

**Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople  
Site Allocations Development Plan Document**

**Preferred Options**

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## How to Comment

This document seeks your views on the preferred options for the allocation of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Bath and North East Somerset Council is committed to meeting current and future needs of these communities and the sites put forward in this document offer the scope for meeting that need.

The purpose of the public consultation is to invite views on the preferred site options identified in this document. No final decisions have been made in favour of any of the sites and your views will be important in informing the final site selection.

This document is subject to public consultation between **XX May and XX July 2012**. Bath and North East Somerset Council would like to hear your views on any aspect of this document. However, views are particularly sought on a series of questions which are raised on each of the sites set out in the main body of the document.

## How to Make Comments and Submit Site Information

Hard copies of this document and response forms are available online at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers), in all local libraries and at The Guildhall, Bath, The Hollies, Midsomer Norton, and Riverside, Keynsham.

To find out more about the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) you can visit our webpage or call the Planning Policy Team on 01225 477548. Please contact us if you have particular access needs or would like help completing the comments form.

Early community involvement will help to ensure this document better reflects the views of all those with an interest in it. If you would like to discuss the site options outlined in the document in more detail, exhibitions will be held across the District.

A response form accompanies this document. If you would like to respond our preferred method of communication is for comments to be submitted online at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers). Alternatively, comments can be sent by email to [planning\\_policy@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk), or in writing using the general response form to:

Gypsy and Traveller DPD  
Planning Services  
PO Box 5006  
Bath  
BA1 1JG

Please send your response to us by **5pm** on **XX July 2012**. This will enable us to consider responses in preparation for the next consultation document.

Please note that Bath and North East Somerset Council will only consider comments by respondents who provide their names and address. Inappropriate, offensive or racist comments will not be accepted.

## **Introduction**

Bath and North East Somerset Council has a duty to plan for the future development of the District and is committed to providing pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the planning process.

The Council previously consulted on an Issues and Options paper over November 2011 – January 2012. That paper asked a series of questions about how sites should be identified and assessed for their allocation potential, and how the Council could provide any identified sites. That consultation also invited site suggestions from the public. The results of that consultation are set out in a Statement of Consultation available to download from the Council's website: [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers)

### **Understanding the District's needs**

The need for pitches within Bath and North East Somerset has been assessed through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation (and Other Needs) Assessment (GTAA, 2007) which sets out an identified need for 22 permanent and 20 transit pitches over the period 2006-16. Since 2006 planning permission has been granted on a temporary basis for a single pitch; that permission will expire in 2015. No further permissions have been granted and there are no other authorised pitches in the district.

### **Planning for Future Needs**

National planning policy (*Planning for Traveller Sites*) released in March 2012 indicates that local authorities should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against the local target, and up to 15 years supply where possible. As set out above, the Site Allocations DPD seeks to allocate sufficient land to meet the need identified in the Draft Core Strategy over the period to 2016.

The implications of the new policy document, in particular the potential need to review the West of England GTAA to take account of the latest up to date evidence

of existing supply and local needs will look to identify these longer term needs, is being considered by officers and will inform future drafts of the DPD.

### **What is a pitch?**

Gypsy and Traveller sites are made up of a number of caravan pitches and associated facilities. Although there is no national definition of what size a pitch should be, the national guidance *'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites'* states that *"an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan...drying space for clothes, a lockable shed...parking space for two vehicles and a small garden"* On average, sites usually contain approximately 1.7 caravans per pitch.

In addition to the need identified for permanent and transit pitches, the evidence base identified need for the Council to allocate land for a single yard for Travelling Showpeople. The needs of Travelling Showpeople are different to Gypsies and Travellers. Their sites usually combine residential, storage and maintenance uses, requiring space for accommodation, storage, repairing and maintaining vehicles and fairground equipment. Yards providing both residential and storage and maintenance uses are known as plots.

## **Identifying the Preferred Sites**

### **How sites have been identified**

Seven sites have been identified as having the potential to meet the accommodation needs of Bath and North East Somerset's Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The background report to how those sites were assessed and selected is available to download from the Council's website [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers) and as part of the consultation pack at all drop-in points. The number of pitches that could potentially be allocated on those sites, taking a reasoned approach to site design and impacts on surrounding areas, is greater than the level of need requiring to be met, as identified in the evidence base.

### **How identified sites could meet the need**

The number of pitches required to meet local levels of need were identified in the Draft Core Strategy (2011) using the evidence base of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation (and Other Needs) Assessment (GTAA, 2007). This document seeks to allocate sufficient land to provide 22 permanent pitches, 20 transit pitches and 1 Travelling Showpeople's yard. Those figures meet the need identified in the evidence base to be met over the period 2006-2016.

Responses to the previous public consultation indicated that the Council should seek to allocate sufficient land to allow groups to live separately of one another. The nine sites that are currently being consulted on have the potential to provide a possible 34 permanent and 20 transit pitches, as well as 1 yard for Travelling Showpeople. This would fulfil the identified level of unmet need set out in the Draft Core Strategy, future household growth on individual sites, and also potentially longer term need.

A number of sites have the potential to deliver alternative pitch numbers or different pitch types. These have been identified where sites have the potential to deliver either permanent, transit or Travelling Showmen's accommodation. These options are also being consulted on and your views are welcomed on the suitability of each site for the proposed allocation.

