South Gloucestershire Council

Local Development Framework

Gypsy and Traveller Sites
Towards Preferred Options Document

‘Consultation Statement’

April 2009
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Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document: ‘Towards Preferred Options’ Consultation Statement

1. Introduction

1.1 South Gloucestershire Council is producing a Development Plan Document to meet the unmet accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the area.

1.2 The consultation statement covering previous stages of this DPD is available to view at www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

1.3 This statement outlines the range of consultation and engagement techniques that South Gloucestershire Council used to promote the Gypsy and Traveller Sites ‘Towards Preferred Options’ document leading up to, and during, the 12 weeks of formal consultation between Thursday 7 November 2008 and Thursday 29 January 2009. In accordance with the Council’s Compact agreement with third sector bodies and taking into consideration changes to PPS12 published in June 2008, it was agreed that the consultation period should be 12 weeks rather than for just a minimum of 6 weeks.

1.4 In undertaking the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ consultation, the Council strove to continue to promote public ownership of its proposals by continuing engagement with as wide a range of interested people and organisations as possible within the requirements of South Gloucestershire Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. Efforts were made to overcome potential barriers to engaging Gypsies and Travellers who are recognised as ‘hard to reach’ groups and fulfil our obligations under Race Relations legislation.

1.5 The documents forming the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ stage comprised the Gypsy and Traveller Site Development Plan Document, supporting Sustainability Appraisal and ‘Plain Guide’ leaflet.

2. Promoting Availability of the Towards Preferred Options document

2.1 A key feature of the new planning system is that local planning authorities, in preparing their portfolio of LDF documents, involve the community throughout their preparation.

2.2 Throughout the DPD process, the Council has recognised the importance of capacity building among community leaders and officers if this historically contentious subject is to be considered in an informed and balanced way by the public.

2.3 To promote and ensure the Gypsy and Traveller DPD was effectively received, the following activities were undertaken:
1) Prior to the opening of the consultation;

2.4 i) Training sessions were held with elected Members,  
   ii) Presentations given to professional partners and;  
   iii) Information/advice notes distributed to officers in departments likely  
   to receive comment/enquiries from the general public.

2.5 The aim was to limit community tension and alarm caused by rumour  
   and mis-information. An example of the advice notes distributed is  
   attached at appendix 1.

2) Documents Available And Community Access

2.6 Formal public consultation began on the ‘Towards Preferred Options’  
   document on Thursday 7 November 2008. Copies of the document  
   and the accompanying ‘Plain Guide’ leaflet and Sustainability Appraisal  
   were placed in the Council’s One Stop Shops in Thornbury, Kingswood  
   and Yate. In addition to this, the following consultation and  
   engagement techniques were used:

2.7 Copies of the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ document, Sustainability  
   Appraisal and ‘Plain Guide’ leaflet were made available at all South  
   Gloucestershire libraries, along with a covering memo to library staff  
   advising them of the consultation. In addition to the documents, library  
   staff were also provided with a set of response forms and a response  
   box (a ballot box) to allow the public to post their comments in rather  
   than have to pay postage or deliver them to any Council Office or One  
   Stop Shop. Attached at appendix 2 are photographs taken during the  
   consultation period.

2.8 Copies of the ‘Plain Guide’ leaflets were made available at all South  
   Gloucestershire Leisure Centres and a covering memo to all staff was  
   enclosed advising them of the consultation and where the public can  
   find more information.

2.9 Outreach innovation included making copies of the ‘Plain Guide’ leaflet  
   available at GP surgeries and health clinics across South  
   Gloucestershire as well as in Police stations. A copy of the ‘Plain  
   Guide’ leaflet was also sent to all Heads of Primary and Secondary  
   Schools in the district.

2.10 The objective of all of the above was to provide support, with our  
   partners, for a diverse range of the local community to gain access to  
   the consultation material.Attached at appendix 3 are photographs  
   taken at the reception area of Thornbury Police station where the ‘Plain  
   Guide’ was placed informing the community of the consultation.
3) Website

2.11 The Council's Gypsy and Traveller DPD webpage www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsypd was updated to inform stakeholders of the dates of the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation and the availability of the document to view on-line as well as in hard copy at the Council One Stop Shops and libraries. The webpage also publicised the dates, times and venues of the three public exhibitions being held across the district to promote the document and provided contact details for the respondents to seek further information.

2.12 The 'read more' section of the website also provided links to the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation document, the Plain Guide and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. It also provided a copy of the Consultation Response form for the public to download – appendix 4. A link to the Council's e-consultation website was also included.

2.13 The 'Towards Preferred Options' document was added to the Council's e-consultation website - Inovem (consultations.southglos.gov.uk). This website allows stakeholders to respond electronically or alternatively download it and then print it out and return it to the Spatial Planning Team by post. This website provides stakeholders with the option to respond to individual sections of the document rather than respond to the document as a whole.

2.14 A link on the front page of the Council's public website was created in the box 'Have Your Say' – Gypsy and Traveller Consultation. This link took the user through to the e-consultation website in Inovem.

4) Notification letter/e-mails

2.15 All interested parties; people or organisation on the Spatial Planning Team's Local Development Framework Consultation Database received a stakeholder letter informing them about the consultation and the ways to respond. Selected consultation bodies and all Town and Parish Councils received complimentary copies of the main Issues and Options document and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. Attached at appendix 5 is a copy of these letters.

2.16 E-mails were also sent to the Gypsy and Traveller Multi Agency Forum Members, Corporate Equalities Forum Members and members of the Partnership against Hate Crime (PAHC) reminding them of the consultation and ways they could respond. Pre-consultation presentations and discussions had taken place with these groups who had been involved in the DPD preparation at the Issues and Options stage. These e-mails are attached at appendix 6.

2.17 In the consultation period, copies of the 'Towards Preferred Options' document, Sustainability Appraisal and covering memo were sent to
every South Gloucestershire Councillor with a reminder of the support available to them during the consultation to supplement the training they had already received. A copy of this memo is attached at appendix 7. A copy of the 'Towards Preferred Options' document and memo was also sent to Chief Officers, Development Control, Political Researchers and members of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD Corporate Working Group.

5) Press and Advertising

2.18 An advertisement was placed in the South Gloucestershire Gazette and Bristol Observer on Thursday 6 November 2008 advertising the dates, times and venues of the 3 public exhibitions being held by the Council. The same advertisement was also placed in the Bristol Evening Post on Friday 7 November 2009. A copy of the advertisement is attached at appendix 8.

2.19 Information was provided to a range of community based organisations to reach as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. This took the form of informatives, for example the Rural and Parish Matters E newsletter autumn edition in November 2008, which is sent for distribution to all Rural and Parish Councils in South Gloucestershire. Prior to the start of the consultation period, a briefing note was also sent to the Corporate Equalities Forum as part of their newsletter, to the Care Forum and Black Development Agency for their website, as well as PAHC, the Housing Partnership and Compact (the Council's link with voluntary organisations). Attached at appendix 9 is the extract from the Rural and Parish Matters E newsletter from November 2008 which demonstrates the information provided to all community based organisations, and a copy of the briefing note that was distributed to organisations.

2.20 To ensure an informed response from the Council, an article also appeared in the Corporate Communications November edition of Snapshot which is distributed to all Officers of the Council. This is attached at appendix 10. Public facing staff had already received briefing notes to assist with any enquiries from the public. Officers attending regular public meetings during the period of the consultation also received advice e.g. Safer and Stronger Communities.

6) Media coverage

2.21 Articles appeared in the local press prior to and throughout the consultation period, which included advising readers of the times and locations for the public exhibitions.

2.22 The articles surrounding the purpose of the consultation and public exhibitions were on the whole reported in a very balanced way and attached at appendix 11 are copies of those articles which appeared in the local press and BBC website.
2.23 Articles also appeared in the local press surrounding the proposals relating to specific areas. These articles were following contact made to the newspaper from community groups and residents associations affected by the proposals. These articles are attached at appendix 12.

3. Consultation to promote the Towards Preferred Options stage

3.1 As part of the overall engagement package, the Spatial Planning Team organised three public exhibitions to promote the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ material. In addition to these events, independent consultants carried out 3 stakeholder workshop events for professional partners and community groups. These were by invitation only. These events were arranged at venues and times to enable wide participation – they were geographically dispersed and covered both day and evening sessions. They were designed to facilitate informed debate around the South Gloucestershire area.

3.2 The local Gypsy and Traveller community were also consulted during the 12 weeks that the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ document was subject to formal public consultation. The Traveller Unit informed the local Gypsy and Traveller community of the event leading up to the formal consultation period to ensure that they were aware of their opportunity to attend and participate in the consultation. A drop in event was held and conducted by the consultants and the Council’s Corporate Traveller Unit.

3.3 Public exhibitions

The first public exhibition was at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, the second at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, and the third at Easter Compton Village Hall. The Gypsy and Traveller event was held at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre. In addition, Entec Consultants held 3 community group workshops. These were held at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, Turnberries, Thornbury and Emersons Green Village Hall. The exhibitions were arranged at a range of venues and times of the day to maximise accessibility. They were not location specific.

