



Draft Guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies & Travellers

A Consultation Paper





*Draft Guidance on the design
of sites for Gypsies & Travellers*

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Printed in the UK on material containing no less than 75% post-consumer waste.

May 2007

Product Code: 07HC04595

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Consultation

- 1.1.1 This consultation seeks views on good practice guidance for the design of Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 1.1.2 We welcome any comments that you may have on this guidance. It would be helpful if you have comments on specific parts of the guidance if you could identify the section or paragraph number to which your comments relate. It would also be helpful if comments were submitted electronically, as well as any hard copies that may be sent. This will help reduce the time needed to compile and consider the comments received.
- 1.1.3 Responses and comments, to be received by 22 August 2007, should be sent to:
- Trevor Diesch
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Tel 0207 944 2501
- 1.1.4 We will consider the responses and make any changes necessary to the guidance as a result, and produce a document which summarises the responses and the changes made.
- 1.1.5 Please note that responses, including the names and addresses of respondents will be made available to anyone who asks for them unless confidentiality is specifically requested or disclosure would prejudice third parties.
- 1.1.6 The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. Further details are at Annex B.

1.2 Purpose of this guidance

- 1.2.1 The Government believes that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. Decent homes are a key element of any thriving, sustainable community. This is true for the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities alike.

1.2.2 There are currently around 300 socially rented Gypsy and Traveller sites in England. However, there is a national shortage of authorised sites, with around one in four Gypsy and Traveller households having nowhere to call home. The Government has established a new framework to increase site provision to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, reducing the number of unauthorised sites and promoting good relations with the settled community.

1.2.3 We need to ensure that these sites:

- Are sustainable, and easy to manage and maintain;
- Are of a decent standard, equitable to that which would be expected for social housing in the settled community;
- Support harmonious relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community.

This guidance will help ensure that potential developers achieve these aims for new sites, and assist those considering improvements to existing sites.

1.2.4 The guidance sets out good practice on design for any developer of Gypsy and Traveller sites, and uses case study examples to illustrate different approaches. In particular, it is intended to help:

- Local authorities who wish to develop a new site, or refurbish the whole or part of a site;
- Registered social landlords who wish to develop or refurbish a site;
- Private developers or architects working with site developers;
- People who will be living on a site and are participating in its design.

1.2.5 It will not be possible to meet the guidance in every respect on every site. Local authorities and registered social landlords will need to take decisions on design on a case by case basis, taking into account local circumstances and in consultation with prospective residents of sites.

1.2.6 This guidance will be particularly relevant to local authorities and registered social landlords wishing to bid for Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant from Communities and Local Government. Once the guidance is finalised, Communities and Local Government will consider whether the essential elements of this guidance are met, and the extent to which the remainder of the guidance is addressed, in assessing schemes for new sites. Bidders should also consider the extent to which it is possible to meet this guidance in schemes for the refurbishment of existing sites.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 The guidance is intended to cover all types of site. This includes sites for Gypsies, Irish Travellers, travelling showpeople and new age travellers. It covers a range of sites including:
- 1.3.2 **Permanent sites** – These sites provide residents with a permanent home. The bidding guidance for Communities and Local Government’s Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant explains that for permanent sites ownership should remain with the local authority or registered social landlord and continue in use as a Gypsy and Traveller site for at least ten years, although consideration will be given to sites of a shorter term nature where there is a sound business case that demonstrates value for money.
- 1.3.3 **Transit sites** – Transit sites are permanent sites used to provide only temporary accommodation for their residents. Lengths of stay can vary but are usually set at between 28 days and three months. Practice on private transit sites tends to be more relaxed in respect of the amount of time people are permitted to stay. The requirements for transit sites reflect the fact that they are not intended for use as a permanent base for an individual household.
- 1.3.4 **Emergency stopping places** – Emergency stopping places are pieces of land in temporary use as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the site for a few days.

1.4 How the guidance was developed

- 1.4.1 This draft guidance was developed by drawing on a range of good practice sources. These included:
- Existing research on the design features that work effectively on Gypsy and Traveller sites;
 - Observations on design features and the views of residents drawn from visits to a range of sites;
 - Consultation with organisations representing the views of Gypsies and Travellers;
 - Interviews with site managers and developers from the social housing and private sectors;
 - Interviews with professionals and organisations working with Gypsies and Travellers, including traveller education services, health advocates, planners and the police.

1.4.2 In developing this guidance the aim has been to incorporate standards that are equitable to those required of publicly funded developments of housing for the settled community. The main source of guidance on this has been the Scheme Development Standards required of new social housing developments funded by the Housing Corporation. In translating the standards for social housing to Gypsy and Traveller sites we have had regard to:

- The different demographic profile of Gypsy and Travellers;
- The cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- The intended use and longevity of the site;
- The need to make best use of land and other resources available to develop sites;
- The need for site design to facilitate economic and effective management of the site;
- The draft Model Standards for Park Homes, and in particular the standards to apply to sites accommodating dwellings made from combustible materials.

1.4.3 The case study below shows that an old site can be successfully refurbished to meet the types of modern day design standards included within this guidance.

Star Hill, Hampshire

The Star Hill site in Hampshire is a long established county council run permanent site which was recently refurbished to bring it up to modern day standards.

Existing residents were extensively consulted about the refurbishment plans before commencement. Now, each of the 20 pitches can accommodate two trailers/caravans and has ample parking space. Every pitch has a brick built amenity block containing high standard facilities and incorporating good insulation and heating. Each one has a bath, shower, toilet, kitchen and airing cupboard. There is space and connections for washing machines and freezers.

Each pitch is demarcated by a 4ft wooden fence and has gated access. The fence height is increased to 6ft between amenity buildings to ensure privacy.

CHAPTER 2

Context

2.1 Addressing the shortage of sites

- 2.1.1 It is widely accepted that there is a national shortage of authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers. This has led to an increasing incidence of both unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments and has sometimes created tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community.
- 2.1.2 The Government has introduced a number of measures aimed at encouraging local authorities to assess the need for sites in their area and identify suitable sites for development.
- 2.1.3 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a new obligation on local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in their areas, and to develop a strategy to address these needs.
- 2.1.4 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006¹ explains that Regional Planning Bodies must determine how many pitches are needed and, through the Regional Spatial Strategy, how many are needed in each local authority area. Local planning authorities must identify sites in Development Plan Documents and if they fail to do so they can be directed by the Secretary of State.
- 2.1.5 Communities and Local Government provides Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant for the provision of new, and the refurbishment of existing sites. The grant is available to local authorities and registered social landlords. 100% funding is available for new sites, and 75% for refurbishment. Up to £56 million has been made available for the grant between 2006-8.

