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**Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods** 16 December 2015

Report of the Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods

**Approval of the updated Allocations Policy for City of York Councils Gypsy Roma and Travellers Sites**

**Summary**

1. To seek approval of an updated Allocations Policy, in order to allocate pitches across the Councils three sites fairly and consistently. The policy has been updated to reflect the changes to North Yorkshire Home Choice (NYHC) policy to ensure equality and fairness to all customers.

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve Option 1-
  - To approve the updated draft policy and application form to be implemented forthwith

Reason: To ensure we have an up to date policy which reflects the North Yorkshire Home Choice policy and meets the council's requirements regarding equalities. Approval of this policy will enable us to allocate pitches to ensure the travelling community are treated in a fair and equal manner.

**Background**

- 3 City of York Council owns and manages 3 Gypsy Roma and Travellers sites, geographically located across the City and totalling 61 pitches. Each pitch has a hard standing with amenity block and includes, electricity, running water, toilet and bathing facilities, kitchen and living space.
4. The waiting list held by the council for its three sites currently stand at 18 households.

5. The key objectives of the Allocations Policy are to:

- Make sure that those assessed as being in most need are prioritised
- Be fair, efficient and consistent in the allocation of pitches
- Ensure equality of opportunity in the allocation of pitches

## **Consultation**

6. Consultation was undertaken with all customers currently on the waiting list in line with advice from Housing Registrations. 18 Letters were subsequently sent out with 2 positive responses but no negative responses.
7. Customers who live on the sites currently and who are on the waiting list were spoken to about the consultation and encouraged by support staff to engage with the consultation. Most did not feel that they needed to comment as they expect to be treated in the same way as other customers by CYC.

## **Options**

8. Option 1- To approve the updated draft policy to be implemented forthwith.
9. Option 2- To reject the updated draft policy.

## **Analysis**

### **Option 1**

10. This policy has been updated:
- To reflect the North Yorkshire Home Choice Policy (NYHC)
  - To provide greater detail so applicants are clear about the policy and procedure for allocating pitches
  - Additional information provided in order that the policy has more clarity and sections have been changed to reflect the NYHC policy
  - The changes include the following;

## 11. Section 1 Introduction

- Objectives of the Policy - have included 'to meet the legal requirement of the Mobile Home Act 1983'.
- Meeting our obligations – ensuring that the policy is compatible with existing legislation
- Included - Information sharing, confidentiality and Data Protection
- Amendment to Service Standards to reflect the NYHC
- Included a section on monitoring and review of the policy

## 12. Section 2 Applying for a pitch

This section has been updated fully in line with the NYHC policy

- Who qualifies to apply – emphasis has changed to identify who is in eligible to apply
- Disclosure of allegiance i.e. related to council worker or councillors
- Fresh Applications – This section covers where applicants are required to complete a new application
- How to apply
- Verifying Information – Tells applicants what verification will be completed
- Confirming registration describes what the applicant will receive once their application is registered

## 13. Section 3 Changing / Cancelling Applications

- This is a new section that describes what the applicant has to do where there is a change in their circumstances or cancellation of their application.

## 14. Section 4 Assessing Applications and Offers (new section)

- This section explains how applications are assessed and how offers will be made

## 15. Section 5 Period of Exclusion

- This section was previously called 'offers and penalties' again this is to bring the policy in line with the NYHC policy
- Includes exclusion reasons and circumstances in which they will apply, and the rules and period of exclusion.
- Anti social behaviour the exclusion period increases from minimum of 6 months to a minimum of 2 years in line with the NYHC.

- Where an applicant owes a debt to CYC or another local authority, exclusion will apply unless the debt is paid in full or an agreement has been made to pay the debt off and this has been maintained for at least 13 weeks and is continuing in line with the NYHC policy.
- Exclusion will be applied where the applicant or partner is currently resident on a council owned site or in a council tenancy and has breached their occupancy conditions.
- Where an applicant provides false or misleading information, the exclusion increases from 6 months to a minimum of 12 months.
- If you are found to be squatting or are an unauthorised applicant on a site or individual pitch the exclusion period is increased from a minimum of 6 months suspension to a minimum of 12 months exclusion.

## Option 2

16. This policy would be at variance to North Yorkshire Home Choice policy. By bringing the policies in line with NYHC there will be less margin for error occurring between the two policies.

## Council Plan

17. The amendments to the allocation policy in line with the aim of focusing on frontline services – specifically ‘to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged, can access reliable services and the community facilities’

## Implications

18. **Financial:** None
19. **Human Resources (HR):** None
20. **Equalities**– Community Impact Assessment has been completed.
21. **Legal-** legal services have been consulted
22. **Crime and Disorder** – None
23. **Information Technology (IT)** – there will be a need to update the existing ICT system to take account of the changes.
24. **Property** – None
25. **Other-** None

## Risk Management

26. There are no known risks

## Contact Details

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Temporary  
Accommodation Manager

**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 7.12.15

Tel 01904 554122

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

### Annexes

Annex 1: Pitch Allocations Policy for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Sites-  
November 2015

Annex 2: Community Impact Assessment: Summary

### Abbreviations

NYHC - North Yorkshire Home Choice

CYC – City of York Council