

## South Norfolk Council

### Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) Public Consultation, March-April 2009

- 1.1 Current Government guidance requires the Council to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers in its Local Development Framework (LDF) – (see Appendix 3 LDS extract). The Council has decided to do this by preparing a Development Plan Document (DPD), which is part of the LDF.
- 1.2 The following definition of Gypsies and Travellers, taken from current Government advice, has been adopted for this DPD:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ housing, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people traveling together as such.”
- 1.3 The selection of the sites suggested in this document has taken into account the concerns and comments made in earlier rounds of participation. For example, this document contains details of the high standards of site design and layout that will be expected together with details on how sites will be managed.
- 1.4 This document seeks the views of the public and agencies on appropriate locations for permanent Gypsies and Travellers sites. It is important to remember that this document is proposing which sites the Council considers to warrant further investigation. It is equally important for you to tell the Council of any evidence or views you may have on any of the sites listed. This will help the Council make its decision on which sites should be proposed as site allocations in the next version of this document.
- 1.5 **Because the current consultation involves revised criteria and additional sites, you must resubmit new comments, previous comments cannot be “carried forward” to this consultation.**

## **2 The reasons for this consultation**

- 2.3 The Council’s recent consultation on preferred locations for Gypsies and Travellers sites, in late 2008, generated a large number of comments, and some additional suggestions for sites, from landowners and public.
- 2.4 In response to those comments, in December 2008, Cabinet withdrew the previous consultation, and agreed revised criteria for assessing

potential Gypsies and Travellers sites. A Working Group of Councillors has been using the revised criteria to assess potential sites which had been suggested during the recent consultation, and to re-assess sites previously considered.

- 2.5 Cabinet on 19 December 2009 also agreed that the future preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD will include two stages of public consultation. The current consultation is the first of these two stages, and is taking place under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (LDF Regs). The results of this consultation will feed into a further consultation on the Council's "proposed submission documents" in July and August 2009, followed by submission of the DPD to Government for independent examination and then approval, in late 2009.

The reasons this DPD is needed can be summarised as:

- Required by Government – the RSS single issue review has set South Norfolk a target of providing 28 pitches to accommodate the need identified for the period 2006 to 2011.
- Promotes a planned approach
- Better balance of interests of travelling and settled communities
- Better opportunities to obtain Government grants
- Promotes effective management of sites
- Better outcomes in terms of health and education for the travelling community
- Provides sites to meet needs
- Allows for effective enforcement of unauthorised sites
- Better than alternatives (continued unauthorised sites, costly enforcement, delays, cost falling on Council Tax,
- Avoids Government exercising its powers to impose sites on the Council (these powers allow the Government to pay for such work from South Norfolk Council Tax)

### **3. How does this relate to previous consultations?**

- 3.1 This consultation aims to apply lessons learned during the recent consultation in late 2008, as a result of public comments. These lessons can be summarised as:

- The previous version of the draft DPD did not fully explain all the steps taken during the site identification and selection phase, which in turn questions its soundness.
  - The previous version of the draft DPD did not adequately address the need for high standards of site design and management.
  - Concerns at how the availability of the site was taken account of in the selection process
- 3.2 In effect, the current consultation is a continuation of the 2007 “Issues and Options” consultation, but with a greater emphasis on the choice of sites. The Council does not propose to revisit parts of “Issues and Options” which are based on sound evidence – particularly limiting the search for sites to “corridors” near main routes, and seeking small sites of 6-8 pitches each. These have been included in the revised criteria for assessment of potential sites.
- 3.3 We have revised the criteria for assessing sites, giving greater priority to the factors considered to be “essential”, this includes the protection of residential amenities. This document shows how we have applied a more systematic assessment to all potential sites. It also includes more information on how sites will be developed and managed. It will take place under less formal rules than the recent consultation, and it will be easier to submit comments.
- We have addressed the issues on site management and design, providing more detail on these matters.
- 3.4 **Because the current consultation involves revised criteria and additional sites, you must resubmit new comments, previous comments cannot be “carried forward” to this consultation.** Comments received during previous consultation can be found on the Council’s website.