2.2 The need for site design guidance

- 2.2.1 The Select Committee for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions *Thirteenth Report*² (October 2004) concluded that ‘The current guidelines relating to site design and standards urgently need updating in the light of modern space standards and services, health and safety provisions and requirements for catering for disability.’ The Committee recommended that the guidance should cover residential sites, transit sites and stopping places.

¹ Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – Guide to responsibilities and powers, ODPM

² Paragraph 163

2.2.2 In October 2004, research showed that there were 320 local authority sites incorporating 5,000 pitches, and that many of the existing sites were of a poor standard. The estimate for maintenance and improvement of these sites to bring them up to standard and to maintain them was £16.7m over the next five years. Research has also showed that skimping on initial site design and construction often means more investment is needed later to rectify problems arising from this.³

2.2.3 The guidance issued by Government recognises the specific cultural and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, as well as the increasingly settled lifestyle of some Gypsy and Traveller households that facilitates, for example, access to education for families with children. This creates challenges for site design because of the need to incorporate features that not only facilitate continued periods of travelling but are also consistent with settled living. Many older sites were developed on an assumption that households would not live on them for long periods, and the facilities on those sites are increasingly out of keeping with accepted standards for family living.

³ Niner, P (July 2003) The provision and condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England, ODPM – summary of full report Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England

CHAPTER 3

Site location/selection – permanent sites

3.1 Location

3.1.1 Selecting the right location for a site is crucial to supporting good community relations and maximising its success. As with any other form of housing, poorly located sites, with no easy access to major roads or public transport services, will have a detrimental effect on the ability of residents to:

- Seek or retain employment;
- Attend school, further education or training;
- Obtain access to health services and shopping facilities

and will generally have a detrimental effect on social inclusion and community cohesion.

3.1.2 Sites situated near refuse sites, industrial processes or other hazards, will obviously have a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of the residents and pose particular safety risks for young children.

3.1.3 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites provides advice on site location and selection. It identifies factors which are important for the sustainability of a site, for instance:

- Means of access, availability of transport modes and distances from services;
- Promotion of integrated co-existence between the site and local community;
- Easy access to General Practitioner and other health services;
- Access to schools;
- Ground conditions and levels of land;
- Not locating sites in areas of high flooding risk.

3.1.4 **Essential:** The location of the site must provide a safe environment for the residents.

- 3.1.5 It should also provide visual and acoustic privacy, and have characteristics which are sympathetic to the local environment. When selecting locations for permanent sites, consideration needs to be given to the relatively high density of children and low income households likely to be on the site.
- 3.1.6 As a rule of thumb, no sites should be identified for Gypsy and Traveller use that would not be appropriate for ordinary residential dwellings. Where possible, sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential developments. To help achieve this local authorities and registered social landlords should consider the need and scope to provide a site for Gypsies and Travellers as part of all significant new build developments.

Evidence provided to Select Committee on the importance of site location:

“What is working [in Ireland] are small sites. And they are not placed under flyovers or pylons, or beside sewers, canals or tips; they are placed on proper positioned land, bang within the middle of a settled community, and they are working.”[204]

“We would make a strong plea for safeguards to be put in place to ensure that future site development is not located in polluted or hazardous locations, as...many sites are. Not only does this have a negative impact on Gypsies and Travellers health and access to services but it has a profound impact on how they feel they are perceived and treated by the wider community, likewise such locations reinforce the prejudiced perceptions that many in the settled community have of Gypsies and Travellers, such locations are therefore a major impediment to the social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.”[205]

3.2 Relationship to surrounding land use

- 3.2.1 **Essential:** Consideration must be given to the relationship of sites to the surrounding community.
- 3.2.2 The site must be sustainable, offering scope to manage an integrated co-existence with the local community. This will include consideration of noise and possible disturbance to Gypsy and Travellers living on the site, and possible noise and disturbance to the wider community, in particular from movement of Gypsy and Traveller vehicles.
- 3.2.3 Many Gypsies and Travellers express a preference for a rural location which is on the edge of or closely located to a large town or city consistent with traditional lifestyles and means of employment. However, characteristics that make a location unpopular for the settled community are likely to hold similar fears for Gypsies and Travellers. Sites adjacent to light industrial areas therefore tend not to be popular because of their isolation, distance from local facilities and because of safety fears (when walking home at night for instance).
- 3.2.4 Similarly, where joint commercial/residential use is envisaged for a site (as in the case of showpeople’s sites because of the need for residents to store and maintain fairground equipment), it is important that the compatibility of both of these uses with the surrounding land uses is given careful consideration.

- 3.2.5 The case study below is a good example of a site integrated into the heart of an urban community.

Wallman Place, London

The Wallman Place site is in Haringey, North London, and was refurbished in 1996 to provide a six pitch site for an extended family.

It is behind the civic centre, next door to a school, opposite a health centre, and close to a wide range of shops.

The site has a single access road through the middle, with three pitches on each side. There is space for a trailer, touring caravan and amenity building on each pitch. The brick built amenity blocks include central heating, bathroom and toilet facilities.

Whilst being close to all facilities the site also provides privacy for its residents and is well integrated into the surrounding community.

3.3 Scope to provide essential services

- 3.3.1 **Essential:** sites must provide access to water, electricity, drainage, and sanitation.
- 3.3.2 Electricity and sewerage for permanent sites should normally be through mains systems, however in some locations and where specific preferences have been expressed by the local community, alternative arrangements may be appropriate.

3.4 Health and safety considerations

- 3.4.1 **Essential:** Sites must not be located on contaminated land.
- 3.4.2 Brownfield sites may be suitable; however the same considerations should apply when appraising such sites as for conventional residential housing. For instance, sites adjacent to a rubbish tip, on landfill sites, close to electricity pylons or any heavy industry are unlikely to be suitable.
- 3.4.3 When considering sites adjacent to main roads, flyovers and railway lines, careful regard must be given to:
- The health and safety of children and others who will live on the site; and
 - The greater noise transference through the walls of caravans than through the walls of conventional housing, and the need for design measures (for instance noise barriers) to abate the impact on quality of life and health.
- 3.4.4 **Essential:** The proposed site must be relatively flat and suitable for purpose. Risk from flooding must be determined prior to development of a site, by reference to the Environment Agency's Flood Map and Planning Policy Statement 25 Development and Flood Risk.
- 3.4.5 Where a flood risk exists, advice from the Environment Agency should be sought on the likelihood of flooding, depths and velocities that might be expected and the availability of warning services. Where such risk exists, the site owner should display flood warning information and procedures for evacuation.

