


Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council		www.oxford.gov.uk  OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
C/M5/5	Matter 5 – Housing Issue 5 – Provision for Gypsies	

i) Is the approach to gypsy site provision in Policy CS27 the appropriate one, having regard to national and RSS guidance?

The approach taken is in line with Circular 01/2006 (relevant paragraphs 31-32) (CD11/28), which states that the Core Strategy should set out criteria for the location of sites that will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant DPD. These criteria based policies must be fair, reasonable, realistic and effective in delivering sites, and should not rule out, or place undue constraints on the development of sites.

Policy CS27 sets out criteria that could equally be applied to conventional housing, albeit taking into account the particular issues arising from caravans as opposed to bricks and mortar housing. The approach complies with the detailed advice on site location set out in ‘Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – A Good Practice Guide’ (extract appended).

Criterion (b) acknowledges the greater likelihood of such development occurring on edge-of-urban greenfield land, and is in line with PPS2: Green Belts (CD11/19). It also has regard to paragraphs 43 and 44 of Circular 01/2006 (and paragraphs 49-53 of Circular 04/2007 (CD11/29) in relation to travelling showpeople), in recognising the general inappropriateness of green belt development, and the special consideration that needs to be given to ecologically sensitive areas.

Criterion (c) is likely to apply to few locations in Oxford, which, due to its compact form, provides generally good local accessibility to community and social infrastructure. It is nevertheless considered that the policy should acknowledge the particular importance of accessing local services for travelling communities, who are recognised as being at high risk of social exclusion.

ii) Is the Core Strategy right to rely on a criteria-based approach or should it be more specific in terms of the location and suitability of certain sites/development areas?

Paragraph 31 of Circular 01/2006 (CD11/28) makes clear that the core strategy should set out criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant DPD. Paragraph 33 of the circular

advises allocation of gypsy and traveller sites in site allocations DPDs, where there is an identified need for pitches. Recent identified need in Oxford has been found to be nil, as acknowledged in the recent consultation on the partial review of the South East Plan (CD10/10), Annex B). Therefore the identification of sites or areas is not an appropriate level of detail for the Oxford Core Strategy. Depending on the outcome of the South East Plan Partial Review, a site or sites may be identified in the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

iii) Should there be a reference to transit sites?

It has proved extremely difficult to realistically assess need for transit sites due to the complex movement patterns of travelling communities, and the close relationship with permanent residential pitches. The South East England Planning Unit is currently embarking on work to assess the scale, type and broad location of need or demand for additional transit provision (but only down to County level). Given the current lack of any evidence of a need for transit sites in Oxford, it would not be appropriate to include such reference in the Core Strategy.