Detailed policies on individual sites will be set out in the next stage, Pre-Submission Draft Site Allocations DPD. That will include policies relating to affordable pitch provision and mixed-use on individual sites, as well as confirming final pitch allocations.

The seven sites which the Council is currently consulting on are set out in the following pages. The Council is only seeking views on the seven identified sites, and not the principle of allocating sites. That principle is set out in the Draft Core Strategy and was the subject of the previous consultation.

## The Preferred Sites

Of the seven preferred sites identified in this document as being suitable, available and achievable for development as Gypsy / Traveller pitches and Travelling Showmen's yard, two are in private ownership.

Three of the seven sites recommended here as having potential for allocation are located within the Green Belt. National policy guidance<sup>1</sup> states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) are inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that the development of Traveller sites should not be approved "*except in very special circumstances*".

Very special circumstances are not defined in national policy. However, paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "*very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*". The Council is therefore required to undertake a balancing exercise, weighing the inappropriateness against any benefits arising from the allocation of specific land to meet need. The lack of suitable sites outside Green Belt land to meet identified needs can be considered very special circumstances.

Details on each of the sites proposed as potentially suitable for site allocation are set out in this section. Further detail is included within the Background Evidence Report available to download from the dedicated webpages at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers).

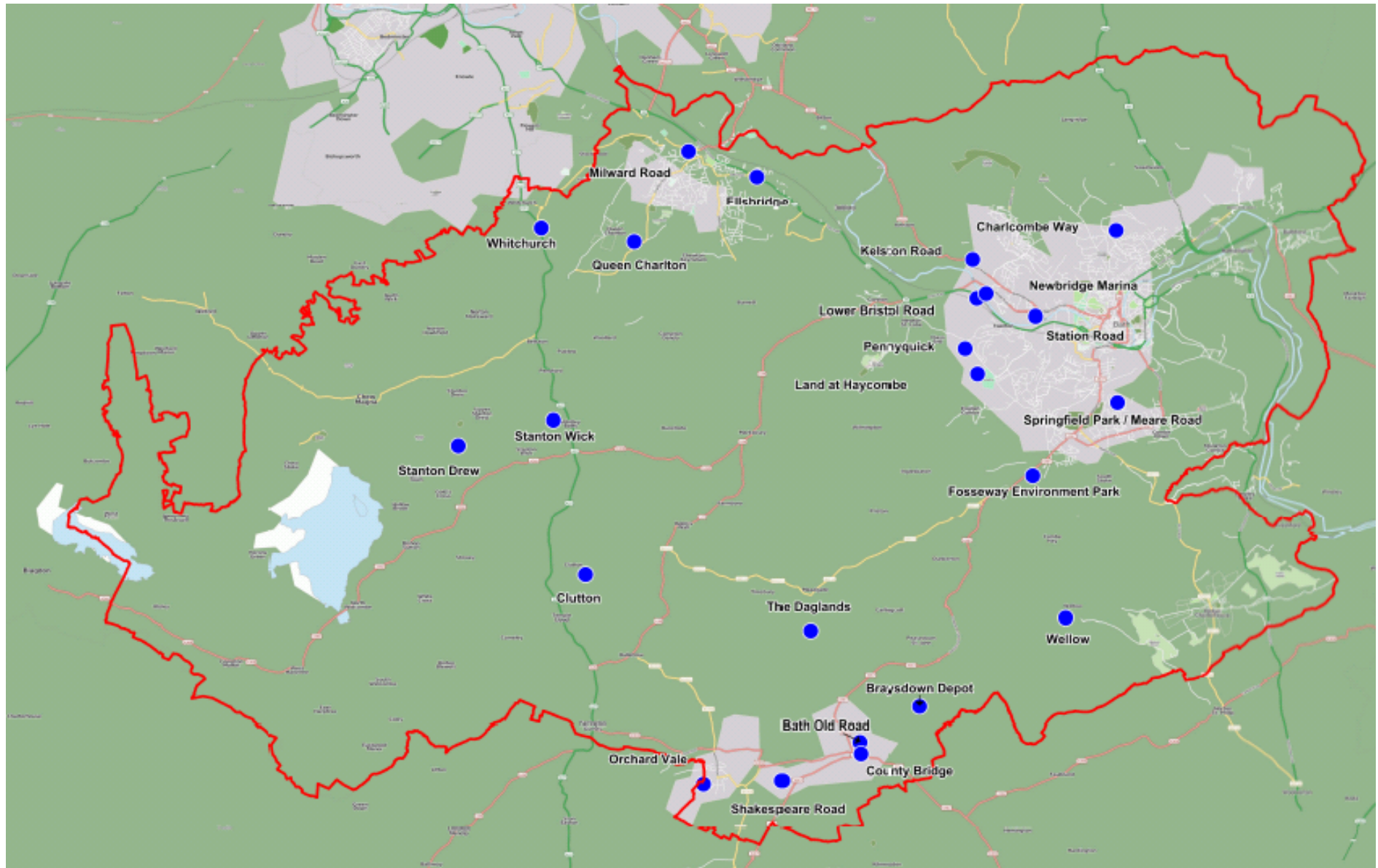
**Question 1: Do you have any evidence or information about any of these sites which will help Bath and North East Somerset Council to determine whether they are available, suitable and achievable for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople provision? (If yes, please specify)**

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<sup>1</sup> *Planning for Traveller Sites* (March 2012)



## All Sites Considered through Site Selection



## **GT.1: Parcel 7100, Woollard Lane, Whitchurch**

### **Potential pitch provision: 2 permanent pitches**

The site is located just to the south of Whitchurch village boundary. It adjoins the A37 and Woollard Lane. The site is in private ownership.

