



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework

Gypsy and Traveller

Development Plan Document

Issues and Options Report I General Approach

Council

Produced by cdnplanning

September 2006

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South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework

Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document

Issues and Options Report 1
General Approach

Public Consultation

Draft for Council September 2006

Prepared by
cdnplanning

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF

What is the Local Development Framework?

- 1.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) for South Cambridgeshire will replace the existing Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2004. It is being prepared under new Government legislation for development plans and will set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the District in the period leading up to 2016. The LDF will set a vision for the future of South Cambridgeshire and include objectives and targets, which developments must meet to secure that vision. Essentially, this framework for growth will guide where, when and how development should take place.
- 1.2 The Local Development Framework will:
- Take account of national and regional planning policies
 - Identify sites for major development
 - Provide the framework of policies for assessing all planning applications
 - Enable infrastructure and service providers to bring forward their services when needed by new development
 - Enable the public to be fully involved in developing local policies and proposals.
- 1.3 The Local Development Framework will form part of the Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire. This Development Plan will also include plans, which have been statutorily adopted and have been 'saved' under the new plan making system. The relevant plans covering the District are:
1. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)
 2. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Local Plan (2003)
 3. The Cambridgeshire Aggregates (Minerals) Local Plan (1991)

Form and Status

- 1.4 The LDF for South Cambridgeshire will be made up of a number of Local Development Documents (LDDs).
- Statutory plans (Development Plan Documents or DPDs) which carry the full weight of the development plan.
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which although not statutory have been consulted upon and will be taken into account (as a material planning consideration) when determining planning applications.
 - Currently the documents in preparation are:
 - Core Strategy DPD
 - Development Control Policies DPD
 - A number of Area Action Plans, which detail proposals for each of the major development areas in the District.
 - Proposals map – Illustrates the site-specific elements of the above documents.
- 1.5 The benefit of having the Local Development Framework structured, as a series of documents is that it allows parts of the plan to be reviewed or updated as required without the need for a review of the entire plan.

Nevertheless, it is important that the documents that make up the Local Development Plan be read alongside each other.

- 1.6 The South Cambridgeshire Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out how the Council will move from the previous development plan system to the new development plan system. It lists current planning policy and guidance documents applicable to development proposals in South Cambridgeshire, and which new local development documents are to be produced and when. It will be reviewed annually to keep it up to date except where it needs to be updated more urgently.

The Purpose of this Document

- 1.7 Independent planning consultants CDN Planning Ltd with experience in Gypsy and Traveller issues have been instructed by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to undertake preparation of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD), which forms part of the Local Development Framework. A two-stage Issues and Options consultation will take place. This Issues and Options Report 1: General Approach is the first stage in the production of the GTDPD, which will set out policies to address the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population in South Cambridgeshire until 2021. It will also allocate sites up to 2010, the period covered by the Cambridge Sub-region Traveller Housing Needs Survey. It will then be reviewed to take account of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) review, which will identify the number of pitches required in the district to 2021.
- 1.8 Along with identifying the main issues as they relate to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, this report will set out a framework for the selection of sites within the LDF and seek your views on the issues and options that have been identified as being important to this process. Once the criteria for site selection have been agreed following the results of this first consultation, a second public consultation will take place on an Issues and Options Report 2: Site Options specifically to look at site options for Gypsy and Travellers' sites that meet those identified criteria.
- 1.9 The objective of this report is to identify where there are genuine and reasonable alternatives before coming to a decision. Where appropriate this report identifies alternative options, rejected options, and where no alternative options exist, the Council's preferred approach. It also describes the reasons why these options have been identified.

Proposed Approach – Indicates the approach favoured by the Council, where it believes there are no appropriate alternative options. In making representations, respondents will either SUPPORT the Council's proposed approach, or OBJECT to the proposed approach.

Proposed Option – Indicates the option favoured by the Council where there are alternative options available, but where the Council believes one option has significant benefits over the others. In making representations, respondents will either SUPPORT the Council's choice of proposed option, or OBJECT to the proposed option.

Alternative Option – Alternative options are put forward where the Council feels there is a genuine choice to be made. Where there are several options on a topic, these are labelled A, B, C for clarity. In making representations, respondents will either SUPPORT an option where they feel it is the way forward, or OBJECT to the option being chosen.

Rejected Option – Put forward in the interests of maintaining an open debate, however, the Council has put forward reasons why the option should be rejected. In making representations, respondents will either SUPPORT the Council's approach to rejecting this option, or OBJECT to the approach being rejected.

- 1.10 Under each option, there is consideration of "Potential for reasonable alternatives" where the Council explains whether it considers there are any other reasonable alternatives that could have been included and if not, why not.
- 1.11 The Issues and Options Report has been subject to a separate Sustainability Appraisal carried out by Scott Wilson consultants in accordance with government regulations. This is to ensure that the options can be compared in the light of full information on their social, environmental and economic impact. A summary of the appraisal has been included in Appendix 2 of this report. A copy of the full appraisal is available from the Council's website.

Context

- 1.12 South Cambridgeshire is located in the middle of the East of England at the junction of the M11/A14 roads and with direct rail access to London and to Stansted Airport. It is a largely rural district, which surrounds the city of Cambridge and comprises 102 villages, none larger than 8,000 persons. It is surrounded by a ring of market towns just beyond its borders, which are generally 10 to 15 miles from Cambridge. Together, Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the Market Towns form the Cambridge Sub-Region. South Cambridgeshire has long been a fast growing district, the mid 2005 population estimate was 136,500¹ persons (bigger than Cambridge itself) and has become home to many of the clusters of high technology research and development in the Cambridge Sub-Region.
- 1.13 SCDC has recorded more Gypsy and Traveller caravans than any other district in England – over 500 in recent years. In July 2005 the district had the highest number of caravans on authorised private sites in the country - 291². A number of small sites are located in Meldreth, Rampton, Willingham, Haslingfield and Swavesey. The highest concentrations of authorised sites are in the Chesterton Fen Road area of Milton parish (approximately 200 caravans) and Smithy Fen, Cottenham (approximately 80 caravans).
- 1.14 The Council operates two sites within the District – at Blackwell, Milton and New Farm, Whaddon. Both sites are currently at full capacity with 15 and 14 pitches occupied respectively. However at Blackwell there is wide dissatisfaction with its suitability as a permanent residential site due to its

¹ Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group statistics

² ODPM caravan count July 2005

location adjacent the A14 and the isolated location away from local services and amenities.

- 1.15 In recent years, the number of unauthorised caravans in the District has grown by over a hundred. In July 2005 SCDC recorded 183³ unauthorised caravans, the second highest number of caravans on unauthorised sites in the country. Most of these were located on Gypsy-owned land without planning permission, usually near authorised Gypsy-owned sites. The largest concentrations of unauthorised sites are located in Cottenham, Chesterton Fen Road, Milton and Willingham. Unauthorised encampments also turn up on highway verge land or on privately owned land where many Gypsies and Travellers are passing through but only short-stay or have been displaced from Council accommodation. There is therefore a clear need to address the issue of unauthorised caravans through the allocation of additional authorised sites throughout the District.
- 1.16 The regional context will be set out in the East of England Plan, which will replace the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and is currently being prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly. This sets out the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) up to 2021 and the LDF must be in general conformity with the East of England Plan. The independent panel report of the Examination in Public (EiP) of the draft East of England Plan was published on 22 June 2006. It is anticipated that modifications will be published for consultation in the autumn of 2006. The plan, in its draft form, can be viewed at the East of England Regional Assembly's website at www.eera.gov.uk. In line with new Government guidance, the final version of the RSS is likely to indicate targets for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches throughout the region and related policies.
- 1.17 The national context is set out in Planning Policy Statements (the replacement to Planning Policy Guidance Notes), Circulars and other advice from Government. The Government guidance most relevant to the preparation of this report and subsequently the Development Plan Document is "*Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*" ODPM Circular, 01/2006. This document sets out the obligation of local authorities to allocate sufficient sites for Gypsies and Travellers in site allocation DPDs. It also identifies a set of criteria, which should be satisfied when allocating sites.

Community Strategy

- 1.18 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to "prepare a community strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK". A Community Strategy has been prepared for South Cambridgeshire to meet the following three objectives:
- To allow communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
 - To co-ordinate the actions of the Council, and of the public, voluntary, community and private sector organisations that operate locally;
 - To focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations.

³ ODPM caravan count July 2005

- 1.19 The Community Strategy has four key components:
- A long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
 - An action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
 - A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so;
 - Arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan and for periodically reviewing the community strategy.
- 1.20 The Strategy is the result of a partnership between SCDC, Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners, working with the health services, the police, parish councils, the business and voluntary sector. These groups have come together in the South Cambridgeshire Strategic Partnership to produce the Community Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership will continue to develop a joint approach to the important issues, whenever possible, and will oversee the delivery of the Strategy. The Local Development Framework will be important in securing those parts of the Community Strategy which involve the development, or use of land and buildings.
- 1.21 The Community Strategy's vision is split into 6 aims as set out below:
- **ACTIVE, SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES** where residents can play a full part in community life, with a structure of thriving voluntary and community organisations.
 - **BUILDING SUCCESSFUL NEW COMMUNITIES** where large-scale developments have created attractive places with their own identity, supported by a range of quality services.
 - **A PROSPEROUS DISTRICT** where jobs, skills and learning are developed and sustained to benefit everyone.
 - **GOOD ACCESS TO SERVICES** for all sections of the community, including older people, children and families, through better transport links and improved local services.
 - **QUALITY HOMES FOR ALL** with new affordable homes developed to meet local needs and assistance provided for those needing help.
 - **A HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENT** with better access to a more bio-diverse countryside, which is protected and improved, and sustainable measures implemented, minimising waste and tackling climate change.
- 1.22 The Community Strategy, (currently being reviewed for 2007-2010 in compliance with the Government's advice (currently in draft form) for the preparation of "Sustainable Community Strategies") has been taken into account in preparation of this Issues and Options Report and will form an integral part of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document.

Cornerstones of Sustainability

- 1.23 The LDF will aim to improve the overall quality of life for its residents in a way, which will also benefit future generations. Taking a sustainable approach to economic, social and environmental issues will be at the heart of the plan and will be closely related to the national strategy for sustainable development, which has four objectives:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
 - Effective protection of the environment;
 - Prudent use of natural resources; and
 - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 1.24 European Directive 2001/42/EC requires an 'environmental assessment' of plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is commonly known as 'strategic environmental assessment' (SEA), and covers relevant plans and programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004. Among the documents to which this requirement will apply are land use plans that cover a wide area, such as the LDF.
- 1.25 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a sustainability appraisal (SA) of all emerging Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. As the guidance explaining this requirement makes clear, SA and SEA are similar processes that involve a comparable series of steps. If there is a difference between them, it lies in the fact that SEA focuses on environmental effects whereas SA is concerned with the full range of environmental, social and economic matters.
- 1.26 A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared, and been the subject of public participation. This highlights economic, social and environmental issues relevant to the area, and objectives to test the LDF documents against. A Sustainability Report, incorporating an 'Environmental Report' has been prepared to accompany each DPD. The initial appraisal accompanying the Issues and Options Report forms the first stage of this process.
- 1.27 Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be undertaken to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site where it would have a significant effect on the integrity of that site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 1.28 Due to the limited scale of development proposed by the Issues and Options Report, and the only European Site in the District (Eversden Woods) is not proposed for development, there is not considered to be any significant impacts. Once sites have been identified in the next Issues and Options stage, the Council will review the need for an Appropriate Assessment."

