

Chairman's Announcement: Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Issues

Item No.02

Wiltshire Council is preparing a plan that will identify land for gypsy and traveller sites and include a policy for assessing the suitability of other sites the Council is asked to consider through the planning application process.

The Council has a responsibility to plan for the housing needs of everyone in the Wiltshire community. This doesn't just mean providing a range of types and sizes of houses available to rent or to buy. There is also a responsibility to plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people.

The number of gypsies and travellers in Wiltshire has been increasing in recent years. The consequence of not addressing this growing accommodation need could be increased tension between the settled and travelling community and discrimination towards the gypsy and traveller community.

An 8 week consultation on the issues and general approach to identifying land for new gypsy, traveller and showpeople sites is to start on Tuesday 6th April and continue until 5pm on Friday 4th June 2010. This is the first stage in the process of preparing a Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

The purpose of the consultation is to:

- Discuss the ISSUES around providing new sites.
- Develop a METHOD for assessing what is a good location for new sites.
- Invite LAND to be put forward to be considered as possible new sites.

All information relating to the consultation will be available from the end of March on the planning policy pages of the Council's web site (www.wiltshire.gov.uk), in the main Council offices in Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge and available at local libraries.

If you would like to discuss the issues involved in this consultation in more detail drop in events are being held at the following locations between 4pm and 8pm:

- Neald Hall, Chippenham - Wednesday 5th May 2010
- Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes - Tuesday 11th May 2010
- Salisbury - Thursday 13th May 2010