

**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

**EMERGING CORE STRATEGY  
AND  
EAST HEMEL HEMPSTEAD AREA ACTION PLAN:  
ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CONSULTATION**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Dacorum Borough Council is in the process of converting existing development policies into the new local development framework (LDF) format. The Core Strategy will establish the overall pattern of development within the Borough over the next 20+ years and it will set out core policies that will help achieve the vision and overall strategy for Dacorum. One of these policies will set out the overall approach for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.
- As part of the LDF the Council are also producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for East Hemel Hempstead. The Issues and Options paper is the first stage in the production of the AAP and aims to identify the key spatial planning issues relevant to the plan, and to consult on alternative options for the future development of East Hemel Hempstead.
- The Council has recently consulted on the Emerging Core Strategy (June 2009) and East Hemel Hempstead AAP: Issues and Options paper (June 2009) during June /August, and this report forms part of that process.
- Following the previous consultation work undertaken with the Gypsy and Traveller community during November/December 2008, Vision Twentyone have been re-commissioned to undertake a number of face-to-face interviews with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community. This was so as to gain an understanding of their views on the overall approach to accommodating new pitches on sites, and the options for the Gypsy and Traveller site at Three Cherry Trees Lane, its relationship to Spencer's Park and its possible future uses.
- Vision Twentyone interviewed 21 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community over the course of two days. This included both those currently living on and off sites. One interview was carried out over the telephone.
- The majority of the criteria contained in the draft policy 'Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers' received overwhelming support. Interviewees supported the Council delivering new pitches in a co-ordinated way, located, designed and managed in a way that promotes the principles of equity and integration.
- Interviewees agreed that government funding should be sought to support the provision of new sites and that collaborating with other agencies could assist the assimilation of residents with the settled community nearby.
- There was a concern from some interviewees that to achieve equity and integration between the communities new sites and the settled community should maintain a reasonable gap. This view was born out in feelings towards providing new pitches through or part of major housing sites, with over half of respondents disagreeing with the statement.

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- When discussing the planning of new pitches all the interviewees agreed that new sites should be dispersed around settlements in the Borough, close to local services and facilities, incorporating landscaping or physical features to provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas.
- Re-affirming the outcomes of the December 2008 consultation, criteria related to pitch size and design resulted in a mix of opinion from interviewees. Those living on larger sites felt that a site of around fifteen pitches would be a reasonable size. Conversely, those living on smaller sites or who had previously lived on smaller sites felt that sites should ideally accommodate between six to ten pitches.
- Two-thirds of interviewees agreed that allowing room for sites to grow to full capacity at a later date was a positive move, providing that this could be managed. Interviewees not in support of future pitch provision in this way raised a number of concerns about how this process would be managed.
- There was a degree of support from just over half of the respondents for sites to be designed so that they are open to the road with a public frontage, with private space being provided to the side and rear. However, other interviewees were split between being unsure of the proposal and disagreeing, noting a preference for more traditional site design and raising concerns over road safety and loss of privacy.
- Interviewees were in the main in agreement with the key considerations for new transit pitches identified in the draft policy. Those that disagreed or were unsure noted that they would, by their nature, always cause a degree of disturbance and raised concerns over them being located so close to main transport routes.
- A large number of respondents were unsure or did not feel that the Three Cherry Trees Lane site should remain in its current form. The site has a number of problems and a poor reputation which are compounded by its large size. Those that did want it to remain predominantly did so because of a desire to reside with family members and live in the Hemel area.
- There is support for making the site at Three Cherry Trees Lane smaller. As it was thought that a site half the size would be easier to manage.
- There is also support to relocate the entire Three Cherry Trees Lane site in smaller component parts across Dacorum. This would remove the perceived stigma and reputation that the existing site and its residents have, and result in a number of smaller sites that would be easier to manage.
- It was felt that all the possible options for the Three Cherry Trees Lane site would require further investigation and more information.

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- Although a number of suggestions were made for landscaping and buffering, it was felt that the potential problems from having a Gypsy and Traveller site in such close proximity to a housing development could not be overcome to a satisfactory level. Furthermore, the land adjacent to Spencer's Park should remain as employment land if Three Cherry Trees Lane site is to remain in its current location and form.
- The Council should continue to consult with the Gypsy and Traveller Community throughout the Local Development Framework process on the documents that directly relate to the provision of pitches and site design.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 The Local Development Framework**

Following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Dacorum Borough Council, like all other local authorities, is in the process of converting existing development policies into the new Local Development Framework format.

