

Barrow Borough Local Plan Examination

Hearing Statement Matter 8:

Gypsy Traveller & Travelling Showpeople's provision

Barrow Borough Council

May 2018



Inspectors MIQ's:

Matter 8- Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's provision

Issue *Whether the approach to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's provision is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in both the NPPF and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*

Relevant policy H15: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Questions

1. How has the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation been assessed? Is there any further evidence other than the Cumbria GTAA of November 2013?
2. What are the findings of this assessment?
3. In terms of the site allocation at Schneider Road:
 - Is there a need for a site allocation in principle? What would be the alternative?
 - What was the process for identifying the site at Schneider Road? How has the situation evolved during plan preparation? Which factors were taken into account in site selection, including the potential impact on heritage assets?
 - Is the site a true Gypsy and Traveller site in that it is restricted to occupation for Gypsies and Travellers?
 - What options were considered and why was this site chosen ahead of other sites? Is this site the most appropriate option?
 - In terms of site allocation, what form has public consultation taken?
4. Is the allocation of this site justified, effective and consistent with national policy? In particular, does the BBLP identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15?
5. If the Council is to rely upon making provision for the first five years and thereafter reassessing demand, where is the commitment to do so and an expression of the intended timescale for review?
6. In terms of the assessment of unallocated sites:
 - Are the criteria within the policy appropriate and justified?
 - Is the policy consistent with national policy?

Council Responses:

Issue 8- Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's provision

Question 1 Response:

1.1. The need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation has been assessed through the Cumbria Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013 (EL4 004) commissioned jointly by all 6 districts in Cumbria, the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria County Council and produced by Arc4.

1.2. The 2013 Assessment provided an update to an earlier assessment again produced by Arc4 in 2008.

1.3. The objective of the Assessment was to provide a robust evidence base to inform local authorities plan making and housing strategies. The Assessment included an information review, stakeholder survey, survey of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the county and provision of recommendations on the future provision of pitches for each authority. Furthermore where possible to provide an understanding of the demographic profile of Gypsies and Travellers, accommodation needs and wider support needs.

1.4. In addition to this assessment the Council monitors the number of caravans in the borough and submits data bi-annually to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Traveller Caravan Count. This data can be found in Appendix A.

1.5. The Council also monitors the occurrence of Unauthorised Encampments in the borough for its own purposes and to notify other appropriate organisations. There have been 22 encampments over the last five years, with an average of 5 caravans per encampment. This data can be found in Appendix A.

1.6. The Council uses the Cumbria wide Unauthorised Encampment Protocol (2015) as the basis for how we respond to unauthorised encampments, most other Cumbrian authorities and Cumbria Police also use it, although there is no ongoing partnership management.

Question 2 Response:

2.1. In summary, the Assessment identified a supply of 22 Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Barrow in Furness Borough, a shortfall of 2 permanent pitches over the period 2013/14 to 2017/18 and 4 over the period 2018/19 to 2027/28, resulting in a total shortfall of 6 pitches over the period 2013/14 to 2027/28. The study also recommended the provision of up to 7 transit pitches in Barrow town. See Table 10.2 page 72 of EL4 004.

2.2. However it should be noted that access to the Schneider Road site was prohibited for survey purposes (para 10.22 page 71 of EL4 004).

Question 3 Response:

3.1. National policy set out in the Government's 2015 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', requires Councils to set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area and to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of provision, a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 – 10 and, where possible, years 11 – 15.

3.2. Based on the GTAA (2013) and data gathered by the Councils Environmental Health and Housing sections there is a need for a small site in principle for Gypsies and Travellers but no requirement for Travelling Showpeople. However the annual data gathered by the Council does suggest that both the number of caravans and the number of unauthorised encampments in the borough has fallen since the 2013 Assessment and continues to do so.

3.3. It is intended to meet the assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches identified with the allocation of a site at Schneider Road, Barrow to accommodate eight pitches as set out in Policy H15 and Appendix H of EL1 001.

3.4. In accordance with national policy, Policy H15 identifies land for allocation to meet the specific known need of 6 pitches, and 2 potential transit pitches.

3.5. Policy H15 sets out criteria for provision on this allocated site, and to address any future or further need arising by establishing criteria against which applications for further 'windfall' sites can be judged, as it is possible that privately owned sites may come forward in the future, which could result in the site identified not being required.

Site Selection

3.6. The Council consulted on the Issues and Options Draft Local Plan in 2014. This asked a question (see Appendix B) which provided options for the emerging Policy including the allocation of a permanent site at Schneider Road, request for alternative sites to be forward or do not identify a site. Throughout all five Drafts of the Local Plan we have not received any alternative locations for a site other than Schneider Road.

3.7. A number of representations were received which supported the inclusion of the Policy and the allocation of a specific site.

3.8. The site at Schneider Road was identified through the SHLAA call for sites in 2013 as a vacant brownfield site owned by the Borough Council, and is sustainable due to its proximity to shops and services. Consideration was given to how the site could deliver adequate living standards for residents including provisions for power, water, drainage, sewage and waste disposal facilities and this was considered suitable as it is located adjacent to an existing private caravan site. In line with the PPTS consideration was also given to the sites location and the ability to use soft landscaping to positively enhance its

environment. The site was selected as the most suitable location for a small Gypsy and Traveller site to meet the assessed need and was available for development.

