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**Q1: Should the Council use the Gypsies and Travellers Plan to safeguard authorised permanent Traveller sites in the District?**

- 4.2 All respondents to this question supported the option for safeguarding sites in the District and some considered it essential to do so in order to meet on-going and future traveller needs within the sub-region.

**Q2: Should the Council consider meeting some of its need by extending existing sites, where possible and appropriate? If so, which sites would be suitable for extension?**

- 4.3 Every respondent who answered this question agreed that the Council should consider extending sites where possible and appropriate. Certain areas were identified through responses as unsuitable for expansions, for example, Iver, which already has a large number of sites in a small area, and Chalfont St Peter, which, although not within South Bucks, borders the district boundary at Gerrards Cross. Wapseys Wood was identified by residents of the existing site as not suitable for expansion.
- 4.4 The Environment Agency, although not giving opinions on which sites are, and which aren't, suitable for extensions, provided a list of factors and constraints on particular sites which need to be considered if sites were to extend.

**Q3: Should the Council seek to allocate non Green Belt sites with temporary permission as permanent authorised sites? If so, which sites do you recommend?**

- 4.5 The majority of respondents agreed with this question that non Green Belt land could be allocated if a site already has temporary permission on it. Most respondents also caveated this by stating 'yes' but only where suitable and emphasised not areas of Green Belt land.
- 4.6 One adjoining authority did place emphasis on national policy, which states that insets into the Green belt boundary are allowed in exceptional circumstances. It stated that if the Council wished to make such designations, then the Green Belt would have to be de-designated.

**Q4: Should the Council consider allocating new sites to accommodate future need for travellers? If so, where?**

- 4.7 Most respondents agreed that new sites should be allocated in South Bucks as long as they do not cause unacceptable harm to the environment, to the Green Belt and the historic environment. Other concerns were listed, but Green Belt was emphasised as a key issue when looking for new sites.
- 4.8 Some respondents stated that new site allocations were a positive way forward; however they would prefer the focus to be on extending existing established sites first as that was where the need was located.

**Q5: Do you own or know of any pieces of land that may be suitable for use as a traveller site? If so, please submit site information as part of your consultation response.**

- 4.9 The majority who answered this question stated 'no' to having any potential sites that could be explored for use as a traveller site; however some travellers noted that Bottoms Walton, an existing site in the District has potential. Chiltern District Council also stated that through an earlier Call for Sites consultation run by their Council, some sites were submitted that were located within South Bucks, so recommended looking back at those sites for potential to be taken forward and assessed.

- 4.10 A handful of sites were also submitted through the Call for Sites form available through the consultation. These will be addressed later in the report.

**Q6: Where the need cannot be met through any other means, should the Council consider allocating new sites to accommodate the future need for travellers on designated Green Belt land?**

- 4.11 Mixed responses were received on this question. Some gave a straight 'no' to allocations on the Green Belt due to it being under threat already, whilst others emphasised that Green Belt land must be de-designated in order to place an allocation on it. Others highlighted that this should only happen in exceptional circumstances where need cannot be met in any other way.

**Q7: Do you agree that the Council should develop policies to assess planning applications for additional traveller sites?**

- 4.12 All respondents agreed that policies should be developed to assess planning applications for traveller sites. Some included additional requirements and criteria they wished to be considered as part of the policies, such as heritage assets, the Chilterns AONB, and the emphasis of need for new pitches for travellers in the District. Chiltern District Council also noted that South Bucks may wish to consider policies including "unidentified proposals which may come forward through the plan period".

**Q8: Do you agree with the GTNA conclusions that no transit sites or temporary stopping places are required for travellers within the District?**

- 4.13 All agreed that transit sites were not required within South Bucks, with two Councils notably supporting the outcomes of the GTNA. Some Travellers responses noted that they had not seen the GTNA, but noted that transit sites are a "waste of time and money" and that permanent sites would be far better to allow travellers to feel more settled on sites.

