

Appendix A CAB2947(LP) Committee 30 June 2017

Traveller Local Plan – Initial Consultation

Summary of Responses received

An initial options consultation was launched on 21 March 2017, to seek views on the potential options to address the requirements for the travelling community as set out in Policy DM4 of Local Plan Part 2 adopted on 5 April 2017.

At the close of the consultation on 8 May, 124 responses had been received.

The following lists, by question, a summary of the responses received and key matters raised where these are relevant to the preparation of the DPD.

Questions 1 – 4

Data collection of names and organisations submitting responses

Question 5

The Council has identified need for 15 pitches for gypsies and travellers and 24 plots for travelling showpeople. Options to meet our identified needs for pitches and plots are set out below:-

- 1. Make sites with temporary planning permission permanent (subject to the required site assessments etc)*
- 2. When existing sites become vacant safeguard these for future traveller occupation*
- 3. Identify and allocate new sites*
- 4. Grant planning permission for occupied but unauthorised sites (subject to required site assessments etc)*
- 5. Extend existing sites (subject to required site assessments etc)*
- 6. Intensify existing sites within their current boundaries*
- 7. Other options*

Generally there was support for option 6 and 2 in terms of being the most preferred approach, whereas option 1 and 5 were well both balanced in terms of responses with no clear preference of most or least preferred. Option 3 and 4 scored less with these being the least preferred options.

24 comments were received in response to 'other options', raising the following matters:-

- Ensure existing sites are fully used
- Use Council land
- Identify sites within Winchester City

- Historic England comment that the Council should have regard to the historic environment when considering sites
- Concern enforcement procedures are not strong enough to resolve tensions between traveller and settled communities
- Grant planning permission for sites that are not occupied
- Identify two super sites to provide the necessary numbers and facilities to avoid impinging on existing residential areas
- Encourage travellers to accept permanent housing if they have stopped travelling
- Encourage applications for new sites
- Specific sites need to be identified
- Plus various site specific comments

The aim of this question was to seek views as to an acceptable way forward, acknowledging the lack of new sites coming forward for consideration and the need to meet the requirements established in adopted policy.

The responses provide an indication of support for regularising some of the known existing sites, however, it is obvious from the additional comments received that the nature and location of the site will be a key consideration in taking forward a site in the DPD.

Question 6

How important do you think the following are for the occupiers of a traveller site?

1. *Being near a settlement with basic facilities- primary school, small shop, pub, church etc*
2. *Having direct access onto an 'A' or 'B' road*
3. *A site with existing vegetation to screen caravans and other structures*
4. *Having drainage on site*
5. *Being close to larger settlements as a source of employment*
6. *Having space/facilities on site for own employment purposes (storage)*
7. *Provision of play space for children to use safely*
8. *Connection to local infrastructure – water supply, telecoms, waste collection etc*
9. *Space for on-site day room*
10. *Ability to occupy a site without creating tension with the settled community*
11. *Space for adequate parking and turning of vehicles*
12. *Preference for a site warden/manager*

The purpose of this question was to seek views on those matters already broadly expressed in Policy CP5 and the PPTS. Matters receiving most support included 1, 4, 8, 10 and 11. These were followed by 2, 3, 7 and 12, whereas there was least support for matters 5, 6, and 9.

Again these responses provide an indication of matters to give further consideration to during the preparation of the DPD.

Question 7

How important is access to the following (please score in order of importance with 1 being the most important). What other services do you feel it is important to have access to?

1. *Schools (primary or secondary)*
2. *Medical facilities*
3. *Shops*
4. *Other*

Overall, schools received the most positive comments with 47% of respondents giving this priority compared to medical facilities and shops at 15% and 14% respectively. Shops scored more highly as least priority. With regard to 'other' the following comments were received :-

- Public transport
- Social services
- Mains drains and clean water
- Located so to avoid tension with residents
- Gypsy liaison officer
- Animal welfare officers
- Site manager
- Refuse storage and collection

There is a degree of repetition with question 6, as many of the 'other' comments reflect those matters specifically listed under the previous question.

Proximity to education provision is a specific requirement of the PPTS which states 'ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis', this guidance also requires local plan policies to 'promote in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services'.

Question 8

What do you think is the ideal size of a site?

- *5 or less pitches/plots*
- *More than 5 pitches/plots*

58% of responses supported the 5 or less pitches/plots option and 16% more than 5 (24% no response). This gives a clear indication for a preference for smaller sites, which accords to some extent to the fact that the majority of existing sites across the

District are typically family units comprising a small number of pitches/plots for family members.

Question 9

If a traveller family decides to move from their current location should the site be retained so that it can be used by another traveller family?

52% agreed with the statement and 23% gave a negative response (24% no response).

The question also sought from those that gave a negative response, '*what do you think should be done with the site*'. 33 comments were received covering the following matters:-

- Land should be returned to the land owner
- Land should be returned to its previous use/condition
- Seek opinion from local community
- If the site is authorised it should be retained as part of a group of 'revolving' pitches
- Authorised sites should be retained
- Unauthorised sites should be reinstated to previous use.

Typically the travelling community own their own sites and the above indicates support for these sites which are also authorised to be retained for such purposes.

Question 10

Is there anything else that we could benefit from knowing when preparing our traveller plan?

