

Local Plan



Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople
Local Development Document

Draft for Consultation (February 2013)

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Have your say

We are interested to hear the views of everyone including residents, businesses, community groups and all other stakeholders. All comments received will contribute towards the final document that will be submitted to the Government at a later date.

We are only seeking views on the site and **not** the principle of allocating sites. That principle is set out in the adopted Core Strategy which was the subject of previous consultation. The Council will consider the suitability of any additional sites brought forward during this consultation period together with consultation responses.

This document, supporting documents and representation forms can be viewed on the Council's website at www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/LocalDevelopmentFramework.

Hard copies can also be viewed and representation forms obtained from the Council's offices in Rickmansworth and at all public libraries in the District.

Please let us have your comments in one of the following ways:

By email to TRLDF@threerivers.gov.uk or

By post to Development Plans, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1RL

The closing date for responses is 22 March 2013.

Please note that Three Rivers District Council will only consider comments by respondents who provide their names and address. Inappropriate, offensive or racist comments will not be accepted.

For further information on this document, please contact the Council:

By e-mail: trldf@threerivers.gov.uk

By telephone: 01923 727106 or Minicom on 01923 727303

In writing: Economic and Sustainable Development, Three Rivers District Council,
Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL

A separate sustainability appraisal report has been prepared on an independent basis for the Council. This document appraises the environmental, social and economic implications of the policies. The appraisal can be viewed on the Council's website, at the Council's reception and at the libraries in the District.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The existing Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-2011 is being updated to help plan for, and manage development in the District in the next 15 years or so.

1.2 For Three Rivers, the new Local Plan will consist of a number of documents including:

- The Core Strategy DPD: provides the over-arching strategy and policies and the long term vision for Three Rivers.
- Site Allocations LDD: allocates sites for housing, employment, retail, open space, education and community uses.
- Development Management Policies LDD: sets out the policies against which planning applications will be assessed.
- **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople LDD**: allocates sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

1.3 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are also carried out to assess the proposals in Local Development Documents to ensure they contribute to sustainable development.

2.0 What is the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Development Document?

2.1 The Core Strategy sets out the vision and objectives for the spatial development of the area. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy sets the criteria against which planning applications for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be assessed. The Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Showpeople LDD will identify sites to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers in the District in accordance with national policy.

3.0 History

3.1 Romani Gypsies have lived in Britain for around 600 years and people have travelled from community to community for even longer. Irish Travellers also have a long tradition of visiting Britain having travelled and lived here for generations. More recently, other people identified as New Travellers have also pursued a nomadic lifestyle.

3.2 Despite the tradition of nomadism, the degree to which Gypsies and Travellers now actively travel varies greatly. Traditional patterns of work are changing and although a minority still regularly travel (predominately for work and cultural reasons); the majority of Gypsies and Travellers now lead a settled life. Research indicated that the majority of travellers prefer to live among family and friends, often in caravans.

3.3 The tradition of Travelling Showpeople in the UK dates back centuries, with the Showmen's Guild being formed in 1889. Many Showpeople are members of the Guild and travel the UK holding fairs in accordance with a strict code of practice. Whilst travelling remains a key feature of their traditional way of life, the community has generally become more settled, with more groups requiring a permanent base from which to travel locally.

4.0 National Policy

4.1 Government planning policy relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is set out in 'Planning policy for traveller sites' which came into force in March 2012.

4.2 In summary national planning policy requires the Council to;

- assess the needs of the traveller community within its area

- set pitch and plot targets to meet the locally assessed need
- identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against this locally set target and
- identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15.

5.0 Local Policy

- 5.1 Policy CP5 Gypsy and Traveller Provision of the adopted Core Strategy sets out that when allocating sites for Gypsies and Travellers, the following criteria will be taken into account:
- a) Avoid areas at risk from flooding
 - b) Avoid causing an adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife, heritage or landscape importance, and on the openness of the Green Belt
 - c) Be in or near existing settlements with access by foot and/or public transport to local services, including shops, schools and healthcare
 - d) Be well located to the highway network with safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site
 - e) Provide adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity
 - f) Provide adequate levels of privacy and residential amenities for occupiers and not be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent occupiers
 - g) The circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches on the application site.

