



Potential Site Allocations for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Public Consultation Information Pack

October 7th – November 18th 2011

Background

The District Council has a duty to plan for the future development of the District. This includes planning for new homes, jobs, shops and leisure uses. The Council also needs to identify sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, which is the topic of this consultation paper.

The commitment to providing pitches to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is clearly outlined in National Planning Policy as well as in Local Planning Policy. There is, however, a difference between the needs of Gypsies and Travellers to that of Travelling Showpeople and this is explained further below.

Gypsies and Travellers

What is a Pitch?

Gypsy and Traveller sites are made up of a number of caravan pitches and associated facilities. Although there is no national definition of what size a pitch should be, a general guide contained in 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' states that *"an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan...drying space for clothes, a lockable shed...parking space for two vehicles and a small garden"* On average, usage is approximately 1.7 caravans per pitch.

Understanding the District's Needs

The need for Pitches within the District has been assessed through a number of studies and the following table identifies the pitch requirement for Gypsies and Travellers within the District, up until 2022.

Time Frame	Number of Pitches	Source
2006 - 2013	30 (Now 23 as 7 pitches have been developed since 2006)	Adopted Core Strategy
2013 - 2017	5	RSS Phase 3 Interim Policy Statement Options Generation
2017 – 2022	15	Indicative target included within the Phase 3 Policy Statement

Please note that the Core Strategy is Adopted Local Policy and therefore the number of pitches identified by 2013 is required to be delivered.

For more detail on the requirement for pitches please visit the Council's website www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk and follow the links from the Home Page article titled *"Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Consultation"*.

Travelling Showpeople

The needs of Travelling Showpeople are different to Gypsies and Travellers. Their sites often combine residential, storage and maintenance uses. Typically a site contains areas for accommodation, usually caravans and mobile homes, and areas for storing, repairing and maintaining vehicles and fairground equipment. These combined residential and storage sites are known as plots.

There is currently one family of Travelling Showpeople residing within the District. However, they are in need of a new site as the lease on their existing site has expired. Therefore, there is a need for one site for Travelling Showpeople to be identified through this process.

How we have gone about identifying sites?

In order to ensure that the District Council was meeting its requirement to allocate sufficient sites, consultants Baker Associates were appointed to undertake an assessment in 2011. This assessment allowed the consultants to give an independent view on the current situation within the District and to identify potential sites that, in their view, could be suitable to be allocated for future pitch provision.

To read the Baker Associates Study in full please view the Council's website www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk and follow the links from the Home Page article titled "Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Consultation".

The recommendations of this assessment were considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet during September, and the Cabinet decided to put forward the following sites for public consultation:

1. Site at Stourport Road, Bewdley
2. Former Sion Hill School Site, Kidderminster
3. Lea Castle Hospital Site, Cookley, Nr Kidderminster
4. Land adjacent Nunn's Corner, Stourport-on-Severn
5. Saiwen, Stourport-on-Severn
6. The Gables Yard, Stourport-on-Severn
7. Farm, St John's Road, Stourport-on-Severn

How could these sites meet the identified need?

The following table identifies how the short listed sites would be able to meet the identified need.

Planning Requirements		Delivery Estimates from the 7 sites
By 2017	23 pitches by 2013 Further 5 pitches by 2017	Up to 35 pitches (By 2018)
2017 - 2022	Further 15 pitches (indicative)	Up to 15 Pitches (By 2023) Up to 15 Pitches (By 2028)

There is also a requirement for one Travelling Showpeople Site, with the consultation suggesting potential locations at:

