Cornwall Local Plan

Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Public Consultation on the Proposed Scope of the Document

Cornwall Council
April 2016
Have Your Say

The Council intends to prepare a Development Plan Document (DPD) identifying sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travelling Communities in Cornwall. This DPD will be called the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will guide how we deal with planning applications for such sites.

At this stage we want to hear what you think about what we think the DPD should cover. Questions you might wish to cover in a response could include:

- Will the proposed scope and content of the DPD address the planning needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities?
- Is there anything else that you think the DPD should cover?
- Is there anything proposed that you think should not be included?
- Are there any other specific areas of concern that we should be aware of?
- Are there any specific locations or areas in Cornwall that would benefit from additional provision?

Please give reasons for your views.

These questions are only meant as a guide, so please feel free to comment on any aspect of the scoping report.

We would be grateful if you could provide any comments on this scoping report by 5p.m. Monday 6th June 2016.

We would encourage comments to be submitted to Cornwall Council via our e-mail address at localplan@cornwall.gov.uk using ‘Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD’ as your subject.

If you are not able to respond via e-mail please send your comments to:

Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD Scoping Consultation
Local Planning Team
Cornwall Council
Carrick House
Pydar Street
Truro
TR1 1EB
1. **Summary**

1.1 Cornwall Council intends to prepare a Development Plan Document to identify sites for Gypsy and Traveller Communities. This will be part of the Local Plan for Cornwall and be the basis for planning decisions.

1.2 This consultation seeks your views on the proposed content and purpose of the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). However, this will not be the only opportunity to have your say – we will be consulting the public and key stakeholders on the detail and proposed sites in the DPD before we submit it to the Secretary of State.

1.3 It is intended that the DPD will cover the whole of Cornwall and identify a range of residential, transit and Showpeople sites necessary to meet the needs identified in the Local Plan: Strategic Policies and to identify small sites as emergency stopping places. Site facilities and design will also be considered.

1.4 This ‘Scoping document’ marks the formal start of the process of preparing the Allocations Plan.
2. **Background**

2.1 **Purpose of this ‘Scoping’ document**

2.1.1 The scoping document is the first formal stage in the preparation of the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). Its main purpose is to seek views on what the DPD should contain and it explains the role of the DPD, the Council’s initial thoughts on its overall approach to meeting different needs and how the DPD relates to the Local Plan: Strategic Policies document.

2.1 **Status of a Development Plan Document (DPD)**

2.2.1 Development Plan Documents are statutory planning documents that form part of the local authority’s development plan. They are used as the basis to determine planning applications. All DPDs are examined by an independent Planning Inspector at an Examination in Public before they can be adopted by the Council.

2.2.2 The Council’s Local Plan: Strategic Policies document sets out the broad policies and strategy for Cornwall. Subsequent DPDs will provide more detailed policy and, in the case of this DPD, identify sites and support the implementation of Local Plan Policy 2a and Policy 12 for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

2.2.3 Planning decisions will need to be in line with the policies and sites in the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD unless other significant ‘material considerations’ such as new evidence of need outweigh them.

Figure 1 shows the various documents that make up the development (local) plan for Cornwall:
2.3 Why prepare a Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD?

2.3.1 Cornwall Council identified a number of objectives in its Gypsy and Travelling Communities Strategy including providing a framework which allows the:

- Provision of a choice of sufficient, suitable and secure residential and transit accommodation opportunities in the right place across Cornwall;
- Reduction in unauthorised encampments and developments;
• Recognition, and protection of the traditional way of life of travelling communities;
• Integration, inclusion and peaceful coexistence of travelling communities with the settled community;
• Improved access by travelling communities to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision; and
• Improved education, health and wellbeing of travelling communities.

2.3.2 The Local Plan and this DPD will be a key delivery mechanism for sites. Furthermore, the Plan must plan to meet identified need, in the case of this DPD, for sites for gypsy and traveller communities. Annual caravan count surveys\(^v\) and recent studies\(^v\) show that the delivery of sites is not likely to meet the demand unless sites are identified through the DPD process.

**Residential Sites**

2.3.3 Cornwall contains a number of authorised as well as unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller sites. Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites tend to be based on traditional patterns of movement and many of these are concentrated around the St Austell/China Clay and the Redruth areas as shown in the map below.

