

# Public Document Pack




**Meeting:** Scrutiny Management Board  
**Date:** Thursday 18th January, 2024  
**Time:** 7.00 pm  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, Northants, NN17 1QG

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To members of the Scrutiny Management Board:

Councillor Gill Mercer (Chair), Councillor Lyn Buckingham, Councillor Lora Lawman, Councillor Graham Lawman, Councillor King Lawal and Councillor Kevin Watt

<b>Agenda</b>			
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<b>01</b>	Apologies for absence		
<b>02</b>	Notification of requests to attend the meeting.		
<b>03</b>	Declarations of Interest		
<b>Items for Decision</b>			
<b>04</b>	Call-In of Key Decision Relating to Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell	Adele Wylie, Executive Director of Customer and Governance Ben Smith, Head of Democratic Services	5 - 42
<b>05</b>	Close of Meeting		
<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p><b>Proper Officer</b> <b>10 January 2024</b></p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Committee Administrator: Ben Smith

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## Scrutiny Management Board Thursday 18 January 2023

Report Title	Call-In of Key Decision Relating to Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell
Report Author	Adele Wylie, Executive Director of Customer and Governance and Monitoring Officer <a href="mailto:adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk">adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk</a> Ben Smith, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer <a href="mailto:ben.smith@northnorthants.gov.uk">ben.smith@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A

### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Notice of Call-In of Key Decision

Appendix B – Extract from minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 December 2023

Appendix C – Report to Executive of 21 December 2023 - Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell

Appendix D – Elements of Call-In not considered by the Monitoring Officer as valid

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To note the call-in by eight councillors of an Executive key decision of 21 December 2023 in respect of 'Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell', and to consider the next steps that the Scrutiny Management Board may take in accordance with the Constitution's Scrutiny Procedure Rules relating to call-in.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1. On 31 December 2023 a call-in request was received from Councillor Jim Hakewill, supported by Councillors Leanne Buckingham, Charlie Best, Dez Dell, Emily Fedorowycz, Martin Griffiths, Matt Keane, and Sarah Tubbs.
- 2.2. The call-in request was considered against the list of requirements set out in paragraph 18.1 of Part 7.1 of the Council Constitution's Scrutiny Procedure Rules and considered valid by the Monitoring Officer on 4 January 2024.

The effect of the call in is to prevent the decision detailed below of the Executive from being implemented whilst the Scrutiny Management Board considers any alternative course of action, or recommendations they wish to propose:.

- a) recommend to full Council the approval of the project being added to the 2024/25 Capital Programme to deliver the Travellers Temporary Stopping site and establish a budget of £1,300,000 to be funded through borrowing, and
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Member for Rural Communities and Localism in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy to submit an application for planning permission for the project and procure the necessary works to provide the Travellers Temporary Stopping site, and undertake any other actions required to deliver the project within the approved financial envelope.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1. Following consideration of the call-in in respect of Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell and the reasons given that have been deemed as valid, the Scrutiny Management Board is asked to either:-
  - a) Refer the decision back to the Executive for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns and any alternative recommendations;
  - b) Refer the matter to full Council after seeking the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules if it considers that the decision is outside the Council's budget and policy framework; or
  - c) Decide to take no further action, and note accordingly the original Executive decision will be effective immediately.

- 3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – To comply with good governance and the call-in procedure set out in paragraphs 15-18 of Part 7.1 of the Constitution’s Scrutiny Procedure Rules.)*
- 3.3. *(Alternative Options Considered – In responding to the call-in, the Scrutiny Management Board has three options to consider, to either refer back to the Executive, refer (in specific circumstances) to full Council, or to take no further action and allow the Executive decision to take effect.*

#### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1. Call-in is the exercise of the Council's scrutiny committees' statutory power in section 21(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 to review an Executive decision that has been made but not yet implemented. Within the Council's Constitution's Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Management Board has the responsibility to determine call in requests.
- 4.2. Once a decision is called in it cannot be implemented until the call-in procedure is complete.
- 4.3. A call-in was received by the Monitoring Officer on 31 December 2023 in relation to Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell, a copy of which is attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 4.4. The call-in is in respect of a decision by the Executive on 21 December 2023 relating to the rationale, work required, methodology and estimated costs to provide a Travellers temporary stopping site on land in the ownership of North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) adjacent to Junction 3 of the A14 close to the town of Rothwell.
- 4.5. The Executive in making its decision has sought to satisfy a strategic need to make provision for temporary stopping places to serve the North Northamptonshire area, as demonstrated by the 2019 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Currently there are no temporary stopping places for transient travellers passing through the NNC area to use which would provide for safe and secure places to stop with suitable facilities.
- 4.6. An extract from the minutes and a copy of the Executive report setting out its reasoning is attached at Appendices B and C to this report respectively.

#### **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1. The elements of the call in that the Monitoring Officer considers are valid, and should be considered as the focus of discussion, asserts that the following principles of decision making outlined in Part 1.1 of the Constitution have been breached by the making of the decision by the Executive in respect of:-

- i) Best Value/Transparency
    - Alternative sites were not considered by the Executive and the process of discounting alternative sites was not considered by the Executive.
  - ii) Best Value
    - Full borrowing costs are not set out within the Executive report
  - iii) Best Value
    - The Executive decision should have been considered as part of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.
- 5.2. The detailed reasoning for these assertions, together with the other elements of the call-in that the Monitoring Officer does not consider are valid are set out in the Notice of Call-In at Appendix A.
- 5.3. The Monitoring Officer's reasoning for not considering the remaining elements of the notice of call-in, i.e. those not set out in 5.1 above, are at Appendix D to this report.
- 5.4. The call-in goes on to seek a proposed alternative course of action to that of the Executive decision, requesting instead that:-
- “The decision should be reversed and the issue of identifying Temporary Stopping Places placed into the NNC wide Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan policy development already approved by Full Council, commencing in March/April 2024.”*
- 5.5. In considering the call-in, the Scrutiny Management Board can choose to either:-
- a) Refer the decision back to the Executive for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns and any alternative recommendations;
  - b) If it considers that the decision is outside the Council's budget and policy framework, refer the matter to full Council after seeking the advice of the Monitoring Officer and/or Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules; or
  - c) Decide to take no further action, in which case the original Executive decision will be effective immediately.



## 6. Next Steps

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- 6.1. Depending on the Scrutiny Management Board's decision, either the Executive will be requested to reconsider its decision, normally at its next meeting; the matter will be referred to full Council, or no further action will be taken and the decision will be effected immediately.

## 7. Implications (including financial implications)

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### 7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. The current estimated project cost set out in the Executive report of 21 December to deliver the Travellers Temporary Stopping Site is £1,300,000 (£1.3 Million).
- 7.1.2. A detailed full breakdown of the projected costs, proposals for the repurposing of capital allocations, scheme delivery plan and revenue budget implications is set out at section 7.1 of the Executive report attached at Appendix C.

### 7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The legal and governance implications of the decision are set out in paragraph 7.2 of the Executive Report (Appendix C).
- 7.2.2. This report supports good governance by application of the procedure set out in the Council's constitution in respect of Call-in.

### 7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The proposals made by the Executive is considered to be in line with the Council's Corporate Plan, particularly the priorities of creating safe and thriving places, green and sustainable environment, and provision of good quality and efficient modern public services. Further details are set out in paragraph 7.3 of the Executive Report (Appendix C).

### 7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. Significant and potential risks are both identified arising from the proposed recommendations in the report to the Executive which can be found at paragraph 7.4 (Appendix C).

