

**Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocations
Committee Report - 19 February 2014
Frequently Asked Questions**

1.	Why are the Council doing this?
	The Council is required to do this by law; it is not optional. Some Councils have already been through this process and any others that haven't will have to go through it shortly.
2.	Why does the Borough have to accommodate more Gypsy and Traveller sites?
	<p>Like any other members of society, gypsies and travellers have the freedom to choose where they live. Local authorities have a legal duty to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and then prepare a strategy to meet those needs. The most recent assessment undertaken for the Borough identified that there is a need to allocate extra sites to meet this need, which amounts to a further 26 pitches between now and 2031.</p> <p>Full details of the assessment can be found using the following link:</p> <p>http://www.kettering.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=465&pageNumber=13</p>
3.	What methods were used to identify sites?
	<p>The search for sites focused on publicly owned land, private land for sale and brownfield sites that are located within 2,000 metres of a primary school and local shop.</p> <p>An initial sieve of all sites was carried out to assess whether sites were suitable for more detailed assessment. This initial sieve took into account current land use, flood zones and impact on international or national wildlife sites. This narrowed the list of sites down to 38, which were suitable for more detailed assessment. These 38 sites were then assessed using the detailed assessment criteria set out in the '<i>Gypsy and Traveller Site Search and Assessment Background Paper</i>', which can be found at Appendix 1 using the following link:</p> <p>http://www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1160/planning_policy_committee</p>

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4.	Why have sites been identified that are adjacent to existing housing or areas of proposed new housing?
	A detailed study of all available sites was carried out and approved by the Planning Policy Committee on the 11 July 2012. Some of these sites are adjacent to housing, but cannot be discounted from the consultation process purely on that basis. National planning policy and Government guidance, which the Council must follow, provides direction that gypsy and traveller sites should be located close to local facilities (e.g. shops and schools) and where possible near to housing for the settled community.
5.	Why does the Council have to follow National Planning Policy and Government guidance?
	At the end of the process to identify suitable sites, the Council's proposals will have to undergo a public examination as part of the Site Specific Local Development Document (LDD). This is the same for all local planning authorities. If the Council fails to take proper account of National Planning Policy, or follow Government guidance without good reason, it is likely that the Council's LDD will not be found to be sound and it will be instructed to redo all or part of the process again at further expense to the Council. This will affect other allocations and planning policies, and undermine the Council's ability to resist undesirable development.
6.	Did you consider all of the Council's own land?
	Yes. All land owned by Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council was considered. The methodology used to identify sites is detailed in the Gypsy and Traveller Site Search Assessment Background Paper 2013, which can be found at Appendix 1 using the following link: http://www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1160/planning_policy_committee
7.	What happened with all the comments that were made during the consultation last summer?
	Over 1,200 written comments were received by the Council during the consultation that ran during June and July 2013. Every single comment that was submitted has been read and considered by the Council, and this has helped to establish why many of the 38 sites that were consulted upon were not suitable.

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8.	How can I find out which sites have now been discounted and which are still being considered?
	<p>The report that is due to be presented to the Council's Planning Policy Committee on the evening of the 19th February 2014 includes all of this information. Of the 38 sites that were consulted upon, there are now only six sites that are recommended to remain under consideration.</p> <p>A copy of this committee report can be found at the following link:</p> <p>http://www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/committee/45/planning_policy_committee</p>
9.	If a site has been discounted, does that mean it can never become a gypsy and traveller site?
	<p>No, that will not always be the case. Some sites have been discounted for reasons that are unlikely ever to be overcome, but others may be for reasons that couldn't be resolved now, but may be at some point in the future. That means that there are some sites that have been discounted this time, which may be looked at again if a further search for sites happened again in future years.</p> <p>The report being presented to the Council's Planning Policy Committee on the 19th February 2014 includes information about why certain sites have been discounted.</p>
10.	What happens about the sites that are still under consideration?
	<p>The six sites (four new sites and two that already have temporary permission) that are still under consideration will be reported to the Planning Policy Committee on the 19th February 2014. The Committee will need to consider which of these sites they wish to include as a gypsy and traveller site allocation in the Council's planning policies. This could be any number of the sites, from one to all six of them, but the Committee must balance this against the Council's legal duty to identify sufficient sites to meet the need.</p>
11.	Can I attend the Committee meeting?
	<p>Yes, the Planning Policy Committee will meet at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 19th February 2014 at the Municipal Offices in Kettering. It is a public meeting and is open for anyone to attend.</p> <p>Please be aware that space in the Council Chamber is limited by fire regulations and therefore seats will be available on a first come first served basis.</p>

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12.	What if I can't get a seat in the Council Chamber for the committee meeting?
	In case there are more people wishing to observe the committee meeting than can fit into the Council Chamber, the Council will be operating two overspill areas at the Municipal Offices. These will be broadcasting the meeting live, so even if you can't get into the Council Chamber, you can still see and hear the proceedings from one of the overspill areas.
13.	What if I want to address the Planning Policy Committee?
	<p>The Planning Policy Committee will operate a public right to speak system in a similar way to a normal Planning Committee. This will allow individuals, or a representative from a group to address the Committee. If you wish to speak to the Committee, you must register to do so by contacting the Council no later than 5.00pm on Tuesday, 18 February 2014. A speaker both for and against each proposed site will be allowed up to three minutes to address the committee.</p> <p>Other speakers, including site owners, parish/town council representatives and ward councillors, may be able to speak but this will be at the discretion of the Committee Chair.</p> <p>Further information on how to register for a right to speak and the general process is available in the guide that can be found at the following link:</p> <p>http://www.kettering.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=209&fileID=1938</p> <p><i>(Please note: Although this guide refers to the Planning Committee and determining planning applications, the same basic right to speak process described will be used for the Planning Policy Committee on 19 February).</i></p>
14.	Can't I just decide I want to speak on the night depending upon what is said?
	No, the Committee has to follow a procedure to make sure the meeting is held in a well managed and orderly manner. This means that people who have registered for a right to speak will be called one at a time to address the Committee shortly after the start of the meeting. Once any people that have registered have spoken, then the report will be presented to the Committee by council officers and the committee members will then debate the report, but further comments or questions from the floor will not be allowed.

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15.	What happens after the Planning Policy Committee in February?
	<p>Once the Committee have decided upon which sites they wish to allocate for gypsy and traveller site provision, they will be included in the emerging Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (LDD). This will become one of the Council's planning policies that will help to manage things such as which land within the Borough might be used for traditional housing development and which might be used for gypsy and traveller accommodation.</p> <p>Before the LDD can be adopted as a formal Council policy, it must undergo another round of public consultation and then a public examination, when an independent Planning Inspector will consider whether or not the policy is sound. Only once all this has been successfully completed can the LDD be adopted by the Council as one of its planning policies.</p>