The Core Strategy is the central document in this Local Development Framework. Its role is to establish the overall pattern of development within the Borough over the next 20+ years and it will set out core policies that will help achieve the vision and overall strategy for Dacorum. One of these policies will set out the overall approach for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. The Council will then need to consider how it will allocate land to meet the need for the provision of more Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough.

To date Dacorum has consulted residents on the Issues and Options (May 2006) part of the production of its Core Strategy and the Core Strategies Supplementary Issues and Options Paper – Growth at Hemel Hempstead (November 2006, produced jointly with St Albans City and District Council). It has now produced an Emerging Core Strategy (June 2009) which outlines the structure of the document and contains information on the main policy themes.

As part of the Local Development Framework, Dacorum Borough Council are also producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for East Hemel Hempstead. The role of the Area Action Plan is to promote economic development and business opportunities in the Maylands business estate and the immediate area. Taking its lead from the Core Strategy of Dacorum, the AAP will drive forward the strategic direction for East Hemel Hempstead. The Issues and Options paper is the first stage in the production of the AAP and aims to identify the key spatial planning issues relevant to the plan, and to consult on alternative options for the future development of East Hemel Hempstead. The possibility of residential development in the north western fringes of Maylands gives the Council the opportunity to think about the options for the Gypsy and Traveller site at Three Cherry Trees Lane, its relationship to Spencer's Park and its possible future use.

### **2.2 Purpose of the consultation**

Vision Twentyone were appointed in 2008 to undertake consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community on the Site Allocation DPD: Supplementary Issues and Options Paper (November 2008). The consultation focused around a number of key themes including location, possible sites, size, management and site suitability.

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The outcomes of the consultation have informed the overall approach to the provision of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community, helping to make sure that new sites fit in with existing communities, as set out in the Emerging Core Strategy (June 2009).

Following the consultation work undertaken with the Gypsy and Traveller community in Dacorum during November/December 2008, Vision Twentyone have been re-commissioned as part of the consultation on the Emerging Core Strategy (June 2009) and East Hemel Hempstead AAP: Issues and Options (June 2009) to advise on, and implement an effective consultation strategy to:

- consult with the local Gypsy and Traveller community within Dacorum undertaking a number of face-to-face interviews
- design and facilitate the interviews to ensure that they aid understanding, use appropriate techniques and record key findings
- prepare this report for Dacorum Borough Council, which records the views of the local Gypsy and Traveller community on the Emerging Core Strategy: Draft Policy for Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

In addition, this report documents responses to a series of questions concerning options for the future of the Three Cherry Trees Lane site in Hemel Hempstead and the Maylands business area, as set out in the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options (a list of the questions discussed during the face-to-face interviews is provided at Appendix One).

The report will form part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework.

The consultation supplements and complements the work undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council to consult key stakeholders, the settled community and statutory consultees on the Emerging Core Strategy (June 2009) and the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan (June 2009).

### **2.3 Methodology**

Vision Twentyone organised face-to-face discussion with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community through a series of interviews. A discussion guide was produced in conjunction with Dacorum Borough Council to explore the views of the Gypsy and Traveller community (see Appendix One). The discussion guide was designed to focus the interviews around the content of the draft policy. The policy sets out the Councils overall approach to the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and planning new pitches, in addition to future of the Three Cherry Trees site and surrounding area in Hemel Hempstead.

To aid discussion about the Three Cherry Trees Lane site and the Maylands area, interviewees were also able to view an aerial map highlighting the area under discussion (see Appendix Two).

Liaising with the Gypsy Section of Hertfordshire County Council, most of the interviewees were sourced from the two existing Gypsy and Traveller sites within Dacorum (Long Marston and Three Cherry Trees Lane in Hemel Hempstead). A telephone interview was also carried out with a member of the community who had a history of residing within the Borough, but was currently living out of the area.

Twenty-one members of the Gypsy and Traveller Community were interviewed in total over the course of two days. The face-to-face interviews were carried out on an individual basis, or in small groups of two or three to ensure that the discussions were conducted in a format that respondents were most comfortable with. Where interviewees were in agreement, discussions were recorded, otherwise notes were taken during the interview. All participants were assured of confidentiality.

## **2.4 Appreciation**

Vision Twentyone would like to extend thanks to the Gypsy Section of Hertfordshire County Council and to all those who kindly took part in the interviews.

This report is based on research and analysis undertaken by the study team. The comments thereafter do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Borough Council.



## 3.0 CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### 3.1 Emerging Core Strategy

This section reviews the key findings of the consultation on the draft policy 'Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers' set out in the Emerging Core Strategy. It will examine views on the various criteria contained in the policy. Interviewees considered each criteria in turn and were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the criteria.