### 7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. The Council conducted a focused engagement exercise undertaken as part of the capital bid that was made to the Traveller Site Fund, administered by DHLUC, for the provision of a Temporary Stopping Place at Junction 3 of the A14 in June 2022, which was based on the same proposal, further details of

which can be found in the report to the Executive at paragraph 7.5 (Appendix C).

#### **7.6. Consideration by Scrutiny**

- 7.6.1. The proposal considered by the Executive on 21 December has not been considered by the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

#### **7.7. Consideration by the Executive**

- 7.7.1. At its meeting of 21 December 2023, the Executive approved a key decision 2023 in respect of 'Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14 Rothwell', as set out at section 2.3 of this report. An extract from the minutes of the meeting, including the full decision can be found at Appendix B to this report.

#### **7.8. Equality Implications**

- 7.8.1. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are legally recognised as distinct ethnic groups and protected by The Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 from being discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity.
- 7.8.2. An Equality Screening Assessment was completed for the Travellers Temporary Stopping Site Capital Project which considered the impact of the proposals on the identified equality groups, further details of which can be found in the report to the Executive at paragraph 7.8 (Appendix C).

#### **7.9. Climate and Environmental Impact**

- 7.9.1. The climate and environment impact of the proposals set out to the Executive can be found in the Executive report at paragraph 7.9 (Appendix C).

#### **7.10. Community Impact**

- 7.10.1. Potential impacts to the community can be found in the report to the Executive at paragraph 7.10 (Appendix C).

#### **7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact**

- 7.11.1. Crime and Disorder impacts raising potentially positive impacts and also concerns can be found in the report to the Executive at paragraph 7.11 (Appendix C).

### **8. Background Papers**

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- 8.1. Report and Decision in relation to 'Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14, Rothwell' – considered by [Executive - 21 December 2023](#)





## Notice of Call-In of Key Decision



In accordance with section 18 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules within North Northamptonshire Council's Constitution, we the undersigned hereby give notice that we wish to Call-In the following key decision:

Resolution(s) to be called-in Item 7 Travellers Temporary Stopping Site - Land at Junction 3 of the A14, Rothwell
Meeting at which the decision was made North Northamptonshire Council – Executive Committee
Date of the Meeting - Thursday 21 December 2023



We believe that the following principle(s) of decision making outlined in Part 1.1 of the Council's Constitution have been breached by the making of this decision (tick all relevant boxes and outline reasons):


Principle	Reasons why believed to be in breach	Tick relevant box
That the action we are taking is proportionate to the results we need to achieve	<p>From the Council's constitution Part 7.1 (Page 170 last updated 29th June 2023).</p> <p>The highlighted sentence below identifies the opportunity for a decision made to be challenged/reviewed.</p> <p>"The purpose of the Scrutiny Committees are to influence the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. They do this through meeting regularly and having input into some policies and decisions before they are made, investigating important public issues through Task and Finish Groups <b>and where appropriate challenging or reviewing decisions once they are made through the Call In Procedure Rules</b>".</p>	

	<p>The above pre-amble is encapsulated in Part 7.1 (page 171):</p> <p><b><i>“1.7. Recommend that a decision made but not yet implemented, be reconsidered by the Executive through the Call In Procedure administered by the Scrutiny Management Board”.</i></b></p> <p>It is entirely reasonable and proportionate to request that full scrutiny of the financing and planning implications of this decision be carried out prior to committing the council to expending scarce resources on a planning application.</p>	
<p>That we consult where appropriate to do so</p>	<p>There was no consultation with Ward Councillors as laid down in the NNC Constitution. (Part 8.4 Member Officer Protocol Point 7 7.1-7.3)</p> <p>There has been no formal consultation with adjacent Parish Councils, the wider community or the Traveller community on either the need for a Temporary Stopping Site or the desirability of various locations in comparison to the Rothwell Green Space that is the subject of this call-in.</p> <p>No recognition of this area being of wildlife and nature interest, as recognised within the emerging Rothwell Neighbourhood Plan, has been taken into consideration.</p> <p>When consultation took place in the summer of 2022 on exactly the same proposal (including the exact same background papers) drew hundreds of comments which I have attached to the call-in email to the Monitoring Officer. These consultation responses were not included as background papers on the Executive Committee Agenda on the 21<sup>st</sup> December.</p>	


<p>That we respect human rights</p>	<p>The lack of consultation and any comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment that compares the suitability of all potential sites (in North Northamptonshire) in relation to existing Traveller community locations means that no recognition or assessment of the impact of this location has been made.</p> <p>People have a right to be consulted within published timescales and processes and will be rightly concerned that this proposal has been decided out of the context of the Gypsy and Traveller Local plan, which has commenced with stage one in the Spring of 2023.</p>	
<p>That the decision represents best value for North Northamptonshire</p>	<p>The Council is in an extremely difficult financial situation with the political leadership predicting further cuts to services in this and future financial years.</p> <p>Should this proposal not be placed within the agreed timetable for the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan, a timeline agreed by the Executive as recently as its November meeting, then a full Best Value/Value for Money investigation will be requested from the Council's Auditors.</p> <p>The original projected timescale from the EAP Planning and Communities meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023:</p> <p><b>5.21. The projected timescale for the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan endorsed by the Panel is set out below:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Early stakeholder and community involvement - April 2023 (completed)</b></li> <li>• <b>Draft Plan Consultation - September/October 2023</b></li> <li>• <b>Publication Plan Consultation - January/February 2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Submission to the Secretary of State - April 2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Examination - July 2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Inspector's Report - December 2024</b></li> </ul>	

	<p>• <b>Adoption - February 2025</b></p> <p>The revised timescale from the Executive Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023:</p> <p><b>Early stakeholder and community engagement - April to May 2023</b>  <b>Draft Plan for consultation - March to April 2024</b>  <b>Publication consultation - November to December 2024</b>  <b>Submission to Secretary of State - February 2025</b>  <b>Examination - September 2025</b>  <b>Adoption - March 2026</b></p> <p>The best value for money option is to consider all aspects of providing for our Traveller community in the agreed timescales and not randomly pick this site and the associated funding outside the projected timeline.</p> <p>The papers within the report to the Executive Committee were reproduced from the funding bid from June 2022 and has not been updated to determine the cost of the decision in December 2023.</p> <p>Inflation in building costs has outstripped headline inflation creating a completely unknown cost which is likely to increase further.</p> <p>It cannot be best value for council tax payers to foot an unknown bill for an expensive site development that has not been tested against potentially far less expensive brownfield options.</p> <p>Comments locally from the Portfolio Holder and MP Philip Hollobone have sought to “comfort” those who are opposed to this location by saying it is unlikely to be used. This is the epitome of failing to achieve best value.</p>	
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	<p>The financial implications within the report do not explain the source of capital funding and any interest due along with any Minimum Revenue Requirement (MRP) to be set aside in the accounts. There is no period for the loan or interest attributable or interest lost. There is no medium term financial plan to clearly set out the direct and indirect costs of building and maintaining the Site. Thus no proper judgement as to value for money can be made or relied upon. The Council and its predecessors have a questionable history for bringing capital projects in on time and on budget.</p>	
<p>That we are open and transparent in the way we make decisions</p>	<p>At the Executive meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> December it was indicated that a number of sites had been considered and this one (Junction 3 - A14) chosen. The community have no transparency in knowing which other options were discounted and why and more importantly whether this proposal offers better value for money than those privately discounted. Previous iterations of seeking to come to a policy decision have included publishing multiple options and enabling community and partners to comment on them prior to making a decision. Good plan-making for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation requires collaboration with adjoining Councils. No evidence of this collaboration has been presented. No complimentary papers have been produced showing the position of the Police in supporting this with appropriate human and financial resource predictions from them.</p>	
<p>Be clear about what we trying to achieve and what the outcomes will be</p>	<p>In the absence of any background papers to support comments made within the report to the Executive on the 21<sup>st</sup> and verbal comments made by Executive Members at that meeting it is entirely unclear as to what the Council is trying to achieve by pulling this forward in isolation to Council's stated and approved policy timeline.</p>	

