

Examination of the New East Devon Local Plan 2006-26

Hearing 11
14:00 Thursday 27 February 2014

Gypsy & Travellers

1. The 2006 Devon wide Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment set pitch targets to 2011 (the need for sites for Travelling Showpeople was not assessed). That study identified a need for 9 pitches. The Local Plan at paragraph 16.31 states that the majority of those pitches have been accommodated which means that not all the identified need has been met. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires local planning authorities set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. A need has been identified and it has not been met. The Local Plan does not accord with national policy and is, therefore, unsound. How can this be rectified?
2. The Council intend to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) but the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should produce a Local Plan for its area and that any additional DPDs should only be used when clearly justified. Given that the Local Plan is able to allocate land for housing and employment uses what is the justification for not updating the 2006 Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment and including pitch targets for gypsies and travellers in the Local Plan?
3. What progress has been made in updating the Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment and producing a Gypsy and Traveller DPD?
4. Notwithstanding the above, has the Council worked collaboratively with travellers and their representatives to develop the Plan's strategy and policy with regard to the provision of accommodation for gypsies and travellers?
5. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires criteria based policies to be fair and to facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
 - 5a. National guidance does not preclude the provision of sites in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, green wedges or sites of conservation interest. Is the blanket ban on sites in such areas in Policy H7(1) justified?
 - 5b. Is it fair and reasonable, as required by Policy H7(6) to refuse to grant planning permission for a site which meets all the other criteria in Policy H7 because the local East Devon need has not been proven and cannot be met elsewhere?
 - 5c. Gypsies and travellers are a diverse group. Is it fair and reasonable to require need to be met through the expansion/intensification of existing sites?

Participants
East Devon District Council
3347 Client Group of PCL Planning