Community Involvement

- 1.29 South Cambridgeshire District Council has made a firm commitment to involving the community in all stages of the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. In line with Government guidance, a Statement of Community Involvement is currently being prepared by the Council as part of the LDF process and is expected in to be finalised in 2007. In the mean time, the plan will also be tested against the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Government) (England) Regulations 2004,

although the Council has already gone beyond these minimum standards during the plan preparation process to this point.

- 1.30 Early consultation ahead of any GTDPD documents being prepared was requested by SCDC to ensure the views of those involved could be fully taken in to account. The Gypsy and Traveller community were consulted on their needs, concerns and aspirations in May 2006. All Parish Councils were then invited to consultation exercises carried out in June 2006. Initial consultation with other key stakeholders, including the Travellers Liaison Group and the Ormiston Children and Families Trust, has also taken place.
- 1.31 The outcomes of these workshops were taken into account in the preparation of this Issues and Options report. However, more detailed statutory consultations will be required and carried out at publicised stages of the GTDPD's development.

The Issues and Options Consultation Process

- 1.32 This Issues and Options Report 1 is now being published for public participation, providing the opportunity for individuals and organisations to consider the Options / Approaches put forward. A second consultation on site options will take place once representations received on the approach to their selection have been considered.
- 1.33 Representations on this Issues and Options Report are invited during a six-week period running from 16 October 2006 to 24 November 2006. There will be a variety of ways of becoming involved in the process, including opportunities to discuss the issues with Council officers. Further information is available on the Council's website:

<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/GypsyandTravellerDPD.htm>

- 1.34 Wherever possible, representations should be made on the website via the interactive form. This will help speed up the process of registering representations.
- 1.35 Alternatively, representations may be made in writing using the appropriate form and sent to the Council as follows:

Head of Planning
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB3 6EA

- 1.36 **Representations must be received by 16:00 on 24 November 2006**
- 1.37 Comments made on the Issues and Options will be taken into account when drafting the next Site Specific Issues and Options Report. The two Issues and Options reports will then be taken into account when drafting the GTDPD, which will later be submitted to the Secretary of State. The draft submission GTDPD will be made available for a six-week period during which formal

representations can be made. The new legislation also allows for a further six-week consultation on the alternative sites put forward by objectors.

- 1.38 There will then be an Independent Examination, conducted by an Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to consider the “soundness” of the plan and objections received during all consultation periods, i.e. on the Issues and Options, draft plan and on objection sites. This independent Inspector will subsequently produce a report, which may include changes to the plan to meet objections and other matters. These changes would be binding on the Council who will then proceed to formally adopting the Plans.
- 1.39 The timetable for completing the GTDPD can be found on the Council’s website at:
www.scambs.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/DistrictPlanning/LocalDevelopmentFramework/GypsyandTravellerDPD.htm

2. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (GTDPD) INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This Issues and Options Report provides the opportunity for stakeholders and the general public to contribute to the policy framework of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD), a document, which will form part of the Council's new LDF. It is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the preferred options drawn up by the Council for the identification of new sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. It also provides the opportunity to comment on how SCDC have identified options and whether there are other reasonable alternatives that have not been identified.
- 2.2 In getting to this stage, SCDC has already begun a dialogue with key stakeholders. This included workshops and consultation exercises in May and June 2006, which explored the key issues and concerns relating to Gypsies and Travellers in South Cambridgeshire. A number of issues and potential options came out of this non-statutory consultation and have been reflected in the Issues and Options Report.
- 2.3 The workshops and consultation exercise with key stakeholders have helped the Council to draw up its preferred options, but it is important to involve the wider community before the Council finalises the plans that will then be submitted to the Secretary of State. The Council is therefore now undertaking detailed consultation with statutory bodies as required under the new system of plan making to help with the identification of preferred options, the process for which was described in paragraphs 1.30 – 1.37 of this report.
- 2.4 The GTDPD as part of the Council's new Local Development Framework will provide a vision for the future of South Cambridgeshire and will set out policies and proposals as they relate to Gypsies and Travellers in the District up to 2021. The GTDPD will also identify a number of sites for Traveller and Gypsy settlements to meet demand up to 2010, taking into consideration the recent *Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment*, which identified a need for 110 to 130 pitches in South Cambridgeshire between 2005 and 2010. It will then be reviewed to take account of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) review, which will identify the number of pitches required in the district to 2021.
- 2.5 The purpose of the GTDPD is not only to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers to meet current and future housing needs, but also to set out a robust strategy for addressing the problem of illegal encampments in the District. The provision of transit sites or temporary sites was outside the original brief of the GTDPD. However, early consultations have revealed the need to address this issue.
- 2.6 The GTDPD will address the full range of land use and planning issues that need to be taken into account in bringing forward Gypsy and Traveller sites over the plan period, including how they relate to the settled community.

3 NEED FOR ADDITIONAL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

GT1A: Need for Sites – Option A:

New Government guidance requires the District Council to provide additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches. A recent study has identified a need for between 110 to 130 new pitches up to the year 2010.

GT1B: Need for Sites – Option B:

As SCDC already provides a large number of authorised sites and Travellers have expressed flexibility in the location of future sites; SCDC should only meet a proportion of the 110 to 130 pitches up to 2010.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

ODPM Circular 01/2006 clearly states “ Local authorities must allocate sufficient sites for Gypsies and Travellers”⁴ A qualitative and quantitative survey (The Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment) has provided evidence of need, and shown that there are no reasonable alternatives to site provision, although the distribution of pitches over the East of England is subject to review by EERA.

GT2: Needs for Sites – Proposed Approach:

New Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be proportionately distributed throughout the district. Concentration of sites should be avoided.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

Current concentration in particular parts of the district highlights the strain on infrastructure and public services. It would not be reasonable to further exacerbate this problem.

- 3.1 New Government legislation requires the Council to allocate new sites for Gypsies and Travellers pitches in a DPD. This new requirement is outlined in the ODPM’s Circular 01/2006: “*Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*”. The Circular also requires the Council to demonstrate sites are suitable and that there is a realistic likelihood that specific sites allocated in the DPD will be made available for that purpose.
- 3.2 SCDC in partnership with eight other local authorities recently published the *Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment*, which identifies a need for an additional 110 to 130 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in South Cambridgeshire up to the year 2010. This survey also took account of additional pitches needed for Travelling Showmen. The GDPD will therefore consider the needs of all Gypsies and Travellers, as defined in the Glossary accompanying this Issues & Options Report. This study has applied new Government guidance on carrying out Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments, which in addition to an overall need figure, must also identify:
 - A broad geographical indication of where additional pitches and sites are needed
 - The type of accommodation needed
 - Gypsy and Traveller site requirements, such as ideal scale of sites, site facilities, and location.

⁴ As cited in paragraph 33, page 9 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”

- 3.3 The needs assessment has suggested that much of the demand for additional pitches could be potentially provided by either granting permission on existing unauthorised Gypsy-owned sites, if these are found to meet the criteria or by replacement allocated sites.
- 3.4 The needs assessment also found, “no specific geographical location” preferred by respondents, just “more sites anywhere.” Historically Gypsies and Travellers had links to agriculture and horticulture within the district but with changes in those industries these links are no longer that significant. Gypsies and Travellers are now traders in various commodities and are much less tied to any one geographical place. Access to the trunk road network is now more of a factor than proximity to orchards and farms.
- 3.5 By taking a responsible approach and making provision for over 200 pitches over the past 20 years the district has made itself attractive to Gypsies and Travellers looking for accommodation. There are many areas with little or no provision, which Gypsies and Travellers have avoided even though they would meet their requirements for transit/permanent sites. With 40% of the district restrained by Green Belt policies and a high concentration of Gypsy/Traveller Sites to the north it could prove difficult to identify enough areas to accommodate 110 – 130 pitches without potentially harming the rural character of the countryside.
- 3.6 A review of the identified need for additional pitches and their location will be undertaken through the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England. Although the exact scale and type of need in South Cambridgeshire has yet to be finally determined, it is almost certain that further new Gypsy and Traveller pitches will be required up to the year 2021. The GTDPD will be re-examined once the review of the RSS is completed to take account of the findings.

4 IDENTIFYING NEW GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

Approach to identifying sites

GT3 Identifying Sites – Proposed Approach:

The Council will use a three-tier approach considering environmental, economic and social indicators to identify the most suitable sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

Government guidance suggests (ODPM Circular 01/2006) a criteria-based approach be used for selecting sites for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The proposed headings for the indicators cover all three aspects of sustainability and therefore there are no reasonable alternatives.

- 4.1 ODPM Circular 01/2006: requires that all sites considered as options for a Development Plan Document (DPD) must have their social, environmental and economic impacts assessed in accordance with the requirements of a sustainability appraisal (SA).
- 4.2 The Council has devised a comprehensive set of site selection criteria both to guide the initial identification of site options and to assist their detailed evaluation. The main environmental factors operate as constraints, helping to identify search zones for more detailed study. Economic factors will include both the business needs of Gypsies and Travellers and of established commercial areas, together with aspects of site development costs. Consideration of the social and cultural needs of travellers is equally important, and focuses on questions of accessibility, safety, special needs and relationships with settled communities. Table 1 briefly illustrates the issues discussed in this chapter.
- 4.3 The set of criteria shown in Table 1 briefly demonstrates the important environmental, economic and social issues and factors, which must be considered when deciding which sites are appropriate for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. These main factors, listed below, closely relate to those identified in Circular 01/2006 as being important when identifying new sites:
 - Site suitability
 - Sustainability of the location
 - Impact on valued areas
 - Impact on Nearest Settlement (including character and appearance of the locality, local amenity, and social and physical infrastructure)
 - Meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
 - Site availability/Site acquisition
- 4.4 A separate Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) has been carried out on this Issues an Options report by consultants Scott Wilson Ltd. This is to ensure that the options can be compared in the light of full information on their social, environmental and economic impact. A summary of the appraisal has been included in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 4.5 The methodology developed for identifying potential sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches is explained in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this Issues and Options Report. It is felt that this approach conforms to new Government regulations and guidance by incorporating a sustainable approach and extensive consultation throughout the process. Once the methodology and criteria for site options have been finalised after consultation, site options will be identified and second consultation will be carried out.
- 4.6 Each of the issues in Table 1 below will be examined in greater detail in this chapter and then applied to the methodology discussed in Chapter 5. The Council would welcome representations on these issues.