	<p>In the Executive report section 5 Issues and Choices:</p> <p><b><i>“(noting that there is a lack of provision of this need both regionally and nationally which has always been the case)”</i></b> There is no scrutiny as to why there has been a lack of provision which has ‘always been the case’. Research shows that these facilities are very hard and complex to establish and maintain, are not liked by the Traveller Community and often result in permanent occupation which entirely defeats the purpose.</p> <p>Analysis of the 16 awards made to Councils from the £10 million Traveller Site Fund 2022-2023 shows that only one new Transit Site (Cornwall Council) was awarded funding with two other awards being for refurbishment (Brighton and Hove and Swindon). There were no Temporary Stopping Sites awarded funding.</p> <p>13 awards were for permanent traveller sites which infers that government itself fails to see the value for money outcome by investing in Temporary Sites.</p>	
<p>Consider whether an alternative option is more appropriate</p>	<p>The alternative option is to follow the Council’s established Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan project timescale and consider this site along with all other options that will be proposed within the draft plan for consultation in March to April 2024.</p> <p>One alternative proposal is to use the long, screened, laybys on the A43 between Kettering and the Holcot roundabout ideally in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council as there is ownership in both Council’s asset register.</p>	



<p>Give reasons for why we have made decisions</p>	<p>The reasons for making this decision are still unclear.</p> <p>The report to the Executive Committee referenced the 2019 GTAA with the following:</p> <p><b><i>“2.6 The baseline date for the study is July 2018 which was when the majority of the household interviews were completed prior to publication of the GTAA Assessment”.</i></b></p> <p>The information in the GTAA is more than five years out of date, which is why it is being used as a base for the current development of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan the timescale for which is indicated elsewhere in this call-in request.</p> <p>The 2019 GTAA is mentioned four times within the Executive Report but was not included in the background papers. It does not give any sound weight to justify the proposal at Junction 3 and indeed is already being outweighed by the emerging Local Plan Policy. It cannot be given significant weight within a planning application.</p>	
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**Proposed alternative course of action/recommendations**

I (Cllr Jim Hakewill) and quite possibly other co-signing members of this call-in will look forward to attending, in person, the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee when this is discussed, in public.

As detailed above this decision should be reversed and the issue of identifying Temporary Stopping Places placed into the NNC wide Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan policy development already approved by Full Council, commencing in March/April 2024.

Should a suitable location be found then the funding source would properly go for capital/revenue decisions once planning permission is secured, leaving scarce resources to be spent on crucial aspects of the Council’s statutory responsibilities, not least within Social Care.

Taking this single aspect (Junction 3 -A14) out of the formally approved Local Plan process will lead to the Council facing challenges, potentially in the Courts, from people who will feel misled by the fact that the council approved a formal statutory process and then within days made a decision which doesn't comply with that published Local Plan timeline.

The most comprehensive background papers come from the "PLANNING COMMUNITIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL" held on Monday 27 March 2023. These papers have been published on the Council's website and throughout its 270 pages it gives a clear indication of how potential sites (Permanent and Temporary) will be identified and consulted upon from May 2023 to March 2026.

Within those papers it clearly states that that was 'the first stage of public consultation' in a plan now expected to be adopted in March 2026.

## ***"2. Executive Summary***

### ***2.1. This report introduces the first stage of public consultation for the North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan".***

[\(Public Pack\)North Northamptonshire Gypsy & Traveller Policy - Scope & Options Agenda Supplement for EAP Planning Communities, 27/03/2023 09:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Notes:

1. No-one who has visited the location can understand why this green space is being considered for development. I urge the Scrutiny Management Committee Members to visit the proposed location at Rothwell Green Space prior to coming to a decision.
2. Cllr David Brackenbury, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration, is also the Chairman of the Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) for Planning Communities. An EAP is not scrutiny, in fact it bypasses the Council's formal Scrutiny processes embedded in the Constitution. At the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> December Cllr Brackenbury did not allude to the deliberations and decisions of the Planning Communities EAP and advise caution to the Executive that their decision would be outside the policies approved and debated within the Committee he Chairs. Not least the Executive as a whole should have been cognisant of the decision of one month earlier to approve the timescales for the Local Plan.
3. In the debate Councillors Howes, Rowley and Binley articulated issues that they felt deemed the decision they were about to make was relevant, but there was no evidence base in the papers to justify, or otherwise, the validity of their comments. This can be seen on the YouTube recording.
4. The comments of Rothwell Town Council to the previous and current recycled proposals can be read here:

[Response from Rothwell Town Council to proposed NNC Transient Traveller's Site | Rothwell Town Council](#)

[2023-12-12-appendix-e-temporary-stopping-site.pdf \(rothwelltowncouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

5. In deciding on the call-in it would be desirable for the Scrutiny Management Committee to watch the item on YouTube.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/BU-z7CAq\\_Dk?feature=shared&t=1483](https://www.youtube.com/live/BU-z7CAq_Dk?feature=shared&t=1483)

Commencing at 24:43 ending 54:33

6. My 3 minutes comments to the Executive:

“Item 7 Travellers

This item should be considered within the emerging Gypsy and Traveller local Plan process which was adopted as recently as your last Executive on the 16 November 2023. That decision is now published for all to see on the council’s website.

3.5 Public consultation on the Scope and Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report took place between 5 April and 31 May 2023. The projected timescale for the North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan proposes consultation on a Draft Plan in March / April 2024.

The communities of North Northamptonshire, including Rothwell, should be able to take your recent decision on face-value and be confident of the process and know when major policy decisions like provision for our Gypsy and Traveller community will be scrutinised.

If this was a random speculative application from a private developer it could be understood as that, but this is our own Council with our own portfolio holder fully promoting it. If we can’t do the boring things like properly engaging with legislation what chance to do have of encouraging the wider community to embrace our processes.

There is nothing different from this agenda Item than was roundly criticised only a year ago, indeed the exact same plans are before us today. Hundreds of people were astonished by the idea that a lovely green space full of wildlife should be proposed to be dug up, concreted, and effectively destroyed.

I have heard that various people like the MP and Portfolio Holder have sought to comfort people concerned about this proposal by saying that “it will never be used”. I look forward to presenting that to our Auditors and seeking a best value review of spending £1.3 million capital and £ 100k annually on a facility that is unlikely to be used.

It is quite disingenuous to suggest that “nothing has been decided” or will be by the approval of this item today. The recommendations provide for an application to be progressed following pre-application advice already received. Scarce resources will be committed by this decision.

Take this off the agenda, place the papers within the March/April 2024 consultation and properly look at Traveller provision across the whole of North Northamptonshire.”

Signatures of those members requesting the call-in of the decision:

Note: each member must insert their own name in the table below. A separate email from the member communicating this is sufficient but should be evidenced upon submission of the form.