The site currently has a 5 year temporary permission for 1 pitch and ancillary development, which was granted in November 2010 (application 10/03798/FUL).

There do not appear to be any insurmountable policy constraints to delivering this site as it is not allocated for any other purposes in either the Adopted Local Plan or Draft Core Strategy.

The site is not constrained by flood risk or contaminated land issues.

The site is located within the Green Belt for which purposes a permanent Gypsy site would be inappropriate development. The granting of the temporary planning permission does however indicate the site suitability for this purpose.

The site is considered to be achievable as it is currently being used for this purpose. The allocation of this site would meet the personal needs of the current occupant and his family. The continuation of access to education and health services is also a matter to be weighed in favour of this site.

**Question 2a: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on Parcel 7100, Woollard Lane, Whitchurch?**

**Question 2b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**

**GT.1: Parcel 7100, Woollard Lane, Whitchurch**



## **GT.2: Old Colliery Buildings, Stanton Wick**

### **Potential pitch provision: 15 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches**

The site is a former colliery, located outside Stanton Wick. The site is in private ownership.

The site is adjacent to a coach business and two residential properties. The previous B2 use has ceased. The site benefits from extant planning permission for conversion to a single dwelling, ancillary accommodation, B1 floorspace and garaging for 5 vehicles (application ref. 05/02227/FUL).

The site is located within the Green Belt. The site is well screened from its surroundings, and sensitive site design would prevent significant visual intrusion into the countryside.

The existing buildings on-site present an opportunity for reuse as utility blocks and community space, which could include an education facility, and space for business use. This would make efficient use of previously developed land. The development of this site should require formal links to be made to the Avon Consortium Traveller Education Service (ACTES) and local GP services to ensure long term educational opportunities, health and well-being.

The site would require some remediation works prior to redevelopment and occupation as a Gypsy / Traveller site.

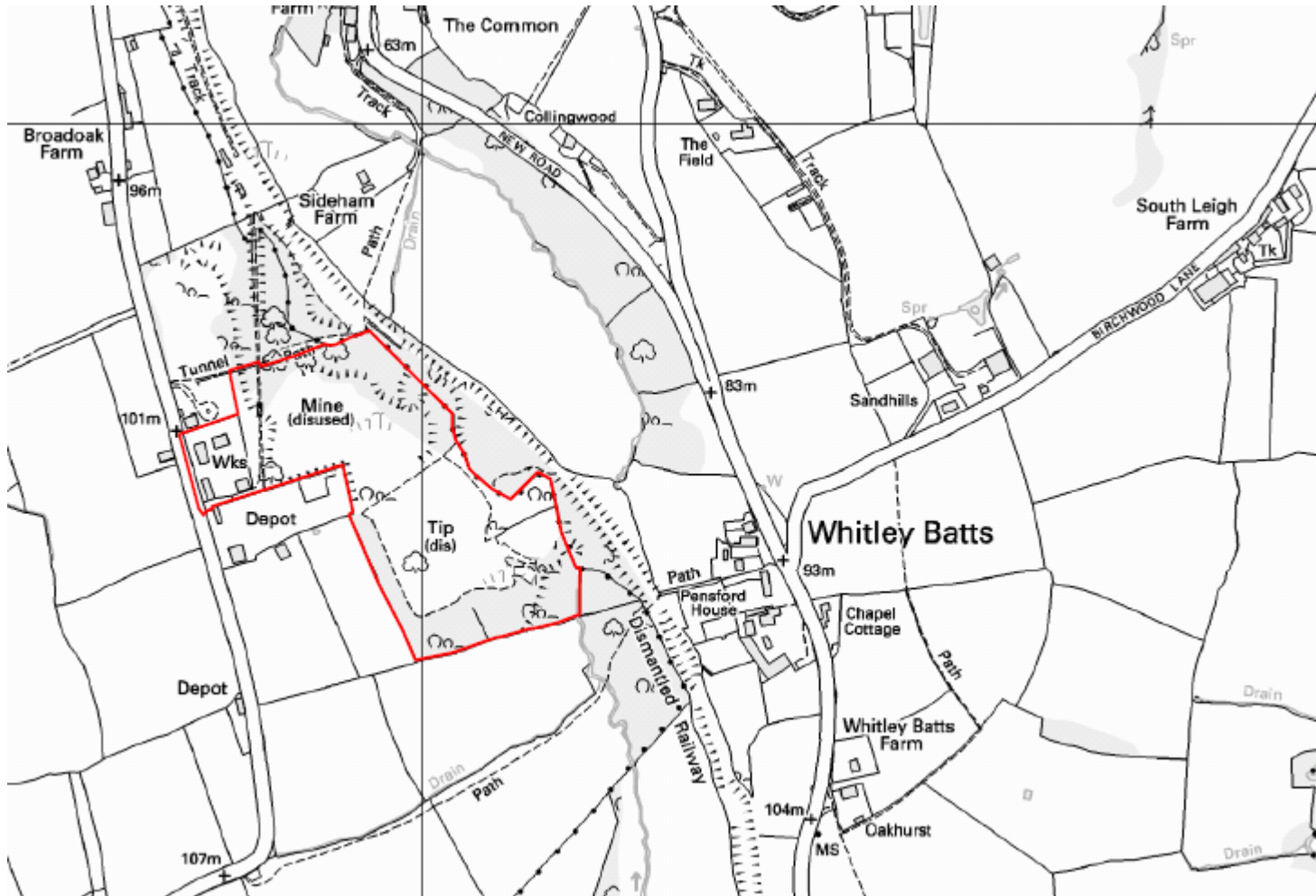
The site is heavily constrained by its access which is single-track in parts.