CHAPTER 4

Site layout, access and orientation – permanent sites

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 As with site location, proposals for the layout and orientation of the site should be developed with regard to:

- Convenience for residents;
- Safety for residents;
- Visual and acoustic privacy – both for people living on the site and those living nearby;
- Aesthetic compatibility with the local environment;
- Scope for social integration with the local community.

4.1.2 This is an area where consultation with the local community of Gypsies and Travellers and with members of the settled community living in close proximity to a site can be particularly valuable and ensure best and most convenient use of available space.

4.2 Size of site

4.2.1 Smaller sites of between 6-12 pitches are most popular with Gypsies and Travellers and are reported to be easier to manage. Sites should not normally exceed 20 pitches in capacity unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferred by the local Gypsy or Traveller community, or that this recommendation would severely limit the potential to meet local needs.

4.2.2 Where a larger site is unavoidable, then steps could be taken to create small ‘closes’ within the site for extended families thereby retaining the sense of community and creating defensible space.

4.3 Site boundaries

4.3.1 **Essential:** The site boundary must provide clear demarcation of the perimeter of the site, so as to prevent the scope for site “expansion” through unauthorised encampments. Boundaries must take into account adjoining land uses, and be designed with the safety and protection of children in mind.

- 4.3.2 Fencing and planting may be used to screen out unpleasant and intrusive uses, such as industrial use or main roads. More open boundaries may be used in residential areas so as to promote integration and inclusion with the surrounding community. Boundaries can also be used to provide shelter for more exposed sites.
- 4.3.3 A range of different boundaries may be used including fences, low walls, hedges and natural features. The aim should be to achieve a boundary that is sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area.
- 4.3.4 **Essential:** There must be a clear gap of 3 metres⁴ within the inside of all site boundaries as a fire prevention measure, unless a risk assessment has determined that alternative arrangements can achieve an adequate level of safety.

4.4 Orientation of pitches

- 4.4.1 **Essential:** As with housing for the settled community, site layout and design must ensure a degree of privacy for individual households (for instance by ensuring that neighbours cannot directly overlook each other's living quarters), but without inhibiting the important sense of community.
- 4.4.2 Consultation has shown that many Gypsies and Travellers prefer a circular or horseshoe design rather than linear layout of pitches. Other reportedly successful layouts include a branch design.
- 4.4.3 **Essential:** Pitches should be designed to enable the easy manoeuvrability of trailers up to 20 metres onto them.

4.5 Health and Safety

- 4.5.1 **Essential:** When designing the layout of a site, careful consideration must be given to the health and safety of residents, and in particular children, given the likelihood of a high density of children on the site and relatively high levels of vehicle ownership amongst some groups of Gypsies and Travellers for towing caravans and employment purposes.
- 4.5.2 **Essential:** The need for appropriate traffic calming measures must be considered for all sites. Clear and effective signage should be introduced where a speed restriction or other traffic calming measure is to apply.
- 4.5.3 The need for separate vehicular/pedestrian access should be considered.

4.6 Access for emergency vehicles

- 4.6.1 **Essential:** All roads must allow easy access for emergency vehicles.

⁴ Draft Model Standards for Park Homes

- 4.6.2 **Essential:** To enable this, suitable roads must be provided, with no caravan or park home more than 50 metres from a road⁵. Roads must have no overhead cable less than 4.5 metres above the ground. Vehicular access and gateways must be at least 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum clearance of 3.7 metres⁶.
- 4.6.3 **Essential:** Roads must not be less than 3.7 metres wide, or if they form part of a one way traffic system, 3 metres wide⁷.
- 4.6.4 One way systems should be clearly sign posted.
- 4.6.5 To increase potential access points for emergency vehicles, more than one access route into the site is recommended. Where possible, site roads should be designed to allow two lorries to pass each other (minimum 5.5m⁸). Specific guidance should be sought from the local fire authority for each site.
- 4.6.6 **Essential:** To avoid future maintenance costs, and in anticipation of increased wear and tear due to frequent movement of heavy vehicles, it is recommended that all roads are constructed to adoptable standards. Details of the relevant standards can be obtained from the local highways authority.

4.7 Security

- 4.7.1 Consultation has shown that site layout can play an important role in avoiding a sense of enclosure and isolation amongst Gypsies and Travellers. The aim should be to 'design out' crime and social exclusion and 'design in' community safety and social inclusion through openness of design, allowing ease in passing through, whether walking or driving.
- 4.7.2 Site layout should maximise natural surveillance enabling residents to easily oversee all areas of the site. Scheme specific advice on security provision for the site should be obtained from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for the area, and reference should be made to 'Secure by Design' standards⁹ to inform detailed planning of the site.
- 4.7.3 To avoid disputes and provide defensible space, it is important to provide clear delineation of public and private space, and boundaries that indicate where individual pitches begin and end.
- 4.7.4 It is recommended that community spaces without a clear usage are avoided as they may attract vandalism, fly tipping or unauthorised caravans.

5 Source: Building Regulation B5 (2000) – 'Access And Facilities for the Fire Service'

6 Draft Model standards for Park Homes

7 Draft Model Standards for Park Homes, also Manual for Streets – Department for Transport, March (2007), and Statutory Instrument 2000 no.2531, The Building Regulations (2000). London TSO. Part 2, paragraph B5: Access and facilities for the fire service

8 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport (2007)

9 ODPM and Home Office (2004) Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention. London: Thomas

- 4.7.5 It is recommended that local needs and preferences are taken into account, as well as the requirements of the local highways authority, when designing the entrance to the site. Many Gypsies and Travellers are in favour of controlled access to sites, for example using a lockable gate. Their experience has been that such controls can prevent unauthorised parking and unauthorised caravans being pitched on the site. However, the presence of such gates can sometimes act as a psychological barrier to effective social inclusion.

4.8 Balance between soft and hard landscaping

- 4.8.1 Many Gypsies and Travellers express a strong preference for soft landscaping (for example grassed areas, shrubs and trees) as opposed to hard landscaping such as paved or concreted areas. However, when designing to include soft landscaping, consideration needs to be given to preventing this from being used for unauthorised parking or unauthorised pitching of caravans.

4.9 Car parking

- 4.9.1 **Essential:** Parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 x 4.8 metres¹⁰.
- 4.9.2 Resident parking should largely be provided for on individual pitches (see 7.3).

4.10 Density and spacing of caravans and trailers

- 4.10.1 **Essential:** To ensure fire safety, every trailer, caravan or park home must be not less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan or park home that is occupied separately.
- 4.10.2 Other structures are allowed in the separation zone if they are made of non-combustible materials (such as a brick built amenity unit), as long as they do not impede means of escape. For further guidance refer to the draft Model Standards for Park Homes.