<b>Signed</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Request originator (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Jim Hakewill	31/12/23
2. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Matt Keane	
3. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Emily Fedorowycz	
4. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Leanne Buckingham	
5. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Dez Dell	
6. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Martin Griffiths	
7. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Sarah Tubbs	
8. (to be confirmed by individual emails)	Cllr Charlie Best	

## **Executive 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

### **Minute 553 - Travellers Temporary Stopping Site Land at Junction 3 of the A14, Rothwell**

The Chair invited Cllr Jim Hakewill to address the meeting. Cllr Hakewill suggested that the proposal before members should be considered within the emerging Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan process and made reference to the public consultation on the scope and options of the proposal and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that had taken place between 5<sup>th</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023, noting that the projected timescale for the North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan proposed consultation on the draft in Spring 2024.

Cllr Hakewill expressed the view that local communities should be confident of the processes involved in decision making and be aware when major policy decisions such as provision for the Gypsy and Traveller community would be scrutinised. Cllr Hakewill made reference to negative public perception of the site being used as proposed, effectively destroying a valuable green space.

Reference was made to the proposed cost of the project and whether it would provide value for money given the anticipated usage of the facility once complete in light of financial pressures affecting the Council's budget. Cllr Hakewill concluded by requesting that the item be withdrawn and considered as part of the consultation process for the North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hakewill for his comments before inviting Cllr Matt Keane to address the Executive. Cllr Keane noted that there was a need for a facility such as that proposed, but queried which other locations had been considered and what would happen should the facility be over-subscribed if opened. Cllr Keane also sought feedback on the Council's unsuccessful bid for the government's Traveller Site Fund.

The Chair thanked Cllr Keane for his contribution and invited Mr Mike Blissett to speak to the Executive. Mr Blissett called for a decision on the proposal to be delayed until a site feasibility investigation had been completed and for it to be considered alongside the development of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Mr Blissett contended that the site in question was not suitable for the proposed development, with issues relating to construction costs, loss of significant wildlife interest and local road congestion, suggesting alternative sites in the area that could be easier to convert, with lower potential running costs.

Mr Blissett noted the opposition to the proposal from Rothwell Town Council, the potential costs of the facility being above those detail in the report, including ongoing operating costs being a liability on taxpayers and the potential lack of use of the site once constructed.

The Chair thanked Mr Blissett for attending and speaking and invited Cllr Dorothy Maxwell to address the Executive. Cllr Maxwell spoke to note that the proposal would be of great benefit in reducing the number of unauthorised encampments in the area. Cllr Maxwell queried the cost implications for operating and maintenance costs and enforcement at the site, if required.

The Chair thanked all the speakers for their comments and invited Cllr David Howes, Executive Member for Rural Communities and Localism to introduce a report that detailed the rationale, work required, methodology and estimated costs to provide a Travellers Temporary Stopping Site on land in Council ownership adjacent to Junction 3 of the A14, Rothwell. The report also sought approval to add £1.3m to the Council's capital programme for 2024/25 and approve that borrowing in order to fund the project. Approval was also sought to procure and contract the delivery of the project to be delivered within the next two financial years.

Cllr Howes made reference to comments made by the speakers in regard to alternative sites, the intended use for the site at the point of purchase and the potential costs for development of the site. It was heard that the government's Travellers Site Fund had been heavily oversubscribed, with further funding bids possible should the government make available any future pots of funding.

Cllr Howes noted that there remained a strategic need for temporary stopping place provision within the Council area, as demonstrated by the 2019 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, with such provision providing a safe and secure place with suitable welfare facilities for groups of travellers passing through the Council's area to stop for a period of up to 28 days.

Details were provided to the meeting of the positive location of the site in terms of connectivity and reference was made to the additional powers that provision of such a site would allow the police in regard to unauthorised encampments, directing Traveller groups to go to the temporary stopping place or leave the Council area.

Cllr Helen Harrison spoke to welcome the movement towards provision of a stopping site in the Council area, noting that the facilities available at the site would have a beneficial impact on the welfare of Travellers and need for such a facility from a Public Health perspective.

Cllr David Brackenbury welcomed the report and the concept behind it, noting that there was a genuine need for the site as a means of preventing unauthorised encampments in the Council area.

Cllr Lloyd Bunday noted the additional controls over unauthorised encampments that provision of a stopping site would provide. The meeting heard that the site in question had previously been purchased by the former Kettering Borough Council with a view to commercial development.

Cllr Mark Rowley spoke to note that provision of a stopping site had been requested for some time by the Rural Forum and that the report, if approved, would recommend the project to Full Council for further consideration.

Cllr Matt Binley spoke to note that creation of a stopping site would provide support to travellers entering the Council's area as well as providing the Council and police with a useful tool in preventing unauthorised encampments. Cllr Binley noted the sensitivity of the issue but noted that there remained a strategic need for temporary stopping place provision in North Northamptonshire.

The Chair spoke to state the report before members was the simply the beginning of the process for creating temporary stopping provision, the proposal would need to go through the usual planning processes including consultation that all interested stakeholders could engage with.

Cllr Howes concluded debate by noting that there was potential to generate income to offset the running costs of the proposed site by charging occupiers a weekly rental fee per pitch in addition to a refundable damage deposit. A number of potential sites had been considered, with officers recommending the proposal before members as the most suitable.

## **RESOLVED**

### KEY DECISION

That the Executive:

- a) Recommended to Full Council the approval of the project being added to the 2024/25 Capital Programme to deliver the Travellers Temporary Stopping site and establish a budget of £1,300,000 to be funded through borrowing.
- b) Delegated authority to the Executive Member for Rural Communities and Localism in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy to submit an application for planning permission for the project and procure the necessary works to provide the Travellers Temporary Stopping site, and undertake any other actions required to deliver the project within the approved financial envelope.

### Reason for Recommendations :

- To procure and undertake the required works in line with the Council's constitution and financial regulations in relation to governance.
- There is a strategic need to make provision for temporary stopping places to serve the North Northamptonshire area, as demonstrated by the 2019 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
- Currently there are no temporary stopping places for transient travellers passing through the NNC area to use which would provide safe and secure places to stop with suitable facilities.

- Provision of a temporary stopping place within the Council's area would enable the Council and the Police to better manage UEs within the Council's area and limit the adverse impacts of UEs on settled communities.

#### Alternative Options Considered

- The only other option available is to do nothing, however this would not address the strategic need for a temporary stopping place within the Council area, which provides a safe and secure place to stop with suitable facilities and would not allow the Council and the Police working together to exercise 'direction' powers available to them in law to better manage UEs and their impact on settled communities.
- Alternative locations for temporary stopping places on land in the ownership of the Council were considered prior to submitting the DHLUC Traveller Site Fund bid and disregarded as being unsuitable.



# Appendix

This drawing to be read in conjunction with all relevant BCAL, Architects, M & E, Specialist Consultants and Contractors project specific drawings and specifications.

Current British Standards apply.

