

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

4 October 2016

Post Project Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Agreement for the Management of Encampments Across West Sussex and the Provision of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site at Chichester West Sussex

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Cabinet notes the findings of the Post Project Evaluation and considers any comments and recommendations it might wish to make to the Council.
- 2.2. That the Cabinet considers the recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that officers make a further application to Southern Water for the connection of the Transit Site to the mains drainage system.

3. Background

- 3.1. On 3 December 2013 Chichester District Council Cabinet considered a report proposing a multi-agency agreement for the management of encampments across West Sussex and the provision of a Gypsy Traveller Transit Site (GTTS). The report identified that the number of unauthorised encampments (UEs) had increased significantly across the District over the last couple of years causing a good deal of concern and expense to the communities affected. It identified that this was not just an issue in Chichester District alone but affected the Districts and Boroughs across West Sussex. It identified that there were currently no public transit sites in West Sussex and that without such a site, the powers open to the Police to deal with UE's was limited. The report further identified that the County Council, District and Borough Councils across West Sussex had met together and agreed to make

available the funding to develop a holistic multi-agency way of managing both UEs and a GTTS. Discussions had taken place with the Police regarding use of powers of direction that the provision of a GTTS would facilitate and a multi-agency agreement was proposed. Detailed proposals with time scales and costings are set out in the approved Project Implementation Document (PID) (see Appendix 1).

- 3.2. Having considered the matter Cabinet, and subsequently Council, approved the recommendations and resolved:
- (i) to enter into a multi-agency partnership agreement for the effective management of unauthorised encampments across West Sussex;
 - (ii) that the case for provision of a transit site was evidenced and that the planning process was an appropriate mechanism to hear any objections to the proposals;
 - (iii) that Council make available and redevelops part of the Westhampnett Depot for use as the transit site; and,
 - (iv) that West Sussex County Council should be responsible for the management of the site.
- 3.3 Approval was given to the partnership funding arrangements proposed for the contribution to the capital build cost and to the ongoing revenue costs. Due note was given to the risks of the project and their impact and the proposed engagement process was agreed.
- 3.4 Following the proposals a project team was assembled together with a steering group to provide governance and strategic management of the project. The PID (see Appendix 1) sets out in detail the project objectives and success criteria together with a project plan for the construction phase which provided detailed milestones.
- 3.5 It is now 12 months since the completion of the GTTS construction and implementation of the multi-agency management arrangements. A Post Project Evaluation (PPE) has been completed and is now reported on.

4 Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 The PPE provides a review of how the proposed construction of the GTTS, supported by the multi-agency agreement has performed against the original objectives and success criteria set out in the PID.
- 4.2 The PPE process also allows lessons learned from the scheme to be passed on to other projects and ensure that provision has been made to address all open issues and risks and highlight future actions and recommendations where appropriate. It further provides the opportunity to assess the expected outcomes already achieved and/or provide a plan for those outcomes yet to be realised.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 The original proposal set the outcomes as:
- The introduction of a multi-agency partnership to reduce considerably the number of unauthorised encampments in West Sussex but, where they do occur to reduce significantly the time taken to evict unauthorised campers.
 - To develop a permanent transit site for countywide use that meets the basic standards in the DCLG guidance for developing transit sites.
- 5.2 The PPE has shown that a 9-pitch transit site was successfully constructed and reached practical completion by 26 March 2015 achieving the timescale set out by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and enabling the claim of the full grant of £630,000 towards construction costs. The original estimate together with contingency provision was £1.15 million; however a number of issues were experienced in working on a brownfield site and once construction was underway the total cost of the scheme was revised to £1.2 to £1.3 million. The final scheme cost was £1,210,867. Together with the HCA grant each partner contributed £72,608 to the capital cost of the scheme together with a further £15,000 annual contribution to the revenue budget – all of which have been paid to date.
- 5.3 The transit site opened for use on 6 May 2015, managed by West Sussex County Council in accordance with the approved multi-agency agreements that supported the processes for the management of UEs across West Sussex together with a transit facility. The presence of the transit site, together with the single agency management of the initial response to UE's, has led to a fall in the number of UEs in the county from 116 during 2014/15 to 68 during 2015/16 and the number of 'dwell days' when UEs were in situ has fallen significantly from 613 to 252.

6 Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 The initial Cabinet report considered the alternatives of not developing the GTTS or management agreement but continuing with the status quo and considered that a 'do nothing' approach was not acceptable to the communities being affected by UEs at that time. It also considered building a GTTS but not entering into a multi-agency agreement. It concluded that progressing independently could be very costly for this Council and that the research concluded that a transit site supported by a multi-agency approach was likely to be the most effective.
- 6.2 The PPE only looks at how the project fared in relation to its original objectives and success criteria. The PPE shows that these were achieved and there has been a positive impact on the number of UEs and concludes that as the GTTS has only been in place for one year given the cost it is not appropriate to consider other alternatives at this time.

7 Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 The evaluation has been conducted by officers involved in the project and reviewed by the Corporate Information Team. These resources have been managed within base budget.
- 7.2 The revenue cost of the arrangements is in base budget and the evaluation has not identified any further resource issues or legal implications.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 A number of key stakeholders have been contacted during the preparation of this PPE and their comments, which all identify positive benefits from the project, are included within Appendix 2 (see paragraph 3.2).
- 8.2 In addition on 13 September 2016 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Post Project Evaluation report whilst noting its finding they made a recommendation that Southern Water be approached again to apply for connection to the main foul water drainage system.

9 Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 The evaluation considers that the reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments and the amount of time that they have remained in situ since the adoption of the multi-agency agreement and GTTS has had a positive effect on community tensions as very few communities are experiencing UEs and the number taking place in locations likely to have a significant community impact have significantly reduced.
- 9.2 The corporate risks associated with the construction and financing of the transit site have minimised having completed its construction.

10 Other Implications

| Are there any implications for the following? | | |
|---|-----|----|
| | Yes | No |
| Crime and Disorder Community tensions and potential points of confrontation have been reduced | x | |
| Climate Change | | x |
| Human Rights and Equality Impact Yes there has been a positive impact on the quality of provision for temporary accommodation for Travellers | x | |
| Safeguarding and Early Help Vulnerable people in the Traveller community can more easily be identified and assisted in the GTTS | x | |
| Other (please specify): N/A | | |

11 Appendices

Appendix 1 Original Project Implementation Document

Appendix 2 Post Project Evaluation

12 Background Papers

None