

PLANNING POLICY

GYPSIES AND OTHER TRAVELLERS

Extracts from UDP

- 5.5.20 The Housing Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to include within their Local Housing Assessments the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. In addition, Government planning policy is increasingly favouring the identification of sites for Gypsies and Travellers in Development Plan Documents. Herefordshire Council recognises these requirements, which will be taken forward in the preparation of new Development Plan Documents forming part of the Local Development Framework. In the interim, however, the following policy is still required in order to consider the merits of planning proposals.
- 5.5.21 Herefordshire Council together with a number of external organisations established a Traveller Policy Task Group in order to produce a comprehensive countywide strategy for traveller issues. The resulting Travellers' Policy was adopted by the Council in November 2002 with a resolution to review and further develop the policy on an annual basis.
- 5.5.22 The provision of new Gypsy/traveller sites is recognised in policy H7 as one of the exceptional circumstances where development may be permitted outside of defined settlements. However, although sites may be acceptable in rural settings their impact upon the character of the countryside should be minimised, particularly within the County's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Sites should be well landscaped in order to limit their visual impact and should be in locations with access to local facilities and services such as shops and schools. Small sites (up to 5 or 6 caravans accommodating pitches for individual or extended families) will be preferred, as they can be unobtrusive and easier to manage. Permanent dwellings on Gypsy/traveller sites will only be permitted in locations where such proposals would accord with other housing policies of this Plan.
- 5.5.23 The nature of sites will vary in terms of the location, size, characteristics and level of service according to the type of site needed. Three types of site are identified in Government advice:
- Residential sites for settled occupation, with infrastructure including provision of sanitation and other services. Such proposals should also identify areas for work and storage within the site, having regard to the safety of the occupants and their children;
 - Temporary stopping places, with basic facilities; such as hard standings, convenient drinking water supply a means of sewage disposal and refuse collection point; and
 - Transit sites, with facilities to minimise impact and avoid health hazards (e.g. refuse collection point, access to a drinking water supply and sewage disposal).

H12 Gypsies and other travellers

Proposals for the development of sites intended to provide for the accommodation needs of Gypsies or other travellers will be permitted where:

- 1. The site is within reasonable distance of local services and facilities;**
- 2. Sites for settled occupation should be small, as should temporary or transit sites, unless there is a need to provide a site on a route frequented by groups travelling in large numbers;**
- 3. Adequate screening and landscaping is included within the proposal in order to ensure that the proposal does not result in an adverse impact upon the character and amenity of the landscape, particularly within the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley AONB, Conservation Areas or other sensitive locations; and**
- 4. They contain appropriate levels of residential amenity, including safe play areas for children and provide satisfactory work and storage areas.**