All levels are in metres. (U.N.O)

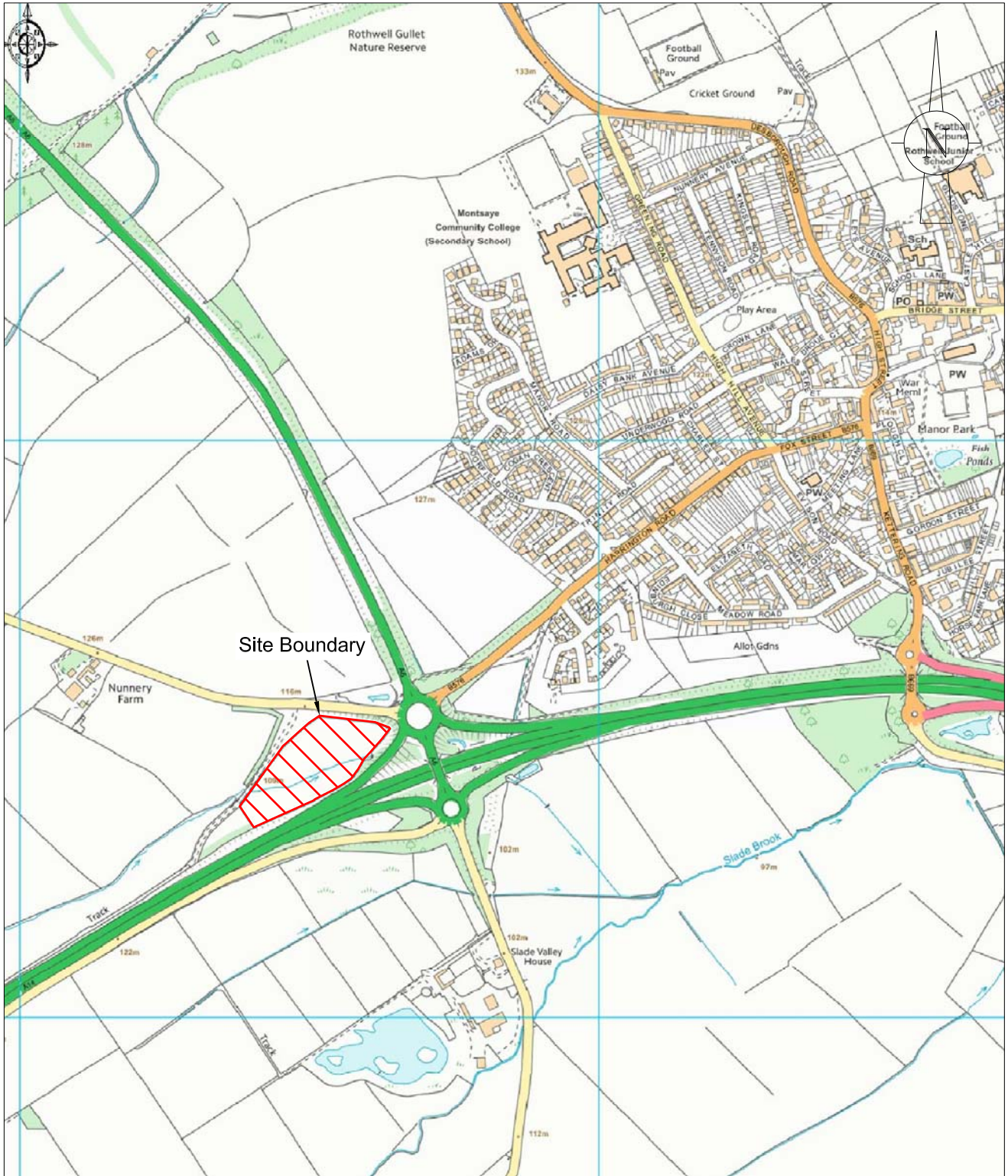
Do Not Scale

Any discrepancies shall be brought to the attention of BCAL immediately.

All dimensions are in millimetres. (U.N.O)

Written Dimensions only shall be used.

IF IN DOUBT ASK



No	Description	Date	Dm	Chk
Revisions to this Drawing				
Saved: C:\projects\550015568\Drawings\BCAL_DWG\5568-01 - Location Plan.dwg				
Dm By:	JW	Date:	12/05/16	Chkd:

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Status: **FOR INFORMATION**



Client  
**Kettering Borough Council**

Drg. Title  
**Location Plan**

Project  
**Feasibility Study  
Land off Harrington  
Rothwell**

Scales @ A4  
**1:10,000**

Drawing No.  
**5568-01**

Rev  
**-**

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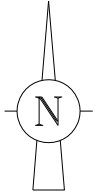
BCAL Sketch 5568-SK-EM-2016-03-18 - Site Location

Location: Land on the South Side of Harrington Road at the A14, Junction 3, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 80527 80456)