3.4 The first public exhibition was held at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre on Tuesday 18 November between 2.30pm and 7.00pm. On display at the exhibition were a number of exhibition boards and material, including leaflets, Development Plan Documents and maps of all the proposed sites within the document. A response box and response forms were also made available for the general public to fill in at the exhibition or alternatively take away with them and also a feedback form asking for their comments in relation to the venue, time of exhibition, information displayed and staff in attendance. This was a ‘drop in’ event where members of the public could come along and talk to Officers about the proposals in the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ document. Approximately 44 people attended this event.
3.5 The other two public exhibitions followed the same format. The public exhibition at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall was held on Friday 21 November between the hours of 10.00am until 2.30pm. Around 115 people attended the event. The final public exhibition took place at Easter Compton Village Hall on Thursday 27 November between 12.30pm and 5.00pm. 123 people signed in at this event but more attended as some people did not sign in when they entered the exhibition.

3.6 The public exhibitions were very well attended and the feedback forms were largely positive in respect of the material that was on display and the helpfulness of staff on the consultation document. There was some criticism on the timing of all the venues but it is considered that a widespread allocation of time across all the venues was provided. Attached at appendix 13 are some of the photographs taken at the public exhibitions. All exhibitions took place without any racially motivated incidents.

3.7 Community workshops

Entec Consultants conducted 3 workshops which were arranged by invitation only. Stakeholders invited to the workshops included professional partners, Town and Parish Councils, school representatives, local businesses and other service providers.

3.8 Workshops were held at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall on Wednesday 19 November, Turnberries in Thornbury on Tuesday 25 November and Emersons Green Village Hall on Thursday 27 November, all between 3.00pm and 6.00pm.

3.9 These events were undertaken in the form of structured workshops involving group discussions over key topics, interactive exercises and a feedback session at the end. To supplement the community workshops, Entec Consultants prepared a briefing pack for all attendees. This provided information about the process and its importance to the area, details on the topics covered and an indication of where further information could be obtained.

3.10 Altogether 51 people attended the three workshops. A separate report by Entec will be made available which provides details of all the workshops.

3.11 Gypsy and Traveller consultation event

This event was held at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre on Thursday 20 November between 10.30 and 3pm. This was a drop in event where the Gypsy and Traveller community could call in and find out more information and ask any questions to the consultants or Traveller Unit about the DPD. This day supplemented on-going site consultation
between the Corporate Traveller Unit and the Gypsy/Traveller community on site provision proposals. Support to publicise the event and facilitate attendance was also received from Avon Consortium for Traveller Education Services (ACTES).

3.12 According to Entec consultants, 15 representatives of the Gypsy/Traveller community attended the event. Bristol Playbus provide a crèche facility for the Gypsy/Traveller children at this event. The style of this event was different to the workshops and designed in order to be as inclusive as possible for the travelling community. Details of this event will be included in the report by Entec Consultants.

3.13 Telephone Information Line

The Council also set up a dedicated answering telephone service which was operated by Entec consultants in support of and as part of the consultation. The service operated 9.00am until 5.30pm Monday to Friday as an answering service, where callers had the opportunity to leave their name, contact details, appropriate contact time and the nature of information required to which a response within a 24 hour period (excluding weekends) was made.

3.14 It was also possible to be interviewed over the telephone to record comments on the DPD. Altogether 25 calls were made to the telephone hotline.

3.15 The telephone number for the information line was advertised within the Council’s ‘Plain Guide’ leaflet which was circulated around South Gloucestershire as part of the material communicated for the consultation.

3.16 Equalities

From the outset it was recognised that past experience here and elsewhere of public involvement in the Gypsy/Traveller site provision process raised issues which made pro-active measures necessary to support a consultation environment where views based on the facts could be expressed safely without damaging community relations.

3.17 As the client group for whom provision is being made is recognised as covered by Race Relations legislation, all arrangements for the consultation had to be compliant with this legislation.

3.18 There is clear guidance for public authorities dealing with issues where Race Relations legislation is relevant. Since the inception of the DPD process, close contact has been maintained with the Partnership Against Hate Crime. It was recognised that not all members of the public would be aware of the implications of the Race Relations Act, and attention was paid to making this clear at all points where
responses to the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ Consultation could be made.

3.19 Past consultations on the issue had led to public disorder arising from prejudice and misunderstanding. This exacerbated concern and anxiety in both the Gypsy/Traveller population and the public at large. For this reason the Council was determined to work with those involved in the consultation and as wide a range of the community as possible to offer support and information.

3.20 As outlined above, this involved working with established partnerships whose outreach touched a wide sector of the local community arranging for workshops to assist community leaders, providing training for Councillors and supplementary information for officers. Established arrangements for working with the Gypsy/Traveller community were focussed on the issue of site provision and the DPD. It was heartening to note that years of encouraging participation has resulted in the active involvement in the DPD by Gypsy/Travellers in the area. This has helped the Council in conducting the consultation in compliance with its Statement of Community Involvement.

3.21 Particular attention was paid to the safety of public and staff at planned public events in the light of past experience. Close co-operation was maintained with the police, both on the subject of public meetings and more widely on the management of potential racist incidents. Specific arrangements were made through the police and other partners, such as schools, to ensure protection from harassment for local Gypsy/Traveller families.

3.22 Having recognised the challenges relevant to this consultation and undertaken extensive preparation arising from this, the Council is pleased to note that public events passed off without incident, and the level of racist written responses was very low. It is appreciated that this could not have been achieved without the co-operation of professional partners, community leaders and the general public. This is encouraging as the Council endeavours to involve all those with an interest in the provision of adequate accommodation for everyone in South Gloucestershire.

4. **Next steps**

4.1 All consultation responses received during the formal ‘Towards Preferred Options’ consultation stage will be analysed and Officers will prepare a schedule of comments, which will categorise the main issues raised and give an initial officer response.

4.2 The next stage in this document’s development, known as the ‘publication draft’ is currently scheduled to commence public consultation in autumn 2009. Work on this document is underway and it will need to take account of all written comments received during the
'Towards Preferred Options' stage as well as the information gathered and views expressed during all of the consultation events.

4.3 Further information on the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document can be found on the Council's public website at www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd or alternatively you can phone the Spatial Planning Team on 01454 823469 to discuss the next steps.
Appendix 1
Briefing note for July 08 Multi Agency Partnership meeting re South Gloucestershire Council Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD

DPD Progress:
The ‘Issues and Options’ stage has been completed. There were no formal submissions of land for pitches submitted as a result of the Issues and Options consultation but most respondents were generally supportive of the approach outlined, which included dividing up South Gloucestershire into ‘areas of search’ and identifying a hierarchy of zones where future Gypsy and Traveller sites would be considered more preferable.

The majority of respondents were also supportive of the other options for gaining authorised pitches, which included intensifying the use of some existing sites and ‘reviewing’ sites with temporary permissions.

As at the end June ‘08, 55 residential and 25 transit pitches are still required in South Gloucestershire.

Officers are working with internal and external partners to identify suitable land (for G and T use) in Council ownership, other public sector ownership and private ownership.

Next Steps:
When the document reaches Preferred Options stage (October 08) it will be necessary to include site specific proposals for meeting the unmet need. This will be contentious and the evidence base needs to be transparent and robust. Pitch/site selection criteria are being consolidated from the existing Local Plan and the Issues and Options paper in order to draft a criteria based policy, which could be used to inform the process. Locations, including Council and other public and private land, will be individually assessed once this has been completed so that the process is consistent and transparent.

Officers are aware that identifying sites will be a controversial process and the Multi Agency Partnership is being asked to show their continued support for this process. Strategies discussed at the Issues and Options stage may be even more pertinent now, such as preparing schools, particularly those with Gypsy and Traveller pupils to protect them from potential bullying during the consultation process.

During public consultation on the Preferred Options document, a series of workshops will be held for invited stakeholders. We would like members of the Multi Agency Partnership and/or the organisations they represent to suggest participants in these upcoming workshops.

Please contact the Spatial Planning Team on 01454 862016 or email lisa.price@southglos.gov.uk with any nominations you may have, preferably by the end of August.
Briefing note for officers receiving calls about the Gypsy and Traveller Consultation

Background

The Council has been asked by the Government to find 55 residential and 25 transit pitches for Gypsy and Traveller families.

South Gloucestershire Council is currently preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South Gloucestershire.


Consultation details

From 6th November onwards, hard copies of the ‘Towards Preferred Options’ consultation material, which includes the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, and Plain Guide leaflet can be viewed at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Thornbury One-Stop Shop, Castle Street Council Offices
- Kingswood One-Stop Shop, Civic Centre, High Street
- Yate One-Stop Shop, Leisure Centre
- All South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library)

The document is also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

Staff are not expected to provide the public with any information on this consultation and should ‘signpost’ people to a dedicated telephone hotline where they can get more information. The telephone number is 01454 863738.

Public consultation exhibitions are being held at the following locations on the dates stated below:

- Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre on Tuesday 18 November 2008 between 2.30pm and 7pm
- Chipping Sodbury Town Hall on Friday 21 November 2008 between 10am and 2.30pm; and
- Easter Compton Village Hall on Thursday 27th November 2008 between 12.30pm and 5pm.

This is their opportunity to come along and find out more information about the DPD and ask any questions they may have prior to making any comments.