Consultation

3.9. The site at Schneider Road was first identified in the Issues and Options Local Plan in 2014 and has remained the same throughout all four subsequent draft and their associated consultations.

3.10. Throughout the development of the Local Plan the Council has undertaken several rounds of consultation which are detailed in the Consultation Statement (EL1 005) and Equality Impact Assessment (EL3 002 page 15) all engagement during the development of the Local Plan has been guided by the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (EL3 005).

3.11. The Council consulted with both statutory consultees and the wider public to gather feedback on and help us improve the content of the Draft Local Plan. We approached a wide range of stakeholders, including both statutory and non-statutory consultees. A full list of the statutory organisations (as identified from our Statement of Community Involvement) that we consulted with is shown in Appendix 1 of EL1 005.

3.12. In addition to writing to all consultees by letter or email, all consultation documentation was available on the council's website and data portal and hard copies were available at public locations such as libraries and council offices throughout the borough, and to Parish and Town Councils. We also held a series of drop in events across the borough, advertised in the local press and in the Development Services newsletter and disseminated information using a variety of informal networks. Promotional material (leaflets and posters) was distributed around the borough and press releases issued to the local newspaper. Site notices were also placed on site at both the Publication and Pre Submission Draft Stages.

3.13. Briefings on the Local Plan and the consultations were given to Members, and other local interest groups on request.

Existing site at Old Candleworks, Schneider Road (SHL13b)

3.14. There is an existing caravan site at Old Candleworks, Schneider Road which is not restricted by planning condition or site licence to occupation by Gypsies and Travellers. This approach allows flexibility and it is not considered necessary to include an occupancy condition limiting the site to the occupation for Gypsies and Travellers.

Question 4 Response:

4.1. National policy in the PPTS states that criteria-based policies should be included in Local Plans. The policy sets out clear criteria for assessing planning applications and is considered to be justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Question 5 Response:

5.1. Policy H15 and the identified site at Schneider Road is intended to accommodate the first 5 years and years 6 to 10 (up to 2027/28) of identified need (ie 6 pitches), the Council intends to monitor the requirement by liaising with internal and external partners to monitor demand annually and Chapter 13 - Monitoring of the Local Plan EL1 001 page 293 sets out the two indicators below:

1. Number of unauthorized gypsy and traveller encampments in the Borough
2. Number of gypsy and traveller pitches delivered (permanent or transit)

5.2. These indicators will be monitored through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report and Housing Land Statements to determine whether the policy is achieving the aims and objectives of the Plan.

5.3. A review of the Local Plan will be carried out at least every 5 years. Through regular monitoring of the indicators, the Council will be able to determine whether there is a need to provide further sites. If the existing caravan site at Old Candleworks SHL13b remains operational this may affect future need.

5.4. The Council will continue to engage in multi-agency working with partners such as the police, fire service, health and education authority and bodies and organisations which represent the interests of Gypsies and Travellers in the borough.

Question 6 Response:

6.1. The Council considers that this policy is justified.

6.2. The criteria for unallocated sites are drafted to support planning applications for the provision of Gypsy & Traveller Sites which represent sustainable development in line with the NPPF and in particular paragraph 13 of the PPTS.

6.3. It is not considered necessary to include an occupancy condition limiting a site to the occupation for Gypsies and Travellers, and national policy (PTTS) does not specifically advocate such occupancy conditions.

Barrow Borough – Traveller Caravan Count Data

Year	Month	Number of Caravans
2018	January	11
2017	July	11
	January	18
2016	July	18
	January	18
2015	July	18
	January	21
2014	July	18
	January	17
2013	July	27
	January	18
2012	July	17
	January	18
2011	July	18
	January	18
2010	July	15
	January	14
2009	July	14
	January	16
2008	July	18
	January	9

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-caravan-count>

Barrow Borough – Unauthorised Encampments for Gypsies and Travellers

Year	Number of Unauthorised Encampments
2013	6
2014	8
2015	4
2016	2
2017	1
2018	1

Source: Barrow Borough Council

Extract from Issues and Options Draft Local Plan 2014

Question H20: How should the Local Plan address gypsy and travellers accommodation needs identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Assessment 2013?

Option 1: Allocate the site shown in Appendix N as a permanent site specifically for gypsy and travellers.

Potential Policy

The following site(s) are allocated for and will provide 8 pitches for the accommodation of gypsy and travellers.

Option 2: Allocate an alternative, permanent site specifically for gypsy and travellers

Option 3: Do not identify/allocate a site/sites for gypsy and travellers in the Local Plan but include a policy which states that the Council will always ensure a suitable, tolerated site/sites is/are available.

Potential Policy

The Council will ensure that, in addition to the authorised Gypsy and Traveller site at Schneider Road, a suitable site of no less than x* hectares, will be available for temporary occupation by Gypsy and Travellers, should demand arise. *(If you prefer this option, please suggest a suitable site size).

Option 4: Other option, please provide details.