

**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

**SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD: SUPPLEMENTARY ISSUES  
AND OPTIONS**

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CONSULTATION**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Dacorum Borough Council is in the process of converting existing development policies into the new Local Development Framework format, which will include a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). Part of the role of the Site Allocations DPD will be to allocate land to meet the need for the provision of more Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough. The Council has recently consulted on potential sites during November/December 2008, and this report forms part of that process.
- Vision Twentyone were commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council to undertake a number of face-to-face interviews with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community to gain an understanding of their views on the sites that have been put forward, identifying important factors to take into account when considering future site provision.
- Vision Twentyone interviewed twenty-two members of the Gypsy and Traveller community over the course of two days face-to-face interviewing. This included both those currently living on and off sites. One interview was carried out over the telephone.
- All interviewees agreed that the factors identified by the Council were indeed key factors to consider, however some were highlighted as being particularly important to the Gypsy and Traveller Community. Key themes included the proximity of the site to services and facilities, potential impact on existing settlement and residential land uses and proximity to existing sites. Size of site was also considered very important.
- Members of the Gypsy and Traveller community would like to see the provision of smaller sites. Those interviewees living on larger sites felt that a site of around fifteen pitches would be a reasonable size. Conversely those living on smaller sites or had lived on smaller sites of around six pitches felt that a site of fifteen pitches would be far too large and that sites should ideally accommodate between six to eight pitches.
- There was a clear split of opinion between those who were residing on a County Council run site who favoured such managed sites, and members of the community who were, had previously, or hold aspirations to live on and manage a site in the future, who favoured privately managed sites.
- In the majority of the interviews the interviewee had a limited and more localised knowledge of the Borough.
- Where interviewees were unable to provide any detailed comments on possible sites a number referred back to some of the criteria they feel it is important to consider when assessing the suitability of future sites.

- Those interviewed were of the opinion that future sites should be spread across the Borough, with a preference for no more than one Gypsy and Traveller site in each settlement. Hemel Hemstead was the exception as it was considered this may be able to accommodate an additional site, due to the size and nature of the settlement. However, a site on the south side of the town was preferred as this was felt to be a reasonable distance from the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site.
- Bovingdon was identified as a favourable location for a future site. This is because of its location being in the south of the Borough, positioned away from the two existing Council managed sites.
- Whilst it was felt by some interviewees that Berkhamsted would be an appropriate location for a Gypsy and Traveller site, a number of references were made to the likelihood that planning permission would be approved for a site in that area/settlement.
- Interviewees commenting on sites in Tring highlighted a concern that any new sites would be near to the existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Long Marston.
- Some interviewees felt that Hemel was substantial enough in size, providing a considerable number of services and facilities to be able to accommodate a further site for Gypsies and Travellers.
- The majority of respondents did not believe that transit provision was required within the Borough. However, some of the interviewees recognised the benefit of having transit provision enabling travelling families to have a place to stay on for a short time that was 'off the road'. If transit pitches were to be provided in the future it was thought that these should be County Council run.
- During the interviews a number of issues were raised relating to Gypsy and Traveller site provision which did not directly relate to the Site Allocations DPD, these included site design, accommodating future growth and existing sites.
- The Council should continue to consult with the Gypsy and Traveller Community when it reaches the next stage in the site allocations process and should consult on site design.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 The Local Development Framework and Site Allocations**

Following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Dacorum Borough Council, like all other local authorities, is in the process of converting existing development policies into the new Local Development Framework format. As part of the Local Development Framework process Dacorum Borough Council will produce a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) specifically intended to identify new sites that may be promoted for particular uses. Examples include as housing or employment and broader designations such as the location of town and village boundaries. Part of the Site Allocations DPD will allocate land to meet the need for the provision of more Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough.

To date, Dacorum Borough Council has consulted residents on the Issues and Options as part of the production of its Site Allocations DPD. The Issues and Options document sought comments on a number of themes relating to the location of, and future provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough. Following the Site Allocations DPD Issues and Options consultation, a further document (Site Allocations DPD: Supplementary Issues and Options Paper, (November 2006)) was produced by the Council, which included a list of potential sites, to look in more detail at the future provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities within the Borough. The challenge is to find the best sites not only for Gypsies and Travellers themselves, but also for the settled community.