#### 3.1.1 Overall Approach

- (a) "The Council intends to deliver the number of pitches needed in the borough in a co-ordinated way, which allows for natural growth."

The intention to deliver the new pitches in the borough in a co-ordinated way received overwhelming support from interviewees with all twenty-one participants agreeing that this is the correct approach to take. One respondent noted that delivering places to live in a co-ordinated way is the same approach that is taken to the provision of housing.

- (b) "The Council intends to locate, design and secure the management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites in accordance with the following key principles:
- (i) equity – i.e. fairness to both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community;
  - (ii) integration of the two communities – i.e. acceptance, social cohesion and a wider, shared sense of place and community;
  - (iii) sustainability – i.e. proximity to services, social inclusion, protection and heritage and important environmental features and conservation of natural resources."

The principles above (b i-iii) were supported by all the interviewees (21 interviewees). It was noted in the previous consultation undertaken by Vision Twentyone (December 2008) that there was a lack of understanding between the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities, so these principles may help to increase this. The lack of communication between the two communities was again highlighted as an issue with interviewees noting that they felt 'people don't mix', as was the potential issues with different people residing on sites.

One respondent felt that the Council should also consider fairness to all Gypsies when allocated places on sites, citing the differences between different sections of the Gypsy and Traveller community. The provision of a specific site for the elderly (similar to sheltered housing for the settled community) was suggested.

Although the principles of equity and integration were supported, there was also a concern from a small number of interviewees that to achieve this, new

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sites and the settled community should maintain a reasonable gap. As in the December 2008 consultation, Long Marston was noted as an example of the appropriate distance between a settled community and a site for the Gypsy and Traveller community, and an example of how a site can work well. If sites were provided too close to existing communities, it was felt that this could potentially reduce integration and understanding between communities.

*“People don’t mix because of a lack of understanding between people.”*

*“The sites should be about half a mile away from the houses as we have our own culture and our own way of life.”*

*“The sites shouldn’t be too close to housing, needs a buffer.”*

*“We get on very well with the village near here, they involve us with any fetes or anything going on.”*

A key question was raised by one of the participants, related to the deliverability of integration and equity. Whilst they agreed with the statement to locate, design and secure the management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites in this way, they wanted to know how this would be achieved. It was felt that to enable an informed response, more detail about how these principles would be achieved is needed.

*“How would they improve understanding and make this work?”*

All respondents were keen to see the provision of sites close to services, reducing the time and distance to travel. Again some respondents noted that whilst it is preferable to be located close to services, a gap or buffer should be maintained between a Gypsy and Traveller site and the housing of a settled community.

It is noted that whilst some of the respondents had strong preferences to be close to services, mentioning specific facilities such as schools and shops, there were very few comments relating to any other of the sustainability measures referred to in the key principles, such as reducing the demand on water and energy.

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| <p>(c) “The Council intends to collaborate with other agencies, such as the County Council, Police and community support groups, and site owners/managers to assist the assimilation of residents on new sites with the settled community nearby.”</p> |
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All respondents (21 interviewees) were in agreement that collaborating with other agencies could possibly help with the assimilation of residents on new sites with the settled community and may assist with relationships between those residing on sites. One respondent noted that people do often require extra help and made specific reference to members of the Gypsy and Traveller community having low literacy levels. As previous with the other key principles, one of the interviewees wanted more information about what help they would provide and how this would work/be achieved.

*“Help is needed to make sure that those already on the site ‘get on’.”*

*“That would be good as some people like people to help them and a lot of us can’t read and write.”*

*“That’s very very important because of all the problems on the site with other families and intimidation – new people who move on to the sites and people who are on the sites with kids that cannot behave themselves and parents that cannot teach their kids manners; causes arguments between families. If there was someone in between like a liaison officer or someone from the council it would help.”*

(d) “The Council intends to seek Government funding to support the provision of new sites.”

The majority of respondents (20 of 21 interviewees) agreed that Dacorum Borough Council should seek Government funding to support the provision of new sites for Gypsies and Travellers. One respondent was unsure, noting that they would want to find out where the money for that funding was coming from.

(e) “The Council intends to give priority to the provision of pitches on sites which are as strategic housing sites or are defined in the Site Allocations DPD – whilst it is possible for other proposals to come forward, they will be judged on the basis of the need for that additional provision and the other principles in this policy.”

Whilst all the respondents agreed that the provision of future accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community should take place in a co-ordinated and planned way through the Site Allocations DPD (see response to (a) above), there were mixed feelings as to whether new pitches should be provided either through or as part of major housing sites, with a significant number (13 of 21 interviewees) disagreeing with the statement.

