

**Gypsy & Traveller DPD - Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Gavin Ball, Principal Planning Officer Anna Ironmonger, Planning Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

The Council, as the Local Planning Authority has a statutory requirement to plan for the needs of all communities in the borough. The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (G&T DPD) is generally progressing on its timeframe as per the Local Development Scheme 2021-2024 approved by Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, with the G&T DPD expected to be consulted on in early 2023.

Evidence gathering is underway for this DPD, including an emerging Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment (G&TNA). The need for new pitches is not yet known, but early work and the time since the previous update suggest that this could be significant.

In order to complete a robust evidence base, the availability of land that has the potential to meet need is to be identified through a Gypsy & Traveller Call for Sites.

Once the Gypsy & Traveller Call for Sites and Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment are complete, a Pitch Delivery Assessment can be carried out to help identify what options are available to meet the current and forecast need from existing communities within the borough.

**Purpose of Report**

Decision

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Maidstone Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites exercise takes place between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
2. That the guidance on making a submission (Appendix A) and the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Site submission template (Appendix B) are noted.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2022

# Gypsy & Traveller DPD - Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Accepting the recommendations will 'add value' to the process of identifying sites for the Gypsy and Traveller DPD which in turn impacts positively across the full range of Strategic Plan Priorities.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of all four cross-cutting objectives.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>Already covered in the risk section there is a risk attached to losing appeals for failing to have a supply of suitable sites.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Financial</b>	<p>There is provision in the budget for preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD, as part of an overall suite of work including the Local Plan Review. This includes undertaking the Call for Sites exercise.</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	<p>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The approach presented accords with national policy and guidance and will ensure conformity with the plan making requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning</p>	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)

	(Local Planning) Regulations 2012 specifically in regard to the development of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD	
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and locally adopted policies.	Policy and Information Team - Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Equalities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will ensure that an inclusive approach is taken as part of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no implications for Crime and Disorder.	Strategic Planning Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no procurement requirements.	Strategic Planning Manager & Section 151 Officer
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and accepting the recommendations is not considered to misalign with the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council, as Local Planning Authority has a statutory requirement to produce a Local Development Scheme and to identify the Development Plan Documents it will produce. Each Development Plan Document must be produced in accordance with the statutory, regulatory and National Planning Policy Frameworks. This includes planning for all development needs across the borough, including those of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities.
- 2.2 At the current time there are sites allocated for Gypsy and Traveller use within extant policies in the form of GT1 of the 2017 Local Plan, which are scheduled to be taken forward into the Local Plan Review.
- 2.3 The current Local Plan 2017 outlines a 187 pitch need-based target over the plan period (2011-2031). The Maidstone Annual Monitoring Report (1<sup>st</sup> April 2021), identifies that the number of pitches on which permanent permissions have been granted is 246.

- 2.4 This need figure is based on Maidstone's 2012 Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment and, in order to maintain up-to-date information in this regard, a new assessment is underway.
- 2.5 On allocated Gypsy & Traveller sites in the 2017 Plan, 15 permanent pitches have been delivered (at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021) on allocated sites (37% of the 41 pitches allocated in LP17 Policy GT1).
- 2.6 As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 the Council can demonstrate 6.2 years' worth of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller pitches. As such there may be latent potential supply to contribute to meeting emerging/future need on allocated sites.

### **The Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment**

- 2.7 An impact of Covid-19 has been a delay in the completion of the ongoing Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment (G&TNA). This study (being prepared by Opinion Research Services) requires need to be identified through interviews with the relevant communities, and face-to-face meetings have been disrupted by the pandemic.
- 2.8 While not yet complete, it is apparent that there is likely to be a significant increase in the need figure for pitches in the borough.

### **The Gypsy and Traveller DPD**

- 2.9 The Local Plan Review, currently between the Publication and Submission stages of plan making covers the majority of development types over the period 2022-2037. The exception to this is the allocation of land for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities, which due to covid-based delays in the preparation of the evidence base, will be taken forward via the Gypsy and Traveller DPD. The timetable for this DPD was approved by Full Council on 8th December 2021 in the Local Development Scheme 2021-2024.
- 2.10 The DPD will sit alongside and build on the policies in the Local Plan Review and will provide the basis for Development Management decision making. The DPD will be informed by the preparation of suitable evidence. Matters to be reviewed include new site allocations to meet the need identified by the G&TNA.

### **The Gypsy & Traveller Call for Sites**

- 2.11 During the Local Plan Review Call for Sites 2019, 11 sites were put forward as potential Gypsy and/or Traveller sites. It is unclear whether these are the best sites to meet the emerging need. They will, however, be considered as part of the potential supply for the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.
- 2.12 Taking the potentially significant emerging need from the G&TNA into account, the most appropriate way to establish the options for how an increased need can be met is to carry out a specific Gypsy & Traveller Call

for Sites exercise. The Call for Sites is aimed at landowners, developers, land promoters and their agents.

- 2.13 It is proposed that the same indicators as those that were used in the 2019 Call for Sites are used to determine whether the submitted sites are Suitable, Available, and Achievable. To ensure site submissions contain the appropriate and relevant information, two documents have been produced. A guidance document has been produced and is attached to this report as **Appendix A**. This will help respondents complete the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Site submission template, which is attached as **Appendix B**. These documents are tailored versions of the documents provided for the 2019 Call for Sites exercise.
- 2.14 The Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites is an important component in understanding the choices available for meeting future need in the borough. The submitted sites will be assessed through a G&T Land Availability Assessment. Alongside the forthcoming Pitch Deliverability Assessment and Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment, it will inform the available options for meeting the identified need within the borough.
- 2.15 It is proposed for the Call for Sites to be open for a period of two months from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The results from this exercise will then be combined with the latent supply from existing allocations, and the sites received in 2019 (see comment above) for consideration in meeting future need.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option A – that the Maidstone Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites exercise takes place between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 3.2 Option B – That the Maidstone Call for Gypsy and Traveller Sites does not take place.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Option A is recommended, that in order to ensure timely progression of the Gypsy & Traveller DPD that Committee agree the commencement of the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites. As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to plan to meet all development needs in the borough. This is the first step in gathering the evidence to progress this. Failure to demonstrate progress poses a risk to the Local Plan Review.
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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks associated with these proposals, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

## **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 Subject to the Committee's decision, the Call for Sites documents will be finalised.

## **7. REPORT APPENDICES**

- 7.1 A guidance note on making a submission to the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites, and a Call for Gypsy & Traveller Site submission template are included in the Appendices to this Report.

Appendix A: Guidance note on making a submission to the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites

Appendix B: Call for Gypsy & Traveller Site submission template

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## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None