

## **Gypsies, Travellers' and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Update on Stock Take and Progress**

### **Context**

1. At its meeting of 12 September 2012 the Cabinet noted that a 'stock take' is currently underway. The key tasks included within that stock take are:
  - responding to the issues arising from the Preferred Options consultation;
  - ongoing assessment of the 3 sites previously consulted on;
  - assessment of new sites suggested through the Call for Sites, including a review of the existing unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites;
  - a review of the site selection process which will be used to review existing sites and assess new sites;
  - review of major development sites, as part of the Core Strategy review, to assess opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller sites;
  - a review of capacity outside the Green Belt, including opportunities for provision in neighbouring local authorities;
  - an update to the assessment of need for pitches to establish the level of need for 5 and 10 year supply of sites in accordance with Planning for Traveller Sites; and
  - ongoing engagement with neighbouring local authorities in accordance with the duty to cooperate.
2. The programme for that work is for the stock take to be completed in December 2012. That will be followed by a public consultation on the results of the stock take in March/April 2013.

### **Stock Take Progress**

3. The full schedule of representations for each site previously consulted on have been published on the dedicated webpages at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningfortravellers) (see 'Consultation').
4. Fieldwork for the update of the assessment of accommodation need (GTAA) has nearly been completed by consultants. The report will identify the need for permanent and transit pitches, and Travelling Showmen's yards, over the next 15 years (as required by national policy), as well as identifying any preferred tenures and site specific requirements expressed by those interviewed. A final report is expected to be published in December 2012.
5. Contact has been made with the neighbouring local authorities to ascertain whether there is any scope to accommodate Bath and North East Somerset Council's need for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites in their area.

6. Research is also underway on the potential for Gypsy and Traveller site delivery on urban extensions or major development sites, including speaking with other local authorities who have sought to address this issue.
7. The Council is writing to developers and Registered Providers to ask for their feedback on two options that could be taken forward:
  - (1) to incorporate a non-site specific criteria policy which seeks consideration of the inclusion of Traveller pitches on large development sites; and
  - (2) the potential for large development sites to be specifically allocated to include Traveller pitch delivery.

### **Site Selection Assessment Matrix**

8. A key part of the stock take is a review of the site selection process. A draft set of criteria were included as part of the Cabinet report, and have since been subject to internal consultation and review. The amended set of criteria is appended to this briefing note.
9. The draft assessment criteria take a more analytical approach to site assessment, setting out a number of questions arising from the policy requirements of *Planning for Traveller Sites*, the NPPF and the local planning policy context.
10. In the meantime work has commenced on the assessment of each of the 3 sites remaining from the previous consultation stage, the new sites recommended to the Council, and the existing unauthorised sites. The Council will analyse all feedback received from neighbouring local authorities, statutory consultees, developers and Registered Providers, together with the results from the GTAA update and use this information to inform the site assessments.

### **Next Steps**

11. The stages are:
  - Results of GTAA update are considered by the Council (November 2012);
  - A formal decision on a shortlist of sites for public consultation in February 2013;
  - March-April 2013: public consultation on the shortlist.
12. The results of the public consultation will then inform preparation of the draft Plan, formal public consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for examination. There is benefit in discussing the emerging results of the stocktake with Town and Parish Councils at an early stage and appropriate arrangements will therefore be made.

## **DRAFT REVISED SITE SELECTION CRITERIA**

Assessment tables to be broadly guided by national policy, Planning for Traveller Sites and the NPPF, Local Plan policy HG.16 and the emerging Core Strategy Policy CP11 (as below) as baseline criteria for land allocations. Tables identify analytical approach to site selection by drawing out site-specific opportunities and constraints as against the criteria.

### **Policy CP11**

The following criteria will be used to guide the identification of suitable sites to meet the established accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople to 2011 and their accommodation needs beyond 2011 once assessed.

Proposals for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople accommodation will be considered against the following criteria:

- a. local community services and facilities, including shops, schools and health facilities, should be accessible by foot, cycle and public transport
- b. satisfactory means of access can be provided and the existing highway network is adequate to service the site
- c. the site is large enough to allow for adequate space for on-site facilities and amenity, parking and manoeuvring, as well as any commercial activity if required
- d. the site does not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- e. adequate services including utilities, foul and surface water and waste disposal can be provided as well as any necessary pollution control measures
- f. use of the site must have no harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers
- g. the site should avoid areas at high risk of flooding and have no adverse impact on protected habitats and species, nationally recognised designations and natural resources

**Table 1**

<b>Site</b>	
<b>Background Information</b>	
<b>Site size, location and existing land use</b> <i>(Where is the site in relation to the existing settlement boundary?)</i>	
<b>Planning history</b>	
<b>Sustainability – economic factors</b>	
Site access to local services? <i>(Food shop, schools, doctor's surgery)</i>	
Would the site enable access to employment opportunities?	
<b>Sustainability – social factors</b>	
Could the site promote peaceful and integrated co-existence? <i>(E.g. residential amenity, privacy, proximity to neighbouring land uses)</i>	
Site access to health facilities?	
Site access to education?	
Could the site promote opportunities for a healthy lifestyle? <i>(E.g. adequate landscaping, play space provision)</i>	

<p>Could the site provide an opportunity for high quality design and a good standard of amenity? <i>(E.g. soft landscaping, site not isolated)</i></p>	
<p><b>Sustainability – environmental factors</b></p>	
<p>Would the site make use of previously developed, untidy or derelict land?</p>	
<p>Would the site place occupants / neighbouring land uses at risk from flooding?</p>	
<p>Is the local infrastructure accessible and have capacity for development? <i>(E.g. highway capacity, ability to turn vehicles on-site, access)</i></p>	
<p>Could the site provide a healthy environment for site and neighbouring occupants? <i>(E.g. contamination, noise issues, hazardous location, access to utilities)</i></p>	
<p>Would the site adversely impact on any important habitat(s) or species? <i>(E.g. Site of Nature Conservation Interest)</i></p>	
<p>Would the site adversely impact on any landscape designation(s)? <i>(E.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</i></p>	

Would the site adversely impact on any heritage asset(s)? <i>(E.g. World Heritage Site, Conservation Area, Listed Building)</i>	
<b>Sites in Rural Areas and the Countryside</b>	
Would the scale of the site dominate the nearest settled community?	
Is the site proposed to meet a need for a rural exception site and would this site be appropriate? (Solely affordable provision)	
<b>Green Belt</b>	
Would the site require an exceptional Green Belt boundary alteration?	
<b>Mixed Use</b>	
Would a mixed-use site at this location be practicable, and have due regard to the safety and amenity of site and neighbouring occupants? <i>(I.e. Could the site enable traditional Gypsy / Traveller lifestyles, including through live/work pitches?)</i>	
<b>Is the site Suitable, Available and Achievable?</b>	
Commentary on overall site suitability for development	

Is the site available for development as residential or transit pitches, or a Travelling Showmen's yard? <i>(Any ownership issues)</i>	
Is the site developable and deliverable? Over what timescale would the site come forward? <i>(E.g. viability concerns, barriers to delivery)</i>	
What pitch capacity does the site have?	
<b>Conclusions</b>	

**Table 2**

***Following table to be used in assessing the overall need for Green Belt sites to be released for allocation for all sites.***

<b>Green Belt Boundary Alteration</b>	
Are any of the sites recommended for allocation located within the Green Belt?	
Consideration of exceptional circumstances warranting individual boundary alteration(s)	