

More Traveller Sites Are in Everyone's Interests

Councils in the East of England have now been told the number of Traveller pitches they need to allocate by 2011 by the East of England Regional Assembly Planning Panel.

More Travellers sites are clearly needed, no one can deny this. Sufficient Traveller sites will mean:

- Families can avoid constant eviction, which impacts badly on their health and life chances. Traveller men and women's lifespan is 10 years less than everyone else. Traveller mothers are more than 20 times likely to have a child die than the rest of the population. Gypsy and Traveller children have difficulty in getting a decent education (Commission for Racial Equality, 'Common Ground', 2006 page 13).
- The general public, taxpayers and councils will be saved the cost and inconvenience of unauthorised encampments and developments.
- Travellers will be helped to become part of the wider community. A growing number of Travellers are playing active roles in schools for example as classroom assistants and school governors and are performing other valuable roles in the wider community. This shows that the negative stereotypes that malign this group are false.

The main thing that helps Travellers to play such a positive role in the community and accessing services is having a secure and decent place to live.

It is therefore important councils:

- Start looking for land now and developing (residential and transit) sites that Travellers can rent or afford to buy as soon as possible to tackle the acute shortage of sites without delay or prevarication.
- Land found should be near services and allow Travellers to feel part of the wider community. Poorly located and environmentally unsuited places should not be chosen. Travellers should be consulted on site design.
- Avoid evictions wherever possible and 'fast track' site plans so that Travellers facing eviction can be relocated to new sites. This avoids the cost of a forced eviction and enables Travellers to access services.
- Take note of research by the Ormiston Trust which found 72.6% of Travellers in a survey they undertook felt that 1,220 net additional residential pitches was not a sufficient estimate of the level of unmet need for residential pitch provision in the East of England.

It is important for councils, community leaders and the media to:

- Ensure that there is a fair and calm debate over Traveller site provision and that hysteria and prejudice are avoided.

Signed.....
 Date.....
 Address.....

The deadline for responses is 5.00 p.m. on Friday 16 May 2008.

Submit your own comments by e-mail, or post to:

Barbara Bay
 Panel Secretary
 Planning Inspectorate
 4/02 Kite Wing
 Temple Quay House
 2 The Square
 Temple Quay
 Bristol BS1 6PN

Email: gtreview@goeast.gsi.gov.uk

Appendix

**These are the pitch allocations for your area? Are they enough?
 Let the East of England Regional Assembly know what you think**

Area/District	<i>Authorised Pitches in 2006</i>	Additional Pitches Required 2006-2011	<i>Proposed Pitches at 2011</i>
Bedford	20	15	35
Mid Bedfordshire	39	25	64
South Bedfordshire	79	45	124
Luton	20	15	35
Cambridge	0	15	15
East Cambridgeshire	105	35	140
Fenland	183	89	272
Huntingdonshire	20	20	40
South Cambridgeshire	215	59	274
Peterborough	95	15	110
Basildon	116	81	197
Braintree	25	16	41
Brentwood	10	15	25
Castle Point	0	15	15
Chelmsford	35	46	81
Colchester	7	15	22
Epping Forest	94	49	143
Harlow	34	15	49
Maldon	39	15	54
Rochford	3	15	18
Tendring	2	15	17
Uttlesford	37	15	52
Southend	0	15	15
Thurrock	70	44	114
Broxbourne	22	18	40
Dacorum	36	15	51
East Hertfordshire	7	15	22
Hertsmere	35	18	53

North Hertfordshire	<i>6</i>	15	<i>21</i>
St Albans	<i>52</i>	33	<i>85</i>
Stevenage	<i>14</i>	15	<i>29</i>
Three Rivers	<i>11</i>	15	<i>26</i>
Watford	<i>10</i>	15	<i>25</i>
Welwyn Hatfield	<i>51</i>	17	<i>68</i>
Breckland	<i>32</i>	15	<i>47</i>
Broadland	<i>2</i>	15	<i>17</i>
Great Yarmouth	<i>4</i>	15	<i>19</i>
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	<i>93</i>	53	<i>146</i>
North Norfolk	<i>1</i>	15	<i>16</i>
Norwich	<i>18</i>	15	<i>33</i>
South Norfolk	<i>25</i>	28	<i>53</i>
Babergh	<i>0</i>	15	<i>15</i>
Forest Heath	<i>35</i>	18	<i>53</i>
Ipswich	<i>43</i>	15	<i>58</i>
Mid Suffolk	<i>69</i>	42	<i>111</i>
St Edmundsbury	<i>2</i>	15	<i>17</i>
Suffolk Coastal	<i>0</i>	31	<i>31</i>
Waveney	<i>20</i>	15	<i>35</i>
East of England	<i>1836</i>	1187	<i>3023</i>