



## 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>	

**• Adoption - February 2025**

The revised timescale from the Executive Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023:

**Early stakeholder and community engagement - April to May 2023**  
**Draft Plan for consultation - March to April 2024**  
**Publication consultation - November to December 2024**  
**Submission to Secretary of State - February 2025**  
**Examination - September 2025**  
**Adoption - March 2026**



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.


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.


Inflation in building costs has outstripped headline inflation creating a completely unknown cost which is likely to increase further.

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.

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>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	