



Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan for Stratford-on-Avon District

Intention to prepare a Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council
February - March 2014**

The period for responses to this consultation is from **Friday 14 February** to **5pm on Friday 28 March 2014**.

This consultation includes 3 questions which you are invited to answer and a 'Call for Sites' request.

If you have any queries regarding this consultation, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01789 260334 or email planning.policy@stratford-dc.gov.uk. Copies of this consultation document and the accompanying Statement of Consultation which gives full details of this consultation are available on the Council's website at www.stratford.gov.uk/gandt or from the District Council offices:

Elizabeth House,
Church Street,
Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire, CV37 6HX

If you find the text difficult to read we can supply it in a format better suited to your needs, please contact Planning Policy on 01789 260334.

We want your views on our plan to allocate new sites for Gypsies & Travellers

Why am I being consulted now?

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is currently preparing the submission draft Core Strategy to shape future sustainable development in the District. The Core Strategy is a strategic document and will be supported by other plans, including a **Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan**.

The District Council is letting stakeholders know of its intention to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and consulting on what the Local Plan ought to contain, this is the first formal step in the plan making process. The results of the consultation will help to inform the content of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. This is known as a Regulation 18 Consultation.

The Council is required, by national planning policy¹ and the Housing Act 2004, to objectively assess and meet the needs of the population within their area. This includes the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

In 2011, the Council examined the need for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites in Stratford-on-Avon district by producing a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.² This report concluded that more pitches are needed in the District (a pitch generally contains one household and can contain one or more caravans). We therefore need to identify locations that might be suitable for future Gypsy and Traveller sites and after assessing these and seeking your views; they will be allocated for development in a new plan called the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

Gypsies and Travellers are defined 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"*³.

In Stratford-on-Avon District, most Gypsies and Travellers do not travel extensively but occupy permanent sites. There are several existing sites with permanent and temporary permission in the District, including the Council owned site at Pathlow, to the north of Stratford-upon-Avon, which has 30 pitches.

What is the process?

Before the plan can be adopted for planning purposes, there are a number of stages that we have to go through. This will include carefully considering all potential sites that are identified and consulting local residents, Traveller communities and other stakeholders at every stage.

¹ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites DCLG - March 2012

² Stratford on Avon Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment ORS - October 2011

³ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites DCLG - March 2012

The first step is to let everyone know of our intention to produce this plan and ask for views on what it should contain. This is what we are doing now. You can also suggest any land that you think might be suitable for future Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Why do we need a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan?

Our evidence shows that there is an under-provision of authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the District. For example, the Pathlow site has a waiting list. The Government requires local authorities to meet the need for new pitches through the identification of land for sites, whilst ensuring that these are in appropriate locations. We will also need to ensure that we can identify:

- Five years' supply of 'deliverable' sites (e.g. available now, in a suitable location, achievable and viable), as measured against our locally set target.
- 'Developable' sites (e.g. in a suitable location and likely to be available and viable when needed) or broad locations for sites for the ten years after this.

It is important to be able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of sites and prepare and adopt a plan as this is the best way to evidence a suitable supply of sites and thus reduce the risk of less appropriate sites being approved. Allocating sites should also provide certainty and help reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments in the District.

What will the plan include?

It is proposed that the Local Plan will set out how future accommodation needs for gypsies and travellers will be met to 2031. It is also proposed to identify sites and to include more detailed planning policy and guidance to inform and manage future gypsy and traveller development.

We propose that the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan includes the following:

- Background information including the identified local need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches;
- Enough sites to meet the full identified need to 2031, taking account of pitches permitted since 2011. If this is not possible, then sufficient 'deliverable' sites should be allocated to meet the first five years after adoption with broad areas of search for the rest of the plan period;
- Guidance on site design and other detailed development management considerations; and
- Guidance on how we will implement and fund the plan and monitor its effectiveness.



Question 1: Do you have any comments on what the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan should contain?

How many pitches/sites are needed?

Our evidence⁴ shows that:

- there is a need for 52 new permanent pitches from 2011 to 2016
- At least 25 of these pitches should be available at affordable rents.
- Beyond 2016, an average of 2 pitches per year will be needed.
- There is no demonstrated need for transit sites⁵ or Travelling Showpeople⁶ sites in the District.

This gives a total of 82 permanent pitches required in the period to 2031. We can take account of any pitches granted permanent planning permission since 2011. A total of 8 pitches were granted permanent planning permission between September 2011 and December 2013. This leaves 74 pitches to identify.

