

Breckland Local Plan Examination

Response from ORS to the Addition Question from the Inspector

Q) How is the Council seeking to deliver the 43 pitches identified as being required for non-travelling households, as set out in Appendix B of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, November 2016.

Background

Following the initial Examination Session on the Breckland Local Plan relating to provision for Gypsies and Travellers the Inspector has asked the Council to respond to the additional question set out above.

It is not now a requirement for a GTAA to include an assessment of need for households that do not meet the planning definition. However, the Breckland GTAA did include this assessment to provide the Council with information on levels of need that will have to be addressed through separate Local Plan Policies (as echoed by the revised NPPF).

Overall the GTAA identified a need for 43 additional pitches from households that did not meet the planning definition. This was made up of 11 households on unauthorised pitches; 9 concealed or doubled-up households or single adults; 2 households on temporary pitches; 3 teenagers who will need a pitch of their own in the next 5 years; and 18 through new household formation using a rate of 1.70% derived from the household demographics.

The Council have asked ORS to undertake further analysis of the need from households that did not meet the planning definition to determine the following:

- Whether any of the need has now been met through the regularisation of temporary and unauthorised pitches;
- Whether any of the need can now be discounted as a result of households moving away permanently from unauthorised encampments and leaving Breckland;
- Whether any of the residual need can be met through the intensification or expansion of existing sites; and
- What the remaining levels of need are and recommendations on how this could be met.

Response

Due to the way that the GTAA analysis is structured it is possible to break down the need for the 43 additional pitches for households that do not meet the planning definition to an individual pitch level. For each pitch this breakdown includes the following, that when added together give the total need by pitch:

- Whether the pitch has temporary planning permission.
- Whether the pitch is unauthorised.
- Number of concealed or doubled-up households or single adults.
- Number of teenagers in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years.
- A 20-year breakdown of estimated new household formation by 5-year bands.
- Whether there is room on the pitch/site for additional pitches through intensification or expansion.

Following the completion of this breakdown ORS asked the Council to confirm whether any of the temporary and unauthorised pitches now have permanent planning permission; and whether the residents on any of the unauthorised encampments have now left Breckland.

As a result of this the Council were able to confirm the following (the numbers in brackets represent the reduction of need from the 43 that was originally identified in the GTAA):

- 2 temporary pitches now have permanent planning permission and that there is sufficient space on these sites to meet any additional current and future need (**-4 pitches**).
- The residents on 1 tolerated encampment and on 1 unauthorised encampment have now left Breckland (**-10 pitches**).

As a result of this stage of the exercise it has been possible to determine that the initial need of 43 pitches identified in the GTAA can be **reduced to 29 additional pitches**.

The next stage of the exercise was to identify how many of the remaining pitches can be met through the intensification or expansion of existing sites. This identified that there is room on 2 of the private sites to accommodate a further 3 pitches, room on one of the tolerated sites to accommodate a further 3 pitches, thus **reducing the need to 23 additional pitches**.

The outstanding need for 23 pitches arises from 4 sites – 16 from a public site; 2 from a private site; and 3 from an unauthorised site and 2 from another unauthorised site.

Meeting Outstanding Need

The interview with residents on the private site identified that there is no space on the site for any additional pitches. However, the residents do have a 6-acre land holding in a nearby local authority where they are seeking permission for additional pitches to meet their needs (**-2 pitches**).

Regarding the need from the 2 unauthorised site the Council should initially consider whether the sites could be regularised and granted planning permission, or whether they can be considered as being lawful for planning purposes. If either of these are the case it would provide another 5 pitches (**-5 pitches**).

The remaining need for 16 additional pitches arises from households living on the public site at The Splashes and the Council have indicated that it is unlikely that this site can accommodate any additional pitches. However closer analysis of this need shows that there is only a current need for 2 additional pitches and a short-term need for a further 4 pitches/tourers for teenagers. The remaining need is as a result of new household formation towards the latter years of the Local Plan Period.

A joint register is operated across Norfolk and Suffolk for any member of the Gypsy and Traveller Community wishing to access pitches on sites owned and managed by both the Local and County Councils. When joining the Norfolk and Suffolk register, applicants are able to select the sites they wish to be considered for and rank them in priority (households can register an interest in up to 3 sites across Norfolk & Suffolk). This ensures that those households requiring social pitches have access to a number of sites at any one time, giving greater prospects of obtaining a pitch.

Conclusions

As a result of this further analysis it can be seen that the level of need for households that do not meet the planning definition that was identified in the GTAA can be reduced considerably, resulting in a residual need from households on the public site at The Splashes that can be met through the joint waiting list and natural turnover of pitches, and that the Council do not need to identify or allocate any further pitches.

Opinion Research Services

September 2018