Overall interviewees felt that in theory, this could be a solution to the problem of finding sites to provide the required new pitches, with both communities moving in at the same time and possibly encouraging integration between the two communities.

*“Think Gypsies and settled community would get on and integrate as it would all be built at the same time.”*

*“There wouldn’t be a problem with devaluation if they were built at the same time.”*

However, the majority of interviewees disagreed with the statement (13 of 21 interviewees). On further consideration they felt that there were a number of factors that would prevent the practice of pitch provision as part of major housing developments being successful. The reasons for this focused on the relationship between the two communities, and included:

- The probability of the settled community wanting to purchase a house adjacent to a Gypsy and Traveller site
- The ability to provide a reasonable buffer between the housing and the site
- A concern that when the communities change so will the relationship between the two communities. Where a new site may work initially changes in resident dynamics over time may lead to problems.

*“People won’t buy house near a gypsy site.”*

*“It’s only a few people that cause problems but then we all get the blame for it.”*

*“Travellers are better spaced out so they don’t get in arguments with people in the villages.”*

*“That’s not the way – it won’t work as they’d be too close.”*

*“Don’t think people would go for it. Both communities would have to get on.  
What about after a while when people have moved on?”*

*“The travellers should have a say how they design the sites. It’s a bad idea putting too many travellers on the one site; big housing sites never work. It’s a very bad idea putting a traveller’s site next to a housing site for the settled community.”*

### 3.1.2 The planning of new pitches

(a) “New sites will be distributed in a dispersed pattern around settlements in the Borough.”

All the respondents (21 interviewees) agreed that new sites should be spread out across Dacorum. This re-affirms the findings of the Site Allocations Consultation (December 2008) in which many of the residents interviewed stated that they would not like to see a new site too close to them. The outcomes of the previous consultation highlighted a number of reasons for this, including a fear of crime from the Gypsy and Traveller community of a new group of people coming into an area close to them when they have a good relationship with the settled community.

(b) “New sites will be located close to facilities and with landscaping or physical features incorporated to provide an appropriate setting and relationship to existing residential areas (as defined in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011).”

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Interviewees (21 interviewees) agreed that new sites should be located close to facilities and incorporate landscaping. There were stronger feelings for a sites proximity to shops than the importance of landscaping, with nearly all the additional comments relating to the statement confirming a high level of support for being near to services such as doctors, schools, and shops. With one respondent noting that they would not like to see sites provided “*in the middle of nowhere*” and another stating that ‘*landscaping*’ should not include the very high banks that you often see around Gypsy and Traveller sites.

*“It would be nice to have trees and hedges etc.”*

*“Slip End was a beautiful site but they were jealous so cut the trees down and smashed it all up.”*

*“It’d be nice to have a little bit of garden at the back of your own place, fenced in.”*

*“Housing should be near to everything – shouldn’t be in the middle of nowhere.”*

(c) “New sites will be of varying sizes, not normally exceeding a site capacity of 15 pitches.”

There were mixed opinions on site size with 15 of the respondents agreeing that sites not exceeding 15 pitches in size would be appropriate. The remaining 6 respondents felt that sites smaller than this would be preferable.

*“That’s an okay size. There needs to be space.”*

*“That’s a good size; if you get the right people in it would be lovely.”*

Re-affirming the outcomes of the December 2008 consultation, the majority of those respondents agreeing that a site of 15 is appropriate, predominantly resided on a site that is far larger than 15 pitches. As such a site this size would feel small in comparison to their current living arrangements. Those citing that they would like to see smaller sites of between 6 and 10 pitches tended to live on a much smaller site, which they felt was the optimum size for a new site. The reasons for a preference for smaller sites again mirrored the outcomes of the previous consultation (December 2008), with interviewees noting that smaller sites were easier to manage and would provide the best arrangement for a single family.

*“Six to eight is the best size, easier to manage; you can get just one family on the site.”*

*“Big sites just don’t work; we’ve seen that in Ireland. It’s very important to have big plots but that are all the same size so that there aren’t arguments between families.”*

*“Sites should definitely be less than 15 pitches.”*

*"15 is too big, small sites are better. The most you'd want would be six to eight, a full family might take over a whole site but people get on better."*

*"That's miles too big – six pitches is plenty"*

*"15 is more than enough – that should be halved."*

- (d) "New sites will be planned to allow for part occupancy initially, allowing subsequent growth to full site capacity."