#### **4 How many sites are needed, and where?**

- 4.1 Needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation are counted in numbers of “pitches”. A “pitch” would accommodate a single family.
- 4.2 In 2006, the Council carried out a survey of needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (see Appendix 4). This showed that Gypsies and Travellers need accommodation in “corridors” near main roads – the A11, A47, and A143/A1066, which are the main locations of unauthorised encampments. In addition, there is a need for temporary stopping places on main roads, with up to four pitches each.
- 4.3 Our needs survey contributed to the assessment of regional accommodation needs which amounts to over 1000 pitches across the East of England region. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy requires a

total of 28 pitches on new permanent sites to be provided in South Norfolk, in the period 2006 to 2011.

- 4.4 It is not clear if part of this need has already been met by planning permissions for private permanent Gypsies and Travellers sites granted since the “base date” of the regional strategy for Gypsies and Travellers sites (RSS), which is 2006. To date the Council has not included private sites that have been developed since 2006, although it has taken account of a site that is under development at Harford. This site is being developed and will be managed by Broadland Housing Association and will be filled by nominations from travellers who are on the Council’s housing waiting list. It is important to remember that the requirement for 28 pitches is a minimum number to be accommodated. We are seeking advice from GO-East to see whether private sites contribute to the overall requirement of 28 pitches.
- 4.5 We are also proposing a potential transit site, to provide temporary stopping places, and help with meeting the need for transit pitches across Norfolk.

**5 How have we assessed potential sites?**

- 5.1 Current Government advice requires the Council to seek out and evaluate possible locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites. 82 potential sites have been considered. This includes all sites previously considered, including land owned by the Council, together with new sites suggested by interested parties as part of the previous consultation.
- 5.2 This document is intended to provide a transparent and consistent approach to the assessment of potential sites, using the revised criteria agreed by Cabinet.

The revised selection criteria for Gypsy and Traveller sites – as approved by Cabinet after 19 December 2008.

<b>Essential</b>	
<p><b>Factors to avoid</b> (in accordance with Government guidance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid environmentally-sensitive sites with national status, where the natural or built environment and cultural features (including archaeology) are recognised as requiring protection from</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable access by local road network to/from major route “corridor” (A.11,A.47, A143/A1066)</li> <li>• At highway access point, having regard to limited traffic generation, appropriate layout/visibility can be provided without significant</li> </ul>

<p>development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid areas which planning aims to protect from development, including areas of flood risk, and contaminated land</li> <li>• Avoid sites where there is more than minimal effect on visual and residential amenities of adjoining dwellings</li> </ul>	<p>loss of natural screening</p>
<p><b>Desirable</b></p>	
<p><b>Factors to avoid:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid significant intrusion in the landscape</li> <li>• Avoid sites where the wellbeing of site occupiers would be adversely affected by environmental factors</li> <li>• New sites should not be too close to existing approved sites</li> <li>• Avoid land with local designations (for example nature conservation)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good natural or potential screening, of area required for number of pitches (i.e. not part of larger open area)</li> <li>• Of sufficient size to meet the on-site needs of occupiers of the number of pitches proposed, having regard to current national standards for site design and management</li> <li>• Have access to social and community facilities)</li> <li>• Having available utility services</li> </ul>

5.3 The previous consultation did not fully explain the process previously used by the Council to narrow down the choice of sites, which involved slightly different criteria scoring methods at successive stages of considering potential sites.