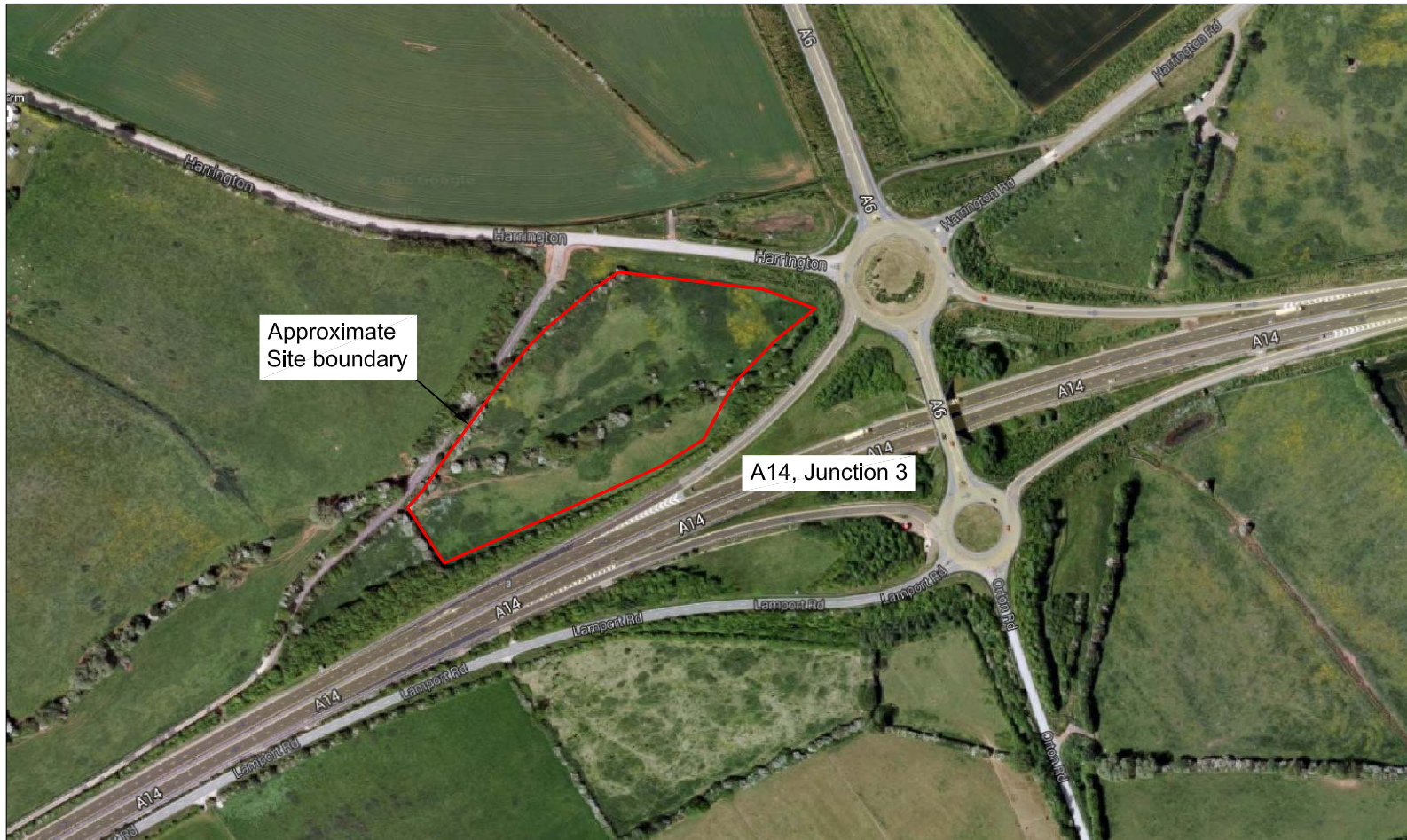
Scale: N.T.S

Date: 18/03/2016

Drawn By: JW



Page 27

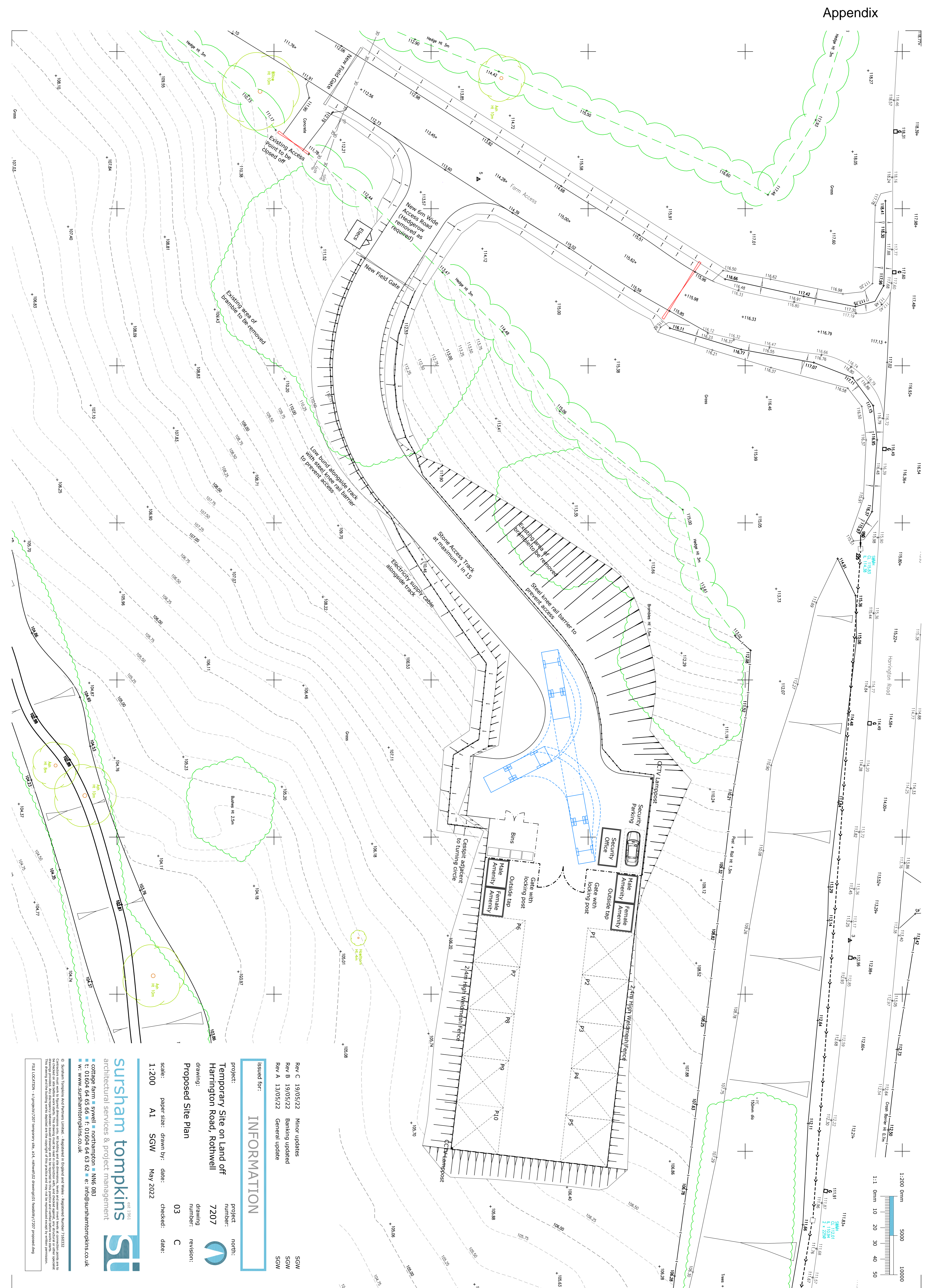


Appendix

Note:

This drawing is based on an extract taken from Google Maps interactive mapping website, which was downloaded by BCAL Consulting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016. This sketch is being used for information purposes only.

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Rev C 19/05/22 Minor updates  
 Rev B 19/05/22 Banking updated  
 Rev A 13/05/22 General update  
 Issued for: **INFORMATION**

project: Temporary Site on Land off  
 Harrington Road, Rothwell  
 drawing: Proposed Site Plan  
 scale: 1:200  
 paper size: A1  
 drawn by: SGW  
 date: May 2022  
 checked: C  
 north:

architectural services & project management  
 cottage farm ■ swell ■ northampton ■ NN6 0BJ  
 t: 01604 64 65 66 f: 01604 64 63 62 e: info@surshamtompkins.co.uk  
 w: www.surshamtompkins.co.uk

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 FILE LOCATION: s:\projects\2021 temporary site, a14, rothwell\02 drawings\01 feasibility\2021 proposed.dwg

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### Traveller Site Fund Budget Table

Please email the completed Traveller Site Fund Budget Table to [travellersitefund@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:travellersitefund@levellingup.gov.uk)

<b>Name of Local Authority:</b>	North Northamptonshire Council
<b>Title of Project:</b>	new 10 pitch temporary stopping place at land adjacent to Junction 3 of the A14 at Rothwell, Kettering, North Northamptonshire

#### Project Costs Table

Please enter all costs associated with setting up and implementing your project in the tables below. The grant funds are restricted to capital expenditure only, you are able to match fund any of the capital costs. All revenue costs must be covered by you, as well as any capital costs that exceed the maximum grant value (£1m). If your application is successful you will be required to confirm you have secured any match-funding at the point of acceptance, this must be signed and agreed by your S151 officer or equivalent. You may insert additional rows if required.

Value Added Tax (VAT) If your authority is eligible to reclaim the cost of VAT back from HMRC, the grant that we will award you will exclude VAT. If there are costs within your budget that include unrecoverable VAT - you may include this in your grant request. You may wish to liaise with a member of your finance team before completing this document. Once confirmed please update the red font in column accordingly and declare the VAT status under section 3 using the drop down

#### 5.4 - CAPITAL COSTS - Please provide a breakdown of all the capital costs you are bidding for.

Capital expenditure comprises the buying, constructing or improving of physical assets, such as buildings, land, purchase of equipment, machinery etc. Please set out costs for the whole of your bid and include breakdown in the description outlining the site/scheme, if more than one.