2.3.4 In terms of residential pitches, there are currently (as at January 2016) 249 pitches/426 caravans with planning permission in Cornwall. Residential pitches can be found on both social and privately owned sites. The most recent DCLG caravan count (July 2015 – counts actual caravans on sites) identified 271 caravans on authorised residential sites in Cornwall, 11 caravans on 2 tolerated sites and 37 caravans on 10 unauthorised sites.
2.3.5 Current evidence vi shows that there is a significant need for additional residential pitches in four broad areas (see appendix 1) of Cornwall and much of this additional need arises from family formation, i.e. children of current Traveller families wishing to set up their own homes. The traditional travelling routes of Gypsies and Travellers have led to a concentration of sites in specific areas of Cornwall as indicated on the map above. Evidence for the four areas shows:

- **West Cornwall** - has the strongest demand with a current pitch requirement of 103, and a future need of 87, bringing the total pitch requirement to 190 by 2030;
- **Mid Cornwall** - current demand equates to 31 pitches and future demand is considerably higher at 82. This is because of the high proportion of family formation, bringing the total pitch requirement to 113 by 2030;
- **East Cornwall** - current demand equates to five pitches and future demand to 9, bringing the total to 14 pitches by 2030;
- **North Cornwall** – there is no identified need in the North arising from the data available although this does not necessarily mean that there is no demand for residential provision in North Cornwall.

2.3.6 As a consequence, the Local Plan: Strategic Policies document proposes a requirement for an additional 318 residential pitches between 2015 and 2030. Since this need was identified, permission has been granted for 13 private pitches.

**Transit Pitches and Emergency Stopping Places**

2.3.7 Our most recent study (2015) vii showed a need for about 60 transit pitches across Cornwall by 2030. Ideally these should be delivered on at least 4 sites (usually of 10 - 15 pitches each) located across Cornwall with at least one transit site in each of the four geographic areas set out in Appendix 1. These sites are used by Travellers for stays of up to 3 months.

2.3.8 Transit pitches will become available on a recent planning permission (since the 2015 study) for a public site for 15 pitches at South Treviddo, near Liskeard (currently unimplemented). Permission exists for 2 private sites – one near Looe (with planning permission, but unimplemented) and one near St Blazey (completed). The most recent caravan count (July 2015) identified 10 caravans on the residential element of the St Blazey site and no caravans on the transit part of the site.

2.3.9 In addition, there is also the need for a number of locations for Travellers to use as emergency stopping places when enforcement action is required.
Travelling Showpeople Plots

2.3.10 In terms of Travelling Showpeople sites in Cornwall there are two sites at Porthtowan and St Blazey. The most recent caravan count (January 2015 - not counted in the summer months as generally Showpeople are travelling at this time) identified 8 caravans between the 2 sites.

2.3.11 Evidence would suggest that there is some need for additional Travelling Showpeople pitches in Cornwall and the Local Plan proposes an additional 11 plots by 2030. Permission has since been granted for 3 Travelling Showpeople plots at Helstone near Camelford reducing need to 8 plots by 2030.

Health & Social Impacts of a Lack of Suitable Sites

2.3.12 Gypsies and Travellers are believed to experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England, and research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for Gypsies and Travellers and poor health and education. The key to addressing these issues is the provision of suitable well managed permanent and transit sites in appropriate locations to meet existing and future needs of Gypsies and Travellers for decent homes. Site facilities and site design will form part of this consideration and may result in the DPD identifying certain standards of provision on allocated sites.

Conclusions and Priorities for DPD

2.3.13 The purpose of this DPD is therefore to identify suitable and deliverable sites for the development of residential, transit and travelling Showpeople as required in appropriate locations to meet Travellers’ needs. This will facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of Travellers whilst respecting the interests of the settled community and will promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between sites and the local settled community.

2.3.14 In terms of anticipated priorities for the DPD it is considered that:
- There is a particular shortage of and a need for transit sites and emergency stopping places;
- There is also a recognised requirement for additional public sites to meet the needs of Travelling communities in addition to the three already provided and particularly to meet the needs of different Traveller groups;
- There is an ongoing requirement to provide private sites to meet the expanding needs of current Gypsy and Traveller families in Cornwall.

