

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE



DATE	20th November 2012
PORTFOLIO	Leisure
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Unauthorised Traveller Encampments

PURPOSE

1. To advise members of the action that is being taken to manage the problem of illegal traveller encampments in Burnley and to identify the measures that can be taken to restrict access to land owned by the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

2. The Executive is recommended to:
 1. Note the action being taken by Pennine Lancashire councils to develop a joint protocol for managing unauthorised traveller encampments.
 2. Recommend to Full Council that an allocation of £15,791 be provided from the Capital Programme to enable the site protection measures as outlined in Appendix 1.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. Unauthorised encampments by travellers has been a problem affecting most Council wards.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Background

4. Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of illegal encampments by travellers across Pennine Lancashire. The Council is currently working with the Police and other Pennine Lancashire Authorities on a joint protocol for managing unauthorised encampments. The new protocol, which is expected to be adopted by early 2013, will ensure that a consistent, robust approach to tackling this problem is taken by all Pennine Lancashire authorities and that it has support of the Police and other agencies.

5. During 2011 there were 8 traveller encampments on Council owned land totalling 103 days and during the period 3rd June 2011 to 13th September 2011 travellers continuously occupied 7 different Council sites.
6. During 2012 there have been 12 separate illegal encampments on Council owned land totalling 129 days and 3 encampments on private land totalling 9 days.
7. The travellers have shown a preference for hard surfaced sites such as car parks, ball games areas and have gained access to sites which are left open or by cutting locks and moving boulders that have been placed to prevent access.
8. The occupation of sites has been accompanied by problems of flytipping of domestic and commercial waste and the fouling of the sites with human excrement. The encampments cause significant concern to local residents and give rise to complaints that the Council is not doing enough to tackle the problem.
9. The average cost to the Council of an unauthorised encampment is estimated at £1300, which is made up of court costs (£175), the costs of staff time dealing with illegal encampment and clearing sites once vacated (£850 per encampment) and costs of hiring skips for the removal of waste (£275).
10. In most cases travellers have vacated sites once a warrant for possession of the site has been served and the average occupation is 12 days and the longest 26 days (Clough Street). However, on two occasions (at Prairie Playing Fields and Whittlefield Recreation Ground) the Police have been able to use powers under Section 61 of Criminal Justice and Public Order Act to enforce immediate removal of travellers in circumstances where there are aggravating factors of crime, obstruction of the highway, or disorder.
11. **Protecting Council land from unauthorised encampments**
12. Installing additional measures such as lockable height barriers, better quality, shielded locks, boulders, etc. will help to deter travellers from occupying Council owned land. However, such measures can't be guaranteed to prevent unauthorised encampments.
13. The Executive is recommended to note that an allocation of £15,791 will be sought from the Council's capital programme to enable the site protection measures outlined in Appendix 1. to be undertaken.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION
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14. The estimated costs of improving security on sites that have been occupied previously, or a considered likely to be used for encampments is £29,400 (Appendix 1). There is already budget provision of £10,589 for the protection of the Brun Valley Forest Park and £3020 has been committed from the GS&A revenue budget for barriers at Prairie. The balance of £15,791 to be funded from 2012/13, subject to agreement from Full Council.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

15. None

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

16. No external consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. None.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

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ALSO:

Appendix 1.

Site	Frequency occupied	Description of work required	Estimated Cost £
Woodgrove Car Park Towneley	3	Installation of additional boulders to prevent access across grass to new car park	250
Prairie Playing Fields	2	Install height barrier and gates install flow plates	1520 1500
Rowley Lane Car Park	1	Install flow plates at one entrance install 2no height barriers install set of gates position boulders on frontage	1500 2580 1000 250
Towneley 9 hole car park	0	install height barrier and gate	1520
Harger Clough Recreation Ground	3	Install height barrier and gate	1520
Stoneyholme Recreation Ground	2	install height barrier and gate	1520
Harold Avenue Play Area and AFT site	2	install boulders and drop bollard in footpath	1250
Queen Victoria Road Car Park	1	install boulders around height barrier	150
Whittlefield Recreation Ground	1	install height barrier and gate	1520
Hargrove Avenue Padiham	0	install boulders around height barrier	1520
Bank Hall Marina	0	Install barrier	800
Queens Park Road	0	Install heavy duty flow plates and alterations to entrance, Install 6m wide, two-way height barriers with gates	5000
Clearance sites SW Burnley	2	Install boulders to road edges	2000
Clearance sites Burnley wood	0	install boulders to edges of grass	2000
Clearance sites North East Burnley	0	Install boulders to road edges	2000
Total			29400