



## Local Plan Committee

Item  
**10**

18 August 2014

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Karen Syrett 506477
Title	Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment		
Wards affected	All		

**The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the report.**

### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To note the findings of the report on Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation carried out on behalf of the Essex Planning Officer Association.

### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To ensure members are aware of the findings assessing the demand for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation in Colchester and Essex. The report will form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.

### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There is no alternative option; the report is for information only.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' came into force in March 2012 and sets out the direction of government policy. Its objectives include that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning, and should work collaboratively to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale.
- 4.2 In producing their Local Plan local planning authorities should:
- Identify and annually update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.
  - Identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6 -10 and, where possible, for years 11 -15.
  - Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites.
- 4.3 Previously targets for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation were set regionally through the East of England Plan. As with other forms of housing, setting targets for gypsy and traveller accommodation is now done through the Local Plan development process and collaborative working with adjacent authorities. Evidence on gypsy and traveller need will

accordingly inform the Council's development of an Objectively Assessed Need for all forms of housing to inform allocations in its Local Plan.

- 4.4 To address these requirements, the Essex Planning Officers Association commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to provide an Essex wide assessment. The report quantifies the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for residential and transit sites as well as bricks and mortar accommodation in five year sections up to 2033. The report was published in July 2014 and is available on the Essex Planning Officers Website, hosted by Uttlesford District Council. <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3934&p=0>  
The results will be used to inform the allocation of resources and as an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning.
- 4.5 The methodology for the study involved analysis of a wide range of data sources; extensive local stakeholder engagement; a survey of travelling communities, including interviews with residents of all pitches and contact with people living in bricks and mortar accommodation desiring a permanent pitch in the study area. In terms of definitions used in the report, a pitch is an area which is large enough for household to occupy and typically contains enough space for one or two caravans but can vary in size, and a site is a collection of pitches.
- 4.6 The study found that there are currently a total of 918 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the Essex study area. Appendix 1 provides a summary of current Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in Essex. The statistics include local authority and private pitches; sites with temporary permission; tolerated sites; and unauthorised sites. Numbers for concealed households and bricks and mortar accommodation are also included within the totals.
- 4.7 In Colchester, there are a total of 32 sites. The Council has asked that the report be revised to move the 5 units in the 'unauthorised pitches' column to the 'households on permanent pitches' given that the pitches have planning permission. On this basis, the totals for Colchester can be broken down as follows: 9 private sites with 16 pitches; 1 local authority site with 12 pitches and one long-term tolerated private site with one pitch. On these Colchester pitches, there is an average of 2.83 caravans per pitch. Colchester does not have any yards for travelling showpeople, and no future plots are considered to be required.
- 4.8 Appendix 2 provides the report's calculations of pitches required to meet need in five-year periods to 2033. 786 pitches are required overall in Essex, with Colchester requiring 24 extra pitches (net) to meet need until 2033. This includes new identified sites; current need; and future needs, including net new household formation.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the following implications arising from the report;
1. The report will form part of the evidence base needed to develop the Council's Objectively Assessed Need for all forms of housing, including gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople. To be found sound at

examination, the Council will need to demonstrate that its Local Plan addresses Objectively Assessed Need.

2. The Local Plan currently in the initial stages of development for the period to 2032 will accordingly need to have regard to the need to identify and allocate at least 19 sites for gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople.
3. In the short term sites will be required for up to 12 pitches by 2018.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan Action Plan includes a commitment to providing safe, secure, decent and affordable homes for all.

## **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 Not applicable

## **8. Publicity Considerations**

- 8.1 There is likely to be continued interest in identifying sites within the Borough for gypsy, traveller, and travelling showpeople accommodation resulting in publicity for the Council.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 None identified

## **10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights/Health and Safety and Community Safety Implications**

- 10.1 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010.

## **11. Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 Ensuring members are fully briefed on planning decisions and the status of the Local Plan will help reduce the risk of inappropriate development being permitted.

## **12. Disclaimer**

- 12.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omissions.

## Appendix 1

Figure 40  
Summary of Current Gypsy and Traveller accommodation type by Local Authority in June 2013

Local Authority	Households on permanent pitches	Households on temporary pitches	Concealed households	Bricks and mortar households	Households on tolerated pitches	Households on unauthorised pitches	Total
Basildon Borough	115	8	30	6	13	9	181
Braintree District	37	0	5	3	0	21	66
Brentwood Borough	10	27	5	3	0	20	65
Castle Point Borough	2	0	0	0	0	3	5
Chelmsford City	75	0	6	4	2	2	89
Colchester Borough	20	3	2	1	1	5	32
Epping Forest District	116	10	11	6	0	10	153
Harlow District	36	0	3	2	0	0	41
Maldon District	57	0	5	3	0	1	66
Rochford District	5	1	1	1	0	9	17
Southend on Sea Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tendring District	11	0	1	1	0	1	14
Thurrock	90	0	10	6	20	18	144
Uttlesford District	38	0	3	2	1	1	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>918</b>

## Appendix 2

New Pitch Provision in Essex in 5 Year Periods

Local Authority	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	2028-2033	Total
Basildon Borough	122	35	39	44	240
Braintree District	14	8	9	9	40
Brentwood Borough	59	8	8	9	84
Castle Point Borough	2	1	1	1	5
Chelmsford City	22	10	11	12	55
Colchester Borough	12	3	4	5	24
Epping Forest District	54	18	19	21	112
Harlow District	9	5	5	6	25
Maldon District	17	7	8	9	41
Rochford District	14	2	2	2	20
Southend Borough	0	0	0	0	0
Tendring District	4	2	2	2	10
Thurrock	49	17	18	20	104
Uttlesford District	9	5	6	6	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>786</b>