Interviewees were mixed in their support for this statement with 15 of the 21 respondents agreeing that allowing room for sites to grow to full capacity at a later date was a positive move providing that this could be managed. It was felt that the provision of pitches in this way would allow for family growth to be accommodated and avoid young people having to find a new site when they grow up and get married.

*"That's a good idea, there needs to be space for growth in the community."*

*"That's a good idea to accommodate future growth but not too big."*

*"That's a good idea as family growth is a problem."*

Interviewees not in support of future pitch provision in this way (6 interviewees) raised a number of concerns relating to the practicalities of how this process would be managed. Interviewees were keen to be provided with more detail on how the Council would prevent the site being at full capacity too soon without permission and if additional land was adjacent to a site to allow for growth, how the Council would prevent this from becoming an area at the mercy of fly-tipping.

*"Providing that they had the land and did not build the bays until they were needed; need to be managed."*

*"There are no sites that accommodate for older people even though it's the younger people who up and leave and the older people who have nowhere to go."*

*"Creates friction as different generations don't want the same things."*

*"That wouldn't work, it would end up like a big rubbish tip."*

*"It would ruin the site to keep adding pitches."*

*"Would be better to have bigger pitches and bigger sheds."*

- (e) "New sites will be designed with an open frontage similar to other forms of housing and to high standards using Government advice in 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide (May 2008)."

There was a degree of support (11 interviewees) for sites to be designed so that they are open to the road with a public frontage, with private space being provided to the side and rear. Respondents agreeing with this statement felt that this would make sites less hidden and may reduce some of the barriers between communities.

*“That would be very nice because a lot of people don’t know we exist in here.”*

*“Should be all open and not banked in.”*

*“The sites [should] run along the road, more like houses.”*

The other 10 interviewees were split between being unsure of the proposal (4) and disagreeing (6), noting a preference for more traditional site design. Two considerations were highlighted by interviewees as reasons for their holding this opinion:

- Road safety issues – particularly for children and animals
- Loss of privacy.

*“It wouldn’t work because of all the traffic on the road – there would be confusion coming off the road into a gateway for a pitch.”*

*“There should be one point of access onto the site or like a ring so that there is one way into the site and then one way out.”*

*“Shouldn’t have direct access to each pitch off the road.”*

*“If you have it like houses there would be a problem of lorries backing out into the road and children and dogs are always going to be running up and down the road.”*

*“Like to have own space and privacy.”*

*“What traveller wants people to see in?”*

*“Better like this site, closed in.”*

*“Not too open – safety of children. They need areas to play.”*

- “For any new transit pitches, the key considerations will, in addition, be
- achieving good access to the M1 or A41 main roads: and
  - minimising potential disturbance to adjoining occupiers.

The majority of interviewees (14 interviewees) agreed with the key considerations for new transit pitches identified in the draft policy. One respondent added that any new transit pitches should not be located near to permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites.

*"It needs to be just off the road."*

*"If they made them in different towns they could easily travel from town to town, every 15-20 miles."*

*"Can be a nuisance."*

Those that were unsure (4 interviewees) or disagreed (3 interviewees) with the statement did so because they were undecided whether transit pitches should be provided at all and raised concerns over them being located so close to main transport routes. It was felt that transit pitches would, due to the transient nature of residents and increased vehicle movements, always cause a degree of disturbance.

*"It's too dangerous near to main roads."*

*"There needs to be a gap so there aren't as many complaints, especially with those coming and going."*

*"They don't want access to a main roads, it will encourage more thieves."*

*"Most transit sites that I know have been closed down – one in Bedford, one in Wales. They're quite hard to manage as there are people of all nationalities showing up. They should be satisfied to have a transit site anywhere."*



### 3.2 East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options

The Council is looking at how the Maylands Business Area in Hemel Hempstead should change and grow in the future and is producing a plan for this part of the town, including where the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site is. This section reviews the key outcomes of the consultation on the options for the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site and the future provision of residential development in the Maylands area of Hemel Hempstead.

#### 3.2.1 Options for the Three Cherry Trees Lane site

The Council is looking at the possibility of developing the area adjacent to the Three Cherry Trees Lane site known as 'Spencer's Park' for a mix of housing, open space, social and community uses. Bringing forward this land for development offers the opportunity to think about the options for the nearby Three Cherry Trees Lane site. Interviewees were asked to consider three options:

1. Keeping the site as it is.
2. Splitting the site into two and re-locating part of it locally (within Dacorum).
3. Re-locating the entire site locally (within Dacorum).

