

## **Gypsies and Travellers Topic Paper**

### **Introduction**

This topic paper provides further detail on the Council's approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision. The first section of the report concerns the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) single issue review and the implications of this for Colchester. This is followed by an assessment of the extent of existing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the Borough and the potential of any existing sites to provide the required level of provision. This report focuses on the pitch provision from existing sites or sites where there is an approved or current planning permission, and sets out how Colchester could meet its required provision in 2011. Due to the recent increases in the pitch provision required for Colchester by East of England Plan Policy H3 (Provision for Gypsies and Travellers) further work will be required to identify sites for growth post-2011.

### **RSS Single Issue Review into Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England**

The East of England Plan has been subject to a Single Issue Review into Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England. A draft policy was submitted to the Secretary of State by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) in February 2008. This proposed policy assumed Colchester to have an existing provision of 7 authorised pitches in 2006 and required the Borough to provide a further 15 pitches between 2006 and 2011, resulting in a total provision of 22 pitches in 2011.

The panel report from the Examination in Public of this policy was published on 17 December 2008. The panel report recommended an increase in Colchester's pitch requirement by 5 to require 20 additional pitches between 2006 and 2011. The report also updated the number of authorised pitches in 2006 to 5. The effect of these changes was that Colchester would be required to have a total provision of 25 pitches in 2011.

The Secretary of State considered this report and published the final versions of policies H3 (Provision for Gypsies and Travellers) and H4 (Provision for Travelling Showpeople) on 20 July 2009. In the final version the Secretary of State chose to increase the required provision in Colchester by a further 5 pitches to 25 pitches between 2006 and 2011. The policy therefore now requires Colchester to have a total provision of 30 pitches in 2011.

In light of the recent increases in the required provision for Colchester the Council has reviewed existing Gypsies and Traveller sites within the Borough. The Council is currently able to identify land for 30 pitches which meets the 2011 requirement.

## Pitch provision post-2011

Whilst the Council was able to plan for the post-2011 provision identified in the submitted regional policy the recent increases recommended by the Panel Report and the further changes subsequently made by the Secretary of State have further increased the provision required in Colchester. Additional work will now be required to identify pitches for the period post-2011. This was made clear in the Council's response to the consultation on the Secretary of State's proposed changes in May 2009.

Post-2011 the policy requires a 3% compound increase in the level of pitch provision. Colchester is therefore required to provide a further 10 pitches by 2021, requiring a total of 40 pitches in 2021. The emerging Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), however, will provide up-to-date evidence on need for gypsy and traveller accommodation in the Borough. This suggests a very low need for additional pitches in Colchester. Paragraph 5.20 of the explanation to East of England Plan Policies H3 and H4 suggests that a review of regional provision and these regional policies should be carried out as soon as possible. The incorporation of the evidence provided by GTAAs into this review should ensure a future required provision for Colchester that better relates to the low need identified in the GTAA. The current East of England Plan review to 2031, however, does not include consideration of the Gypsy and Traveller policies. Until a review of these policies is carried out the Council will need to work on the basis of providing a total of 40 pitches in 2021 as required by the current policy.

## Pitch provision in Colchester

The following pages set out the extent of current Gypsy and Traveller site provision within the Colchester Borough and attempt to assess the ability to meet the targets within revised East of England Plan Policy H3.

**Table 1: Summary of Colchester's RSS required provision**

RSS required provision	
<i>Authorised pitches in 2006</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Minimum additional pitches 2006 - 2011</i>	<i>25</i>
<b>Total minimum number of pitches in 2011</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>The revised policy requires that beyond 2011 provision should be made for an annual 3% compound increase in the level of residential pitch provision. Colchester is therefore required to provide a further 10 pitches between 2011 and 2021.</i>	
<b>Total minimum number of pitches in 2021</b>	<b>40</b>

## Pitch numbers and sizes

As the requirements of East of England Plan Policy H3 are expressed in pitches it has been necessary to make some assumptions with regards to pitch sizes. Existing sites may commonly have permission for a specific number of caravans but how many pitches this relates to is sometimes less clear. It is also necessary to make assumptions when estimating the potential number of pitches that could be accommodated by a site.

The assumptions on size of pitch have been based on guidance within the Communities and Local Government Good Practice Guide on '*Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites*' (May 2008).

This makes clear at paragraph 7.9 that there is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs. Paragraphs 7.12 and 7.13, however, specify that as a general guide a family pitch should be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, and a lockable shed), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area. Smaller pitches must be able to accommodate at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle.

The Good Practice Guide gives the example of Severalls Lane, Colchester as a case study of good practice pitch design. The design at Severalls Lane, developed as a result of consultation with the gypsy and traveller community, provides a 12 pitch site around an oval shaped road, with a central fenced play area, creating a safe environment for children to play where they can be seen from all 12 pitches. Pitch sizes allow for the accommodation of up to three caravans, or one large static trailer plus a touring caravan to allow for travelling during the year. Each pitch will have a semi-detached single storey amenity building. The planning application for the Severalls Lane site (F/COL/05/2085) specifies the total site area as 2.57 hectares. This includes significant amounts of landscaping and woodland area. The built area of site is in the region of 7500 sq m. On smaller sites there is also a need to accommodate access roads, open space and often some communal buildings.

