
HONEYPOT LANE CARAVAN SITE - IMPROVEMENTS

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Stephen Harker,
Consumer and Environmental Services Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To report on progress in carrying out improvements and the current financial position.

Information and Analysis

2. The Council applied for and were successful in obtaining a Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant in 2003/04 and 2004/05 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
3. Phase 1 in 2003/04 involved the provision of electricity and water supply to individual pitches and the construction of some amenity blocks. A 75% refurbishment grant of £435,000 was awarded with the Council contributing the £130,000 from Capital. In addition a 100% grant of £294,510 was obtained for the construction of a 10-pitch transit site.
4. Whilst Phase 1 was progressing, an application was made for Phase 2 which involved the further provision of more amenity blocks and with the assistance of Darlington SureStart and Darlington Primary Care Trust, constructing community facilities for travellers use. This successful bid was for £312,210.86.
5. Phase 1 and the transit site have been completed and Phase 2 is in progress. However, there have been several unforeseen factors which have increased the likely final cost.
 - (a) Increased costs with providing the substation and connection to the mains cable.
 - (b) Poor ground conditions which have led to increased excavation and reinstatement.
 - (c) The discovery of a surface water sewer which meant repositioning of amenity blocks.
 - (d) More extensive excavations for cables and pipes have meant that instead of 'patching' pitches, the whole pitch had to be tarmaced.
6. Overall it is estimated that a further £110,000 is required to complete the site. Officers have examined various measures to reduce these costs but in order to claim awarded the grant from the ODPM the works have to be completed. The work cannot be left uncompleted and the Council will be unable to complete the new lease if the works are unfinished.

7. Other possible sources of funding have been examined and the use of Capital has been identified as the only realistic way to complete the scheme.
8. The total cost of the works at Honeypot Lane was estimated to be £1,172,000, the additional £110,000 required to complete the works represents 9.4% of the original estimated cost.

Outcome of Consultation

9. Consultations were undertaken with the Site Lessee.

Financial Implications

10. The additional capital resources of £110,000 are required to be expended during 2004/05. There is sufficient flexibility in the capital programme for this additional expenditure to be accommodated, however Members will appreciate that this will reduce available capital funding in future years.

Legal Implications

11. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

12. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have an effect on reducing crime and anti social behaviour associated with unauthorised encampments, as the transit site would meet some of this need.

Council Policy Framework

13. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

14. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this is an urgent matter as the contractor is currently on site undertaking the Phase Two works.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that Cabinet approve and release a further £110,000 to be funded through the Council's own capital receipts programme in order that the project can be completed.

Reasons

16. The recommendations are supported so as to allow the project to be completed

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

File 16A – Honeypot Lane Caravan Site Redevelopment

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BAH