PLEASE NOTE that any calls from journalists should be redirected to the corporate communications team on 3891, 3892 or 2299.
Calls from members of the public should NOT be put through to corporate communications but directed to the dedicated telephone advice line on 01454 863738.
Briefing note 2 for officers receiving ad hoc enquiries re: Gypsy and Traveller sites

Background

The council is currently assessing land in the district for potential use for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Public awareness of this work is increasing, and staff who deal directly with the public may receive enquiries from residents concerned about plans for specific sites.

Approach to be taken

The PTSE team working on the project and corporate communications have prepared the following information which can be given to members of the public:

"The council has been asked by the Government to find 53 residential and 25 transit pitches for Gypsy and Traveller families. To do that, we are looking at all land owned by the council and other public authorities. In addition, some private landowners have contacted the council to put forward suggestions."

"A list of proposed sites will be presented to the council's Cabinet on 6 October, and papers for that meeting are now available in One Stop Shops, local libraries and on our website, http://www.southglos.gov.uk/mcmshosting/ui/sites/council/Applications/Agendasandreports.htm"

"No decisions have been made yet. The list that appears in those papers is simply a list of suggestions based on our assessment so far. Following the Cabinet meeting, there will be a full public consultation which is to start in early November when everyone will have a chance to express their views. Only views expressed at the Consultation stage can be taken into account. Details of the arrangements for the Consultation will be made available in mid October."

PLEASE NOTE that any calls from journalists should be redirected to the corporate communications team on 3891, 3892 or 2299. Calls from members of the public should NOT be put through to corporate communications.

Initial distribution to management of Property Services, One Stop Shop and Contact Centres.

Corporate Communications, 30th September 2008
Briefing note 3 for officers receiving ad hoc enquiries re: Gypsy and Traveller sites

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PLEASE NOTE that any calls from journalists should be redirected to the corporate communications team on 3891, 3892 or 2299. Calls from members of the public should NOT be put through to corporate communications.

Initial distribution to management of Property Services, One Stop Shop and Contact Centres.

Corporate Communications, 7th October 2008
South Gloucestershire Council

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document
'Towards Preferred Options' for Consultation
6 Nov 2008 – 29 Jan 2009
Representation Form

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3. Are you supporting the DPD or objecting to it?
(please tick box as appropriate)

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(For official use only)
4. Please give the reasons for your objection/support. To help in the analysis of your comments, please always make sure to state which part of the consultation material your comment relates to and what change(s) you would like to see made.

Please note your comment should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and any suggested changes.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Print name: ___________________________

Please be aware that all comments, whether received electronically or in hard copy, will be treated exactly the same. As this is a planning policy document, you need to be aware that your comments cannot be made confidential. They will be publicly accessible and other parties will have the right to read them. However, while your name and response will be publicly available for others to read, your address details will not be published either electronically or in a report. We will not publish any comments until after the public consultation period has closed on 20th January 2009.

Please note that offensive, racist, discriminatory and other statements that are not relevant will not be formally considered. Offensive statements lower a person's reputation personally or within their trade, profession or business. Racist statements are those that discriminate against individuals on racial grounds including their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins. As Gypsies and Travellers are a racial group, comments that include such statements will not be accepted and will be rejected.

Please return completed forms to the 'Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options' postal box held at these premises or alternatively you can post your form to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire BS35 1HF
Date: November 2008
Enquiries: Lisa Price
Telephone 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863186
Internet: Lisa.price@southglos.gov.uk

Dear

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Towards Preferred Options Document

South Gloucestershire Council is currently preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South Gloucestershire.

The Council undertook the 'Issues and Options' consultation in January this year and is now formally consulting on the 'Towards Preferred Options' stage of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document for twelve weeks between Thursday 6th November 2008 and Thursday 29th January 2009. This is an opportunity to have your say and to help shape the final draft 'submission' document (the next statutory stage of production), which will be produced for public consultation later next year.

From 6th November onwards, hard copies of the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation material, which includes the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, can be viewed at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Thornbury One-Stop Shop, Castle Street Council Offices
- Kingswood One-Stop Shop, Civic Centre, High Street
- Yate One-Stop Shop, Leisure Centre
- All South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library)

The document is also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk Alternatively, you can download the document online via our internet based consultation system: consultations.southglos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where you will need to register (if you have not already done so) and follow the links to "Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options Document". You can then either use the 'structured document' to make comments on individual sections of the DPD, or you can view the full document and then fill out the electronic response form. More instructions are available on the website.

You can also make comments in other ways. Letters/response forms can be sent to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street

Peter Jackson, Director of Planning, Transportation & Strategic Environment
Thornbury Council Offices, Castle Street, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire BS35 1HF
Telephone: 01454 868868 Fax: 01454 863440. Internet: mailbox@southglos.gov.uk

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
Dear

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Please find enclosed a copy of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites 'Towards Preferred Options' document and also a copy of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal report. Also enclosed is a copy of the 'plain guide', which provides details on the public consultation events.

You can make your comments in the following ways:

The document is also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk Alternatively, you can download the document online via our internet based consultation system: consultations.southglos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where you will need to register (if you have not already done so) and follow the links to "Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options Document". You can then either use the 'structured document' to make comments on individual sections on the DPD, or you can view the full document and then fill out the electronic response form. More instructions are available on the website.

You can also make your comments in other ways.

Letters/response forms can be sent to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Dear

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Towards Preferred Options Document

South Gloucestershire Council is currently preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South Gloucestershire.

The Council undertook the 'Issues and Options' consultation in January this year and is now formally consulting on the 'Towards Preferred Options' stage of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document for twelve weeks between Thursday 6th November 2008 and Thursday 29th January 2009. This is an opportunity to have your say and to help shape the final draft 'submission' document (the next statutory stage of production), which will be produced for public consultation later next year.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites 'Towards Preferred Options' document and a copy of the 'plain guide', which provides details on the public consultation events. The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report can be downloaded on our website at www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

You can make your comments in the following ways:

The document is also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can download the document online via our internet based consultation system: consultations.southglos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where you will need to register (if you have not already done so) and follow the links to "Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options Document". You can then either use the 'structured document' to make comments on individual sections on the DPD, or you can view the full document and then fill out the electronic response form. More instructions are available on the website.

Letters/response forms can be sent to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
Appendix 6
Dear Members of the Partnership Against Hate Crime,

Your partnership has taken a supportive interest in the progress of the Development Plan Document on the provision of Gypsy/Traveller sites from an early stage. We anticipate your support during the current consultation by helping to disseminate accurate information so that the issue can be discussed in a positive and non-divisive way.

If you need any further information or help please do not hesitate to contact me.

For your information, if you get any questions about the consultation, the following information may be useful:

Formal consultation started on Thursday on the Gypsy and Traveller Sites 'Towards Preferred Options' development plan document. The consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks from Thursday 6 November 2008 until Thursday 29 January 2009.

From 6th November onwards, hard copies of the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation material, which includes the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, can be viewed at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Thornbury One-Stop Shop, Castle Street Council Offices
- Kingswood One-Stop Shop, Civic Centre, High Street
- Yate One-Stop Shop, Leisure Centre
- All South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library)

The documents are also available on our website: www.southgos.gov.uk/gypsypdp

Alternatively, you can download the document online via our internet based consultation system: consultations.southgos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where you will need to register (if you have not already done so) and follow the links to "Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options Document". You can then either use the 'structured document' to make comments on individual sections of the DPD, or you can view the full document and then fill out the electronic response form. More instructions are available on the website.

You can make comments in the following ways:

Letters/response forms can be sent to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 1HF

You can also phone the Spatial Planning Team on 01454 863469 if you would like copies of the response.
form to be posted to you.

Comments/response forms can also be emailed to: planning.LDF@southglos.gov.uk

Please be aware that all comments, whether received electronically or in hard copy, will be treated exactly the same. As this is a planning policy document, you need to be aware that your comments cannot be made confidential. They will be publicly accessible and other parties will have the right to read them. However, while your name and response will be publicly available for others to read, your address details will not be published either electronically or in a report. We will not publish any comments until after the public consultation period has closed on 29th January 2009.

Regards

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116

07/11/2008
Lisa price

From: Lisa price
Sent: 07 November 2008 10:51
To: Andy Hichens; Christine Brownlie; Claire Bell; 'dstevens@connexionswest.org.uk'; Denis De Souza; John Malone; 'julie.claridge@avonandsomerset.police.uk'; Margaret Lamb; 'maria.hennessy@sglos-pct.nhs.uk'; Maria Lopresti; 'phil.harrill@avonandsomerset.police.uk'; Sam Drew; Sean Tarpey; Steve Waters; Verity Scott
Subject: FW: Gypsy and Traveller Consultation

Apologies. Wrong e-mail!

Dear Members of the Multi Agency Forum,

Your Forum has taken a supportive interest in the progress of the Development Plan Document on the provision of Gypsy/Traveller sites from an early stage. We anticipate your support during the current consultation by helping to disseminate accurate information so that the issue can be discussed in a positive and non divisive way.

If you need any further information or help please do not hesitate to contact me.