### **2.2 Purpose of the consultation**

The Single Issue Review of the East of England Plan contains a new policy which would require Dacorum Borough Council to provide 15 new pitches in the next three years, with a further 44 pitches being provided by 2031. There are 26 sites identified that may be suitable, located across the main settlements in the Borough. As part of the consultation on the supplementary 'Issues and Options' during November/December 2008 the Council appointed Vision Twentyone to advise on, and implement an effective consultation strategy to:

- consult with the local Gypsy and Traveller community within Dacorum undertaking a number of face-to-face interviews
- design and facilitate the interviews to ensure that they aid understanding, use appropriate techniques and recording mechanisms
- prepare this report for Dacorum Borough Council, which records the views of the local Gypsy and Traveller community on a series of questions concerning the suitability, concentration and nature of future sites and can be used as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, (a list of the questions discussed during the face-to-face interviews is provided at Appendix One).

The consultation supplements and complements the work undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council to consult key stakeholders, the settled community and statutory consultees on the Site Allocations DPD: Supplementary Issues and Options Paper.

### 2.3 The value of stakeholder engagement in the LDF process

A key driver in the LDF process is the involvement of communities in the development and planning system. It is acknowledged that a front-loaded, effective and participatory consultation programme for Development Plan Documents will lead to improved policies and proposals, and greater community ownership of the resultant document.

PPS12 (June 2008) places the onus on Local Authorities to consider who should be involved in the preparation of DPDs and to therefore take steps that they consider appropriate to involve them. PPS12 establishes that Development Plan Documents must be *deliverable* rather than *aspirational* and in relation to consultation:

- the community and key stakeholders must be involved from the start – work should be linked with the Sustainable Community Strategy; an evidence base should be established which has input from stakeholders who have the specialist knowledge and data
- options should be worked up in consultation with the community and stakeholders.

The overall consultation programme for the Site Allocations DPD must also adhere to the principles in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (June 2006). The SCI established that statutory consultees, stakeholders (identified in the SCI) and communities in the vicinity of the sites proposed were to be engaged at this stage of the production process.

### 2.4 Methodology

Vision Twentyone facilitated discussion with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community through a series of face-to face interviews. A discussion guide was produced in conjunction with Dacorum Borough Council to explore the views of the Gypsy and Traveller community (see Appendix One). The discussion guide and accompanying maps were designed to reflect the issues around future provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites. The discussion with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community focused around the following key themes:

- site suitability and requirements
- size
- management
- possible sites
- types of provision.

To aid discussion, interviewees were also able to view a number of maps highlighting the locations of the sites under discussion. Copies of the maps and a list of the potential sites are provided at Appendix Two.

Liaising with the Gypsy Section of Hertfordshire County Council, interviewees were sourced from the two existing Gypsy and Traveller sites within Dacorum (Long Marston and Three Cherry Trees in Hemel Hempstead) and Gypsy and Traveller families living in houses within the Borough. Interviews were also carried out with members of the community who had a history of residing within the Borough, but were currently living out of the area.

Twenty-one members of the Gypsy and Traveller Community were interviewed over the course of two days face-to-face interviewing. One interview was carried out over the telephone. The face-to-face interviews were carried out on an individual basis, or in small groups of two or three to ensure that the discussions were conducted in a format that respondents were most comfortable with. Where interviewees were in agreement interviews were recorded, otherwise notes were taken during the interview. All participants were assured of confidentiality.

## **2.5 Appreciation**

Vision Twentyone would like to extend thanks to the Gypsy Section of Hertfordshire County Council and to all those who kindly took part in the interviews.

This report is based on research undertaken by the study team and the analysis and comment thereafter does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Borough Council.

## 3.0 CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### 3.1 Overall findings

This section reviews the key findings of the consultation with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. It will examine views on site size, suitability and requirements, management, possible sites and types of provision.

### 3.2 Site requirements

Discussion with all the interviewees commenced with an overview of the key aspects/criteria that the Council are advised (for example through Government Circular 01/2006) are particularly important when choosing sites. Interviewees were given examples of the key factors the Council will consider when choosing sites such as the availability of the site, its proximity to nearby housing, access, and impact on any nearby settlements. Members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were asked if they agreed with these and if any were of particular importance (please refer to attached discussion guide in Appendix One for full list of considerations).

All interviewees agreed that these were indeed key things to consider, however some were identified as being particularly important to the Gypsy and Traveller Community. They were:

- **Proximity to local services and facilities**

All those interviewed noted that the closeness of a site to local services and facilities was particularly important to them and should be one of the key Council considerations when looking at future provision. It was noted as being particularly important to be located within a reasonable distance of schools, doctors surgeries and shops. Interviewees reasons for needing these services within close proximity often related to the age of a resident, their mobility, or if they had children.