4.11 Inclusion of space for work/animals

- 4.11.1 Gypsy and Traveller sites are essentially residential and those living there are entitled to a peaceful and enjoyable environment. Draft Communities and Local Government guidance on site management proposes that working from residential pitches should be discouraged and that residents should not normally be allowed to work elsewhere on site.
- 4.11.2 **Essential:** Where significant commercial or other work activity is envisaged for a site (for instance the storage and maintenance of fairground equipment), the site must be delineated so that residential areas are separated from areas for commercial or work use. This also applies to the inclusion of space for keeping animals.

¹⁰ 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport, (2007)

- 4.11.3 Details of specific guidance for the development of sites for showpeople can be found in Annex A.
- 4.11.4 Where there is demand for space for animals and where the site provider is satisfied that it may be reasonable and practicable to include this, a grazing area for horses and ponies may be provided, to reflect the cultural use of the horse as a traditional means of transport.
- 4.11.5 Site managers may also enquire whether owners of land on the periphery of the site have surplus land for this purpose that could be provided at a reasonable rent.

CHAPTER 5

Site services and facilities – permanent sites

5.1 Introduction

As for any other kind of accommodation, consideration must be given to the infrastructure needed to support Gypsy and Traveller sites so that they meet the needs of residents and support good relations with people living nearby.

5.2 Water supply

5.2.1 **Essential:** A mains water supply suitable for drinking must be provided for each pitch on the site, sufficient to meet the reasonable demands of residents. Water supplies must comply with current legislation, regulations and British Standards, and water meters must be for domestic usage.

5.2.2 **Essential:** Water pressure should be sufficient to enable use of fire hydrants.

5.2.3 It is recommended that an outside tap is provided on each pitch.

5.3 Electricity supply

5.3.1 **Essential:** Mains electricity must be provided to each pitch, sufficient to meet the reasonable requirements of the residents, and with separate meterage for each pitch. Electric meters must be for domestic use and enable economic use of electricity.

5.3.2 **Essential:** There must be underground cabling which is adequately earthed and complies with current electrical installation regulations. Electrical installations must be inspected annually. All electrical work must be carried out by competent and appropriately qualified personnel.

5.4 Gas supply

5.4.1 **Essential:** Gas installations, supplies and storage must meet statutory requirements, relevant standards and codes of practice. Storage facilities compliant with health and safety regulations for Liquid Propane Gas cylinders must be provided¹¹. Since the guidance on storage is complex, developers and managers of sites are advised to see advice from their local environmental health services.

¹¹ LP Gas Association: Code of Practice 7: Storage of Full & Empty LPG Cylinders and Cartridges.

- 5.4.2 **Essential:** Any mains gas installation must be inspected and certified as safe on an annual basis.
- 5.4.3 It is recommended that mains gas supply is considered for amenity buildings on pitches and, if supplied, must be compliant with current gas installation regulations¹².

5.5 Oil fired central heating

- 5.5.1 Installations for oil fired central heating should meet Part L of the Building Regulations 2007.

5.6 Drainage

- 5.6.1 **Essential:** Surface water drainage and storm water drainage must be installed. All drainage provision must be in accordance with current legislation, regulations and British Standards¹³.
- 5.6.2 This should be given early consideration in both site selection and scheme design.

5.7 Sewerage

- 5.7.1 **Essential:** Where it is not possible or economic to connect to a public sewer, provision must be made for discharge to a properly constructed sealed septic tank. All sanitation provision must be in accordance with current legislation, regulations and British Standards¹⁴.
- 5.7.2 It is recommended that mains sewage disposal is included for each pitch, where it is economic to do so.
- 5.7.3 The case study below illustrates the important influence that essential services have on quality of life.

¹² Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances Approved Code of Practice and guidance L56 HSE Books (1998)

¹³ Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) and 'Manual for the Streets' – Department of Transport (2007) Chapter 11

¹⁴ Part H of the 'Building Regulations' (2000), and 'Sewers for Adoption – Water UK' (2006) Sewers for Adoption 6th Edition Swindon WRc plc

Abbey Close site, Hackney

The story of the Abbey Close site in Hackney, East London illustrates the importance of good services to the lives of Travelling communities.

In 1995 there were sixteen Irish Traveller families living on three tolerated sites in the Borough with no running water or toilets. When the area was due for regeneration, the families made representations and the council found a piece of land to be used as a temporary site until funding could be found to upgrade it and a second piece of land to adequately accommodate all the families. Sixteen families moved onto the temporary site. There was only a cold water standpipe provided for the families to share, and a portaloo for each family. The site was overcrowded, with no proper demarcation between pitches and poor drainage.

By 1999 the Travellers had secured strong support from the local community and the local councillor, who was also the Deputy Mayor. Despite this a shortage of funding delayed significant improvements. Some families moved off as they could no longer tolerate the lack of facilities, and others were given pitches on a nearby official site when they came vacant. The remaining families continued to campaign for better conditions with support from local community organisations and some improvements were made, for instance the provision of electricity, hardstanding and additional standpipes.

In 2002 funding was secured to refurbish the site and families were relocated during building works. The refurbished site provides each family with a clearly demarcated pitch with a private detached or semi-detached brick-built utility block, including a modern fitted kitchen and bathroom. The utility buildings, site boundaries and pitch boundaries are entirely in keeping with the architecture and features on surrounding estates and blend in well. The families were involved in all aspects of the site design and kept fully informed throughout, thereby able to ensure that design mistakes were kept to a minimum. In order to accommodate all the families left on the temporary site the pitches are small for growing young families, but the location and community support is ideal.

In September 2003 the remaining six families returned to the site, a 'Welcome Home' banner at the local school, and an opening ceremony that was attended by neighbours from the adjacent estates.

5.8 Lighting

- 5.8.1 **Essential:** Sufficient lighting must be provided on the site to enable safe access and movement through the site at night for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 5.8.2 The street lighting arrangements should be planned to minimise the risk of damage through vandalism and avoid problems of light pollution to the homes on the site through light shining directly into caravans, amenity buildings or park homes.

5.9 Waste disposal, scrap and storage

- 5.9.1 **Essential:** Standard domestic waste disposal arrangements must be provided for each pitch in accordance with local authority requirements for the disposal of domestic waste¹⁵.
- 5.9.2 Experience on some sites suggests that communal refuse areas can encourage fly-tipping and the accumulation of non-domestic waste. If a communal refuse area is deemed necessary (in addition to individual refuse collection for each pitch), this should be designed and located so as to be convenient, accessible, robust and inconspicuous.
- 5.9.3 It is recommended that access is provided for local authority refuse collection from individual pitches as well as any central points.