At present, we cannot be sure precisely how many new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be needed as sites can contain different numbers of pitches. National guidance⁷ suggests that sites should be no bigger than 15 pitches in size but that smaller sites of 3-4 pitches can also be successful.



Question 2: Do you think that new Gypsy and Traveller sites should normally be small (e.g. 3-4 pitches) or larger (e.g. up to 15 pitches in size)?

How will sites be identified? What factors will be taken into account?

Before we can allocate new sites, we need to understand what land is potentially available for such a use and then decide which sites are the most appropriate.

The Council is in the process of producing a Core Strategy to provide a long term vision and development strategy for the District. It will include a 'high level' policy that sets out the number of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be provided, the preferred broad locations for new sites and the criteria to be used when proposals come forward.

Two preferred broad locations for Gypsy and Traveller provision will be identified in the Core Strategy as follows (see Map 1 at the end of this leaflet):

- Broad Location 1 – the 'Avon Valley' outside of the Green Belt
- Broad Location 2 – the remainder of the district, but outside of the Cotswolds AONB.

⁴ Stratford on Avon Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment ORS - October 2011

⁵ Travellers are permitted to stay for up to 3 months on a transit site.

⁶ Travelling Showpeople are members of a group that holds fairs, circuses or shows.

⁷ Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites DCLG - May 2008

Suggested criteria for assessing potential sites

It is proposed that any potential Gypsy and Traveller sites suggested or identified would be assessed against the following criteria, potentially supplemented by additional criteria that emerge from the sustainability appraisal⁸:

1. The site is not located within the Green Belt, unless there are very special circumstances, or the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), unless there are exceptional circumstances;
2. the site is not located within an area of designated historic or environmental importance and will not compromise the objectives of any national or local designation, including Special Landscape Areas;
3. if located in proximity to the Cotswolds AONB, the site will have a buffer of appropriate scale and landscaping to minimise any adverse visual impact upon the AONB;
4. the site will not be at high risk of flooding in accordance with Environment Agency requirements;
5. the site will not be located on unstable or contaminated land that cannot be mitigated;
6. the site will have safe access to the highway and avoid significant impact on minor rural roads;
7. the site will be in a sustainable location in reasonable proximity to local services and facilities, including health services, making them accessible by modes of transport more sustainable than the private car;
8. the location of the site should not result in unacceptable environmental impacts on the amenity of future occupiers of the site;
9. the development and use of the site makes best use of previously developed, untidy or derelict land and will not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the landscape, biodiversity or the built environment;
10. the site will have a good residential environment and be of good quality layout and design incorporating appropriate landscaping, security, utilities and facilities, and be acceptable in terms of foul and surface water drainage and waste storage and disposal;
11. the site will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity, including noise from any commercial activities; and
12. arrangements can be put in place to ensure the proper management of the site to seek to ensure community cohesion between the settled and traveller communities.

For sites that are considered to form part of the 5 year land supply we will also need to be able to demonstrate that they are deliverable (that is available now, suitable and achievable)⁹.

⁸ A sustainability appraisal is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

⁹ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites DCLG - March 2012

For longer term allocations we will need to demonstrate that they are developable (that is in a suitable location for a traveller site development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged)¹⁰.



Question 3: Do you have any comments on the suggested criteria for assessing potential Gypsy and Traveller sites?

¹⁰ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites DCLG - March 2012

How to make comments

We would welcome your comments on the questions in this leaflet.

The deadline for responding to this consultation is 5pm on Friday 28 March 2014



Online via the interactive consultation document at www.stratford.gov.uk/gandt



By completing a comment form for each question and emailing it to planning.policy@stratford-dc.gov.uk



By completing a comment form for each question and posting it to: Stratford-on-Avon District Council, FREEPOST CV2468, Consultation Unit, Chief Executive's Unit, Elizabeth House, Church Street, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CV37 6BR