For the reasons detailed above a density of 1 pitch per 500sqm over a whole site has been assumed in the estimations of potential capacity. This allows for the on-pitch and communal space required by the facilities listed in paragraphs 7.12 and 7.13 of the Good Practice Guide. It should be noted, however, that the potential capacity that appears in the table has been adjusted to take account of the type and character of the site, and any constraints such as existing built development.

The number of pitches provided by existing sites has also been based on an assessment of the character and size of each site. The existing permission at Severalls Lane, Colchester, for example, allows for a large site with 12 caravans on plots with associated amenity buildings and has therefore been

counted as 12 pitches. The application pending decision at Gwynlian, Kelvedon Road, however, proposes 4 caravans on a much smaller site occupied by 2 families, so this has only been counted as 2 pitches.

### **Summary of existing and potential pitch provision**

The table below summarises the current pitch provision and the potential capacity of Gypsy and Traveller sites. The potential capacity figure attempts to assess if additional pitches can be accommodated within the existing site area. The figures in the potential column therefore reflect the maximum number of pitches that the site reasonably has potential to accommodate and represent the number of pitches that would be provided by the formal allocation of the site.

The potential for physical expansion of sites has not been assessed as part of this study. If further provision is required in order to meet longer-term (post-2011) provision it is anticipated that the potential for expansion of sites will need to be assessed alongside other options for additional pitch provision. Many of the sites are unconstrained on their boundaries so it is considered that further expansion of existing pitches will be a viable option.

**Table 2: Existing and potential pitch provision in Colchester**

Site	Current type	Current provision		Potential capacity	
		Caravans	Pitches	Caravans	Pitches
Authorised Sites					
Clearview, Rectory Road, Aldham	Authorised	1	1	1	1
Colt Farm, Kelvedon Road , Tiptree	Authorised	2	2	2	2
Emmanuel, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	Authorised	2	1	2	1
Nunns Farm, Lower Road, Layer Breton	Authorised	2	1	2	1
The Paddocks, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	Authorised	4	2	4	2
Stableview, Newbridge Road, Tiptree	Authorised	1	1	2	2
Sub-total authorised		12	8	13	9
Temporary Authorisation					
Bridge Side, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway, Colchester	Temp. Planning Permission	6	3	6	3
Sub-total temp. authorised		6	3	6	3
Historic Sites					
Ponys Farm, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree	Historic Site (Lawful due to length of time)	2	1	2	1
Sub-total historic		2	1	2	1
Sites with planning permission but yet to be completed					
Severalls Lane, Colchester	Planning permission granted	0	0	12	12
Sub-total planning permission granted		0	0	12	12
Sites with applications pending determination					
Land adjacent to Gwynlian, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester	Current planning application	0	0	4	2
Orchard Place, Vernons Road, Chappel	Current planning application	3	3	6 *	3 *
Sub-total planning applications pending determination		3	3	10	5
Total		23	15	43	30

\* Note: A higher level of provision may be acceptable. See site details on page 19.

The above table shows that the required 2011 provision of 30 pitches could be achieved by:

- Allocation of existing authorised sites  
     Clearview, Rectory Road, Aldham  
     Colt Farm, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree  
     Emmanuel, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree  
     Nunns Farm, Lower Road, Layer Breton  
     The Paddocks, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree  
     Stableview, Newbridge Road, Tiptree
- Provision of one additional pitch on the existing site at Stableview
- Allocating the existing temporary site at Turkey Cock Lane so that its use may become permanent
- Allocating the existing site at Ponys Farm which has lawful use as a Gypsy and Traveller site due to the length of time this use has occurred
- Allocation of the site at Severalls Lane which already has planning permission for 12 pitches and where construction is anticipated to begin in early 2010
- Allocation of sites where there are current planning applications which are considered acceptable in principle. There are two such sites; land adjacent to Gwynlian, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree; and Orchard Place, Vernons Road, Chappel. Public consultation has been carried out as part of the planning application process and the applications are expected to be reported to planning committee on the 17 September 2009. The 6 pitches currently proposed in the planning application at Vernons Road, Chappel, may be inappropriate for the size and character of site. A lower provision of 3 pitches has therefore been assumed from this site, although if proved appropriate the site could accommodate up to 6 pitches.

Alternative scenarios would fail to meet the required 2011 provision of 30 pitches as required by East of England Plan policy H3 and would fail to contribute towards the post-2011 increase in pitch provision. There is no immediately available option that would provide a pitch provision in excess of 30 pitches.

**Table 3: Alternative Scenario A:** Authorised sites, historic sites, and sites with planning permission (Severalls Lane).

<b>Site</b>	<b>Pitches</b>
Existing Authorised Sites (including one additional pitch on the existing site at Stableview)	9 pitches
Historic Sites (Lawful)	1 pitch
Sites with planning permission (Severalls Lane site)	12 pitches
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 pitches</b>

**Table 4: Alternative Scenario B:** Authorised sites, historic sites, sites with planning permission (Severalls Lane), and temporary permissions.