5.4 The assessment used the following method:

- The members of the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group made site visits to all sites that were considered to have potential.
- Each site was scored on essential and desirable factors (on the 1 to 4 scale, with 1 being the lowest, 4 the highest).
- Sites with a score of 1 or 2 in the essential categories did not proceed to the next stage.
- Sites scoring 3 or 4 in the essential categories were evaluated for the desirable factors, and an average score of all factors was calculated.
- The sites were sorted into the three road corridors (A11, A47 and A143/A1066).
- Members' scores were averaged and the three highest scoring are considered to warrant detailed investigation as to their suitability for gypsies and travellers sites. The following sites for further

investigation are as follows (it is important to note these are not listed in order of priority):

A47 Corridor –

- (i) Land at Station Lane, Ketteringham
- (ii) the former MoD Fuel depot, Station Lane Ketteringham
- (iii) land at the Thickthorn A47/A11 interchange, suitable as a transit site

A143/A1066 Corridor –

- (i) Land south of Scole Road, Brockdish
- (ii) Land north of Old Harleston Road Earsham
- (iii) Coach Depot, Old Harleston Road, Earsham

A11 Corridor –

- (i) Land at Station Road S of A11, Spooner Row
- (ii) Land at Chepore Lane, Sutton
- (iii) Land west of Stanfield oil depot.

These investigations will inform the Council's decision as to which site to allocate in each corridor for a site for Gypsies and Travellers. (See appendix 5 for the full list of sites and scores).

- 5.6 The following section of this document gives further details of nine sites that achieved a high score in the assessment. We are particularly seeking your views on which of these higher-scoring sites should be chosen in each corridor, to go forward to the next stage of consultation in Autumn 2009.
- 5.7 We propose that the other sites - those with a score of 2 or lower in the assessment - should not be considered further at this stage. Consequently, no sites are ruled out at this stage.

## **6 Details of higher-scoring sites (see appendix 2 for site plans)**

- 6.7 We are seeking views on the following potential locations for **one** site of 6-8 permanent pitches in the A143/A1066 corridor:

- Land south of Scole Road, Brockdish
- Land north Old Harleston Road Earsham

- Coach Depot, Old Harleston Road, Earsham

Q	Which location do you prefer in the A143/A1066 corridor?
---	--

6.8 We are seeking views on the following potential locations for **one** site of 6-8 permanent pitches in the A11 corridor:

- Land at Station Road S of A11, Spooner Row
- Land at Chepore Lane, Suton
- Land west of Stanfield oil depot

Q	Which location do you prefer in the A11 corridor?
---	---

6.9 We are seeking views on the following potential locations for **one** site of 6-8 permanent pitches in the A47 corridor:

- Land at Station Lane, Ketteringham
- the former MoD Fuel depot, Station Lane Ketteringham

Q	Which location do you prefer in the A47 corridor?
---	---

6.10 We are seeking views on one potential location for a transit site of up to 4 pitches.

- land at the Thickthorn A47/A11 interchange, suitable as a transit site

Q	What are your views about a transit site at this location?
---	--

## 7 How will the proposed sites be developed and managed?

7.1 The Council aims to obtain Government grants which are available to cover 100% of the costs of acquiring and developing the land, to avoid these costs falling on the Council Tax.

7.2 The design of new permanent sites will follow Government advice published in “Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide” – see Appendix 6. These guidelines have been used for the site recently granted planning permission at Harford.

7.3 The boundary of the whole site, and each pitch will be fenced. On the site boundary, if existing natural screening needs to be supplemented by earth bunds or additional screen planting this will be provided. Each pitch will include a small amenity block – about the size of a small bungalow – and hard-standings for caravans and vehicles. The site access will be

constructed to the specification of the Highways Authority, to achieve suitable visibility and to avoid water or surfacing materials spreading onto the highway.