**Q9: Do you agree with the GTNA conclusions that no plots for Travelling Showpeople are required in the District?**

- 4.14 Most agreed that there was no need to provide for Travelling Showpeople in South Bucks. Some noted that demand needed to be assessed to adapt if the need was present in the District. One traveller responded saying that there was a known need in the District, but no details were provided on this, so it will be important to monitor the situation in the future.

- 4.15 Notably, Chiltern District Council have a known need to accommodate Travelling Showpeople, so have expressed an interest in any such responses received in relation to Travelling Showpeople or sites within the District, which may help meet their known need to 2026.

**Q10: Do you agree with the site selection criteria? Do you agree with the weighting given? If not, how could the methodology be improved?**

- 4.16 This was undoubtedly the most talked about question through the consultation. Although a handful of respondents agreed with the criteria listed in the site selection criteria, the majority had something to say on the issue. The most common issue was in relation to the weighting and scores assigned to each issue; many respondents felt that this did not expressly help in the assessment of sites as some issues were given higher or more positive/negative scores than others. There were also comments on the lack of justification provided with regards to the site selection criteria.

- 4.17 The main concern in the site selection criteria related to Green Belt. One concern was that it had two criteria listed with different scores (-5 for site location in the Green Belt and -4 for whether a site would cause significant harm to the openness), with one respondent noting that one criteria on looking at the overall assessment of impact on Green Belt purposes (in line with the NPPF) may be more appropriate. Other concerns stated that Green Belt should have a far higher weighting, stating that nothing could outweigh the detrimental impact that would occur from development on the Green Belt.
- 4.18 English Heritage generally agreed with the site selection criteria listed, however suggested changes to the weighting with regards to a potential sliding scale of impact upon heritage assets, such as positive scores if a site has no impact on a heritage asset or setting, and sliding progressively negative if a site were to have an impact upon a Grade I or II\* listed building. English Heritage also suggested that greater weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of nationally designated heritage assets and protected landscapes.
- 4.19 Other responses included criteria which have potentially been omitted from the table which have been requested to be included. These include drainage (including foul drainage), landscape character, the Chiltern AONB, more detail on flood risk, more clarification on safety and contaminated land and relating the criteria more closely to national policy.

#### **Call for Sites**

- 4.20 Sites submitted to the Council through the Call for Sites forms are listed below. As yet, these sites have not been assessed for their suitability; they have simply been submitted through the public consultation as having the potential to be a traveller site.
- A site in Hedgerley, which has planning permission for a residential dwelling
  - The Warren, Rowley Land, Wexham, SL3 6PB
  - Land at Little Sutton Lane, Langley, SL3 8AN
  - Bottoms Walton, Walton Lane, SL2 3TS
  - Pyebush Lane, Beaconsfield, HP9 2RX

#### **General comments made through public consultation**

- 4.21 Most of the more general comments made were from consultees noting issues to be aware of when identifying sites, for example, the Aerodrome Safeguarding, Bird Strike and Wind Turbine Development around Heathrow airport, which are all identified on maps and flood zones and other constraints from the Environment Agency.
- 4.22 Other comments received that were of a more general nature were from neighbouring and local authorities, all of which welcomed the study to help meet the needs of travellers in South Bucks. The main concerns from such authorities however was the suggestion of depending upon neighbouring authorities to help meet some of the unmet need in South Bucks. This was listed as an option within the issues and options paper along with every other option; however it was intended that all other options for sites would be fully explored prior to asking authorities to help meet such need.

#### **Duty to Co-operate**

- 4.23 As stated in the previous paper to Members, the Council now has a duty to co-operate, in line with the Localism Act 2011, which places a legal duty on local authorities and public bodies to engage, constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise effectiveness of Local Plan preparation relating to cross boundary matters.

4.24 Through this public consultation, South Bucks has worked closely with neighbouring authorities and has had meetings with some districts, both prior, during and post public consultation. The table below sets out how the Council has consulted neighbouring local planning authorities to date.