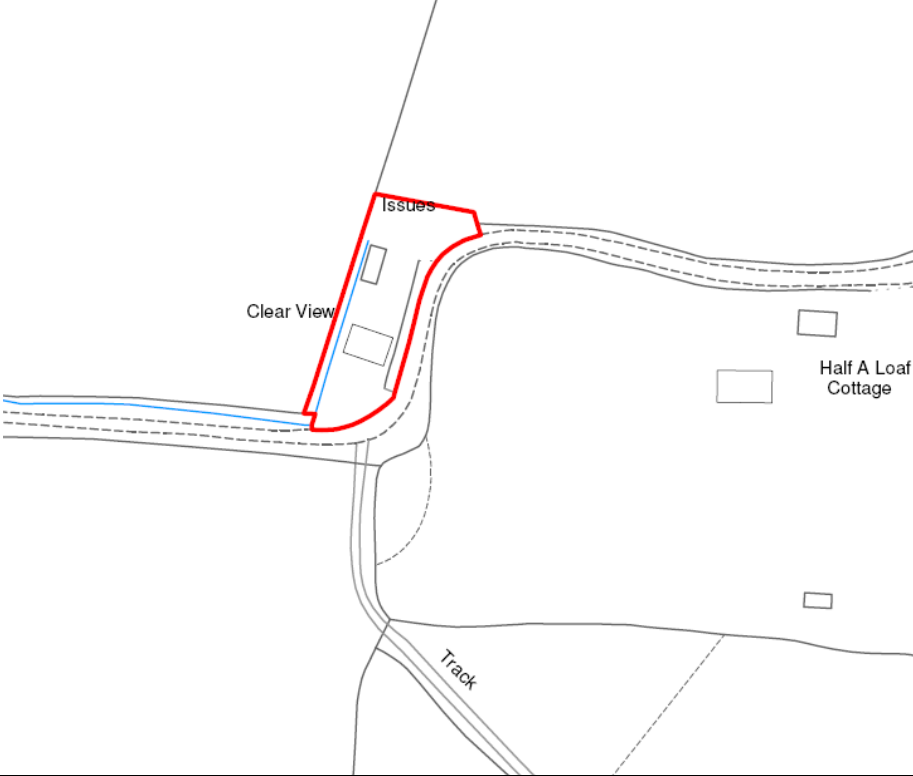
<b>Site</b>	<b>Pitches</b>
Existing Authorised Sites (including one additional pitch on the existing site at Stableview)	9 pitches
Historic Sites (Lawful)	1 pitch
Sites with planning permission (Severalls Lane site)	12 pitches
Seek to make existing temporary permissions permanent	3 pitches
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 pitches</b>

### **Schedule of sites**

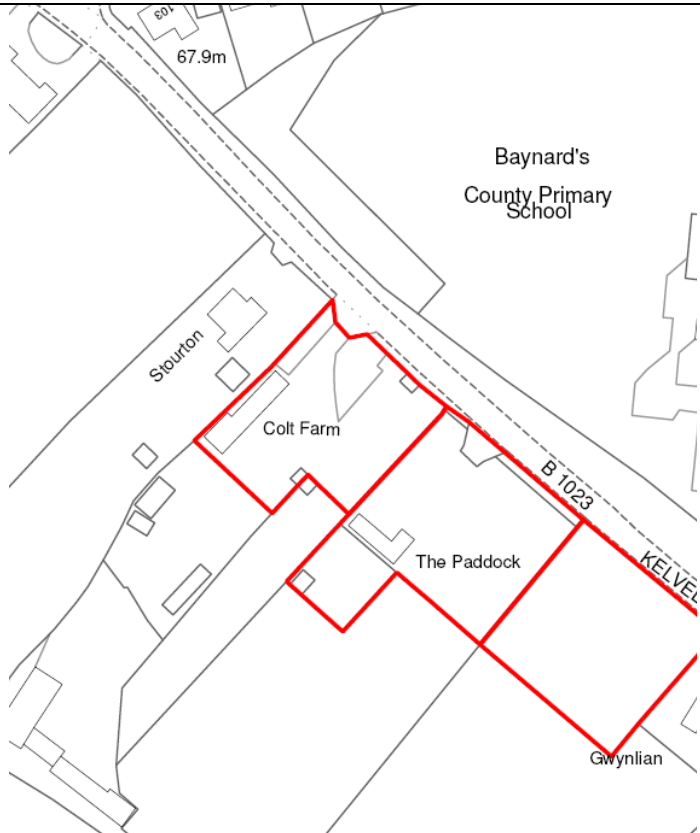
The following pages provide detail on Gypsy and Traveller sites within the Borough, set out the current level of provision on each site and make an assessment of the number of pitches they have potential to provide. The assessment of these sites provides the basis for the information included in table 2 (page 5). The plans provided indicate approximate site boundaries and are not to scale.

