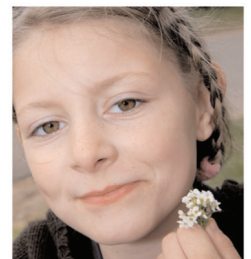




GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

Accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the East of England

The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to
the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy
and Statement of Reasons





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March 2009

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March 2009

Dear John

**EAST OF ENGLAND RSS GYPSY AND TRAVELLER REVIEW:
DECISIONS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXAMINATION
PANEL AND PROPOSED CHANGES**

The Secretary of State has today issued her Proposed Changes to the draft policy on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the East of England, which was prepared by the Regional Assembly as a single issue review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Secretary of State's Decisions on the recommendations of the Examination in Public Panel are also issued today and copies are enclosed.

We have considered the recommendations in the Report of the Panel: the Proposed Changes and Secretary of State's Decisions are the results of that consideration and are published for eight weeks public consultation. The closing date for responses is 22 May 2009. Responses can be made on line at: <http://goe-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>.

Key elements of the proposed changes include:

- Increasing the numbers of additional pitches to be provided in the East of England by 2011 from 1,187 to 1,237 (4.2%) and treating them as minima;
- Including provision for transit sites, 160 pitches by 2011;
- Including provision for Travelling Showpeople, 184 pitches by 2011;
- Lower pitch requirements for Basildon and Epping Forest, recognising the particular delivery challenges in those districts.

The policy is strongly rooted in the draft policy produced by the Regional Assembly. I would like to thank the members and officials of the Regional

Assembly for their commitment through the various stages of the Gypsy and Traveller review process.

Copies of the proposed changes and Decisions are being sent to the local authorities, MPs and MEPs in the East of England. The documents will also be made available for public inspection in libraries across the region and can be downloaded from the Government Office website (www.goeast.gov.uk).

The responses to the consultation will be carefully considered before the finalised review is published later this year. The crucial task will then be to ensure it is implemented quickly and effectively. I understand the Regional Assembly is developing a delivery plan showing how the policy can be effectively implemented. It would be helpful if this was available quickly. We look forward to working with you, the local authorities, the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, the Homes and Communities Agency and other partners on its delivery.



SADIQ KHAN

INTRODUCTION AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This document forms the latest stage in a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England. It addresses the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in accordance with the requirements of ODPM Circular 01/2006, Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and CLG Circular 04/2007, Planning for Travelling Showpeople. It is part of the longer term planning process for homes within the East of England, and of the Government's commitment to provide sufficient authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers to stop the cycle of evictions from unauthorised sites that is costly to the taxpayer and impacts on the quality of life for the travelling community and wider public.

So Far

The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) agreed in February 2006 to prepare a review of RSS on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. EERA worked with the region's local authorities to identify the additional pitches required. In partnership with the Department of Communities and Local Government it commissioned research¹ to review the local authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments and develop a methodology for translating those assessments into pitch requirements.

The results of the research together with advice from local authorities informed an Issues and Options report which EERA published for consultation in mid-2007. In the light of the responses to that consultation and further advice from the local authorities, EERA approved the draft policy "Regional Spatial Strategy Single Issue Review: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England" which was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2008 and published for 12 weeks public consultation.

The Secretary of State appointed an independent panel who held an Examination in Public to test the soundness of the draft policy in Letchworth from 21-24 October 2008. The Panel submitted their Report to the Secretary of State in December 2008.

This Consultation

Legislation requires that the Secretary of State publish and consult on any proposed changes to the draft RSS revision and the reasons. Accompanying regulations refer to the need for a 'statement of reasons'.

¹ Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies, CLG, March 2007

This document splits the 'statement of reasons' into 2 Parts:

- Part 1: A schedule of the Secretary of State's decisions on each of the Panel's recommendations and the reasons for them. In many cases the Secretary of State's reasons draw on the Panel's reasoning and people should refer to the Panel Report.
- Part 2: The modified text of the draft policy incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes. The resulting text is strongly rooted in the draft policy developed by EERA and the subsequent text recommended by the Panel (Appendix A to their report).

