Report for: Cabinet - 10 November 2026

Title: Approval to consult on a Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocation policy

Report authorised by: Sara Sutton, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health

Lead Officer: Kristian Melgaard, Director of Housing

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. This draft allocation policy proposes the approach Haringey Council will take to allocate vacant pitches on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

1.2. This report seeks approval from Cabinet to consult formally on this draft policy.

1.3. The Council does not currently have a policy in place for allocating Gypsy and Traveller pitches and one is required.

1.4. The Council recently held a borough-wide Gypsy and Travellers Call for Sites to identify land or sites that could potentially be developed, or available and suitable for pitches or potentially for transit stopping places over the next 15 years. This policy is needed to outline the Council's policy approach to allocations on current and any future pitches.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1. Standing up against racism and inequality is at the heart of this administration's work, and that means standing up for communities who have too often been overlooked, marginalised and excluded. Gypsy and Traveller communities face persistent racism leading to sustained inequalities: poorer health outcomes, lower life expectancy, barriers to education, employment and suitable housing. As a Green administration, we are committed to challenging discrimination and ensuring everyone in Haringey is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

2.2. We are proud of the rich contribution that Gypsy and Traveller communities make to Haringey's social, cultural and economic life. Their presence in the borough spans generations, and their history, traditions, languages and way of life form an important part of the diverse and vibrant community that makes Haringey what it is.

2.3. For many Gypsy and Traveller families, access to housing is about more than simply having a roof over their heads. It is about being able to live in a way that reflects and sustains their cultural identity. We recognise that culturally appropriate accommodation is essential to tackling inequality and ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller residents can thrive while maintaining their traditions and way of life

2.4. Earlier this year, I was delighted to celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in my ward at Haringey Learning Partnership. Throughout their history, the community has been systematically criminalised for their way of life. The chronic shortage of sites leads Gypsy and Traveller people to become criminal for simply existing – a situation exacerbated by recent Government legislation. The fact there have been no new sites in Haringey in the last two decades is a symptom of institutional racism.

2.5. That is why we want to continue to work closely with residents and community representatives as we develop a new pitch allocation policy as we bring forward new pitches in the Borough. Our aim is to create a fair, transparent and inclusive system that recognises the specific needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, supports community cohesion, and helps ensure that everyone in Haringey has access to accommodation that meets their cultural needs.

2.6. We want to make Haringey an anti-racist borough, one where no community is left behind. Supporting Gypsy and Traveller communities is part of our wider commitment to tackling inequality, combating discrimination, and building a Haringey where diversity is celebrated and everyone can thrive.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

3.1.1. Note the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 2.
3.1.2. Approve formal consultation on the draft Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocation policy (Appendix 1) in accordance with the Consultation Plan at 6.8 – 6.10
3.1.3. Delegate the following to the Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing:

- Minor changes to the policy prior to consultation
- The detailed timing and arrangements for that consultation

4. Reasons for decision

4.1. This draft policy aims to outline in a clear and accessible way the council's approach to allocating Gypsy and Traveller pitches on its sites. The council wishes to consult on this draft.

4.2. Once the policy has been considered in light of that consultation, the council will adopt a policy on allocating pitches on its sites to members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1. The council could adopt a pitch allocations policy without consulting on it. This option has been rejected because consultation supports good policy and because it supports the discharge of the Public Sector Equality Duty and principles of fair decision-making.

6. Background information

6.1. This policy has been developed to outline the approach to allocating any existing pitches that become available on the council's Gypsy and Traveller sites and to allocating any new pitches that might be developed by the council.

6.2. The aims of the policy are to:

- Allocate permanent pitches when they become available on Haringey Council owned sites to Haringey Gypsies and Travellers who meet our policy's qualification rules.
- Allocate pitches taking account of the need for culturally appropriate accommodation rather than urgent housing need, which is addressed by the Council in accordance with its homelessness duties.
- Allocate pitches in a sensitive way to promote cohesive, safe and secure sites including by considering the compatibility of households sharing the sites.
- Recognise the diversity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Ensure that pitches are allocated fairly and transparently.

6.3. The policy outlines the process for applying for a pitch. This includes the requirement to provide supporting documents with a completed application form. It also sets out where grounds for the exclusion of applicants may be necessary.