*“Sites should be close to a village especially if they have got kids as they need an education in this day and age.”*

*“Some sites they build too far out and then old people can’t get to the facilities, like they can’t get to the services or the local shop or the post office.”*

*“A lot of people want a place a bit in the countryside but near enough to facilities like schools and doctors.”*

- **Potential impact on existing settlement and residential land uses**

Bearing in mind the need to be close to local services and facilities, interviewees also considered that there was a need to keep some degree of separation from a site for the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled population. It was highlighted that an area of separation would benefit the Gypsy and Traveller community and settled community alike. Interviewees noted an awareness of the hostility they often face through the introduction, or possible introduction of a new site into an area and the



fears that members of the settled community often have of a Gypsy and Traveller site being introduced into a settlement. It was felt that by locating sites a reasonable distance from the main settlements a compromise could be reached with both communities. There was a feeling that both communities needed to mix to enable a better understanding to develop. A number of interviewees felt that larger settlements may be able to absorb a new site with less difficulty and would offer a wider range of services and facilities than perhaps a smaller village would.

*“You want to keep sites out a little bit but not too far out. Just nicely so everybody can be friends with each other, and if they can start mixing with people from the local town so everybody can get to know each other and start working along with them.”*

*“Sites should not be too far out in the country. People have to learn to live together and mix together.”*

*“No matter where you build a travelling site people are going to object. So you have to play ball and find a compromise with both communities.”*

- **Proximity to existing sites**

Whether there are any other existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in the vicinity was also a key issue to some interviewees when considering future Gypsy and Traveller site provision. Many of those interviewed that were residents on existing sites stated that they would not wish to see another site being provided too close to them. This was particularly evident in discussion with those living in a small village. There appear to be a number of reasons for this, the main ones being a fear from the Gypsy and Traveller community of a new group of people coming into an area close to them when they have a good relationship with the settled community. It was felt that a new group of people could cause problems with the settled community and damage a relationship that been established over a number of years.

There was also recognition amongst interviewees that the Gypsy and Traveller community often got ‘tarred with the same brush’, and it was very easy for a small minority of the community to cause trouble and for this behaviour to be associated with the whole community. Proximity of sites to each other was also noted as an issue that needed to be considered in relation to any impact this would have on the existing settlement. Some respondents felt that sites too close to each other could overwhelm the settlement making it harder for the sites to integrate with the settled community and possibly put pressure on local services such as schools.

*“Sites should be spread out.. [I’m] Afraid that if there are too many sites in one place, if one family were to cause trouble then people from the other site may get tarred with the same brush.”*

*“We don’t want another site near us there is not enough population [within the settled community in the village].”*

Once interviewees had discussed the considerations from the list that they felt were most important, they were asked to identify any further criteria that they felt was particularly important for the Council to consider when looking at the future provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites. A significant majority of those interviewed stated that the size of a site was one of the most important aspects to them when considering site suitability as it was one of the first factors that came up in discussion. This report goes on to look at site size in more detail in Section 3.3 below. There were three key reasons why site size was particularly important to interviewees:

- Relationships within the Gypsy and Traveller Community
- Management; and
- Relationship with the settled community.

### 3.3 Site size

The Council are keen to ensure that any new sites are of the right size. Government design advice suggests sites of around fifteen pitches and interviewees were asked to give their feelings on this number, give their recommendations for the size of future sites and their reasoning behind their recommendations. It is worth noting at this point that views on site size and interviewees opinion on the possible fifteen pitches correlated with the experience of any sites that they had previously resided on, or the size of the site on which they were currently living.

All respondents without exception would like to see the provision of smaller sites in the future. Those interviewees living on larger sites felt that a site of around fifteen pitches would be a reasonable size. Whereas those living on smaller sites or who had lived on smaller sites of around six pitches felt that a site of fifteen pitches would be far too large and that sites should ideally accommodate between six to eight pitches. There was a clear split over site size with half of the interviewees (11 of the 22) noting a preference for around 6-10 pitches per sites, with the other half noting a preference for sites of around 15 pitches.

*"Fifteen pitches on a site is too big...about six pitches is the best site size, maximum about eight."*

*"I think the wisest thing would be to build it for between six and eight – six and ten."*

*"Six pitches is a good size [for a site]."*

*"Sites should not be too big."*

*"Think about 15 pitches is just right, anything larger and they would be too much trouble."*

*"Anymore than 15 would be too big and get very hard to manage."*

Members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were then asked to identify the benefits of providing the size of site they had identified as being the most

appropriate. Again, the different perceptions of those living or previously living on large sites of around thirty pitches have when compared with those who predominantly have experience of much smaller sites of around six pitches should be borne in mind.

- **Relationships within the Gypsy and Traveller Community**

There was a feeling amongst all those interviewed that the provision of smaller sites would result in less difficulties within the Gypsy and Traveller Community itself. Respondents noted a preference towards living with people on a site that are either members of the extended family, or families they have an understanding of and close relationship with. There were a number of interviewees who gave examples of issues they had in the past as a result of sites being too mixed and new people being introduced on a site.