The process of developing this review of RSS has been informed by Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, and by assessment under the Habitats Regulations, which give effect to the European Habitats Directive. Copies of the assessments of these Proposed Changes can be read and downloaded from the GO-East website, www.goeast.gov.uk.

How to respond

- If you wish to respond to the Proposed Changes it would be helpful if you could submit your comments online at:
<http://goe-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>.
It is easy to register on the online portal and by doing so you can see comments others have made.
- Alternatively, please send any written response to:
Regional Planning Team
GO-East
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8DF
Email: gtproposedchanges@goeast.gsi.gov.uk
- Or, if you want to speak to us, please phone the GO-East Regional Planning Team who will be pleased to respond to any queries on 01223 372772.

The consultation on the Proposed Changes runs for 8 weeks from 27 March to 22 May 2009.

All comments must be received by 5pm on Friday 22 May 2009.

Next Steps

The Secretary of State will carefully consider all the responses to this consultation before publishing the finalised RSS Review later in 2009.

Part 1

The Secretary of State's Decisions on the Recommendations by the Panel who conducted the Examination in Public

Panel Recommendation		Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
1 Introduction			
1.1	Expand the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in the policy footnote to make clear that it applies whatever the race or origin of such a person.	Agree that definition should reflect that in Circular 01/2006 and include through a cross-reference to the Circular.	For the reasons at paragraph 1.8 of the Panel Report and for conciseness.
2 Scale of Residential Pitch Provision			
2.1	The next round of GTAAAs should give more emphasis to investigating the preferences of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar to return to living on caravan sites, and include a fuller investigation of the needs of New Travellers.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 2.17 -2.24 of the Panel Report.
2.2	Express the annual increase beyond 2011 as "3% compound" in Policy H4.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 2.42-2.44 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
2.3 Delete the option in Policy H4 for amending the post 2011 provision for any district on the basis of up to date GTAA evidence, and replace it with a requirement that any revision to provision post 2011 should be made following the co-ordinated preparation of GTAAs and a formal regional level review.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 2.49 – 2.50 of the Panel Report.
3 Distribution of Residential Pitch Provision		
3.1 An explanation of why the submission Sustainability Appraisal assessment differed from that at the Issues and Options stage on the wider distribution strategy and on two objectives, should be included in any further Sustainability Appraisal at the Proposed Changes stage or when the policy is adopted.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 3.3 – 3.6 of the Panel Report.
3.2 Revise Policy H4 to express more clearly how district provision post 2011 is to be calculated, retaining the principle that this should carry forward the 2006-2011 distribution.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 3.62 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4 Sub-Regional Provision		
Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea		
4.1 Reduce the pitch requirement for Basildon by 10 to 71.	Do not accept: reduce the pitch requirement by 19 to 62.	Balancing the desirability of providing accommodation close to where Gypsies and Travellers are currently living with the constraints to delivery in Basildon identified by the Panel at paragraph 4.18 of the Panel Report.
4.2 Reduce the pitch requirement for Epping Forest by 10 to 39.	Do not accept: reduce the pitch requirement by 15 to 34.	For the reasons at paragraph 4.21 of the Panel Report.
4.3 Increase the pitch requirement for Braintree by 5 to 21.	Do not accept: increase the pitch requirement by 9 to 25.	Reflecting the constraints to delivery in Basildon at paragraph 4.18 of the Panel Report, the suitability of Braintree to accommodate higher provision at paragraphs 4.31 – 4.32 of the Panel Report, and the proximity of Basildon and Braintree, relative to other districts suitable for accommodating higher provision.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4.4 Increase the pitch requirement for Colchester by 5 to 20.	Do not accept: increase the pitch requirement by 10 to 25.	Reflecting the constraints to delivery in Basildon at paragraph 4.18 of the Panel Report, the suitability of Colchester to accommodate higher provision at paragraphs 4.31 – 4.32 of the Panel Report, and the proximity of Basildon and Colchester, relative to other districts suitable for accommodating higher provision.
4.5 Increase the pitch requirement for Uttlesford by 10 to 25.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.31 – 4.32 of the Panel Report.
Hertfordshire		
4.6 Increase the regional pitch provision by 10 to allow for higher local needs than expressed through the formula approach.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.62 of the Panel Report.
4.7 Decrease the requirement for Watford by 10 to 5 pitches.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.52 of the Panel Report.
4.8 Increase the requirement for Dacorum by 5 to 20 pitches, and reduce that for St Albans by 5 to 28 pitches.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.53 – 4.54 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4.9 Decrease the pitch requirement for Stevenage by 5 to 10, and increase the requirement for East Hertfordshire by 5 to 20 pitches.	Accept in regard to Stevenage. Do not accept in regard to East Hertfordshire: increase the pitch requirement by 10 to 25.	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.56 of the Panel Report. Reflecting the constraints to delivery in Epping Forest at paragraph 4.21 of the Panel Report, the suitability of East Hertfordshire to accommodate higher provision at paragraphs 4.58 – 4.59 of the Panel Report, and the proximity of Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire, relative to other districts suitable for accommodating higher provision.
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough		
4.10 Increase the pitch requirement for South Cambridgeshire by 10 to 69.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.72-4.75 of the Panel Report.
4.11 Increase the pitch requirement for Huntingdonshire by 5 to 25.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.77 of the Panel Report.
4.12 Increase the pitch requirement for Peterborough by 15 to 30.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.78 of the Panel Report.
Norfolk		

