

# Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Local Plan

## Options Report - Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: What is a Local Plan and the Development Plan?

**A:** A Development Plan is a series of documents setting out the local authority's policies and proposals for development in its area. These individual documents are known as Local Plans. The Development Plan as a whole guides and shapes day-to-day decisions as to whether or not planning permission should be granted. In order to ensure that decisions are consistent, all applications are considered against the Development Plan as a whole.

### Q: Why do we need a plan for Gypsy and Traveller sites?

**A:** We are committed to meeting the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community within the borough, in the same way as the housing needs of the settled community are planned for in the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires that local planning authorities identify and supply sites for Gypsies and Travellers over a set period of time. Other legislation, such as the Housing and Planning Act and Equality Act also require that we plan for this specific accommodation need.

### Q: What is the purpose of this consultation?

**A:** This 'options' report is designed to highlight the key issues around this topic, while suggesting options to address these issues. The format of the document is to provide some background information and then pose a series of 'options' as questions. The views received will feed into the next stage, which will be a full draft plan including site allocations, expected in mid-2020.

## **Q: Are you identifying new sites or pitches yet?**

**A:** No, we are not yet identifying specific sites or pitches. We are seeking your views on the site assessment process and criteria. There is the opportunity to raise further site selection issues as part of this consultation and submit sites or pitches for consideration as potential options for allocation. Specific sites will be assessed and then identified in the next stage of the plan production (called Regulation 19 stage).

## **Q: What benefit to the settled community will new sites provide?**

**A:** If we plan for new Traveller and Gypsy accommodation, it will help to prevent the formation of unauthorised encampments which often cause conflict with the settled community. It is better for all members of the community if sites can be identified based on agreed suitable assessment criteria and designed appropriately.

## **Q: How do I respond to the consultation?**

**A:** You can view and comment on the documents online at [www.ashford.gov.uk/consult](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consult) or in person at Ashford Civic Centre, Ashford Gateway, Charing Library, Tenterden Gateway and Wye Library. You can also call us on 01233 330229 or email [planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk) for a copy of the document or comment forms to be sent out to you in the post.

## **Q: What will the next steps be?**

**A:** After this consultation, we will need to consider responses carefully. Your responses will inform the policies coming forward in the draft plan. Sites will be assessed and selected on whether they can be delivered. We also consider their suitability and sustainability as set out in this consultation. The next version of the plan, which will include specific sites or pitches, will be subject to a further consultation where everyone can comment on the proposed policies and site allocations. Finally, the plan will be submitted to the government for independent examination to be checked for legal 'soundness' before its adoption by the council.