*“Sites should be around six pitches, that way you can have one family on a site. If you start going above this size this is when you start getting trouble.”*

*“The smaller the site the better. [You get] More trouble on large sites. Fifteen pitches is too large. It means that people are mixed and people don't get on.”*

*“Just have one family on there and then everyone gets on.”*

*“Smaller the better, less trouble when you don't mix different types of travellers.”*

- **Management**

A number of interviewees noted the relationship between the size of a site and its management, expressing the opinion that they felt smaller sites were easier to manage. One of the main reasons for this is the relationships within the Gypsy and Traveller community as described above. It was felt that just having one family or members of an extended family on a site made it easier to manage. General maintenance on a smaller site was also thought to be easier.

*“A mixed crowd is harder to manage. If you have the right management on a site you can keep the site nice.”*

*“Smaller sites are easier to manage.”*

*“Any more than 15 would be too big and get very hard to manage.”*

- **Relationship with the settled community**

A few interviewees raised the issue of the Gypsy and Traveller community's relationship with the settled community. It was suggested that the provision of smaller sites may also be of benefit to the settled community and the size of the settlement should be taken into consideration when looking at the size of site to provide.

*“Towns should have larger sites and villages smaller sites.”*

*“Small sites are not such a burden on the settled community.”*

When asked whether interviewees felt that other members of their community would hold similar views in relation to site size, a significant majority felt that other members of their community would like to see smaller sites provided. It was noted that exact pitch requirements would often relate to the size of a family or the number of people or extent of extended family that they would like to live with on a site.

### 3.4 Site management

There are a number of options for the management of future Gypsy and Traveller sites. Interviewees were asked who they would prefer to manage any new sites and the reason for this preference.

This question highlighted a clear split of opinion between those who were residing on a County Council run site who favoured sites managed by them (15 interviewees) and those members of the community who had previously, or currently hold aspirations to live and manage a site in the future (3 interviewees). A number of positive and negative features of both types of management options were identified by interviewees, with four of the interviewees citing that they had no preferred management option.

<u>County Council Management</u>	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Council have a fault line so you can report anything that goes wrong and they will come out and fix it. They are very good on the response, years ago you used to have to go to the warden.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The Council know all the rules and regulations and the law.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Better being managed by the Council, they make sure everything that needs to be done is done.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“You may get anyone living on a site with you.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Sites are mixed.”</i></li> </ul>

<u>Private Management</u>	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The person running the site can choose who resides on the site so there is less likely to be any trouble.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I have never had any problem from the Council. Some sites run by gypsies are okay and work well and others don’t, some are too bossy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Privately run sites are responsible for running and maintaining the sites themselves which has a benefit.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Sites managed by a Gypsy or Traveller give that person too much control. They can decide who can and can’t come into the site.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It would take Travellers a long time to get up to speed on the rules and regulations.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Sites shouldn’t be privately managed....there are too many cliques.”</i></li> </ul>

Nearly all interviewees stated that the key to successful management of sites relates to the mix of people residing on them, and this was crucial in the success of any site.

The interviewees that were living in caravans but not currently residing on a Council run pitch in the Borough were particularly keen to manage one of the future Gypsy and Traveller sites. A number of these interviewees had past or present experience of living on unofficial encampments within the area. They were very keen for new sites to be provided in the future to allow them and their respective families to reside permanently in the Borough on an allocated site.

A number of comments were made during the interviews, particular by those who would like to see future sites privately run, referring to the difficulty members of the Gypsy and Travelling community have had in the past obtaining planning permission for sites they own.

### 3.5 Possible sites

In March 2007 the Council published a report that was prepared by consultants Scott Wilson: Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in South and West Hertfordshire Stage Two – Identification of Potential Gypsy and Traveller Sites in the Study Area (September 2006). The study identified 24 locations in Dacorum. The locations were considered against a variety of criteria, including proximity to specific local services and facilities (e.g. shops, schools and doctors surgeries etc.), access to the road network, achieving a suitable site size, the ability of sites to be landscaped, and the need for a buffer with existing housing. The study ranked individual locations, sites being ranked from one to three; those sites receiving a score of one being most suitable. Two further sites were put forward by members of the public.

At this point in the discussion interviewees were shown a map of the Borough highlighting the sites being considered by the Council. Interviewees could also view more detailed maps of the settlements with the sites marked on in red, amber or green, corresponding to how they had scored in terms of suitability. Green illustrated the most favourable sites, with red being less suitable. (Copies of the site maps and ranking are provided in Appendix Two)

It is first important to note that each interviewee had a different knowledge of the Borough. In the majority of the interviews those being interviewed had limited knowledge of the Borough as a whole, instead having a more localised knowledge. Interviewees were able to comment and make recommendations on the geographical spread and number of sites in a location. Few were able to comment on specific sites unless they had a prior knowledge of them, or the area in which they are located.