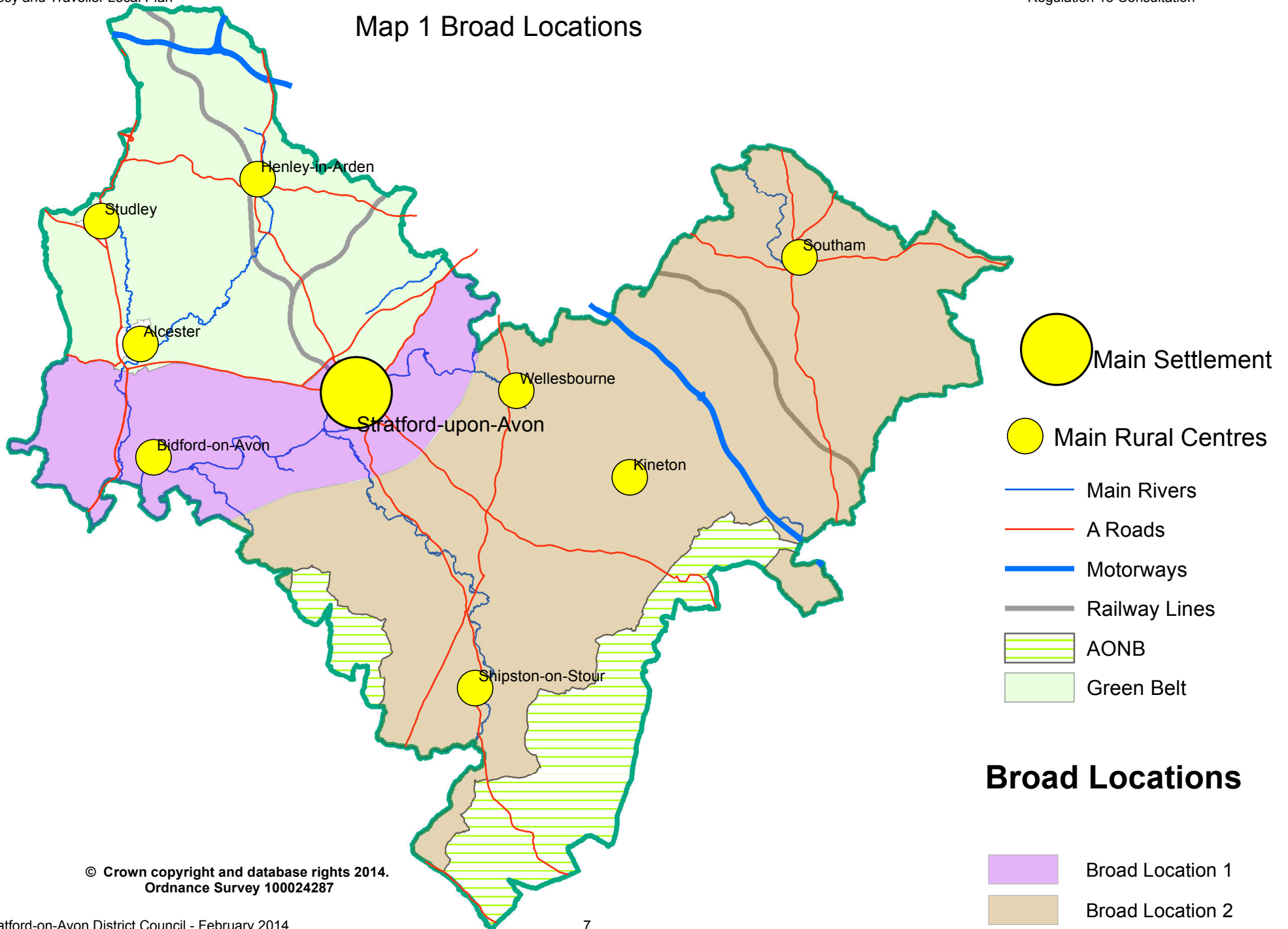
'Call for Sites' Submissions

We would also welcome any suggestions for land that might be suitable for new Gypsy and Traveller sites, whether you own the land or not. If you wish to submit land/sites, please complete the **Call for Sites Form** and return it to us, along with a 1:2500 scale site plan with the site boundary clearly marked by **5pm on 28 March 2014**.

What are the next steps?

- After the closing date, we will review all of the comments made and sites suggested to us. We will then assess the sites against the agreed criteria to ensure that the sites chosen are the most appropriate and sustainable.
- During summer 2014 the Council will publish its preferred options and sites. These will be subjected to extensive public consultation. We will then carefully consider all of the comments that are made.
- Towards the end of the year, we will publish the Proposed Submission Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan for representations to be made on the 'soundness' of the plan.
- The plan will be then be submitted to the Government and there will then be an 'examination in public' held by an independent inspector.
- We expect to finalise and 'adopt' the plan during 2015.

Map 1 Broad Locations



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