A total of 15 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches could be provided on this site, reflecting Government guidance on optimum site sizes for management purposes. The two pitch types could be clearly separated to ensure effective site management.

**Question 3a: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on the Old Colliery Buildings, Stanton Wick?**

**Question 3b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**

## GT.2: Old Colliery Buildings, Stanton Wick



#### **GT.4: Former Radstock Infant School canteen, Radstock**

##### **Potential pitch provision: 2 permanent pitches**

The site contains a redundant building, formerly part of the Radstock County Infants School. Its reuse as a permanent Gypsy site would make efficient use of previously developed land.

The site is not within the Green Belt and has excellent access to local services and facilities.

Access to the site may require works to improve visibility.

Development of this site within the Radstock Conservation Area, and surrounded by residential properties would require sensitive pitch design to maximise residential amenity and privacy. Existing screening at the site would assist with this aim.

The development of this site would meet a need for a small residential (permanent) site.

The site is available for redevelopment but would require some demolition and potentially remediation works to make acceptable for residential use.

**Question 4: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on the Former Radstock Infant School canteen, Radstock?**

**Question 4b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**

**GT.4: Former Radstock Infant School canteen, Radstock**





**GT.6: Station Road, Newbridge**

**Potential pitch provision: 1 Travelling Showmen's Yard**

***Alternative pitch provision: 6 permanent pitches***

The site is located within the existing employment site Locksbrook Industrial Estate in Newbridge, Bath. The site is a regularly shaped, vacant parcel of land that is fenced in and has access via Station Road.

The site is bounded by employment uses to the north and a road to the east. The site is adjacent to commercial buildings to the south and residential properties and garages to the north and west.

The site benefits from existing access from Station Road.

Remediation works may be required to development and occupation of the site due to its former use as a coal depot yard.

The presence of hardstanding and derelict portacabins indicate potential redevelopment for business use, in particular the storage of vehicles / equipment for Travelling Showpeople.

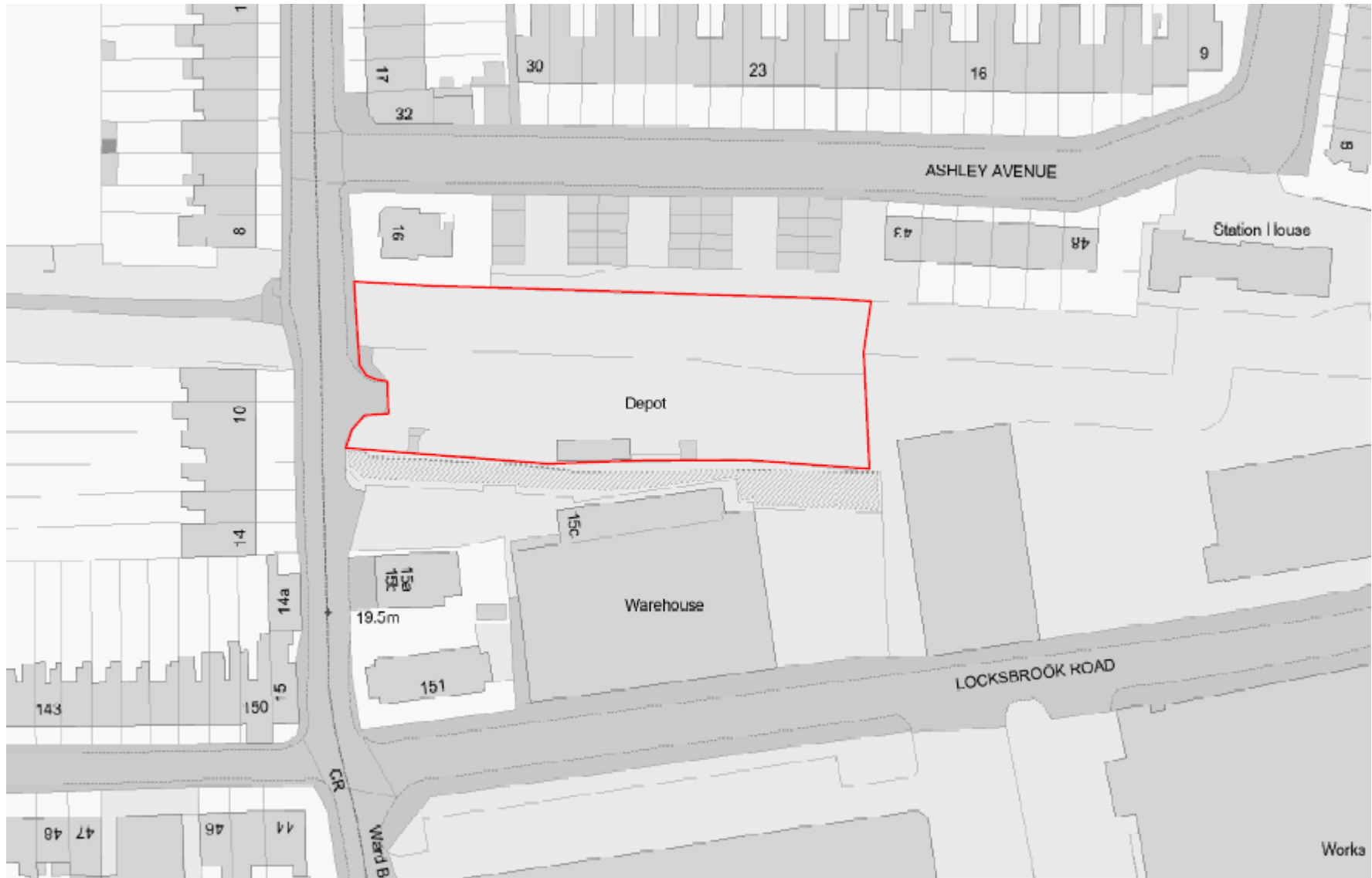
There is considered to be no landscape impact as the site is located within a built up area and is well screened from the surrounding residences and commercial buildings by mature tree cover.