Site 1, Stourport Road, Bewdley

Site 3, Lea Castle Hospital Site, Cookley, Nr Kidderminster

Site 7, Farm, St John's Road, Stourport-on-Severn

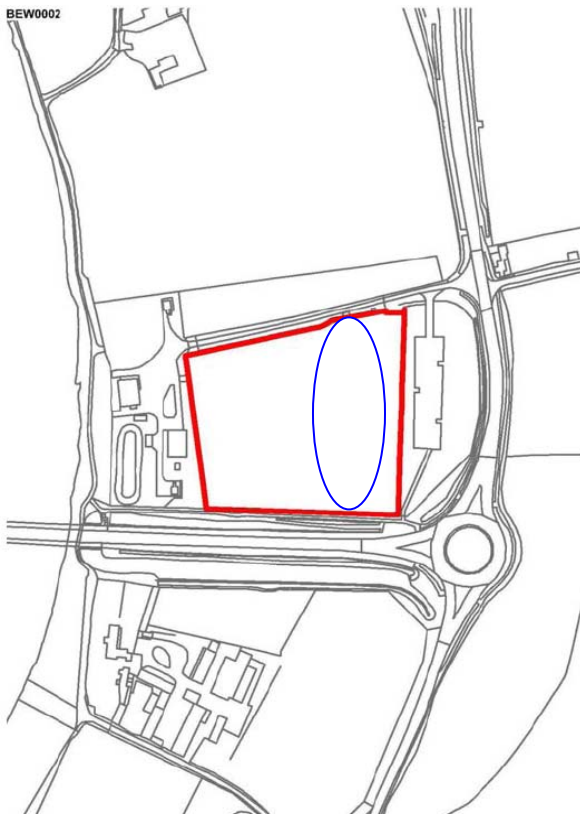
If one of these sites were to be selected for the Travelling Showpeople then this would mean that the potential delivery estimates for that site in terms of Gypsies or Travellers would be reduced.

These seven short listed sites form the basis of this consultation information pack and each of the sites is identified in more detail in the following sections.

SITE 1: Site at Stourport Road, Bewdley
Potential Pitch Provision: 15 Pitches / Or Travelling Showpeople Site

- This site comprises a broadly square level rough pasture field lying between Blackstone car park/picnic area and water works just off the A456, which runs east and south of the site to cross the Severn. The boundaries are defined by hedgerows with highway planting along the southern boundary. A footpath provides access from the car park to the Severn way, passing adjacent to the southern boundary.
- The site is located within the Green Belt and therefore special circumstances would need to be justified for allocation.
- The site is also within the Flood Zone and would need to pass the sequential and exception test to allow development.
- The site is located in close proximity to educational facilities and services.
- The site is not considered to be sensitive in landscape terms but any development within this location would need appropriate screening with hedgerow screening and planted buffers.
- The site has been identified by the land owner as being available for Gypsy and Traveller use.

Site Map



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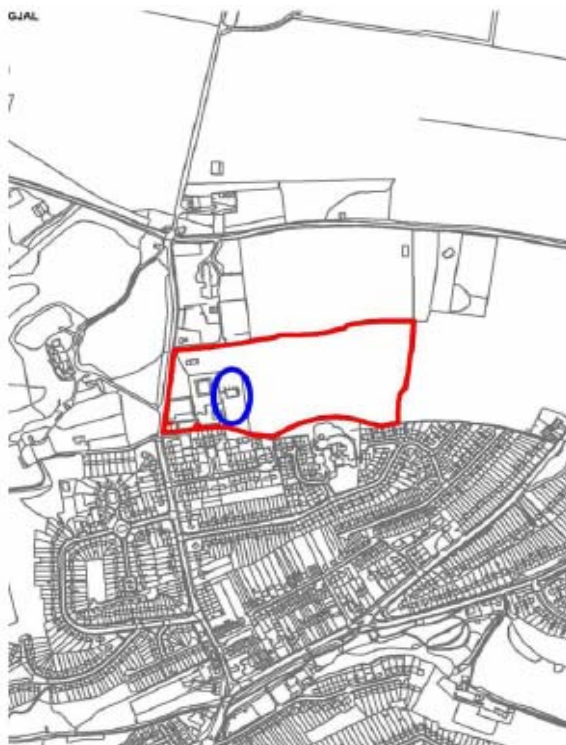


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SITE 2: Former Sion Hill School Site, Kidderminster

