

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## ENVIRONMENT & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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**Date of meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009  
**Report of:** John Knight - Head of Planning and Policy  
**Title:** Consultation by 4NW on the Submitted Draft North West Plan Partial Review

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### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the Council's response to the submitted draft North West Plan Partial Review prepared by 4NW.

### **2.0 Decision Required**

- 2.1 To make a recommendation to the relevant Portfolio Holders:

1) That the Council objects to the Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision figures identified in draft policy L6 for Cheshire East as they exceed the figures shown in the Cheshire Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA);

2) That the Council objects to the current wording in policies L6 and L7, concerning the provision of an annual 3% compound increase in overall residential pitch provision beyond 2016, as it fails to fully recognise that a review of the GTAA may result in the requirement for a different level of provision or percentage increase beyond 2016;

3) That the Council supports the Travelling Showpeople plot provision for Cheshire East identified in draft policy L7; and

4) That, while broadly welcoming the proposed revisions to the regional parking standards, the Council objects to some of the content of Table 8.1.

### **3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs**

- 3.1 None

### **4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond**

- 4.1 No direct resource implications at this stage although proposals in Partial Review of the RSS will need to be taken into account by the Council when it prepares its Local Development Framework.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 None

## **6.0 Risk Assessment**

6.1 There are no directly associated risks with this consultation although proposals in Partial Review of the RSS will need to be taken into account by the Council when it prepares its Local Development Framework.

## **7.0 Background and Options**

7.1 The partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is limited to three subject areas: Gypsies & Travellers; Travelling Showpeople; and Regional Parking Standards. The Council must make any representations on the draft policies by October 19<sup>th</sup>, which is the end of the consultation period. These policies will have direct implications for the LDF especially for the provision of Gypsy & Traveller sites. It is likely that the Council's core strategy will set out the criteria for the location of these sites, while other LDF documents will translate these requirements into land allocations, and set out how these sites will be delivered.

### **Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in Cheshire East**

7.2 Draft policy L6 proposes that the Council make provision for a minimum of 60 additional permanent residential pitches and 10 transit pitches between 2007 and 2016. Beyond 2016 provision will be made across the region for an annual 3% compound increase in the level of overall permanent residential pitch provision. Within Cheshire East provision will be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as set out for 2007 – 2016.

7.3 Table 1 shows the levels of provision proposed in the partial review and includes a broad comparison with needs identified in the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) published in May 2007.

**Table 1 Proposed Scale and Distribution of Gypsy and Traveller Permanent Pitch Provision for Cheshire East**

Current Authorised Provision in 2007	Minimum additional permanent residential pitches required 2007 to 2016	Provision between 2016 to 2026 (based on 3% regional compound increase)	Total Additional Provision 2007 to 2026	Sub-regional GTAA assessment requirement 2006 to 2016
101	60	46	106	37 to 54

- 7.4 The previous interim policy set out a requirement for Cheshire East of 80 pitches to 2016. This figure was challenged by the authority as it was considered there was no robust evidence base to depart from the GTAA figure. Although the decision to reduce the requirement to 60 pitches is welcome, this figure is still above the upper limit figure shown in the GTAA (of 54 pitches) and no evidence is provided to support this increased figure. It is considered that the policy should reflect the range set out in the GTAA of 37 to 54 pitches, as this work follows an agreed methodology, both locally and nationally, and represents the most robust evidence base for determining future needs.
- 7.5 The draft policy requires GTAA's to be reviewed in 2013. There are currently proposals in Cheshire to complete another GTAA in 2010/11, which will build upon the previous work. Given the uncertainties of forecasting need over a long time period the policy should state that requirement figures beyond 2016 can be superseded by any updated GTAA that may be undertaken.

#### **Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople**

- 7.6 Draft policy L7 proposes at least 285 net additional plots for Travelling Showpeople between 2007 and 2016. The figure for Cheshire East is for an additional 10 plots between 2007 and 2016 which is an increase of 6 plots from that in the GTAA.

**Table 2 Proposed Scale and Distribution of Travelling Showpeople Permanent Plot Provision for Cheshire East**

Current Authorised Provision in 2007	Minimum additional permanent plots required 2007 to 2016	Provision between 2016 to 2026 (based on 3% regional compound increase)	Total Additional Provision required 2007 to 2026	Sub-regional GTAA assessment requirement 2006 to 2016
6	10	9	19	4

- 7.7 The Gypsy and Traveller Co-ordinator for the Cheshire sub-region advises that there is additional evidence from the Showmen's Guild that would justify an increase in plots from the GTAA. As such it is not considered that a fundamental objection to the policy figure should be made. However, as with policy L6 there are concerns over the forecasting of need beyond 2016 and it is suggested that the policy is amended to reflect the updating of the GTAA.

## Regional Parking Standards

- 7.8 The partial review has produced a revised set of North West Parking Standards that will provide the framework for the identification at a local level of the maximum parking provision within new developments. Local Authorities will be required to divide all areas within their boundary into three 'Area Accessibility Categories' as set out in the Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Area Accessibility Categories**

Area Accessibility Category	Locations
A	City & Town Centres in Metropolitan Areas; Regional town and City Centres
B	Non-metropolitan key service centre town centre; District or local centres in metropolitan areas; District or local centres in regional town and cities.
C	All other areas ranging from those in regional towns and cities to villages and rural areas.

- 7.9 The approach suggested is designed to allow for varying levels of accessibility to be taken into account, with more restrictive standards in those areas that have the highest levels of public transport accessibility and development density. The policy says it will be for Local Authorities through their LDF's to provide justification for the categorisation of areas.
- 7.10 The production of revised guidance is broadly welcomed but the Council's Highways Development Manager considers that a number of changes should be made to the proposed maximum parking standards detailed in Table 8.1 of the Submitted Draft Partial Review, as follows:
- 1) The table indicated that smaller food and non-food facilities (under 500sqm) may require significantly less parking due to the fact they serve local needs. However, experience has shown that small stores with inadequate car parking provision can create problems on the highway network. It is considered that this comment should not apply within Accessibility Area Type C;
  - 2) The table provides an over simplification of the relationship between floor area and staff numbers for B8 (storage and distribution) uses. Further research should be undertaken on B8 parking requirements and the table should be amended to state that parking provision for each application should be judged on its own merits; and
  - 3) A comment should be added to the table in relation to some of the D1 uses, namely clinics & health centres and crèches, that these types of facilities should be located in sustainable locations served by a range of modes of transport.

## **8.0 Recommendation**

- 8.1 That Officers raise objections to Table 8.1 and to draft policies L6 and L7 of the partial review based on the reasons set out in this report.

## **9.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 9.1 To respond to the consultation from 4NW.

### ***For further information:***

*Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jamie Macrae; Councillor David Brown*

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### ***Background Documents:***

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.