**Question 5: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints at Station Road, Newbridge?**

**Question 5b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**



GT.6: Station Road, Newbridge



**GT.8: Lower Bristol Road, Twerton**

**Potential pitch provision: 15 transit**

***Alternative pitch provision: 14 permanent pitches***

The site is outside and does not adjoin the existing development boundary of Bath. It adjoins the Lower Bristol Road (A36) to the north, a recreation ground to the west and green open space to the east. The site is currently occupied by an unauthorised, but tolerated Traveller encampment.

The site is set within the Green Belt and the setting of the World Heritage Site (WHS). The site lies adjacent to the Carrs Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

Road calming and other improvement measures are required to establish safe access to this site. This has cost implications for site development.

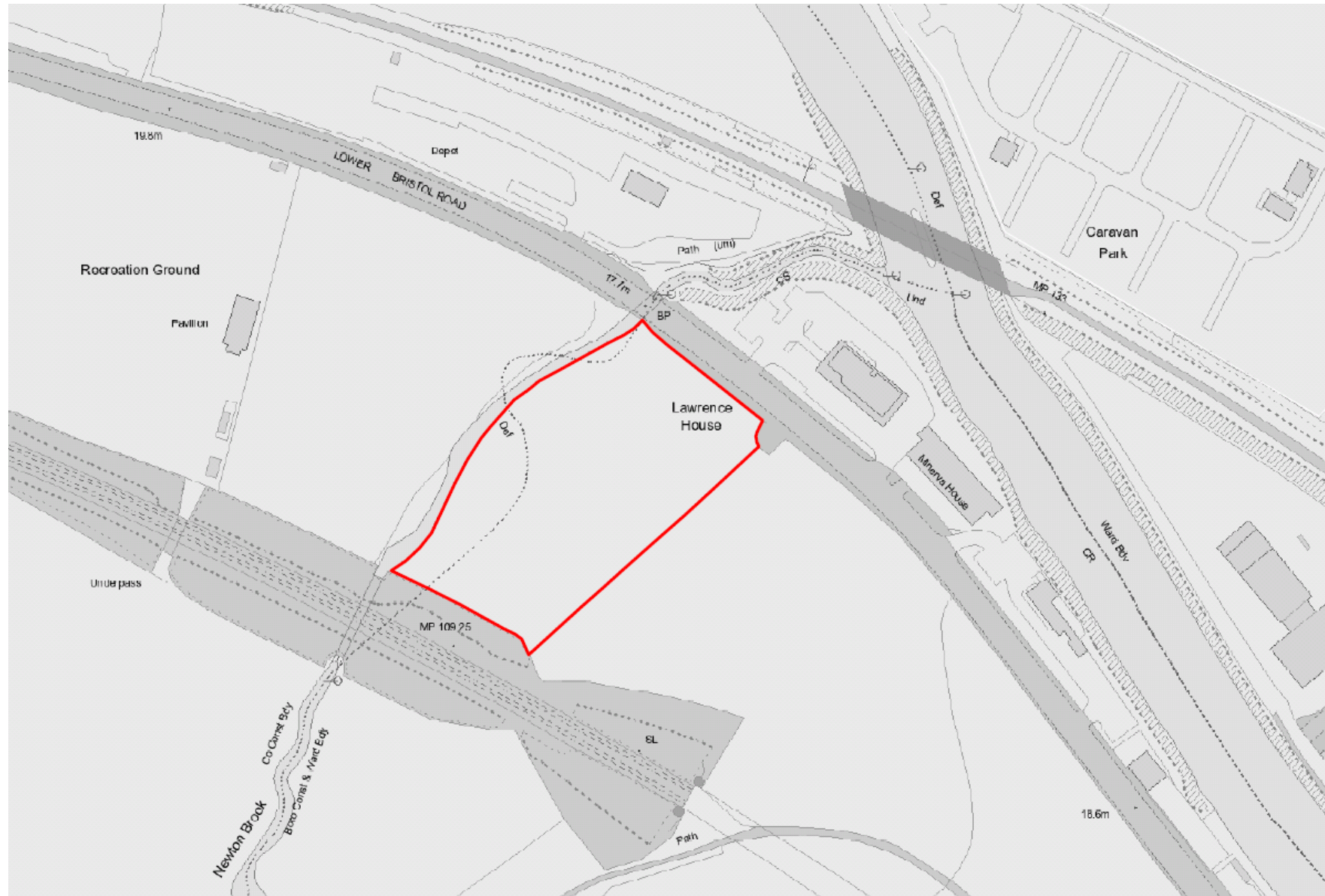
The site is very well located for access to the wider highway network which makes it favourable for use as a transit site. The site size would also enable the provision of a site warden's office or dwelling, should this be required.