##### Option One – Keeping the site as it is

The majority of interviewees did not support (10 interviewees) or were not sure (8 interviewees) about keeping the Three Cherry Trees Lane site as it is. A large number of respondents believed the site to be too large and as a consequence too hard to manage as it is. Reference was made to the problems that have occurred on the site in the past and its poor reputation.

*"It's too big with too many people on there as it is now which has caused problems."*

*"It's too big there has always been trouble on that site."*

Nearly all of the interviewees who did favour keeping the existing as it is (3 interviewees) were residents on the site, citing that they were happy with the status quo and residing on the same site as close family members. It was also noted that the site had been there a long time and the reputation and management of the site is very much dependent on who is residing on it.

*"Everybody here gets on well with each other."*

*"I think it's lovely as it is."*

##### Option Two- Splitting the site into two and re-locating part of it locally

The option to split the site into two and re-locate part of it locally (within Dacorum) divided the opinion of respondents with just over half (11 interviewees) supporting the option, with the remaining interviewees not sure about the option (3 interviewees) or opposing the option (7 interviewees).

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The reasons interviewees gave for supporting option two included:

- The current site is too big
- The site would be easier to manage and less trouble if it was half the size.

*"It [the site] was better when it was half the size; there was less agro and less trouble for the factories".*

*"Should develop the other side of town."*

Interviewees that were not sure about the option raised further questions and wanted to find out more about where people would be re-located too, with one respondent citing a preference to stay in the Hemel area. Another respondent found it hard to make a decision either way as they said it would be heavily dependant on who would be left on the current site and who would be relocated.

*"It would depend on where the people went to that are there now."*

*"That would be a very good idea. Around 15 pitches would be better, [but] it would depend on who moves and who stays."*

*"Like being in Hemel, would want to be located in Hemel."*

Of those that did not support the option the overriding feeling was that of people being happy with the current situation and wanting it to remain the same.

Option Three – Re-locating the entire site locally

Option three received the greatest level of support from interviewees with 13 respondents supporting the option. It is noted that the majority of respondents supporting this option were of the opinion that the site would not be relocated as one site but as a minimum of two sites. This should be in accordance with the draft policy relating to site size in the emerging Core Strategy, which states that sites would not normally exceed 15 pitches.

Reasons given by those that supported this option included:

- The current site has a poor reputation
- The sites would be better spread out across Dacorum
- Smaller sites would be easier to manage.

*"Everybody's different – I would like a site with my immediate family but not everyone feel like this. The current site has a bad reputation and everyone should be split into smaller groups."*

*"It would be a good idea to spread the sites out."*

*"That would be better into smaller sites – [residents would] need to live somewhere locally."*

*"Good idea to make smaller sites but where would they go?"*

As with option two, questions were again raised as to where people would be relocated to and who of the current residents on the site would go where and who would make this decision. Similarly those who did not support the option noted that they were happy living on the current site.

*"It's alright to say we'll get rid of it but where would you put everyone?  
There are a lot of people living there."*

*"Everybody is happy here."*

## **Housing Development**

The Council has to provide new housing in Dacorum and want to develop new homes within and around the Maylands business area. Some of this housing would be located in the Heart of Maylands, however a large amount of this new housing would be in the north west of the area on agricultural land next to the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site. The land is currently set aside for employment. Interviewees were asked whether they thought this land adjacent to Three Cherry Trees Lane should be used for housing in the future rather than employment.

Interviewees held differing opinions as to the appropriateness of the land adjacent to the Three Cherry Trees lane site being use for housing. Those that thought the land should be used for housing rather than employment (6 interviewees) made reference to the existing employment land uses adjacent to the site being noisy and felt that housing may be a quieter neighbour.

*"Factories are noisy."*

*"There's a lot of noise from the factories at the moment; it would be quieter as housing."*

Two respondents in support of using the land for housing as opposed to employment uses also highlighted that they recognise that there is a need to provide housing.

*"People do need housing."*

There were a number of concerns raised by those interviewees who opposed the land being used for housing (8 interviewees) or were not sure about the potential residential use (7 interviewees). These concerns centred on the relationship between the settled community and the Gypsy and Traveller Community. It was noted on a number of occasions that having housing in such close proximity to the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site would 'lead to trouble'. The number of children currently residing on the site was raised as a point of concern and a possible source of trouble between the two communities. Interviewees wanted to ensure there was a reasonable distance or buffer between the two and made a number of recommendations if the site were to be used for residential development and questioned the reality of the settled community wanting to live in such close proximity to a Gypsy and Traveller site.

