

Summary of Findings from the Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report November 2009 (Fordham Research) and Proposed Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation policy for the Core Strategy.

Agenda Item 6

Portfolio Area: Cllr Nigel Harley Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Culture

Report Presented by:

Eleanor Dash

Background Papers:

- Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report November 2009 (Fordham Research)
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
- Accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons in East of England – A Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England July 2009
- Planning Circular 01/2006
- Planning Circular 04/2007

Corporate Implications:

- **Financial** N/a
- **Legal** Housing Act 2004
- Race Relations Act
- **Equalities and Diversity**
Gypsies and Travellers are recognised ethnic groups. Assessing and quantifying the accommodation and housing related needs of Gypsies and Travellers would contribute to promoting equality amongst this ethnic group. The Council has a duty to promote good race relations, equality of opportunity and community cohesion in all of their policies and practises.
- **Customer Impact**
There may be some impact on local residents.
- **Environment and Climate Change**
Environmental and sustainability issues would be addressed as part of any planning application.

Options:

1. To approve the wording of the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpersons policy for the submission draft of Core Strategy.

2. To suggest changes to the wording of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation policy for the submission draft of Core Strategy.

Risks:

Failure to make appropriate provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpersons will lead to the risk of sites being allowed on appeal.

Local Planning Authorities are obliged to set out policies in their Development Plan Documents in accordance with the RSS, failure to do so could lead to the Core Strategy being found unsound.

Executive Summary:

The proposed Core Strategy policy 'Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation' seeks to make provision for additional residential and transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and further provision for Travelling Showpersons in accordance with the Consultant's Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Report.

Decision

Members of the Local Development Framework Panel are recommended to :

- **Approve the Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report November 2009 (Fordham Research) as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base**
- **Approve the wording of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation policy for the submission draft of Core Strategy.**

1 Background

1.1 At the LDF Panel on the 30th September 2009, Members were informed of the Regional Planning Single Issue Review of the Spatial Strategy on the subject of Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation, which set out how many pitches should be provided in each District. In the Braintree District this required 50 authorised pitches for the period up to 2011 and a further provision of 3% per annum for the period to 2021, which was calculated to be a total of 67 pitches. Members were advised that there were already 25

authorised pitches in the District at Sandiacres, Cressing and at Ridgewell. In addition, the Council had agreed in 2008 to take steps to authorise the existing site at Twin Oaks, Stisted which would provide 21 pitches, and 2 further pitches could be provided at the Sandiacres site. This left a balance of 19 pitches to be provided during the period 2011 to 2021 and it was proposed that these should be identified through the Local Development Framework, or Development Control processes.

2 Summary of the Findings from the Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment - Final Report November 2009 (Fordham Research)

2.1 The purpose of the assessment was to assess and quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in terms of residential sites, transit sites and bricks and mortar accommodation. The results of the assessment will be used to inform the allocation of resources and as evidence base for policy development in housing and planning.

2.2 The assessment identified approximately 895 Gypsy and Traveller households in Essex. This was based on data collated from Councils, the national CLG (Communities and Local Government) Caravan Count and the Essex Traveller Education Service.

2.3 The following table provides a breakdown for each district across accommodation types:-

Table 5.1 Household estimates based on secondary data							
	Social rented site	Private site	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Housing	Travelling Showpeople	Total
Basildon	25	94	-	107	15	19	260
Braintree	21	6	-	21	12	1	61
Brentwood	-	32	8	13	6	-	59
Castle Point	-	-	-	1	8	1	10
Chelmsford	19	43	4	3	14	24	107
Colchester	-	7	-	1	15	-	23
Epping Forrest	16	49	-	9	11	10	95
Harlow	36	-	-	-	7	-	43
Maldon	23	29	-	-	5	3	60
Rochford	-	6	-	8	7	1	22
Southend	-	-	-	-	77	-	77
Tendring	-	3	-	1	13	2	19
Uttlesford	17	32	3	-	6	1	59
Total	157	301	15	164	196	62	895

Figures in bold italics are those that have been calculated from caravan or pitch figures using a formula approach given in Table 5.2.

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

Living on Local Authority Sites

2.4 Social rented sites are managed by Essex County Council and information regarding the number of households was supplied by the management.