Identifying Sites – Preferred Approach

TABLE 1 – CRITERIA FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE EVALUATION						
	Environmental Considerations		Economic Factors		Social Aspects	
	Valued Areas	Danger Zones	Strategic Issues	Cost Considerations	Accessibility	Site Needs
Site Suitability						
Flood risk		✓		✓		
Highway access				✓	✓	
Site safety		✓			✓	✓
Infrastructure				✓		
Ground stability		✓				
Drainage		✓		✓		
Hazardous installations		✓				
Contaminated land		✓				
Protection of mineral workings	✓		✓			
Sustainability of the Location						
Access to local services and amenities					✓	
Access to public transport					✓	
Re-use of brownfield sites			✓			
Impact on Valued Areas						
Nationally recognised designations	✓					
Protection of green belt	✓					
Conservation areas	✓					
Other locally recognised designations	✓					
Impact on Nearest Settlement						
Local Social and physical infrastructure				✓	✓	✓
Local character and appearance	✓					
Local residential amenity	✓					
Special Needs of Gypsies and Travellers						
Size of sites						✓
Provision for business uses			✓			✓
Provision for stables						✓
Traditional gypsy settlement and employment areas			✓			✓
Children's play areas					✓	✓
Site Availability/Site Acquisition						
Council-owned land, other public bodies				✓		
Private land owner				✓		
Compulsory purchase				✓		

Site Suitability

Relationship to settlements

GT4A: Relationship to Settlements – Option A:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches may be located in areas deemed unsuitable on planning policy grounds for standard housing (e.g. outside settlement frameworks) if the site can meet the requirements of ODPM Circular 01/2006 with regard site location and those of Gypsies/Travellers.

GT4B: Relationship to Settlements – Option B:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches may be located in areas deemed suitable for standard housing on planning policy grounds (e.g. within settlement frameworks) if the site can meet the requirements of ODPM Circular 01/2006 with regard site location and those of Gypsies/Travellers.

GT4C: Relationship to Settlements – Option C:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches may be located in areas deemed both suitable and unsuitable for standard housing on planning policy grounds (e.g. outside/within settlement frameworks) if the site can meet the requirements of ODPM Circular 01/2006 with regard site location and those of Gypsies/Travellers.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
Gypsy /Traveller sites are often located on the outskirts of settlements but locations within settlements, where standard housing would be acceptable should not be ruled out if it met the requirements outlined above.

- 4.7 ODPM Circular 01/2006 refers to the Government's key objective for planning for housing – to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home. It states that members of the Gypsy and Travelling community should have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen.
- 4.8 The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to include gypsies and Travellers in their accommodation assessments and to take a strategic approach, including drawing up a strategy demonstrating how the accommodation needs of gypsies and Travellers will be met, as part of their wider housing strategies.
- 4.9 Gypsy and Traveller needs for accommodation are invariably different to that of standard housing but consideration of location should be similar and have regard of the health, welfare and social impact it may cause. Generally development outside the settlement framework is not allowed, but Gypsy/Traveller sites historically tend to be in these areas. It would be appropriate therefore to consider locating sites either within (as infill development) or outside settlement frameworks (using rural exception site policy) to ensure that all possible site options are explored.

Flood Risk

GT5: Flood Risk – Proposed Approach:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted where the site is liable to flooding or where the development would likely give rise to flooding elsewhere, unless it is demonstrated that these effects can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures secured by planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

There are no reasonable alternative options. PPS25 provides detailed guidance on development and flood risk.

- 4.10 This approach is in line with Government advice in PPS25 Development and Flood Risk, given their vulnerability; caravan sites should not be located in areas of high risk of flooding. The Environment Agency (EA) produces maps, which are regularly updated illustrating areas of flood risk.
- 4.11 There is generally a presumption against development in areas where a risk of flooding exists, either from the development itself or from surrounding watercourses, for up to the 1 in 100 year event including the forecast effects of climate change. New development must also not increase the risk of flooding in surrounding areas.
- 4.12 In areas of flood risk where a site has been deemed suitable for development, a risk assessment will be required to identify the extent of potential flood risk and recommend any possible mitigation measures prior to development of any new Gypsy and Traveller site. The EA will be consulted on all proposed sites within and adjacent to a floodplain. The EA will then advise on the acceptability of the proposal in light of all known information and comment on any proposed mitigation measures.

Highway Access

GT6: Highway Access – Proposed Approach:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted where the site access is deemed unsafe or inadequate, or where no safe pedestrian route to a local area centre is or can be made available.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

Providing highway access where these criteria are not met would be unsafe and therefore unreasonable.

- 4.13 This approach is essential for the operation of the site, for road safety, and for ease of travel. Adequate space, grades, and visibility are essential factors in the provision of safe and effective sites. Desirably the answers to the following questions should be “yes”:
- Can access through an industrial area, recognised commercial area or housing estate/residential area be avoided?

- Can an independent vehicular access point that adheres to the Highway Authority's guidance and standards service the site?
- Does the site have a safe pedestrian access/route to a nearby settlement with an appropriate level of services and facilities to meet needs?

4.14 In promoting sustainable development, new Gypsy and Traveller pitches will ideally be situated within walking distance of local services and amenities (see GT13 and GT14). Therefore, safe pedestrian routes to a nearby village, town or area centre with adequate services and facilities to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers would ideally be available. This aims to reduce the reliance on private vehicles.

Site Safety

GT7: Site Safety – Proposed Approach:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not ideally be located in the vicinity of any dangerous roads, railway lines, water bodies or power lines. However these locations will be considered in the same way as conventional housing if they are suggested.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
 To risk the safety of any individual especially children by locating a Gypsy/Traveller site near hazardous locations would be unreasonable.

4.15 Historically Gypsy and Traveller sites have been allocated in questionable areas near potentially dangerous infrastructure such as power lines and railway lines. During initial consultations with the Gypsy and Traveller community many expressed concern over the location of their sites, particularly with young children safety. It is recommended that sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches must receive the same protection as other residential areas. ODPM Circular 01/2006 states: "In general Gypsy and Traveller sites should not be located on significantly contaminated land, but this does not necessarily rule out all locations near or adjoining motorways, power lines, landfill sites or railways, anymore than it does conventional housing."⁵

Basic Infrastructure

GT8: Basic Infrastructure – Proposed Approach:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would only be allocated or granted planning permission in areas where the provision of necessary infrastructure such as water, sewage disposal, and electricity are readily available and financially feasible.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
 To locate a Gypsy/Traveller site in an area without access to basic infrastructure would be against statutory duties placed on utilities companies such as water, to provide water for domestic purposes.

⁵ Page 21 Annex C paragraph 5 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites"

- 4.16 As with all forms of development the availability of water, electricity and sewage disposal are necessary features of any viable Gypsy and Traveller site. Consultations with utility companies will be undertaken to assist with detailed evaluation of all potential sites that come forward for consideration. As with traditional residential development, the developer, owner or manager of the site will undertake the implementation and associated costs of providing essential infrastructure to Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- 4.17 Sustainable technologies should be promoted where appropriate on sites for provision of heat and domestic hot water through the use of, for example, Biomass installations (wood chip/wood pellet) systems. Given the Gypsy and Traveller community's self-reliance, having on-site energy solutions might be attractive to them.

Ground Stability

GT9: Ground Stability – Proposed Approach:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted on land found to be unstable, unless it can be demonstrated that the land is physically capable of accommodating development and that the risk of damage to the proposed development or adjoining land or buildings can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures secured by planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
 To position Gypsy/Traveller pitches on unstable land without the potential for alleviation would be unreasonable.

- 4.18 Often where there is poor drainage or risk of flooding, ground instability occurs. Similarly, where mineral extraction or other activities have taken place, a site's stability can be compromised. Therefore, where appropriate the Council must be provided with information regarding the ground stability of a site before determining whether or not to grant planning permission for a new Gypsy and Traveller site. Similarly, when allocating sites, the Council will only identify sites that are physically capable of accommodating the new development.

Drainage

GT10: Drainage – Proposed Approach:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted in areas of poor drainage unless it can be demonstrated that these issues can be addressed through an appropriate drainage system secured through planning conditions or Section 106 Agreement. Where practical the development should be served by sustainable drainage systems.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
 To position Gypsy/Traveller pitches on land with poor drainage without the potential for alleviation would be unreasonable.

- 4.19 Gypsy and Traveller pitches should not be located in areas of poor drainage. Where these problems exist, a flood risk assessment will be prepared prior to development of any new site which will identify risks of flood as well as recommend sustainable drainage systems for the site. A sustainable drainage system will help to maintain, where possible, practical and sustainable, the natural catchment areas.

Hazardous Installations and Contaminated Land

GT11: Hazardous Installations and Contaminated Land – Proposed Approach: Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted if located in the vicinity of a hazardous installation or in areas of contaminated land or water unless it can be demonstrated secure by planning conditions or Section 106 Agreements.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

To position Gypsy/Traveller pitches in the vicinity of a hazardous installation or in areas of contaminated land or water with poor drainage without the potential for alleviation would be unreasonable.

- 4.20 As with traditional residential development, caravan sites should not be located within defined safety zones established around installations or operations considered as dangerous to life and health. These may include pipelines, installations handling or storing hazardous materials, industrial or defence premises, and mineral extraction areas.
- 4.21 Similarly, caravan sites will not be permitted on sites considered to present health risks through prior contamination of land or water. Where significant contamination issues arise, detailed investigation and risk assessment would be required. This especially applies to the re-use of brownfield sites, which may be appropriate where acceptable remedial measures could overcome any hazards.

Protection of Mineral Workings

GT12: Protection of Mineral Workings – Proposed Approach: Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be permitted if located in the vicinity of mineral resources so as to safeguard any future demand.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

Mineral resources are precious and scarce, therefore any development would not be permitted in areas where such resources existed.

- 4.22 It is important that access to mineral deposits which society may need is safeguarded. The East of England Regional Strategy will require that potential mineral resources be safeguarded from types of development that would either sterilise them or hinder extraction. Therefore, the siting of Gypsy and Traveller pitches in any identified areas should be avoided. A Minerals and Waste DPD is currently being prepared by Cambridgeshire County

Council and progress on this will be taken into account as the GTDPD progresses to ensure it follows the same approach.

Sustainability of the Location

GT13A: Sustainability of the Location – Option A:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located outside but near to local centres, towns or villages with access to a range of services.

GT13B: Sustainability of the Location – Option B:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within settled communities with access to a range of services.

GT14: Sustainability of the Location – Rejected Option:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located away from settled communities in remote locations so as to avoid conflict between the two communities.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
One of the intentions of ODPM Circular 01/2006 is *“to create and support sustainable, respectful, and inclusive communities where Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision.”*⁶ PPS7 also promotes *“focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages”* it would be perverse to infringe Government objectives. The options cover the range of scenarios for site location

- 4.23 Government guidance stresses the importance of providing the Gypsy and Traveller community access to a range of community services and facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that Gypsy and Traveller pitches be located within a reasonable distance of local services and facilities, thereby reducing the need to travel long distances to obtain essential services and ideally reduce their reliance on private vehicles for transport.
- 4.24 Early consultations with key stakeholders in the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community have confirmed a preference for providing pitches with access to nearby settlements and local services and amenities. There was a general consensus between both communities that sites should not be located away from local amenities. The Gypsy and Traveller community expressed a desire to be close to local communities and the benefits of local services, but a preference for not being within these communities. Similarly, the settled community emphasised the importance of building bridges with the Gypsy and Traveller community, and that access to schools and health facilities was important.

