Dear Sir/ Madam

Havering Local Plan – how you can comment on the Local Plan and the latest planning policy for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

I am writing to you about the Havering Local Plan.

Why this letter has been sent to you

As you know, we have been preparing a new Havering Local Plan. This document is important because it:

- explains how land may be used; and
- will guide decisions on whether or not planning applications can be granted

You are receiving this letter because we want to make sure that families and households in the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community in Havering:

- know about the progress made with the Local Plan;
- can see and understand how it will affect them; and
- can comment about a specific part of the Local Plan that deals with accommodation for this community

There is another letter with this one which tells you about more about progress with the Local Plan and it will be helpful if you read that alongside this one. There are also some documents which it is important for you to know about.
I apologise that this is such a long letter but it deals with important matters which may affect you and your family and you should take some time to read it and make sure you understand it. We have asked that Lee and Gill who helped us with the accommodation needs survey last year deliver it so that they can answer any questions you may have.

**What stage has the Local Plan reached?**

A Planning Inspector has been looking at the Local Plan since it was submitted in Spring 2018.

We have provided the Inspector with information on a range of matters in the Local Plan.

In particular, the Inspector has asked us to do more work on our approach to understanding and planning accommodation for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households.

This further work is so that the Inspector can be sure that:

- the Local Plan is up to date in regard to how many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople live on sites and yards in Havering; and
- there is enough land available for these families in the future.

We have been helped by experts (from a firm called Opinion Research Services) to help us do this work. You may have spoken with Lee and Gill (who work for ORS) about this. Val Smith who works with us at Havering has also been very helpful with this work.

We are now confident that the Local Plan is right about how many Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households live in Havering. We also have a good understanding of how these households may expand and how they would prefer their future accommodation to be arranged on the sites.

Many of the Gypsy and Traveller families living in Havering have been very helpful in helping us on this. We think that this will greatly help the Local Plan Inspector.

**What we are doing now**

At the suggestion of the Local Plan Inspector, we are asking people to comment on the changes that the Inspector wishes to see included in the Local Plan when it is finalised.

The Council must:

- tell everyone about all the changes that the Inspector wants us to make to the Local Plan. These will cover many aspects of the Local Plan and not just the approach to accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; and
- tell the Inspector what people say about the proposed changes so that she can finalise the Local Plan.
You will see from the other letter that you have received that we have set out the proposed changes in a document called Proposed Main Modifications. We have also prepared some other documents that set out the information that supports the changes and you can comment on these, too.

**Which part of the Local Plan will be most important to you?**

The Local Plan covers all of Havering and sets out how we:

- aim to make sure there are enough homes and jobs here;
- will protect how the borough looks;
- can make sure that Havering is not spoilt by new development; and
- will ensure that Havering has enough facilities such as schools and hospitals.

A particular part of the Local Plan deals with Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

This part of the Local Plan is really important for families and households in the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community because it explains how we will:

- make sure there are enough sites and yards and say which of the sites it considers should continue;
- ensure that the sites and yards are big enough now and in the coming years; and
- require the occupiers of the sites and yards to get planning permission for their sites and yards.

The part of the Local Plan dealing with this matter is called Policy 11 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation.

The Inspector has asked us to make quite a lot of changes (she calls them ‘Modifications’) to this part of the Local Plan so that she can be sure that it is right.

We expect that you will be interested in how it is proposing to take forward accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

For this reason, with this letter is another document that sets out:

- what we initially prepared as our planning policy for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation; and
- what we now intend to include in the Local Plan in the light of the survey work that ORS did in summer 2019 and our discussions with the Local Plan Inspector last year.

**What are the key points of the proposed approach in the Local Plan?**

You will see that the proposed policy for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is quite long and covers several topics.

The main points are that:

**Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Together**
• it is in line with the Government’s national planning policy approach to providing for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
• it is based on a revised and up to date accommodation needs survey done by ORS in 2019 (July) so that the Inspector can be sure she has an accurate picture of current accommodation needs as well as needs arising in the future;
• we will seek to meet accommodation needs for those households who meet the planning definition (as well as those who don’t), for the period that the Local Plan covers (up to 2031);
• it sets out a list of current sites and yards which we are proposing to allocate for use by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The sites and yards are intended to be removed from the Green Belt;
• **not all of the existing sites and yards in Havering are going to be allocated so you should look carefully at the list**;
• occupiers of sites and yards that are allocated must get planning permission for their land once the Local Plan is in place;
• it is based on an assessment as to how many pitches or plots may be accommodated at each approved site or yard;
• planning permission for sites and yards will depend on detailed requirements being satisfied on matters such as layout, services, boundary treatments and access;
• sites and yards must fit into their surroundings and provide suitable places to live for the families that occupy them;
• sites and yards where there may be opportunities for further pitches or plots to be accommodated subject to necessary planning approvals and agreement with the landowners are identified; and
• in the event that proposals come forward for sites and yards which are not identified in the Local Plan then national planning policy will apply.

