

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

Public Examination

Matter 8 Statement

January 2017

Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Public Examination

Statement by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)

Matter 8 – Gypsies and Travellers

NB: SBC responses set out in blue font

1. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites says at paragraph 24 that 'local planning authorities should consider the following issues amongst other relevant matters when considering planning applications for traveller sites... that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections'. However criterion 'a' of Policy HO13 requires applicants seeking gypsy and traveller accommodation on unallocated sites in the borough to demonstrate a local need for accommodation. As such the policy does not accord with National Planning Policy. In this context, is the Council likely to want to amend the Plan?

NB discussion about the gypsy and traveller site allocated in the Plan will take place at the stage 3 hearings

- 1.1 Stevenage Borough Council notes that this is Question 19 of the Inspector's initial Questions to the Council, August 2016 ([ED106](#)). For ease of reference, the Council has included its original answer below.
- 1.2 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan takes a positive, plan led approach to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. As such, it identifies a new Gypsy and Traveller site which is sufficient to meet the entire need arising in the plan period. This is in addition to the existing Gypsy and Traveller site within the Borough at Dyes Lane. This approach is confirmed at paragraph 9.95 of the plan.
- 1.3 Criterion 'a' of Policy HO13 relates to the requirement of paragraph 24 a) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites that "*Local Planning authorities should consider the following issues amongst other relevant matters when considering planning applications for traveller sites: a) the existing level of local provision and need for sites.*"
- 1.4 Criterion 'a' of Policy HO13 requires planning applications for new sites to consider the existing level of local provision and need for sites and for any further sites to demonstrate a sequential approach. The reference in criteria 'a' to "*Satisfies a demonstrated local need for accommodation and follows a sequential approach to site identification*" is explained at paragraph 9.96 of the plan. This states that "*Such applications will need to be accompanied by up-to-date evidence of need.*" It then continues, to explain the sequential approach.

- 1.5 Criterion 'a' of Policy HO13 therefore requires an application to identify that there is a demonstrated need for the site, in accordance with paragraph 24 a) of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
- 1.6 The Council understands the concern of the Inspector that the criterion could be misinterpreted. As currently worded, it needs to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 9.95 and 9.96 of the plan which explain what an applicant is required to demonstrate.
- 1.7 If the Inspector considers this goes to be an issue of fundamental soundness, the Council suggests the following main modification:
"Satisfies a demonstrated ~~local~~ need for accommodation and follows a sequential approach to site identification; ..."
- 1.8 This potential change is also reflected in SBC schedule of proposed main modifications ([ED114](#)). The relevant reference is Page 125, Ref No HOC11.