5.10 Play space

- 5.10.1 It is recommended that the inclusion of recreation areas for children of all ages is considered where suitable provision is not available within walking distance on a safe route or using easily accessible public transport, and for larger sites.
- 5.10.2 **Essential:** Where recreation areas are provided, these must be designed and located with the safety of children in mind (taking account of the proximity of busy roads) and where they allow for natural supervision.

5.11 Post

- 5.11.1 **Essential:** Site and pitch addresses must be created which are of a similar nature to those for the settled community – for instance by not highlighting that the accommodation is site based.
- 5.11.2 **Essential:** Arrangements must be made so that post can be delivered separately for each pitch.

5.12 Communal facilities

- 5.12.1 Where a site is isolated from local facilities and/or is relatively large, provision of a communal building is recommended. This can be used by the site manager, visiting professionals (such as health visitors, youth workers or play workers) and by residents.
- 5.12.2 Any such building should include:
- Community room;
 - Toilets (male and female);
 - Kitchenette.

¹⁵ 'Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management' (PPS10) and Schedule 1, Part H of the Building Regulations (2000).

CHAPTER 6

Health, safety and accessibility – permanent sites

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Everyone should be able to live in a home that is safe, whether that home is a house, a flat or a caravan. Health and safety considerations and requirements for sites are included throughout this guidance. Additional guidance is provided below.

6.2 Risk assessment

- 6.2.1 **Essential:** Site owners must undertake a risk assessment of the site during the initial design stage, including the homes on the site.

6.3 Fire safety

- 6.3.1 **Essential:** Pitches must be no more than 30 metres from a fire point. Fire points must be housed in a weather proof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked 'Fire Point'. A clearly written and conspicuous notice must be provided and maintained at each 'Fire Point' to indicate the action to be taken in the case of fire, including details of the muster point. The draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.2 **Essential:** Water standpipes, hydrants, or fire extinguishers must be provided on each site as determined by the risk assessment and as informed by consultation with the local fire officer. All equipment must conform to relevant British/European standards. The Draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.3 **Essential:** A means of raising the alarm in the case of fire must be provided at each fire point. This must be appropriate to the size and layout of the site and informed by consultation with the local fire officer. The draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.4 **Essential:** All alarm and fire fighting equipment must be installed, tested and maintained in working order by a competent person. All equipment susceptible to frost must be suitably protected.

6.4 Accessibility

- 6.4.1 **Essential:** All private or communal buildings on the site must be provided to mobility standards as specified within Part M of the Building Regulations 2000. Developers must also have regard to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- 6.4.2 When considering the extent to which pitches, parking spaces and amenity units should be suitable for wheelchair users, reference should be made to local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments. Where provided, these should be consistent with the standards for housing for wheelchair users as set out in the Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards and other related guidance¹⁶.

¹⁶ 'Meeting Part M and Designing Lifetime Homes' The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1999), Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, Construction Research Communications Limited (1997), 'Inclusive Mobility', Department for Transport, (2005)

CHAPTER 7

Individual pitches – permanent sites

7.1 Layout and orientation of pitches

- 7.1.1 The layout of pitches will be dependent on the layout of the overall site. There will be different views about whether to have grassed areas and amenities at the front, back or side of the pitch. Discussion with the local Gypsy and Traveller community will be useful, however developers need to consider future as well as current or prospective residents.
- 7.1.2 **Essential:** Pitches must be oriented to enable the easy manoeuvrability of trailers of up to 20 metres in length onto and off the pitches.
- 7.1.3 Each pitch should have a distribution of electricity hook-up points to allow for different positioning and orientation of caravans and trailers.
- 7.1.4 Complete hook-up to drains and sewage systems for each pitch is recommended.

7.2 Hard standing

- 7.2.1 **Essential:** Each pitch must include a hard standing constructed of a suitable hard wearing material which extends over the whole area to be occupied by a trailer, caravan or other vehicle. These standings must be constructed in accordance with the industry code of practice¹⁷ and project a sufficient distance outwards to enable occupants to enter and leave safely. The base must be sufficient to bear the load placed on it by the home or vehicle and its contents, and the anticipated level of vehicle movement.
- 7.2.2 Soft landscaping is recommended for each pitch where possible.
- 7.2.3 Local authorities and other developers should consider the environmental impact of the site and the measures that might be taken to improve sustainability. For example, the inclusion of separate identifiable containers for the collection of recyclable waste and provision of water butts is recommended.

¹⁷ The 'Gold Shield' which specifies compliance with BS 3632:2005 Residential park homes

7.3 Size of pitch

- 7.3.1 In common with some other ethnic minority communities, some Gypsies and Travellers often have larger than average families, for instance where members of an extended family live together. For this reason there is likely to be much greater demand amongst these communities for large family units, and small pitches may become quickly overcrowded. Larger than average family sizes, alongside the need for vehicles for towing caravans and for employment also creates particular requirements for parking.
- 7.3.2 **Essential:** Pitches must be capable of accommodating an amenity unit, large trailer, touring caravan, drying space for clothes, lockable shed (for bikes, wheelchair storage etc) and parking space for two vehicles.
- 7.3.3 A number of smaller pitches (accommodating at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle) may be provided where there is evidence from a local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment of a sustainable need for pitches of this size.
- 7.3.4 **Essential:** Individual parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 × 4.8 metres¹⁸.
- 7.3.5 Where space permits the inclusion of a playspace on each pitch is recommended.
- 7.3.6 **Essential:** Drainage falls should comply with Part H of the Building Regulations 2000. Ideally the pitch should be level apart from drainage falls.

7.4 Amenity buildings

- 7.4.1 **Essential:** There must be an amenity building on each pitch. This must include, as a minimum: hot and cold water supply; electricity supply; a separate toilet; a bath/shower room; a kitchen and dining area. The access to the toilet should be through a lobbied area.
- 7.4.2 **Essential:** The amenity building must include: secure storage space for harmful substances/medicines; enclosed storage for food, brooms, washing, cleaning items etc; and space for connection of cooker, fridge/freezer and washing machine.
- 7.4.3 The inclusion of a day/living room in the amenity unit is recommended. The day/living room could be combined with the kitchen area to provide a kitchen/dining/lounge area. It is desirable that the day/living room should not be part of essential circulation space, nor contain essential storage.
- 7.4.4 **Essential:** The design and construction of amenity buildings must meet the requirements of the current Building Regulations, Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards, the Institution of Electrical Engineers regulations¹⁹, and the Local Water Authority. Materials used must comply with the relevant British Standard Specifications and Codes of Practice and must provide for durable and

¹⁸ 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport, (2007)

¹⁹ IEE Wiring Regulations (16th Edition) available at www.iee.org

low maintenance buildings. Its construction should be sympathetic to local architecture, attractive and of a domestic nature.

