

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

**TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT
DUTY TO COOPERATE STATEMENT**

Winchester City Council

July 2017



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) places a legal duty on local planning authorities, County Councils and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plan.
- 1.2 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the actions taken regarding the Duty to Cooperate in relation to Traveller Development Plan Document from its commencement in 2016.

2 Duty to Cooperate Actions 2016 - July 2017

Introduction

- 2.1 Cross-boundary working has been embedded in the formulation of the Draft DPD from the outset. In that respect, the City Council has engaged positively with neighbouring authorities through the commissioning of key studies that contribute to the evidence base.

Evidence

Peter Brett Associates (PBA) - Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study

- 2.2 PBA were appointed in 2015 on behalf of the following authorities

- East Hampshire District Council,
- South Downs National Park Authority and
- Winchester City Council

to advise the Councils on delivery of pitches and plots to meet the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers. The study identified and assessed potential sites to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers that were identified at the time by the Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire, published by Forest Bus in 2013. The methodology for the PBA study is set out in full in the report. In summary, all authorised and unauthorised sites were assessed together with those in public ownership (Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council), plus any other potential sites identified at that stage. Each site was screened in terms of physical and landscape constraints and assessed with regard to suitability and availability. The results of this report were published in July 2016.

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/files/27968/190716-G-T-Site-Assessment-Study-FINAL-Reduced-size-.pdf>

- 2.3 The final PBA report was the culmination of a significant period of sustained cooperation between the authorities which included regular meetings and collaborative working.
- 2.4 Since publication of the report and initial preparation of the DPD, both Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council as land owners, have confirmed that their sites are not available for consideration as gypsy and traveller sites, as these sites need to be retained for other operational or policy purposes.

The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment - Opinion Research Services (ORS)

- 2.5 More recently, ORS were appointed in 2016, in partnership with a number of Hampshire authorities to undertake a comprehensive accommodation needs assessment of gypsies and travellers in the authorities' areas, including Winchester District. The partnership authorities were;
- Winchester City Council
 - Fareham Borough Council
 - Gosport Borough Council
 - Havant Borough Council
 - New Forest District Council
 - New Forest National Park
 - Test Valley Borough Council
- 2.6 The resulting Winchester GTAA covered the whole area of the District as a housing authority, this however differs to the planning authority which excludes the area covered by the South Downs National Park. The results for the National Park Authority's area have been forwarded to them (and excluded from Winchester's needs) as they are in the process of preparing a whole Park Local Plan, to include traveller sites.
- 2.7 The production of the ORS report required a sustained period of collaborative working with six neighbouring local authorities culminating in the publication of the Winchester GTAA in October 2016 and the combined authorities' final report in March 2017. The final report was presented to the elected members of the partner authorities by ORS on the 11 May 2017, which included a question and answer session.
- 2.8 A summary of the report can be viewed at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/gypsy-and-traveller-development-plan/>

Preparation of the Draft Traveller Development Plan Document

- 2.9 Formal preparation of the Traveller DPD commenced with the publication of a notice on 28 October until 12 December 2016, to seek comments on the scope and content of the DPD in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This 'commencement notice' also included a further 'call for sites'. All adjoining local authorities and relevant public bodies were consulted on the commencement notice.

- 2.10 An 'options' consultation was undertaken from late March to early May 2017. The focus was to explore the options and key matters to be taken into account when identifying sites, which are suitable and available for traveller purposes.
- 2.11 On the 2 May 2017 the Council hosted a meeting with 6 neighbouring authorities in order to discuss cross-boundary issues relating to gypsy and travellers and travelling showpeople. This included representatives from Havant Borough Council, the South Downs National Park, East Hampshire District Council, Test Valley Borough Council, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, and Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 2.12 At that meeting neighbouring authorities were briefed regarding Winchester's approach to travellers in the context of relevant Local Plan policies (Parts 1 and 2), the results of the finalised GTAA and on the emerging DPD. The Council also indicated that, based on the work on the DPD so far, it was likely that it would need to make a formal request as to whether neighbouring local authorities have sites at could meet any shortfall in travelling showperson's sites in Winchester.
- 2.13 In the light of the evidence studies, the Council's strategy for travellers' accommodation set out in the Draft DPD is based on the conclusion that the supply of additional pitches and plots to meet the identified need is likely to be confined to those that are in existence, with only one additional (gypsy and traveller) site being submitted through the call for sites. The DPD's strategy proposes the following sources of pitches/plots
- Safeguarding existing permitted and vacant sites
 - Granting permanent permission on sites which currently have temporary consent
 - Making proposals to promote additional travelling showpersons' plots on several specific sites
- 2.14 Whilst the strategy set out in the Draft DPD demonstrates that the need for 15 gypsy and traveller pitches will be met, there will still be a shortfall of about 3 travelling showperson's plots. Despite several 'calls for sites', no further potential sites are available for travelling showpersons' use. In this context, the Council has resolved to formally request whether neighbouring authorities are able to help meet that need on sites in their areas. This will be done as part of the formal consultation on the Draft DPD.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 The Council will continue to engage constructively and actively as necessary with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary issues arising from the Draft Traveller DPD.