2.5 The assessment concluded that, *'in most districts the level of caravans on authorised sites had increased with exception of Braintree (where there had been a 5% decrease) and Uttlesford (a fall of 27%)*. In both of these districts the decrease can be accounted for by the drop in number of caravans on private sites; the number on social rented sites has broadly remained constant.

2.6 In the Braintree District interviews were undertaken with nearly half of the residents from the Sandiacre Caravan Park and Ridgewell Caravan Park (local authority sites) to determine travelling patterns and gather views on the condition of the sites.

Levels of satisfaction with the local authority sites

2.7 Sandiacres – 20% of participants thought it was in a poor location and 80% of participants were particularly unsatisfied with the amenity block.

2.8 Ridgewell – over half of participants reported that the site was in a good location and 40% were satisfied and 20% were very satisfied with the amenity block.

2.9 Overall, Ridgewell scored highly in comparison to other sites across the County with over 60% of participants being very satisfied with the site.

Length of time on site

2.10 Sandiacres – 40% of participants had been onsite for 1-2 years, 40% on site for 3-5 years and 20% onsite for more than 5 years.

2.11 Ridgewell – 20% of participants had been onsite for 3-5 years, 80% on site for more than 5 years.

100% of the respondents at Ridgewell and Sandiacres did not intend to move from the accommodation.

Essential Facilities Required

2.12 The survey found that participants at Sandiacres and Ridgewell were in need of a kitchen and dining room, secure storage for medicine etc, enclosed storage for food, cleaning products and space for a cooker, fridge and freezer.

Living on Private Sites

2.13 Data relating to the number of households on private sites was taken from information on questionnaires submitted to the districts. A formula devised from Salford University during the GTAA 2006 survey, was used if the district were not aware of the number of households on private sites (which included Braintree District) but had information on the number of caravans.

The table below describes the formula:

Table 5.2 Formula for estimating current household formation level

Caravan count x average caravan occupancy level (2) = estimated Gypsy and Traveller population
 Estimated Gypsy and Traveller population ÷ average household size (4) = number of Gypsy and Traveller households

Sources: Essex GTAA 2006 – Salford University; Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

2.14 Of the 296 estimated Gypsy and Traveller households living on private sites in Essex, 62 (21%) were included in the survey. The majority had full planning permission (37) but a high number had temporary (20) or personal (5) permission. The average household size of the sample was 4.5 and satisfaction levels amongst participants were high.

Living on Unauthorised Sites

2.15 Data on unauthorised encampments and sites were collated from the Councils and the caravan count. Of the estimated 179 unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites in Essex 39 (22%) were included in the survey. The average household size was recorded at 6.7.

The majority of participants stated that if they found land that would be granted planning permission they would move, although there was a preference to remain within a 15 mile radius of their current location, and remain within their current district.

The assessment concluded that factors influencing good locations included:

- Community cohesion – within site and local community
- Services – including health and education
- Rural – in rural areas with good public transport links.

Living in Housing

2.16 The Essex Traveller Education Service provided data on Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Table 5.3 Distribution of estimated households in bricks and mortar accommodation by population proportion

	Population proportion	Housed estimate
Basildon	12%	15
Braintree	10%	12
Brentwood	5%	6
Castle Point	6%	8
Chelmsford	12%	14
Colchester	12%	15
Epping Forest	9%	11
Harlow	6%	7
Maldon	5%	5
Rochford	6%	7
Tendring	11%	13
Uttlesford	5%	6
<i>Total (Essex districts)</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>119</i>
Southend	-	77
Study area total	-	196

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

2.17 The vast majority of participants were English Gypsies and the average family size was fairly small at 2.8 people. 44% of the participants had previously lived on a social rented site and a quarter on an unauthorised site. The majority of participants had moved into housing due to lack of space on authorised sites, poor conditions, or to access services more easily. However, most of the participants would return to a site if they had a chance.

Travelling Showpersons

2.18 Data on the number of Travelling Showperson households in Essex was collected from The Showmens Guild. 29 interviews were conducted with Travelling Showperson families living on yards (3 of those interviews were in the Braintree District).