⁶ Paragraph 12a, page 5 of Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”

Access to Local Amenities

GT15A: Access to Local Amenities – Option A:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 1000m (via a safe walking route) of a centre in Cambridge or Northstowe or a Rural Centre as defined in the Core Strategy.

GT15B: Access to Local Amenities – Option B:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 1000m (via a safe walking route) of a centre in Cambridge or Northstowe or a Rural Centre or a Minor Rural Centre as defined in the Core Strategy.

GT15C: Access to Local Amenities – Option C:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 1000m (via a safe walking route) of a centre in Cambridge or Northstowe or a Rural Centre or a Minor Rural Centre or a better-served Group Village as defined in the Core Strategy.

GT15D: Access to Local Amenities – Option D:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 1000m (via a safe walking route) of a centre in Cambridge or Northstowe or any village identified in the Core Strategy.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The options provide a full range of scenarios for locating sites.

- 4.25 The Core Strategy DPD identifies a sequence for housing development, which is focused on Cambridge, then at the new town of Northstowe and only then on Rural Centres. Housing development in other locations should be very limited and focused on meeting local needs.
- 4.26 It identifies a rural settlement hierarchy based on size of settlement and level of provision of services, facilities and public transport. The hierarchy as contained in the latest Draft of the Core Strategy (January 2006) is as set out below. The Plan has now been subject to a Public Examination (like a public inquiry) and the independent Inspectors' binding report is anticipated in October 2006. It is possible that there may be changes to the Core Strategy Rural Settlement hierarchy as a result of that examination and that categories of settlement and the villages within them could be changed. The principle of the criteria for locating Gypsy and Travellers sites relates to the category rather than individual villages at this stage.
- Rural Centres are the largest and best served villages.
 - Minor Rural Centres also act as service centres for a rural area.
 - Group villages have a modest level of services and facilities.
 - Infill villages have very few services and facilities.
- 4.27 The Building Research Establishment (BRE) also provides guidance on sustainable residential development and encourages developers to locate new housing development within close proximity of local services and

amenities, thereby reducing the reliance of local residents on their cars. These amenities included:

- food shop
- postal facility
- bank/cash point
- pharmacy
- primary school
- secondary school
- medical centre
- leisure centre
- community centre
- place of worship
- public house
- children's play area
- public park

- 4.28 BRE recommends that at least 5 of these amenities should be no more than 1000m away from 80% of the development, which is deemed to be an acceptable walking distance. These facilities are broadly compatible with the approach taken in the Council's Core Strategy. The distance criteria is useful for assessing proximity to services and facilities. The options therefore suggest that sites should be no more than 1000m from the service centre in any of the types of settlement identified, rather than from the edge of the settlement.
- 4.29 In line with this guidance it is recommended that a similar approach should be adopted when selecting sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community are no different than those of the settled community, and initial consultations have identified the need to be close to these amenities as a priority. Ideally, all sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would have a safe pedestrian link to the nearest village or bus stop providing access to essential services and amenities.
- 4.30 ODPM Circular 01/2006 provides similar guidance by stressing the importance of convenient access to local services such as medical clinics and schools. The Circular regards this as the first thing to consider in deciding locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Education and health are vital components of an inclusive approach to Gypsy and Traveller welfare. It is crucial that children are given the opportunity to attend school on a regular basis and that medical services are available for the needs of families, and of the young, the elderly and the disabled.
- 4.31 The approach to settlement categories means that many of these services and facilities are to be found in Rural Centres, and to a lesser extent also in Minor Rural Centres. Some Group villages also have a reasonable level of services and facilities, and those that are better served could be judged against the BRE test listed above.

Access to Public Transport

GT16A: Access to Public Transport: Distance – Option A:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 1000m (via a safe walking route) of a transport node providing a frequent service to the nearest local centre or town.

GT16B: Access to Public Transport: Distance – Option B:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located within 400m (via a safe walking route) of a transport node providing a frequent service to the nearest local centre or town.

GT17A: Access to Public Transport: Frequency – Option A:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located close to a transport node providing an hourly service to the nearest local centre or town.

GT17B: Access to Public Transport: Frequency – Option B:

To encourage sustainable forms of development within the District, sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would ideally be located close to a transport node providing a half hourly service to the nearest local centre or town.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

PPG13 states “*planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling.*” It would therefore be unreasonable to go against these principles. Whilst there are infinite variations on the distance from and frequency of public transport services, these are considered to provide alternative appropriate options to consider this issue and invite public comment.

- 4.32 Whilst many Gypsies and Travellers have a car or other private vehicle, some will need to rely on convenient access to public transport. The Council actively seeks to reduce reliance on private vehicles and increase accessibility to public transport and non-car modes. Preference will therefore be given for pitches located in areas with good public transport links and safe access to pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 4.33 Ideally, all sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would have a safe pedestrian link to the nearest bus stop or transport node providing frequent service to a local centre or town.
- 4.34 BRE recommends that 80% of new residential development be at least 1000m of a transport node providing frequent service to a local centre or town. In considering sustainable locations for standard housing and what comprises good accessibility to public transport in its other plans, the Council uses the test of being within 400m of a public transport node.
- 4.35 The frequency of service is also relevant to how sustainable it is. SDCD’s planning policies describe a good local public transport service as; “minimum service frequencies of every 30 minutes during the day, hourly in the

evenings (After 7pm) and on Saturdays. Every 2 hours or better on Sundays.”⁷

Re-use of Brownfield Sites

GT18: Re-use of Brownfield Sites – Proposed Approach:
The Council would encourage, where suitable, the use of brownfield sites for siting of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
PPS7 states, “Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed (“brownfield”) sites” in order to promote sustainable planning. It would be unreasonable to suggest this was inappropriate.

4.36 Nationally and locally it is planning policy to encourage the re-use of brownfield sites wherever suitable. This is a main principle of sustainable development and is encouraged in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which states “In some cases, perhaps involving previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land, the establishment of a well-planned or soft-landscaped Gypsy and Traveller site can be seen as positively enhancing the environment and increasing openness.”⁸

Major New Developments

GT19: Major New Developments – Proposed Approach:
The provision of Gypsy/Traveller pitches will be considered at all major new developments.

GT20: Major New Developments – Rejected Option:
Gypsy/Traveller pitches will not be provided at all major new developments.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It would be unreasonable to provide affordable housing within new developments without considering the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches within such allocations.

4.37 Gypsies and Travellers are a recognised ethnic group and under housing legislation are entitled to the same access to housing as the settled population. They are therefore included in affordable housing allocations and as such should be considered when new schemes are being developed.

4.38 There will be approximately 20,000 homes built within South Cambridgeshire over the next 20 years. It is not reasonable to ignore that the Gypsy/Traveller population will also increase over this time and require more accommodation. There should be provision for Gypsy/Traveller pitches.

4.39 Early consultation with Gypsies and Travellers showed an interest in such provision. There were no objections to providing pitches at large new

⁷ Taken from the Draft Core Strategy January 2006 - Page 53

⁸ Taken from paragraph 55, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”.

developments providing they were sensitively located with regard impact on the surrounding locality.

Impact on Valued Areas

Protection of the Green Belt

GT21: Green Belt – Proposed Approach:

In very exceptional circumstances, sites could be proposed in the Green Belt and allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches if they conform to suitability and sustainability criteria, in particular where they are located close to Cambridge or a Rural Centre.

GT22: Green Belt – Alternative Option:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches would generally not be permitted within the Green Belt.

GT23: Green Belt – Rejected Option:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches would generally be accepted in the Green Belt.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The options cover all potential scenarios for sites to be located in the Green Belt.

- 4.40 There is a general presumption against inappropriate forms of development within the Green Belt. Historically, local planning policy has classified Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the green belt as inappropriate development, much like other forms of residential development would be avoided.
- 4.41 ODPM Circular 01/2006 asserts “*Alterations to the Green Belt boundary can be used in exceptional circumstances for housing and other types of development inappropriate for the Green Belt....such an exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) could be considered to meet a specific, identified need for a Gypsy and Traveller site in the same way such an alteration could be used for any other type of development.*”⁹ It is therefore reasonable to explore green belt land if all other alternatives have been exhausted. However, it makes clear that all alternatives should be fully explored and exhausted before sites within the Green Belt are considered. In such cases an exceptional limited alteration to the Green Belt might be made through the plan-making process and allocated for a Gypsy and Traveller site. In the context of South Cambridgeshire, where Cambridge is the highest order settlement serving the district and where several Rural Centres are located within the Green Belt, it may be a reasonable option to consider whether limited Green Belt release would be the most sustainable option for provision of sites for Gypsy and Travellers and depending on what other options for sustainable locations for sites are available outside the Green Belt. However, the Green Belt remains a location where in principle such uses are not appropriate.

⁹ Taken from paragraph 51, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

Nationally Recognised Designations

GT24: Nationally Recognised Designations – Proposed Approach:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would normally not be permitted where it would have an adverse affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of Nationally Recognised Designations whether or not they are statutorily protected.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

“Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. They should have particular regard to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities where greater priority should be given to restraint of potentially damaging development.” This statement from PPS7 clearly shows that such areas should be protected from development and as such it would be unreasonable to disagree.

- 4.42 In such areas – including SSSI’s, NNR’s, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and Historic Landscapes – as with any form of development, Gypsy and Traveller pitches should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development.

Conservation Areas

GT25: Conservation Areas – Proposed Approach:
Conservation areas are to be avoided if at all possible. However the Council could consider a proposal for Gypsy and Traveller pitches within or adjoining a Conservation Area if it was in a suitable and sustainable location, and where it can be shown that it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or its setting.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The potential for alternatives is consistent with the requirements of PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment. ODPM Circular 01/2006 also specifies that for conservation areas, development should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that *“the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development”*¹⁰. It is therefore not reasonable to completely rule out development in a conservation area if it can preserve and enhance the area.

- 4.43 Approximately 80 Conservation Areas have been identified within the District as having special architectural or historical interest. In these areas, development will generally not be permitted unless it would preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area or it’s setting. Historically there has been a presumption against Gypsy and Traveller site development within or adjoining Conservation Areas. Circular 01/2006 clearly states; “As with any other form of development, planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be

¹⁰ Paragraph 52, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

compromised by the development.”¹¹ Therefore the Council should apply the same test to a Gypsy/Traveller site as it would any other form of development in such areas.

Other Locally Recognised Designations

GT26: Locally Recognised Designations – Proposed Approach:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would normally not be permitted where it would have an adverse affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of Locally Recognised Designations.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
ODPM Circular 01/2006 advises that, “local landscape and local nature conservation designations should not be used in themselves to refuse planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites.”¹² It is therefore not reasonable to rule out development in a locally recognised designation area if there is no harmful impact.

4.44 In such areas – including Village Amenity Areas, Important Countryside Frontages, County Wildlife Sites, River Valleys, and other natural areas or areas of special landscape character arising from the LDF process – as with any form of development, Gypsy and Traveller pitches should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development.