2.4 DPD Preparation and Timescale

2.4.1 The DPD will be prepared by the Strategy, Economy, Enterprise and Environment Service of Cornwall Council in liaison with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer. Key stakeholder bodies and particularly TravellerSpace will be engaged at all stages in the process of developing this DPD. The Council will also collaborate with neighbouring authorities to identify sites in their Plans that have the potential to meet the needs of Travellers leaving the immediate Cornwall area.
2.4.2 An up to date evidence base supports the Gypsy and Traveller Policy in the Local Plan: Strategic Policies document and will also be used for this DPD - these are listed at the end of this document.

2.4.3 The anticipated timetable for the production of the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD is set out below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Anticipated Timescale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult on the scope of the DPD</td>
<td>6 weeks (Spring 2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consult on draft DPD</td>
<td>6 weeks (Winter 2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission to Secretary of State</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination of DPD</td>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoption of DPD</td>
<td>Autumn 2017</td>
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2.4.4 In addition to the key stages identified above, the Council will seek continuous engagement with key stakeholders through the development of the DPD, including through active engagement with specific Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople groups and representatives, relevant agencies and delivery stakeholders, and the wider community. Local Travelling Communities will be encouraged to identify suitable sites for consideration.
3 Scope of the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD

3.1 Geographic coverage and content of the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD

3.1.1 The Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD will cover the whole of Cornwall.

3.1.2 It is proposed that the DPD will identify a range of residential, transit and Travelling Showpeople sites as required to ensure the availability of sites that meet the needs identified in the Local Plan: Strategic Policies document over the Local Plan period and to identify small sites for emergency stopping places.

3.1.3 The Local Plan Strategic Policies document (Policy 2a) sets out pitch requirements over the plan period and (Policy 12) criteria for assessing planning applications for Traveller sites.

3.1.4 Given the level of need identified in paragraphs 2.3.5, 2.3.8 and 2.3.10, the particular focus of this DPD will be on additional public residential sites, transit sites and emergency stopping places.

3.1.5 The DPD will therefore aim to identify specific sites for development for Traveller accommodation, and will provide guidance on site facilities and site design.

3.2 What the Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD will not cover

3.3.1 The Gypsy and Travelling Communities Site Allocations DPD purely covers accommodation need and as such do not include wider aspects of welfare. This does not preclude other welfare aspects being considered and included in the delivery of specific sites identified in the DPD.
4 Planning Context

4.1 National Planning Context

4.1.1 National ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ sets out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites and should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework. The 2007 DCLG guidance provides advice on carrying out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to assess the need of Gypsies and Travellers and to provide strategies to deliver these needs, and although changes have been proposed in the emerging Housing and Planning Bill, authorities will still have a requirement to assess Gypsy and Travellers accommodation needs.

4.2 Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies

4.2.1 Cornwall Council is developing a Local Plan with the submission of the Strategic Policies document in February 2015. Hearings were held in May 2015, and one of the Inspector’s findings was that more evidence was required in the assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Cornwall.

4.2.2 A study to address the Local Plan Inspector’s concerns was commissioned in August 2015. The purpose of this new assessment was to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) primarily in terms of residential sites for the period 2015 to 2030 but also to consider the requirement for transit provision.

4.2.3 Proposed Policy 2a of the Strategic Policies document (as at January 2016) sets out the overall accommodation needs targets for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Cornwall. Generic policy for the consideration of site applications for all types of pitches is set out in Policy 12.
Cornwall Council (2016) Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies (proposed version as at January 2016)

Cornwall Council (2014) Gypsy and Travelling Communities Strategy

The Council’s Gypsy and Travelling Communities’ Strategy was published before recent Government guidance was issued and may require some adjustment as a result.

DCLG (various) Caravan Count


DCLG (2015) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites


DCLG (2007) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Assessments: Guidance Please note that this guidance is still live on the DCLG website (as at 01/12/2015) although is not referred to in the latest Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The Housing and Planning Bill currently going through Government is proposing changes to the ways in which the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are assessed and the status of this document may change once this document becomes legislation.

HMSO (2004) The Housing Act


Cornwall Council (2016) Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies (proposed version as at January 2016)