The site is in Council ownership but is available for development now.

**Question 7: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on Lower Bristol Road, Twerton?**

**Question 7b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**

### GT.8: Lower Bristol Road, Twerton



**GT.13: The Daglands open space, Camerton**

**Potential pitch provision: 9 permanent pitches**

The site is a gently sloping area of public open space located adjacent to the residential street, The Daglands, at the village of Camerton. Works would be required to make the land safe for residential use due to the sloping nature of the site.

The site has good access to local services and amenities.

The site contains some play equipment. The removal of this play space would be contrary to Local Plan policy SR.1A which would require replacement in another location at Camerton. Other play spaces were considered for selection but were rejected on grounds unrelated to policy SR.1A; this site is included due to its locational benefits. The replacement of this play space would have associated costs and require alternative land to be found.

The site is located outside the Green Belt and is to be favoured on this basis as one of the few rural preferred sites for allocation.

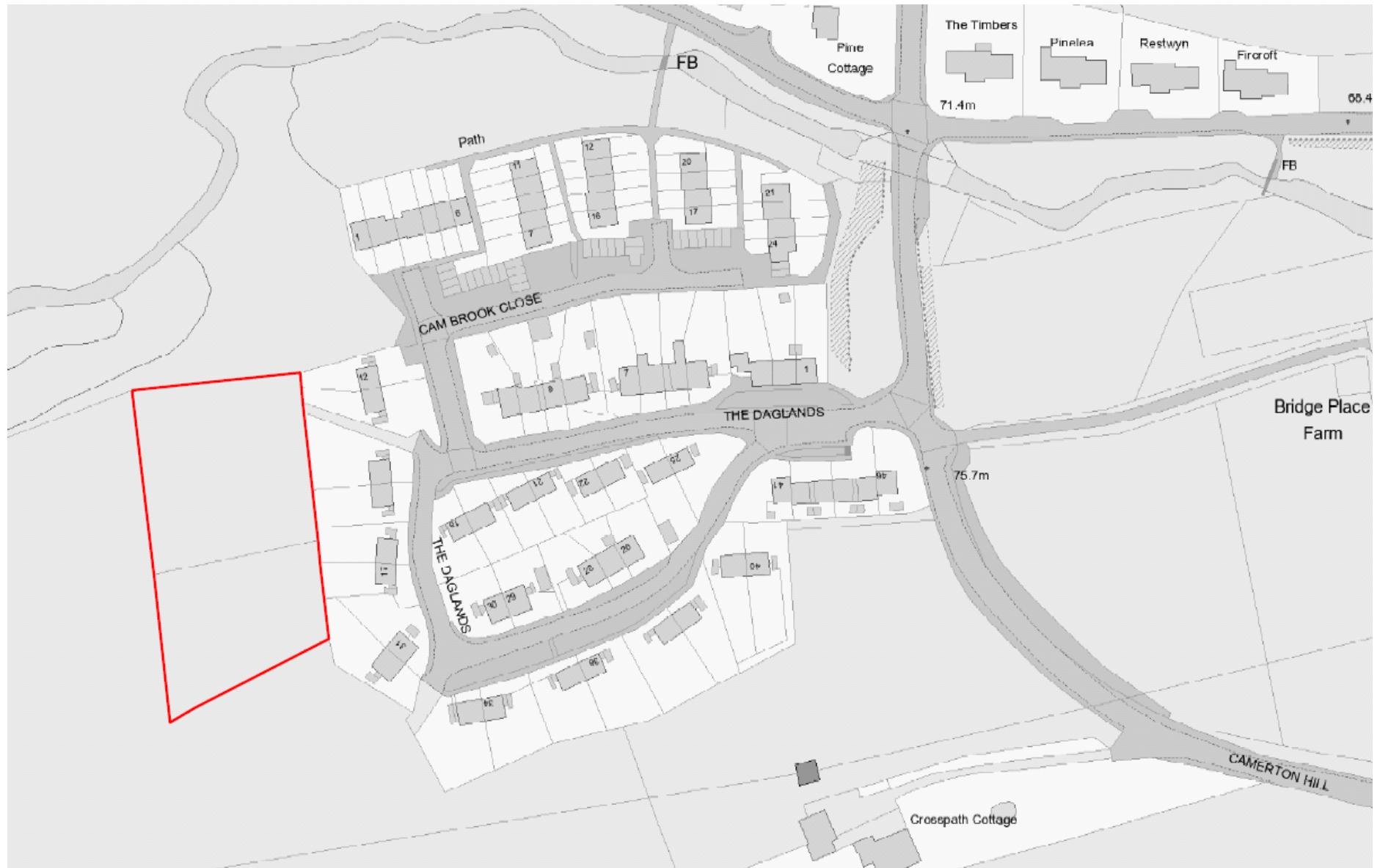
Access on to the site would be established from The Daglands. Access creation would require negotiation with the owners of land to the south of the site.

