



Hertfordshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council

**RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

**Accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South and West Hertfordshire  
Stage Two: Identification of potential Gypsy and Traveller sites in the study area**

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hertfordshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, and Watford Borough Council have formed a partnership in order to identify potential Gypsy and Traveller sites in the study area.

Following a comprehensive context review, to establish relevant documents and previous experiences within the study area, a further report was produced outlining site selection criteria to identify areas where the provision of sites would be acceptable. Criteria was applied to datasets and overlaid on maps to identify constraints and thus, identify sites for appraisal and site visits.

This document combines the results of the GIS mapping, site visits and assessments to present 85 potential sites for the consideration of the partner authorities. In addition to this report electronic GIS maps detailing layers of 'constraints' and 'opportunities' are provided. Furthermore, photos of the sites and details can be accessed via hyperlinks.

Scott Wilson has prepared criteria for site identification to assist the partners in criteria based policy making. The criteria has been organised under the following categories: Alternative Sites, Access, Site Descriptions, Accessibility of Services, Neighbouring Uses, Protected Areas, and Future Use.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A survey of the study area (refer to Figure 1) has been undertaken to identify broad areas of potential sites for the Partner Authorities to consider for inclusion in Local Development Plan documents. This is in line with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006 *'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites'*, which states that local authorities must allocate sufficient sites for Gypsy and Travellers in their development plan documents, criteria must not be used as an alternative to this where a need for accommodation has been identified (paragraph 33). Further, the Housing Act 2004 has a requirement for local housing authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in their housing needs assessments and prepare a strategy to meet these needs, the requirement is also set out in Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing.
- 2.2 The site identification report has been commissioned by the Partner Authorities in response to a desire to be proactively planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, rather than adopting a more traditional reactive and costly approach comprising of enforcement action and planning appeals. This assessment will provide opportunities to avoid negative impacts associated with the provision of accommodation sites for Gypsies and Travellers and maximise environmental and social benefits.
- 2.3 This report follows on from the earlier commissioned report, *'An Assessment of the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South and West Hertfordshire'*, produced by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS). The CURS study recommended: *"Partner authorities should commit to a more pro-active approach to site provision"*. Further, a key recommendation stated: *"Partner authorities should undertake an exercise to identify sites suitable for development as Gypsy/Traveller sites"* (paragraphs S.24 and S.25 of the CURS Executive Summary).
- 2.4 In line with the CURS recommendations, this report provides, first, a systematic review of options for the location of Gypsy sites for the partner authorities to use to identify specific sites and secondly, suggested criteria based policy.
- 2.5 For the purposes of this study the definition of Gypsies and Travellers given in the ODPM Circular has been adopted and is as follows:
- "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 show people or circus people travelling together as such."* (Paragraph 15)
- 2.6 It is acknowledged that, while some Gypsies and Travellers have an actively itinerant lifestyle with a need for transit sites that meet their social and working patterns, these traditional patterns are changing and the community is generally becoming more settled. This is beneficial in terms of access to employment, health and education services, along with contribution and social inclusion within their local community. However, it is still important to the Gypsy and Traveller culture that the ability to travel is maintained.

- 2.7 Following a comprehensive context review, to establish relevant documents and previous experiences within the study area, a further report was produced outlining site selection criteria to identify areas where the provision of sites would be acceptable. Criteria was applied to datasets and overlaid on maps to identify constraints and thus, identify sites for appraisal and site visits.
- 2.8 This document combines the results of the GIS mapping, site visits and assessments to present potential sites for the consideration of the partner authorities. In addition to this report a CD-ROM is provided with GIS maps detailing layers of 'constraints' and 'opportunities'. Furthermore, photos of the sites and details can be accessed via hyperlinks. Scott Wilson's methodology is explained more fully in the following section.
- 2.9 Scott Wilson is providing independent advice using guidance from Government publications, the final choice of policy wording and sites will be determined by the Local Authorities. The contents of this report represent the views of the consultants and are not necessarily supported by the Local Authorities.

