

Traveller Related Issues Policy

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1. South Gloucestershire Council is aware that a nomadic existence is lawful and recognises that it is not a Local Authority role to either endorse or discourage it. However, this cannot be taken to exempt persons following this lifestyle from considerations of nuisance or harm to others that can arise from it. Standards of behaviour expected of Gypsies and Travellers are the same as those expected of the settled community.
2. The Council will review provision of local authority Traveller sites and maintain and manage existing sites appropriately with the best use of resources and the involvement of site residents.
3. The Council will seek to facilitate the provision of private sites through advice and practical help with planning procedures to avoid breaches of planning control.
4. The Council recognises that Gypsy/Traveller families can experience difficulties in gaining access to education, health and community services and will work to minimise these difficulties.
5. The Council recognises its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and has adopted a clear Human Rights Policy. In all decisions relating to Traveller Issues the Council will ensure full compliance with the Act.
6. The Council recognises that the majority of Travellers in its area are covered by the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2001. Travellers represent one of the largest minority groups in the Council's area.
7. The Council will strive to balance the interests of local people and the travelling population in the management of unauthorised encampments. In recognition that there is no provision of emergency stopping places or transit accommodation and that eviction can result in other unauthorised encampments in less suitable locations every unauthorised encampment will be considered in relation to its individual circumstances. Consideration will be given to the provision of facilities as recommended in DoE Circular 18/94.

8. The following criteria will be taken into account in reaching a decision on eviction of unauthorised encampments on Council land: -
 - a) Public health and safety considerations including highway safety - obstruction or danger to road users; environmental and other dangers;
 - b) Whether this presence causes an unacceptable nuisance to nearby residents or businesses;
 - c) Whether the encampment prevents or seriously interferes with the use of the land for its normal purpose or imminent change of use;
 - d) Statutory obligations for the welfare of the families on the site;
 - e) Whether there are well reasoned grounds for believing that it cannot be managed effectively – e.g. size, composition or threatening behaviour to Council staff or others by site residents.

9. The Council will not generally intervene in respect of encampments on privately owned land and would expect private landowners to deal with these in accordance with Civil Law.

Contact information

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