For your information, if you get any questions about the consultation, the following information may be useful:

Formal consultation started on Thursday on the Gypsy and Traveller Sites 'Towards Preferred Options' development plan document. The consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks from Thursday 6 November 2008 until Thursday 29 January 2008.

From 6th November onwards, hard copies of the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation material, which includes the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, can be viewed at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Thornbury One-Stop Shop, Castle Street Council Offices
- Kingswood One-Stop Shop, Civic Centre, High Street
- Yate One-Stop Shop, Leisure Centre
- All South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library)

The documents are also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

Alternatively, you can download the document online via our internet based consultation system: consultations.southglos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where you will need to register (if you have not already done so) and follow the links to "Gypsy and Traveller Towards Preferred Options Document". You can then either use the 'structured document' to make comments on individual sections of the DPD, or you can view the full document and then fill out the electronic response form. More instructions are available on the website.

You can make comments in the following ways:

Letters/response forms can be sent to:

Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 1HF

07/11/2008
You can also phone the Spatial Planning Team on 01454 863469 if you would like copies of the response form to be posted to you.

Comments/response forms can also be emailed to: planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk

Please be aware that all comments, whether received electronically or in hard copy, will be treated exactly the same. As this is a planning policy document, you need to be aware that your comments cannot be made confidential. They will be publicly accessible and other parties will have the right to read them. However, while your name and response will be publicly available for others to read, your address details will not be published either electronically or in a report. We will not publish any comments until after the public consultation period has closed on 29th January 2009.

Regards

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116
Lisa price

From: Lisa price
Sent: 07 November 2008 11:10
To: Will Oulton
Subject: RE: Gypsy and Traveller 'Towards Preferred Options' Consultation

Yes it is for you.

Regards

Lisa

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116

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From: Will Oulton
Sent: 07 November 2008 11:01
To: Lisa price
Subject: RE: Gypsy and Traveller 'Towards Preferred Options' Consultation

Thanks for letting me know Lisa. The copy of documentation you sent to me, is that for my own information i.e. I don't need to pass it on to anyone?

Regards

Will

---

From: Lisa price
Sent: 07 November 2008 10:58
To: Will Oulton
Subject: FW: Gypsy and Traveller 'Towards Preferred Options' Consultation

Dear Will,

Please see e-mail below that I have sent to the Chairman of the Corporate Equalities Forum yesterday.

If you get any requests for any documents, let me know and I will send them accordingly

Regards

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116

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From: Lisa price
Sent: 06 November 2008 16:10
To: 'David Primrose'
Subject: Gypsy and Traveller 'Towards Preferred Options' Consultation

Dear David,
Formal consultation has started today on the Gypsy and Traveller Sites 'Towards Preferred Options' development plan document. The consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks from Thursday 6 November 2008 until Thursday 29 January 2008.

From 6th November onwards, hard copies of the 'Towards Preferred Options' consultation material, which includes the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, can be viewed at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Thornbury One-Stop Shop, Castle Street Council Offices
- Kingswood One-Stop Shop, Civic Centre, High Street
- Yate One-Stop Shop, Leisure Centre
- All South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library)

The documents are also available on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

You can make comments in the following ways:

Letters/response forms can be sent to:

**Spatial Planning Team**
**South Gloucestershire Council**
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 1HF

You can also phone the Spatial Planning Team on 01454 863469 if you would like copies of the response form to be posted to you.

Comments/response forms can also be emailed to: planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk

Please be aware that all comments, whether received electronically or in hard copy, will be treated exactly the same. As this is a planning policy document, you need to be aware that your comments cannot be made confidential. They will be publicly accessible and other parties will have the right to read them. However, while your name and response will be publicly available for others to read, your address details will not be published either electronically or in a report. We will not publish any comments until after the public consultation period has closed on 26th January 2009.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your offer of helping with community feelings during this Consultation and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Lisa

Lisa Price
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016
Fax: 01454 863116

07/11/2008
RE: Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document – Towards Preferred Options Consultation

Dear Member

The new planning system that was introduced in 2004 replaced ‘Local Plans’ with ‘Local Development Frameworks’. The Local Development Framework is a collection of planning documents that set out the Council’s policies and proposals for the development and use of land.

One of the first Local Development Framework documents that the Council is preparing, as a result of a Direction from the Secretary of State made in August 2006, is a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document. This is being produced in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South Gloucestershire up to 2011.

Under the new planning system there are currently three stages in a Development Plan Document’s production. The Council has now reached the second stage in this plans production (Towards Preferred Options). Formal public consultation runs for twelve weeks between Thursday 6th November and Thursday 29th January 2009. Compact members were made aware of the consultation in September.

Enclosed is a copy of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites ‘Towards Preferred Options’ document and also a copy of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal report. Also enclosed is a copy of the ‘plain guide’, which provides details on the public consultation events. Further copies of all materials are available from the Spatial Planning Team by calling 01454 863469.

As part of our drive to make consultation on planning issues more accessible and efficient, the Council has introduced a new internet-based consultation system. We would be grateful if you would consider using the on-line system as the preferred means to make any comments about the Gypsy and Traveller ‘Towards Preferred Options’ material and that you ask your constituents to do the same.

The consultation can be found at the following web address: consultations.southglos.gov.uk (note there is no www. as a prefix) where people will need to register (if they haven’t already done so) and follow the links to ‘Gypsy and Traveller Sites Towards Preferred Options Document’. Then the user can either use the ‘structured document’ to make comments on individual sections of the document, or they can view the full document and then fill out the necessary electronic response form(s). More instructions are available on the website.

Comments can also be made in other ways. Letters can be sent to:
Spatial Planning Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Council Offices
Castle Street
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 1HF

The electronic response form on the website can also be printed out and then completed by hand and posted to the same address (one form per comment).

Comments can also be emailed to planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk

Please be aware that all comments, whether received electronically or in hard copy, will be treated exactly the same. As this is a planning policy document, comments cannot be made confidential. Comments will be publicly accessible and other parties will have the right to read them. However, whilst names and responses will be publicly available for others to read, address details will not be published either electronically or in a report.

To help in the analysis of your comments, please always make sure to state which part of the consultation material your comment relates to and what change(s) you would like to see made. If you make your comments electronically, we would prefer not to be sent the same duplicate comments in hard copy format. However you choose to respond please ensure we receive your response by Thursday 29th January 2009.

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to working to achieve good community relations and promote social cohesion. This is a sensitive and controversial matter. Your on-going support and understanding of why this Development Plan Document is being prepared is very much appreciated.

If you have any questions or require any help, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 01454 862016, or email me – Lisa.price@southglos.gov.uk

Regards

Lisa Price
Spatial Planning Team
**Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

Towards Preferred Options

South Gloucestershire Council needs to provide 53 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 25 transit pitches by 2011. This is your chance to comment on the Council’s suggestions for where the necessary pitches could be located and why.

To find out more, come to a Public Exhibition:

**Tuesday 18 November 2008**  
Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre  
2.30pm - 7.00pm

**Friday 21 November 2008**  
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall  
10am - 2.30pm

**Thursday 27 November 2008**  
Easter Compton Village Hall  
12.30pm - 5.00pm

For more details and to take part go to:  
- Any South Gloucestershire Council one stop shop  
- Any South Gloucestershire Council library  
Or go online at:  
- www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsypd  
- http://consultations.southglos.gov.uk

For further information contact the South Gloucestershire Spatial Planning Team:  
planningLD@southglos.gov.uk  
01454 863489

Comment by 29 January 2009
FREE ADVICE, GRANTS AND LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

South Gloucestershire Council has teamed up with Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) to provide SG Futurenergy – a renewable energy advice scheme which gives free advice, grants and low interest loans to help install renewable energy at home.

SG Futurenergy's helpline is manned by expert advisors that give expert advice and help identifying the most suitable renewable technology for your home. They also provide a list of reliable local installers.

Grants of £500 will be awarded to homeowners to help towards the cost of installing a renewable technology.

The scheme also offers a low interest loan. Up to £3,500 can be loaned at a fixed interest rate of three per cent over a maximum of 10 years.

Renewable energy can significantly reduce energy bills and helps the environment too. The renewable technologies eligible for the grant and loan include: solar hot water, solar photovoltaics (PV), ground source heat pumps, small scale wind and biomass.

To find out more contact SG Futurenergy, 01594 544119, lines are open Mondays to Fridays, 9am until 5pm. Alternatively email renewables@swea.co.uk or visit www.swea.co.uk and click on grants for renewables.

VOLUNTEER WITH THE POLICE TO JOIN THEIR INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

Independent custody visitors visit police stations and carry out specific checks. These ensure that people detained in police custody are being properly cared for. Visitors observe, comment and report upon the legal rights of the person being detained, the conditions of the facilities and environment in which they are being detained and the health and wellbeing of the detainee. If you would like to find out more and apply to become a Custody Visitor, ring 01275 816377 or visit www.aspola.org.uk.
**CONSULTATION CORNER**

Have your say on these two key consultations currently underway by South Gloucestershire Council...

**BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX CONSULTATION 2009/10 TO 2011/12**

Each year the Council consults council tax payers on its likely budget and council tax proposals. This also provides an opportunity for the Council to tell council tax payers how it expects to become more efficient in its use of your money, and what its recent performance has been.

