

## **Councils Response to Inspectors Initial Questions Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

### **13. Question 13**

**Does the Plan set out anywhere the level of need for gypsy and traveller and travelling showpersons pitches, based on the recent GTAA?**

13.1. The Plan sets out the approach to and provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches in policy L7 and S6 (ii) and (xi). This totals 60 pitches across four sites in the Broad Locations and provides a criteria based approach, including to potential intensification and extension of existing sites.

13.2. Local Plan policy L7 sets out:

#### ***Policy L7 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People***

*In considering proposals for such new accommodation, the Council will have regard to the following (in order of priority):*

- 1. The suitability and potential of new sites as part of Broad Locations for development. Such new sites should accommodate a maximum of 15 pitches (each pitch being designed to accommodate 1 family / household). Pitch sizes should not exceed 500m2.*
- 2. That development should be in general accordance with Policy S1 Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.*
- 3. The potential and suitability of extending existing sites.*
- 4. The suitability of sites with temporary permissions.*
- 5. That development should take account of any additional criteria contained in Government guidance.*

*Within the constraint set by the pitch sizes limit above, site design will be judged in relation to the specific circumstances of the site and in particular whether there is a need to make an allowance for integral general amenity and landscaping space. A minimum pitch size of 450m2 is likely to be required.*

*Because of a variety of factors including: proximity to the road network most used by Gypsies and Travellers; development site scale; area topography and landscaping opportunities; and the wide range of uses to be provided in the Broad Locations for development (Policy S6); provision of the following new sites will be required:*

- East Hemel Hempstead (South) Broad Location - one 15 pitch site*
- East Hemel Hempstead (Central) Broad Location - one 15 pitch site*
- Park Street Garden Village Broad Location - two 15 pitch sites*

*Specific locations will be identified, allocated and safeguarded through collaborative Masterplanning, as set out in Policy S6.*

13.3. The St Albans Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update (GTAA) (HOU 021), submitted to the Inspectorate on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This can also be accessed online on the following link:

[https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/St%20Albans%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20Update%20Final%20Draft\\_tcm15-66976.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/St%20Albans%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20Update%20Final%20Draft_tcm15-66976.pdf)

- 13.4. The approach taken in policy L7 accords directly with that advocated in the updated GTAA (2019). The report sets out at page 6:

*1.10 The need arising from households that met the planning definition should be addressed through site allocation/intensification/expansion Local Plan Policies. Consideration will also need to be given to the allocation of pitches on public sites.*

- 13.5. At page 51, in the conclusion:

*7.2 In summary there is a need for 72 additional pitches in St Albans over the GTAA period to 2036 for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition; a need for up to 5 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may meet the planning definition; and a potential need for 41 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition.*

*7.3 It is recommended that need for households that met the planning definition is addressed through new pitch allocations or the expansion or intensification of existing sites. Any need arising from undetermined households, or from new households seeking to move to the area and develop a site, should be addressed through a criteria-based Local Plan Policy. Need from households who do not meet the planning definition will be met as part of Local Plan proposals for housing development in response to assessment of overall housing need.*

- 13.6. For the avoidance of doubt, it is noted that the PPTS in para 10 sets out that that LPAs should, in producing their Local Plan, identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.
- 13.7. The reference to locally set targets is important. A need has been identified for Gypsies and Travellers of 72 pitches over the Plan period, as has a need for general housing of circa 14,500 homes. A generally similar, stepped, approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs compared with general housing needs is therefore being taken. This includes considerable work in particular already underway to support the delivery of East Hemel Hempstead and its 30 pitches on two sites.
- 13.8. As stated in LP Policy L7, there are benefits of providing pitches at the strategic sites including proximity to the road network most used by gypsies and travellers, the scale of the development sites, the area topography and landscaping opportunities, and the wide range of uses proposed.