- 7.4.5 It is recommended that amenity buildings incorporate cost effective energy efficiency measures. The building layout and construction should be designed to maximise energy conservation and the use of passive solar gain. All mechanical and electrical systems should be as energy efficient as possible. Consideration should be given to the insulation of plumbing systems, the use of low energy light fittings and appropriate heating and ventilation systems. Any opportunities for using energy from renewable sources should be considered. It is desirable to produce an assessment of materials and construction techniques proposed for the site against standards set out in ‘The Green Guide to Housing Specification’²⁰.
- 7.4.6 **Essential:** Throughout the amenity building there must be adequate and sensibly situated electrical outlets, switching and controls.
- 7.4.7 **Essential:** Throughout the amenity building there must be heating which provides temperatures suitable for room use, which is economical and capable of individual control for each room.
- 7.4.8 **Essential:** The width of main entrances, doorways and passageways must comply with building regulations to ensure mobility standards.
- 7.4.9 **Essential:** Fixtures and fittings in the amenity building must be of a domestic nature, but robust.
- 7.4.10 In line for standards for social housing other recommended features²¹ include:
- Glazing lines in living/dining areas that are no higher than 810mm above floor level;
 - Hot water taps to baths with a thermostatically controlled supply;
 - Adequate screening and wall tiling provided where showers are provided over baths;
 - A worktop-cooker-sink-worktop sequence that is not broken by doors, passages or tall units;
 - A 1.2 metre run between the cooker and sink;
 - A 500 millimetre minimum clear work top each side of the cooker, and wall units set back minimum 100 millimetres;
 - A space for additional equipment such as a microwave;
 - Walls in bathrooms and WCs must be designed to take support aids.

²⁰ *The Green Guide to Housing Specification* available from the Building Research Establishment at www.bre.co.uk

²¹ Design and Quality Standards, Housing Corporation

Severalls Lane Site, Colchester

Work on the proposed new site at Severalls Lane, Colchester began in 1999 with planning consent given in November 2006. The aim was to provide a site to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers living in or regularly travelling to the Colchester area. The Gypsy and Traveller community was involved in the design from the very start. They worked with the surveyors on the drawings and visited sites of different designs to highlight what did and didn't work on these existing sites. The site plans were finalised with the agreement of the Gypsy and Traveller community – both those working closely with the surveyors and other people living on existing sites.

The site is within easy access of a major trunk road, whilst still offering both privacy and good access to local services. The access road will be a bituminous macadam road surface. The internal oval road block will be paved and have strategically placed speed restricting ramps. The road layout allows for manoeuvring static units on and off all pitches. There will be a site manager's office with good storage space and a secure refuse/recycling area.

The new design provides a 12 pitch site around an oval shaped road, with a central fenced play area, creating a safe environment for children to play where they can be seen from all 12 pitches. Close boarded fencing will be provided between each pitch to give privacy and avoid loose debris, such as leaves, being blown across the site and into pitches. The delineation of individual pitches was regarded as a 'must', and Gypsies and Travellers were keen to avoid a 'no mans' land' which could encourage fly tipping.

Pitch sizes allow for the accommodation of up to three caravans, or one large static trailer plus a touring caravan to allow for travelling during the year. There will be different surfaces within the pitches. Apart from the necessary concrete hard standing there will be tarmac areas and a red brick paved patio and footpath around the amenity blocks. Each pitch will have a small garden area to the rear of the pitch where there will be a footpath access and hard standing for a shed or kennel and a position to stand a rotary line for washing. The Gypsies and Travellers requested this to allow for a place to hang the washing that would not impact on the look of the site from the access road.

Each pitch will have a semi-detached single story amenity building. These will be larger than those on the majority of existing sites, with a kitchen and separate lounge/dining area, plus a bathroom and storage space. The living area will look out to the front of the site to allow for views across it. To avoid the 'institutional' look of the amenity buildings on the existing site, a variety of building materials will be used. Some will be brick built, others will be half-brick, half-weather boarding. The material for the roof will be either plain tiled or slate. There will be hardwood domestic front doors to each amenity building. There will be a post box at the front of the pitch to allow for individual delivery of mail without a need to access the pitch.

CHAPTER 8

Transit sites

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Although transit sites may be occupied all year round, they are not intended to be used as permanent accommodation by individual households. The guidance below therefore reflects that expectation. However developers should note that, in the past and due to the shortage of permanent sites, some transit sites have become permanent sites by default.
- 8.1.2 Views are mixed on the extent to which transit pitches can be successfully provided on permanent sites. Where this has been successful the transit pitches are usually provided adjacent to the main site, or at one end of it.

8.2 Site selection/location

- 8.2.1 The guidance for permanent sites largely also applies to transit sites except that the requirement for proximity to community facilities is only essential in respect of the need for access to schools. In all other respects the requirements are recommended rather than essential.
- 8.2.2 The presence of children on the site, and potential health and safety risks for them and other residents should receive equal consideration for transit sites.

8.3 Site layout, access and orientation

- 8.3.1 **Number of pitches** – The number of pitches on transit sites should not normally exceed 15.
- 8.3.2 **Site boundaries** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.3 **Orientation of pitches** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except that the need to avoid pitches that overlook each other is recommended rather than essential.
- 8.3.4 **Health and safety** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.5 **Access for emergency vehicles** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.6 **Security** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except that the need for delineation of individual pitches is recommended rather than essential.

- 8.3.7 **Balance between soft and hard landscaping** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.8 **Parking** – It is essential to provide at least one vehicle space per pitch which should be a minimum size of 2.4m x 4.8 metres. It is recommended that these should be included on individual pitches.
- 8.3.9 **Density and spacing between vehicles** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except where the local Fire Officer has agreed alternative arrangements that provide the same degree of fire safety.
- 8.3.10 **Inclusion of work/animal space** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.

