

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
EXAMINATION OF THE SITE ALLOCATIONS & MANAGEMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT (SAMDev) PLAN

INSPECTOR'S INTERIM VIEWS
Gypsy and Traveller Provision

Core Strategy Policy CS12 'Gypsy and Traveller Provision' is the Council's planning policy on gypsy and traveller provision. In brief, Policy CS12 confirms that the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers will be addressed by allocating sites, supporting sustainable development proposals for sites close to Shrewsbury, the Market Towns and Key Centres, and Community Hubs and Community Clusters; and small exception sites.

Notwithstanding Policy CS12, the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan does not identify any sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation. To support this approach, the Council relies on the 'Shropshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Shropshire Council' (July 2014) (GTAA). This identifies a shortfall of 5 pitches, excluding turnover, over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19. Taking account of supply through turnover there would be an oversupply of some 30 pitches to 2018/19. It is recognised that no adjustment is made for in-migration. Over the longer-term (2019/20 to 2026/27) an additional 12 households may require pitch provision. However, the GTAA concludes that current pitch provision and likely turnover is expected to address the need for pitches from these households.

The GTAA was published after the period for consultation on the Pre-submission SAMDev Plan had expired. Accordingly there has been no opportunity for interested parties to comment upon the robustness of this evidence base.

As I indicated in the relevant hearing session, I consider that it is necessary to ensure that this evidence is made available for consultation given that it forms the basis on which the Council consider it is not necessary to identify and allocate sites to accommodate pitches for gypsies and travellers and there has been no opportunity to make informed representations on the soundness of this aspect of the plan.

Warrant Road Caravan Park 2 is an extremely large privately owned site that has a total of 51 pitches. As can be seen from Table 4.1a, almost half (25 pitches) were vacant in May 2014. I heard that the owner is carrying out improvements to the site and it is his intention to enable the pitches to be occupied; indeed this may well explain the high vacancy rate as was the case with a number of the Council managed sites at that time. However, so that I may assess the likelihood of this being a suitable and available site that realistically contributes towards the identified gypsy and traveller accommodation needs in Shropshire, could the Council please provide me with some additional information (in liaison with the site owner). In particular I would like to understand the owner's intentions for

those vacant pitches and how long they have been vacant in addition to how the site is managed i.e. any pitch allocation policies.

Finally, could you please provide details of the relevant planning permissions for each of the authorised sites included in the supply of available pitches included in Table 4.1a of the GTAA?

A response to my questions within 21 days would be appreciated. Could I then suggest that the evidence base is publicised for at least 4 weeks together with the Council's response to my questions about availability of pitches. A further hearing session should be scheduled on a provisional basis in case it is necessary to hear representors and / or for me to test the evidence further with the Council.

Assuming this matter could run parallel with the remainder of the examination on other matters it would not introduce significant delays.

I look forward to a response from the Council in due course.

Claire Sherratt

Inspector appointed to examine the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan

2 December 2014