

SCRUTINY & POLICY PANELS Project Scoping Template

Topic: To explore the issues surrounding caravan licensing and enforcement

Objectives and Key Issues:

The issues of caravan licensing and associated enforcement issues have come to light in a number of recent scrutiny panels, two of which recommended a separate scrutiny of the issues.

Lockdown exposed what has in reality been a longstanding problem of people living permanently on caravan sites. Some in collusion with, or with a blind eye turned by, park owners overwinter onsite in their caravans. Sometimes on the pretence of doing maintenance, sometimes with no such guise, apparently with some additional fee paid. Some appear to have been miss sold 'homes' on these grounds, most if not all are aware that they should not overwinter. Others live in their vans only part of the year, but have no other permanent residence to go to, staying in otherwise empty off-season B&B accommodation across the district.

Environmental Health teams are hampered by weak enforcement powers, arising from old and complex legislation, and too little resource to investigate and enforce.

The aim of the scrutiny is to look at how the Council can help ensure that sites are running lawfully and how they can use all enforcement options open to them to ensure that sites are compliant. There is also a need to consider the health, wellbeing and deprivation issues linked to this topic, which were also exposed during the events of the last 2 years.

Lines of Enquiry:

- Review the data currently held regarding unauthorised use of caravan sites. What are the main issues / problem areas?
- Review the capacity of staff within the existing enforcement team to police the anticipated number of non-compliant caravan sites;
- Investigate the enforcement options that the council have. Are they using them to their full potential? If not, why not?
- Possibilities of lobbying for change for complex and out of date legislation;
- What best practice can we learn from other councils with similar issues?
- Explore links with and impact on the wider determinants of health.

Standard Areas to Consider: Equalities / Relationship with Corporate Strategy / Financial Implication

Witnesses

Internal: Christian Allen, Jo Parker, David Dodds, Emily Spicer, Laura Gale, Mike Gildersleeves

External: site owners, other coastal / caravan councils, Environment Agency

Resources:

Liaison Officer: Christian Allen

Required officer expertise: Planning, Enforcement, Wellbeing, Communities

Timescale

Start date: September 2022

End date: February 2023

Target Overview meeting: 7th March 2023

Target Executive Board meeting: 22nd March 2023