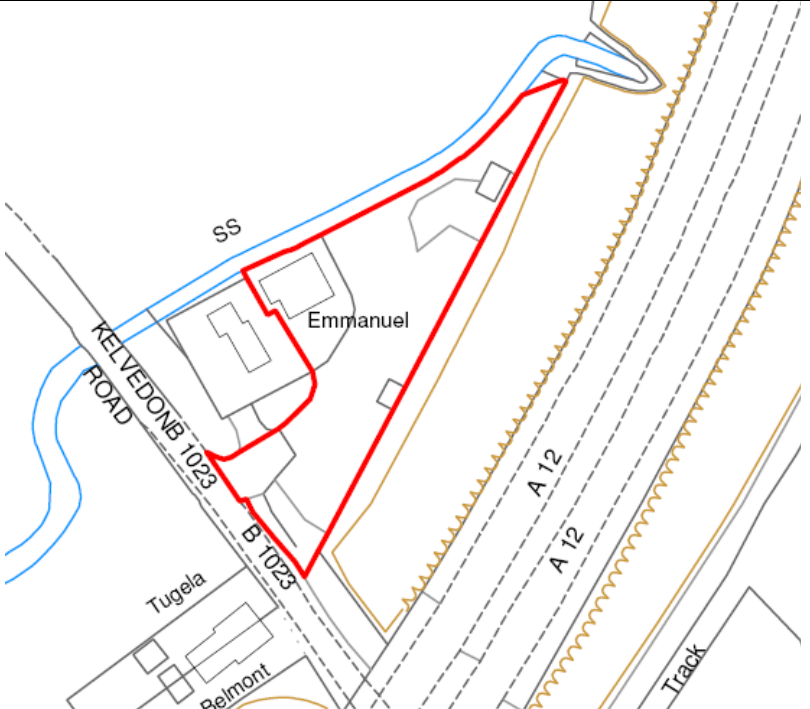
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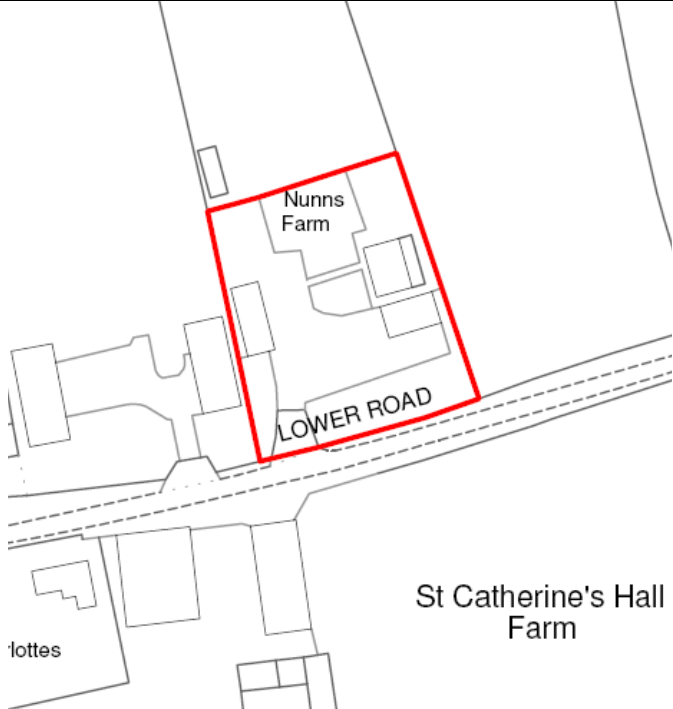
## Authorised Sites

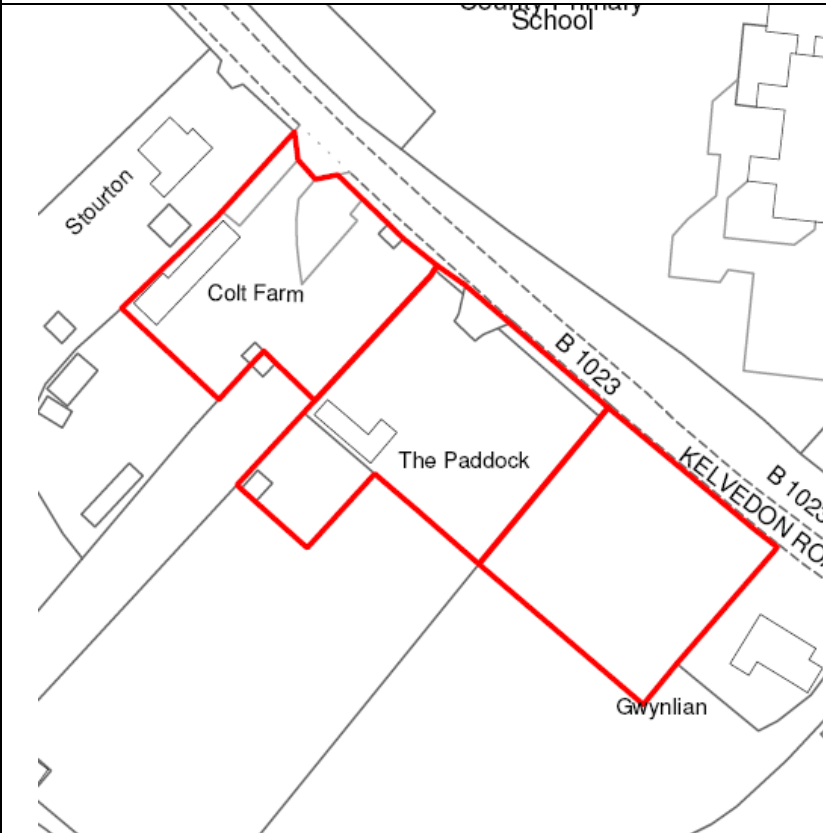
Site Address	Clearview, Rectory Road, Aldham
Type	Authorised
Map	
Existing situation	The site currently has personal permission for 1 caravan. Existing permissions COL/86/1193, 92/0236 and 97/1612. The current capacity of the site is therefore 1 caravan (1 pitch).
Potential capacity	The red line shows the area from previous planning applications. This covers an area of area of 900 sqm. If the whole area was available for pitches the site would have a theoretical capacity of 1.8 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). As there is existing development on the site and the site not well related to community facilities it seems unlikely that additional pitches could be accommodated. The current capacity of 1 caravan (1 pitch) should be considered the maximum potential for this site.




