

Community Involvement Plan for Traveller Sites Allocations Development Plan Document – Consultation Draft; Consultation Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report; and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

1. Background

Mid Sussex District Council is producing a *Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document* to meet the identified permanent needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the district by safeguarding existing sites and allocating suitable new sites. This Community Involvement Plan¹ sets out who is involved in forming this document *and why*, when and how people can get involved; and how the results are used.

2. Who is to be involved?

Work on the Traveller Site Allocations DPD is led by the Traveller Policy Member Working Group, a cross-party group of elected Councillors.

Early community involvement has been made in forming the *Mid Sussex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment*². This included Gypsies and Travellers and representative groups, Town Councils, West Sussex County Council, neighbouring authorities and representatives from Mid Sussex District Council Housing and Planning Departments.

Engagement with the general public will commence 8th August 2014 through a public consultation. This is open to all who are interested.

Including everyone

Equality analysis³ considers the needs of people classified as having '*protected characteristics*'⁴. This shows that community involvement for the Traveller Site Allocations Documents should in particular consider the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community; people with a physical disability or a mental impairment; young and older people and women who are pregnant or have very young babies; people who are disadvantaged by their socio-economic background; and people who live in isolated rural areas.

Who will be contacted?

A number of groups will be contacted directly. These are:

- Town and Parish Councils including meetings where requested;
- '*Statutory Consultees*'⁵ including West Sussex County Council, adjoining Local Planning Authorities, service providers and government agencies such as the Environment Agency⁶;
- Other organisations, groups or individuals that may have an interest in the Traveller Sites Allocations DPD⁷. These include members of the Mid Sussex Partnership, residents associations, housing associations, environmental, countryside and conservation groups;
- Representatives of groups highlighted as requiring consideration by Equalities Assessment;
- Gypsy and Traveller representative groups including meetings with Gypsies and Travellers where possible; and
- Subscribers to the Local Development Framework email alert service⁷.

District Councillors play a key role in forming the Traveller Sites Allocations DPD and will be involved through:

- The Traveller Policy Working Group (open to any District Councillor to attend as an observer);
- The Scrutiny Committee for Planning and Economic Development (any District Councillor can attend and request to speak);
- Council (all District Councillors can attend and speak); and
- Public consultation.

¹ In accordance with the Mid Sussex Statement of Community Involvement (2011)

² Available to view at www.midsussex.gov.uk/8686.htm

³ The Equality Assessment is available at www.midsussex.gov.uk/6536.htm

⁴ As defined by the Equality Act 2010

⁵ Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended)

⁶ Details of these groups are set out in a list of 'key contacts' available at www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci.

⁷ For details or to subscribe see www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci

3. Why are people being involved?

It is important that people submit their views to shape the Traveller Sites Allocations DPD as it seeks to safeguard existing sites and provide new sites to help meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

It is important to note that certain parts of the DPD may not be changed as a result of public consultation as it must maintain consistency with the *National Planning Policy Framework*, *National Planning Policy Guidance* and the *Planning policy for traveller sites*, and accord with relevant legislation and regulations⁸. The DPD must also consider the results of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal which sets out why the options chosen are preferred over those rejected in terms of their contribution towards sustainable development.

4. When will people be involved⁹?

Traveller Sites Allocations DPD – Consultation Draft	Consultation is proposed to start 8 th August 2014 for 6 weeks. Documents will be available on the website from this date and printed copies will be available from one week later at the venues set out in Section 5. Comments will be considered by the Council in forming the Proposed Submission Traveller Sites Allocations DPD.
Proposed Submission Traveller Sites Allocations DPD - Publication	The Council will 'publish' the Proposed Submission Traveller Sites DPD for a 6 week public consultation scheduled December 2014. Comments will be considered by a Planning Inspector appointed to carry out the public examination (the Council may make minor changes to the Traveller Sites DPD following publication). A further Community Involvement Plan will be produced at this stage.
Adoption	The Traveller Sites DPD is scheduled to be adopted June 2015.

5. How will people be involved?

Public consultation is open to all. We will:

- Issue press releases;
- Make all documents and a response form available on the Council's website¹⁰. On-line material will be compatible with 'Browsealoud' for people who find it difficult to read on-line;
- Provide copies of documents for viewing and response forms at all Mid Sussex libraries (including the mobile library); Help Points¹¹; District, Town and Parish Council offices;
- Send letters or emails to all the organisations listed in Section 2.

6. What happens to the results?

Comments¹² will be treated equally although it will be up to the Council to balance any conflicting opinions when considering the final document. A report summarising the issues raised and how they have been considered will be published on the Council's website. All statutory consultees, LDF email alert subscribers and those who submitted comments and provided a valid email address will be notified that this report has been published.

If you have any comments or concerns regarding this Community Involvement Plan or this community involvement exercise please in the first instance, contact the Planning Policy and Economic Development Team – planningpolicy@midsussex.gov.uk – (01444) 477053. Alternatively you can contact the Customer Services and Communications Team - (01444) 477478 or Customer Services and Communications, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS.

⁸Such as Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments (Regulations)

⁹ Further details of the timetable are available at www.midsussex.gov.uk/8686.htm

¹⁰ See www.midsussex.gov.uk/consultation

¹¹ Details of libraries and help-points available at www.midsussex.gov.uk/sci

¹² All comments must be submitted in writing via the website, email or by post and cannot be accepted as anonymous. All information received is public information subject to Data Protection