning Body, now known as 4NW) published a Partial Review consultation document in the form of an options report in June 2008. The review covered a number of planning issues including provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 4.3 The consultation document referred to three options for Gypsies and Traveller provision as follows:
- (1) Use the results of the existing studies to distribute new provision based on identifying 'need where it arises';
  - (2) As above, but subject to the proviso that it is modified to ensure minimum level of pitch provision in every district; and
  - (3) Working with sub regional partnerships and the Gypsy and Traveller Community to agree a more balanced share of meeting needs across districts
- 4.4 With regard to Travelling Showpeople there were three options, similar to the above:
- (1) Use the results of the existing studies to distribute new provision based on identifying 'need where it arises';
  - (2) As above, but subject to the proviso that it is modified to ensure minimum level of pitch provision in every district; and

(3) Working with sub regional partnerships and the Showman's Guild to agree a more balanced share of meeting needs across districts

- 4.5 The options were reported to Planning Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008 along with the fact that the Secretary of State had imposed a very restricted 4-week consultation timetable on that consultation stage, with responses to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The report indicated an initial view that option 2 be supported in both cases. However, in the light of the short consultation deadline the Planning Committee resolved that the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director be authorised to agree Sefton's contribution to a joint Merseyside response based on the comments set out in the report.
- 4.6 Subsequently the Merseyside authorities made a joint response via Merseyside Policy Unit, supporting a mix of options 2 and 3. A further informal consultation on pitch numbers in October 2008 proposed 15 additional Gypsy and Traveller and 1 additional Travelling Showpeople pitches by 2016 for Sefton. The Officer-level response re-iterated the June 2008 consultation response.
- 4.7 The process of modifying the pitch numbers has continued at regional level and a set of interim draft policies (including pitch provision figures for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) were approved by the 4NW (The Regional Leaders Forum, the successor Regional Planning Body to the North West Regional Assembly) on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009.
- 4.8 For Merseyside the interim draft policy (Interim Draft Policy L6) recommends increased pitch numbers (permanent and transit pitches) in respect of Gypsies and Travellers as follows:

Authority	Current authorised provision in 2007	Minimum Additional Permanent Residential Pitches Required (2007-2016)	Proposed Provision of Permanent Residential Pitches at 2016	Minimum Additional Transit Residential Pitches Required (2007-2016)
Knowsley	0	10	10	5
Liverpool	14	25	39	5
Sefton	16	30	46	5
Wirral	0	10	10	5
Study Area	30	75	105	20

- 4.9 For Travelling Showpeople the interim draft policy recommends increased provision as follows:

Authority	Current Authorised Provision In 2007	Minimum Additional Plots Required 2007-2016	Proposed Provision Of Plots At 2016
Knowsley	0	0	0
Liverpool	0	0	0
Sefton	0	5	5
Wirral	0	5	5
Study Area	0	10	10

- 4.10 It can be seen from the above that the interim draft policies arising from the RSS partial review contain numbers for additional pitch provision in excess of the numbers identified in the Merseyside Accommodation Assessment. Specifically, in relation to permanent pitch



provision, the RSS interim draft policy review figure is for an additional 30 pitches whereas the GTAA specified an additional 16 in the period to 2016. For transit pitches the Sefton RSS figure is 5 whereas the GTAA specified 10 for Merseyside as a whole, and for Travelling Showpeople the Sefton RSS figure is 5 pitches whereas the GTAA identified no need, (although it recommended monitoring). Furthermore, draft policy L6 requires an additional 3% (compound) increase per annum to account for population increases between 2017 and 2021. Where Core Strategies look beyond 2021, the same rate should be applied. Sefton's Core Strategy has an end date of 2026, so this means the Core Strategy has to provide for additional pitches in all categories (permanent, transit and travelling showpeople) at the compound rate of 3% per annum between 2017 and 2026.

- 4.11 4NW have provided an explanation for the interim draft RSS policy figures being higher than those in the Merseyside GTAA as follows:
- (1) In addition [to the GTAA findings] an allowance has been made to address the issue raised by the Gypsy and Traveller community of "hidden" overcrowding on existing sites and concealed Gypsy and Traveller households who currently reside on other caravan sites and holiday parks, who for various cultural and management reasons remain undetected in GTAAs.
  - (2) Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are identified in GTAAs on a 'need where it is seen to arise' basis. However, the results of these apportionments should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should actually be met to the identified degree in these specific localities. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the region. Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances; for example, an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or, an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed in GTAAs, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities that already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).
  - (3) The methodology clearly builds upon the evidence base whilst taking into account the strong messages from the options stage consultation and the clear policy direction advocated by sub regional elected members since Spring 2008, at successive meetings of 4NW's Regional Leaders Forum, Regional Planning Group and Regional Housing Group, that the policy and pitch provision should be developed as follows: "Working with sub-regional partnerships and the Gypsy and Traveller Community agree a more balanced share of meeting need across districts, reflecting a wider range of factors other than solely the 'need where it arises' basis. This would see pitch provision distributed to meet the requirements for Gypsies and Travellers, so that they had the same chance to enjoy equal (or comparable) access to services and facilities, social land economic opportunities, as the settled community, and thus contribute towards community cohesion and sustainable communities."
  - (4) The current pattern of provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers is concentrated in particular parts of the region as explained above. In light of feedback from the Options Consultation stage, the distribution of additional pitches in Interim Draft Policy L6 seeks to broaden the choice available to the Gypsy and

Traveller community by providing some pitches in areas where previously little provision has been made. It also seeks to assist the delivery of pitches by widening the geographic distribution to increase provision in areas beyond those where the highest level of need is currently evident. However, the distribution of additional pitches remains to a significant degree concentrated in parts of the region where Gypsies and Travellers currently reside...."