*"I can only really comment about from here to Bovington as I am familiar with that area."*

*"[I] Can only talk about the Hemel area as I know that area."*

Where interviewees were unable to provide any detailed comments on possible sites some referred back to some of the criteria they feel it is important to consider when assessing the suitability of future sites. It was highlighted that the Council should look at the 26 sites with these in mind. It was felt that if the sites that had been identified as not as suitable (identified in red on the map as scoring '3') when considered against the criteria could be disregarded. Interviewees once again re-affirmed the importance of site size, proximity to other sites, local services and facilities when looking at locations for future Gypsy and Traveller sites.

### **3.5.1 Site locations**

All those interviewed (22 interviewees) were of the opinion that future sites should be spread across the Borough with a preference for no more than one Gypsy and Traveller site in each settlement, with the exception of Hemel Hemstead. The reasons towards the preference to see future sites being geographically spread across Dacorum were two-fold. Interviewees already residing on sites within the borough did not want another site close to their existing site. It was also felt that too many sites in one location would have a detrimental impact on the existing settled community in that location.

When asked to clarify why new sites should not be too close to existing sites and spread geographically, some interviewees stated that there would be a far lower potential for conflict between the members of the Gypsy and Traveller community if sites were a reasonable distance apart. It was also felt that smaller sites across the Borough in different locations would be beneficial for the settled community.

*"Little sites should be dotted around, this would cause less trouble for the settled community."*

*"There should not be any more than one site in each area."*

*"If you put any sites this side of Tring [Long Marston side], Tring would be finished, you see what happens is people bring more and more trailers and family members onto sites and they will take over the place."*

### 3.5.2 Favoured site locations

The areas of Dacorum which interviewees identified as most favourable were:

- **Bovingdon**

It was felt the location of Bovingdon, being to the south of the Borough away from the two existing Council run sites in Dacorum would make it a favourable location for a future site. The site at the airfield (D18-Bovingdon (Airfield)) was highlighted as a positive location, however there was some concern with regard to its possible proximity to the prison, or whether it would cause disruption to the airfield.

*"Bovingdon would be in-between and a good location. There are no private sites up there either."*

*"Site should not be right next to the prison."*

*"Bovingdon would be a good place on the old airfield."*

- **Berkhamsted**

Opinions on the possibility of a site in Berkhamsted were mixed. Whilst it was felt by some interviewees to be an appropriate location for a Gypsy and Traveller site, a number of references were made to the ability to get permission for a site in that area/settlement. One interviewee felt that Berkhamsted may not be suitable as they felt it is too close to the existing site at Long Marston.

*"Berkhamsted would be a good location for a site, somewhere in the middle [of the Borough]."*

*"Tring, Berkhamsted near the by-pass and Bovingdon should have one."*

*"You won't get a site near Berkhamsted."*

*"Berkhamsted is too near the existing sites in Long Marston."*

A couple of the interviewees noted the suitability of site D3 Swing Gate Lane, referencing its proximity to both the by-pass for access, transport links and close proximity to a school.



- **Tring**

Interviewees commenting on sites in Tring highlighted a concern that any new sites would be near to the existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Long Marston. Opinions on a possible site here were mixed with concerns also being raised with regard to the Icknield Way sites (D11 – Icknield Way (South side)). It was considered to be too close to the industrial estate, with one interviewee believing that in the past that area of land had been subject to flooding. The site at Little Tring Road (D10) was not thought to be suitable as the track adjacent to it is thought to be regularly used by bird watchers. One interviewee believed the Tesco side of Tring to be an appropriate location for a new Gypsy and Traveller site.

*“Not sure if the site next to the industrial site would be a good site [D11].”*

- **Hemel Hempstead**

Hemel Hempstead was the exception to the, ‘one settlement - one site’ view. A number of interviewees (which included some residents of the existing site in Hemel) felt that an additional site could be accommodated. Interviewees felt that Hemel was substantial enough in size, providing a considerable number of services and facilities to be able to accommodate a further site for Gypsies and Travellers.

None of the interviewees in Hemel had specific knowledge of the sites proposed there but favoured the sites on the south of Hemel at Featherbed Lane (D1), or Bourne End (D26) as it was felt that these sites were a reasonable distance from the existing Three Cherry Trees site. When asked specifically if interviewees in Hemel had any comments with regard to the Highwood site (D15) they found it difficult to comment on the specifics, but felt that its location may be too close to the existing site at Three Cherry Trees.

