

**Responses to Sevenoaks District Council consultation on the first stage of the preparation of its Gypsy and Traveller Plan**

Q1 Do you agree with the main aim and objectives of the Plan?

**Yes**

Q2 Do you think there are any other objectives that the Plan should address?

**No**

Q3 Do you consider that the Needs Assessment is robust and that the figure of 72 pitches to be provided in the period 2012-2026 is appropriate?

**Yes, specifically in respect of the likely movement between housing and sites, which the GTAA assessed as a net movement of 0 comprising of 2 households moving onto sites and 2 households moving off sites. This more closely reflects the evidence from Bromley waiting lists, than the figures suggested through the London GTANA produced by Fordhams.**

Q4 Is the Council correct to plan for Gypsies and Travellers that meet the planning definition?

**Yes**

Q5 Is your Local Authority willing and able to assist Sevenoaks DC in meeting the identified need in Sevenoaks District?

**No**

Q6 Do you consider these to be an appropriate set of criteria to determine the suitability?

**Yes**

Q7 Do you feel any other criteria should be considered?

**No**

Q8 How do you consider that these criteria should be weighted?

**Significant weight should be attached to the need to protect Green Belt, other than sites with an established history of pitch provision.**

**The London Gypsy Traveller Unit (LGTU), in response to Bromleys recent consultation on its "Draft Policies and Designations" document objected to placing so much emphasis on the constraints in the flood zones. They believe this risk can be mitigated the same as with conventional housing, and this criterion should commit to seek solutions rather than stop site development in these areas.**

Q9 Do you consider the approach to the way in which our future pitch provision may be met is appropriate?

**Yes**

Q10 Are there any alternative ways in which the pitch requirements can be met?

No

Q11 Do you agree with the initial site assessments (see also the background site assessment document)? If not, why not?

**Whilst Bromley raises concerns about the intensification of the pitches at Knockholt Station it acknowledges the significant difficulties in allocating sites and is itself unable to provide pitches to meet Sevenoaks assessed need**

Q12 Do you think the number of pitches proposed for each potential site option is acceptable? If not, why not?

**Yes with reservations in respect of Land East of Knockholt Station which lies within Flood zones 2 and 3 and is therefore contrary to the draft criteria**

**Whilst acknowledging the views of the LGTU highlighted in response to Qu 8 and the recognition in the Sevenoaks consultation that not all criteria may always be met the intensification of pitches on this site should not be promoted, unless to meet the direct needs of traveller families already residing on the site.**

Q13 Should any future residential site provision include any additional space for visitors?

**Not specifically allocated – if there are surplus sites these could be made available to meet the needs of neighbouring authorities, however where pitches fall vacant and cannot be filled from waiting lists in neighbouring authorities their short term transit use by visitors would be appropriate**

Q14 Can you suggest any additional sites that you consider suitable for use as Gypsy and Traveller sites?

No

Q15 In view of the fact that there is currently no specific identified need for a Travelling Showpeople site in Sevenoaks, is there a need to provide additional capacity for Travelling Showpeople in the District?

**Yes – In the response of the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain to the London Plan 2011 they argued that the provision of new plots for travelling show people in London should be weighted in such a way that lesser provision was required in areas with already substantial provision and new provision concentrated in areas without historic existing provision. The London Plan EIP panel accepted that such a distribution would be reflective of need.**

Q16 What criteria considerations do you feel should be included, if any, into design and layout guidance to support proposed allocations?

In respect of provision for Travelling Showmens “Plots” it will be important to acknowledge the plots will be larger than Gypsy and traveller pitches due to the need to accommodate bulky equipment