4.45 Important Countryside Frontages have been identified through the LDF process. These are defined as land with a strong countryside character, which penetrates or sweeps into a village or separate two parts of a built-up area. These areas often enhance the setting, character and appearance of the village by retaining the sense of connection between the village and its rural origins and surroundings. It would therefore be inappropriate to locate Gypsy and Traveller pitches in these areas, as it would compromise the purpose of this designation.

Impact on Nearest Settlement

Impact on Local Social and Physical Infrastructure

GT27: Impact on the Nearest Settlement – Proposed Approach:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would respect the scale of the nearest settlement. Planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not be granted where it results in undue pressures on local physical and social infrastructure.

¹¹ Paragraph 52, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

¹² Paragraph 53, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

ODPM Circular 01/2006 highlights “Sites should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community. They should also avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.”¹³ It is therefore sensible and reasonable to follow this guidance.

- 4.46 Both ODPM Circular 01/2006 and the SCDLP make clear that the location of sites should take into account their impact on the residential amenity of nearby villages or settled communities. Early consultation with the key stakeholders in the settled community has demonstrated a desire for a proportionate impact resulting from the need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- 4.47 Based on Government guidance, it is therefore recommended that Gypsy and Traveller sites should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community, and should also avoid placing undue pressure on the local physical and social infrastructure. Previous local planning policy has encouraged development that has a minimal impact on the amenities of existing local residents and that concentration of sites should be avoided.
- 4.48 Availability of suitable infrastructure to accommodate Gypsy and Traveller pitches must be readily available, such as water and electricity. Although the availability of this physical infrastructure is a necessary feature of any viable site, undue pressure on the local infrastructure, including local social infrastructure such as schools and health facilities, must be avoided. Therefore consultation with utility providers and other statutory bodies will be undertaken to accurately gauge local capacity once potential sites have been identified and detailed site assessments are prepared.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Locality

GT28: Local Character and Appearance – Proposed Approach:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would only be permitted where it would not result in any significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality. Pitches would be sensitively screened and enclosed where appropriate.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

It would be unreasonable to permit any development where it would have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the locality. ODPM Circular 01/2006 also states, “Landscaping and planting with appropriate trees and shrubs can help sites blend into their surroundings, give structure and privacy, and maintain visual amenity”¹⁴.

- 4.49 The development of Gypsy and Traveller pitches should not result in a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality – this includes the surrounding countryside, landscape or nearest settlement.

¹³ Paragraph 54, page 13 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller caravan Sites”

¹⁴ Paragraph 4, page 21 of Annex C - ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

As with any other forms of development, this outcome would not be acceptable. Therefore, Gypsy and Traveller sites should respect the character and appearance of the nearest settlement or surrounding area.

- 4.50 ODPM Circular 01/2006 suggests sites on the outskirts of built-up areas, or in rural or semi-rural settings, as being acceptable in principle. However, they must be satisfactorily assimilated into their surroundings and not have a significant adverse impact on the rural character of the locality. Ideally, sites will be selected with a natural enclosure or boundary created by vegetation for example.

Impact on Local Amenity

GT29: Impact on Local Amenity – Proposed Approach:
Sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would only be permitted where they can show respect for neighbouring uses and avoid placing undue pressure on the nearest settled community.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It would be unreasonable to locate pitches where harm could be inflicted on existing residents/land users. ODPM Circular 01/2006 advises Gypsies/Travellers looking for land to have, “*respect for neighboring uses.*”¹⁵

- 4.51 Government guidance expresses the need to consider the needs and interests of the settled community along with those of the Gypsy and Traveller community. The identification of new sites and the granting of future planning permission for sites should therefore avoid any detrimental impact on amenity of local residents and adjoining land users, including business parks and commercial land uses. Amenity would include local services, facilities, infrastructure, and other aspects that enhance the value of a particular area.

Special Needs of Gypsies and Travellers

Size of Sites

GT30: Size of Sites – Proposed Option:
New sites allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches should generally be for no more than 15 pitches, however all planning applications would be considered on their own merits regardless of site size.

GT31: Size of Sites – Alternative Option:
All planning applications for Gypsy/Traveller pitches would be considered regardless of size.

GT32: Size of Sites – Rejected Option:
Consideration of planning applications for new or extensions to Gypsy and Traveller sites would not be permitted if the site size exceeded 15 pitches.

¹⁵ Paragraph 3, page 25 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.”

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

ODPM Circular 01/2006 does not recommend a Government standard for site size, it asserts, *“The Government does not consider it appropriate to set a national maximum size for a site, but would suggest that cases should be considered in context, and in relation to the local infrastructure and population size and density.”*¹⁶

- 4.52 The size of Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches will depend upon a number of factors apart from basic capacity requirements. These will cover both family and cultural requirements together with needs for mixed use as appropriate. Early consultation with Gypsies and Travellers will assist in establishing the precise requirements.
- 4.53 Through various initial consultations with both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community, the general consensus is that smaller, family sites work best. There is particular interest for small Gypsy-owned sites of between 5 to 10 pitches. This site size tends to ‘work better’ by allowing for better maintenance, management, and control. Due to family expansion, visiting relatives/friends and other site needs, it may be necessary to expand sites. Based on this early consultation it would appear that the optimum size of sites should be no more than 15 pitches.
- 4.54 It is generally accepted that concentrations of a large number of pitches experience more frequent instances of vandalism, crime and other anti-social behaviour. These same problems exist in large social housing estates. The ‘ghettoisation’ of Gypsies and Travellers should be avoided. It is generally believed that through provision of smaller family sites, problems of anti-social behaviour can be address more effectively. Early consultation has revealed a desire to avoid the size and concentration of sites that exists at Smithy Fen, Cottenham and Chesterton Fen, Milton.

Space for business and other uses

GT33: Provision for Business Uses – Proposed Approach:

Business Uses on Gypsy and Traveller sites would only be permitted if appropriate for its location and where it would not result in a significant impact on neighbouring properties or land uses. These uses would be subject to EA regulations and requirements for the disposal of waste.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

ODPM Circular 01/2006 advocates that sites identified should be, *“suitable for mixed residential and business uses, having regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and their children, and neighbouring residents.”*¹⁷

GT34: Provision for Stables – Proposed Approach:

Planning permission for stables on a Gypsy and Traveller site would be considered if there is an identified need for this use and where it does not result in any harmful impact on the site or surrounding area.

¹⁶ Paragraph 6, Page 21 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”

¹⁷ Paragraph 56, page 14 of ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

It would be unreasonable to disregard an application for stables on a Gypsy/Traveller site when such applications are considered on all other land.

4.55 Some Gypsies and Travellers run their businesses from the site on which they reside. ODPM Circular 01/2006 states that local planning authorities, should wherever possible, identify in their DPDs Gypsy and Traveller sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses, having regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants, their children, and neighbouring residents. Areas of a potential site identified as unsuitable for residence might be suitable for parking vehicles or storage.

4.56 There is also requirement in the Gypsy and Traveller community for stable facilities. Therefore, where appropriate, there must be provision within sites for a suitability-designed area for this activity.

Traditional Gypsy Settlement Areas

GT35: Traditional Gypsy Settlement Areas – Proposed Approach:
Sites should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community. They should also avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.

GT36: Traditional Gypsy Settlement Areas – Rejected Option:
Gypsy and Traveller pitches would be considered within a locality regardless of scale and pressure on the local infrastructure.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

ODPM Circular 01/2006 recognises that Traveller development needs to respect the scale of the existing settlements to which they relate. The existing scale within some parts of the District have been recognised by both the Secretary of State and the Courts as having a significantly harmful impact on the neighbouring settlements. It is therefore unreasonable not to consider scale and pressure of sites when looking at their location.

4.57 There should be no negative impact on the amenity, the character and the social and physical infrastructure of nearby settlements. It is also important to consider the overall impact on the mix and balance of a community in a local area. Nevertheless, the desire of Gypsies and Travellers to be close to relatives and friends cannot be ignored.

4.58 Account also needs to be taken of the traditional job preference areas of the Gypsy and Traveller community in determining the location of appropriate sites. Care must be taken in selecting sites to maximise economic opportunities for the Gypsy and Traveller families and communities without the need for long distance travelling.

4.59 Sites however should not be allocated or granted planning permission on these grounds alone. In compliance with Government guidance, consideration must be given to other suitability and sustainability criteria, along with the

impact the proposed development will have on neighbouring residents and adjoining land uses.

Play Areas

GT37: Play Areas – Proposed Approach:

An area for children to play in should be available on sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Where appropriate, preference would be given to pitches within a reasonable and safe walking distance of local recreational facilities.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

It would be unreasonable to expect children to live on a site without play equipment or at an excessive walking distance of the nearest community recreational facility that was not on a safe route.

4.60 The needs of children will need special consideration, particularly relating to play. Sites will need the capacity and character for this provision, which can be formal or informal spaces, so they may play in safety while respecting the amenity of other occupants. Ideally, Gypsy and Traveller sites will also be located within walking distance via a safe pedestrian route to local recreational facilities.

Site Availability/Site Acquisition

GT38A: Site Availability – Option A:

Private landowners could come forward with available and suitable land for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

GT38B: Site Availability – Option B:

Where problems finding sufficient available sites are encountered, the Council could consider exercising their Compulsory Purchase Powers to secure new sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in appropriate locations.

GT38C: Site Availability – Option C:

Council-owned land could be disposed of for Gypsy and Traveller pitches where such land met the agreed selection criteria.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The Council will explore all reasonable alternatives to find suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

4.61 Once a site has been identified as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, ease of acquisition then becomes an important criterion for assessment. Sites may be in public or private ownership, authorised or currently unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches, or other landowners.

4.62 South Cambridgeshire District Council has limited land in its ownership and much of this land would not be suitable or available for Gypsy and Traveller pitches as the majority are public amenity areas such as parks and open

spaces. The willingness of site owners to sell will therefore be an important consideration in identifying sites.

- 4.63 It will therefore be necessary to identify suitable sites owned by private landowners who are willing for their land to be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The consultation process on this Issues and Options Report is an opportunity for potential sites to come forward from landowners. These sites will then be assessed in terms of their suitability and may then be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- 4.64 ODPM Circular 01/2006 indicates the Council should consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers to acquire appropriate sites. The use of these powers often has consequences associated with financial cost and community conflict and should therefore be avoided where possible. The Council is currently not financially able to purchase land, however, if this situation changes it may be possible to use Compulsory Purchase Powers if there are problems in finding sufficient available sites for additional gypsy pitches in the District.

GTQ1:

The Issues and Options stage of this GTDPD allows for potential sites to be put forward by representors. Are you aware of any sites/land within the District, which might be suitable and available for Gypsy and Traveller pitches?

Site Ownership and Management

GT39: Site Ownership and Management – Option A:

The Council would identify suitable sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the Plan. Private landowners would sell each site to members of this community where management would be undertaken privately.

GT40: Site Ownership and Management – Option B:

Gypsy and Traveller sites will be released to private developers/Housing Associations (HA) in the same way as traditional housing sites. The developer/HA would cover costs associated with basic infrastructure and then sell/rent individual pitches to Gypsies and Travellers.

