

**Test Valley Revised Local Plan  
DPD  
2011 – 2029  
Regulation 22 – Submission to  
Secretary of State**

**Policy COM13:  
Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling  
Showpeople Topic Paper**

June 2014

# REVISED LOCAL PLAN

## TOPIC PAPER – POLICY COM13: GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS & TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this topic paper is to consider the policy approach to accommodate the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the Borough. The paper sets out the national and local policy context and considers the evidence from the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

### 2 Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council is legally required by the Housing Act 2004 and the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012)<sup>1</sup> to objectively assess and meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population within the Borough. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interest of the settled community.
- 2.2 In March 2012, the Government published a new planning policy for traveller sites (PPTS), alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government's approach to planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites. The overarching aim of Government policy is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life, while respecting the interests of the settled community. To help achieve this, the Government has identified the following aims in respect of traveller sites:
- Local planning authorities making their own assessment of need as long as it is based on robust evidence, includes engagement and cooperation with traveller and settled communities, and involves working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.
  - Local planning authorities setting their own pitch and plot targets.
  - Local planning authorities:
  - Identifying and updating annually a supply of specific deliverable<sup>2</sup> sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.

---

<sup>1</sup> DCLG. March 2012. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

<sup>2</sup> To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning

- Identifying a supply of specific developable<sup>3</sup> sites (those in a suitable location, with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed) or broad locations for growth, for 6 to 10 years and where possible, for years 11 – 15.
- Using criteria to guide land supply allocations and help determine planning applications.
- Ensuring traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.
- Strictly limiting new traveller sites in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the local plan.
- Considering sites suitable for mixed use residential and business use wherever possible.

2.3 Consideration must also be given to the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out the Government’s overarching planning policies with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

### **3 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment**

3.1 It is a duty under the Housing Act (2004) for the Council to assess the accommodation needs of the population in its area. Section 225(1) of the Act refers to the requirement to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to their district.

3.2 The Council, along with other Hampshire authorities, commissioned Forest Bus to undertake the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment (GTAA)<sup>4</sup> in order to quantify the level of need for traveller sites in the area. Forest Bus were commissioned on the basis that they could demonstrate social research expertise, and had a track record of engagement with traveller communities, including those in ‘bricks and mortar’ accommodation. All Hampshire authorities were invited to take part in the accommodation assessment, including the National Park Authorities (New Forest and South Downs). Ultimately, the following 11 authorities jointly commissioned the Travellers Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire:

- East Hampshire District Council
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- Fareham Borough Council
- Gosport Borough Council
- Havant Borough Council
- New Forest District Council
- Test Valley Borough Council

---

permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years.

<sup>3</sup> To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for traveller site development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

<sup>4</sup> Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Forest Bus. 2013

- Winchester City Council
- New Forest National Park Authority
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Hampshire County Council

3.3 The GTAA identifies a current provision of 13 permanent gypsy pitches in the Borough with an estimated current need for 1.5 further pitches (rounded to 2 pitches). The GTAA calculates the cumulative future need (including the existing need for 2 pitches) as:-

Total by 2012 - 2017 = 4 pitches

Total by 2017 - 2022 = 7 pitches

Total by 2022 - 2027 = 10 pitches

3.4 Following a recent appeal decision at Bridle View<sup>5</sup>, the Council is reviewing the evidence base. This will be included within the forthcoming Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) which is scheduled to be published for consultation in the autumn.

## 4 Policy Approach

4.1 The Inspector of the Bridle View appeal reaffirms the GTAA study in that it shows that there is some level of unmet need, albeit it possibly quite small, and that there will be further needs in the future.

4.2 The Council is proposing to prepare a separate Gypsy and Traveller DPD which will identify permanent site(s) to meet the unmet need. The Council also proposes the approach of including a criteria based policy within the Revised Local Plan to assess planning applications regarding accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The inclusion of a criteria based policy follows Government guidance within the PPTS which states:

“criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward” (paragraph 10).

4.3 Including a policy will also assist and guide any pre application discussion and may reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective.

4.4 It is acknowledged that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are three distinct groups and have separate legal definitions therefore should be considered independently. However, it is recognised that the approach of having a joint criteria based policy for all three groups has been taken by other Local Planning Authorities in Hampshire.

---

<sup>5</sup> 12/02318/FULLS: The use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 1 gypsy pitch together with the formation of additional hard standing and building to provide utility/dayroom ancillary to that use

- 4.5 Southampton City Council has a policy within their adopted Core Strategy (2010) relating to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople (Policy CS 17). Havant Borough Council Core Strategy (March 2011) has produced Policy CS10 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. In addition, Fareham Borough Council has included Policy CS19 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople population within their adopted Core Strategy (2011).
- 4.6 Post the publication of the NPPF and PPTS, Winchester City Council has defined, within their adopted Local Plan (2013) Policy CP5 - Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 4.7 In recognition of the approach taken by other authorities in Hampshire it is proposed to have a joint criteria based policy covering the following requirements:

*It is located where services and facilities are accessible*

- 4.8 The PPTS sets out the Government's aims in respect of traveller sites (paragraph 4) which includes the provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.
- 4.9 Paragraph 11 of the PPTS requires criteria based policies to ensure that children can attend schools on a regular basis, access to appropriate health services and provide a settled base that reduces the need for long-distance travelling. Further to this, applications for traveller sites should be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and be assessed and determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and with the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.

*Potential occupants are recognised as gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople*

- 4.10 This requirement is proposed as there was an appeal decision<sup>6</sup> within the Borough where it was questioned whether the applicant met the definition of Gypsy. The Inspector relied on the opinion of Hampshire County Council Gypsy officer. Annex 1 of the PPTS provides a definition of gypsies and travellers and a definition of travelling showpeople.

*Proposal helps meet the identified need*

- 4.11 Paragraph 22 of the PPTS specifies that when considering planning applications for traveller sites, the Council should assess the existing level of local provision and need for sites.

---

<sup>6</sup> TVS.10154/1 The Orchard, West Wellow

*Evidence is provided to justify the reason for the proposal to be located in the Borough*

- 4.12 An issue that is commonly raised is whether the applicant has a local connection. The PPTS at paragraph 22, states that LPAs should consider applications from those not just with a local connections. The criterion has been drafted to allow for those without a local connection to make a justified case for them to be located in Test Valley Borough.

*The site is of sufficient size to provide for parking; turning; servicing and storage of vehicles and equipment*

- 4.13 The nature of Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople self-sufficient lifestyle and the range and mix of activities that occur within a site is that there is often a need for outside storage especially for winter quarters for travelling showpeople. It is proposed that a criterion is included which ensures that sufficient space is provided. The issue of screening/ landscaping and impact on amenity would be covered by separate policies.
- 4.14 Once sites are permitted, it is necessary to retain their use to prevent loss to other uses unless justified.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is proposed that a policy is included within the Revised Local Plan which covers Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and includes criteria on the above points raised. The proposed wording of the policy is:

**Policy COM13: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

**Development to accommodate gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople will be permitted provided that:-**

- a) it is located where services and facilities are accessible; and**
- b) the potential occupants are recognised\* as gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople; and**
- c) the proposal helps meet the identified need; and**
- d) evidence is provided to justify the reason for the proposal to be located in the Borough; and**
- e) The site is of sufficient size to provide for parking; turning; servicing and storage of vehicles and equipment.**

**Existing permanent authorised gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites should be retained for the use of these groups unless it has been established that the sites are no longer required.**

**\*Meeting the definition as contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' Annex 1, March 2012**