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4.13 Increase the regional pitch provision by 9 to allow for higher local needs for New Travellers than expressed through the formula approach for Broadland.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.84 of the Panel Report.
Suffolk		
4.14 Increase the regional pitch provision by 13 for an overestimate of pitch turnover in Ipswich and by 8 to allow for higher local needs for New Travellers than reflected in the GTAA estimates.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.107 – 4.108 of the Panel Report.
4.15 Increase the pitch requirement for St Edmundsbury by 5 to 20.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.121 of the Panel Report.
Bedfordshire		
4.16 Increase the regional pitch requirement by 10 pitches.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.126 – 4.128 of the Panel Report.
4.17 Increase the pitch requirement for Bedford by 10 to 25.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.130 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4.18 Increase the pitch requirement for Mid Bedfordshire by 5 to 30.	Accept In addition combine the requirements for Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire.	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.132 – 4.133 of the Panel Report. To reflect the creation of the unitary Central Bedfordshire authority from April 2009.
4.19 Increase the pitch requirement for South Bedfordshire by 5 to 50.	Accept In addition combine the requirements for Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire	For the reasons at paragraph 4.132 of the Panel Report. To reflect the creation of the unitary Central Bedfordshire authority from April 2009.
Region-wide		
4.20 Substitute the total of our [the Panel's] recommended adjustments, i.e. making provision for at least 1,237 not 1,187 new additional residential pitches, in the opening part of Policy H4 and in paragraph 5.18.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 4.137 – 4.142 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
4.21 Insert the word 'Minimum' before Additional pitches required 2006-2011 in the District table in Policy H4.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 4.143 of the Panel Report.
5 Transit Provision		
5.1 Add to Policy H4 a requirement to establish a network of transit provision across the region. The number of sites in each county area would be defined in an accompanying table, with the location and size of sites developed following local studies.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 5.1 – 5.40 of the Panel Report.
5.2 Delete paragraph 5.20 since this general guidance on transit needs and Travelling Showpeople would no longer be needed.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 5.41 of the Panel Report.
6 Travelling Showpeople		

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
6.1 Add a new policy on the accommodation requirements of Travelling Showpeople to require county groupings of local authorities to work with their local communities and The Showmen's Guild of GB to identify land sufficient for the interim estimate of plot requirements given in the table.	Accept In addition include reference to wider distribution within Essex under the further locational guidance column of the policy.	For the reasons at paragraphs 6.1 – 6.40. To take account of the Panel's guidance in the third bullet on page 94 of the Panel Report.
6.2 The next round of GTAAs should include a more consistent coverage of the needs of Travelling Showpeople.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 6.41 of the Panel Report.
7 Guidance for Local Development Frameworks		
7.1 Add additional wording to the start of Policy H4 to emphasise that provision should be made through LDDs.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 7.3 and 7.5 of the Panel Report.
7.2 Revise paragraph 5.17 to express an obligation upon local planning authorities to identify sufficient sites in LDDs.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 7.5 of the Panel Report.
7.3 Delete from the final paragraph of the policy the phrase "through criteria based policies".	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 7.10 of the Panel Report.

Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision
7.4 Refer to avoiding adverse "effects" rather than "impact" in paragraph 5.17.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraph 7.20 of the Panel Report.
7.5 Update the footnote in paragraph 5.17 to give the latest reference documents.	Accept in regard to design guidance and in addition delete reference to guidance on local authority responsibilities.	For the reasons at paragraph 7.23 of the Panel Report.
7.6 Add an additional element of locational guidance to paragraph 5.17 that Gypsy and Traveller provision where possible should be made as part of mainstream residential development, contributing to any local requirement for affordable housing provision.	Accept	For the reasons at paragraphs 7.34 – 7.38 of the Panel Report.
7.7 Add an additional element to paragraph 5.17 to strengthen the use of Policy H4 in development control negotiations by clarifying the definition of major development opportunities.	Accept: include within paragraph 5.16 of the Proposed Changes (the equivalent of paragraph 5.17 in the Draft Policy)	For the reasons at paragraphs 7.27- 7.33 and 7.40 of the Panel Report. The reference is appropriate to paragraph 5.16 given its emphasis on delivery.

8 Delivery and Monitoring			
Panel Recommendation	Secretary of State's Decision	Reasons for Decision	
8.1 Revise the text in paragraph 5.18 to give a stronger confirmation of the role of the Delivery Plan and the involvement of the Homes and Communities Agency and other partners.	Accept In addition include reference to the delivery guidance covering provision for Travelling Showpeople.	For the reasons at paragraphs 8.2 – 8.21 of the Panel Report. To take account of the Panel's guidance in the fifth bullet on page 94 of the Panel Report	
8.2 State in the supporting text to Policy H4 that it will be reviewed in 2011.	Accept and in addition indicate that the review may alternatively be as soon as possible after 2011	For the reasons at paragraphs 8.26 – 8.27 of the Panel Report.	
8.3 Annual monitoring should distinguish pitches with temporary and permanent permission, and include unauthorised developments and encampments.	Accept In addition include reference to monitoring provision for Travelling Showpeople.	For the reasons at paragraphs 8.23 – 8.25 of the Panel Report. To take account of the Panel's guidance in the fifth bullet on page 94 of the Panel Report.	
8.4 EERA should issue guidance on definitions and record keeping for all information to be collected as part of annual monitoring and the Caravan Count.	Do not accept	The Department of Communities and Local Government already provides such guidance on a national basis and there is a risk of inconsistency if regions set out their own guidance.	

Part 2

Modified text of the Draft Policy incorporating the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes

Policy H3 – Provision for Gypsy and Travellers²

Local authorities should make provision through Development Plan Documents for at least 1,237 net additional residential pitches for Gypsy and Traveller Caravans by 2011 distributed as follows:

District	<i>Authorised Pitches in 2006</i>	Minimum Additional Pitches 2006-2011	<i>Minimum Pitches 2011</i>
Bedford	20	25	45
Central Bedfordshire	118	80	198
Luton	20	15	35
Cambridge	0	15	15
East Cambridgeshire	59	35	94
Fenland	183	89	272
Huntingdonshire	20	25	45
South Cambridgeshire	203	69	272
Peterborough	95	30	125
Basildon	112	62	174
Braintree	25	25	50
Brentwood	10	15	25
Castle Point	0	15	15
Chelmsford	35	46	81
Colchester	5	25	30
Epping Forest	94	34	128
Harlow	34	15	49
Maldon	39	15	54
Rochford	3	15	18
Tendring	2	15	17
Uttlesford	37	25	62
Southend	0	15	15
Thurrock	80	44	124
Broxbourne	22	18	40
Dacorum	36	20	56
East Hertfordshire	7	25	32
Hertsmere	35	18	53

² Gypsies and Travellers as defined in ODPM Circular 01/2006, Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites, paragraph 15.