Site Address	Colt Farm, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree
Type	Authorised
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The site has a Certificate of Lawfulness for use of land for siting of two mobile homes for residential purposes and includes a dayroom and utility block (application number K/COL/05/1255). It is situated on Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, immediately adjacent to another Gypsy and Traveller site at 'The Paddock'. The Colt Farm site currently provides 2 caravans (2 pitches).</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line shows the approximate site area of the existing lawful use. This area is approximately 1400 sq m and therefore has a theoretical capacity of 2.8 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). Existing built development on the site, however, may be a constraint on pitch capacity. Given the small scale existing lawful use and the constraints on the site it appears unlikely that additional pitches could be accommodated within this existing site boundary.</p> <p>Expansion of the Gypsy and Traveller use to the Southern part of the Colt Farm site is again constrained by built development and the existing uses on the land. A provision of 2 caravans has been assumed as the maximum potential provision for this site. Given that a dayroom and utility block are provided alongside the 2 caravans, the provision from this site has been counted as 2 pitches.</p>

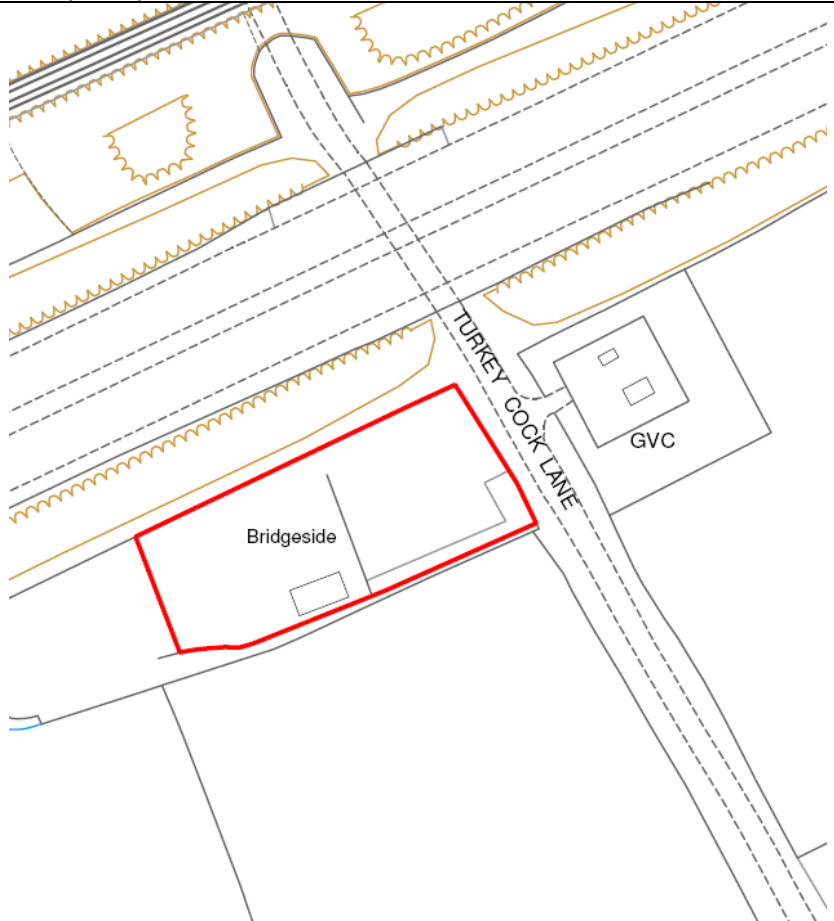
Site Address	Emmanuel, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree
Type	Authorised
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The site has planning permission for standing of two mobile homes (application number 89/1807) and abuts the borough boundary. Subsequent planning applications have been made regarding the variation of conditions (application number 072866). A personal condition applies to the site. The current capacity is 2 caravans (1 pitch).</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line indicates the approximate site area from previous applications (072866). The site covers an area of 2000 sq m which gives a theoretical capacity of 4 pitches (based on 500 sq m per pitch). The majority of the site, however, is at risk of flooding which is likely to prohibit development. Existing built development would also be a constraint. It is therefore considered unlikely that additional provision could be accommodated on this site and the current provision of 2 caravans (1 pitch) should be considered the maximum potential of the site.</p>

Site Address	Nunns Farm, Lower Road, Layer Breton
Type	Authorised
Map	 <p>The map shows a site boundary outlined in red. The site is located on Lower Road, adjacent to Nunns Farm. To the south of the site is St Catherine's Hall Farm, and to the west are several 'lottes' (small buildings). The site boundary is a red rectangle that encompasses several buildings and a portion of the road.</p>
Existing situation	The site has permission for the stationing of two caravans (application numbers COL/89/0947 and 95/0606). The current provision at the site is 2 caravans (1 pitch).
Potential capacity	The red line shows the approximate site boundary which covers an area of approximately 2000 sq m. The site would therefore have a theoretical capacity of 4 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). There is, however, a significant amount of built development on the site and very little scope for expansion. The maximum potential provision of this site is therefore considered to be 2 caravans (1 pitch).