*“If there is another site the other side of the town in Hemel it would take the strain off existing sites.”*

*“One the other side of Hemel would be okay but not too close to the existing sites.”*

### **3.5.3 Possible site suggestions**

During the course of the interviews two further sites were suggested for consideration:

- Old Tree Place, Lower Icknield Way, Wilstone – The site is close to the village, has access to main roads and has grazing for horses; and
- Fox Lane (off Fox Road), Tring.

However, these two locations would seem to contradict earlier comments regarding proximity to the existing Long Marston site.



One interviewee highlighted the area of Kings Langley as a suitable location for a future site and it was put forward that a site search should be undertaken there.

### 3.6 Transit provision

When asked to consider future provision of transit sites within the Borough the majority of respondents (15 of the 22 interviewed) did not believe that this was something that was required. A large number of those interviewed were aware of the transit site located on the M25 adjacent to the South Mimms service area and believed it to be sufficient to cater for that particular need within the area. Some of the interviewees did recognise the benefit of having transit provision to enable those families travelling to have a place to stay on for a short time that was 'off the road'. If transit pitches were to be provided in the future it was thought that these should be Council run. It was noted that there may not be a need for transit pitches if more permanent pitches were to be provided. It was also noted by two interviewees wanting to manage a site in the future that additional pitches could be provided on sites to accommodate visiting family and friends.

*"Transit pitches help get people off the road. It should be on its own and sites should be [County] Council run."*

Interviewees main concerns about the provision of transit sites related to people coming and going and not staying in an area for any length of time.

*"Most Travellers don't like transit sites as they don't know who is going to come on next."*

### 3.7 Other issues

During the interviews a number of other issues were raised relating to Gypsy and Traveller site provision.

- **Accommodating future growth**

When discussing the need to accommodate for future growth within the Borough some interviewees highlighted the possibility of building new sites that could not only accommodate current need within the Borough, but also accommodate for future growth within them. It was noted that by providing large enough pitches it would be possible for younger members of a family to move into a caravan of their own once married, but remain on the same pitch as their parents. This would dispense with some of the need to continually be finding additional pitches through new sites.

- **Design**

A large number of those interviewed made reference to the design of new sites. Many felt that it would be useful if the Council consulted with them further when sites were in the design stages to ensure that there is a greater understanding of how people live and what people need. This would therefore make the end site design more suitable as it would have

been designed with them, not for them. Design issues that were highlighted during the interviews included:

- Provision should be made for a children's play area.
  - Pitches should be large and the same size within a site.
  - Good design will help sites integrate into the settled community.
  - The same design rules should apply to a Gypsy and Traveller site as the settled community. For example the question was raised as to the need for security fencing round play areas and bunds to contain a site. It was felt that the design of some of the existing sites had the effect of ghettoising the Gypsy and Traveller community living there.
  - Amenity blocks should be practical and well designed.
  - Good design and layout of a site will have a significant impact on how the site is managed and cared for in the future.
- **Existing sites**  
Although the majority of interviewees currently residing on a site within the Borough were happy with their site and the way it was managed a few highlighted that they felt that more could be done on the existing sites to improve them, particularly in relation to amenity blocks.

### 3.8 Demographics of interviewees

#### 3.8.1 Gender

	Count
Male	9
Female	13
Total	22

#### 3.8.2 Age

	Count
Under 16	0
16-24	0
25-34	8
35-44	8
45-54	1
55-64	5
65-74	0
75 and over	0
Total	22

### 3.8.3 Place of residence

	Count
Site	19
House	3
Total	22

### 3.8.4 Length of time residing in the area

	Count
0-10 years	9
11 - 20 years	6
21 - 30 years	1
Over 30 years	4
Note: two respondents were not currently living in the area but had a history of living in Dacorum and were keen to return	
Total	22

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusions

The core findings of the face-to-face interviews undertaken can be found below:

