

**Decision Session - Executive Leader
(incorporating Housing and Safer
Neighbourhoods)**

20 June 2016

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

Proposed Changes to the Traveller Pitch Agreement

Summary

1. To seek approval to consult on proposed changes to the existing Traveller Pitch agreement.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Leader, Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods, is asked to agree option one: to consult with the travellers who live on the City of York Council sites or who are on the waiting list with regards to the changes proposed to Traveller Pitch Agreement. The proposed changes include the following;
 - The introduction of flexible tenancy start dates.
 - Insert a section regarding Non payment of rent.
 - To add a paragraph with regards to the keeping of dogs on the travellers pitch in particular naming the Dangerous Dogs act 1991 and the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
 - To add several minor changes to strengthen the Travellers Pitch agreement, these are listed on Annex 1 numbers 3.18 to 6.

Reason: To ensure consistency, as far as is practicable, across the different agreements that are issued in housing services.

Background

3. Following the implementation of changes to the council tenancy agreement, limited changes are proposed for the Travellers Pitch agreement.

4. A summary of all the changes can be found at Annex 1. This information will be used for the formal consultation.

Consultation

5. A formal period of consultation will take place with all residents on the traveller's sites over a period of 6 weeks in June and July 2016.
6. All travellers will be written to outlining the proposed changes, the implications of these and given the opportunity to comment before final changes are agreed. All customers will be notified in writing of the changes. The Travellers Trust will be included in the consultation regarding the proposed changes.
7. A summary of the consultation and any further proposed changes as a result of this will be brought back to the Executive Member in September 2016 for decision. Subject to any changes been agreed 4 weeks statutory notice of change will be given to tenants, outlining the agreed changes and the implementation date.

Options

8. **Option one** – To consultation on the proposed changes:

- The introduction of flexible tenancy start dates.
- Insert a section regarding Non payment of rent.
- To add a paragraph with regards to the keeping of dogs on the travellers pitch in particular naming the Dangerous Dogs act 1991 and the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- To add several minor changes to strengthen the Travellers Pitch agreement, these are listed on Annex 1 numbers 3.18 to 6.

9. **Option two** – To not consult and leave the Travellers Pitch agreement unchanged.

Analysis

- 10 Option one - For the Travellers pitch agreements the additional income using a flexible start date is negligible due to the low turnover of voids (typically one per year) however, this change would bring it inline with the tenancy agreement for council houses. The other proposed amendments (see Annex 1) are proposed to strengthen the agreement in areas where problems have previously occurred.

11. There are significant issues with tenants on the Travellers sites, keeping pets, especially dogs. The number of dogs allowed on any travellers pitch is 2 on the current agreement, however further information with regard to the keeping of dogs has been added in line with the council tenancy agreement.
12. Option two – At present the current tenancy agreement only allows the council to start an agreement on a Monday. By introducing flexible start dates, tenancies could start from any day in the week and therefore reduce the period a property is empty and reduce the rent loss on the property.

Council Plan

13. The proposed changes will contribute to the council plan by ensuring 'a focus on front line services' – ensuring the city centre, villages and neighbourhoods are clean and safe environments.

Implications

14. The implications arising from this report are:
 - **Financial** – cost of consultation and issuing new tenancy agreements will be contained within existing budgets
 - **Human Resources (HR)** none
 - **Equalities** A community Impact assessment will be required following the completion of the consultation exercise. The amendments are in line with the changes to the council tenancy agreement to ensure consistency.
 - **Legal** – The changes have been advised and agreed with legal services
 - **Crime and Disorder** – none.
 - **Information Technology (IT)** Minimal changes to existing IT systems will be needed.
 - **Property** - none

Risk Management

15. The risk in making these amendments is minimal

Contact Details

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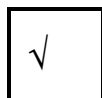
Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington

Assistant Director – Housing & Community

Safety

**Report
Approved**



Date

7th June 2016

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Implication: Legal

Alison Hale

Senior Legal assistant

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Wards Affected: Guildhall Ward, Rawcliffe and Clifton
Without Ward and Osbaldwick and Derwent Ward

Background Papers:

None

Annexes:

Annex 1 Proposed changes to the Traveller Pitch Agreement and the
Temporary Accommodation Agreement

Annex 2 Travellers Pitch Licence – proposed changes to agreement