*"Leave it as it is – housing would cause too much trouble."*

*"Who'd ever want to live there?"*

*"Factories would be better, less trouble – if housing there would be trouble; so many children here [on the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site]."*

*"Settled and the Gypsies and Travellers would not get on."*

*"I think its bad idea for houses to go on that site...people won't want to move into houses when there are gypsies nearby."*

Interviewees opposed to housing on the site also made comments in support of the retention of the site for employment uses. Using the site for employment use was considered more appropriate as it was felt that not only would this have less potential as a source of conflict and trouble, employment development was also cited as being a source of employment in the area and a land use that they know from experience that they can co-exist with.

*"Offices and factories would be better as they would create work."*

*"Factories would be best as there's already a lot around here anyway."*

Finally respondents were asked to consider if there were any things Dacorum Borough Council should take into consideration if the land adjacent to Three Cherry Trees Lane was to be used for residential purposes and the Gypsy and Traveller site were to remain. In addition to those opposed to housing on the site, a number of practical recommendations were made for the Council to take into account should the land be used for housing and the Gypsy and Traveller site remains in its current location:

- Fencing and trees to obscure the view of the site from the residential development
- Landscaping the site so that it sits lower in the ground and would be less visible
- Creation of an adequate buffer zone between the existing site and any new residential development. This could be through the creation of open space or a children's play area
- Maintain a separate access to the existing site.

### 3.3 Demographics of interviewees

#### 3.3.1 Gender

	Count
Male	8
Female	13
Total	21

#### 3.3.2 Age

	Count
Under 16	1
16-24	-
25-34	3
35-44	9
45-54	1
55-64	5
65-74	-
75 and over	-
Not given	2
Total	21

#### 3.3.3 Place of residence

	Count
Site	18
House	2
Other	1
Total	21

#### 3.3.4 Length of time residing in the area

	Count
0-10 years	7
11 - 20 years	9
21 - 30 years	2
Over 30 years	2
Not currently residing in area	1
Total	21

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The core findings of the face-to-face interviews undertaken can be found below:

### 4.1 Emerging Core Strategy

- New pitches in the Borough should be delivered in a co-ordinated and planned way as set out in the Emerging Core Strategy.
- The key principles of encouraging equity, integration and sustainability should be delivered through the location, design and management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites. The current lack of communication between the two communities is a barrier to achieving the key principles and greater levels of understanding between them.
- Whilst a greater level of interaction is advocated, there was a strong preference expressed for a buffer to remain between the residential areas of the two communities.
- New sites should be spread out across the Borough and located close to services and facilities such as schools, doctors and shops reducing the need to travel whilst maintaining a reasonable gap between sites for Gypsies and Travellers and housing for the settled community.
- Collaborating with other agencies may help the integration of residents on new sites with existing communities close by, however more information is required as to how this would work in practice.
- Dacorum Borough Council should seek Government funding to support the provision of new sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Further consideration should be given to the possibility of providing pitches through major housing sites. Whilst it may be a good idea in theory, a number of factors have been highlighted that would prevent this practice being successful.
- New sites should be landscaped in such a way that does not ghettoise the occupants, through the use of banking and other materials that would not be appropriate to use in new housing developments.
- New sites that do not exceed 15 pitches in size remains a popular view. Further consideration should be given to providing smaller sites of around 6 to 10 pitches, as the smaller the site the easier they are to manage and integrate with the existing settled community. This is providing that a reasonable separation distance is maintained between the two communities.

- Whilst there is a need to and support for the concept of providing sites that can accommodate natural growth at a later date, more needs to be done to establish how this would work in practice so that the sites are not overdeveloped prematurely or suffer neglect.
- If sites are to be provided with open frontages similar to that seen in housing developments fears and concerns relating to road safety and lack of privacy need to be overcome.
- Although there was not overwhelming support for the provision of transit pitches, the key considerations of achieving good access to main roads and minimising potential disturbance to adjoining occupiers are supported.

#### **4.2 East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan Issues and Options**

- A large number of respondents were unsure or did not feel that the Three Cherry Trees Lane site should remain in its current form. The site has a number of problems and a poor reputation which are compounded by its large size. Whilst there were a limited number of interviewees who want the site to remain in its current form, the reasons for this relate to a desire to reside with family members and remain in the Hemel area; all issues are resolvable with further consultation once an option has been agreed.
- There is support for making the site at Three Cherry Trees Lane smaller. A site half the size would be easier to manage, however, more information is required as to where people would be relocated to and how the decision would be made as to who would remain on the current site and who would be relocated.
- There is support to relocate the entire Three Cherry Trees Lane site in smaller component parts across Dacorum. This would remove the stigma and reputation that the existing site and its residents have and result in a number of smaller sites that would be easier to manage. Further investigation is needed on the practicalities of this option in addition to consultation with residents if this were to happen; particularly as some have noted a preference to stay in the Hemel area.
- The land adjacent to Spencer's Park should remain as employment land if the Three Cherry Trees Lane site is to remain in its current location and form. Although a number of suggestions were made for landscaping and buffering, it was felt that the potential problems from having a Gypsy and Traveller site in such close proximity to a housing development could not be overcome to a satisfactory level.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