- Sites should be considered against the issues identified by the Council, particularly a site's proximity to services, facilities, existing sites and the potential impact on the settlement.
- In addition to the key things the Council are advised as being important when assessing sites, size should also be a significant determining factor of site suitability.
- The Gypsy and Travellers interviewed expressed a preference for smaller sites, which they believed to be easier to manage, although there were differences as to the appropriate scale.
- Gypsy and Travellers are keen for new sites to be located in close proximity to local services and facilities, whilst maintaining a degree of separation from a settlement to ease integration with the settled community.
- The management of a site should be judged on a site by site basis as there are number of positive and negative factors relating to the management of a site by the County Council or a private interest.
- New sites should be spread across the Borough with no more than one site in each settlement, with the exception of Hemel Hempstead. However, any new sites there should be located on the south side of the town away from the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site.
- Bovingdon was identified as a favourable location for a future site. This is because of its location to the south of the Borough, positioned away from the two existing Council managed sites.
- Whilst it was felt by some interviewees that Berkhamsted would be an appropriate location for a Gypsy and Traveller site, a number of references were made to the likelihood planning permission would be approved for a site in that area/settlement.
- Interviewees commenting on sites in Tring highlighted a concern that any new sites would be near to the existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Long Marston.
- Some interviewees felt that Hemel was substantial enough in size, providing a considerable number of services and facilities to be able to accommodate a further site for Gypsies and Travellers.
- New sites should not be located close to existing sites.
- If sites score poorly against the criteria identified as being important to the Council they should be discarded, with the ones scoring more favourably being investigated further.
- The Gypsy and Traveller community does not see a current need for transit provision within the Borough despite recognising the benefits to those travelling on the road. If a site were to be provided it should be County Council managed.
- A number of other issues have been raised during the course of the interviews which the Council should consider further, such as the design of sites and accommodating for future growth within new sites.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

A number of key recommendations have emerged from the interviews:

- The Council should continue to consult with the Gypsy and Traveller Community throughout the Sites Allocations process.
- The Council should consult further with the Gypsy and Traveller Community regarding the design of future sites.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**Discussion guide questions**

## DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

### Consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller Community:

### Site Allocations Supplementary Issues and Options Paper

#### Site requirements

**Q1.** These are some key things the Council think are important when choosing sites – For example: *(interviewer to give some examples from the list below)*

- Is the site available? – for example, whether the site owner is willing to sell, and whether the timescales for provision are appropriate
- Is the site suitable? - e.g. in terms of pollution/contamination, flood risk, safe access arrangements
- What impact will the site have on the character and appearance of the area?
- Will the site impact on any areas of environmental protection? such as wildlife sites or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- What impact will there be on nearby residents or other adjoining land users?
- Where is the site and is it close to local facilities? Preference is given to sites within or adjoining settlements with access to local services, e.g. shops, Doctors and schools.
- What impact will there be on the nearest settlement? sites should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community
- Is the proposed site near any existing sites?
- Access to public transport such as buses.
- Can the site be properly landscaped?
- Ease of access to main roads.
- Can the site be reasonably separated from any nearby housing?
- Is the site large enough to accommodate the planned number of pitches and other facilities e.g. parking, access road, play areas etc?

**Q2.** What other things when selecting sites should they take into account that is not already mentioned? Please give your reasons.

#### Site size

**Q3.** The Council want to make sure any new site is of the right size. Previous studies have recommended smaller sites of around 15 pitches (about the size of the Ver Meadow site in Redbourn). What do you think is the right size of site?



- Q4.** Do you think other members of your community share your view about the size of sites?

## **Management**

- Q5.** Who would you prefer to manage any new site(s)?

## **Possible Sites**

- Q6.** These are the locations being considered around Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Bovingdon Markyate and Bourne End (interviewer to show map).
- Q7.** The Council has indicated those sites (*sites in red on the map and in the list in interviewer note table*) that it believes are less suitable, and may not want to take these forward to the next stage.

