Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople – Call for Sites

GUIDANCE NOTE

Introduction

Government guidance issued in March 2012 requires local authorities to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have access to decent and appropriate accommodation in their area.

As a first step Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre councils worked together to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment for the Fylde Coast which was published in September 2014. This identified a need for the three councils to provide additional sites up to 2031. The Assessment can be found at www.blackpool.gov.uk/callforsites

Blackpool Council is now undertaking a “Call for Sites” within the Blackpool area as the next step in the process to find suitable sites to meet this need.

What is a "Call for Sites"?

The “Call for Sites” is part of the Local Plan process. The Council is asking residents and other interested parties to identify potential sites that may be available to provide accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. We will use the information provided by this “Call for Sites” to help us consider how best to meet the needs identified in the Fylde Coast Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment and to decide which sites need to be allocated in the Local Plan.

How Should I Put Forward a Site?

If you wish to put forward any sites which you believe to have genuine potential to provide accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople then please complete the Call for Sites Response Form, which is available at www.blackpool.gov.uk/callforsites

Please note that all suggested sites need to be accompanied by a 1:1250 scale Ordnance Survey map clearly showing the precise boundaries of the site and details of site ownership. Extracts of OS plans for the purpose can be obtained from approved Ordnance Survey Map resellers.

If you have previously submitted or written to us regarding a site you should complete the form even if you have had recent discussions with the Council. Sites with unimplemented or lapsed planning permissions should also be included. You do not need to complete a form if you are proposing minor changes to existing sites.

Please return your completed form(s) by Friday 17th April.

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1 Planning Policy for Travellers March 2012 - Department of Communities and Local Government
How Will the Sites Suggested Feed into the Local Plan Process?

The sites that are suggested as part of this “Call for Sites” will be assessed to make sure that they are suitable for use for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation using criteria already set out in Policy CS16 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (see box below).

Sites that are considered potentially suitable and deliverable will be subject to public consultation and a sustainability assessment.

The Council will start preparing, later in the year, Part 2 of the Local Plan which will set out the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies for Blackpool, including those specifically for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Eventually, at the end of the process, a number of sites may be allocated within Part 2 of the Local Plan as being suitable for use by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

For more information about Blackpool’s Local Plan go to www.blackpool.gov.uk/corestrategy

Policy CS16: Traveller Sites

1. The target for new permanent and transit pitches and plots will be set out in the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management document, according to the most recent Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment agreed by the Council.

2. The following criteria will be used to guide land supply allocations and to provide the basis for determining planning applications that may come forward. Proposed sites should meet all the following criteria. A traveller site must:

   a. Be suitable in that it provides a good living environment for residents, including access to essential infrastructure and services and does not cause an unacceptable environmental impact;

   b. Be appropriately located taking into account surrounding uses, with preference given to sites being located on brownfield land;

   c. Not cause demonstrable harm to the quality, character and appearance of the landscape taking account of the cumulative impact of other authorised sites in the vicinity;

   d. Be of a size and scale appropriate to the size and density of the local settled community;

   e. Have good access to transport links, public transport and be close to shops, schools, jobs, health and local services and other community facilities;

   f. Have safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access from the highway and provide adequate space for the provision of parking, turning, servicing, storage and land for associated livestock where appropriate;

   g. Be well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches/plots, and between sites and neighbouring properties and to avoid harmful impacts by noise, light, vehicular movements and other activities; and

   h. Provide soft landscaping and where appropriate communal recreational areas for children.

3. The detailed design of the traveller site should take account of current best practice guidance.
What is the definition of “Gypsy”, “Traveller” and “Travelling Showpeople”?

At the time of writing, for the purposes of the planning system, Gypsies and Travellers means: Persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), March 2012).

Within the main definition of Gypsies and Travellers, there are a number of main cultural groups which include:
» Romany Gypsies;
» Irish Travellers; and
» New Travellers.

Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010.

What Happens Next?

The suggested sites will be assessed to determine their suitability and appropriateness for providing accommodation for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople. Please note that putting a site forward does not guarantee that the Council will allocate it or support its development in the future, as all sites will need to be judged against relevant planning policies and other considerations.

Sites assessed as suitable will be put forward for public consultation as part of the Local Plan process so that everyone has a chance to comment on those sites considered to have potential for such development. Sites that are considered potentially suitable and deliverable will be subject to public consultation and a sustainability assessment. At the end of the process a number of sites may be allocated within part 2 of the Local Plan as being suitable for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

More detail of how the Local Plan process is being carried out in Blackpool can be found at www.blackpool.gov.uk/corestrategy

Blackpool Council cannot make any commitment or comment at this stage about any land put forward for consideration. Until such time as any site is formally allocated, any submission will have no weight as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. However, in the meantime, the “Call for Sites” does not preclude landowners and developers submitting planning applications for development.

What About Sites for Other Types of Development?

The Council will be “Calling for Sites” for types of development other than for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation later in the year when work will commence on Part 2 of the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management DPD.

A copy of the Call for Sites Response Form is available on the Council’s website at www.blackpool.gov.uk/callforsites
If you have any further queries please contact the Development Plans Team by:
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