North Hertfordshire	6	15	21
St Albans	52	28	80
Stevenage	14	10	24
Three Rivers	11	15	26
Watford	10	10	20
Welwyn Hatfield	51	17	68
Breckland	32	15	47
Broadland	2	15	17
Great Yarmouth	4	15	19
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	93	53	146
North Norfolk	1	15	16
Norwich	18	15	33
South Norfolk	25	28	53
Babergh	0	15	15
Forest Heath	35	18	53
Ipswich	43	15	58
Mid Suffolk	69	42	111
St Edmundsbury	2	20	22
Suffolk Coastal	0	31	31
Waveney	20	15	35
East of England	1,782	1,237	3,019

Local authorities should achieve the levels of provision required by 2011 as soon as possible through development control decisions and Local Development Documents. The preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents is encouraged and where they are produced, provision can be redistributed across the areas concerned. Opportunities should be taken to secure provision through major developments.

Beyond 2011 provision should be made for an annual 3% compound increase in residential pitch provision, equivalent to 1,038 additional pitches between 2011 and 2021. Where Local Development Documents look beyond 2011 provision should be made for the same proportion of the regional requirement as in Policy H3 for 2006-11.

Local Development Documents should consider the need for rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, to meet the required provision.

Local authorities should work together to establish a network of transit pitches. Provision should be made through Development Plan Documents for an additional 160 transit pitches by 2011, distributed as in the table below. The location and size of sites should be defined following local studies.

County groupings	Existing Provision (pitches)	Additional Pitches 2006-11	Locational Guidance
Bedfordshire & Luton	Nil	10	Central location capable of meeting a range of needs; could be two smaller sites.
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Nil	40	Cambridge area, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough.
Essex, Southend-on-Sea, & Thurrock	Nil	30	Distributed network of 3-4 sites aligned with transport routes and urban centres.
Hertfordshire	15	20	Two sites, one in South West Hertfordshire, complementing the existing South Mimms site, the other in North East Hertfordshire.
Norfolk	18	40	Across Norfolk, including Norwich fringe.
Suffolk	Nil	20	Two sites, one in the Ipswich/Felixstowe area.

5.11 There is an urgent need to address the shortage of permanent and transit accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, which creates problems for Gypsy and Traveller communities in terms of access to health, education, employment and other opportunities and can create tensions over the use of pitches without planning permission. This is a national issue, but particularly pressing in the East of England.

5.12 The level of provision in Policy H3 reflects the needs of those currently resident on sites without planning permission, natural growth and movements between pitches and other forms of accommodation. The provision of permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches contributes towards meeting local housing targets and pitches provided by Local Authorities or Registered Social Landlords to affordable housing targets.

5.13 Accommodation is concentrated in certain parts of the region. Policy H3 balances providing most additional pitches in those parts of the region where most Gypsies and Travellers currently live with broadening the choice available to families by providing some pitches in all parts of the region which will assist delivery by ensuring all areas contribute to provision.

5.14 Delivery of the required pitches by 2011 will provide for the existing backlog. The 3% compound increase in provision will ensure that accommodation will be available to meet continuing needs after 2011.

5.15 Local Development Documents should identify the location and capacity of sites to deliver the pitch requirements in Policy H3 in locations likely to be attractive to the local Gypsy and Traveller communities while avoiding areas at risk of flooding and adverse effects on areas of wildlife and landscape importance. Guidance on site location is provided in ODPM Circular 01/2006 and on site layout and design in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites, CLG May 2008. Policies should recognise the diversity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, for instance, provision of sites for New Travellers may require different forms of site development.

Policy H4 – Provision for Travelling Showpeople¹

Local authorities should make provision through Development Plan Documents for 184 net additional plots for Travelling Showpeople by 2011, distributed as in the table below. Where Local Development Documents look beyond 2011 they should provide for an annual 1.5% compound increase in plots.

County groupings	Existing Provision (families)	Additional Plots 2006-11	Locational Guidance
Bedfordshire & Luton	27	13	Bedford and elsewhere
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	54	18	East Cambridgeshire and elsewhere
Essex, Southend-on-Sea, & Thurrock	166	103	Needs in Thurrock and also Chelmsford, Basildon and elsewhere. Locations should take account of the wider distribution philosophy in paragraph 5.13.
Hertfordshire	60	20	Needs in Broxbourne and also in East Hertfordshire
Norfolk	75	21	Norwich and elsewhere
Suffolk	20	9	Suffolk Coastal and elsewhere

¹ Travelling Showpeople as defined in CLG Circular 04/2007, Planning for Travelling Showpeople, paragraph 15.

