How to get involved

This is a short guide to accompany the full Towards Preferred Options Development Plan Document. If you wish to comment on its proposals, you will probably want to see the main document.

This can be viewed on our website at www.southglos.gov.uk/gypsydpd

The full document is also available in libraries and one stop shops.

Gypsies and Travellers can approach the Traveller Unit on 01454 864298.

Any comments, questions, or requests for assistance can either be sent by email to planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk or posted to:

Spatial Planning Team

South Gloucestershire Council

The Council Offices

Castle Street

Thornbury

South Gloucestershire

BS35 1HF

If you require any further information about this document or advice on how to make your comments, you can ring a dedicated answering service on 01454 863738 and leave your name, contact details and nature of information required. Lines are open from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, from 6 November to 29 January and will be charged at mobile rates. Calls will generally be returned within a 24 hour period. You will not be charged for the return call.

We are also holding Public Exhibitions where you can get some more information:

- **TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2008** at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, Fiddlers Wood Lane, Bradley Stoke, BS32 9BS between 2.30pm and 7pm
- **FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2008** at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, Broad Street, BS37 6AD between 10am and 2.30pm
- **THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2008** at Easter Compton Village Hall, Main Road, Easter Compton, BS35 5RA between 12.30pm and 5pm

If you are aware of any land, or own any land which you think may be suitable for Gypsy/Traveller use, please contact the Spatial Planning Team.

Thank you for your help

This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape.

Please phone 01454 868004 if you need any of these or any other help to access council services.
Introduction

All councils must now work out how many pitches are needed in their areas where Gypsies and Travellers can live or stay. Councils must show the government how land will be found to meet this need. This is because there is a long-standing national shortage. The government believes that there is an urgent need to meet the shortfall in South Gloucestershire by 2011 and has told the council to produce a new plan called a Development Plan Document which will identify land where pitches can be developed.

Part 1 of the planning document went out to public consultation in January/February this year. This is still available to view on the council’s website together with the outcome of the consultation.

The next stage called ‘Towards Preferred Options’, which has built on the results of the earlier consultation, is now available. This is your chance to comment on the council’s suggestions for where the necessary pitches could be located and why. The final proposals will be sent to the Government in November 2009 after further public consultation in October 2009.

How many pitches are needed?

The number and type of pitches needed for South Gloucestershire was worked out by independent consultants in what’s called a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). These are now carried out by every council so that Gypsy/Traveller needs are included when ‘housing needs’ are worked out for each area. As at November 2008, the outstanding need for South Gloucestershire is for 53 permanent residential pitches and 25 transit pitches for use by families passing through the area.

The intention is that many of the new pitches will be provided on private family sites. Private sites are preferred by Gypsy and Traveller families in the area and a lot of the need identified in the GTAA comes from existing families already on their own sites in South Gloucestershire.

Why are these pitches needed?

Having enough authorised accommodation benefits everyone. Gypsy and Traveller families have improved life chances through better access to education and health services. They can vote and play a fuller, more integrated role in society. The wider community benefits because authorised site residents pay council tax and fewer special services are needed for them, reducing the cost for tax payers.

Transit pitches to be rented by families passing through the area may be council owned/managed or in private ownership and management. When more authorised transit pitches are available, the number of unauthorised encampments will fall as with them and direct families to available, authorised pitches.

What about the longer term?

When the present shortage of sites has been met we will continue to cater for the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers using the same methods as we do for all our residents.

Where we are now

Seventeen locations where the new pitches could be developed are now being suggested. Eight of those are existing Gypsy and Traveller sites which could be used more effectively. Almost half of the identified need arises from families already in the area. A total of 25 extra pitches are proposed on existing family sites where there is room.

Some of these sites are on council and other public land, while others are on private land that has been brought to the council’s attention.

There are planning restrictions on a large part of the district and this has made it difficult to find sites. However, recent government guidance means that green belt land can now be considered.

As a result, only the most protected sites have been excluded from our site search area. This includes areas of public open space, sites of international/national nature conservation interest, scheduled ancient monuments and areas adversely affected by COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) sites.

New locations suggested have been initially assessed for any potential hazards and highway/access issues but sites going forward to the next stage will be subject to a more comprehensive assessment.