LDF Evidence Base Report: Managing Travellers’ Accommodation
December 2011

AIM
The aim of this report is to provide evidence for the management of Travellers’ accommodation within the borough and give reasons for why a site has not been allocated.

BACKGROUND
There is currently one Travellers’ site at Eleanor Street, accommodating 19 pitches, with scope for the creation of 1 or 2 additional pitches, provided the site is redesigned by Crossrail, who plan to locate a ventilation shaft on the site.

The London Borough Gypsies & Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2008) undertaken by the Mayor of London required LBTH to provide an additional 19-33 pitches within the next 5 years and approximately 5-6 pitches in the following 5 years, resulting in 25-40 pitches in total. These targets have now been removed from the London Plan (2011)

LBTH Gypsies & Travellers Criteria for additional sites in Tower Hamlets (2009) document establishes the criteria for developing new sites in Tower Hamlets.

CURRENT AND EMERGING POLICY GUIDANCE

National guidance
The national guidance for the management of the provision for Travellers’ accommodation is currently being revised, with Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan sites and Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Show people being replaced by PPS Planning for Travellers’ Sites (this has been identified to be incorporated within the emerging National Planning Policy Framework). The CLG Consultation document Planning for Travellers Sites (2011) includes a draft version of the PPS.

The Consultation Document Planning for Travellers’ Sites (2011) requires local authorities to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, set targets and develop appropriate measures to meet these targets.

It asks local authorities to allocate sites if they control or own them or there is likelihood that they will be made available for that purpose. It establishes criteria for site selection for travellers to be consistent with policy on general housing provision. It establishes the criteria of a suitable site as

- Any site which is suitable for housing,
- From where travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure
- Have good means of access from roads and be near bus routes and other transport modes
- Not be located in areas of high flood risk (Flood Risk Zone 3).

The document also requires the provision of Traveller accommodation to be related to the surrounding population’s size and density.

The NPPF will replace all PPS and PPG and requires the Local Authorities to deliver a wide choice of housing to meet all people’s needs. It sets out that development
should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings. If further requires consideration of density, massing and making optimum use of land.

**Regional guidance**
The targets for Traveller accommodation in the previous London Plan (2008) have been removed with the current London Plan (2011) requiring that the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers (including travelling show people) are identified within the local policies and addressed in line with national policy, in co-ordination with neighbouring boroughs and districts as appropriate.

**Local guidance**
LBTH Core Strategy (2010) Spatial Policy 02 requires safeguarding the existing Traveller site at Eleanor Street, and identifying requirements for new sites through the Site and Place Making DPD, to meet targets set in the London Plan.

New sites should meet the following criteria:

- Be suitable for housing
- Have good means of access from roads and be near bus routes and other transport modes
- Not be located in areas of high flood risk (Flood Risk Zone 3).

The Site & Placemaking DPD Engagement Document (May 2011) provides a background to the present situation and the changes to the number of pitches required to be provided. It gave an overview of the process that was used to try to identify potential sites for Travellers accommodation through the use of the criteria stated within the Core Strategy and other relevant guidance (please see the Site Selection Methodology Note (2011) for additional information) which resulted in five potential sites:

- Bow Enterprise Park
- Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project
- Bromley-by-Bow Redevelopment
- London Chest Hospital
- Marian Place gas works and The Oval

These potential sites were further interrogated for factors outside of the site selection criteria process, however none of them met with the Place visions set out in Spatial Policy 12 of the Core Strategy: Annex: Delivering Place making nor did they accord with existing and emerging development proposals. As such no new sites were suggested for Traveller accommodation.

**MANAGING TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION**
The Managing Development DPD continues to not be able to allocate a site following on from the Sites and Placemaking DPD Engagement Document. In accordance with the draft PPS (2011) the MD DPD has taken due consideration of the surrounding densities of the above five potential sites. This continues to preclude the provision of a larger site for Traveller accommodation given the relatively high existing and potential residential densities of each site. Provision could be delivered on smaller sites or individual pitches within a mix of housing that would accord with PPS 3: Housing and help to deliver mixed and sustainable communities.

As such the provision of Traveller accommodation will be managed in accordance with Core Strategy and development management policies, specifically through the criteria set out in the Core Strategy (2010).
New Traveller accommodation could also be managed through the use of
neighbourhood development plans at a neighbourhood scale. The Council would
welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with any future neighbourhood forum.

In accordance with London Plan policy, the Council will also seek to help deliver
Traveller accommodation in coordination with neighbouring boroughs.