

BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

**Report of the Executive
Director - Communities**

Grange Lane Emergency Stopping Site

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To advise members of the feedback from elected members, residents and a residents group in relation to the proposed re-opening of the Emergency Stopping site at Grange Lane.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Cabinet notes the feedback from the consultation undertaken with local elected members and local residents**
- 2.2 **Cabinet agrees to open the Emergency Stopping Site at Grange Lane from 13th March 2017**

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The Emergency Stopping Site at Grange Lane was opened in March 2015 providing 11 caravan pitches designed for temporary occupancy for passing Gypsy and Traveller groups. The provision of such a site was deemed a requirement for Barnsley to ensure a sufficient number of pitches were available in the town. This was subsequently reflected in the Local Plan and formed part of a formal consultation in 2014/15.
- 3.2 The site was temporarily closed in the spring of 2015 following problems experienced with the initial encampment placed there. The experience and following closure prompted a review of the site management arrangements to attempt to address some concerns raised by local residents in Stairfoot. Some of these concerns were voiced at the local Crime and Safety Group and officers agreed to consider the issues that were raised prior to the site being reopened.
- 3.3 The review of management arrangements has now been concluded with significant changes made including;
- Payment up front for use of the site.
 - Dedicated officer time commitment of 3 hours per day (Monday to Friday) and 1 hour per day (Saturday and Sunday) to manage the site when occupied.
 - A Toleration Agreement to be signed prior to occupancy outlining expectations and standards required.

The full schedule of reviewed management arrangements are attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.4** To support a more equitable and consistent approach to addressing issues presented by unauthorised and illegal encampments Cabinet endorsed a multi - agency protocol in February 2017. A primary feature for the protocol to be operationally effective in its current form is the provision of an emergency stopping place.
- 3.5** Whilst formal consultation was not required with regards reopening the stopping site at Grange Lane, local members for Stairfoot and Ardsley and Monk Bretton were engaged to discuss the proposed revised management arrangements on 1st February 2017. Additionally a letter outlining the revised arrangements (included in Appendix 1) was prepared for circulation to residential properties and businesses in the immediate vicinity of Grange Lane. Local members also requested further face to face engagement with Stairfoot and Ardsley Crime and Safety Group on 6th February 2017. Elected members provided feedback for amendments to the letter which was to be circulated from the 3rd February to 8th February. Residents were asked to feedback any comments via the safer@barnsley.gov.uk website within 14 days of receipt of the letter. The final closing date for comments was 22nd February 2017.
- 3.6** The Head of Service Safer Communities, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer and the Cabinet Spokesperson for Communities attended the Stairfoot and Ardsley Crime and Safety Group on 6th February to outline the revised site management proposals.
- 3.7** The letter being circulated to local residents was also distributed to those in attendance at the meeting.
- 3.8** Feedback from Engagement
- Of the 25 local residents attending the Crime and Safety Group all unanimously stated that they were not in agreement with the site being reopened as an Emergency Stopping site irrespective of any improved management arrangements being put in place.
 - Of the 80 letters distributed to businesses and residents (App 2) there have been 6 respondents to safer@barnsley.gov.uk all of which are against the reopening of the site.
 - Of the 45 properties and businesses visited by the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer most seemed conciliated with new management procedures but all were still opposed to the location of the site.
 - No additional suggestions came forward in terms of the proposed management of the site for the council to consider.
- Main concerns can be summarised below :

Concern	Response
That the site will not be properly managed	The management arrangements attached as App 1 to this report detail the operational management of the site.
Increase on traffic on Grange Lane	There is no evidence to support this however we will keep this under review.

Increase in ASB	The management arrangements attached at App 1 alongside dedicated capacity (ref 3.3 of this report)
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4. Proposal and justification

- 4.1** In arriving at this proposal we recognise that council needs to balance the concerns arising from this informal consultation with local people with the requirements of the National Planning Policy which requires councils to assess the need and ensure an appropriate supply of traveller sites.
- 4.2** The arrangements as described through Appendix 1 provide assurance that the temporary stopping site will be managed appropriately - these arrangements will be continuously reviewed with a formal review in October 2017.

