

Dear Sirs

Warrington Local Plan Review – Local Plan Preferred Development Option

I refer to your email dated 18 July 2017 in connection with the above consultation.

I now write to offer my **brief comments** relating to Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople site provision as follows.

First of all, despite the fact that the GTAA is currently being updated and is therefore not yet available to inform the Local Plan process, I note and welcome the Council's acknowledgement (within the consultation document) that there is currently a shortfall in provision across the Borough in terms of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Gypsies and Travellers Transit pitches up to 2028 which needs to be addressed through the new Local Plan and provision extended to cover the proposed 20 year Plan period up to 2037.

The Council propose to address this in part by removing three, currently unauthorised, Gypsy and Traveller sites from the Green Belt and allocating them as permanent sites, whilst acknowledging that further sites will also be needed to meet current and future need – and that these will most likely need to be released from the Green Belt given there is limited capacity within the existing urban area to meet the needs for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, as is the case for the Council meeting its employment and housing needs.

Having represented a group of locally-operating Travelling Showpeople to identify and secure suitable accommodation within the Borough (and others throughout the Country), we have first-hand experience of just how difficult it is to meet the identified needs of the Travelling Showpeople community outside of the Local Plan process – particularly in circumstances where there are insufficient potential development sites within the main built-up area, leading to the consequent reliance on land within the Green Belt.

Paragraph 4.84 confirms the Council is not aware of any sites within the urban area currently being promoted or available to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople – and this means that Green Belt release will be needed to ensure that the required provision is met.

As part of the previous 'Call for Sites' and Local Plan Scope and Contents Document

consultation, I made representations to the Council in support of my clients' **land north of Halls Lane, Lower Stretton** (approved at appeal under PINS reference APP/M0655/A/12/2177362 and LPA reference 2011/18728) being formally allocated, or alternatively shown as a commitment, within the new Local Plan as Showpeople's Family Quarters in recognition of its approved status and its contribution (and potential future contribution) towards meeting the needs of Travelling Showpeople in the Borough.

In the interests of consistency, it is suggested that those authorised/unauthorised sites for Travelling Showpeople should also be released from the Green Belt and formally allocated as permanent sites for Travelling Showpeople in addition to those Gypsy and Traveller sites listed in Table 10.

As paragraph 4.86 acknowledges, national planning policy does allow limited alterations to Green Belt boundaries in exceptional circumstances, through the Plan-making process to meet specific identified need for a Traveller (and Travelling Showpeople).

In removing land from the Green Belt through the Local Plan process to meet identified need, all such sites should be specifically allocated in the Plan as a Traveller (or Travelling Showpeople) site only.

Not only will this enable the Council's existing and future Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's needs to be provided for as required, it will also safeguard those existing/allocated sites from future redevelopment for other non-Gypsy and Traveller and non-Travelling Showpeople uses.

In summary, my clients' authorised Travelling Showpeople's site at **land north of Halls Lane, Lower Stretton** should, as a matter of consistency, be released from the Green Belt and allocated as a Travelling Showpeople's site, alongside all other authorised/unauthorised sites identified.

In addition, the Council may wish to consider the wider site in my clients' landholding as a suitable site to accommodate additional plots.

In the above connection, the site is (having been formerly used as a landscape contractor's depot immediately adjoining a motorway roundabout) well established and performs well against the national planning policy criteria for site location – as evidenced by the fact that the authorised Showmen's site was originally recommended approval by the Council and subsequently approved at appeal (and further endorsed by the Secretary of State – and the High Court).

The site, as with those three unauthorised sites in the Green Belt that Table 10 and paragraphs 4.87 and 4.88 refer to, also performs poorly in respect of its contribution to the Green Belt.