6.4. The policy outlines the establishment of a council-run waiting list for applicants limited to those

- From a Gypsy or Traveller background
- Aged 18 or over
- Who have lived in Haringey for at least the previous three consecutive years or would have done save for compelling circumstances
- Who have the legal right to remain in the UK and are not subject to immigration control

6.5. The allocation principles highlight that applicants will be prioritised only by the length of time they have been in Haringey and unable to live in culturally appropriate accommodation. Pitches will therefore be allocated on the basis of evidence of the household's length of time living continuously in Haringey without access to accommodation that reasonably enables it to maintain its cultural identity and traditional way of life, taking account of the particular circumstances of the household.

6.6. The policy sets out the following situations as examples of situations that it recognises do not allow a household to have access to culturally appropriate accommodation:

- Living in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation including social housing, privately rented housing, and temporary accommodation
- Being homeless
- Living on pitches or sites that are overcrowded or otherwise inappropriate to the extent that they cannot reasonably accommodate the household's composition or cultural identity and traditional way of life

6.7. The policy also confirms that a panel will be created of senior council officers to consider applications, identify the applicant unable to live in culturally appropriate accommodation for the longest period, and make offers based on this information. The Panel will involve a site community member by asking for their advice to support the Panel's decision-making process.

6.8. All successful applicants will be offered a pitch agreement regulated by the Mobile Homes Act 1983 and applicants who wish to appeal against a decision can do so within 3 months.

Proposed consultation plan

6.9. The consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community will be held for a minimum of six weeks.

6.10. The consultation will be shared with all known members of the community identifiable from the Council's contact systems where the council has an electronic or physical address, and in addition the council will request that the London Gypsy and Traveller Organisation circulate the consultation to their members as part of supporting wider circulation amongst the community.

6.11. Consultees will be invited to complete a brief survey on the draft policy and invited to attend an in-person engagement event during the consultation period.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes

7.1. The recommendations in this report will support the Corporate Delivery Plan's theme 5, "Homes for the Future", and in particular its commitment to provide reliable, customer focused resident housing services and to undertake a full review of all policies relating to our tenants and leaseholders in our role as their landlord.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

8.1. This policy does not create or change any physical assets or direct service provision, there are no carbon or climate change implications.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

9.1. Finance

9.1.1 This report approval request to consult on a Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocation policy does not give rise to any financial implications

9.1.2 The resource required to implement the policy is already contained within the Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) approved budget and MTFS.

9.1.3 Any financial implication resulting from future review/amendment of the policy will be considered as part of Council's HRA Medium-Term Financial Planning.

9.2. Director of Legal & Governance

9.2.1. The Director of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the drafting of this report and comments as follows:

9.2.2. The Council has a number of protected sites (within the meaning of the Mobile Homes Act 1983) on which pitches are made available for gypsy and traveller use.

9.2.3. Neither the Council's Allocation Scheme nor Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 govern offers of an agreement permitting an applicant to occupy a permanent pitch.

9.2.4. The Council should allocate pitches on its permanent sites according to a policy that is:

- 9.2.4.1. Fair and rational
- 9.2.4.2. Equitable
- 9.2.4.3. Transparent
- 9.2.4.4. Culturally sensitive

9.2.5. There is no statutory requirement for consultation on this policy, but the Council has an established practice of consultation on such matters.

9.2.6. The principles of consultation require consultation to:

- 9.2.6.1. Take place at a formative stage when input can genuinely input the outcome
- 9.2.6.2. Provide sufficient information to permit consultees to understand and comment upon the proposals (including being transparent about alternatives)
- 9.2.6.3. Give adequate time for response
- 9.2.6.4. To involve conscientious consideration of responses

9.2.7. There is no legal reason why Cabinet should not adopt the recommendations in this report.

9.3. Procurement

9.3.1. Strategic Procurement has been consulted on the preparation of this report and notes its content. There are no procurement implications arising from the recommendation

9.4. Equality

9.4.1. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected
- characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and
- people who do not.

9.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

9.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

9.4.4. The policy considered here will apply to Gypsies and Travellers.

9.4.5. A full analysis of the impact of the policy on people with protected characteristics is contained in the Equality Impact Assessment found at Appendix 2.

9.4.6. The Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocation policy will have a positive impact on the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and socioeconomic status. It will have a neutral impact on those with other protected characteristics.

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 — Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocation Policy - consultation version
Appendix 2 — Equality Impact Assessment of the Gypsy and Traveller pitch allocation Policy