Line ref	Cost Description	Quantity	Total Cost (Exc VAT)	Grant Contribution
C1	Facilities Buildings - Security Office 12sqm Concrete slab	1	£19,069	
C2	Facilities Buildings - Male/Female amenity buildings 10sqm Concrete	4	£101,699	
C3	Facilities Buildings - Services to Security Office	1	£3,178	
C4	Facilities Buildings - Services to amenity buildings	1	£6,357	
C5	Highways Enabling Works	1	£105,750	
C6	External Works - Site clearance	1360 sq metres	£4,321	
C7	External Works - Removing Trees	1	£1,271	
C8	External Works - Remove Brambles adjacent to entrance	1	£635	
C9	External Works - Excavate to reduce ground levels	916 cubic metres	£3,493	
C10	External Works - Filling to make up ground levels	933 cubic metres	£7,116	
C11	External Works - Imported fill	17 cubic metres	£662	
C12	External Works - Close off existing access point	1	£1,641	
C13	External Works - Field Gates	2	£4,346	
C14	External Works - Bund alongside access track	186 metres	£3,547	
C15	External Works - Knee rail barrier	174 metres	£16,590	
C16	External Works - Form new entrance including tarmac surface	88 sq metres	£16,780	
C17	External Works - Joint to existing surfacing	1	£317	
C18	External Works - Stone access track, terram	375 sq metres	£16,685	
C19	External Works - Kerb/ edging	150 metres	£4,767	
C20	External Works - Stone plateau, laid to falls, terram	1000 sq metres	£44,494	
C21	External Works - Kerb/ edging	140 metres	£4,450	
C22	External Works - 2400 high weldmesh fencing	106 metres	£20,212	
C23	External Works - Pair of gates	1	£6,357	
C24	External Works - Landscaping	1	£6,357	
C25	Drainage - Cesspit	1	£31,781	
C26	Drainage - Trenching for foul drains	1	£6,357	
C27	Drainage - Power supply to plant	1	£6,357	
C28	External Services - Base for electric cupboard	1	£1,271	
C29	External Services - Trenching for electricity cable	100 metres	£6,357	
C30	External Services - Incoming electrical services	1	£98,986	
C31	External Services - Trenching for water services	100 metres	£6,357	
C32	External Services - Incoming water services	1	£25,425	
C33	External Services - CCTV lamp posts	2	£2,543	
C34	External Services - CCTV	1	£9,534	
C35	External Services - External lighting	1	£12,712	
C36	External Services - Outside taps	4	£1,271	
C37	Allowance for main contractors overheads and profit	10%	£59,905	
C38	Preliminaries	12.50%	£74,881	
C39	Contingencies	15%	£89,857	
C40	Professional Fees QS, Planning Consultant, Contract Admin	10%	£73,383	
C41	Professional Fees Project Manager	5%	£36,691	
C42	Site Surveys	1	£45,000	
C43	Planning Application Fees	1	£12,000	
C44				
C45				
C46				
	<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>£990,762</b>	<b>£0</b>

[>CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE PROJECT PLAN](#)

#### Project Costs Summary

Total Capital	£990,762	
Total Revenue Costs		
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>£990,762.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

Total Grant Value	£0	0%
<b>Total Match Funding</b>	<b>£990,762.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 3. VAT Declaration

GRANT REQUESTED DOES NOT INCLUDE VAT

Supporting comments here (where applicable)

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## Traveller Temporary Stopping Site - Survey/Design Work Costs

Topographical	£5,000.00
Ground Investigation	£5,000.00
Drainage	£5,000.00
Surface Water Drainage	£5,000.00
Flood Risk Assessment	£5,000.00
Underground Utilities	£3,000.00
Contamination	£5,000.00
Air Quality and Noise Assessment	£5,000.00
Transport Statement	£5,000.00
Travel Plan	£3,000.00
Design and Access Statement	£2,000.00
Ecology	£5,000.00
Arboriculturist	£2,000.00
Archaeology	£5,000.00
Biodiversity Net Gain survey	£5,000.00
Sustainability & Energy Statement	£5,000.00
Detailed site design and costings/cost plan, project plan and plans (location; block; elevations, floor)	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£80,000</b>

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# Appendix



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

Project Activity  
to deliver your  
Grant recipient

<b>Name of Applicant:</b>	North Northamptonshire
<b>Title of Project:</b>	stopping place at land adjacent to Junc

Line ref	Activity description	Name of Lead
1	Pre-planning - Establish planning requirements and obtain quotes	
2	Prepare planning submission - Appoint team & specialist reports, car	
3	Planning process - Full application and expected to go to committee.	
4	Milestone - Planning approval	
5	Discharge planning conditions	
6	S.278 Technical and legal process - Required for moving gate, mound	
7	Procure utility supplies (off site work) - Water and Electricity allow 3-	
8	Tender process - Prepare detailed tender package (8 wks) Tender pe	
9	Milestone - Appoint main contractor	
10	Contractor lead time - This includes any a proportion of lead time for	
11	Site works - On site works 8 – 12 weeks (earthworks are weather dep	
12	Commissioning/ handover and contingency	
13	Milestone - Completion	

**Traveller Site Fund: xxxx 2022**

Plan: Please provide a project plan listing all key activities / milestones you intend to complete project. You must include adequate time to monitor and evaluate the impact of your project. You will be required to complete and return project monitoring reports if successful. You may

e Council
ction 3 of the A14 at Rot

Target Date	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
2 weeks							
8 weeks							
20 weeks							
26 weeks milestone							
12 weeks							
26 weeks							
26 weeks							
26 weeks							
52 weeks milestone							
8 weeks							
12 weeks							
6 weeks							
78 weeks milestone							





## Elements of Call-In not considered by the Monitoring Officer as valid

**Other arguments included within the Notice of Call-In not be considered to be valid and the Monitoring Officer's reasoning for this are set out below:-**

### **Proportionality**

The reasons (contained within the Call In Form) as to why the decision is not proportionate are stated as *"It is entirely reasonable and proportionate to request that full scrutiny of the financing and planning implications of this decision be carried out prior to committing the council to expending scarce resources on a planning application"*. A lack of scrutiny on a decision taken by the Executive does not in itself render the decision disproportionate to the outcome that the Council is trying to achieve. For this particular issue, the proportionality test is whether there is sufficient evidence that a temporary traveller site is required on land in the ownership adjacent to Junction 3 of the A14 and do all of the implications make it a proportionate decision.

### **Consultation**

It is alleged that there has been no consultation with Ward Councillors and no formal consultation with adjacent Parish Councils, the wider community or the Traveller community on either the need for a Temporary Stopping Site or the desirability of various locations in comparison to the proposed location.

Para. 7 of the Executive report recognises that *"a focused engagement exercise was undertaken as part of the capital bid that was made to the Traveller Site Fund, administered by DHLUC, for the provision of a Temporary Stopping Place at Junction 3 of the A14 in June 2022, which was based on the same proposal. Apart from updates to the delivery cost, the proposal has not changed since the bid was made. This exercise engaged with the following stakeholder groups; 3 Local MP's, 3 Ward Councillors, Parish and Town Councils within local proximity to the proposed site, Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue, Local Gypsy and Traveller Community, Director of Public Health and other relevant council officers/departments and the NNC Gypsy and Traveller Forum for Parish Councils"*.

Whilst the consultation responses were not included as background papers, they were summarised within the relevant section of the report, and it was noted that *"the response to this engagement exercise with targeted stakeholders was positive and letters of support were received from the Police and 3 local MPs. There were concerns raised regarding the proposal, primarily from the 3 Ward Councillors and the local Town and Parish Council representatives. Negative responses were focused on the locality of the site, the possible impact on wildlife in the area and the shortness of the engagement exercise timeframe for the DHLUC bid"*. In accordance with the Gunning Principles, conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. To satisfy this requirement, decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account when making the decision. It is arguable that the summary contained within the report allowed the Executive to understand the key concerns, it is not a requirement for all responses to be considered individually.

It is also noted within the report that *"further detailed targeted public consultation on the proposal would be carried out with all relevant stakeholders as part of the process of submitting the scheme for planning approval, which will also require detailed assessment of all material impacts of the proposal as part of that process"*.