Potential Pitch Provision: 10 Pitches

- This site comprises of a redundant school and associated playing fields. The site is located on top of a hill with residential development lying to the south of the site, the edge of which is followed by a public footpath, with a tree belt defining the northern and eastern boundaries with countryside respectively.
- The site is located within the Green Belt and therefore special circumstances would need to be justified for allocation. However, part of the site is Brownfield and comprises existing school buildings. Therefore a small part of the site could potentially be suitable for redevelopment without harm to the Green Belt.
- The site has good access to local facilities including a Primary School, Shop and Bus Stop.
- Any development would need to be coupled with a robust landscape scheme.
- The site is owned by Worcestershire County Council and as the site is publicly owned it is deemed available, in principle. However, the costs for redevelopment may be significant and could have a significant impact on the achievability of the site unless a mixed use scheme was to be considered.



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SITE 3: Lea Castle Hospital Site, Cookley, Nr Kidderminster
Potential Pitch Provision: 15 Pitches/ Or Travelling Showpeople Site

- This site comprises redundant buildings set within a parkland setting surrounded by trees, close to Kidderminster. Adjacent uses include mainly farmland as well as residential properties close to the site.
- The site is within the Green Belt but is identified as a Major Developed Site meaning that some redevelopment within this area is permissible.
- The site is very well screened with numerous trees on site.
- There are issues with regards to the sustainability of the site and access to local facilities.
- Any Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use would need to be considered and delivered through a comprehensive redevelopment of the site.
- The site is within control of the Homes and Communities Agency and so was deemed to be potentially available for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use, for later in the plan period.



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SITE 4: Land adjacent Nunn's Corner, Stourport-on-Severn
Potential Pitch Provision: 4 Pitches

- This site is currently in Gypsy and Traveller use on a flat piece of hardstanding. It is located on Sandy Lane employment area, which has a community of Gypsy and Traveller sites within the local area.
- The site is within Flood Zone 3 and identified as an employment area, although the site does contain 6 existing caravans. There is also a planning application (Ref: 11/0195/FULL) currently being considered to extend this site for another 2 caravans.
- This is an existing tolerated site and if allocated would provide permanency for the existing residents.
- There could potentially be social and economic impacts on these families if they had to move to another area within Wyre Forest District.
- The site is available for Gypsy and Traveller use.
- The consultants identified that given the particular background to the site then it should be considered further for potential allocation.



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SITE 5: Saiwen, Stourport-on-Severn

Potential Pitch Provision: 3 Pitches

- This is a Gypsy and Traveller Site which has 6 caravans, situated within Sandy Lane employment area, which has a community of Gypsy and Traveller sites within the local area.
- One of the static caravans is lawful with the remaining 5 caravans on site currently unauthorised. There is currently a planning application (Ref: 10/0056/FULL) being considered to allow the site to remain in Gypsy and Traveller use.
- The site is also within the Flood Zone and would need to pass the sequential and exception test to allow development.
- The site currently has families living on site and there could potentially be social and economic impacts on these families if they had to move to another area within Wyre Forest District..
- The site is available for Gypsy and Traveller Use.



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SITE 6: The Gables Yard, Stourport-on-Severn
Potential Pitch Provision: 3 Pitches

- This is an existing residential caravan site with 8 caravans on an area of hardstanding. It is adjacent to another Gypsy and Traveller Site and within Sandy Lane employment area, which has a community of Gypsy and Traveller sites within the local area.
- The site is within Flood Zone 2 and is currently allocated in the Local Plan for employment uses.
- The site does have planning permission for 5 residential caravans and 2 touring caravans. There are currently 3 other caravans on site which are not tolerated.
- The consultants have identified that the use of the site for Gypsies and Travellers would be appropriate and that it should be safeguarded through allocation for this particular use.