Two key recommendations have emerged from the interviews:

- The Council should continue to consult with the Gypsy and Traveller Community throughout the Local Development Framework process on the documents that directly relate to the provision of pitches for the Gypsy and Traveller Community.
- The Council should consult further with the Gypsy and Traveller Community regarding the design of future sites.



Gypsy and Traveller Consultation:  
Emerging Core Strategy and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options

## **APPENDICES**

Gypsy and Traveller Consultation:  
Emerging Core Strategy and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**Discussion guide questions**

## DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

### Emerging Core Strategy

**Q1. Approach to new sites: For each of the statements agree or disagree.**

- (a) The Council wants to provide the number of pitches needed in the borough in a planned way, which will be able to provide for future growth of the Gypsy and Traveller Community.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (b - i) The Council intends to locate, design and secure the management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites in a way that is fair to both the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (b - ii) The Council intends to locate, design and secure the management of all new sites in a way that promotes integration, understanding and acceptance between the travelling and settled communities.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (b - iii) The Council wants to locate, design and secure the management of all Gypsy and Traveller sites so that they are located close to services, they look after the environment, they reduce the demand on water and for energy, and so that communities can live alongside each other.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (c) The Council intends to work with other agencies, (such as the County Council, Police, community support groups, and site owners/managers) to help residents of new sites settle in and get on with existing residents nearby.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (d) The Council intend to seek Government funding to help provide new sites.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

- (e) The Council wants to provide pitches as part of choosing and planning for major housing sites. The Council will decide on other sites that come forward only if there is a need for additional pitches and they meet the principles in this policy.

Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

**Q2. Planning new pitches: For each of the statements agree or disagree.**

- (a) New sites will be spread out around settlements in Dacorum.  
Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?
- (b) New sites will be located close to facilities (such as schools, doctors surgeries, shops etc.) and will incorporate landscaping or physical features (such as trees, hedges, open space, garden frontage etc...) to make sure the site fits in with existing residential areas.  
Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?
- (c) New sites will vary in size, and will not normally be larger than 15 pitches  
Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?
- (d) New sites will be planned to allow for future growth. For example, it may be that 10 pitches are used on a 15 pitch site initially, with the other five pitches being used when the family or families on the site grow up, and require further living space.  
Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?
- (e) New sites will be designed so that they are open to the road and not closed in. This is so that they are similar to other forms of housing and that they meet high standards laid out in Government advice. For example, the Council encourages new housing development to have an open and public frontage to the road, but with private spaces to the side and rear  
Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?
- (f) For any new transit pitches, key considerations will also be to:
- Achieve good access to the M1 or A41 main roads; and
  - Minimise potential disturbance to people living nearby.
- Agree? Disagree? Any comments? Why agree/disagree?

**East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan – Issues and Options**

There are three options for the Three Cherry Trees Lane site:

1. Keeping the site as it is.
2. Splitting the site into two and re-locating part of it locally (within Dacorum).
3. Re-locating the entire site locally (within Dacorum).

**Q3. Which option would you support?**

- (a) **Option One** - Keeping the site as it is.

Agree? Disagree? If agree, any reasons/ comments?

- (b) **Option Two** - Splitting the site into two and relocating part of it locally (within Dacorum).

Agree? Disagree? If agree, any reasons/ comments? Do you have any thoughts as to where the site should be located?

- (c) **Option Three** - Relocating the entire site locally (within Dacorum).

Agree? Disagree? If agree, any reasons/ comments? Do you have any thoughts as to where the site should be located?

**Housing Development**

- Q4. Do you think that land next to the existing Three Cherry Trees Lane site should be used in the future for housing rather than for employment?**

Agree? Disagree? Any reasons/comments? Why agree/disagree?

- Q5. If land close to the Three Cherry Trees Lane site is used for residential purposes, what things do you want us to take into account when planning for the new housing?**

Gypsy and Traveller Consultation:  
Emerging Core Strategy and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options

**APPENDIX TWO:**  
**Aerial map of the Maylands Business area**

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Emerging Core Strategy and East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan: Issues and Options

