

CP14 – Provision for Gypsies and Travellers



Supporting Documents:

Housing Act - 2004
PPS3 Housing - 2006
Circular 1/2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' - 2006
Draft South East Plan - 2006
Housing Needs Survey - 2005
East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Gypsy and Traveller Study - 2006

Introduction

3.112 The 2004 Housing Act requires local authorities to assess the need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in their areas when they assess the housing requirements of the rest of the population. As part of the 2005 Housing Needs Survey, the city council took part in a sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) published in 2006 as the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Gypsy and Traveller Study. This study looked at the accommodation needs and aspirations of gypsies and travellers in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove study area.

3.113 The Brighton & Hove City Council Traveller Strategy aims to promote community cohesion and to protect the rights and needs of both the settled and travelling communities. The Strategy acknowledges that gypsies and travellers have a right to a nomadic lifestyle, to equal access to services (such as education, health and accommodation) and to protection from discrimination and harassment. The GTAA, the Traveller Strategy and recent government guidance in Circular 1/2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' provide the appropriate context for planning to help meet the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers living in or passing through the city.

Preferred Option – CP14 Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

Provision will be made to meet the local need for gypsy and traveller⁵⁵ caravan pitches in accordance with requirements set out in the South East Plan.

⁵⁵ Definition(s) of Gypsy and Travellers: Circular 1/2006 defines 'gypsies and travellers' as: 'Persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such'.

In assessing the suitability of new sites to accommodate gypsies and travellers (or extensions to existing sites), the local planning authority will have regard to the following planning considerations and will need to be satisfied that:

- There is safe and convenient access to the road network;
- There is satisfactory access to local services and facilities (including health services, GPs, schools, shops);
- The potential for noise and other disturbance from the movement of vehicles to and from the site and any on-site business activities is not detrimental to the character and appearance of surrounding areas;
- There is scope for landscaping and planting to help give structure and privacy and to maintain visual amenity;
- There is capacity to provide the necessary physical and social infrastructure (water, electricity, drainage, sanitation, play areas);

Locating suitable sites within AONBs and other areas with nationally recognised designations (for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks, National Nature Reserves and Conservation Areas) will only be acceptable where there are no other suitable sites and provided that it can be demonstrated that they do not compromise the objectives of their designation.

The following locations should be avoided:

- Sites on or near to significantly contaminated land, industrial processes or other hazards, where there would be a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of residents; and
- Sites in areas of high flood risk; and
- SACs, SPAs, Ramsar Sites and other areas with internationally recognised designations.

Existing Gypsy/Traveller sites will be safeguarded. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of an existing site will be refused unless:

- a. the local planning authority is satisfied that the need for the provision of the site no longer exists; or
- b. the proposal complies with the policies in the development plan and a replacement Gypsy/Traveller site is to be provided in a suitable location.

Supporting text

3.114 Circular 1/2006 establishes a new planning framework to help increase site provision to meet the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers, reduce the number of unauthorised sites and promote good relations with the settled community.

3.115 Regional Spatial Strategies will now identify the number of pitches required for each local authority area in the light of local assessments of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs (the GTAA processes). The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) is currently undertaking a partial review of the South East Plan to specifically consider the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers and the review will set pitch requirements for the South East region. The city council has worked closely with its GTAA partners and has submitted advice to SEERA regarding the need for additional provision locally. The city council expects that its allocation for permanent (as in

residential) pitch provision could be 14-16 pitches⁵⁶. This will be additional to the transit provision that the council currently makes at the Horsdean site just north of the A27. Formal consultation on SEERA's preferred options will take place during September-November 2008.

3.116 Guidance in Circular 1/2006 also advises that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document should set out relevant planning considerations and criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites which may be used to guide the formal consideration and allocation of sites in further development plan documents (for example, the Development Policies and Site Allocations DPD). These criteria can also be used to meet unexpected demand for sites and/or to assist the city council in granting planning consent for suitable applications in advance of the formal adoption of the Development Policies and Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

3.117 There is a need to ensure that all sites (whether new or existing/improved):

- are sustainable, easy to manage and maintain;
- are of a decent standard, equitable to that which would be expected for affordable housing in the settled community; and
- support harmonious relations between gypsies and travellers and the settled community.

All sites considered as options for the Development Policies and Site Allocations DPD will have their social, environmental and economic impacts assessed in accordance with the requirements of the sustainability appraisal.

Implementation

3.118 This preferred option will be implemented through the Development Policies and Sites Allocation DPD and the development control process.