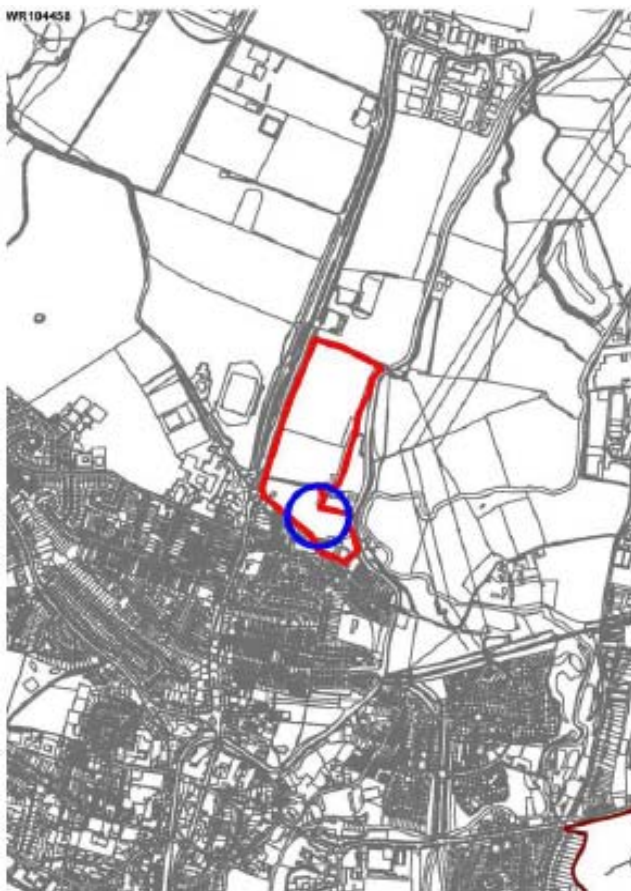
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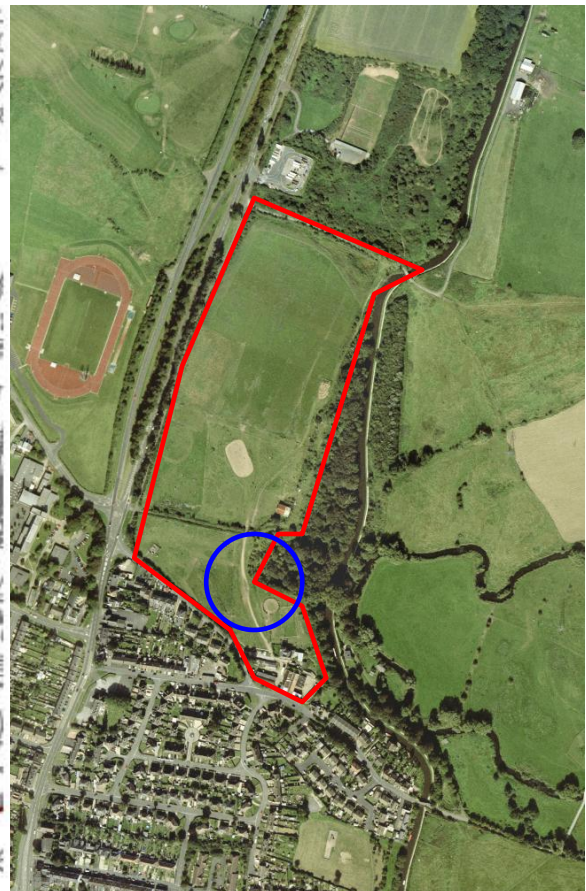
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SITE 7: Farm, St John's Road, Stourport-on-Severn
Potential Pitch Provision: 15 Pitches and/or Travelling Showpeople Site

- This site is located to the north of Stourport-on-Severn and comprises a number of fields with paddocks and farm buildings.
- The site is located within the Green Belt and would require special circumstances to justify allocation.
- Development within the site area could appear as an isolated development and is likely to be significantly prominent.
- The consultants have proposed that this site could form a longer term option should land become available as a result of the Stourport Relief Road being developed. If the Stourport Relief Road is developed then there could also be the option for the site to potentially provide for Travelling Showpeople use as well.
- The site is owned by the District Council and so was deemed to be available for potential use.