- 7.4 Any plan which is allocated in the final version of this DPD will also require planning permission, with the normal opportunity for the local community to make comments.
- 7.5 For a typical site plan of a permanent site, see Appendix 8.
- 7.6 The Council expects that any permanent site should be self-contained, and should not expand onto nearby land. Any subsequent proposals to expand a site would be considered under the proposed policy in section xx below, which rules out locations which are close to an existing authorised site.
- 7.7 Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Sites will be managed in accordance with the draft Government guidance – see Appendix 7.
- 7.8 The Council intends that permanent pitches will be managed by a Registered Social Landlord. There would be a tenancy agreement, dealing with acceptable behaviour and activities, restraining anti-social behaviour and the maximum number of caravans and vehicles on each pitch. In other locations, for example, this has been achieved by having a lead tenant on site who is responsible for day-to-day management .
- 7.9 There would usually be an area near the site entrance to accommodate visitor's vehicles.
- 7.10 South Norfolk Council will allocate tenancies for pitches on new permanent sites, and the Council has already established a "waiting list". Prospective tenants will be required to provide references, in the same way as applicants for social housing.
- 7.11 Tenancies will be enforced by the Housing Association, as with their other tenants in conventional housing. Occupiers will be expected to pay rent and Council Tax.
- 7.12 These national standards of design and management will be expected from applicants for planning permission for private sites. Such applications will be determined against the criteria in the proposed development control policy in section 9 of this document.

## **8 Relationship to other plans**

- 8.1 In the normal course of events a DPD such as this would follow behind the preparation and adoption of a Core Strategy. A Core Strategy is the broad framework of policies that explain how the District will develop over the next 15 years, setting out areas for development. South Norfolk is preparing a Joint Core Strategy with Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council. The need to find sites means the Council cannot wait for the Joint Core

Strategy process to be completed accommodation for travelling show people is being considered as part of the Joint Core Strategy.

- 8.2 The need for 28 pitches has been confirmed in the Regional Spatial Strategy's "single issue review" of Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England. This strategy was examined by a Panel of the Planning Inspectorate in October 2008, and the Panel's report has now been published.
- 8.3 The Panel also accepted that planning for the period after 2011 should be based on fresh surveys of need, rather than annual percentage growth, an approach proposed by this Council and others.
- 8.4 The Panel's report will now be considered by the Government, but the regional framework for the DPD is now much closer to being settled.
- 8.5 This DPD is intended to implement the 3-year goal that is stated in paragraph 3.3 of the Council's adopted Sustainable Community Strategy as: "to have mechanisms in place to deliver new Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet identified needs" and all the Council's current corporate priorities
- 8.6 This DPD also meets many of the objectives of the South Norfolk Alliance's Sustainable Communities Plan. This plan has objectives that, among other things, look to improve health and educational attainment. Allowing travelling families a permanent base allows them to have continuity in education and health services which otherwise might not be available to them.

## 9 Development control

- 9.1 We are suggesting that the DPD should include a policy for assessing any further proposals for Gypsy and Traveller sites, by landowners or private developers, which may be submitted as planning applications during the life of the DPD, up to 2011.

Applications for planning permission for permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites **of up to 8 pitches**, on land other than land allocated for that purpose in a Development Plan Document, will be permitted where the proposal can demonstrate:

- the proposed location is not an environmentally-sensitive site (natural and cultural) which has national status, is not within an area of flood risk and is not on contaminated land.
- Any effect on visual and residential amenities of nearby dwellings and land could be mitigated at acceptable cost.
- The proposed site has suitable access by the local road network.
- At the site's access point to the highway, having regard to limited traffic generation from the development, appropriate layout/visibility can be provided without significant loss of natural screening.

- The development will not be a significant intrusion in the landscape.
- The proposed development would not be too close to existing approved Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- The proposed site has good natural screening by vegetation and/or landform,(including bunding) and is not part of larger open area.
- The proposed site is sufficient in size to meet the on-site needs of occupiers of the number of pitches proposed, having regard to current national standards for site design and management.
- The proposed site has access to social and community facilities (shopping, health services and schools)
- There are reasonable prospects of implementing the proposed development, including the provision of satisfactory foul and surface drainage, water supply and utilities.

When assessing such proposals, the history of any current or previous occupations of the site by Gypsies and Travellers will be taken into account.

Planning applications for permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites whether allocated or otherwise should demonstrate how the proposal will meet current national standards for site design and management, and should contain full details of screening, landscaping, security, mitigation of any other significant impacts, and arrangements for management of the site. Any planning permission will normally be made personal to a responsible person or organisation, such as a registered social landlord.