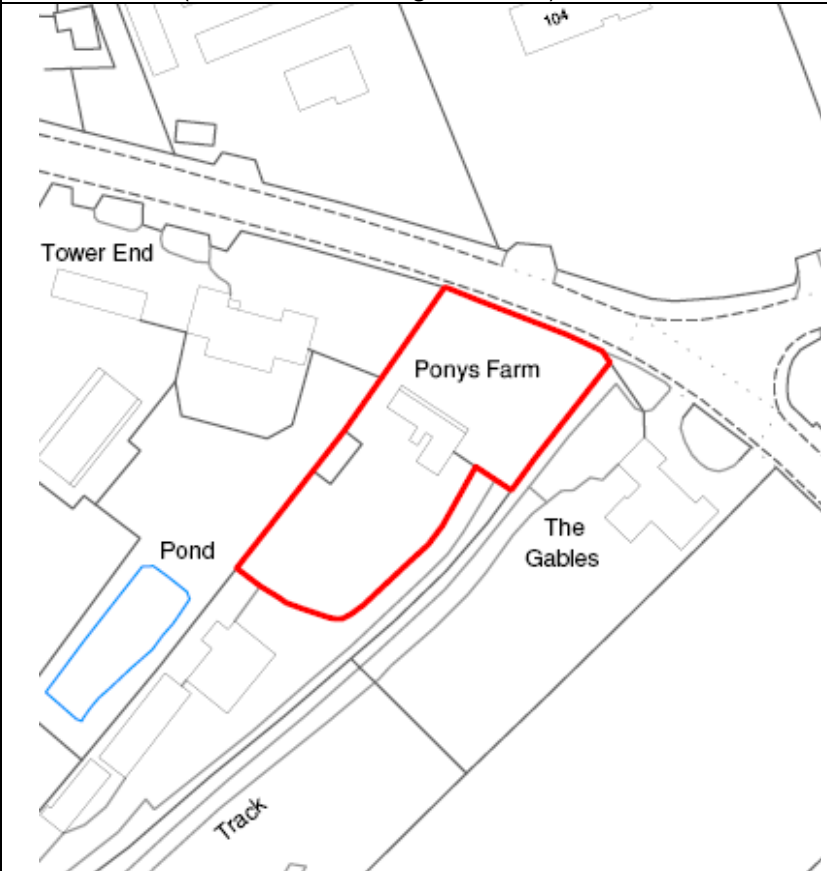
Site Address	The Paddocks, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree
Type	Authorised
Map	
Existing situation	<p>This site is located on Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, and is immediately adjacent sites at Colt Farm and the current application at land adjacent Gwynlian. The Paddocks site has permission for the retention of an existing utility building/dayroom, hardstanding and access and the change of use of land to a private gypsy caravan site. The permission allows for 4 caravans (application number F/COL/07/0113). Given the relatively small site size and the low number of families using the site it is appropriate to assume that the permission for 4 caravans provides approximately 2 pitches.</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line indicates the site area from the permission for 4 caravans (application number F/COL/07/0113). This covers an area of approximately 1800 sq m providing a theoretical capacity of 3.6 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). Given the existing built development on the site and the family nature of the current use it appears that there is no space for additional capacity within the existing site area.</p> <p>The planning applications relating to this site, however, do indicate ownership of much larger area of land to the south-west of the site. This may provide options for future expansion to meet longer-term needs.</p> <p>The potential capacity of the existing site has been assumed to be 4 caravans (2 pitches).</p>

Site Address	Stableview, Newbridge Road, Tiptree
Type	Authorised
Map	
Existing situation	The site currently has permission for 1 caravan (application number 081776). A personal condition applies. The provision on this site is currently 1 caravan (1 pitch).
Potential capacity	The red line indicates the site area from planning application 081776. This covers an area of approximately 1700 sq m giving a theoretical capacity of 3.4 pitches (based on 500 sq m per pitch). The site includes some existing built development but there is considered to be sufficient space for an additional caravan / pitch on the site. There is potential for a small increase in capacity on this site to 2 caravans (2 pitches).