Local authorities should work in County groupings with local Travelling Showpeople and the Showmen's Guild to identify the sites required to meet the above needs for inclusion in Local Development Documents. The preparation of joint or co-ordinated documents is encouraged.

Local Development Documents should consider the need for rural exception sites and the alteration of Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, to meet the required provision.

5.16 The interim targets in Policy H4 will ensure that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople in the East of England can be met, as required by CLG Circular 04/2007. The 1.5% compound increase in provision will ensure that accommodation will be available to meet continuing needs after 2011.

5.17 Local Development Documents should identify the location and capacity of sites sufficient to deliver the plot requirements in Policy H4 in locations likely to be attractive to Travelling Showpeople while avoiding areas at risk of flooding and adverse effects on areas of wildlife and landscape importance. Guidance on site location is provided in CLG Circular 04/2007.

Delivery, Monitoring and Review

5.18 Delivering 1,237 additional residential pitches, 160 transit pitches and 184 plots for Travelling Showpeople by 2011 poses challenges. The Regional Assembly, local authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency, Gypsy and Traveller communities, the Showmans Guild and others should work together to ensure delivery. The Regional Assembly are developing a Delivery Plan, which will identify the range of delivery mechanisms and the role of the different agencies in securing delivery. Policy H3 stresses the importance of using opportunities presented by major developments to secure delivery. In this context major developments will vary relative to the range of developments in each district: the objective is to ensure there are opportunities to help secure the required provision in each area.

5.19 The Regional Assembly, working with partners, should monitor net changes in numbers of permanent and transit pitches, pitches with temporary permission and unauthorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, together with net changes in plots for Travelling Showpeople, for inclusion in its annual monitoring reports.

5.20 The Regional Assembly (or its successors, the Regional Development Agency and Local Authority Leaders Board) working with the local authorities should ensure a coordinated review of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments across the region and of Policies H3 and H4 in, or as soon as possible after, 2011. The GTAA's should be carried out on a consistent basis and consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar housing, Travelling Showpeople, and New Travellers.

Appendix: Existing RSS Policy proposed for deletion

The following policy and supporting text is proposed for deletion as part of the revision.

Policy H3: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

Local authorities should make provision for sites/pitches to meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers living within or resorting to their area. EERA will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to bring forward an early review to this RSS setting out the strategic framework for such provision, and identifying the requirement in terms of pitch numbers at a district level. Until that review is in place provision in LDDs and decisions on planning applications should be based on the latest available information on need within the region and local area in the context of the urgent need for improved provision across the region.

5.11 There is an urgent need to address the shortage of sites for gypsies and travellers and the problems that flow from it in terms of gypsy and traveller families not being able to gain access to the housing, educational, health, employment and other opportunities enjoyed by other members of society, as well as the conflicts at local level over unauthorised encampment and use of sites without planning permission. This is a national issue, but is at its most intense in the East of England, which has the largest number of caravans and by implication Gypsy and Traveller population - of any region as well as the highest level of caravans on unauthorised sites. Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and the Fens, and the southern half of Essex are particularly important areas for the Gypsy and Traveller population, but increased site provision is required across the East of England.

5.12 Reflecting the guidance in ODPM Circular 1/2006, EERA submitted a single issue revision to this RSS in February 2008, which sets out the strategic framework to meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the additional pitch numbers required at district level. There will be an Examination in Public in October 2008 with the revision issued in spring or summer 2009. In preparation for the review, the information on need at the local and regional level is improving, including through the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments carried out across the region. Pending its completion, site allocations and policies on provision in Local Development Documents and decisions on planning applications should be based on the latest available local and regional information, including the emerging RSS review policy, in the context of the urgent need for improved provision.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
CLG	Communities and Local Government
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
EIP	Examination in Public
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
GO-East	Government Office for the East of England
LDD	Local Development Document
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPS11	Planning Policy Statement 11
RPP	Regional Planning Panel
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal

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