Q	Do you support the proposed policy to assess planning applications which arise during the life of the DPD?
---	--

## 10 What happens next

- 10.1 The Council will have to consider all the responses made during this consultation. This consideration will include which sites should be allocated in the next version of this DPD. The next version of the document is a more formal stage and is the draft that the Council will submit to the Planning Inspectorate for Public Examination (which is likely to be held late 2009/early 2010).

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Sustainability Appraisal (to be added)
Appendix 2	Site Plans
Appendix 3	South Norfolk Local Development Scheme extract
Appendix 4	2006 Survey of Accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller (to be added)
Appendix 5	Site Scoring Sheets
Appendix 6	Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide (to be added)
Appendix 7	Government Guidance on site Management (to be added)
Appendix 8	Typical site plan of permanent site (to be added)

Appendix 2

Site Plans

Appendix 5      Site Scoring Sheets  
 South Norfolk: potential Gypsy and Traveller sites -  
 initial assessment on essential factors

Ref	Address	Essential Factors (4=best)				
		Avoid environmentally-sensitive sites	Avoid flood zones, contaminated sites	Road network from corridor	Site access visibility	Minimal effect on amenities of adjoining dwellings
<b>2005 search - private land</b>						
	Woodton, Shotesham Road	2	3	2	2	2
	Seething Airfield	4	4	2	4	4
	Chapel Bell	2	2	3	3	1
	Trowse, by A146/Rockland road	3	4	4	4	2
	Harleston, Spirketts Lane	4	4	4	1	4
	Frenze Beck, Diss	1	1	4	4	3
	Stoke-Holy-X, former RAF base	4	4	2	2	1
	Carleton Rode	3	4	2	2	2
	Lower Thurlton	2	2	1	3	2
<b>2005 search - Council-owned</b>						
	Costessey - Roundwell	3	4	3	1	2
	Dickleburgh - Rectory Road	1	4	2	3	1
	Ditchingham - Scudamore Place	4	4	3	3	1
	Gissing - Common Road	4	4	2	3	1
	Harleston - Henry Ward Road	4	4	1	3	1
	Harleston, Rushall Road	4	4	3	1	1

Kimberley, The Green	1	4	1	2	1
Long Stratton, Swan Lane	4	4	1	3	1
Poringland, All Saints Rd	4	4	2	3	1
Poringland, Shotesham Road	4	4	2	4	1
Pulham St Mary, Chestnut Road	4	4	2	4	1
Roydon, Hose Avenue	4	4	3	3	1
Stoke-Holy-X, Five Acres	4	4	3	3	1
Tasburgh, Everson Close	4	4	2	3	1
Thurlton, Links Way	4	4	2	3	1
Woodton, Suckling Place	4	4	2	3	1
Suton, Eleven Mile Lane	4	4	3	1	1
Wymondham, Friarscroft Lane	1	1	3	3	1
<b>2007/8 landowner offers</b>					
Tharston, Wacton Road	3	4	3	1	1
Easton, Marlingford Sports Club	4	4	4	3	1
Newton Greenways rail crossing	4	4	2	3	1
Great Melton, Turnpike Meadow	4	2	3	2	1
Ellingham, Florence Way	4	4	2	4	1
Kewick, W of Keswick Hall	4	4	2	2	1
Bawburgh, Hockering Lane	1	1	2	3	1
Winfarthing, Mill Farm	4	3	3	3	1
<b>2008 search - "long list"</b>					
Caistor St Edmund, Harford Farm	4	4	2	4	4
Colney, S of NCFC training ground	3	4	4	3	1
Colney, W of Hall Farm	3	3	4	2	2
Keswick Intwood Lane, N of A47	4	4	2	2	4
Hethersett, S end of Colney Lane	4	4	3	3	1
West of Hethersett Hall	4	4	3	3	1
Hethersett, Ketts Oak	4	4	3	3	1
Wymondham, N of Stanfield oil depot	2	2	4	2	4

