

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 17 March 2025

Question from: Aberline McShane

Question to: Councillor Patient, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action and Housing

QUESTION

Why is the Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document limited to sites for the settled community, rather than nomadic gypsies and travellers visiting Calderdale?

Response

The evidence base which underpins the Development Plan Document (DPD) finds a need for 22 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the period to 2040 and suggests that the Council should also consider options for transit provision given the level of unauthorised encampment activity in the borough. The Council's proposed preferred approach is the allocation of three sites to meet the need for permanent pitches. These are expected to provide a total of 21 pitches, which falls short of the need figure of 22 pitches. No other sites subject to assessment were considered to be available, suitable or viable.

In terms of transit provision, the Council has been working closely with Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (Leeds GATE) who have recommended the implementation of a negotiated stopping policy by the Council. This involves the Council making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to land more suitable for all parties. Terms are agreed between both parties, including time stopped on the land and services to be provided by the Council.

The Council are currently considering the introduction of negotiated stopping which would include exploring the principles, processes and terms that will be required to support a negotiated stopping policy. This is a separate piece of work to the DPD.

This approach has been used elsewhere, such as in Leeds. It could help to foster good relationships with the Gypsy and Traveller community, steer roadside encampments from environmentally sensitive sites and could reduce eviction and clean-up costs for the Council.