

Scrutiny briefing note

This Briefing note updates Economy Scrutiny Panel on a review of the approach, following the adoption of Negotiated Stopping Agreements (NSA's) for Gypsy and Travellers visiting the Borough. This note contains the latest position as of August 2023.

Background/Updates

At the Economy Scrutiny Panel on 8th July 2022 the panel recommended to Cabinet.

That the Executive Director of Environment, Economy, and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets conducts a review of the new approach in SIX months' time to allow an understanding for the need for changes.

Furthermore, at the Cabinet meeting of 20th July 2022 Cabinet agreed a mandate to:

1. Take note of the findings of the exploration work that has been conducted to understand how a 'negotiated stopping agreement' (NSA) approach could be implemented
2. Approves the adoption of the 'NSA approach' outlined within the body of this report and authorises the Executive Director of Environment, Economy, and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets to so implement, making any amendments or modifications as may be necessary from time to time
3. That the Executive Director of Environment, Economy and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets conducts a review of the new approach in 6 months' time (or earlier if required) to allow an understanding for the need for changes

In Jan 2023 Scrutiny received a further update to advise that since implementation there had been no visitors to the area from the Gypsy and Travelling community, staying on Council land, therefore the NSA approach had not been tested.

Since then, there has been two visits to the area.

- On the 13th July eight caravans arrived on Wellington Street carpark which is Council owned located to the rear of Boyes, Freeman Street. The land was classed as Tier 2, so the new process was trialled. The group was of French descent and consisted of approximately 40 people. The group had previously visited North East Lincolnshire approximately three years ago. The head of the family signed the contract, and it was agreed that they could stay on site until the 31st July. Waste bins were provided however they declined the offer of portable toilets. A welfare assessment was undertaken in accordance with the

guidance and one of the females were nine months pregnant, so an outreach practitioner attended the site.

On the 18th of July, the group left the site early due to threats from an Eastern European resident who it was alleged threatened to burn down their caravans. The site was left very clean with minimal waste.

The group relocated on Water Street Carpark, Immingham. Having visited the group they advised that they only intended to stay here for one night, so no contract was issued and they left on the following day.

- On the 4th August 2023, two caravans arrived in the carpark of Immingham Leisure Centre. The group advised that they intended staying for one night and no contract was issued. A notice of direction was served on the group, and they left on the 6th August. Waste bins were provided, and minimal waste was left.

Recommendation /Next steps

As previously recommended through the renewed Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), this update provides evidence that there is insufficient demand for the need to identify a fixed designated stopping site for the travelling community. The introduction of Designated Stopping Agreements assists in adopting a new approach to visits to the area.

This approach brings the opportunity to work with the travellers to ensure in the first instance they are not on sites that are intolerable but also looks to provide services to travellers to mitigate some of the issues that have previously been met by communities.

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