

No. 13

The Travelling Community

(January 2011)



Core Strategy Background Paper No.13

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1. Policy Background

- 1.1 Since 1960, three Acts of Parliament have had a major impact on Gypsies and Travellers
- Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960;
 - Caravan Sites Act 1968 (Part II); and the
 - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- 1.2 The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act abolished all statutory obligations to provide accommodation, discontinued Government grants for sites and made it a criminal offence to camp on land without the owner's consent.
- 1.3 The 1994 Act resulted in increased pressure on available sites. It eventually resulted in further reviews of law and policy, culminating in the Housing Act 2004 which placed a requirement (s.225) on local authorities to assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.

2. Core Strategy

- 2.1 Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy sets out the approach to identifying and permitting authorised sites for the Travelling Community, including criteria for locating a site for allocation in the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

3. Assessing Local Need

- 3.1 Research was commissioned by local authorities in the North Yorkshire Sub-region to inform the development of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Strategy at district level which in turn will inform Local Housing and Homelessness Strategies, Supporting People Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The research was carried out by arc4 in partnership with the Northern Network of Travelling People.
- 3.2 Using the CLG-approved model for calculating pitch requirements, the research has demonstrated that across the North Yorkshire Sub-region, there is a projected need of 55 pitches allowing for household formation and the turnover of pitches. In Selby District this was shown as a current shortfall of 26 pitches, with a projected need to 2015 of 9 pitches. Further, the report demonstrated an anecdotal need for Showpersons' quarters in Selby and York areas.

4. Analysis of the arc⁴ report

- 4.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 27 July 2010 the Councillors agreed to receive the Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) report by consultants arc⁴ as a indicative starting point and have therefore taken into account both

historic and local considerations.

- 4.2 It was noted that there is a distinction between a *need* and a *desire* for new pitches and so that removing the desire element, the Council considers that the demonstrated need in Selby district is for 7 pitches, as follows (from arc⁴ summary):

Source	Number	Total
Household growth prediction	3+9	= 12
Minus households moving in to houses	-15	= -3
Plus Unauthorised encampments needing pitches	8	= 5
Plus Unauthorised developments needing pitches	2	= 7

- 4.3 This broadly accords with the arc⁴ report findings of a projected need for 9 pitches up to 2015. However to allow for growth, a site for 10 pitches should be identified to maintain a supply up to 2016 when the need situation could be monitored.
- 4.4 Similarly, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to receive the Showmen report by arc⁴, but concluded that there is no local or historic demonstrated need for a permanent site for showmen in Selby District and therefore no provision for this use is to be included in the Local Development Framework documents.

5. Gypsy Site Requirements

- 5.1 In consulting with the Gypsy community, the aspirational requirements of a suitable site were found to be a site within easy reach of the main road network (A1(M), A19, M62, A62 and A64) that dissects the District. A preference for sites in the open countryside or Green Belt areas was expressed.
- 5.2 Further, a site screened/concealed from the road, requiring an amenity building, sanitary and refuse disposal facilities, secure storage areas, a small garden, grazing for horses, and parking for several caravans and towing vehicles.
- 5.3 In terms of the size of a site, there is no one-size-fits-all solution and so there is no national guidance to dictate the size of site required. However, Colchester Borough Council cite the *Good Practice Guide on Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites* (DCLG May 2008) where it gives the Severalls Lane site in Colchester as a case study in good design. It features 12 pitches in 2.57 hectares, but with a built area of around 7500sqm and a substantial amount of landscaping. The 7500sqm built area also features a large central communal play area around which the pitches are arranged.
- 5.4 Colchester Borough Council conclude that each pitch measures around

500sqm having taken in to account the specifics of that site, and have used that figure in allocating further sites in their Site Allocations DPD. Colchester Borough Council's approach has been found sound at an Examination in Public held on 23 March-20 April 2010. Therefore the same approach to estimating the amount of land required could be used in Selby.

6. Finding a suitable site

- 6.1 The Council has consulted with the travelling community, considered national guidance and local circumstances, and developed a justified methodology for searching for a suitable site.
- 6.2 The methodology for selecting sites is set out below:
1. Discount sites in Flood Zone 3
 2. Discount sites in the Green Belt
 3. Remove land within the Limits to Development of Selby Town, Local Service Centres, and the Designated Service Villages, as it is likely to be suitable for market housing, and as such will have too high a land value
 4. The travelling community require a site along the main road network of the A1(M), M62, A64, A63, and A19 to facilitate their travelling needs. The main roads also have bus services that could assist site users, and so it is considered that a 'site search corridor' should be created along these main roads. Walking distance to bus stops should be 300-400m as set out in *Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Developments* (March 1999) published by the Institute of Highways and Transportation. The 400m figure is more appropriate in rural areas and has therefore been used in this methodology.
 5. Sites should be within reasonable walking distance of a village to allow site users to make the best use of the existing facilities. Walking distance is defined as 2km in paragraph 75 of *Planning Policy Statement 13: Transport*. Therefore sites beyond 2km of Selby Town, the Local Service Centres and the Designated Service Villages have been discounted.