Local Authority	Correspondence	Consultation response received?
Wycombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A duty to co-operate meeting took place on 25 October with Wycombe</li> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A consultation response was received on 4 April</li> </ul>	Yes
Three Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A duty to co-operate meeting took place with Three Rivers on 14 April</li> <li>• A consultation response was received on 16 April</li> </ul>	Yes
Chiltern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A follow up email was sent on 20 April offering further time to respond</li> <li>• A consultation response was received on 20 April</li> </ul>	Yes
Hillingdon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A duty to co-operate meeting took place with Hillingdon on 5 February</li> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A follow up email was sent on 20 April offering further time to respond.</li> <li>• Email correspondence took place agreeing to Wed 23 April as a final deadline</li> <li>• No consultation response has been received</li> </ul>	No
Slough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A follow up email was sent on 20 April offering further time to respond</li> <li>• An email was received on 28 April recognising that no response had been sent, but no consultation response has been received</li> <li>• A duty to co-operate meeting had since taken place with Slough Council between officers on 28 April</li> </ul>	No
Windsor and Maidenhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A duty to co-operate meeting took place on 13 November</li> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A follow up email was sent on 20 April offering further time to respond</li> <li>• No correspondence or consultation response has been received</li> </ul>	No
Bucks County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting took place with Bucks CC on 17 March about the public traveller sites within the District</li> <li>• The consultation email was sent out on 19 March</li> <li>• A follow up email was sent on 20 April offering further time to respond</li> <li>• No correspondence or consultation response has been received</li> </ul>	No

4.25 Aylesbury Vale District Council also responded to the Issues and Options consultation as a Bucks authority, but is not an adjoining authority to South Bucks. Aylesbury Vale District Council was also involved in the Bucks GTNA study, so it was expected that the District would share views through the public consultation.

4.26 During and post public consultation, the four Bucks authorities involved in the GTNA (Wycombe, Chiltern, Aylesbury Vale and South Bucks) have had a meeting regarding the evidence base study and the needs within Bucks; this took place at Chiltern District Council offices on 1 April 2014. Another meeting regarding travellers needs also took place at Chiltern, however this was directly in relation to the Chiltern Delivery DPD, and how needs

could be met through their plan. This meeting took place on 24 April 2014 and included the same four Districts as well as Three Rivers Council as a neighbouring authority.

4.27 The Council will continue to work closely with all neighbouring authorities.

### Next Steps

4.28 As set out in the Issues and Options paper, the next stage in the preparation of the Gypsies and Travellers Plan is the publication of the draft plan. At this point, sites will be formally identified as those that are deemed suitable to take forward in the plan. This stage will also include a public consultation to give people an opportunity to comment on the chosen sites.

4.29 A copy of the timetable is set out below.

Stage	Indicative Date
Scoping and evidence gathering Undertake need assessment and scope Sustainability Appraisal	May 2013 - February 2014
Issues and Options / Call for sites Consultation paper setting out options to meet identified need, including Call for Sites consultation	March 2014 - April 2014
Working towards a Draft Plan	Current Stage
Publication of Draft Plan This will formally identify the sites that the Council feels are suitable for use as traveller sites and invite comments on the chosen ones.	Autumn 2014
Submission to Secretary of State At this stage the Plan will be formally submitted to the Government along with all the comments received. An independent Inspector will then be appointed to examine the document.	February 2015
Examination in Public Formal examination of the Plan by the Government appointed inspector	June/ July 2015
Adoption	December 2015

## 5 Resources, Risk and Other Implications

5.1 The main resource implication is officer time. The results of the public consultation have been analysed and are being taken forward to inform the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Plan for the District. There could be considerable risk in not proceeding with the Gypsy and Traveller Plan as there would be more likelihood of applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites being allowed on appeal.

## 6 Summary

6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Sustainable Development PAG note the outcomes of the recent public consultation.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>	Accommodating the needs of the Travelling Community in South Bucks: consultation on Issues and Options and Call for Sites Paper <a href="http://www.sbdc-spider.southbucks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=2071&amp;Ver=4">http://www.sbdc-spider.southbucks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=2071&amp;Ver=4</a>