2.19 The average number of people living on each plot was 4.5 and satisfaction with living on their current yard was high. The main negative aspect of the yards was a lack of space. Over half of those questioned reported they did not have enough space on their yard. Many of those interviewed believed that the accommodation shortfall could be met privately by granting planning permission to Travelling Showpersons to expand or buy new yards. Two thirds of participants said that someone lived there all year on the yard, rather than using it as traditional winter quarters.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need

2.20 The table below provides an overview of the resulting situation in terms of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the 2008 to 2021 period for Braintree District.

Table 14.12 Estimate of the need for permanent / residential site pitches, 2008-2013	
1) Current occupied authorised residential site pitches	27.0
<i>Current residential supply</i>	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	3.0
3) Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant through mortality	0.5
4) Number of households on sites expected to leave area in next 5 years	0.2
5) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0.8
6) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use 2008-2013	21.0
7) Additional supply generated by movement within the stock	5.7
Total Supply	31.1
<i>Current residential need from sites*</i>	
8) Households sharing pitches causing overcrowding	6.7
9) Existing households on pitches moving and requiring pitches in the area	1.9
10) Existing households on unauthorised sites requiring pitches in the area	18.1
11) Existing households on overcrowded pitches requiring pitches in the area	3.8
12) New households forming on sites requiring pitches	5.7
13) Households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0.6
Total gross requirement	36.7
<i>Current residential need from housing</i>	
14) Existing households in housing moving and requiring pitches in the area	1.8
15) Households in overcrowded housing requiring pitches in the area	0.5
16) Households in housing requiring pitches	0.6
Total Need	3.0
<i>Balance of need and supply</i>	
Total additional pitch requirement**	8.6
Annualised additional pitch requirement	1.7

* Please note that a household cannot be counted as being in more than one of these categories, except where a household both lives on an unauthorised pitch and containing a newly forming household needing to move to independent accommodation.

** Numbers in table may not add exactly due to rounding errors; the final figures are calculated before rounding takes place.

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

Table 14.13 Distribution of Gypsies and Travellers (2008 – 2021)				
	Base: 2008*	2013	2021	Change
Housing units	12	14	15	+22%
Authorised pitches	34	60	66	+97%
Unauthorised pitches	21	0	0	-100%
Total	67	74	81	+22%

* Total households on sites – may be larger than the number of pitches

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

Short stay provision

2.21 The assessment indicated that in addition to permanent residential pitches and in order for provision to be complete, short stay sites need to be considered. Gypsies and Travellers describe short term travelling as part of their culture and way of life/livelihoods.

2.22 The following table distributes short stay provision across the District and is based on the district's size, so if one accounts for 5% of the total Essex land mass, it receives 5% of the short stay requirement. However, it is

recognised in the assessment that it is more practical, cost effective and appropriate to meet Gypsies and Travellers needs, if fewer but larger short stay sites were provided across Essex, close to major transport routes.

2.23 For the Braintree District there is a total requirement of 6 short stay sites between 2008 and 2021.

Table 14.37 Requirements for short stay sites, 2013-2021			
District	Requirement 2008-13	Requirement 2013-21	Total requirement 2008-2021
Basildon	1	-	1
Braintree	5	1	6
Brentwood	1	-	1
Castle Point	-	-	-
Chelmsford	3	-	3
Colchester	3	-	3
Epping Forest	3	-	3
Harlow	-	-	-
Maldon	4	1	5
Rochford	2	-	2
Southend-on-Sea	-	-	-
Tendring	4	1	5
Uttlesford	6	1	7
Total	32	4	36

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

Travelling Showpeople Need

2.24 The table below indicates the plot requirements for each district between 2008 and 2021. The distribution is based on need where it arises. The assessment also refers to the RSS Single Issue Review, which states there is potential for the need to be distributed amongst districts.