79 responses were received to this question covering the following matters:-

- Consideration to the age of the children, health of occupants and employment status
- Availability of sites; cost of sites/affordability and whether sites are deliverable
- Sites should not be located near to major roads where the occupants will be subject to noise and air pollution
- A new traveller site will cause much tension with the existing community
- Ensure occupants are verified travellers
- Sites should be subject to Council tax
- Query reliability of information to support planning applications
- Close unofficial sites and include these in strategic housing allocations
- Opinions of the travellers themselves; create a forum to discuss issues between travellers and non-travellers
- Lack of S106 or CIL contributions associated with this form of development

- Lack of confidence that by making a temporary site permanent will have a beneficial effect or compliance with the necessary requirements
- Emphasis for integration between travellers and non-travellers
- Consider sites on edge of large settlements such as Winchester with access to better facilities rather than rural locations
- Sites should have provision of essential services – water, electric, waste collection etc
- Sites should comply with all the necessary regulations
- Needs assessment is flawed as it based on a definition of traveller that is unlawful and in breach of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Given the different lifestyles of travellers, this can have a detrimental effect on local residents
- Highways England have no comment on the options consultation, but wish to be consulted again if any proposed sites are identified as having direct or indirect impact on the strategic road network
- Numerous comments on specific sites – Travellers Rest, Bishops Sutton; Firgrove Lane, North Boarhunt; Chilcomb Lane; Carousel Park; Appledown Lane, Alresford; Northington Down (see below).

The nature of these responses illustrates the range of concerns that will need to be taken into account when drafting the DPD. Of note is that a number of the specific site representation relate to sites owned by Hampshire County Council. These were assessed through the Peter Brett Associates Site Assessment Study, which examined both existing traveller sites and land in public ownership. Hampshire County Council as landowner has since confirmed that its sites need to be retained for operational and policy purposes and are therefore no longer available to be considered as traveller sites. Similarly Winchester City Council has confirmed its land holdings are not available.

Other matters will be considered during the site assessment process, in particular many of these are known requirements as set out in Policy CP5/PPTS. CIL is not payable on caravans or mobile homes, but any buildings on the site will be liable. For those sites that fall within Solent Recreation Mitigation Project area there is specific reference to “permanent accommodation for gypsies and travellers” in the emerging draft strategy which it is anticipated will be in place by early 2018, such sites will need to make the necessary contribution which is currently sought at £172 per dwelling. Temporary and transit pitches will be assessed on a case by case basis.

With regard to the reference to the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is complying with the requirements of the PPTS which applies a revised definition of travellers. This has been challenged by the travelling community in the High Court. To date there is no announcement as to when this will be heard, obviously depending on the outcome this could have a significant impact on the DPD and the

approach to be proposed. This issue is outside of the Council's control, there is a commitment to prepare a DPD, publication of a draft document as planned will allow for this matter to be resolved through the appropriate channels.

Question 11

Do you know of any opportunities for extra pitches/plots? Please state where the site is located so that it can be looked at as part of this process.

A number of sites were referred to in response to this question, all of which the Council is already aware and these together with the comments submitted will be taken into consideration in preparing the DPD. One response suggests contacting other public bodies and specifically the Forestry Commission. It is the intention as part of the consultation on the draft DPD the Council will specifically request other public bodies whether they have any landholdings that could be considered.

Question 12

Please indicate which of the following groups you fall within from the list below.

Traveller or travelling show person	3.23%
Planning agent acting on behalf of travellers	3.23%
Organisations representing the travelling community	0.81%
Parish council	6.45%
Statutory consultee	0.81%
Member of the public	63.71%
Amenity, charity, councillors, other	4.03%
Not answered	20.16%

This question aimed to determine the effectiveness of the engagement techniques utilised. The above illustrates that just over 7% of responses were received from the travelling community or their representatives, which suggests the use of social media and direct contact approach has been successful. A consultation statement will accompany the draft DPD when it is published for consultation, this will set out in detail the methods used.

Question 13 and 14

Requested age and gender of respondent:

Male	33.9%
Female	35.5%

Prefer not to say	8.9%
Not answered	21.8%
<24	0%
25-34	4%
35-44	9.7%
45-54	20.2%
55-64	16.9%
65-74	13.7%
>75	4.8%
Prefer not to say	10.5%
Not answered	20%

Site Specific Comments

Whilst it was not the intention of this options consultation to seek views on specific sites, a number of comments were received, the following lists those sites referred to, together with a very brief summary of key matters raised:

Barn Farm, Swanmore – request for the site to be considered for allocation

Ourlands, Knowle – site with temporary consent for 3 pitches

Big Muddy, Alma Lane – existing personal permission for 3 pitches

Gravel Hill, Swanmore – existing temporary for 3 pitches

Durley Street – proposed site for 4 pitches

Firgrove Lane, North Boarhunt – additional mobile homes occupy the site without planning permission; bungalow on the site does not have planning permission; over concentration of mobile homes on one site; visual impact of site; lack of drainage; query occupants meeting definition of travellers

Chilcomb Lane (W048) – existing grazing land that floods

Carousel Park (W020) – query occupants meeting definition of travelling showpersons; tensions on site

Appledown Lane, Whitehill Lane/ Travellers Rest - Alresford/Bishops Sutton (W008) – noise/disruption impact to local residents; site not near to local amenities or on a bus route; site now abandoned so question need for it to be retained; proximity of site to new housing and employment development and new junction on A31;

Northington Down/Chippings Depot (W038) - site not near to local amenities or bus service; lack of drainage; impact on landscape and ecology; strategic fuel pipeline lies beneath the site; incompatible with local community; light and noise pollution; proximity to Carousel Park; poor access to the site and located on a fast road; impact on Micheldever Forest; lack of infrastructure; impact on school places; site is not available

The Nurseries, Shedfield (W023) – plot 1 now has permanent planning permission, site assessment needs to be updated