

Agenda Item 10(a)

Update from Task and Finish Group – Sites for Gypsies and Travellers

- In the South Hams there is a disproportionate number of unauthorised G&T encampments and no official sites. This lack of provision has implications for the planning enforcement regime.
- Many such sites are on DCC highway land. Subject to the occupants meeting the requirements set out in the DCC Code of Practice and Handbook, DCC will normally tolerate such unauthorised encampments as “areas of temporary acceptance”.
- A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment has been undertaken to complement the Plymouth area Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA). It includes recommendations on the number of permanent G&T pitches required in the future.
- The Assessment presents the pitch requirement for the district as a range between 22 and 30 pitches to be delivered between 2013 and 2017. It indicates that there will be no additional need arising during the period following up to 2027.
- A Land Availability Assessment (LAA) has been undertaken recently to inform the preparation of Our Plan. The process included consideration of the sites for G&T use.
- A site in the Totnes area has been promoted by the landowner and has received an initial favourable assessment. The suitability of this site is being considered further and discussions with the landowner are on-going.
- The preparation of Our Plan will provide an opportunity to identify and allocate an official G&T site or sites.
- SHDC and DCC are continuing to work together in order to address this issue in both the short and longer terms. This has recently included an assessment of the potential of public sector owned sites for G&T accommodation provision. This included County Farms land and a site south of Lee Mill was assessed. It was concluded that due to the small size of the holding the release of part of it could jeopardise the future operation of the farm.
- Officers of both authorities liaise regularly on the range of G&T issues. To assist with working towards an appropriate way forward, direct engagement with the G&T community is envisaged.