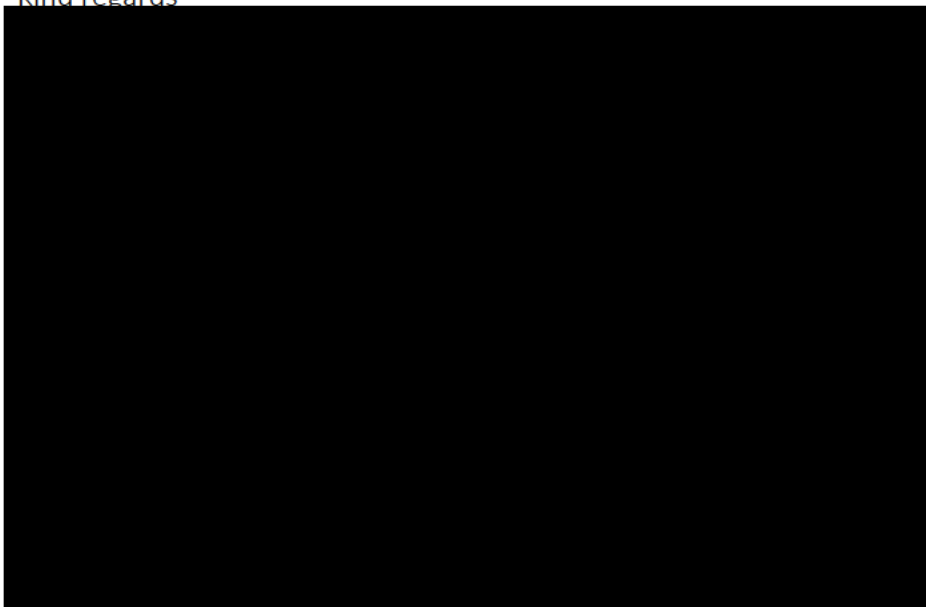
The Council is urged to allocate to meet the full provision required as part of the Local Plan process rather than rely on a criteria-based policy in the future to mop up any residual needs emanating from the updated GTAA. I say this as the Local Plan process provides the ideal opportunity to justify the removal of such land from the Green Belt as an exceptional circumstance. Given that the Council recognises that any future provision will necessarily fall within the Green Belt, any new site coming forward will inevitably fall foul of the Council's criteria-based policy and national planning policy and have to rely on very special circumstances which is, as the Council is aware, a notoriously difficult test to meet.

As with all other development sectors, the needs of all must be established and fully taken into account during the preparation of the *new* Local Plan.

I trust that the above is of assistance and look forward to being consulted on future stages of the Local Plan Review process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or I can assist in any way.

Kind regards



the studios, church farm, mansfield road, edwinstowe, nottingham, NG21 9NJ

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WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Warrington Borough Council

Local Plan

Preferred Development Option

Regulation 18 Consultation

Standard Response Form

July 2017

2: Questions

Question 1

Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the need for new homes and employment land in Warrington over the next 20 years?

Response:

Question 2

Do you have any comments to make about how we've worked out the number of homes and amount of employment land that can be accommodated within Warrington's existing built up areas?

Response:

Question 3

Have we appropriately worked out the amount of land to be released from the Green Belt, including the amount of land to be 'safeguarded'?

Response:

PLEASE SEE ASSOCIATED EMAIL RESPONSE

Question 4

Do you agree with the new Local Plan Objectives?

Response:

Question 5

Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different 'Spatial Options' for Warrington's future development?

Response:

Question 6

Do you have any comments to make about how we've assessed different options for the main development locations?

Response:

Question 7

Do you agree with our Preferred Development Option for meeting Warrington's future development needs?

Response:

Question 8

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the City Centre?

Response:

Question 9

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Wider Urban Area?

Response:

Question 10

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for developing the Warrington Waterfront?

Response:

Question 11

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the Warrington Garden City Suburb?

Response:

Question 12

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for the South Western Urban Extension?

Response:

Question 13

Do you have any comments to make about our Preferred Development Option for development in the Outlying Settlements?

Response:

Question 14

Do you agree with our approach to providing new employment land?

Response:

Question 15

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites?

Response:

PLEASE SEE ASSOCIATED EMAIL RESPONSE

Question 16

Do you agree with our suggested approach for dealing with Minerals and Waste?

Response:

Question 17

Having read the Preferred Development Option Document, is there anything else you feel we should include within the Local Plan?

Response:

PLEASE SEE ASSOCIATED EMAIL RESPONSE