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Alternative Sites

As part of this consultation the Council want to know if there are any sites that we have missed which may be suitable for future Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use. Sites need to be available, suitable and achievable (please see Glossary for definitions) so if you know of others that we should have considered please let us know.

How to get Involved

The consultation period will run for 6 weeks from Friday 7th October to Friday 18th November and you can get involved and have your say in a number of ways.

- All of the information relating to this consultation is available on our website. If you click on www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk you can follow the links directly from the home page and respond on-line or download a response form to fill in and send back to us.
- Hard copies of the consultation document can be viewed at the Worcestershire Hubs in Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley and the District's libraries in Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley during their normal opening hours. Hard copy response forms are also available in these locations.
- You can send your completed response forms, or a letter, to us at the following address:

Planning Policy
Wyre Forest District Council
Duke House
Clensmore Street
Kidderminster
DY10 2JX

- Alternatively, you can send an e-mail outlining your comments to the following address LDF.Consultation@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Please remember that we are consulting on how the Council plans for future land use and therefore comments should be focussed on planning reasons as to why a site should or should not be considered.

Please also note that any comments made can not be treated as confidential and will be made public. Inappropriate comments will not be considered through the consultation, more information about this is included on p.13.

Public Meetings

Arrangements are currently being made for public meetings to be held in areas where sites have been identified during the consultation period. These meetings will be available to the public attend and to ask questions regarding the sites and the process of allocation. Further details of these meetings will be made available on the District Council's website at the earliest opportunity.

Inappropriate Consultation Responses

Wyre Forest District Council has a statutory general duty under the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the 2000 Act, to 'pay due regard' to the need to eliminate racial discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good race relations.

Gypsies and Irish Travellers are legally recognised ethnic groups and are protected under the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the 2000 Act. This means it is unlawful for any individual or organisation to treat Gypsies or Travellers less favourably than any other group or to discriminate indirectly.

Through this consultation the council will not tolerate any representations, objections or comments whether via letter, telephone, in person or e-mail that are deemed to be racist or discriminatory. In general terms, a racist representation is one which includes words, slang, names, phrases or comments which are:

- Offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group
- Racially abusive, insulting or threatening
- Apply pressure to discriminate on racial grounds; or
- Stir up racial hatred, discrimination and/or disrespect

Representations which are deemed to include racist or discriminatory content will be returned and reported in the consultation as inappropriate content and any comments within those representations can not be considered as part of the consultation process.

Therefore, please ensure that any comments you wish to make on this consultation reflect planning related issues only.

What happens next?

Following the close of consultation, all responses will be reported to Councillors in January 2012. Following this, a decision on the most appropriate way forward will be made and the chosen sites included as part of the document known as the 'Site Allocations and Policies' Development Plan Document, which will detail all the potential new sites for development within the District. This document will then be subject to further consultation during the early part of 2012 with an Independent Inspector making the final decision on the Document's suitability via a Public Examination in late summer 2012. The decisions on Site Allocations will therefore not be taken until late in 2012.

Glossary

Consideration of Sites:

- **Available:** That the site is available for the intended purpose.
- **Suitable:** That the site offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
- **Achievable:** There is a reasonable prospect of the site being delivered and that any constraints identified are capable of being overcome.

Core Strategy: Wyre Forest District Council has an Adopted Core Strategy (December 2010) which is the document that sets out the Strategy and Vision that will guide the development of the District up until 2026.

Mixed-use scheme: Is a scheme which includes a number of different types of uses, as identified in the 'Use Classes Order' of 2005. For example, developments that include homes, shops and offices in one scheme would be classed as 'mixed use'

Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document: This document will allocate sites for specific types of development in accordance with the Core Strategy. This is the document that will ultimately include the allocated Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites.

Tolerated Sites: Are sites that are currently in Gypsy and Traveller use that do not benefit from planning permission for that use but are tolerated by the Local Authority.