2.25 For the Braintree District there is a total requirement of 1 plot between 2008 and 2021.

Table 15.5 Additional travelling show people plot requirements for Essex study area, 2008-2021						
Area	Total at 2008	Req'mt 2008-2013	Total at 2013	Req'mt 2013-2021	Total at 2021	Total Req'mt 2008-2021
Basildon	16	6	22	2	24	8
Braintree	3	1	4	0	4	1
Brentwood	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castle Point	0	1	1	0	1	1
Chelmsford	22	7	29	3	32	10
Colchester	0	0	0	0	0	0
Epping Forest	9	3	12	1	13	4
Harlow	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maldon	2	1	3	0	3	1
Rochford	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southend	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tendring	0	1	1	1	2	2
Uttlesford	2	1	3	1	4	2
<i>Essex total</i>	54	19	73	8	81	27

Source: Essex GTAA 2008 - Fordham Research

3 Conclusion

3.1 The assessment concluded that regardless of how the requirement is distributed, each district in Essex (with the exception of those who already have new sites planned) will need to provide additional residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. The assessment recognised there was a requirement for short stay sites. However the priority should be in bringing forward residential pitches, where there is a greater need and demand.

The assessment also concluded that local planning authorities should offer guidance to Travelling Showpeople on the type of land which is currently suitable under current planning policy and identify specific sites in future policies.

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Policy for the Draft Submission Core Strategy

3.2 The proposed Core Strategy explanatory text and draft policy sets out the proposed requirements calculated in the Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which seeks to address the provision of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpersons in the Braintree District.

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation

There is a shortage of sites to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers in the District and in the East of England at present.

A revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England, entitled 'Accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons in the East of England,' was published in July 2009.

This set out policies requiring local authorities to make provision for additional residential and transit pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpersons. (A pitch normally accommodates two caravans.)

Policy H3 set out a requirement for a minimum of 50 gypsy and traveller pitches for Braintree District by 2011. As there were already 27 authorised gypsy and traveller pitches within Braintree District in 2008, this meant that there was a requirement to provide an additional 23 authorised pitches by 2011.

As assessment of need in Essex was published in 2009 (Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment), which identified a requirement for 66 additional residential pitches in Braintree District between 2008 and 2021.

Policy H3 also stated that local authorities should work together to establish a network of transit pitches, with 30 additional transit pitches required for Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock between 2006- 2011. The assessment of need in Essex in 2009 identified an additional short-stay requirement of 6 pitches in Braintree District between 2008 -2021, of which 5 would be required by 2013.

Policy H4 set out a requirement for an additional 103 plots for travelling showpersons in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock between 2006 -2011. There were two travelling showpersons sites in this District in 2008, with a total of 3 plots. The assessment of need in Essex identified an additional requirement in Braintree District of 1 plot between 2008-2021.

The Council will identify gypsy and traveller residential pitches in accordance with the requirements for this District and CLG guidance in Circular 01/2006 and will work with the other identified local authorities to identify transit sites. The Council will also work with travelling showpersons and the Showmen's Guild to identify the required provision for travelling showpersons, in accordance with the guidance set out in CLC Circular 04/2007.

The requirements will either be met by identifying sites and plots in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, or through development control decisions, when appropriate sites or plots come forward, which may include rural exception sites. Sites should be provided in sustainable locations, which are not at risk of flooding and have access to health, education and other community facilities. Funding for the provision of sites and plots may be sought as part of developer contributions.

Policy CS3 Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpersons

The Council will identify sites in suitable locations to provide a minimum of 50 residential pitches for gypsies and travellers caravans by 2011 and a total of 66 pitches by 2021.

Provision will also be made for 5 transit pitches for gypsies and travellers by 2013 and a total of 6 transit pitches by 2021 and for an additional 1 plot for travelling showpersons by 2021.

This does not supersede a Braintree District Local Plan Review Policy, as the previous Local Plan policy 23 Provision for Gypsies and Travelling Showpersons had already been deleted.

Corporate Implications				
Financial:	N/a			
Legal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Act 2004 - Race Relations Act 			
Equalities & Diversity:	Gypsies and travellers are recognised ethnic groups. Assessing and quantifying the accommodation and housing related needs of gypsies and travellers will contribute to promoting equality amongst this ethnic group. The Council has a duty to promote good race relations, equality of opportunity and community cohesion in all of their policies and practises.			
Customer Impact:	There may be some impact on local residents.			
Environment & Climate Change:	Environmental and sustainability issues would be addressed as part of any planning application.			
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Local Committees	N	Partners – Local Parish Councils	N
	Public	N	Staff	N
Key Decision:	No			
Public/Private Report:	Public			
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