The Council spends over £400M a year, delivering many services. These include schools, care of the elderly, waste collection and disposal, and highways. About a quarter of this spending is funded from the council tax.

This is your opportunity to express your views about how the council uses your money. You can make your views known by responding online, in person at two public events planned for December, or in writing. The Council will consider these responses before it makes its final decisions on the budget and council tax in February 2009.

You can view the budget consultation document online and complete an on-line questionnaire or postal questionnaire. For details visit [https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk](https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk) or write to Freepost RRKZ-JTHU-HUGE, Budget Consultation, South Gloucestershire Council, Castle Street, Thornbury BS35 1HF.

There will also be two public meetings in December which you can attend and give your views. These will be at:

- Bradley Stoke Community School, 3 December 2008, at 7:00pm
- Kingswood Civic Centre, 15 December 2008, at 7:00pm

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The Budget and Council Tax consultation runs from **04 Nov 2008** until **14 Dec 2008**. The results will be published by **18 Feb 2009**.

**GYPSIES & TRAVELLERS PLAN**

At the Direction of the Secretary of State South Gloucestershire Council is preparing a new plan called a Development Plan Document to show the Government how it will allocate enough land in its area to meet the outstanding need for Gypsy/Traveller pitches by 2011.

Independent consultants working with the guidelines used by all Councils for this purpose show that a further 53 residential and 25 transit pitches need to be provided.

The broad issues and options facing the council were consulted on in January/February this year. A major issue is that the shortage of authorised accommodation has contributed to Gypsy/Travellers having poor levels of health and educational attainment and generally having problems gaining access to services or contributing to the community.

Based on the response to the earlier consultation, the Preferred Options stage of the Development Plan Document is now available. This contains proposals for where the extra pitches could be found.

**Consultation has now started and runs until 29 January 2009.** Details of the proposals are available on the Council's website at [www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsypdpd](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsypdpd) together with details of the ways in which you can give your comments to the Council. You can also email planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk or ring 01454 863469 for more information.
Lisa Price

From: Lisa Price  
Sent: 20 October 2008 17:30  
To: gillturner@thecareforum.org.uk  
Subject: Article for newsletter  
Attachments: Update on PO stage.doc

Gill,

Article attached as discussed this morning.

Regards

Lisa Price  
Gypsy and Traveller DPD Project Officer  
Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 01454 862016  
Fax: 01454 863116

17/04/2009
'Consultation on Gypsy / Traveller Sites'

At the Direction of the Secretary of State South Gloucestershire Council is preparing a new plan called a Development Plan Document to show the Government how it will allocate enough land in its area to meet the outstanding need for Gypsy/Traveller pitches by 2011. Independent consultants working with the guidelines used by all Councils for this purpose has identified that a further 53 residential and 25 transit pitches need to be provided. The broad issues and options facing the council were consulted on in January /February this year. A major issue is that shortage of authorised accommodation has contributed to Gypsy/Travellers having poor levels of health and educational attainment and generally have problems gaining access to services or contributing to the community. Based on the response to the earlier consultation, the Preferred Options stage of the Development Plan Document is now available. This contains proposals for where the extra pitches could be found. Consultation starts in November. Details of the proposals are available on the Council's website at www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd together with details of the ways in which you can give your comments to the Council.
Briefing note for professional partners and community groups on South Gloucestershire Council’s preferred options for meeting the shortage of sites for Gypsy/Travellers – 30 September 2008.

The Council has been directed by the Secretary of State to prepare a Development Plan Document to allocate enough land through the planning system to meet the urgent unmet accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers in the area by 2011.

The number of sites required was determined by independent consultants and agreed following an examination in public at regional level. This is expected to be confirmed after further government consultation on the Regional Spatial Strategy next year.

The first stage of the DPD which was a discussion of general issues and options around the best way to provide sites went out to public consultation in January/February this year. There was little public interest presumably because no site locations were included. The responses, which were received, were largely supportive of the Council’s proposed approach, which is to make better use of existing sites both public and private, and, where new sites are needed, to assess their suitability based on planning constraint zones and clear criteria.

A full public consultation will take place in November/December and will concentrate on specific site locations and why they were chosen. This can be expected to arouse some strong public reaction but the Council is very conscious of its duty to minimize social disruption by arranging for a range of safe opportunities for public comment.

In line with government policy people will be encouraged to use the Council’s website and there will be a dedicated telephone line for enquiries in addition to the more traditional consultation events one of which will be specifically for Gypsy/Travellers. If your individual organization would like to be included in the mailing list for the consultation please contact the Gypsy/Traveller DPD project manager in Spatial planning by email or on ext 2016. We are working to be in compliance with Compact consultation arrangements.

The Council’s work with Gypsy/Travellers was an important element in achieving grade 3 of the Equality standard. Together with its professional partners the council recognizes that the shortage of authorised site provision is the major barrier to social integration. This prevents Gypsy/Travellers from reaching their potential and contributing fully to the local community. These families have much worse health and educational achievement than the average. These disadvantages cannot be adequately addressed without families having a stable base.

In the forthcoming consultation adverse and ill-informed comment will no doubt appear in the media and in general public debate. It would be very helpful if community leaders, those working with Travellers and the public and others who understand disadvantage and the need to challenge racism would take the opportunity to counter these views, either in one to one conversations or in the media.

More information is available from the Council’s website at or telephoning 01454 862016.
Corporate Communications

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Snapshot

A message from Chief Executive Amanda Deeks

Dear colleagues,

Last week I was in Kingswood to wrap-up the latest series of my lunch morning - staff briefings held across the council.

It was a real pleasure to meet so many of you again and to thank you work which contributed to the council getting a four star rating. I hope useful and that they provided an interesting update on the council’s pri grateful for any feedback and what topics you’d like to see included in briefings. Just send me an email and let me know. Thank you again to your lunchtimes (or got up very early!) to attend.

On the subject of saying thank you, we are launching our staff recognition scheme today. TI Council PRIDE awards (it stands for People, Recognition, Inspiration, Dedication and Excelle with the opportunity to give recognise colleagues and teams who go that extra mile. You ca to nominate in the article below.

I’ve been out to a couple of other interesting events recently. Firstly, a public meeting on the Ridings High School and King Edmund Community School to become federated academies. I’ve out for consultation and our Cabinet will be looking at the responses and come to a decision.

I also went to an event at the Grange School in Warmley to start a physical education strategy. I had the pleasure of meeting Kate Grey, South Gloucestershire’s own paralympian. Kate is University but her family live in Thornbury and until recently she was a pupil at the Castle S have the opportunity to talk to this very inspirational young woman.

On 5 November the Cabinet will launch its budget consultation. As you may know the counci the next three years and we will continue to run our services as efficiently as possible. This at better ways of working, reviewing how our services are run and looking at the opportunit smarter working proposals and accommodation strategy. Final agreement on the budget and in February.

Finally, thank you to all who put forward ideas for the staff suggestion scheme Eureka. We ideas during its first month. This is a fantastic response and you can find an update on the se

See you next month,

amanda.deeks@south

News from across the council

Nominate now for the council's PRIDE awards

Do you know an individual or te
the leases on current rented offices and introducing new smarter working arrangements for staff will help save council tax payers an average of £1.3 million per year over the life of the building.

You can see more of how the Badminton Road will look both inside and out, how work is progressing and the latest news on smarter working and green travel at the ourspace intranet site.

Alternatively contact Lynne Griffiths, Accommodation Manager, on ext 3880 or Sarah Thompson, Smarter Working Project Manager on ext 3817.

...and this is how it will look when its finished

Consultation begins on Gypsies and Travellers Plan
Consultation on the latest stage in preparing a 'Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan' Thursday 6 November for 12 weeks.

All councils in England, including South Gloucestershire, are required to assess accommodation sites for Gypsy and Travellers in South Gloucestershire. Also, an independent report last year on behalf of West of England councils – the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Area – which recommended more sites in South Gloucestershire.

The council needs to find 53 residential and 25 transit pitches by 2011.

The council will publish a document – 'Towards Preferred Options' – on Thursday 6 November at the proposed locations. Eight of the 17 possible locations are on existing Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The council is consulting widely on the proposed locations as it wants to ensure that all residents in Gloucestershire are able to give their views. No decisions have been taken on the potential sites as part of the assessment process so far. Consultation responses will be taken into consideration together with the suggestions for alternative locations.

As part of this consultation process three public exhibitions have been organised to take place where people can find out more information:

- Tuesday 18 November: Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, 2.30pm – 7pm
- Friday 21 November: Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 10am – 2.30pm
- Thursday 27 November: Easter Compton Village Hall, 12.30pm – 5pm
The closing date for consultation is Thursday 29 January 2009.
For more information visit www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd, email planningLDF@southglos ext. 3469.

Eureka ideas hit the ton mark
Our staff suggestion scheme Eureka is celebrating its first century of ideas. Since its launch at the end of September we have now received over 100 ideas from staff from all over the council.

No matter how big or small, your ideas can make a difference to the council. Ideas suggested come in all shapes and sizes, from a sort of scheme for council staff, to furnishing our pictures by local artists or schools, to reusing and recycling stationery. We are now in the process of evaluating these ideas to see if they can be implemented.

