

Thank you for your emails regarding your requests for information about travellers' sites.

The City Mayor has extended the consultation period until July 13<sup>th</sup> 2012 and has published details of the 350 potential sites online. He has also asked the Council's economic development, culture and tourism scrutiny commission to look at the proposals, to ensure the widest possible consideration has taken place.

Some of the information you have asked for will fall under the Environmental Information Regulations rather than the Freedom of Information Act as it relates to the environment. These regulations are very similar to FOI and more information about them can be found here:  
[http://www.ico.gov.uk/for\\_organisations/environmental\\_information.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/environmental_information.aspx)

**You asked for the details of the 350 sites considered, and information relating to meetings and or discussions on their suitability, and any information held relating to the decision process on which sites should be pursued and which should not, and why not.**

This information is now available on the Council's website at:  
<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersites/>

Please let me know if you require an information pack in hard copy.

Your previous request has now also been considered.

**You asked for information relating to the decision making process around why the travellers on Thurcaston Road (near Biffa plant) have not yet been moved on, and details of any meetings held relating to this process (and minutes of these meetings) and any information relating to council policy in respect of 'tolerating' travellers.**

The decision making process is conducted in line with Department of the Environment Guidelines, Circular 18/94 and, more recently, the Guidelines of the DETR and the Home Office entitled "Managing Unauthorised Camping – a Good Practice Guide".

Both of these documents can be downloaded from:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/157323.pdf>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/supplementmanaging>

The local policy for managing unauthorised encampments is the Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland (see attached).

The encampment on Hoods Close (at the Junction of Thurcaston Road) has been tolerated in line with all these guidelines for several reasons - none of which we are able to disclose without giving personal details for these families.

This information involves the personal information of individual travellers and is exempt from release to you under Reg. 13 of the Environmental Information Regulations and s40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. This is therefore a refusal notice under s17 of the Freedom of Information Act.

I am sorry if this response is disappointing, but to release the sensitive personal information of other individuals (e.g. their health details) could cost the Council a £500,000 fine from the Information Commissioner's Office under the Data Protection Act 1998.

**You also asked for minutes of any meetings held in respect of a) deciding to create the permanent sites b) in respect of choosing the sites (report from Cabinet session.)**

Details of private meetings which relate to the decision to consult on the three proposed sites, and minutes of non-public meetings which have discussed policy relating to travellers and travellers' sites, is exempt from release under Reg 12(4)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations (Internal communications) and s36 of the Freedom of Information Act (Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs).

Release of notes from private meetings will inhibit the ability of politicians, public authority staff and others, when deliberating or providing advice, to express themselves openly, honestly and completely, or to explore extreme options.

Section 36(2)(b) acknowledges that the disclosure of information which reveals internal thinking processes may be detrimental to the ultimate quality of either policy-making or to other decision-making within a public authority. Some disclosures may lead to less candid and robust discussions, hard choices being avoided and ultimately the quality of government being undermined. This is still a live issue, currently being consulted upon and no decisions have been made as yet. Politicians and staff need to be able to have free and frank discussions about options without being hindered by lobbying and media involvement.

The minutes of the public meeting that took place are available on the Council's website.

**You asked for proposed budget information relating to these proposed sites, and information held in respect of how they will be managed.**

Leicester City Council has grant allocation from the Homes and Communities Agency of £270,000 towards the development of six Gypsy and Traveller

pitches. An additional £480,000 has provisionally been allocated in the Council's Capital programme 2012/13 to support this.

Framework Housing Association has approval for £1,305,000 for a proposed 15 pitches from the Homes and Communities Agency.

As the Council is still consulting on the potential sites and therefore no final decision has yet been made, the management of sites have not been considered in at this stage.

What we do know is that any agreed sites will be managed by Leicester City Council or a Registered Provider (Housing Association).

It is also likely that there will be Site Managers who will be responsible for:

- Arrivals, Allocations and Departures
- General Housing Management
- Intensive Housing Management
- Site Inspection
- Health and Safety
- Site Maintenance and Repair
- Financial Management.

Leicester City Council and / or the registered provider will also be working with the Multi Agency Travellers Unit (MATU) in managing any new Gypsy and Traveller sites. More information on MATU can be found here: [http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/gypsies\\_and\\_travellers-2/multi\\_agency\\_travellers\\_unit.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/gypsies_and_travellers-2/multi_agency_travellers_unit.htm)

**You asked if information / or any study was completed to assess the impact of the sites on property prices and crime rates in the area.**

No study has been undertaken in relation to property prices and crime rates, and therefore this is information not held.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

**Information Governance Manager  
Information and Customer Access  
Leicester City Council  
FREEPOST (LE985/33)  
New Walk Centre  
LEICESTER LE1 6ZG  
e-mail: [foia@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:foia@leicester.gov.uk)**

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion.

You can also complain to the Information Commissioner at:

**Information Commissioner's Office**

**Wycliffe House**

**Water Lane**

**Wilmslow SK9 5AF**

**Telephone: 01625 545 700**

[www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Please be aware that the Information Commissioner does not normally consider appeals or complaints until the internal appeals and complaints processes of the public authority which is answering the request have been exhausted. You are therefore advised to complain or appeal to the Information Governance Manager before contacting the Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

**Lynn Wyeth**

**Information Governance Manager**