

Select Committee Recommendations

1. For KCC, in partnership with all Kent local authorities, to take joint responsibility for the establishment of a network of transit sites across Kent. For KCC to co-ordinate the submission of funding bids to the regional housing fund for January 2007 and subsequent bidding opportunities, where appropriate and sustainable.
2. For Kent local authorities to investigate ways to facilitate growth in the number of self-owned, self-leased and self-managed private sites, within the existing planning and legislative framework.)
3. For the KCC Gypsy Unit to investigate the situation of Irish Travellers in Kent, regarding access to local authority sites, and to monitor and report on the pitch occupancy rate on public sites.
4. For KCC to facilitate the sharing of best practice between Kent local authorities, over the needs assessment processes, including addressing future needs.
5. All Transit and permanent site provision in Kent should have amenities and services, including boundary fencing, hardstanding on each pitch, water supply, toilet and washing facilities, waste disposal and electricity supply and ensure adequate health and safety measures are taken.
6. Where transit sites are to be provided in Kent by the district authorities, KCC should offer its expertise in managing sites that have special challenges.
7. For all Kent local authorities, to increase the involvement and responsibility of Gypsy and Traveller residents in site management arrangements.
8. For KCC, in consultation with district authorities, to consider having a residential 'gatekeeper' on transit sites in Kent.
9. For Kent local authorities to ensure that any new transit sites in Kent should be self-financing, with rent charged on sites. The revenue costs for the running of transit sites should be shared between KCC and the relevant District/Borough Councils.
10. For KCC, with district authorities, to lobby the Department of Work and Pensions to address the difference in the treatment of County Councils (as if they were profit-making landlords) in comparison to housing authorities. This is in the context of the Department of Work and Pensions meeting the full reasonable rent of claimants in receipt of housing benefit who reside in Gypsy and Traveller sites. This is in order to ensure that County Councils and Housing Association who provide and manage public sites are not forced to

subsidise the costs of provision.

11. For KCC, with district authorities, lobby the government to provide sufficient resource to ensure that unsuccessful retrospective planning applications can be dealt with in weeks rather than years.
12. For Kent local planning authorities to consider the importance of ensuring that temporary applications are refused in situations where there are material objections, along the same lines as dealing with permanent permission applications.
13. For Kent local planning authorities to consider the importance of ensuring that, where rural exception policies are included within Local Development Frameworks, there is a need to ensure that they are tightly drafted to mitigate any potential increase in planning applications on these grounds.
14. KCC to facilitate the establishment of a Countryside partnership group, which will work to share best practice and information to reduce and tackle Unauthorised Developments.
15. For the KCC Gypsy Unit and Trading Standards to demonstrate increased collaboration in effectively reducing the practice of rogue trading, including more effective strategic and operational data sharing.
16. For KCC, with district authorities, to lobby the government, to ensure that there is stronger, multi-agency working to tackle any criminality or tax evasion in transient populations.
17. For KCC to facilitate the establishment of a joint Kent and Medway Authority group, to address the accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers. The primary objective of this group is to address the accommodation needs that are identified. It will also provide a vehicle for consultation and a sub-regional approach for applying for funding. In addition, it will consider the revenue cost implications linked to site provision, with a view to pooling resources.
18. For the KCC Gypsy Unit to be renamed as the 'Gypsy and Traveller Unit', in order to reflect the role of the Unit in working with all Gypsies and Travellers.