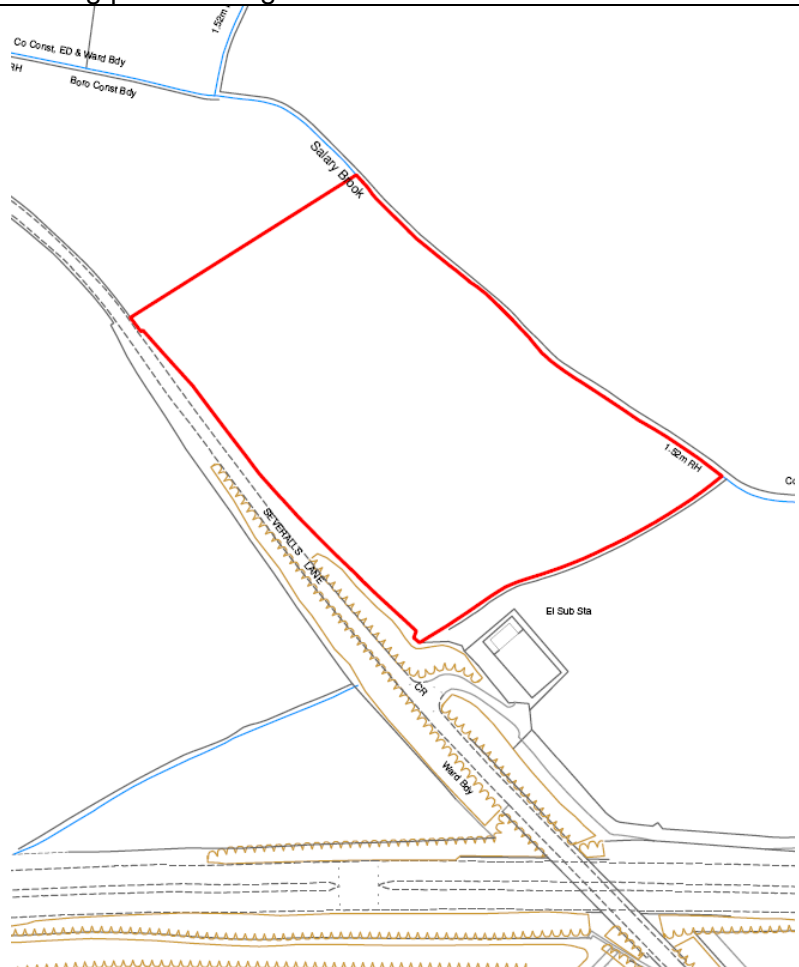
## Temporary authorisation

Site Address	Bridge Side, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway, Colchester
Type	Temporary Authorisation
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The site has temporary permission for 6 caravans (planning application numbers F/COL/07/0221 and 081275). The site is currently split into two plots, is subject to a personal permission and time limit of 2 years.</p> <p>Given the reasonably large size of site and the current permission for 6 caravans the site has been assumed to provide 3 pitches.</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line indicates the approximate site area from recent planning applications. This covers 2500 sq m which would have a theoretical capacity of 5 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch).</p> <p>Given that the layout of the site has already been determined there does not appear to be potential for it to accommodate additional pitches. The maximum potential provision has therefore been assumed to be 6 caravans (3 pitches).</p>

## Historic Sites

Site Address	Ponys Farm, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree
Type	Historic Site (Lawful due to length of time)
Map	
Existing situation	<p>This is a historic site where use for gypsy and traveller accommodation has occurred for some considerable time. The use is considered to be lawful due to the length of time it has occurred. There have been no planning applications or lawful development certificate applications related to the site. The site is currently believed to be occupied by approximately 2 caravans. The site can be considered to currently provide 1 pitch.</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line shows the approximate area of the existing use. This covers an area of 1500 sq m which has a theoretical capacity of 3 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). The Pony Farm site also extends further to the south-west. There are, however, many existing buildings within this area such as outbuildings, caravans and trailers and there appears to be little space for further pitches to be accommodated. A maximum potential provision of approximately 2 caravans (1 pitch) has therefore been assumed from this site.</p>

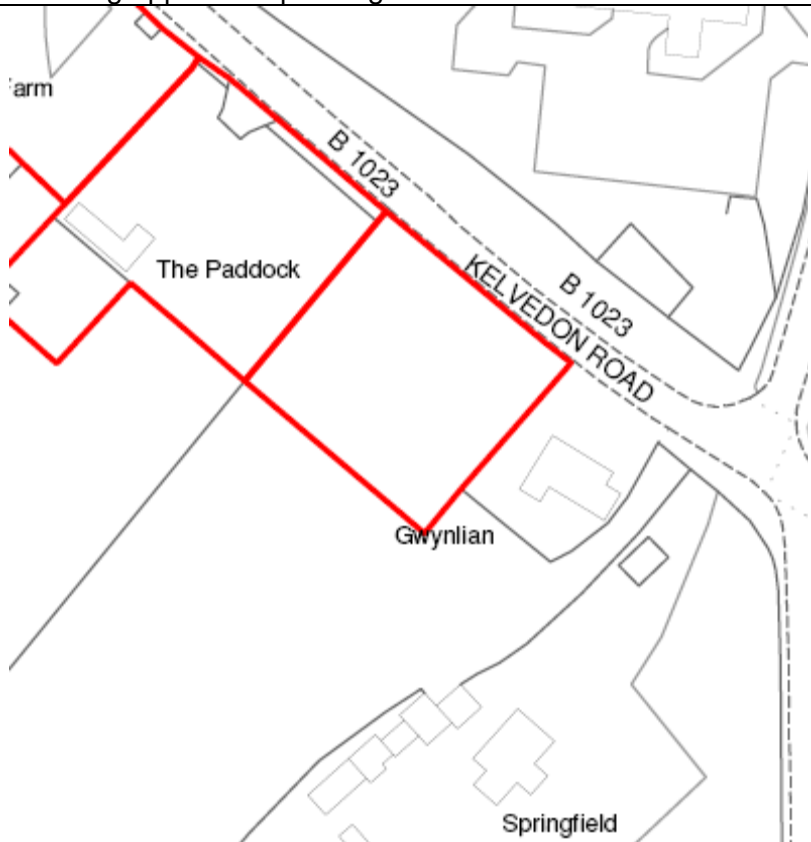
## Sites with planning permission but yet to be completed

