THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Local Plan Sub-Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday, 11 March 2025 from 7.00 - 9.05 pm

Present: Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Chair), Louise Price, Christopher Alley, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Philip Hearn, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes and Andrew Scarth

Also in Attendance: Councillor Jon Tankard

Officers in Attendance:

Michael Davey, Planning Officer (Policy)
Marko Kalik, Head of Planning Policy and Conservation
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Aaron Roberts, Senior Planning Officer

LPSC55/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

LPSC56/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

LPSC57/25 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

LPSC58/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

LPSC59/25 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

The Local Plan Sub-Committee received a report which provided an overview of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) which had been prepared to assist with the formulation of the emerging Local Plan.

The Senior Planning Officer summarised that the GTAA identified the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the district.

In terms of Gypsy and Traveller need, the GTAA showed a need for 41 pitches arising from households which met the planning definition. This would be met directly from site allocations, either by allocating new sites or expanding existing sites. Additionally, there was a need for 5 pitches arising from households from undetermined need, which would be met by criteria-

based policies. A need for 3 pitches from households which did not meet the planning definition would be met as part of general housing need through separate Local Plan policies.

In terms of Travelling Showpeople need, the GTAA showed a need for 6 plots arising from households which met the planning definition. These would be met directly from site allocations, either by allocating new sites or expanding existing sites. There was also a need for 10 plots arising from households with undetermined need, which would be met through criteria-based policies.

The Sub-Committee noted that during the final stages of the drafting of the GTAA in December 2024, the planning definition of a Traveller (as set out in Annex 1 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites document) was expanded to include 'all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan.' The GTAA therefore included a note which set out that, following this amendment, an updated version of the GTAA report would be prepared in due course to reflect this change to the definition. The Senior Planning Officer reported that initial discussions had indicated that the overall assessed need of 49 Gypsy and Traveller pitches would not alter as a result: there would be a need for a further 3 pitches arising from households which previously did not meet the planning definition but would now do so. However, this would not result in any additional need, as the 3 pitches from households which did not meet the planning definition would no longer be required.

Members of the Sub-Committee sked questions on the detail of the report, which were responded to by officers. This included the following:

- The process through which sites would be identified would be either by allocating new sites (for example as part of a larger strategic site allocation), or by extending or re-developing existing sites.

- ORS was undertaking as assessment of the additional work which was required to update the report following the change to the definition. It was not envisaged that it would be too onerous, and so no adverse financial or resource implications were expected.

- There was no identified need to allocate a transit site: all of the need which had been identified in the GTAA arose from households within the Three Rivers district.

- Discussions with ORS and GATE Herts had indicated a general preference for expanding existing sites rather than allocating new sites. However, it was acknowledged that this may not always be possible, given the planning constraints.

- ORS had undertaken GTAAs for several neighbouring authorities, and these had been found to be sound at Examination. Officers therefore had confidence in the methodologies which had been used and the analysis provided.

- Figure 5 of the GTAA referred to 5 'Public Transit Sites', whilst paragraph 4.6 stated that no public transit site need was identified. It was noted that this was likely to be an error and that these 5 sites and 37 pitches should instead be reflected in the row below, as Travelling Showpeople yards. Officers undertook to seek a correction.

RESOLVED:

That the Local Plan Sub-Committee notes the contents of the report and, subject to correction to Figure 5 noted above, agrees to publish the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (December 2024) to the emerging Local Plan Evidence Base.

LPSC60/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Sub-Committee that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

LPSC61/25 'CALL FOR SITES' SUBMISSIONS

The Sub-Committee received a confidential presentation summarising the new sites which had been submitted during the call for sites.

The presentation was noted.

CHAIR