Considering that consultation has already taken place, it would not be a reasonable requirement to repeat the exercise just because the council is proposing to fund the decision rather than government. It is noted that this consultation did not consider alternative sites as these were rendered to be unsuitable and would not therefore be appropriate to consult upon as they would not be realistic options, the transparency and best value of this aspect is dealt with later.

The call-in form states that the emerging Rothwell Neighbourhood Plan identifies the area being of wildlife and nature interest and that this hasn't been taken into consideration. The Rothwell Neighbourhood Plan, led by the local community, is still at an early stage in its preparation, it is understood that a consultation and open event was held early last year, and that a questionnaire launch will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024, with a drop-in event the following week. A draft Neighbourhood Plan providing policies for comment is yet to be published for consultation, or responses to the consultation given consideration from the Neighbourhood Plan Group. No weight can be given to the Rothwell Neighbourhood Plan in its current form. It is acknowledged that pre-application advice obtained from the Planning Management team identified a lack of activity at the site over a prolonged period may have resulted in immigration of protected species and recommended a phase 1 habitat assessment be carried out. It remains however that this site has no protective ecological designation attached to it and therefore it would not be proper to consult the draft Plan in making a decision.

### **Human Rights**

It is argued that the lack of consultation and any comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment that compares the suitability of all potential sites (in North Northamptonshire) in relation to existing Traveller community locations means that no recognition or assessment of the impact of this location has been made. An Equality Screening Assessment has been completed for the Travellers Temporary Stopping Site Capital Project which considered the impact of the proposals on the identified equality groups. An EIA should assess the impact of a decision on those with protected characteristics on the actual decision being made which has been completed and therefore valid reasons are not made out for this decision-making principle.

### **Best Value**

It is alleged within the Call-In form that a decision made in isolation, prior to the scheduled Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan being agreed in March 2026 (timetable agreed on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023) would not represent best value. The reasons for this is that all aspects of providing for the Traveller community should be considered rather than this specific project.

It is accepted that the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan could be a vehicle for also identifying suitable sites for Emergency Stopping Places, however a need has already been established through the 2019 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), it is recognised that to date no such provision to meet that need has been met. Work undertaken in updating the GTAA for the period 2021-41 shows the need for transit provision remains. Policy 31 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy provides a series of criteria to assess new site allocations and applications for gypsy and traveller sites. This will form a basis for assessing applications for gypsy and traveller site provision. The Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan is at an early stage in its preparation, with a Pitch Deliverability Assessment in preparation with the Council's specialist consultants, Opinion Research Services. The need for Gypsy & Traveller accommodation is a part of the assessment ORS is undertaking with the Council in the form of a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), including reporting on need for transit provision in the area.



It is arguable however that the Executive could have further considered if the decision should be made following the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and the specific reasons why it is not being done so and why this alternative option has been discounted. The GTAA is clear on the reasons why the decision is required; however, this could be explored by Scrutiny to ensure best value.

Within the call-in form, it also stated that the costings have not been updated from the 2022 submission and “inflation in building costs has outstripped headline inflation creating a completely unknown cost which is likely to increase further”. Para. 7.1.3 of the report states *“these costings have been based on the indicative design and full detailed project costings would need to be confirmed once the final detailed design had been commissioned and agreed which would also likely be subject to an uplift due to contract cost inflation for building materials and construction costs (10-15% per annum) since the project was previously costed back on 17th May 2022 (circa 18 months ago), therefore assumed 22.5% increase in costs”*. It is therefore acknowledged that prices have increased and the original figure of circa £900k has been increased to £1.3m.

It is also stated that the financial implications within the report “do not explain the source of capital funding and any interest due along with any Minimum Revenue Requirement (MRP) to be set aside in the accounts”. There is no period for the loan or interest attributable or interest lost. There is no medium-term financial plan to clearly set out the direct and indirect costs of building and maintaining the Site. It is therefore alleged that no proper judgement as to value for money can be made or relied upon. It is noted within the Executive report that funding will be taken from one of the projects which are in the Place and Economy development pool to ensure the Council remains within its estimated Capital Programme funding envelope related to costs of borrowing. It is arguable however that these costs should be considered by Scrutiny to ensure that the decision is proportionate and represents best value and therefore this could be explored by Scrutiny within call-in.

Alternative sites were determined as not viable and therefore the Executive can not compare to these sites when they would not be able to be developed upon, they would not therefore be realistic options.

References to comments which have allegedly been made locally from the Portfolio Holder and MP Philip Hollobone are not relevant to the call-in or the decision made by the Executive.

## **Transparency**

It is argued that other sites which were considered but discounted should have been open and considered. It is correct that when coming to previous policy decisions, the council has included publishing multiple options and enabled community and partners to comment on them prior to making a decision. A list of potential sites for emergency stopping places on land owned by NNC was drawn up by Property Services colleagues on 28.09.21, following a review of all council land holdings, and was subsequently reviewed for suitability by the Northamptonshire Traveller Unit colleagues. The list was further reviewed by the Project Group leads convened to progress the DHLUC emergency stopping place bid and the proposed site at land NW of junction 3 of the A14 at Rothwell was selected as the preferred site. A call for sites was also undertaken as a part of the early preparation of both the North Northamptonshire Local Plan (formerly NN Strategic Plan) and the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan, no sites were submitted through either of the exercises. It is arguable that the process for determining this list should be considered by Scrutiny to ensure that a process for determining alternative options has been considered and the decision represents best value.

## Reasons for Decision

It is argued that “it is entirely unclear as to what the Council is trying to achieve by pulling this forward in isolation to Council’s stated and approved policy timeline”. It is also argued that there should have been consideration as to why there has traditionally been a lack of provision and a reference to research which shows that these facilities are very hard and complex to establish and maintain, are not liked by the Traveller Community and often result in permanent occupation which entirely defeats the purpose.

The report is clear that there is a strategic need to make provision for temporary stopping places to serve the North Northamptonshire area, as demonstrated by the 2019 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA is however cited to be out of date within the call-in form. The 2019 GTAA is not considered out of date, it is less than 5 years old, and prepared to form an evidence base on need for the period to 2033. The GTAA is therefore still perfectly relevant and up-to-date. However, recognising that the period the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan would cover would be 2021-41, it was considered important that a update to the 2019 GTAA be prepared to provide need for the extended period of this Local Plan, to 2041.

The 2019 GTAA considered the demand for transit provision in North Northamptonshire. Transit provision meets the needs of gypsy and traveller households who are visiting or passing through the area. This type of provision can include transit sites, emergency stopping places, temporary sites and stopping places, negotiated stopping places and fair and event sites. The 2019 GTAA identified that there are increasing numbers of unauthorised encampments in many parts of North Northamptonshire. There is currently no public transit provision, although the GTAA reported that there were instances of transit provision on some large private sites. The GTAA recommended that the Council should work to identify opportunities for the provision of emergency stopping places.

Currently there are no temporary stopping places for transient travellers passing through the NNC area to use which would provide safe and secure places to stop with suitable facilities. The report is clear that the provision of a temporary stopping place within the Council’s area would enable the Council and the Police to better manage UEs within the Council’s area and limit the adverse impacts of UEs on settled communities. Although non-Executive members may disagree with the reasons, it is not the case that the reasons for decision were not considered by the Executive.

There is an analysis of funding bids contained within the form. Funding bids will be approved by government according to the criteria they determine and there is a limited pot to fund from. The Council need only be concerned that it is a robust and lawful decision for it to make and not why government chose not to invest.