The site is in Council ownership but is available for development in the medium term. Development of this site would require works to establish safe access and to the flatten areas for safe establishment of residential space, as well as the provision of alternative play space to replace the current facilities if removed.

**Question 9: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on The Daglands open space, Camerton?**

**Question 9b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**

### GT.13: The Daglands open space, Camerton



**GT.14: Land near Ellsbridge House, Keynsham**

**Potential pitch provision: 6 permanent pitches**

***Alternative pitch provision: 15 transit pitches***

The site is a wooded area of land fronting the A4 Bath Road to the south of industrial buildings at the roundabout junction with Broadmead Lane and the B3116. The site is covered by mature trees.

The site has good access to local services and amenities.

The site is adjacent to the Grade II Listed Building, Ellsbridge House. Development at this location would have an impact on the setting of that building.

The site is located outside the Green Belt and is to be favoured on this basis as one of the few urban preferred sites for allocation.

The site is very well located for access to the wider highway network. Access on to the site would have to be established from either the A4 Bath Road or the adjoining access to Ellsbridge House. This site would incur costs associated with relocation of the bus stop to the front of the site.

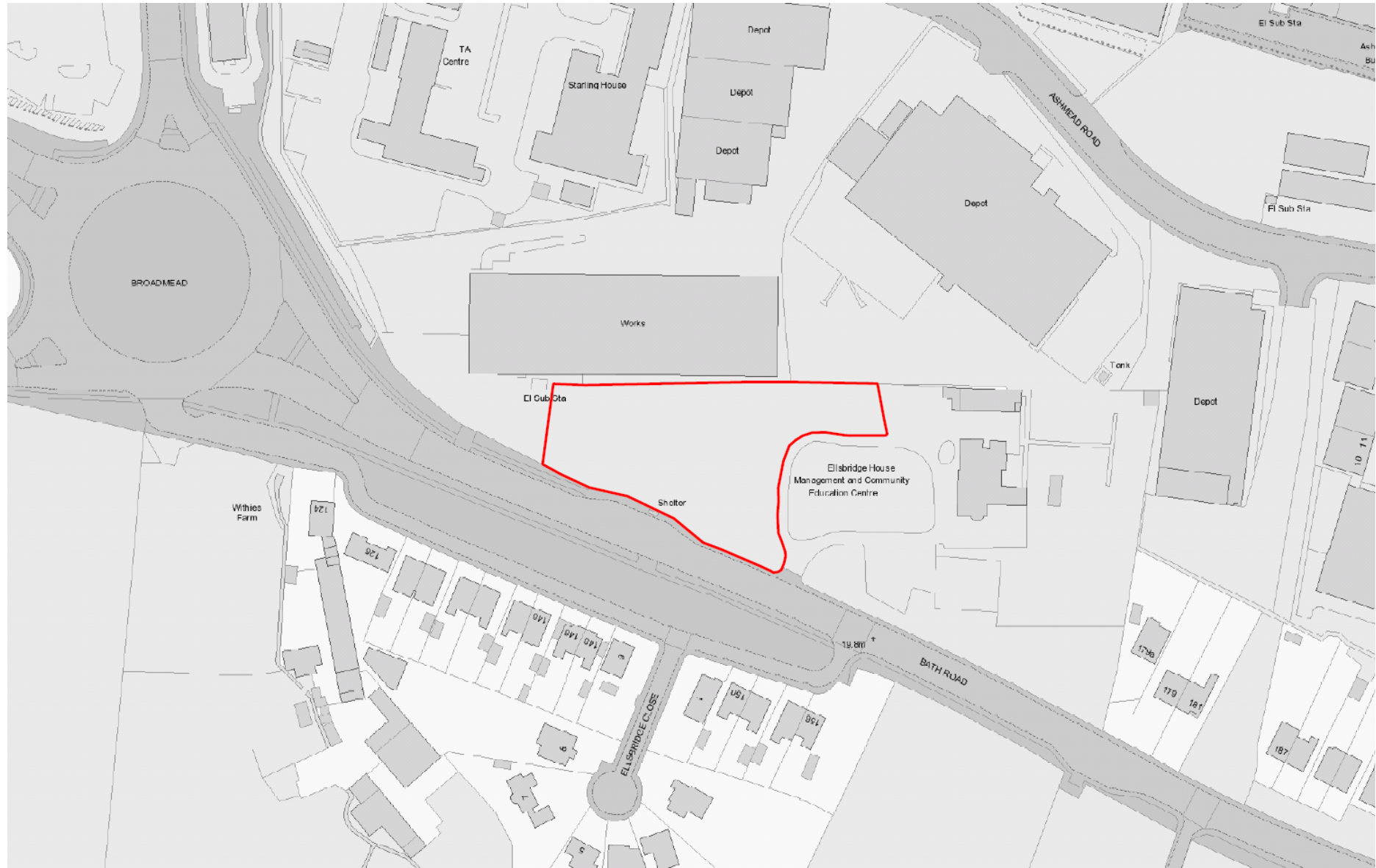
The site is in Council ownership but is available for development now.