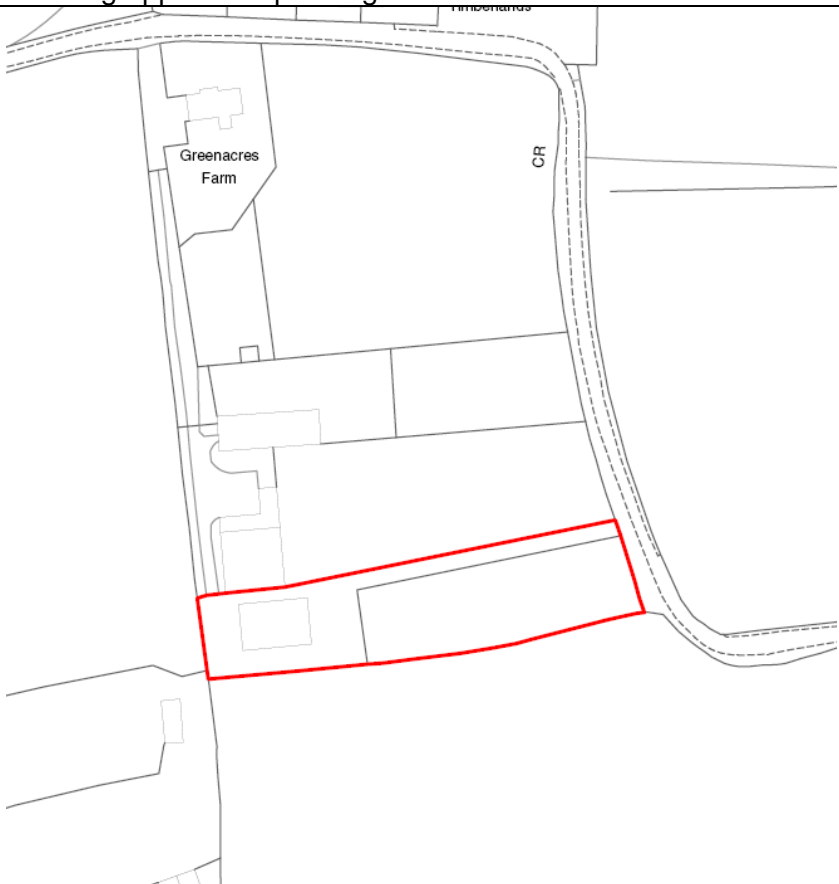
Site Address	Severalls Lane, Colchester
Type	Planning permission granted
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The site is identified by Policy H5 of the Adopted Core Strategy as a suitable site for gypsy and traveller accommodation. The site has planning permission for a 12 pitch site providing 12 caravans around an oval shaped road, with a central fenced play area (planning application F/COL/05/2085). Each pitch will have a semi-detached single storey amenity building. Essex County Council has indicated that construction of the site is expected to commence in 2010.</p>
Potential capacity	<p>When completed the site will provide space for 12 caravans on 12 pitches alongside semi-detached single storey amenity buildings. A site office, children's play area and oval shaped access road are also included on the site. The planning application specifies the total site area as 2.57 hectares. This includes significant amounts of landscaping and woodland area. The built area of site is in the region of 7500 sq m.</p> <p>The design of the site is highlighted as good practice by the Communities and Local Government Good Practice Guide on 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' (May 2008). As the site has already been designed to accord with best practice there is no scope to accommodate additional pitches within the existing</p>



	site area. The maximum potential provision from this site has therefore been assumed to be the 12 caravans (12 pitches) that are currently permitted.
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## Sites with applications pending determination

Site Address	Land adjacent to Gwynlian, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester
Type	Planning application pending decision
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The land is not currently used for gypsy and traveller accommodation but has been the subject of recent planning applications for a gypsy and traveller use. A previous application for the change of use of the land from agriculture to private gypsy caravan site including hardstanding for four caravans, the erection of a communal dayroom/utility building and the formation of a new access was withdrawn after objections from the highways authority (planning application number 082030). A revised application was resubmitted (090471) and is currently pending determination. The location of the site appears to generally accord with Core Strategy Policy H5.</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line indicates the approximate site area of the latest planning application. This covers an area of approximately 1500 sq m which would have a theoretical capacity of 3 pitches if 500 sq m per pitch were assumed. The supporting information submitted with the application states that 2 pitches will be provided on the site (each comprised of one mobile home and one touring caravan) to meet the needs of 2 families. A communal amenity building is also included on the proposed plans. If the previous highways issues are overcome and the site is found to be acceptable with regard to other considerations the site has potential to provide 4 caravans / 2 pitches.</p>

Site Address	Orchard Place, Vernons Road, Chappel
Type	Planning application pending decision
Map	
Existing situation	<p>The gypsy and traveller use on this site is currently unauthorised. A planning application has been submitted for 12 caravans on the site which is currently pending determination (planning application number 090891 – resubmission of 090559).</p>
Potential capacity	<p>The red line shows the approximate area of the currently planning application. This covers an area of 2800 sq m and has a theoretical capacity of 5.6 pitches (assuming 500 sq m per pitch). The current planning application is for 12 caravans, suggests there will be 6 families living on the site, and proposes that the site will be divided into 6 pitches. There are, however, a number of constraints including the shape of available land on the site, the size of site which would be compatible with the character of the area, and the number of people and vehicles which could reasonably access the site using Vernons Road. The provision of the number of pitches currently stated by the planning application may therefore be inappropriate. The principle and general location of the site, however, appears to generally conform with Core Strategy Policy H5 and the site is considered suitable for a lower number of pitches. A provision of 3 pitches has therefore been assumed as the potential pitch provision from this site. If it can be demonstrated that a higher number of pitches can be accommodated satisfactorily in this location, the increased number will count towards the borough requirement.</p>