6.0 Why do we need to allocate sites?

- 6.1 The failure to allocate sufficient land to meet the need for permanent pitches has a number of impacts including:
- Unauthorised development and encampments, as well as tensions with the settled community
 - Difficulty of ensuring stable access to all the support and services that Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities need
 - Reinforcing the cycle of nomadism and homelessness for those Gypsies and Travellers who may prefer or need a more settled way of life, but cannot find a permanent site
 - Applications for development being decided on appeal, which can result in sites being permitted that may not be the most suitable or sustainable locations for development
 - Failure of the Council to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in contravention of its duty under the Housing Act 2004 and
 - Restricting the Council's ability to enforce against unauthorised development as our ability to enforce is related to our activity in meeting the need for new provision.

7.0 Understanding the District's Needs

- 7.1 In previous years the number of pitches the Council had to supply was based on the policies within the Regional Spatial Strategy. However, with the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the introduction of the national policy 'Planning for traveller sites' the Council must now determine the future needs of the Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Showpeople based on it's own assessment. This was achieved by a Travellers Needs Assessment that was undertaken in 2012 which determined the current provision and the likely future needs of our Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.

7.2 Current and Future Provision

7.3 Gypsies and Travellers

7.4 There are currently no publicly owned/run sites in Three Rivers but there are a range of private sites. The largest private site is in Bedmond and this has a capacity for 20 pitches. A smaller site in Sarratt has a capacity for two caravans on one pitch, while sites in Kings Langley and Langleybury have temporary planning permission for three and two pitches respectively. A site at Carpenders Park has recently expired planning permission for one temporary pitch.

7.5 The results of the Traveller Needs Assessment revealed that the estimated extra site provision that is required now and in the future in Three Rivers will be 8 pitches to address the needs for the existing households on the sites with temporary planning permission due to expire in the near future, for the family on a currently unauthorised site and a small amount of household growth over time. The table below summarises the requirements for each five year period.

	2012 – 2017	2017-2022	2022 - 2027
Private Pitches	6	2	0

7.6 Travelling Showpeople

7.7 There are also two authorised Showmen yards in Mill End with a combined capacity of 20 plots. However, it was determined through the study that there are two other long term Showmen yards that exist in the District and the true number of Showmen on sites in the District is much higher. The Traveller Needs Assessment shows that there is no identified need for further Showpeople sites in the first five years and any future needs can be accommodated on existing sites with applications to be assessed against Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy.

7.8 Transit Sites

7.9 There is currently only one transit site in Hertfordshire which is located in Hertsmere at South Mimms. Transit sites serve a specific function of meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who are visiting an area or who are passing through on the way to somewhere else. The key issue for determining if there is a requirement for further transit site provision is whether there is evidence of sufficient travelling through the area. Evidence held by Hertfordshire County Council shows that there were only 3 occurrences of unauthorised encampments in Three Rivers between 2008 and 2012. The study concludes that there is no identified need for a transit site in Three Rivers.

8.0 Planning for Future Needs

8.1 National planning policy states that local authorities should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against the local target and up to 15 years supply where possible. As set out above the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople LDD seeks to allocate sufficient land to meet the needs identified.

8.2 What is a pitch?

8.3 Gypsy and Traveller sites are made up of a number of caravan pitches and associated facilities. Although there is no national definition of what size a pitch should be, national guidance 'Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites' states that '*an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan....drying space for clothes, a lockable shed....parking space for two vehicles and a small garden*'. On average, sites usually contain approximately 1.7 caravans per pitch.

8.4 The needs of Travelling Showpeople are different from Gypsies and Travellers. Their sites usually combine residential, storage and maintenance uses, requiring space for accommodation, storage, repairing and maintaining vehicles and fairground equipment. Yards providing both residential and storage and maintenance uses are known as plots.

9.0 **Proposed Traveller Site Allocations**

9.1 We are now consulting on a site situated east of Tolpits Lane, Rickmansworth which has been identified as having the potential to be developed for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople use and it is this site and Policy GT1 that we are now seeking your views on.

Site Ref	GT(1)	Site	Land East of Tolpits Lane, Rickmansworth	
			Current Use	Agricultural (Growing hay)
			Capacity	3.56ha
			Green Belt	Yes
			<p>Comments:</p> <p>The site is adjacent to residential properties and business uses.</p> <p>It is situated near the A4145 and adjacent to a wildlife site.</p> <p>There is access to education and open space but limited access to other local services. It is within walking distance of a bus service that could provide access to larger centres and more local services.</p> <p>Not all of the site will be required for development over the plan period.</p> <p>Access to the site could be achieved via the existing spur of the A4145 west of the site</p>	

POLICY GT1: TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS
<p>Allocated traveller sites will be safeguarded for traveller development.</p> <p>Proposals for the development of sites should have regard to Core Strategy Policy CP5.</p>