**Question 10: Do you agree with the Council's assessment of opportunities and constraints on Land near Ellsbridge House, Keynsham?**

**Question 10b: Do you agree that the potential pitch provision be taken forward as a formal allocation?**



### GT.14: Land near Ellsbridge House, Keynsham



## **Glossary**

### **Allocation**

Land identified as appropriate for a specific land use and safeguarded for that purpose through a Development Plan Document.

### **Amenity Building**

There is no single definition of an amenity building but Government guidance states that they should include a minimum of: hot and cold running water; electricity supply; separate toilet; a bath/shower room; and a kitchen and dining area.

### **Authorised Site**

A site which has planning permission for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site.

### **Brownfield**

Also described as previously developed land. Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

### **Caravan**

Any structure designed or adapted for human habitation that is capable of being moved from one place to another. Twin-unit caravans shall not be treated as not being (or not having been) a caravan by reason only that it cannot lawfully be moved on a highway when assembled.

### **Core Strategy**

The principal Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework which sets the long term vision, spatial strategy and core policies for shaping the future development of the District to 2026. All other DPDs have to be in conformity with it.

### **Development Plan Document (DPD)**

The key statutory documents within the Local Development Framework. These have to go through rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination being adopted.

### **Emergency Stopping Place**

A licensed short-term Gypsy and Traveller site (or sometimes a 'tolerated' but unauthorised location) to which Gypsies and Travellers can be directed when in need. Fewer facilities are available than on transit sites and usually residents would only be able to remain at such a site for a few days.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The process of appraising the equalities effects of plans, strategies and policies on different groups within the community. The primary concern is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences.

### **Green Belt**

Areas of land where development is particularly tightly controlled with the purpose to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns coalescence; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.



### **Gypsy and Traveller**

For the purposes of this document, the term is used to refer to all ethnic Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as other groups that adopt a nomadic way of life. It does not include Travelling Showpeople.

### **Household**

The typical housing need and census category of 'household unit' is defined as people who share either living space or at least one meal a day together.

### **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

A series of planning documents that, when adopted, will set the long term spatial planning strategy for an area. This will replace the Local Plan.

### **Local Plan**

Sets out policies which guide how and where development should take place up to 2011. It will eventually be replaced by the Local Development Framework.

### **Mixed Use Sites**

Sites that accommodate both residential and business uses. Business use may, for example, include the keeping of tools for employment in landscaping,

### **Mobile Home**

Legally a **caravan**, but not usually capable of being moved by towing. Residential mobile homes are usually of a large size and may resemble either static holiday caravans or chalets.

### **Permanent / Residential Site**

Authorised site intended for long-stay use by residents. No maximum length of stay is set unless planning permission is on a temporary basis.

### **Pitch**

Area of a Gypsy / Traveller site where a single household live in their caravans. Pitches may vary between those large enough for one residential trailer (or mobile home) and one touring (small) trailer to those spacious enough to hold one or two large mobile homes and several 'tourers' as well as working vehicles. On public (socially provided) sites rented pitches tend to be smaller and are easily delineated by fencing. On private family sites where several related households may own the site it may be less easy to identify separate pitches / plots.

As pitch sizes vary considerably between public (socially provided) and private sites, pitch requirements are described in terms of one pitch per **household** rather than specifying how many caravans / mobile homes should be accommodated on a pitch. Accordingly, a large household with a number of children may require more than one pitch if living on a public (or private rented) site with limited pitch size.

### **Plot**

Used with reference to Travelling Showpeople sites. A piece of ground large enough to accommodate a single accommodation unit, and may include space for the storage and maintenance of equipment. A group of plots may be referred to as a yard.

### **Site**

An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. Sites vary in type and size and can range from one-caravan private family sites on Gypsy and Traveller's own land to large scale private and local authority sites.

**Sustainability Appraisal**

The process of appraising the social, economic and environmental effects of plans, strategies and policies.

**Tolerated Site**

An **unauthorised development** or **encampment** may be 'tolerated' for a period of time during which no enforcement action is taken.

**Trailer**

Gypsies and Travellers generally use the term 'trailer' for caravans.

**Transit Site**

Authorised site intended for short-term use by those in transit to other areas. The site is permanent but people who stay on it may only do so for a temporary period (normally for up to three months). Normally these sites have fewer facilities than permanent/residential sites.

**(New) Traveller**

Term used here to refer to people who have adopted a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle living in moveable dwellings who are not ethnic Gypsies or Travellers. The neutral term 'Traveller' is preferred.

**Travelling Showpeople**

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). Most Travelling Showpeople are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.

**Unauthorised Development**

A Gypsy and Traveller site established on Gypsy- and Traveller-owned land without appropriate planning permission or site licence.

**Unauthorised Encampment**

A piece of land where Gypsies and Travellers reside without planning permission. The land is not in the ownership of those involved in the encampment.

**World Heritage Site**

A cultural or natural site of outstanding value inscribed on the UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) List. The City of Bath was inscribed on the List in 1987.

**Yard**

Term used for a **pitch** or **site** occupied by Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies and Travellers may also use the term for a small **site** or a house with land which can accommodate trailers.