Bressingham - E of Pooley Street	3	3	4	3	1
Harleston Redenhall Rd NW of A143	3	3	4	3	1
Harleston Redenhall Rd SE of A143	3	4	4	3	1
Harleston, Mendham Lane S of A143	4	4	4	2	4
Brockdish, Scole Road SW of Church	4	4	3	3	1
Kirby Cane, Church Road North	4	4	3	2	4
Earsham, Hall Road	4	4	3	2	4
Scole, Billingford, by public house	4	4	4	2	2
Wortwell, High Road	4	4	3	2	2
Denton, Low Farm, by footbridge	4	3	2	3	2
Suton, opposite Turnpike Farm	4	4	4	3	1
Suton Street, opp Sawyers Lane	4	4	2	2	2
Brockdish, S of Scole Road	4	4	4	3	4
Earsham, Old Harleston Road	4	4	4	3	3
Earsham, Coach Depot	4	4	4	3	4
Ketteringham, by A47/A11 junction	4	4	4	3	4
Ketteringham, Station Lane	4	4	3	4	3
Ketteringham, Former Oil Depot	4	4	3	4	3
Spooner Row, Station Road S of A11	4	4	4	3	4
Suton, Chepore Lane	4	4	4	4	3
Spooner Row, Station Road N of A11	4	4	4	4	2
Ketteringham, Cantley Lane South	4	4	4	4	1
Kirby Cane, Church Road South	4	4	4	4	1
<b>2008/9 public/landowner suggestions</b>					
Ellingham, opposite old Station Rd	3	2	4	3	4
Ellingham, west of Wardley Hill Rd	2	2	4	3	1
Haddiscoe Quarry	4	2	3	2	3
Gillingham, south of Hollow Way Hill	2	2	3	3	4
Gillingham, NW of Hill Farm	2	3	2	2	3
Brockdish, Scole Road, east of A143 junction	3	4	2	2	4

Roydon, Tottington Lane	1	3	2	3	3
Diss, Sawmills Road, S of Hamlins	1	2	4	4	3
Brockdish, Kiln Lane, Thorpe Abbots	4	4	1	3	3
Brockdish, Church Road North	4	4	1	3	3
Harleston, Mendham Lane	4	4	3	3	1
Wortwell, Station Farm, N of A143	4	3	1	1	4
Denton, Grove Farm, Middle Road	4	3	1	1	1
Aldeby, former Station yard	4	3	1	3	2
Wymondham, W of Stanfield oil depot	4	4	4	4	4
Wymondham, Lower Spinks Lane	4	4	4	4	4

Sites with score of less than 3, on any essential factor, are not considered further

## South Norfolk Gypsy and Traveller DPD: 2009 shortlisting

Address	Essential Factors (4=best)					Desirable Factors (4=best)								
	Avoid environmentally-sensitive sites	Avoid flood zones, contaminated sites	Road network from corridor	Site access visibility	Minimal effect on amenities of adjoining dwellings	Avoid significant intrusion in landscape	Avoid adverse effect on wellbeing of site occupiers	Not close to existing authorised G&T sites	Avoid land with local designations (e.g. wildlife)	Good natural or potential screening of area required	Sufficient size	Access to social and community facilities	Available utility services	
<b>A47 corridor</b>														
Ketteringham, former oil depot	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	2	1	4	4	
Ketteringham, Station Lane	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	
<b>A11 corridor</b>														
Wymondham, Lower Spinks Lane	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	
Spooner Row, Station Road S of A11	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	
Suton, Chepore Lane	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	
Wymondham, W of Stanfield oil depot	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	2	
<b>A143 corridor</b>														
Brockdish, S of Scole Road	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	2	3	
Earsham, Old Harleston Road	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	
Earsham, Coach Depot	4	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	
<b>Transit site</b>														
Ketteringham, by A47/A11 junction	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	

