

Newport City Council
Local Development Plan

Council Response to Matters Arising
Hearing Session 5: Gypsy and Traveller Sites
10am – Tuesday 8th April 2014



Hearing Session 5 – Council Response to Proposed Removal of H15(i) Land at Celtic Way

- 1.1 The Inspector has considered the allocation of a Gypsy/Traveller transit site at Celtic Way and the Council notes the Inspector's view. The Celtic Way allocation will be removed from the Plan.
- 1.2 As a result of the decision to remove Celtic Way from the Plan, the Council has considered the options it considers are available in order to meet the identified transit accommodation requirement of 7 pitches. These options are, in order of preference:

OPTION A – Regional Approach

- A.1 Since the LDP was submitted, the Welsh Government's stance on Gypsy and Traveller transit site accommodation has moved on. The Welsh Government's Planning Bill Consultation proposes that strategic elements of LDPs, such as Gypsy/Traveller provision and Greenbelts, should be elevated for discussion and conclusion at a regional level Strategic Development Plan. In the light of this new position, the Council's preference is for the Former Ringland Allotments site to be deleted. Therefore, no transit site is identified within the Plan, but a commitment is made to working at a regional level to identify and develop a regionally based transit site serving the M4 corridor and A449, which is where the demand exists.
- A.2 While the Former Ringland Allotments site is considered suitable to meet local transit need, it is not considered suitable to meet the regional need. Delivery and operation of the site would require public finances, including Welsh Government grant. It is considered that identifying and delivering a site on a regional basis in partnership with other South East Wales Authorities would be a more effective use of limited public funds.
- A.3 It is noted that no other South East Wales Authority has identified a new transit site in its adopted or emerging LDP, and that this approach has been accepted by the respective Inspectors and by the Welsh Government.
- A.4 This approach is consistent with other Authorities in South East Wales, most notably Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan. Both are relying on a regional approach to meet their needs for transit site provision. In the Welsh Government's responses to Cardiff's and The Vale of Glamorgan's Deposit LDPs, it is supportive of a regional approach:

Welsh Government response to Cardiff's Deposit LDP

*Whilst it is disappointing that a regional based **transit site** has not been progressed as quickly as it should have the imminent publication of the Consultation paper and Draft Planning Bill may well provide a statutory plan based approach to resolve this matter. **The Welsh Government considers that a more strategic approach to land use planning, as highlighted through the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Report, would resolve transit site matters along the M4 corridor in the medium to long term.***

Welsh Government response to The Vale of Glamorgan's Deposit LDP

*The authority has not made provision for a transit site in the LDP, and suggests that this should be dealt with at a regional level. The GTAA suggests there is a gap in provision of around 10 pitches close to the M4. **The plan should make provision for identified need, where the evidence indicates there is a need. Publication of the Consultation Paper and Draft Planning Bill may provide a statutory plan based approach to resolve this matter. The Welsh Government considers that a more strategic approach to land use planning, as highlighted through the Independent Advisory (IAG) Report, would resolve transit site matters along the M4 corridor in the medium to long term.***

- A.5 Therefore, the Council's preferred option is for the Former Ringland Allotments site to be deleted and the transit site need met via a regional approach. A suitable monitoring target would be required.

OPTION B – Allocate Former Ringland Allotments as a transit site

- B.1 The Council has allocated a Contingency Site (H15(ii)) at the Former Ringland Allotments. This site is capable of delivering 7 pitches. The Council is aware that this site sits adjacent to a strategic housing site (Llanwern Village H1(3)) but considers that the transit site can be appropriately screened so that it does not impact on the housing site. As part of the JHLAS process, the Council held a round table discussion on delivery rates in October 2013. At this point, the contingency site at Ringland Allotments was within the Revised Deposit LDP, but Gallagher's (who were present at the meeting) agreed that 1,100 homes would be delivered within the Plan period. Therefore this gave confidence to the Council that if the proposed transit site came forward, there would be no negative impacts on delivery of the strategic housing site. Other constraints associated with the transit site can be overcome (as discussed in Hearing Session 5).
- B.2 Notwithstanding the above, should the Inspector be minded to agree with Gallagher's submission regarding the reduced delivery rates (Rep No. 1401), the Council contends that this would be dealt with within the Council's 12% flexibility allowance on housing land supply, and would not harm the delivery of the Council's growth strategy. Monitoring targets would ensure this situation is kept under review.
- B.3 Therefore Option B, and the Council's second preference, would be that the Former Ringland Allotments is allocated as the Gypsy/Traveller transit site.

OPTION C – Allocate Former Ringland Allotments plus new housing sites

- C.1 The submission on behalf of Gallagher Estates (Rep No. 1401) has raised concerns with regard to the expected housing delivery rates at Llanwern Village (H1(3)) if the

Former Ringland Allotment site becomes a site for Gypsy/Traveller accommodation. The submission indicates that the presence of a transit site will impact negatively on the demand for housing within their site and consequently delivery rates will fall. Therefore they will be unable to build the full 1,100 dwellings within the Plan Period. On the figures provided, they expect to build 660 dwellings, leaving a shortfall of 440 dwellings.

- C.2 As noted above, the Council considers that the Former Ringland Allotments site could be screened from the housing development. The figures provided in the submission are not based on any evidence and are simply speculation and contradict the figures provided in the recently agreed JHLAS. Nevertheless, should the Inspector be persuaded by Gallagher's submission, and, moreover, not consider that the reduced housing delivery rate falls within the Council's 12% flexibility provision, Option C would be to retain the Former Ringland Allotments site in the LDP for transit purposes, but the Council also adds additional housing sites to the Plan capable of providing an additional 440 dwellings within the Plan period.
- C.3 This is not a preferred option, but is included for completeness.

OPTION D – Allocate a new transit site

- D.1 Option D, and the least preferred option, is that the Council identifies a new transit site capable of accommodating 7 pitches. However, given the extensive site selection work already undertaken, the Welsh Government Land Division's objection to use of its land for such purposes in both Newport and Cardiff, and the agreed unsuitability of land within flood zones C1 or C2 for such a use, this will not be a simple process and will result in further delay and uncertainty. If the Inspector were minded to select this option, this could be achieved via a monitoring target and does not render the whole LDP unsound.
- D.2 This option is undesirable, but is included for completeness.

COUNCIL'S PREFERRED OPTION

- 2.1 The Council considers that Option A should be taken forward. The Former Ringland Allotments site should be deleted from the Plan and a monitoring target inserted relating to the timely identification of a regionally-based transit provision. This reflects the direction of national planning policy and the recent Welsh Government advice to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, as discussed in Session 5, the Former Ringland Allotments site is not required to meet the residential Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need: this can be met at the Hartridge Farm Road site.