

HELP PLAN THE FUTURE OF DARLINGTON

Potential Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Consultation

Summary Guide

This 'Summary Guide' is intended to provide brief information on the consultation on potential sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. For more detailed information, please refer to the 'Where to find out more' section at the end of this document.

OVERVIEW

The Council is preparing a planning policy document that, amongst other things, will identify sites for potential residential occupation by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The aim is to identify a range and choice of sites to meet identified needs.

This consultation seeks feedback on a number of sites, which have been assessed as potentially suitable for Gypsy and Traveller, or Travelling Showpeople sites.

HOW MANY PITCHES ARE NEEDED?

In 2009, a study identified that 142 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches were required across the Tees Valley (Stockton, Darlington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland) by 2021, and that 98 of these would be required in Darlington. These figures were based on a method of assessment that meant the areas with the highest population of Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople, had the highest need. The study went on to recommend that further work should be undertaken, to consider how the overall need could be apportioned across the Tees Valley in a more equitable way.

To date, there has been little appetite amongst the other Tees Valley Local Authorities, to undertake this further work. As an interim position, Darlington Council has undertaken work based on trends and local circumstances, that concludes that 35 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Darlington are required in the 15-years to 2026. The Council has also been approached by a group of Travelling Showpeople seeking a site, so this is also being considered as part of the process. In the meantime, efforts are being made with the other Tees Valley Local Authorities, to ensure that the necessary plans are in place to ensure that a strategic approach is taken to providing for needs across the sub-region.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

The Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy was adopted in May 2011, sets out the strategic policies for the Borough. Policy CS13 (Accommodating Travelling Groups) sets out the criteria against which future land allocations and planning applications for Gypsy, Traveller, or Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be assessed, and is shown below in **Figure One (below)**.

Figure One: Core Strategy DPD Policy CS13 (Accommodating Travelling Groups)

Provision will be made for travelling groups at the existing sites of Honeypot Lane, Neasham Road, and other small sites within the Borough. Where required, additional sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria, which will also be the basis for determination of windfall sites, ensuring that sites:

- a) have appropriate access and are in a sustainable location for schools, shops, employment opportunities and other local facilities and services; and
- b) are located and designed so as not to have an unacceptable negative impact on existing residential amenity or existing landscape character; and
- c) are appropriate to provide a safe and healthy environment for residents; and
- d) are located in areas not at risk from flooding; and
- e) are located and designed so as not to have a significant negative impact on the natural, archaeological or historic environment.

Preference will be given firstly to locations within and then adjacent to existing settlements, and then to the re-use of brownfield land in other locations.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, we have sought to identify potential sites by assessing possible locations, including those where unauthorized encampments have taken place in the past. A call for suitable sites was also made in November 2010. Through these processes, a number of potential locations have been identified and, where appropriate, have been the subject of further assessment. The criteria against which sites have been assessed have been informed by the advice contained in national Government policy and guidance.

WHERE ARE THE POTENTIAL SITES?

Table one (below) lists the potentially suitable sites that we are consulting on. All have been initially assessed and the purpose of this consultation is to get feedback on the suitability of the sites. *Please note that not all of the sites will be required to meet the needs identified above.* Plans showing the boundaries of these sites have also been prepared; see the 'Where to find out more' section at the bottom of this page to find out where you can view these.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SITES INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT REPRESENT A STAGE IN THE PROCESS OF SITE IDENTIFICATION, AND CARRY NO ENDORSEMENT OR OTHERWISE FROM THE COUNCIL. FURTHER INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN SITES BEING UNSUITABLE, UNAVAILABLE, OR UNDELIVERABLE, WHILST OTHER MORE SUITABLE SITES MAY COME FORWARD THAT HAVE NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS CONSULTATION.

Table one: Potential sites for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople

Site ref.	Address	Source
GT002	Honeypot Lane	Public Land / Intensification of Existing Sites
GT015	Honeypot Lane Extension	Public Land / Expansion of Existing Sites
GT014	Neasham Road Extension	Public Land / Expansion of Existing Sites
GT022	North West Urban Fringe (South, part)	Public Land / Initial housing site assessments
GT023	Blackett Road (part)	Public Land / Initial housing site assessments
GT041	Salters Lane West (part)	Public Land / Former SHLAA site
GT016	Part of field No. 5100, Roundhill Road, Hurworth	Private Land / Expansion of Existing sites

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

We are looking for your comments on the sites currently under consideration, and any suggestions for alternative site locations that you think may be suitable. If you want to suggest a new site, please provide as much information as you can about it, including details of ownership (if known), together with a plan clearly showing the boundaries of the site.

A comments form and all associated documents relating to this consultation can be found on the Council's website at www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy, or at the Town Hall reception and at Crown Street Library. Documents and comments forms will also be available at the Cockerton and mobile libraries, and at our consultation events.

A programme of events / drop-in sessions will take place to allow you to ask questions and to have your say at this stage. See the website for more details, or contact a member of our team on 01325 388644 for details of times and venues.

CONTACT DETAILS

To contact a member of the Planning Policy Team, please telephone 01325 388644 or send an e-mail to planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk.

Head of Place Strategy and Commissioning,
Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

THE CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMMENTS IS 5PM ON TUESDAY 24TH APRIL 2012