

Committee: Local Plan Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 21 October 2014

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Title: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study

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Summary

1. The attached report is the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study. The Council commissioned Peter Brett Associates to assess potential sites to determine if they are suitable, available and achievable.
2. The results of this study will inform the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan for the District.

Recommendations

3. To note the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study.
4. To note the intention to develop a draft Issues and Options paper on the production of a Gypsy and Traveller site allocations DPD for public consultation.

Financial Implications

5. None

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	The report will be made available on the Local Plan page of the Council's website.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A

Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

8. The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment 2014 concluded that 26 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches were needed in the District by 2033. Following this study the Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment Study. This report summarises the findings of this study and the next steps.
9. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012 requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets to meet the accommodation needs in a Local Plan. It specifically requires us to:
 - Identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets
 - Identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and where possible, for years 11-15
 - Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area
 - Relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and surrounding populations size and density
 - Protect local amenity and environment
10. The Department for Communities and Local Government recently published a consultation document 'Planning and Travellers' which seeks views on proposed changes to planning policy and guidance ensuring fairness in the planning system and strengthening protection of sensitive areas and the Green Belt. The consultation closes 23 November 2014 (a paper dealing with a Council response to the consultation is elsewhere on this agenda). It is unlikely that this consultation document will become policy before January 2015. Therefore until new national policy is adopted the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites remains the national policy for assessing sites.

11. The Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study seeks to identify and assess potential sites to meet the need identified in the Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014.

12. 29 sites were identified by the Council to be assessed within the Study, these came from the following sources:

- All existing authorised and unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites
- All remaining sites promoted through the 2012 Call for Sites exercise
- Recent Gypsy and Traveller encampments

13. All of these sites were assessed against a set of criteria which took account of national policy, adopted and emerging Local Plan policy and physical constraints. Within the overall policy framework the general approach to identifying appropriate site selection criteria was built upon the NPPF:

- Is the site **available** – Landowners were contacted and identified whether sites are being made available and any potential legal or ownership constraints. With regard to existing sites the question was asked if the site could accommodate more pitches;
- Is the site **suitable** – each site was assessed against criteria which looked at policy requirements, physical constraints and potential impacts; and
- Is the site **deliverable** – potential site constraints were identified which may affect viability.

14. The report identifies a total of 6 sites, 3 existing sites and 3 potential new sites, beyond the green belt which are available and suitable for Gypsy and Travellers. These 6 sites have the potential to deliver a total of 43 additional pitches from 2013-2033, 17 pitches greater than the identified need. Of which 41 are deliverable in the first 5 years, 2013-2018.

	2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2033	Total
a) Need for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Pitches (as identified in the 2014 Accommodation Assessment)	9	5	6	6	26
b) Potential number of additional pitches on existing sites beyond the Green Belt	4	2	0	0	6
c) Potential number of pitches on new sites beyond the Green Belt	37	0	0	0	37
Total potential supply (b+c)	41	2	0	0	43
(shortfall) or surplus (a-d)	32	(3)	(6)	(6)	17

15. One existing site within the Green Belt, Oak Tree Little Hallingbury, is also identified as potentially available and suitable for an additional 6 pitches.
16. The report recommends that the Council should use the following priority approach to safeguard and allocate sites:
 - a. Safeguard existing sites
 - b. Allocate existing sites for intensification and allocate new sites beyond the Green Belt
 - c. Allocate existing sites for intensification within the Green Belt
 - d. Allocate new sites within the Green Belt

Next Steps

17. The next step is to produce a Gypsy and Travellers 'issues and options' document for consultation. This will set out and ask a number of questions, such as people's views on the Vision and Objectives, the ideal plot numbers per site, preference of sites for allocation and whether the Council should plan for the full identified need up to 2033 or just allocate enough plots to meet the need for the first 5 years and then have a broad area of search for the rest of the Plan period.
18. Officers will bring the draft consultation document to the group for discussion. The consultation is planned to start in December 2014 running for a minimum of 6 weeks, but extended to take into account the holiday period.

Risk Analysis

19.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan will be found unsound.	Low likelihood if UDC allocates sites in line with the evidence and carry out public consultation in line with the regulations.	If the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan were unsound then planning permission would have to be granted on sites that may be in locations we would normally find unsuitable.	Ensure that evidence is used in formulating the consultation document and that consultation is carried out in line with the regulations.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.