

Feedback/Comments from the Members who took part in the discussion Sessions

The two groups had similar positions. Water, waste, sluices and parking were the key issues. There was not suggestion that the water should be free. We were very clear with Kushti Bok that this was not about traveller sites, something the Local Plan would look at, and they should engage with that consultation.

We failed to have the same level of engagement with two possible groups. Travellers choose to live on the road, they even expressed contact who have moved into bricks and mortar and want to return to the mobile lifestyle.

The five van lifers we spoke to were "professional" van lifers, "choosing" that life style, even if for financial reasons. Their vans were well set up for living and they were used to travel across Europe.

We did not get to speak with those who lived in a van, so were reasonably set up, but did not choose that lifestyle at all. Nor did we get to talk to any living in cars, whilst not "vans", they are often the least well-resourced and most in need of help, but hardest to engage with.

If this is to be a community pact, equal focus needs to be given to the non van dwellers part of the community. No pact will work if "the community" have not signed up to it.

Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson

The main topic apart from a transit site (not in our remit) was access to facilities e.g. water and waste disposal.

I think we need to be careful that if we do find suitable places that they are not abused.

Van lifers should be encouraged to make contact with BCP and St Mungo's for any advice or help they may need if appropriate. I would presume that this will be contained in the pact?

Cllr J Edwards

1. Create a designated area with basic facilities

At our meeting with van lifers, one of the strongest messages was the need for somewhere appropriate and safe to stay with access to basic facilities such as water and waste disposal which could be paid for by small fees for the facilities.

This would help reduce tensions, support responsible behaviour and create clearer expectations for both van lifers and residents. It would provide a basis for building more positive relationships between communities as well as potentially saving officer time and resources currently being used in enforcement.

2. Develop a Community Pact

The meeting highlighted a desire from van lifers to work constructively with the Council and local communities. A Community Pact could set out shared expectations, with van lifers committing to respect local neighbourhoods, dispose of waste responsibly and avoid anti-social behaviour. In return, the Council would provide clear information and appropriate facilities.

I would also add that provision for van lifers to be incorporated into the new local plan currently being worked on.

A suggestion for a proposal:

This Committee recommends that Cabinet/Full Council:

1. Develop a Community Pact with van lifers, residents and other stakeholders, setting out shared expectations around responsible parking, waste disposal, respect for local communities and avoidance of anti-social behaviour.
2. Consider what facilities and information the Council could provide to support compliance with the Pact, including access to water, waste disposal and other basic services where appropriate.
3. Ensure that the needs of people living in vehicles, and any future provision to support them, are considered as part of the emerging Local Plan.
4. Request officers to report back with options for implementing the Community Pact and supporting arrangements.