We propose therefore that :

- 4.3** Cabinet notes the feedback from the informal consultation undertaken with local elected members, local residents and businesses.
- 4.4** Cabinet agrees to open the Emergency Stopping Site at Grange Lane from 13th March 2017.

5. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 5.1** The council could decide not to have an emergency stopping site however this goes against established need and could jeopardise the Local Plan.
- 5.2** The council could consider an alternative site to Grange Lane however despite previous enquiries no other suitable site has been identified.

6. Implications for local people / service users

- 6.1** There is local public opposition to an emergency stopping site at Stairfoot. This opposition has been exacerbated by the initial experience of using the site. We have reassured local consultees that any re-opening of the site will be well managed and that previous occupants responsible for the initial problems will be excluded.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1** Costs of reopening the site will be contained in existing resources. The pre-paid charge to be levied against site occupancy is set at a level to cover the cost of services and amenities.

8. Employee implications

- 8.1** None

9. Communications implications

9.1 Communications and Marketing have been involved throughout the process to introduce a Protocol and consider the reopening of Grange Lane due to local opposition to the proposal and local media interest.

9.2 It is anticipated that should a decision be taken to reopen the site further communication will be required.

10. **Consultations**

Informal Consultation was undertaken as follows :

10.1 Engagement with local elected members

10.2 Engagement with Stairfoot and Ardsley Crime and Safety Group

10.3 80 letters circulated to residents and businesses in the Grange Lane area.

11. **The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

11.1 **Thriving and Vibrant Economy:** Reopening the Grange Lane site will support the council's economic ambitions enabled in the Local Plan.

12. **Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion**

12.1 In dealing with unauthorised and illegal encampments, all partner agencies will have due regard to the legal requirements as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. The Barnsley Community Safety Partnership is committed to promoting equality and diversity and ensuring that everyone is treated fairly taking into account their individual needs and circumstances.

12.2 Agencies will take all reasonable steps to ensure they do not unlawfully discriminate and will treat everyone with the same level of courtesy, dignity and respect regardless of any of the protected characteristics.

13. **Tackling the Impact of Poverty**

13.1 None.

14 **Tackling health inequalities**

14.1. Health inequalities can disproportionately impact the traveller community. One of the considerations for the management of the site is to ensure that any encampment receives appropriate health checks which will be taken into consideration when identifying the most appropriate actions.

15. **Reduction of crime and disorder**

15.1 It is anticipated that by reopening an emergency stopping site potential disorder issues will be alleviated in more sensitive locations.

16. **Risk management issues**

16.1 The Operational Risk Register identifies a risk (reference 3502) of the inability to move unauthorised and illegal encampments (particularly in high risk areas such as near schools and industrial sites) in an expedited manner due to capacity issues. By re-opening the emergency stopping site, it increases the feasibility of moving encampments more quickly from sensitive locations.

16.2 Operational and reputational risks associated with re-opening the Emergency Stopping Place have been considered specifically the likely significant local opposition to the decision. To mitigate these risks a more robust operational management approach has been developed. (See Appendix 1)

17. **Health, safety, and emergency resilience issues**

17.1 Occupational Risk Assessments will be reviewed in line with the development of the operational management procedure for the Grange Lane emergency stopping site

17.2 A full health and safety assessment review will be undertaken of the site upon its reopening.

18. **Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

18.1 The provision of an emergency stopping site ensures a balanced and equitable approach to ensure that our duties are fulfilled appropriately in line with the European Convention on Human Rights.

19. **Conservation of biodiversity**

19.1 None

20. **Glossary**

20.1 None

21. **List of appendices**

21.1 Appendix 1 – Schedule of management arrangements

21.2 Appendix 2 – Draft consultation letter

22. **Background papers**

22.1 None

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Financial Implications /

Consultation
<i>(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)</i>