GT41: Site Ownership and Management – Rejected Option:

The Council would own and manage all new Gypsy and Traveller sites within the District.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The Council is financially unable to buy and manage its own sites. Facilitating purchases by Housing Associations/Partners is the only reasonable alternative.

- 4.65 Along with a desire for smaller family sites, early consultation with key stakeholders has revealed a preference for sites owned and managed by the Gypsy and Traveller community. Several success stories exist in the District where Gypsies and Travellers have established successful, attractive caravan sites where residents have integrated well with the settled community. Conversely, there have been two closures of Council operated sites.

- 4.66 It is therefore recommended that sites be owned and managed by Gypsies and Travellers themselves. Sites owned and managed in this way are perceived as more effective in dealing with anti-social behaviour. A sense of pride and respect for sites is also instilled when they are privately owned.
- 4.67 Sites identified for Gypsy and Traveller pitches will be exclusively for that use. No land owner will be permitted to convert a planning consent for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to residential use if, for example, the land owner was unable to sell pitches/sites to Gypsies and Travellers. This will be ensured through planning conditions.
- 4.68 More detailed aspects of site management are outside the scope of the GTDPD's purpose.

Affordable Accommodation

GT42: Affordable Accommodation – Proposed Option:
The Council will assist interested Housing Associations/partners to purchase and oversee a site (or more than one site) providing affordable accommodation to the Gypsy and Traveller community.

GT43: Affordable Accommodation – Alternative Option:
There would be a requirement for a proportion of affordable pitches on private Gypsy/Traveller sites.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
 The Council is financially unable to buy and manage its own sites. Facilitating purchases by Housing Associations/Partners is the only reasonable alternative.

- 4.69 Not all members of the Gypsy and Traveller community will be in a position to buy their own pitch or site. It is therefore recommended that SCDC facilitate site purchase/acquisition either by Travellers groups themselves or by agencies such as Housing Associations where there is a need for affordable pitches. The Housing Association might choose, in the interests of mixed communities etc, to sell some long leases and possibly offer shared ownership to provide choice, balance and revenue. The day-to-day management duties of these sites would be given to the organisation involved or Gypsy and Travellers themselves.
- 4.70 Owners of private sites could be required to make a proportion of their pitches affordable and rent them to Gypsies/Travellers unable to purchase their own sites. Most private sites are family run and for the accommodation of an extended family. Renting pitches to other families could be a way of generating income but may not be culturally acceptable to Gypsies/Travellers who like to live in their own family groupings.

Transit and Temporary Sites

Transit Sites

GT44A: Transit Sites – Option A:
In addition to providing permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites SCDC will, in cooperation with neighbouring authorities, investigate the provision of transit sites within the County.

GT44B: Transit Sites – Option B:
SCDC would not make provision for transit sites within the district.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It is not reasonable for the Council to provide transit sites in isolation of other local authorities since their provision needs to be county wide in order to meet demand.

4.71 The aim of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document is to find new sites within the District to meet future demand for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and set out a robust policy strategy for dealing with unauthorised encampments and future planning applications for new sites. The specific provision of transit sites is beyond the original scope of the brief for this DPD. Nevertheless, this is a significant issue that has emerged from early consultations with key stakeholders.

Temporary Special Event Sites

GT45A: Temporary Special Event Sites – Option A:
SCDC would, in cooperation with neighbouring authorities, investigate the feasibility of establishing temporary Gypsy and Traveller sites during special events, such as the Mid-summer fair.

GT45B: Temporary Special Event Sites – Option B:
SCDC would not investigate establishing temporary Gypsy and Traveller sites during special events, such as the Mid-summer fair.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It is not reasonable for the Council to provide temporary special event sites in isolation of other local authorities.

4.72 Early consultations have also revealed the need to address illegal encampments during special Gypsy and Traveller events. Although again the provision of this type of site is not a specific aim of the Development Plan Document brief, given its significance it is an issue that must be addressed. One way to achieve this could involve the district council issuing temporary permits for Gypsy and Traveller encampments in suitable locations during special events with strict restrictions on the length of stay.

Further Issues

GTQ2:

A number of issues have been discussed in this chapter relating to site identification/location and management for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Do you wish to raise any further issues that might not have been addressed?

- 4.73 The Council considers that it has identified all reasonable alternative options for consultation in relation to the identification/location and management for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. However, if you consider that there are other issues that should have been considered, or alternative options for any issues that have been included, please let us know what they are.

5 METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING SITES IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

GT46: Methodology – Proposed Approach:

Subject to selection of the preferred options/approaches listed previously, SCDC will use this three-tier approach to develop a list of site options for consultation.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None

The Council believes this three – tier approach allows for a wide reaching but inclusive set of criteria on which to base its new policy and to identify options for sites for Gypsy and Travellers.

- 5.1 Bearing in mind the environmental, economic and social issues discussed in the previous chapter, a detailed methodology entailing a three-tier site selection and scoring process has been devised to assist in the process of identifying potential sites. If, following consultation, the Council follows the preferred options; this methodology outlines the next steps. It may need to be amended if other options are put forward in representations and chosen by the Council, if they alter any of the process involved.

Tier 1 – Location

- 5.2 The first tier of the site selection process will examine aspects of a site's location. This will include site constraints along with opportunities for site development.
- 5.3 The first question to be answered when identifying a potential site is whether or not a site is suitable for Gypsy and Traveller development. Sites located within the following areas will be avoided:
- Areas of flood risk where no mitigation measures can be implemented.
 - Areas with poor drainage where no mitigation measures can be implemented.
 - Areas of poor ground stability where no mitigation measures can be implemented.
 - Hazardous installation or contaminated land.
 - Protected mineral workings.
 - Valued areas, such as conservation areas, green belt, and other nationally/locally designated areas.
 - Areas adjoining dual carriageways, railway lines, power lines and water bodies (site safety concerns)
- 5.4 Once these 'no-go' areas have been identified, the location of potential sites becomes clearer. The next stage in identifying search zones for potential sites will involve aspects of sustainability. The Council promotes forms of sustainable development within the District. It is agreed that sustainable locations should be sought for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Therefore, preference will be given to areas within 1000m of at least 5 of the following local services and amenities:

- food shop
- postal facility
- bank/cash point
- pharmacy
- primary school
- secondary school
- medical centre
- leisure centre
- community centre
- place of worship
- public house
- children's play area
- public park

5.5 Access to public transport also becomes an important consideration. Areas within 1000m of a public transport node will be sought for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

5.6 The re-use of brownfield sites, a key objective of sustainable development promoted by the Council, will also be examined if the development of such sites would not give rise to any adverse impacts.

5.7 Any pitches that come forward to the Council through the planning application process should also be assessed and determined against the above criteria.

Tier 2 – Highway Access and Infrastructure

5.8 Following completion of the Tier 1 search, a list of potential sites will be generated. Only those that score well against the criteria set out in Tier 1 will be carried over to the second tier of the site selection process examining aspects of a site's access and infrastructure.

Highway Access

5.9 The previous chapter identified providing a safe access arrangement to sites as an important issue, which must to be addressed as part of the site identification process. The following will be assessed for each potential site:

- Is the only means of access through an industrial area, recognised commercial area or housing estate?
- Can an independent vehicular access point that adheres to the Highway Authority's guidance and standards service the site?
- Does the site have a safe pedestrian access/route to the nearest settlement?

5.10 Ideally, sites should have an independent vehicular access point that conforms to the guidance and standards of the local highway authority. To protect amenity, Gypsy and Traveller pitches should not share an access with an industrial area, commercial area or housing estate.

5.11 In some exceptional circumstances providing an acceptable access might not always be feasible. Therefore, detailed consultation will be undertaken with the Highway Authority to assess individual sites that perform well under other criteria but fail to meet some of the requirements for adequate highway access to investigate possible mitigation measures.

Infrastructure

- 5.12 The impact new pitches have on local infrastructure is one of the issues raised in early consultations and is an important consideration for site selection. Therefore, the following will be examined to assess the infrastructure of a potential site:
- What is the maximum site capacity?
 - Is basic infrastructure (water and electricity) available on site or at a reasonable distance away from the site to enable a practical connection?
 - Does this basic infrastructure have the capacity to serve the maximum site capacity?
- 5.13 The use of a site for Gypsy and Traveller pitches should not put undue stress on local physical infrastructure. Therefore, the capacity of local infrastructure such as water and electricity must be assessed and only sites that have a minimal impact on this infrastructure will be permitted. Mitigation should be investigated where appropriate.
- 5.14 Preliminary indications are that sites should ideally be no more than 15 pitches and should meet the business and cultural needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community, having regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants, their children and neighbouring residents. As part of the public consultation process of this Issues and Options Report and future consultation exercises and workshops, the optimum site size will become clearer.

Tier 3 – Deliverability, Design and Impact

- 5.15 Only sites that perform well under the first two tiers of the site selection process will be assessed under this final tier. The third tier will examine details of deliverability, site design and site impact.

Deliverability

- 5.16 The site suitability analysis undertaken in Tier 1 will identify whether or not a site is appropriate for development. It will also be necessary to assess the availability of the site. Each potential site will be assessed on its timescale to come forward for development – the availability of a potential site for immediate use, or likely to be available for development in the LDF period will be an important considerations.
- 5.17 Site acquisition will be an important factor is assessing a potential site's deliverability. Sites may come forward that are in private or public ownership. Compulsory Purchase Orders, although not ideal, might be required if the Council encounter difficulty securing sites. Site ownership is also an important consideration. Through initial consultations it appears Gypsies and Travellers would prefer to purchase sites themselves, however the opportunity for lease or 'rent-to-own' should also be investigated for those not able to purchase land.
- 5.18 The second element of deliverability is notational costings. This does not entail detailed costing for site development, but will only give an indication of

the land value, along with costs associated with utility connections, road infrastructure and landscaping.

Design and Impact

- 5.19 The first aim that should be fulfilled is the satisfaction of the identified local need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The optimum size of each potential site must be established and a preliminary layout should be prepared to assess the feasibility of the development.
- 5.20 The effect on amenity of nearby residential properties and land uses must also be assessed. This will also include assessing the impact on local social infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities. The impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or nearest settlement will also need to be assessed. Possible mitigation measures will be investigated to minimise any harmful impact.
- 5.21 A detailed site appraisal will be undertaken for each potential new site examining elements such as topography, aspect, level and quality of existing vegetation, along with potential impacts on the surrounding area resulting from the development.

Potential Sites

- 5.22 This three-tier approach to site selection will enable the identification of suitable and sustainable site options throughout the District for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches. A detailed scoring sheet and site appraisal will be produced for each site option and included in the Site Specific Issues and Options Report to be produced and consulted on early in 2007. Paragraph 1.8 of this report provides more information on this process.
- 5.23 Appendix 1 of this report provides an example of a scoring sheet, which would be provided for each potential new site as part of the site identification process.