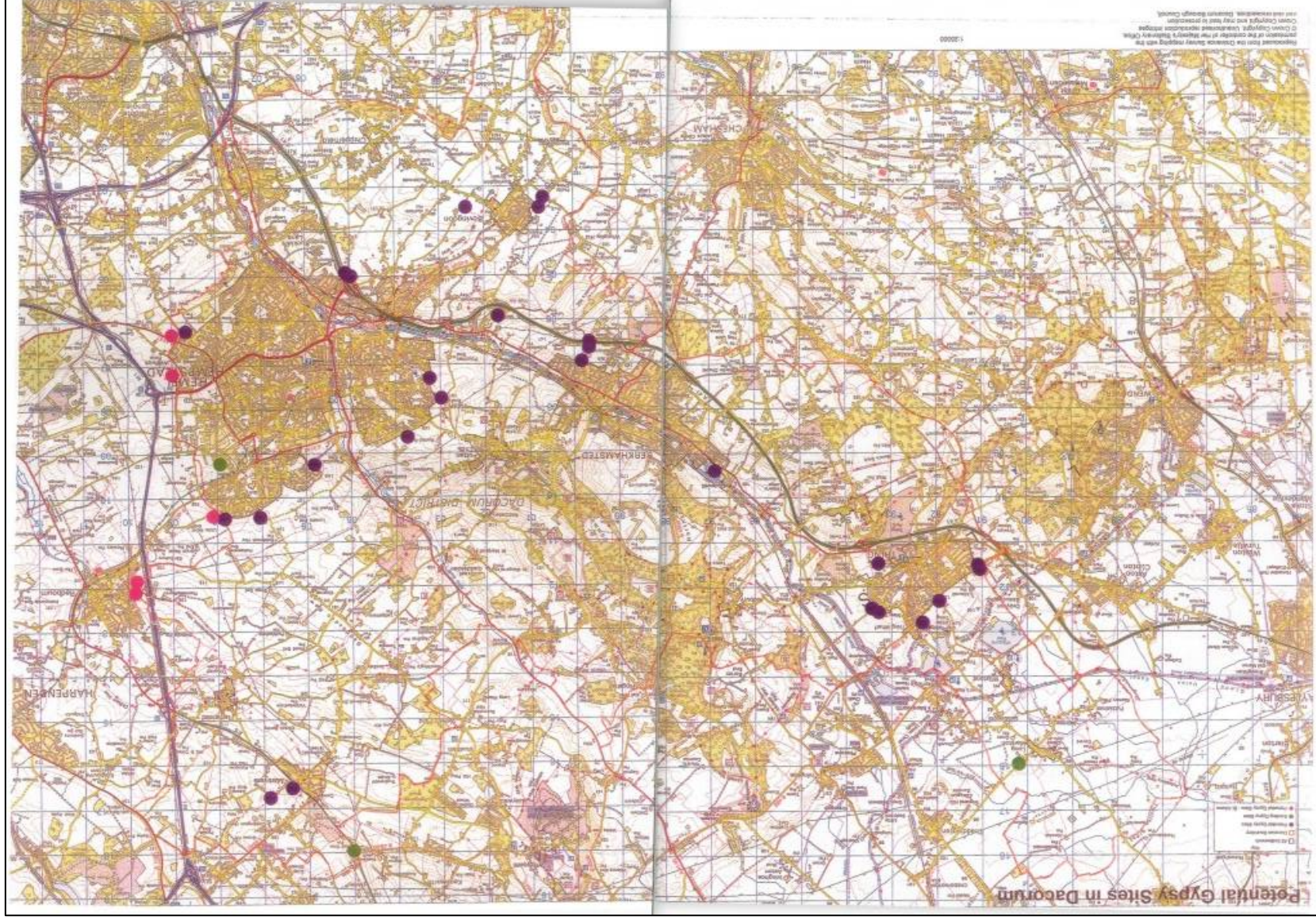
Do you agree that they shouldn't be considered anymore?

- Q8.** If the Council had to provide several sites, how do you think they should be spread across the borough?
- Q9.** If sites need to be provided around Berkhamsted, Tring, Bovingdon or Markyate the Council is asking whether no more than one should be provided in each settlement. Do you agree with this?
- Q10.** Do you know of any other sites or locations in Dacorum that may be suitable? Please provide details (and/or mark on a map).

## **Transit provision**

- Q11.** Do you think the Council should also provide transit pitches in the Borough?
- Q12.** How many of these pitches are needed and how should they be managed?

**APPENDIX TWO:  
Maps and list of potential locations**



*Note: Original map provided at interviews at A2*



<b>Hemel Hemstead</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D1 Featherbed Lane	1
D2 Felden (Featherbed Lane)	3
D15 Highwood (Holtmere End Lane)	1
D19 Cupid Green Lane	2
D20 Grovehill	3
D21 Polehanger Lane	3
D22 Fields End Lane	3
D23 Long Chaulden	2
D24 Leverstock Green (Bedmond Road)	3

<b>Tring</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D7 Upper Dunsley (London Road)	3
D8 Marshcroft Lane (SE Side)	3
D9 Marshcroft Lane (NW side)	3
D10 Little Tring Road	2
D11 Icknield Way (South side)	1
D12 Icknield Way (North side)	3
D25 Land adjacent to Longbridge Close Identified by member of the public	No score – separately estimated as being 3.

<b>Bovingdon</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D16 Longcroft (Longcroft Flauden Lane)	3
D17 Bovingdon (Green Lane)	2
D18 Bovingdon (Airfield)	1

<b>Markyate</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D13 Windmill (Windmill Lane)	3
D14 The Ridings	3

<b>Bourne End</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D26 Land adj. Bourne End Ind Estate - Identified by member of the public	No score. It would not meet criteria.

<b>Berkhamsted</b>	<b>Scott Wilson Report Ranking</b>
D3 Berkhamsted (Swing Gate Lane)	1
D4 Ashlyns Hall (Swing Gate Lane)	3
D5 Sandpit Green (Swing Gate Lane)	2
D6 Dudswell Lane	3

Note: Original settlement maps provided at interviews at A3