- 4.12 The RSS interim draft policy is subject to a consultation period running until 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009, and a statutory 12-week consultation will take place during summer 2009. 4NW have also set up a series of meetings across the region during February 2009 in an effort to sit down with Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and officer representatives from Local Authorities and others to discuss Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site allocations. Officers from Sefton will be attending the meetings.
- 4.13 The new higher numbers proposed for Sefton do not appear to reflect the logic of the 4NW explanation in that it greatly increases an existing uneven distribution of the burden within the Merseyside sub region. Sefton officers have not been seen the full reports justifying the Travelling Showpeople pitch numbers, but question the need for such provision given Sefton and Merseyside's lack of travelling fairs and being some distance from the main transport network. Subject to further adequate explanation being received the figures will therefore be strongly challenged.
- 4.14 After 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 4NW officers will analyse the feedback and revise the policies and pitch provision as appropriate. It is envisaged that at the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009 meeting of the 4NW Regional Leaders Forum members will then be asked to approve the final version of the draft policies. A 12-week formal public consultation exercise will then take place, followed by an Examination in Public in late 2009.

## **5.0 FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Clearly the assessed need for additional pitches has many implications for Sefton: as a local planning authority; as a site provider and landlord; in relation to supporting vulnerable groups; in ensuring fair access to housing choices; and in securing continuing community cohesion.
- 5.2 In relation to planning for additional pitch provision, the additional need as assessed by the GTAA (and, in due course, the RSS) will need to inform and be incorporated into the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). Sefton's overall strategy for providing sites for Gypsies and Travellers will need to be set out in the LDF Core Strategy.
- 5.3 The Core Strategy document is currently in preparation. Gypsies and Travellers will be amongst the groups to be included in the consultation and preparation of the document. The Core Strategy consultation will be carried out up until October 2009 and the adoption date is expected to be around April 2011.
- 5.4 The specific allocation of sites will need to be via the Allocations DPD. It is anticipated that the start of preparation of this will be around May 2010. It is expected to be adopted in June 2012.
- 5.5 Before the adoption of the Core Strategy and the Allocations DPD the short term strategy for meeting the housing requirements of Gypsies and Travellers will be to identify suitable sites from those sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), pending the provision of more permanent pitches. It is anticipated that the outcome of the SHLAA will be known in April/May 2009. Whilst not anticipating the outcome of the SHLAA and the associated option appraisal it does seem clear that, particularly for mid Sefton, finding suitable sites will be challenging and is likely to require additional funding for site search and appraisal and community consultation. This is especially the case if Sefton has to provide pitches for Travelling Showpeople, as they need adequate space for fairground

equipment, which makes them less suitable for residential areas due to amenity issues.

- 5.6 In addition to this, Sefton officers still believe that the Merseyside local authorities need to work together to agree a fair sub-regional distribution of pitches in conjunction with Regional Planning Officers from 4NW. Collaborative work on the process for identification of sites and criteria for options appraisals may also take place, although this is not yet agreed with the other Merseyside authorities.
- 5.7 It should be noted that the Government does make available, through annual bidding rounds, 100% grant aid for providing additional pitches/new sites once they are identified. Running costs are defrayed via rents and service charges and are not covered by Government grant.
- 5.8 At this stage outlining a more detailed timetable over and above that indicated above is not possible. Clearly much will depend upon workshops and liaison with 4NW, the partial review of the RSS, detailed appraisal of sites arising from the SHLAA and the outcome of community consultations. The outcome of this work will form the subject of further reports to Cabinet Members and Cabinet. Other questions such as arrangements for the financing and management of future new sites(s) will also be addressed in future reports.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 In summary:

1. There is a statutory duty to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
2. Assessed need must be incorporated into local housing and planning policy via the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents in order for them to be considered sound.
3. Sefton's assessed need, for the period to 2016, as currently modified via the interim draft RSS policy, is for 30 additional permanent pitches, 5 transit pitches and 5 pitches for Travelling Showpeople. By 2026, the end of the Core Strategy, the pitch numbers will be need to be increased by 3% compound per annum between 2016 and 2026.
4. The interim draft RSS policy is currently being consulted upon, with further consultation in Summer 2009, and the Sefton figures are being questioned and challenged by Officers via the consultation.
5. Further reports will be submitted in due course.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That Planning Committee and Cabinet Members note the report and recommend that Cabinet:

1. Note the report and the need to incorporate in the Council's Core Strategy under the Local Development Framework additional Gypsy & Traveller and potentially Travelling Showpeople pitch provision in line with the assessed need as identified in the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, other relevant studies and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy policies.
2. Authorise the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Health and Social Care and the Environmental Protection Director, to respond on behalf of Sefton to the consultations around the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review policies on Gypsy & Traveller permanent

and transit pitch provision and provision for Travelling Showpeople.

3. Note that further research work will be needed to identify suitable sites and engage in consultation work.
4. Agree to further reports being submitted as details emerge as a result of discussions with sub regional and regional partners.