

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-094-2008/09.**  
**Date of meeting: 5 February 2009**



**Portfolio: Planning and Economic Development.**

**Subject: Extension of Consultation Period for Gypsies and Travellers Options Consultation.**

**Responsible Officer: Ian White (01992 564066).**

**Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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### **Recommendations:**

**To approve a two-week extension to the consultation period for the Gypsies and Travellers Consultation on Options so that the end date is 5pm on Friday 20 February 2009.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Consultation on the Options document for increasing pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers commenced on 4 November and was originally intended to end on 20 January. The period was extended to 6 February because there were some early printing problems. A second extension period is proposed to allow sufficient time after an external training session on making effective responses in line with the requirements of the new development planning system.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The training session was held on 21 January and it is considered that this is too close to the current end of the consultation period (6 February), so more time should be allowed for respondents to make their case in the light of the outcomes of the training. It is also felt that a fortnight's extension is a reasonable period, and that this would not endanger the Council meeting the deadline for the submission of the final document by the end of September 2009.

### **Other Options for Action:**

To retain the end date of 6 February 2009.

### **Report:**

1. In September 2007 the Secretary of State directed the Council to prepare a separate Development Plan Document on pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers. The document is to be ready for submission for Examination in Public by the end of September 2009.

2. The Options consultation, which identified potentially suitable sites, commenced on 4 November 2008. It was originally intended to finish on 20 January 2009, but was extended to 6 February 2009 to allow for delays caused by early printing problems and consequent lack of documents.

3. It was intended to hold a training session for members, local councils, local societies and other organisations before the end of 2008 to explain the new planning system (the Local Development Framework) and to advise on how best to respond to the Options consultation under the new system. Tenders for this were sent out in early December, but there were no replies the first time round. Three replies were received for a second request for Tenders and

Andrew Wright, of Planning Officers Society Enterprises, was appointed. His timetable meant that the earliest date he could make for the training sessions was 21 January. The two sessions (the first concentrating on explaining the intentions, content and procedures of the Local Development Framework, and the second on making effective representations) were quite well attended by Members, local councils and a number of local organisations.

4. In view of the closeness of the training sessions to the end of the consultation period, it is felt that a short extension is justified to allow respondents to take on board the information made available and discussed at the sessions. Copies of the slide presentations have also been made available on the Council's website.

5. An extension of two weeks is considered appropriate in the circumstances, and officers are satisfied that this should not interfere with the timetable to meet the September deadline for submission of the final version of the document.

**Resource Implications:**

There are no budgetary implications provided the deadline set by the Direction is still met.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Members proposed the extension to the consultation period shortly after the training sessions.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Impact Assessments:**

The only potential risk is to the timetable for submission set by the Direction. Officers are satisfied that the extended period for consultation response can be accommodated without serious risk.