Please keep your ideas coming either through the online form, or downloading a paper form by calling the Eureka team on 3848.

But what happens once you click submit or pop the form in the post?

1. Your idea will be acknowledged - if submitting online look out for the pop up window, if you paper form you will get an email response.

2. Ideas are sifted corporately (once a week) and then passed onto the relevant department for evaluation.

3. You'll be sent a message outlining what's going to happen to your idea from your scheme.

4. Your idea will be evaluated. This could take between 2 - 4 weeks depending on the nature and department involved.

5. You will receive formal feedback as to whether your idea has been successful or not, all ideas require further work. This will also be posted on the Eureka website.

Eureka is one of the many initiatives that make up the Inspirational Leadership programme Future (the council's improvement programme).

Inspirational leadership is aimed at all service areas and staff because the council recognises that all staff, at all levels, can be "leaders" in their jobs. Part of the programme is to "continually learn and share best practice to support continuous improvement across departments". Eureka is one of many ways that give staff the opportunity to do this.

For further information contact Claire Brown, Organisational Improvement Adviser.

CCTV investment helps our residents be safe and feel safe
The council's commitment to improving CCTV is set to receive CCTV investment helps our residents be safe and feel safe

Our Cabinet approved the funding at a meeting this week. The cash will provide priority neighbourhoods and 'hotspot' areas for crime and behaviour with state-of-the-art CCTV equipment to help residents feel safe.

Enhanced CCTV systems will be installed in Kingswood, Staple Hill, Hanham, Filton, Cadbury Heath and Patchway and additional Home 1 cameras will be used to implement a brand new CCTV system in Thornbury.

Heather Goddard, executive member for communities, said: "Since our pledge in February to monitor over the next three years, a lot of groundwork has already been done to improve..."
Appendix 11
Travellers to get up to 80 new pitches

NILABLY 80 new pitches for travellers could be created on 17 sites in South Gloucestershire as the district tries to meet government demands for more accommodation.

The council has been told to draw up plans for more sites as a matter of urgency with more than 50 new residential and 30 touring pitches needed in the next three years, on top of the sites already in use.

It plans to place some in existing camps, but new sites could also be created alongside the existing official sites in Stonehouse, Webberforce, and presently owned sites. Yate, Stone, Giffard, Winterbourne, Bristol, and Falmouth are all possibilities.

The Tory cabinet will discuss the plans next week, after which they will go out to public consultation.

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REVEALED: WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE PIER

Exclusive
Find out on Page 3

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EXCLUSIVE

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EAD SON

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Eight pages of latest non-league football action - FREE inside
Government tells council to identify more pitches

by Lynne Hutchinson

NEARLY 80 new pitches for travellers could be created on 17 sites in South Gloucestershire as the district tries to meet Government demands for more accommodation.

A total of 62 new residential and 26 traveller pitches have to be provided by 2011 on top of the sites already in use.

South Gloucestershire Council hopes to find room for some of the extra pitches by intensifying the use of existing camps.

But new land is also being considered - some areas near current sites and some in completely new locations.

The authority already has two official sites: in Highwood Lane, Patchway, and in Old Gloucester Road, Winterbourne.

There are also a number of privately owned sites throughout the district, but only a few of them are legally允许ing on them have suggested ways of meeting the local demand.

All English councils are under pressure to assess accommodation needs for Gipsies and tell the Government how they intend to meet them.

South Gloucestershire has been directed to prepare a new plan to allocate sites as a matter of urgency.

An independent report last year also recommended more sites in the district.

The council is aware the provision of new pitches is likely to be controversial and its ruling Cabinet will meet next week to consider potential sites.

But press reports that decision had been taken on the sites identified.

Sites being considered for an intensification of use are those in: Bank Road, Patching, Bristol Road, Frampton Cotterell, Henfield Road, Gloucester Road, Alexandra, Berwick Lane, Wotton Road, Northwood Park, Winterbourne, and directly north of the council-owned site in Old Gloucester Road.

New locations are in: End Lane, between Wickwar and Rangeworthy; Kelston Road, Patchway; Kendal Close, Yate, between the Badminton and Westerdene business parks.

These are under consideration for trial runs, and more in Northwood Park, Winterbourne.

The council now plans to consult about the proposed locations and arrangements.

That is likely to start in November.

Site going forward will be subject to the usual planning process.

The minister has said there is no rush for planning applications, and the environment agency have the option of not providing additional sites, as there have been requests by the game and a legal direction to carry out this work.

There is a danger that failure to follow these requirements may well lead to the Government taking over the council’s local planning powers and imposing sites without consulting local people.

He said having a place in place would also give the council greater powers to take action against illegal camps and refuse applications for sites in inappropriate areas.

Two computer experts hired by police to work on a child pornography investigation have been arrested on suspicion of child porn offences.

Jim Bates, 37, and Chris Maggs, 44, both from Bristol are among several officers with an ongoing investigation into sex crimes and are now under arrest.

The pair were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to possess indecent images of children and are now under arrest.

Both men were questioned at Rugby police station and released on bail pending further inquiries, a police spokesman said.

Bates, from Market Harborough, Leicestershire, has previously appeared in court as an expert witness in a number of child porn cases and works as an adviser to police on computer crime.

In March this year, he was found guilty of making a false written statement to the court, claiming he had a degree in electronic engineering, where he had been given a six-month jail sentence.

Maggs, from Rugby Warwickshire, is a director of Warwickshire-based firm Cyber Forensics and has set up and run British forensic departments for police forces in the UK, Europe, US, India, the Caribbean islands and Singapore.

No one was available for comment yesterday at the company.

A spokesman for Avon and Somerset police said: "Two people have been arrested and remain in custody."

Shamed pop star Gary Glitter has been charged with possession of child pornography.

Glitter, who became a sex icon of the Sixties with his hit singles Rock and Roll, Sweet Victory and I'm Makin' Love, is now 63 and has a string of drug charges.

He was given a six-month jail sentence two years ago for a conviction for sex with a 14-year-old girl.

Maggs from Rugby Warwickshire, is a director of Warwickshire-based firm Cyber Forensics and has set up and run British forensic departments for police forces in the UK, Europe, US, India, the Caribbean islands and Singapore.

The 66-year-old returned to the UK last month for the first time since fleeing the country after his release from a prison sentence for possessing child pornography in 1997.

Glitter, real name Paul Gadd, was living in Switzerland when he submitted 14 charges of creating indecent images described in court as the "sordid form of immoral art".

The court has ordered Glitter, now befuddled to be living in Kent, from travelling to the country for the next six months.

The register of sex offenders must inform court authorities if he plans to be away from his home for more than three days.
Gypsy and traveller talks begin
A public consultation has begun into providing permanent and transitory pitches for Gypsy and traveller families in South Gloucestershire.

The council must find 53 residential and 25 temporary pitches by 2011. So far 17 new locations have been proposed — eight of which are on existing sites.

Almost half of the number of pitches needed will be to accommodate families already in the area.

The intention is to keep most of the pitches on private family sites.

There are planning restrictions on a large part of South Gloucestershire Council district, however, recent government guidance means greenbelt land can now be considered.

Public exhibitions
As a result, only the most protected sites have been excluded from the council’s site search area.

During the 12-week consultation, three public exhibitions will be held.

These will be held at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall and Easter Compton village hall.

All councils in England are required to assess accommodation needs for Gypsies and travellers, and inform the government how they intend to meet them.
New project for children is lots of fun

CHILDREN in Weston-super-Mare are excelling in a fun-filled action thanks to the success of a new project.

The Five-13 Family Support Service is managed by Barnardo's South West and based at the For All Healthy Living Centre in Lonsdale Avenue.

It provides a range of services including support and advice to parents, and low-cost activities for children, living in south and central Weston.

Activities include climbing and trampolining, street dance, arts and crafts and coach trips to various attractions.

The aim is to encourage a stronger community spirit among children and parents.

Barnardo's children's service manager, Andrea Williams, is leading the project with the support of Sue Sharp, Karla Keene, Shona Dedman and Ioli Iudon.

She said: "The service provides a range of activities in both the school holidays and during the school term.

"It's a great way to encourage the whole family to come together and bond, especially for those without a transport who would otherwise not be able to access many events."

For further information on the Five-13 Family Support Service, call Ioli Iudon on 07860 616638 or email Ioli.Iudon@barnardos.org.uk.

Gipsy site plans will go on show

CONTROVERSIAL plans to create nearly 80 pitches for gypsy families in South Gloucestershire are to go on show.

People are being urged to have their say on the plans at a series of exhibitions held as part of a 12-week consultation exercise.

The Government has insisted that the district should provide new pitches by 2021, otherwise it could face legal action.

The district has now proposed pitches on three new sites in Higley Lane, Patchway and in Old Gloucester Road, Winterbourne.

But it is also looking new sites for caravans, with some areas near current camps and others in previously undeveloped locations.

The council already has two official sites in Higley Lane, Patchway and in Old Gloucester Road, Winterbourne.

There are also a number of privately-owned sites throughout the district and the council has spoken to traveller families to hear their suggestions of how to make the high target.

The council said they were "very pleased" with the proposals.

The council will make the final decision after the consultation ends, and it will then have to apply for planning permission for the pitches.