As mentioned above, we have undertaken an up to date assessment of accommodation needs and we have prepared other information to support its approach including diagrams showing how pitches or plots could be accommodated on sites and yards.

**What can you comment on?**

As is explained in the other letter you have received, you can comment on any of the changes that the Inspector is suggesting should be included in the Local Plan.

You can also comment on the changes proposed to the maps showing where the policies in the Local Plan apply.

You can also comment on the background information that we have prepared to support the Local Plan.

The other letter that you have received includes a list of all the documents that you can comment on. There are links to each of the documents.

We expect that you will be mainly interested in the proposed approach to providing sites or yards for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households.

We would like to hear from you if you have any comments on how it is proposing to ensure that there are enough sites/ yards and pitches / plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. We would also like to hear from you if you have any comments on the documents that support the proposed policy.

**Cleaner, Safer, Prouder Together**
How can I look at the documents?

You can look at the consultation documents:

- on the Council's website at https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20034/planning/183/planning_policy/12

The main consultation documents linked to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople matters are also enclosed with this letter.

Who can comment and when are comments needed?

Anybody can comment during this latest public consultation on the Local Plan.

It doesn’t matter if you didn’t make comments on the earlier versions of the Local Plan as you can still comment at this stage.

Your comments can be to any parts of the rest of the Local Plan or just on the proposed changes to the policy for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.

In accordance with the statutory requirements, the consultation will run from **Monday 17th August to Monday 12th October 2020**. Unfortunately late comments cannot be accepted.

How to respond to the consultation

If you wish to make comments, you can do this:

- **Online**: using the consultation response form at https://havering.objective.co.uk/portal/

- **By email**: please complete the consultation response form and send it to developmentplanning@havering.gov.uk

- **By post**: please complete the consultation response form and send it to: London Borough of Havering, Development Planning, 5th Floor Mercury House, Mercury Gardens, Romford, RM1 3SL

It will help if you say which bit of the Local Plan you are commenting on.

You can download further guidance on how to make comments at the link above.

What will happen to your comments?

Your comments and name will be published and made available to the Planning Inspector following the consultation. However, personal information, such as addresses, phone numbers and emails, will be kept confidential.

Your comments will be forwarded to the Inspector who will take all representations on the proposed Main Modifications into account before determining whether any Main Modification is necessary to make the submitted Local Plan sound.
Further information on the Local Plan

We are proposing a number of additional ‘minor’ modifications (e.g. typographical errors, clarifications and factual updates) to improve the clarity of the Local Plan. None of these changes will materially affect the policies of the Local Plan and they are outside the scope of this consultation. Comments on these additional modifications will not be forwarded to, or considered by, the Inspector.

Details can be found at: https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20034/planning/183/planning_policy/12

Other relevant documents relating to the examination of the Local Plan can also be found at the above link.

If you have any queries please contact: developmentplanning@havering.gov.uk

What happens next?

Having considered all responses to the proposed Main Modifications, the Inspector will finalise her report into the soundness of the Local Plan and the schedule of recommended Main Modifications. The Inspector’s report is expected later this year.

We will then take steps to put the Local Plan in place in Havering so that it can use it.

What must you do after that?

Once the Local Plan is in place, households who occupy gypsy and traveller and travelling show people sites and yards should prepare and submit planning applications for their sites in line with the planning policy.

We will then deal with these and if they meet the planning policy, then planning permission will be granted.

Separately, you should also ensure that you get any licence approvals necessary.

It is important you wait to submit planning applications for your site until the Local Plan work is finished and the Local Plan has been formally adopted by the Council.

How can I find out more information?

If you need any more information, please contact the Development Planning Team by calling 01708 43 4220/4083.

Yours faithfully

The Development Planning Team
London Borough of Havering