

Maldon Local Development Plan Examination

Chelmsford City Council Hearing Statement to Matter 9

Representation Reference:

0145-5275-H6-14

Matter 9: Provision for Travellers H6

Issue: Whether policy H6 and its associated text on the provision for travellers is justified by the evidence, consistent with national policy, and effective

Response

1. Chelmsford City Council's (CCC) submitted a representation to the Pre-Submission consultation with respect to Policy H6 Provision for Travellers (Ref: 0145-5275-H6-14). The substance of the representation was that the LDP does not allocate sufficient sites to meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers including, a five year supply of sites. CCC considered this contrary to national guidance set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
2. MDC has subsequently published suggested modifications to Policy H6 and its supporting text (Refs: 058 and 059 in SD04b). These remove the identified need for permanent pitches and identify 2016 as the date when Policy H6 would be formally reviewed based on the conclusions of the 2014 Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons' Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
3. The 2014 GTAA provides recent evidence on future accommodation needs for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpersons within Maldon District. It has been prepared in accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy for Travellers. However, CCC considers there may be a need to re-examine it in the light of recent proposed changes to Government policy as outlined in Consultation: Planning and Travellers, DCLG (September 2014).
4. The GTAA was also completed in July 2014 after the submission of the LDP. CCC considers that it would unrealistic for MDC to respond to this document including potential consultation on additional sites within this Examination timetable.
5. In view of the above, the City Council agrees with MDC that it would be appropriate for the future accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers to be addressed as part of a formal/focused review of Policy H6 in 2016. CCC would not wish the LDP to be delayed on this single issue. Policy H6, national policy and any other relevant material considerations would allow for non-allocated sites to come forward through the planning application process and meet needs arising in the intervening period. Paragraph 25 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites could also enable the Council to consider the use of temporary planning permission, where appropriate, if there is a need to continue with the supply until a full or focused review is adopted.
6. In the City Council's view, the proposed modifications do not undermine the commitment of MDC to provide accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community through the plan making process. CCC would therefore now support the LDP with respect to the proposed modifications (Refs: 058 and 059 in SD04b) to Policy H6. CCC also does not consider it necessary to attend the Hearing Session on this matter.