



Colchester Borough Council

Sheepen Road

Colchester

Essex

27<sup>th</sup> February 2015

With reference to the Colchester Local Plan, I attended the Marks Tey consultation display accompanied by members of the Gypsy/Traveller community and we were advised to write in with our comments.

Members of the Gypsy and Traveller community feel that once again they have been overlooked by council officers and have not been consulted about their needs for more pitches to be included in the Local Plan.

With reference to Colchester, the Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling show people Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014 is flawed.

1. Relatives of families already living on legal private sites in Colchester would like to move to the area. Land should be made available for more private sites.

2. Travellers arriving during the summer months each year have stated they would like to live in Colchester on the Local Authority Site. Unfortunately there is no movement on the site. Colchester should either provide another Local Authority site or pieces of land that Travellers could either purchase or lease from the council.
3. Colchester should work collaboratively with Tendring District Council to provide more pitches for travellers.
4. Has Colchester Borough Council consulted Essex County Council to enquire how many Travellers are on their waiting list for a place on the Local Authority Site? I have copies of eight applications that were submitted to ECC prior to the site in Colchester being completed. None of these families were offered a pitch although their need was great.
5. Many children living at present on legal sites in Colchester will reach maturity during the 'life span' of the Local Plan and will require their own sites. Affordable pieces of land on a par with Affordable housing should be included in the Plan.
6. Referring to the National Planning Policy Framework Document March 2012 to quote one example 6.50 "to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities" etc.

At great public expense there have been so many documents produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and unless these are to be yet more wasted exercises it is time to make changes for the Gypsy/Traveller community and

incorporate their needs together with the needs of the “settled community”.

For far too long Gypsies and Travellers have been segregated from members of the “settled community” and unlike the statements often made have not received preferential treatment when trying to establish sites for themselves.

Hopefully with this latest Local Plan Colchester Borough Council will use their powers to provide more accommodation for Travellers without the interference of Local Politics. To conclude, this proposed Local Plan should meet the guidelines set out in the new Planning Policy for Traveller Sites published by the Government on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Christine Atkins (Honorary member Gypsy Council, President Hughie Smith) and members of the Gypsy Traveller community.