

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Bingley (Leader of the Council)

Question:

What are YOU doing to avoid illegal encampments and reduce the cost of such legal action?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

I am ensuring that the Portfolio Holder works with Officers to make sure we are doing what we can to prevent Unauthorised Encampments. Whilst doing this we need to ensure that we respect the rights that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people have under Human Rights legislation and that the Council need to ensure we are fully compliant with them.

We have put in place a Target Hardening plan with Ward Councillors where sites have experienced Unauthorised Encampments this year. Following a UE at a site there is a meeting between Ward Councillors and Officers to discuss potential improvements that could be made to the site. This needs to be balanced against the need to ensure sites remain accessible and attractive for members of the public wishing to use the green spaces, this includes ensuring Council and emergency vehicles are still able to gain access to the site where required.

The Council will always review the most cost effective legal action to take and where appropriate Negotiated Stopping agreements will be made with groups who abide to the terms of the agreement to reduce need for legal costs by agreeing to a planned move-on date. When an eviction is arranged Officers attend the site to give advance warning to the group that bailiffs will be attending and the day this is due to occur. In many instances, groups choose to move-on voluntarily prior to eviction.

Signed:

Dated: 25/08/2022