Existing Unauthorised Sites

GT47: Potential Sites – Proposed Approach:
Using this three-tier, criteria-based approach, currently unauthorised sites might be deemed as suitable and sustainable for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and therefore be proposed as authorised sites.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
If currently unauthorised sites meet the new criteria developed, it would be unreasonable not to consider them for authorisation.

- 5.24 Along with identifying new sites throughout the District, existing unauthorised sites will be evaluated under the three-tier, criteria-based approach outlined above. The outcome of this analysis might reveal that some unauthorised sites would be suitable and sustainable sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. These sites would be immediately available to meet demand within the District for additional pitches.

Further Options

GTQ3:

Are there any other clear options you feel have not been identified? Have any reasonable options not been identified or tested and if so why?

6 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of other issues that fall outside the scope of the Development Plan Document. However, as they relate to the wider issue of addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, your views are invited on the following topics.

Dealing with Unauthorised Sites, Planning Applications and Enforcement

- 6.1 Through early consultations with Parish Councils, it was revealed that there is general unhappiness in the wider community and a perception that there is a lack of action by the District Council on illegal Gypsy and Traveller encampments in the District. It was acknowledged by the Parishes that this was largely the result of lack of resources, although much has and is being done through the due lengthy legal processes. However, some Parish Councils would prefer a stronger approach.
- 6.2 Although these concerns are understandable, issues of enforcement should be dealt with through the planning process on an individual basis and are not a matter for the DPD. However, it should be mentioned that once adopted, the GTDPD, being a robust and deliverable policy document and outlining a clear criteria-based policy and approach to identifying suitable and sustainable sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, will be an effective tool for the Council in dealing with future applications for new pitches and if necessary acting on unauthorised ones.

Regenerating Existing Sites

GT48: Regenerating Existing Sites – Proposed Approach:
SCDC will support and encourage programmes and initiatives to regenerate SCDC managed Gypsy and Traveller sites, if they remain following this GTDPD.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It is unreasonable not to promote the existence of refurbishment grants for local authority owned sites if there are the resources and time available.

- 6.3 Some Gypsy and Traveller sites are in poor states of repair and are in desperate need of upgrading, particularly infrastructure and landscaping. There is scope through grants to update or redevelop local authority owned sites to provide more attractive living accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. This again falls outside the scope of the DPD brief; however representations are welcome on this issue.

Community Education Programmes

GT49: Education Programmes – Proposed Approach:
The Council will continue to promote education programmes in local schools and initiatives in the wider community to increase awareness of the issues and needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community whilst resources are available.

Potential for reasonable alternatives: None
It is within the requirements of SCDC's race relation's policy to promote and enhance cultural differences.

- 6.4 Based on initial consultation there appears to be misconceptions and general stigmatisation of the Gypsies and Travellers by the settled community. This often leads to a sense of intimidation. Similarly, there is often a sense of alienation among Gypsies and Travellers from the settled community. Conflict should be avoided and bridges built between these two communities. Therefore, it is recommended that education programmes be promoted in local schools and the wider community to increase awareness of Gypsy and Traveller issues.
- 6.5 Workshops such as that involving the Romany Theatre Company at Swavesey Village College in 2006 will be supported and if possible spread to more schools to enhance the knowledge of children about the Gypsy/Traveller way of life.

7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviations

AAP	Area Action Plan
BRE	British Research Establishment
CA	Conservation Area
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
GTDPD	Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LDS	Local Development Schedule
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NNR	National Nature Reserve
ODPM	Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government)
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PVAA	Protected Village Amenity Area
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SCDC	South Cambridgeshire District Council
SCDLP	South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Specific Scientific Interest

Definitions

1 in 100 year flood event	A flood event with a 1% annual probability of occurrence.
1.0% annual probability flood	The flood event that has 1% chance of occurring in any one year.
Area Action Plan	Provides statutory planning framework for an area of change
Affordable Housing	A wide variety of types and tenures of housing where the common feature is that it is subsidised in some way to make it affordable to those who cannot afford a home on the open market.
Brownfield	Land or premises which has previously been used or developed and is not currently fully in use, although it may be partially occupied or utilised.
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan	Statutory plan that sets out broad development requirements in the Council to 2016 (Prepared by the County Council).
Cambridge Sub-Region	Comprises Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the Market Towns.
ODPM Circular 01/2006	Updated Government guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for Gypsies and Travellers and how local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers can work together to achieve that aim. This replaces Circular 01/94: Gypsy Sites and Planning.
Community Strategy	Strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area and contributing to the achievement of District wide sustainable development
Core Strategy	An element of planning policy within the LDF setting the vision for the entire District.
Development Plan Document	Statutory document having been through Independent Examination, which forms part of the LDF.
Environment Impact Assessment	Considers the potential environmental effects of land use change, enabling decisions on land use change to be taken with full knowledge of the likely environmental consequences.
Examination in Public	Inquiry lead by an independent Planning Inspector into proposals for and objections to LDDs

Flood Risk	Refers to previous flooding events and whether the site is affected by certain flood events e.g. 1 in 100-year event. Also looks at the effects the proposed drainage strategy during flooding.
Flood Risk Assessment	A formal consideration of flood risk at a particular site, or across a particular catchment. Required to be submitted to accompany planning applications for development sites that are at risk of flooding and could increase the flood risk to surrounding areas. The scope and content of the FRA can be found in Appendix F of PPG25.
Good local public transport service	Minimum service frequencies of every 30 minutes during the day, hourly in the evenings and on Saturdays. Every 2 hours or better on Sundays.
Green Corridor	Areas of open land, which penetrate into an urban area for amenity and recreation.
Green Separation	The area of open land required to keep apart two separate communities and maintain their individual identities.
Group Villages	Group villages are defined in SCDC's Core Strategy within Policy ST/6
Gypsy and Traveller Site	Circular 01/2006 defines this as 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. This GTDPD includes Travelling showmen within its remit since they were also included in survey and figures from the Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment.
Gypsy and Traveller Pitch	Can normally accommodate 1 mobile caravan, 1 static caravan and 1 brick building amenity block.
Gypsy and Traveller Site	A specific area containing a varying number of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers
Highway Authority	A local authority with responsibility for the maintenance and drainage of highways maintainable at public expense. The highway authority sets standards for adoptable roads.
Housing Needs Survey	Assessment of housing needs across the whole district.
Local Development Document	Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
Local Development Framework	A 'folder' containing LDDs, LDS, SCI etc.
Local Development Schedule	Sets out the LDDs to be produced over the next 3 years.
Major New Settlement	These are defined in SCDC's Core Strategy Policy ST/3.
Minor Rural Centres	The following villages are defined as Minor Rural Centres in SCDC's Core Strategy: Bar Hill, Cottenham, Fulbourn, Gamlingay, Linton, Melbourn, Waterbeach and Willingham.
Mitigation	Ways and measures of reducing the effects of, for example, flooding, ground instability and poor drainage.
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister now known as The Department for Communities and Local Government.
ODPM Circular 01/2006	Updated Government guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for Gypsies and Travellers and how local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers can work together to achieve that aim. This replaces Circular 01/94: Gypsy Sites and Planning.
Planning Policy Statement	New form of national planning guidance replacing PPGs.
Protected Village Amenity Area	Open land protected for its contribution to the character of the village.
Regional Spatial Strategy	Planning guidance for the region (formally Regional Planning Guidance)
Rural Centre	The following villages are defined as Rural Centres in SCDC's Core Strategy: Cambourne, Great Shelford and Stapleford, Histon and Impington and Sawston.
Section 46	Previously Section 106. Planning agreements that secure contributions (in cash or in kind) to the infrastructure and services necessary to facilitate proposed developments.
Site of Specific Scientific Interest	Designated site of national importance to wildlife and/or geology.
Statement of Community	Shows how the wider community and stakeholders will be involved in the process of producing the LDF

Involvement	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, promoting sustainable development.
Supplementary Planning Document	Informal policy which has been the subject of public participation (the new name of SPG)
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal against sustainability criteria of proposals for LDDs by independent consultants.
Sustainable Drainage Systems	May take the form of swales, lagoons, permeable paving, green roofs and sensitively re-engineered channels or reed beds.
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Transit Site	A temporary stopping place for Gypsies and Travellers passing through the District.
Valued Area	Areas of special character, landscape, historical or ecological importance that may or may not be officially designated. These included Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Landscapes, SSSIs, NNRs and other local designations such as CAs and PVAAs.

**APPENDIX 1:
EXAMPLE OF TIER 3 APPROACH SCORING SHEET**

TIER 1 – LOCATION

Sites must score 5+ to move on to Tier 2

1. Is the site within a valued area?	Nationally recognized designations (i.e. SSSI, NNR, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Landscapes)	-1
	Green Belt	-1
	Conservation Area	-1
	Other locally recognized designations	-1
	Retail/Commercial Allocation in Local Plan	-1
	Industrial/Employment Allocations in Local Plan	-1
	Protected Mineral Workings	-1
2a. Is the site in close proximity to a hazardous area?	Flood Plain	-1
	Contaminated Land	-1
	Hazardous Installations	-1
	Poor Drainage	-1
	Poor Highway Safety	-1
	Dual Carriageway, Railway Line, River	-1
2b. Can any of the above be addressed through mitigation or through sensitive design of the site?	Yes	2
	No	0
3. Is the Site within a Gypsy/Traveller Preference Area	Yes	1
	No	0
4. Is the site on the Council's brownfield site register?	Yes	1
	No	0
5. Is the site within 1000m of at least 5 local amenities*?	Yes	5
	No	0
6. Is the site within 2000m of at least 5 local amenities*?	Yes	2
	No	0
7. Is the site provided with a good local public transport service?	Yes	1
	No	0

* Local Amenities include: postal facility, food shop, bank/cash point, pharmacy, primary school, medical centre, leisure centre, community centre, place of worship, public house, children's play area, outdoor access public area/public park.

TIER 2 – ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Sites must have a Tier 2 score of 3+ to proceed to Tier 3

1. What is the maximum capacity in terms of pitches of the site?	-	
2. Is basic infrastructure (water, electricity,) available on site or within a reasonable distance away from the site to enable a practical connection?	Yes	2
	No	0
3. Does this basic infrastructure have the capacity to serve the maximum site capacity?	Yes	1
	No	0
4. Is the only means of access through an industrial area, recognised commercial area or housing estate?	Yes	-1
	No	0
5. Can the site be serviced by an independent vehicular access point, which adheres to the Highway Authority's guidance and standards?	Yes	1
	No	0
6. Does the site have a safe pedestrian access/route to the nearest settlement?	Yes	1
	No	0

TIER 3 – DELIVERABILITY, DESIGN AND IMPACT

It is then envisaged that the highest scoring/rated sites will have a detailed assessment considering the elements in the table below along with a draft illustrative layout prepared for practical purposes.

