

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 28 JUNE 2007

ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Report by: Sarah Applegate, Senior Planning Officer

Summary

Local authorities are required to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, to assess the general accommodation needs of gypsy and traveller communities and identify pitch requirements for each local authority area. This is then used to inform the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Authority's Development Plan Documents.

The South East England Regional Assembly has requested advice on the numbers of permanent and transit caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers to inform a partial review of the South East Plan. This information is required by 15 October 2007.

This report summarises the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and assesses the implications for the New Forest National Park.

Recommendations

- 1. To note the conclusions of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and to endorse the report as a basis for informing the Authority's response to the South East England Regional Assembly partial review of the South East Plan on pitch requirements for gypsies and travellers.**
- 2. To liaise with the neighbouring authorities set out in paragraphs 9 and 11 of this report, to identify potential sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation in or around the New Forest National Park.**

Resources and Corporate Plan

A4 – Develop spatial planning policies to support the delivery of the National Park's purposes and duties.

Routine resources

Paper

NFNPA 193/07: Cover paper

Annex 1: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

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Introduction

1. The Office for the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006 published in February 2006 requires local authorities to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. This will assess general accommodation needs of gypsy and traveller communities and identify pitch requirements for each local housing authority area.
2. The data collected through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will then be used to inform the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and each local authority's Development Plan Documents.
3. The South East England Regional Assembly has requested advice from all local authorities in the South East on the required provision for permanent and transit caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers. The Assembly require this advice by 15 October 2007. The Regional Assembly will set out the number of pitches for each local planning authority area in the South East Plan. The translation of the Assessment by housing authority areas to the allocation of provision by planning authority areas will be an important issue for the National Park Authority.
4. David Couttie Associates was commissioned in January 2006, by those local housing authorities in Hampshire who are members of the Strategic Housing Officers Group, to produce a Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment.
5. This report summarises the conclusions of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and assesses the implications for the New Forest National Park, including the next steps to respond to the Regional Assembly by 15 October.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

6. An initial draft of the Assessment produced by David Couttie Associates identified a range of 15 - 20 pitches required for the New Forest District. However, there were concerns that the methodology used by the consultants did not adequately take account of the amount of local need, rather than the expressed preferences of the gypsy and traveller communities surveyed as part of the Assessment. Consequently the consultants did further work on the Assessment to address this, and the final report has now been presented to the Strategic Housing Officers Group.
7. The conclusions of the Assessment are set out in Annex 1, which identifies that three permanent pitches are required in New Forest District, with one transit pitch required in West Hampshire (Southampton, Eastleigh, Test Valley or New Forest local housing authority areas).

Recommendation 1:

To note the conclusions of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and to endorse the report as a basis for informing the Authority's response to the South East England Regional Assembly partial review of the South East Plan on pitch requirements for gypsies and travellers.

Site Identification

8. In order to take forward the conclusions of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and to facilitate identification of sites three area-based sub-groups of local authorities in Hampshire have been set up. The Authority is represented on the West sub-group which also includes the Councils of New Forest District, Test Valley Borough, Eastleigh Borough and Southampton City.
9. The intended aim of the sub-groups is that local authorities will work together to agree the numbers and broad locations of permanent and transit pitches required.
10. Liaison will also take place with Dorset and Wiltshire County Councils and Salisbury District Council to ensure that an appropriate distribution of sites is provided and that the implications for the National Park are taken into account when sites are identified and evaluated.

Recommendation 2

To liaise with the neighbouring authorities set out in paragraphs 9 and 11 of this report, to identify potential sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation in or around the New Forest National Park.