

Places for People/City and Provincial Properties

East Herts District Plan Examination

Chapter 14 – Housing

Issue 4

HOU9: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople - Criterion I, would the additional pitches and plots shown in the table attached to the policy be in the right place to meet the needs of the travelling community?

1. No, for the following reasons. East Herts District Council commissioned a Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) Accommodation Needs Assessment (ORS, May 2016) which forecasts needs to 2033 of 5 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers, and 9 plots for travelling showpeople.
2. It was recognised in paragraph 14.10.7 of the GTTS that the needs of gypsies and travellers frequently change and that it is not possible to forecast needs with any certainty for a 10 year period, let alone for the plan period. Accordingly, it said that the forecast of 5 pitches and 9 plots needed to be kept under review.
3. In the context of this identified but uncertain need, and in comparison to the current size of the GTTS population in East Herts, the safeguarding of an additional 15 permanent pitches and 8 plots for travelling showpeople on the Gilston Area site to satisfy potential need beyond the plan period (i.e. in addition to the 5 pitches and 9 plots that have been identified at other sites to satisfy the forecast needs to 2033) is extraordinarily disproportionate. There is no evidence in the ORS assessment that demonstrates a potential for need on this scale (i.e. 3 times the current need for pitches but 1 less plot).
4. Further, the ORS needs assessment does not comment on the appropriate location for the required pitches, except to emphasise the need for accessibility, local service provision and amenity of both GTTS households and those residents of neighbouring homes. This would indicate that this provision could come forward anywhere within the district with a suitable site and appropriate local facilities. There is no evidence to suggest that the Gilston Area (or any of the other sites indicated) is particularly suited to or needed as a GTTS location based on their needs.

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