Element	Issues to Address	Topics for Exploration
Deliverability	1. Ease of Acquisition	Private/Public Ownership Purchase/Lease
	2. Notional Costings	Land value Utility connections Road infrastructure Landscaping
Design and Impact	3. Satisfaction of Identified Need	Identified Need Establish optimum site size Establish practical 'raw' layout
	4. Effect on residential amenity of nearby residential properties	Level of harm Possible mitigation measures
	5. Level of obtrusion	Level of harm Possible mitigation measures
	6. Site Appraisal	Topography Aspect Level and quality of existing vegetation Other issues

APPENDIX 2:
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY



SCOTT WILSON PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the draft South
Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller DPD

DRAFT ISSUES AND
OPTIONS
INTERIM SA REPORT
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY



September 2006



Scott Wilson

We work with clients to develop, implement and evaluate projects, programmes and change initiatives to improve performance and reduce risk.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller DPD – Issues and Options Report

20/09/2006

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1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Local Development Framework (LDF) for South Cambridgeshire will replace the existing local plan. The LDF acts as a folder of documents that will set the policy and context for development in the district for the period leading up to 2016. Amongst other plans the LDF will contain a number of statutory plans (Development Plan Documents or DPD's), which carry the full weight of the development plan. The Government guidance document *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Circular, 01/2006* set out the obligation for Local Authorities to allocate sufficient sites for Gypsy and Travellers in site allocation DPDs. Furthermore the Gypsy and Traveller DPD (GTDPD) must undergo a **Sustainability Appraisal** (see below).

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal

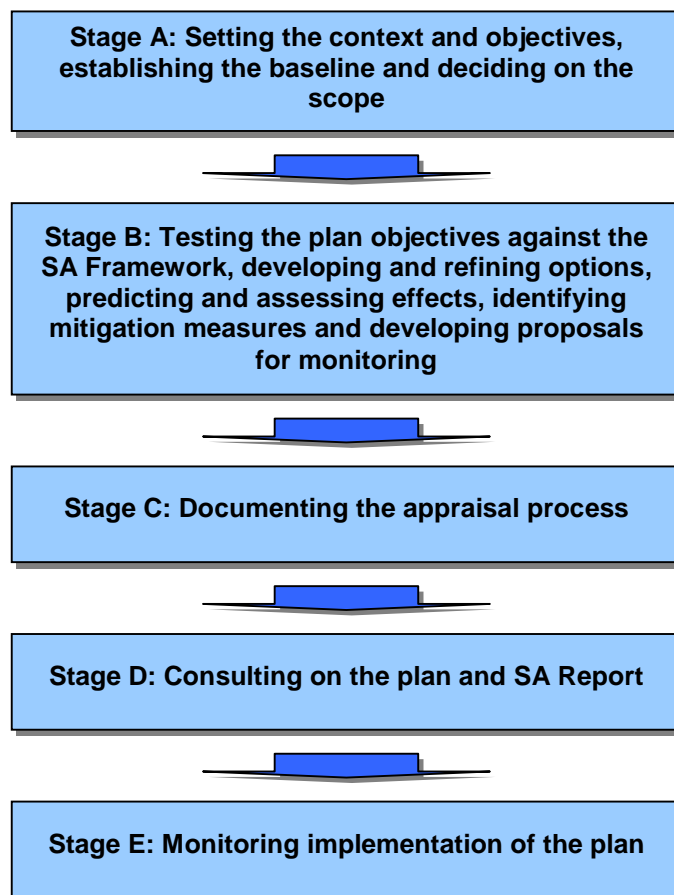
1.2.1 Scott Wilson and have been commissioned to support South Cambridgeshire District Council in undertaking the **Sustainability Appraisal** (SA) of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

1.2.2 SA involves the identification and evaluation of the Strategy's impacts on economic, social and environmental objectives – the three dimensions of **sustainable development**. The SA process incorporates the requirements of a new European law on the environmental assessment of plans (referred to as the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive').

1.2.3 The SA process – incorporating SEA – involves five key stages – see Figure 1 overleaf.

1.2.4 Stage A involved establishing the framework for undertaking the SA – essentially a set of sustainable development objectives against which the DPD could be assessed – together with an evidence base to help inform the appraisal. The framework and evidence base are documented in the South Cambridgeshire **Scoping Report**, which have been subject to consultation, and are available on the respective Council's website. Furthermore Scott Wilson has prepared an addendum to the Scoping Report containing specific and relevant issues and information pertinent to the assessment of the GTDPD.

Figure 1 Five stage approach to SA



1.2.5 This report - Stage B in the SA process – focuses on the issues and options for developing the draft DPD. Although not a formal requirement of the SEA Directive it has been prepared to help demonstrate that sustainability considerations have been incorporated into the development of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD from an early stage, and to provide information for stakeholders as well as an audit trail of the appraisal process. The appraisal findings documented in this report will be taken into account by the Council in the development and choice of the preferred options that will provide the basis for the Gypsy and Traveller DPD. Stage B refers to the LDF objectives. At this stage, there are no concrete objectives, however in addition to appraising the options, this report will look at the general aspirations of the Plan. The assessment of objectives can also be assessed as part of the final SA Report.

1.3 Issues and Options

1.3.1 One of the most important parts of the SA process is the appraisal of different options for preparing the DPD. The role of the SA is to help inform the decision maker on constructing a draft DPD on what tradeoffs are required and what the associated environmental, social and economic impacts are likely to be. This information should help South Cambridgeshire Council prepare a plan that finds an optimal reconciliation of economic, environmental and social objectives.

1.3.2 SA centres on the consideration of different **options**. The draft report on Issues and Options for the South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller DPD sets out a series of options organised around a series of the following themes and sub-issues:

- **Identifying New Gypsy and Traveller Sites:**
 - Approach to identifying sites
 - Site Suitability
 - Sustainability of the Location
 - Major New Developments
 - Impact on Valued Areas
 - Impact on Nearest Settlement
 - Special Needs of Gypsies and Travellers
 - Site Availability/Site Acquisition
 - Site Ownership and Management
 - Affordable Accommodation
 - Transit and Temporary Sites

- **Methodology for identifying sites:**
 - Tier 1 – Location
 - Tier 2 – Highway Access and Infrastructure
 - Tier 3 – Deliverability, Design and Impact
 - Potential Sites
 - Further Options

- **Other Considerations:**
 - Dealing with Unauthorised Sites, Planning Applications and Enforcement
 - Regenerating Existing Sites
 - Community Education Programmes

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

1.4.1 A number of reoccurring issues and strong points for consideration for inclusion within the South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller DPD have been identified in the assessment process. Listed below are these issues broadly separated into social, environmental and economic topics.

Environmental

- Sites that can offer greater permanence in residence will help reduce the number and distance of vehicle trips that would otherwise have been undertaken. This will have benefits in reducing the potential volume of emitted air pollution.
- Proximity to centres providing services and facilities will have benefits for air quality by reducing vehicle trips. Similarly, sites within new major developments will also result in this benefit.
- The site criteria that feed into the first tier of the three-tier assessment process will help reduce potential impacts on the environment from pollution and by reducing flood risk.
- Sites on Brownfield land should be encouraged to preserve agricultural resources, minimise landscape impacts and avoid environmental effects such as pollution incidents.
- New sites provide the opportunity to employ sustainable design and construction methods, where possible. On-site renewable energy and sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) would provide environmental benefits and the DPD could explore provision for these.
- Locating sites within the greenbelt will have a number of environmental impacts. However, it is acknowledged that those impacts may be inevitable in order to provide for demand and need for sites. In these cases careful site selection and consideration will be needed in the first tier of assessment, to reduce the effect of trade offs between social and environmental goals.
- Constraining site size could affect family groups by separation of social networks. This may result in increasing vehicle trips between sites, or use of illegal sites that have negative environmental effects.
- Privately owned sites, and to a degree, sites that may be owned by housing associations may provide environmental benefits, in particular from nuisance such as noise, as these sites instil an element of pride and ownership.
- The provision of transit and temporary sites will be able to provide some of the infrastructure required for inhabitation and will reduce the likelihood of illegal sites. This in turn will reduce the possible environmental effects associated with illegal sites.
- The three-tier approach, as detailed in the Issue and Options Report 1, if applied correctly will help to apply appropriate environmental protection during the site selection process.

Social

- Adequately providing in full for anticipated need for pitches from the Gypsy and Traveller Community will help avoid illegal sites and the associated and varied sustainability issues that will arise from these, together with providing affordable housing to this section of the community.
- Options for locating sites in proximity to settlements or within new large developments will provide accessibility to services and facilities. This provides benefits in terms of health and educational levels within the Gypsy and Traveller community. Associated benefits also include social integration and cohesion amongst this group and the settled community. These options will promote accessibility to and the use of public transport and encourage walking.
- It must be ensured that for the above benefits to come to fruition the settlement close to Gypsy and Traveller sites or that the site is within must not be overwhelmed in terms of size or demand for services and facilities. In this case negative effects would result.
- The site criteria that feed into the first tier of the assessment process should provide benefits for site safety and therefore community health will benefit.
- Some greenbelt sites may be needed to fulfil demand for pitches. These should however remain close to facilities and communities that can support the new population but should not isolate the Gypsy and Traveller population and divide social groups.
- Constraining site size could have a number of effects. Although smaller sites may limit some issues of the perceived nuisance attached to Gypsies and Travellers they may also affect the ability of family groups to remain together. The potential would therefore be for family and friendship groups to leave designated Gypsy and Traveller sites and locate elsewhere in uncontrolled locations where issues of nuisance, health and safety could feature.
- Site acquisition and ownership has a number of benefits. Ownership can promote pride and care in ownership. This will reduce some of the impacts associated with non-permanent or unsecured encampment such as nuisance and some social issues such as anti social behaviour. These sites can also provide some community facilities on site (such as children's play areas). It is important to note that some Gypsy and Traveller families may have issues with selling or renting pitches to other low-income families, as this is not a normal practice within this social group. Therefore some housing association owned sites can help provide affordable accommodation. The renovation for existing council sites may also help provide accommodation of low-income groups and improve existing on-site facilities.
- Transit and Temporary sites can help fulfil some of the social needs required by those Gypsy and Travellers who are actively travelling. Such sites can help provide accessibility to community services required for short-term habitation. It should be noted that temporary and permanent sites should be separated to avoid social issues within the Gypsy and Traveller community.¹ This will also help to reduce the number of illegal sites and the social issues such as noise and nuisance that may be associated with these.

¹ Cambridge County Council (2006), Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment

- The three-tier approach will help ensure social needs such as accessibility to services and impact on existing settled communities are considered. The result of this may be to help improve health and education levels amongst the Gypsy and Traveller population, as identified within the sub-regional needs assessment as a pressing need.

Economic

- Proximity to centres providing services and facilities will also provide opportunities for employment and business development amongst the Gypsy and Traveller population.
- The protection of heritage and biodiversity designations is potentially important to protecting some of the tourist interests in the district and wider region.
- Provisions for the inclusion of business use on site will provide opportunities for Gypsy and Travellers to input into the local economy.
- Privately owned sites and the purchase of pitches provide an opportunity for Gypsy and Travellers to be involved in the housing market if desired.
- Transit and temporary sites can ensure that important events in the calendar of Gypsy and Travellers will continue to go ahead. These can be important inputs into the local economy and provide income for some members of the travelling community.
- The three-tier approach to site selection will enable accessibility to local services to be a consideration. This can help provide income for the local economy, via goods and services purchased.