Council spokesman Robin Shaw said: "We want to hear the views of all people on the proposed locations for sites.

"The council will listen carefully to what they have to say and consultation responses will be taken into consideration, together with suggestions for alternative locations."

Illegal: Travellers in the Thornbury Leisure Centre car park in February

by Lynne Hutchinson

The second is on Friday, November 21, in Chipping Sodbury Town Hall from 10am to 3pm, and the third is on Thursday, November 21, from 12.30pm to 6pm.

Sites being considered to take extra pitches are those in Bank Road, Patchway; Trimple Road, Frankston; Higley Lane, Patchway; Cooks Road; Patchway; Cooks Road; Coton Road, Badminton Road; Sibson Lane, and two in Winterbourne Road. Winterbourne.

The next is in existing camps are in Bank Road, Patchway, and next to Northfield Park, Badminton.

New locations are in: Hill End Lane, between Wotton and Bells; Wotton Road, Patchway; Russell Close, Yate, between the Badminton and Winterbourne business parks, being considered suitable for transit camps are land next to the service station at Sandy Lane, Astbury Lane, Yate, and Wotton Green, next to Old Gloucester Road, Winterbourne.

Check the council’s website for more information.

Runners needed for Tough Ten race

HUNDREDS of runners are needed for the annual Tough Ten race in Weston-super-Mare.

The Lions Club of Weston are hosting the annual 10-mile mountain race on Saturday, August 15, at 8am from the Central Library at the Clifton Pavilion.

The course is set over the main road to the seafront, through the forest and over the cliffs at Brean Down. The finish is at the Clifton Pavilion.

Partnerships with Woodland Walks and Yeovil Community Services mean that all funds raised will go towards raising funds for the following charities: Weston Hospicecare, Weston Park Hospital, Weston Mencap, Weston Developments, Weston Community Support.

Entry fees are £12 for adults and £6 for children aged 6-12, plus a 50p booking fee.

For the main race and for the Tough Ten race, a maximum of 1,500 runners are allowed on the course, so book early to avoid disappointment.

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Gipsy site plans go on show

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TRAVEL FOOD & DRINK NEWS FASHION INTERVIEWS Gossip

THE first of a series of exhibitions on controversial plans to provide nearly 80 new pitches for gypsy and traveller families in South Gloucestershire has been held as part of a three-month consultation programme.

South Gloucestershire Council has been told it has to increase the number of pitches for travellers by 311 to prevent the Government from stepping in and deciding where they should go.

It has produced a list of 17 possible sites throughout the district where the extra spaces could be created, some of them on existing council-owned land.

Now the council wants to hear from the people who could be affected by the plans and has organised three exhibitions to give them the chance to comment.

The first was held in Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre on Monday, and will be followed by displays in Chipping Sodbury and Easter Compton.

The proposals have already led to complaints from people opposed to accommodating some of the pitches in their communities.

They include residents in areas where there are already sites and those in villages that could have their own pitches for the first time.

Pamela in Filton has handed in a petition against further plots because there are already five traveller sites in the immediate vicinity of the village.

South Gloucestershire's list of possible sites has the potential to create 81 residential and 23 transit pitches if they were all given approval.

Some would go to camps where more caravans could be fitted in without expanding the site.

Others are near existing camps and some are in new locations.

Currently there are two council-run sites in Patchway and Winterbourne, as well as a number of privately owned camps.

The next exhibition will be in Chipping Sodbury Town Hall on Friday between 10am and 3pm, with the third in Easter Compton Village Hall on Thursday, November 22.

1 Bank Road, Filton
2 Pumpkin Park, Bristol Road, Filton
3 Glanfield Park, Morland Road, Winterbourne
4 Creswell Orchard, Creswell Lane, Easter Compton
5 Bridge View, Horfield Road, Horfield
6 The Post, Winterbourne Road, Winterbourne
7 Land of Winterbourne
8 Land of Horfield
9 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
10 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
11 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
12 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
13 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
14 Land adjacent to Asda, Sand Lane, Asda
15 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
16 Land of Chestnut, Westbury
17 Land of Chestnut, Westbury

Council seeks residents' views on potential locations to avoid Government stepping in.

by Lynne Hutchinson
1/fuchsia5447@live.co.uk

South Gloucestershire traveller sites

http://www.northeast.a.com

To order this picture, log on at www.thisisbristol.co.uk or call 0117 934 3091 and quote reference 8611262-007
A RURAL community has joined forces to fight shock plans for a travellers' encampment which they fear could ruin country life.

Neighbours of the site, a retired couple who asked not to be named, spoke out against the Gazette about their fears for the future if the application gets the go-ahead.

"We certainly didn't want to be in a situation where we were the only ones living in a field," they said.

"We interviewed about 10 years ago in Yate and were told it wasn't going to go ahead and it seems like a really good site."

"But we're going to have to clear the site and move on."

Landowner Colin Morgan has submitted the plans after being forced to remove his mobile home from the site following a High Court injunction in July.

Mr Morgan bought the land six years ago.

He then built a barn and lived on the land without planning permission.

A spokesman for his agents South West Land and Water said: "Mr Morgan and Mrs Morgan live in the barn and they have now in central accommodation."

"In addition, the only Mrs Morgan has suffered from kidney failure and needs to have dialysis three times a week and the pressure and stress of the present situation clearly has not assisted."

"More than 400 letters have backed their fears and objections to the plans on South Gloucestershire Council's website."

"They are worried that the site could be up to 10 to an encampment packed in."

"Mr and Mrs Morgan said they were worried that they would have no control of who lives there."

"We do not want our four grandparents living in a single-track lane between Wickwar and Nortonworthy."

"All hail the King lots of them!"

Organiser Sue Milleson from the Elvis Presley Club UK said: "It was a fantastic event and the stands were selling out their blue ribbons as they competed for the title of the best Elvis in the South West."

Several were professional tributes, artists, but one was someone unexpected at the Rockpool Elvis competition in Yate on Saturday.

A panel of judges and a public vote decided the winner. Mike News, who came second in the Rockpool Elvis contest last year, was there.

"I was absolutely delighted," he said."
Worshiping Julie Andrews?

School pupils prove queens of catwalk

Road is safer

Bicycle dangers

Flowers, nice, but Use it wisely

End of grotto
Residents oppose plans to allows caravans on agricultural site

RESIDENTS have launched an action group to fight plans for a travellers site on land which was the centre of a bitter legal battle for six years.

South Gloucestershire Council has received a planning application for pitches at Homelfield, Hall End Lane, Wickwar.

Each pitch would have room for a static caravan, touring caravan and a "day room".

The council has just spent six years and thousands of pounds fighting a legal battle to get the land owner to remove his own caravan from the site.

But Hall End Lane appears on a list of potential sites for travellers, drawn up by the council and unlike other sites subject to public consultation.

Action group member Jan Avera, whose house is about 500 yards from the proposed site, said: "There were objections to it on July 14 and four days later the application by the council was submitted."

"It is one of the sites chosen as potential travellers sites across South Gloucestershire."

"There have been 200 objections to it. The site is in the middle of the countryside with a single road, leading to it, no lighting, no bins, no power, no seewater or electricity."

Retired builder Terry Corneck, 60, and his wife Alison, 55, live in the house on the proposed site.

Mr Corneck said: "It has taken three years for South Gloucestershire Council to get the owner to remove his caravan from the site. I want to know at whose instigation the site was put forward as a travellers site."

"Dave Smith, 60, who lives within sight of the land, said: "Hall End Lane is so narrow. There would be a lot of extra traffic. This is an agricultural site. Two government inspectors have said it should remain that way."

In 1994, Richard Spence of the Aon Archeology Unit, and his team uncovered a human settlement in the area and part of a Roman road goes through the proposed travellers site.

"Christopher Jones, also of Bassetworth, said: "I object because farmers are losing their livelihoods all the time and this should stay as agricultural land."

"The second of a series of exhibitions on 11 possible sites for travellers was held today at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall between 10am and 5.30pm."

South Gloucestershire Council has been told it has to increase the number of pitches for travellers by 2011 to prevent the Government fining itself where they should have been built."

The proposals have led to complaints from people who are opposed to accommodating some of the pitches in their communities.

South Gloucestershire's list of possible sites has the potential to create 92 residential and 26 transit pitches if they were all given approval.

Currently there are two council-run sites in Patchway and Winterbourne, as well as some privately-owned camps.

by Julie Harding
julieharding@henes.co.uk

WEDDING FAIR
Presented by THE BATH & DISTRICT GUILD OF PROFESSIONAL WEDDING SERVICES
Friday 28th November 2008
At KEYSNAM CO-OPERATIVE RESTAURANT BROADAME LANE KEYSNAM
6PM - 9PM
For further information Tel:0117 410160

The story so far
COLIN Morgan bought the agricultural land, now called Homelfield, in 1990 and moved there in a caravan with his wife. They later bought a mobile home on to the site, but South Gloucestershire Council issued an enforcement notice in 2003 demanding the caravan and mobile home be removed and the land returned to its previous condition.

The Morgans stayed at Homelfield and in July 2004 applied for consent to build a bungalow. This was refused and the couple appealed against the enforcement notice. A government inspector upheld the council's decision.