8.4 Site services and facilities

- 8.4.1 **Accommodation for a Resident Manager** – Transit sites are reported to present particular management challenges and it is recommended that provision is made for a resident manager. As the resident manager will be living on the transit site on a semi-permanent basis, the pitch and facilities for the manager should comply with the guidance for permanent sites, including the provision of an amenity building.
- 8.4.2 **Water supply** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.3 **Electricity supply** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.4 **Gas supply** – The gas installations guidance for permanent sites applies. However, consideration of mains gas supplies is not applicable to transit sites.
- 8.4.5 **Drainage** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.6 **Sewerage** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.7 **Lighting** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.8 **Waste disposal** – Waste disposal for individual pitches is recommended rather than essential for transit sites. It is **essential** to provide communal refuse disposal which is convenient (but away from dwellings) fenced off, robust and inconspicuous.
- 8.4.9 **Sluice** – A sluice should be provided on each site.
- 8.4.10 **Play space** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.11 **Post** – Arrangements for postal delivery are recommended rather than essential.

8.5 Health and safety

- 8.5.1 **Risk Assessment** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.

- 8.5.2 **Fire Safety** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.5.3 **Accessibility** – The guidance for permanent sites is recommended rather than essential.

8.6 Individual pitches

- 8.6.1 **Hard standing** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.6.2 **Size of pitch** – It is **essential** that each pitch is of a size sufficient to accommodate a touring caravan, one parking space and private amenities.
- 8.6.3 **Private amenities** – It is **essential** to provide private amenities on each pitch including a toilet, wash basin and shower with hot and cold water supply. Consideration should be given to the need for hook-up to the main sewerage system for toilets.
- 8.6.4 **Amenity buildings** – There is no requirement to provide amenity buildings on a transit site, however provision of a communal laundry and drying space is recommended on sites which have a resident manager, and where these facilities can be properly managed.
- 8.6.5 **Clearwater Site, Chichester**

The Clearwater site, near Chichester, is an example of a privately owned and run site which incorporates both permanent and transit pitches. It is a very attractive, green site on the edge of a village in a rural location, and with good access to the road network. The owner has planned the site specifically to enable future growth in both the number and size of households, without members of the extended family having to be overcrowded, displaced to another site or left homeless.

The owner recently received planning permission to add six transit pitches to the existing permanent site. It will not operate as an openly available transit site but will be available to family and other visitors of existing residents. Each transit pitch will have its own amenity building with toilet, shower and kitchen. Pitches will have space for two caravans, and planting is used to mark the boundary between each.

There are four permanent pitches on the site, with space for a further four to accommodate future needs. The pitches are spacious, and each incorporates an amenity building which is 10' wide by 20' long, with kitchen/laundry and bathroom.

There is a children's play area on the site. Residents are able to graze animals on the adjoining field.

CHAPTER 9

Emergency Stopping Places

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Emergency stopping places accommodate intermittent needs for site accommodation. They are not occupied all year around but may be made available at times of increased demand, such as fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers.
- 9.1.2 The guidance below sets out the essential and desired features of emergency stopping places.

9.2 Site selection/location

- 9.2.1 **Essential** – Emergency stopping places should provide safe and convenient access to road networks and be located so as to cause minimum disruption to surrounding communities.
- 9.2.2 **Essential** – When considering the suitability of different sites, the potential presence of young children and any risks that may arise due to adjoining land uses must be considered.

9.3 Site layout, access and orientation

- 9.3.1 **Essential** – Markings or barriers must be used to encourage residents to park safely, allow access for emergency vehicles, and enable maximum use of the site in accordance with its intended capacity and fire safety standards. Particular regard must be given to the need to ensure a safe distance between trailers/caravans and other structures made of combustible materials. The advice of the Local Fire Officer must be sought during the planning of emergency stopping places.
- 9.3.2 **Essential** – The road to and from the site must be of sufficient quality and size to enable access onto and off the site by heavy vehicles such as trailers.
- 9.3.3 **Essential** – There must be a clear barrier around the emergency stopping place to discourage unauthorised expansion of the site.
- 9.3.4 Gated access to the site is recommended.

9.4 Site services and facilities

- 9.4.1 **Essential** – A cold water supply must be provided for the use of site residents.
- 9.4.2 **Essential** – Portaloos must be provided for the use of residents, with separate provision for men and women. There must be at least one portaloos for every four households on the site.
- 9.4.3 Provision of portashowers is recommended.
- 9.4.4 **Essential** – A sewerage disposal point must be provided.
- 9.4.5 **Essential** – Refuse disposal facilities must be provided.

9.5 Health and safety

- 9.5.1 **Essential** – As well as seeking advice from the local Fire Officer, a risk assessment must be carried out during planning for the site.

CHAPTER 10

Consultation

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This guidance is not intended to replace local consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other key agencies. Local consultation should include:

- Gypsies and Travellers from the communities whose needs will be met on the site, including if possible, the families who will move onto the site at first let;
- The settled community;
- Planners – from the very first stages of site identification;
- The Fire Officer;
- The Police Architect – or other source of advice on security;
- Site managers and maintenance officers who can advise on the design features that can promote good management and keep costs to a minimum;

10.1.2 The same principles apply to consultation on Gypsy and Traveller sites as with other refurbishment projects and new developments. Very few architects and developers will have first hand experience of living on a site as part of a Gypsy or Traveller community, and consultation with Gypsies and Travellers will be crucial to ensuring the site works successfully.

10.1.3 The needs and preferences of those who will live on the site should be given full consideration and should be met as far as is possible within available resources. People who have lived on sites for most or all of their lives are in the best position to advise on what works well and what doesn't for a particular community. However, the needs of those people who will move onto the site at first let, will need to be balanced with the needs of those who may live on the site at a later stage.

10.2 When to consult?

10.2.1 Gypsies and Travellers should be consulted throughout all stages of the design process, including site identification. Local communities can be aware of factors which, despite site shortages, could prevent take up of site places in particular areas.

Evidence provided to Select Committee

“Gypsy and Traveller families often wish to have small compact and well-managed sites located in areas where they have historically resided and have a network of local family support. Local authorities have in the past tended to provide accommodation in inappropriate areas and the sites have therefore not always been used to their full potential. As with the settled community, Gypsy families prefer clean well-managed sites where there is no fear of retribution from problem families and they can enjoy a peaceful coexistence. [...]. Caution should be used when seeking locations for sites to ensure that they are based on need in a particular area and not the availability of inappropriate land for alternative uses. Traditionally, Gypsy sites have been located on land which is inappropriate for alternative uses and this, in itself, has caused problems both for the Gypsy community and for Site Managers.” [210]

- 10.2.2 There is no reason why Gypsies and Travellers cannot be included in all design meetings with architects, so that expensive design mistakes are not made and so that professional perceptions of what will work well can be challenged if necessary at an early stage.
- 10.2.3 Where sites are intended for mixed communities it will be necessary for the views of each of the different communities to be gathered.

