

**Merton Sites and Policies Plan Examination in Public
Proposed changes to the Position statement on meeting the
accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers**

**London Gypsy and Traveller Unit
21 January 2014**

Following the written statements on Matter 3 of this Examination, we wish to submit the following proposed changes to the position statement on Gypsy and Traveller provision to ensure the soundness of the Sites and Policies Plan.

As previously stated, we are requesting the deletion of paragraphs 2.7 and 2.9 of the position statement and the insertion of new paragraphs to read as follows:

2.7 The assessment of need of existing residents at the Brickfield Road site has been complicated by a low level of satisfaction with the management and maintenance of the site. Recent discussions with the site residents shows the need for new pitches in the next 5 years as a large number of new family formations are expected. The Council sees merit in undertaking a further review of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough in conjunction with the community and support organisations.

2.9 The new accommodation needs assessment will identify a target for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches for 2019-23 and 2024 - 28. The current target for the 1st five years from 2014-2018 is 4 - 16 pitches as identified in the 2008 Needs Assessment.

We consider a major process change is required to deliver this pitch target and our preferred approach would be a revision of the assessment for all the sites in the Plan, conducted by Merton jointly with the Gypsy and Traveller community and LGTU. We have already submitted a number of suggestions for site allocations that could be modified to accommodate the required pitch provision, but we consider that a more thorough assessment should be undertaken.

In addition, we wish to propose that paragraph 2.11 is amended as follows, in order to ensure the delivery of required Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision after 2018:

*2.11 The council will continue to review Gypsies and Traveller accommodation needs in collaboration with stakeholders including local Gypsies and Travellers communities, neighbouring boroughs and Registered Providers. **The required provision for years 2019-23 and 2024-28 will be accommodated on the sites identified as suitable and available in this Plan.***

Currently a number of allocations for sites available after 2018 comprise a range of possible uses (for example Leyton Road Centre considered for community and/or residential uses, Worsfold House/Chapel Orchard considered for education and/or residential uses, Birches Close considered for education, healthcare and/or residential uses). Therefore, we consider it appropriate for some of these sites to indicate Gypsy and Traveller pitches among the possible uses.

To conclude, we wish to ask the Inspector to recommend this as a major modification to ensure the soundness of the Plan and to advise on the process and timescale for a further round of public consultation on those sites where the range of possible uses has changed.