The Morgans submitted another planning application to change the use of the land and site a caravan there. This was turned down by the council and again the Morgans appealed. Once again, a government inspector upheld the council's decision.

He said in his report: "The development on the site is clearly contrary to national policy to restrict isolated development in the countryside.

The caravans and temporary structures bouse particularly out of place, the track and hard standing further compromise development on the site and, as a result, the appearance of the development as a whole is severely intrusive against the back drop of open fields."

In April this year South Gloucestershire Council got a High Court injunction to have the caravan and mobile home removed from the site.

The couple left on July 14 and are believed to be living in the Yate area.
Festive fair draws the crowds

Not ‘fair’: Residents voice opposition

Fears over Gypsy sites

by Liza-Jane Gillespie

PLANS to build new gypsy and traveller camps in Pilton have met with opposition from residents.

Almost 100 people turned out at a special public meeting this week to vent their anger at proposals by South Gloucestershire Council to build two new gypsy and traveller sites and extend an existing site in the village.

The scheme is part of a consultation into possible sites across the district for 50 permanent pitches and 20 transient pitches which the council was told to find by central government.

The plans for Pilton are to extend an existing site on Back Road and build a new site nearby with another on Northwick Road.

At the meeting, organised by the Pilton and Severn Beach Parish Council, residents said they felt their village was being expected to take more than its fair share of sites.

Karen Williams, 42, of Pilton, said: “If South Gloucestershire has to do this then I’d expect the entire district to have sites and not for them all to be lumped in one area, isn’t that fair?”

Some residents said they were concerned about the future of their village if the sites went ahead.

Cllr Jane Bell, 47 of Pilton, said: “If this does go ahead they need to guarantee proper parking and facilities, such as waste water and proper management of the site.”

Concerns were also raised about how close the Back Road sites would be to the new Pilton Primary School.

Residents also complained about a lack of communication from the council.

A South Gloucestershire spokesman said it had organised a number of workshops and community drop-in exhibitions and promoted the consultation through local press and a telephone advice line.

The spokesman added: “Colleagues in the Children and Young People (CYP) department were fully consulted and made aware of the proposals to include sites in the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan document.

“The proximity of gypsy and traveller sites in relation to the new school in Pilton was not objected to in principle by CYP.

“Should further issues be identified, these will be fully considered following the close of the public consultation.

“The current list of proposals are those plots of land which have been put forward to the council.

“In addition, not only has the council’s property services department searched council-owned land, subject to criteria from the spatial planning team, but the council continues to have discussions with the Government about other publicly-owned land.

“This is a relatively early stage of the process and some proposals will no doubt drop out of the process.”

Representatives from Pilton and Severn Beach Parish Council are to meet with South Gloucestershire Council to discuss residents’ concerns.

For more information on the consultation visit www.southglos.gov.uk
Focus on thanks to all

FOLLOWING our successfully sold-out event for The People’s Millennium 10 in Newport, thank you to everyone who supported our campaign for the church.

This was a huge achievement and we are grateful for all your support.

Dave Smith, Chairman Chipping Sodbury Town Council

Lights are great

I FEEL as though I have been living in a world of darkness for too long.

As I drove up the A417 near Stroud this evening I noticed the street lights were on.

It was a relief to see the familiar street lights as I made my way home.

I hope that the council will continue to invest in street lighting to keep us safe and secure.

Mrs E.M. Smith, Chipping Sodbury

$1,000 raised

I WOULD like to express my gratitude to all those who supported the Fashion Show organized by Thornbury and District Women’s Guild on November 11, which was a tremendous success.

We raised a fantastic $1,000, which will be used to support local charities.

Mary Halsall, Chairwoman, Thornbury and District Women’s Guild

Dinner treat

THANKS to you all. On Saturday, December 2, we had a wonderful evening at Thornbury Baptist Church.

It was a fantastic night and we are grateful to everyone who supported the event.

Mrs Wendy Ellis, Secretary, Thornbury Baptist Church

Hidden agenda?

I SEE that David Leeming has chosen his opportunity to “advertise” to seek nominations for the leadership of the town.

But why? Was this not the same David Leeming who was once the leader of the town council?

He promised to lead the town to success, but has failed to deliver.

I urge the people of Thornbury to think carefully before voting for him.

Mike Jackson, Thornbury

Old TV appeal

OVER the Xmas break, Gazette reporter David Martin-Sowden visited the town of Chipping Sodbury to see if there were any old TV sets available.

To date, he has been able to find a few old sets, but more are needed.

I urge anyone who has an old TV set to contact David or myself.

We are hoping to collect as many sets as possible to help our local community.

David Martin-Sowden, Thornbury

Bear says thanks

BEAR would like to thank the people of Chipping Sodbury for donating over $3,000 to the local community.

We are grateful for their generosity.

Edward Bear, Bear Foundation

I say humbug

MAY I take just a few moments of your valuable time to thank you for your generosity?

Every time I watch my favorite Christmas movie, I notice the great music.

But do you know that this music drives me nuts? I am not sure if it is my imagination but it seems to me that the music is too loud.

I am concerned about the impact of this music on our community.

Edward Bear, Bear Foundation
Gypsy site expansion plans anger villagers

by Liza-Jane Gillespie

RESIDENTS living in Easter Compton have hit out at plans to expand a traveller and gypsy site in their village.

Travellers based at a site on Berwick Lane, known as Green Orchards, have applied to South Gloucestershire Council for seven additional residential caravans on three pitches, plus one transit pitch.

The site already has permission for one residential pitch with two caravans.

Villagers have said they are objecting to the application because the site is in the green belt, expansion will increase traffic and permission was only originally granted for the use of one family.

Janet Hiscocks, an Easter Compton resident, said: "I just feel that it's a traffic hazard. Berwick Lane is a windy country lane and people already use it to avoid Cribbs Causeway roundabout and if you put additional caravans on that site they will generate even more traffic."

One group of residents feel so strongly about the expansion that they have appointed town planning consultant Nigel Cant to represent them.

Mr Cant told the Gazette: "This particular site is in the wrong place. It is in the green belt and expansion like this will clearly have an effect on the people living nearby."

Easter Compton resident Graham Kent is concerned that objections to the application will fall on deaf ears.

The Berwick Lane site is currently part of the South Gloucestershire Council consultation into locations for a further 78 gypsy and traveller pitches, which the council has been told to find by central government.

Mr Kent said: "I think the local consultation is purely a sham just to meet the legal requirements and I don't think it will serve any use. This site is mentioned in the consultation and now there's a planning application so South Gloucestershire Council will act as judge and jury on this and local feeling will count for nothing."

A spokesman for South Gloucestershire Council said: "The council has carried out consultations on this planning application with local residents and the parish council in line with its policy, which gives people a chance to comment on the proposals, before the planning application is decided."

"The government has issued a direction to the council to allocate sites for gypsies and travellers and the council is currently consulting the local community on this. The consultation on where possible sites might be allocated will run until January 29 and this gives people an opportunity to comment on all the proposals."
Traveller sites will swamp our village

by Ali Dent

PEOPLE in Westerleigh joined forces to fight plans which they say would "swamp" the village with travellers' sites.

Much of the community was left outraged after South Gloucestershire Council's proposal to expand existing encampments and create new gypsy sites at five locations surrounding the village.

Chairman of Westerleigh Residents' Association Evan Carey said the "invasion" was unlike anything the village had ever seen.

Mr Carey said: "We think the gypsies are only a small community of about 200 houses and we feel we are being swamped.

"For such a small community to take 10 per cent of pitches is unfair. I think it is about time they were evenly distributed around South Gloucestershire."

The residents' association held a public meeting and delivered leaflets to every household in the village and in homes in the Bynes, Chedworth and Rodfield Way areas.

Campaigners are desperate to raise awareness of the plans and believe many residents do not have enough notice to live close to five temporary sites.

Mr Carey added: "There is a lot of resistance to the volume of traveller and gypsy sites we can accommodate and five more is too many."

The council launched a public consultation on gypsy and traveller sites in November last year after a government directive instructed local authorities to accommodate all permanent and 25 transit plots for travelling families.

The council is considering expanding sites at Rendfield Park, between Westerleigh and Coombe Hill, Bridge View and Elm Farm, in Westerleigh, Hill View in Bynes and building a new travellers' site at Kendell Close, on Westerleigh Business Park, as well as utilising 12 other sites across the region.

A spokesman said: "The council has issued a direction to the council to urgently allocate sites for gypsies and travellers in the district.

"The consultation on where possible sites might be allocated has been running since the start of November to give people an opportunity to comment on the proposals.

"The consultation has been widely advertised, with information available on the council's website, at all one-stop shops, libraries, leisure centres and GP and health clinics, and there have been adverts and articles in the local media.

"If for any reason people are not aware of the consultation, then the council cannot be held responsible for inability to propose by the time the consultation ends on January 31 then the council will still take into account responses received shortly after this date."

Yate Town Council is against the proposal, but Dodington Parish Council has not raised an objection.

Cllr Mandy Sainsbury, who lives in Rodfield, said: "Unfortunately there is a lot of prejudice around travellers' sites and people tend to judge these things by personal experience. I think there is good and bad in all, but if people knew just how many existing traveller sites there are they would be quite staggered."