

## **Appendix C**

### **Members Pre-Consultation Briefing**

#### **Local Plan - Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

**January 2018**

Subject to approval from Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Chesterfield Borough Council will shortly be consulting residents and businesses on potential Gypsy and Traveller sites.

We wanted to brief all members on this important aspect of the Local Plan before the public consultation. The information in this paper is a summary, and you are strongly urged to look at the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Consultation Report and supporting documents when they are published.

Planning Officers will be available between 8:30am and 18:30pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 in committee room 2 for a drop in session. Please do call in if you have any queries or need further information about any aspect of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites consultation.

#### **Why do we need to allocate Gypsy and Traveller Sites?**

Government guidance requires every Local Authority across England to assess the need for sites for Gypsies and Travellers and to identify a supply of sites to meet identified needs. An assessment of the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Derbyshire published in 2015 identified a requirement for 4 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers in the borough. Part of this requirement has already been met by the grant of planning permission for 2 pitches, meaning that a site must be found to accommodate two pitches. In order to provide some flexibility, a small reserve site will also be allocated.

#### **How big will sites need to be?**

A family pitch would need to be a minimum of 500sqm, and ideally would be around 2000sqm in order to provide space for family growth and a wide landscaping boundary. The site must be capable of containing a single storey amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area. It would also include a static caravan and a

hard standing for a storage shed and drying. It might also include space for family on a short term visit.

### **How did we identify potential sites?**

There have been a number of opportunities for landowners to put forward sites for consideration for all types of land uses, including traveller pitches:

- Local Plan; Sites and Boundaries Issues and Options document (November 2012)
- Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Call for Sites (January 2016 – this specifically gave gypsy and traveller sites as an option on the response form)
- Draft Local Plan (January 2017)

In addition, Derbyshire County Council was specifically asked if they have sites available for allocation as a Gypsy or Traveller site. No sites were put forward as available for Gypsy or Traveller use in response to recent calls for sites or from Derbyshire County Council.

Other sources of land, such as part of large scale housing sites (e.g. Waterside and Staveley works) and the Green Belt, were also considered but rejected.

As a result, the focus turned to sites owned by the council. In particular, garage sites were investigated for two main reasons:

- Our Housing Service has been carrying out a review of garage 'plot' sites with a view to disposal where appropriate
- Garage sites tend to be located in or on the edge of the existing urban area and are not 'large', therefore are a reasonable potential source of land supply for meeting the borough's need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

### **How are the sites assessed?**

In order to make the plan as robust as possible and the site allocation process transparent and fair, all sites covering a range of uses have been assessed in the same way. This Land Availability Assessment (LAA) assesses site potential for development and the likelihood of development happening. There are three stages of LAA assessment, plus additional specific criteria for potential

Gypsy and Traveller sites that are required in order to comply with government guidance. The methodology is being published alongside the consultation report.

Matters that are assessed include:

- Site size and availability
- Physical constraints such as flood risk, land stability, and compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Access to and impact on local highways
- Walking and cycling accessibility to services
- Capacity of physical infrastructure e.g. water supply
- Capacity of social infrastructure e.g. schools and GPs
- Impact on green infrastructure e.g. public open spaces
- Impact on biodiversity and landscape character
- Pollution
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on heritage
- Adequacy of drinking water, sewerage provision and gas or electricity
- Scale of a site in relation to the nearest settled community to which it relates
- Degree to which the site might promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the sites occupiers and the local community
- Scope for living/work

A total of 46 garage sites have been assessed. 21 of these were rejected because they did not meet the minimum size threshold and/or were unavailable. Out of the remaining 25 sites, six passed the second and third stages of assessment and have been shortlisted as potential gypsy and traveller sites.

**Which sites have been shortlisted?**

Plans and details of the six shortlisted sites (as well as the rejected sites) will be available for viewing at the drop in session.

### **How will residents' comments be taken into account?**

The public consultation will last for six weeks and will include wide publicity and drop in sessions at Chesterfield and Staveley. Residents' comments will be fully reported to Cabinet, and will inform decisions about which sites are allocated in the new Local Plan. Significant levels of objection to a site will not necessarily mean that a site is not considered suitable for allocation, but it may inform any measures that need to be in place to try and overcome any concerns. For example, this could be in terms of access arrangements or landscaping to provide privacy.

### **What happens next?**

The council intends to publish a final Local Plan for public consultation in summer 2018, which will include Gypsy and Traveller site allocations. After this, the Planning Team will make any changes to the plan resulting from the consultation, and then send the Local Plan in to the government, who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to hold a Public Examination of the plan, which will consider any objections. Everyone who makes an objection has the right to appear at the Public Examination. The Inspector will then make recommendations for the Council to consider.

If sites are allocated, they will still have to go through the planning application process to determine the detailed aspects of development such as design, highways access and landscaping before development can commence.

### **What happens if planning permission is sought for other sites?**

Allocating sites to meet the identified needs does not mean that planning permission cannot be sought on other unallocated sites. The Local Plan has a policy which sets criteria for making decisions in cases where an unanticipated need for a site arises and a planning application is submitted for a Gypsy or Traveller site on land that is not allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. This is less likely to happen if enough sites are allocated and a reserved site is set aside.

## **Member Involvement**

All members will be individually consulted as part of the public consultation, and details of any consultation events such as drop-in sessions and exhibitions will be published on the council's website [www.chesterfield.gov.uk](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk) along with the plan and the evidence that has been prepared to support it.

Work on the Local Plan is guided by the Local Plan Steering Group (LPSG), a non-decision making, cross party group of elected members that oversees the progress of the Local Plan and work on key sites and supports and promotes implementation of adopted plans. Formal decisions are made by the Executive Member for Planning, Planning Committee, Cabinet and Full Council.

Core membership of the LPSG is James Drury (Executive Director), Alan Morey (Strategic Planning and Key Sites Manager), Planning Officers, Cllr Terry Gilby (Executive Member for Planning), Cllr Britton (Chair of Planning Committee) and one opposition member from each party, currently Cllr Peter Barr and Cllr Richard Bexton.

Councillors represented on the LPSG should feedback information on the progress of the Local Plan to their respective parties, and Members may be invited to attend the LPSG where a significant or controversial issue arises.

## **Further Information**

For further information you can contact the Strategic Planning and Key Sites Team

[Lauren.Dempsey@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:Lauren.Dempsey@chesterfield.gov.uk) Principal Planner (Job Share Weds-Fri)  
01246 345793

[Anthony.Wallace@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.Wallace@chesterfield.gov.uk) Principal Planner (Job Share Mon-Weds)  
01246 345954

[Alan.Morey@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Morey@chesterfield.gov.uk) Strategic Planning and Key Sites Manager –  
01246 345371