10.3 Methods of consultation

- 10.3.1 Where there is no established record of joint working between the Gypsy and Traveller community and the organisation wishing to consult, steps will need to be taken to build up trust. Introductions can usually be secured through organisations that already have a good working relationship with members of the communities. This is often the case for the Traveller Education Service and health advocates, but may not necessarily be the case for existing site managers/liaison officers, some of whom may have an enforcement role that has brought them into conflict with the communities in the past.
- 10.3.2 Participation will be greatly improved by holding the consultation in familiar and informal surroundings that are easy to get to, comfortable and warm. The office of a local organisation working with Gypsies and Travellers, or a local community building might be appropriate for instance.
- 10.3.3 There are low levels of literacy in some sections of the community. It is important therefore that consultation does not rely on written methods such as leaflets, surveys or feedback forms. Face to face consultation which enables Gypsies and Travellers to influence rather than just respond to the consultation agenda is important.
- 10.3.4 In some cases it may be appropriate to use a small number of people from the communities to represent their interests, however there is a danger with this type of approach that the perspective of some parts of the community will be missed – for instance children, women or men, or older people.

- 10.3.5 The timing of the consultation will be important. For instance women are more likely to be able to take part in consultation that takes place on sites during the day (and outside school pick up hours) whereas men may be more likely to be able to make evening meetings.
- 10.3.6 One to one interviews are one method of consulting, but they can be time-consuming and do not provide an opportunity to attempt to resolve differing opinions. Focus groups can be a good way to encourage discussions around matters where there are differing perspectives and where there is a need to achieve a consensus position. If some tensions between different members of the community are anticipated then small meetings or group discussions will work better than large meetings.
- 10.3.7 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments may gather views on site design and ask about satisfaction with existing sites. This information should be drawn upon where available.

South Liberty Lane site, Bristol

Bristol County Council used 'Planning for Real'²² methods to consult with Gypsies and Travellers on the design for a new permanent site. This method of consultation involves making a three dimensional model of the area to be developed/improved. This encourages consultees to consider the area as a whole and how the different elements of their environment impact upon one another. They started by getting Gypsy and Traveller children to make models of the site, and made this into a fun event. The parents then became curious and got involved too. Consultation was carried out on a range of existing sites and at Stowe Fair.

The result of this consultation has been a 'state of the art' 12 pitch site. Many of the features were directly influenced by the consultation, including:

- Semi-detached utility buildings that incorporate a day room, kitchen, bathroom/toilet and separate toilet;
- Boiler and central heating in utility buildings;
- A variety of power points on each pitch to enable flexible positioning of trailers and caravans and avoid trailing wires;
- The use of built-up flower beds to prevent trailers being positioned too close to each other;
- Low walls and gates separating each pitch and creating 'defensible' space;
- Parking on individual pitches;
- Communal playspace for children.

22 More information on this consultation method can be found at www.nif.org.uk

10.4 Feeding back on the results of consultation

- 10.4.1 It will not always be possible to meet the needs and preferences of everyone and, if the reasons for this are explained clearly, this will normally be understood by participants. As a common courtesy the results of any consultation should always be fed back to the individuals and/or communities concerned. Where it has not been possible to meet the expressed preferences of the community the reasons for this should be clearly explained.

10.5 Consulting with the settled community

- 10.5.1 As for other kinds of development, it is important that members of the local community, whether Gypsies and Travellers or settled residents, are able to feed in views on plans for new sites.
- 10.5.2 Misinformation and limited contact between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community can feed distrust and misconceptions, and these must be challenged and addressed proactively. Opposition from the settled community can delay, and in some cases prevent, the issue of planning permission for new sites. Councils and other developers need to plan for the possibility of such opposition at an early stage in the development and provide accurate information to help overturn negative stereotypes and allay concerns.
- 10.5.3 It will be important to demonstrate the need for new site provision in any consultation with the settled community, and the steps that the council or private developer will take to address concerns and deal with problems should they arise.

Transit Site Development, Southampton

Southampton City Council has recently granted cabinet approval to allow a planning application to be made for a six pitch transit site on the outskirts of the city.

Local residents were sent a letter and information sheet setting out the proposed nature of the development and inviting them to attend public meetings. A phone hot line, email address and postal address were set up to receive comments.

The proposal was processed through both a full cabinet meeting and cabinet consultation meeting – all of which were open to the public. Local community representatives and individuals spoke at each meeting, as did a member of the Romani Rights Association.

Cabinet decided to defer the final decision for three weeks until after a public information day had been held.

The information day consisted of two drop-in events which were held in different locations both close to the proposed site and a public meeting in the larger of these two venues.

All events were held on the same day, a Saturday between 9 am and 4pm, and were attended by out of area speakers, including the Head of Kent Gypsy and Traveller Unit and the South East Regional Advisor on Gypsies and Travellers, as well local police and council officers from planning, community safety, inclusion, education and other teams.

A series of question and answer sheets were prepared for an Information Day that was attended by 450 local people. These covered: site selection and costs (which included evidence of need for the site); design and environmental matters; security, crime and community safety and having Gypsies and Travellers as neighbours. As well as providing information about the proposed development the sheets also tackled common prejudices head on. Objections from the local settled community focused on fears of increased anti-social behaviour and 'hawking', impact on local traffic conditions, potential overspill onto surrounding land; safety issues linked to the adjoining railway line, and potential negative impacts for local small businesses.

The consultation process demonstrated that the council was prepared to listen to the views of local people and devote resources to addressing concerns raised. As a result of the consultation, the council has set up a management group that includes representatives from local businesses and residents as well as agencies such as the police and schools, which will respond to any issues as they arise. It has also increased security proposals for the site, including the installation of closed circuit television and escalating charges for pitches on the site to discourage overstaying.

ANNEX A

Key References

Niner, P (July 2003) The provision and condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England, ODPM – summary of full report Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England

ODPM (Feb 2006) Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – Guide to responsibilities and powers

ODPM Circular 01/2006 (Feb 2006) Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites ODPM

Commission for Racial Equality. Common Ground – Equality, good practice and race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers

Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions (Oct 2004) Thirteenth Report

East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Gypsy and Traveller study – draft final report 2005

Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards (April 2003)

ODPM, Revising the Model Standards for Park Homes, consultation paper on revising standards and guidance (Dec 2005)

Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A planning focus. Model Standard Package'. Available from the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, Guild House, 41 Clarence Street, Staines, Middlesex TW18 4SPY. Tel: 0784 461805

ANNEX B

The consultation criteria

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of policy.**
- 2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**
- 3. Ensure your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
- 4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
- 5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
- 6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact

Albert Joyce

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU;

or by e-mail to

albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the response to the consultation itself should be sent to the contact shown within the main body of the consultation.