

ROSSENDALE LOCAL PLAN

**Consultation on Proposed Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site**



January 2020

**Rossendale**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Consultation on Proposed Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site

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## Introduction

1.1 The emerging Rossendale Local Plan was submitted on 25 March 2019 for independent examination by Planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State. As part of the Examination, a number of Hearing sessions were held during September and October 2019 to discuss a number of “Matters” relating to the Local Plan. One of the actions requested by the Inspectors, after the discussion on Matter 4 (Other Housing Needs), was for the Council to consider their position in relation to the provision of Gypsy / Traveller transit site and provide information to Inspector as soon as possible. This is in light of the need to replace the previously identified transit site at Futures Park, Bacup as this is now no longer available.

## Background

1.2 Policy HS18 (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) of the emerging Rossendale Local Plan states that *‘a transit site accommodating a minimum of four pitches will be provided on a site at Futures Park, Bacup’* and a site specific policy EMP6 (Futures Park) states that a Transit Site for Gypsies and Travellers is considered to be an acceptable use at this location, along with other mixed uses. This is in accordance with the need identified in Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (the GTAA), which was undertaken on behalf of the Council by independent consultants (ARC4). This assessment was carried out in line with Government policy (National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites).

1.3 In April 2019, planning permission was granted for an industrial building on one of the plots at Futures Park (application ref. no. 2019/0102). Following the grant of permission, a lease was signed by the Council and the occupier of the building in August 2019 which would preclude the development of anything other than employment use on land owned by the Council at or adjacent to Futures Park. Therefore, neither Futures Park nor any land adjacent, is available or deliverable for a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site.

1.4 At the Examination hearing on this matter, the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Inspector agreed that policies HS18 and EMP6 of the emerging Local Plan required modification as they should no longer refer to Futures Park. These changes will be proposed in the Main Modifications document, which will be published for consultation in due course. Also, based on the evidence of unauthorised encampments in the Borough, the Inspector recognised that there was a *‘significant need’* which requires addressing in terms of transit provision.

## Current Consultation

1.5 As Futures Park is no longer available, Council Officers have reconsidered land which would be deliverable and achievable for a Transit Site and now propose the former Little Tooter Quarry site at Sharneyford (see site edged red in the map below). This is after thoroughly re-considering all sites which have previously been identified as having potential as a Transit Site in the 2018 Gypsy Topic Paper and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Of all the alternative sites that have been identified previously this land at Sharneyford is considered to be the most appropriate.

1.6 The site is regarded as brownfield and with good access to the highway network. The site is in single, private ownership and the Council would be willing, if necessary, to use its Compulsory Purchase Powers to acquire the site. ARC4 have also reviewed the site and found it to be suitable for development as a Transit Site.

1.7 The decision to undertake this consultation was made at the Council meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019. The report and minutes from this meeting can be found here: <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1183/council>

1.8 Following the consultation, all responses will be sent to the Local Plan Inspectors. The Inspectors may then decide to hold a further hearing session to hear representations on the proposed transit site. Subject to the Inspectors' recommendations, an amendment to policy HS18 would need to be made to make reference to the new Transit Site, as a Main Modification. The Local Plan Policies Map would also need to be amended to include the new site. All references to Futures Park as an allocation for the Gypsy and Traveller Transit site would need to be removed.

1.9 This consultation document should be read alongside the following:

- Extract from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2018);
- Technical Note on the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.10 Further information on the emerging Local Plan, the Local Plan Examination and the other documents referred to in this paper can be found on the Council's website: [www.rossendale.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/localplan).

## How to Comment

Representations on this document can be made over the 6 week period starting Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020, and must be received **on or before 5pm on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020**.

**Comments arriving after this time will not be accepted.**

**Representations must be sent to:**

Online Form: <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/localplan>

Electronically: [forwardplanning@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@rossendalebc.gov.uk)

By post / hand to: **Forward Planning  
Rossendale Borough Council  
One Stop Shop  
Bacup  
OL13 0BB**

Paper copies of the Comments Form can be obtained from the One Stop Shop in Bacup or by phoning 01706 217777.

**The Council's preference is for comments to be submitted using the online form** as this is the speediest and most accurate way to submit representations and will enable the Council to manage the comments for the Inspector most efficiently.

# Proposed Site Plan

## PROPOSED GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITE



## Technical Assessment

**Gross site area:** 2.53ha

**Number of transit pitches proposed:** 4

### Key considerations:

The following summary includes information taken from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment<sup>1</sup> (SHLAA 2018), which has been updated where necessary:

- The proposed Transit Site is within single ownership;
- There is an area at high risk of surface water flooding within the site (approximately 0.22ha);
- A small part of the site (approximately 0.08ha) is situated within the Wetland and Heath Ecological network Stepping Stone Habitat;
- The site is served by public transport from the A681 (Todmorden Road); according to the Transdev website, there are currently 5 bus services per day towards Todmorden and 5 per day towards Bacup and Burnley;
- The site is located within the Moorland Fringe Landscape Character Type;
- Two Heritage assets are situated in the vicinity of the site;
- The site is within a 7km buffer from the South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA (see the Habitat Regulations Assessment).

### Requirements:

The following documents will be expected as part of a planning application for a Gypsy and Traveller Transit site:

- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Landscape Assessment;
- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Ecological Assessment.

### Potential mitigation measures:

- Consideration should be given to siting pitches to the rear of the site to protect the setting of Toll house;
- Road surface materials should be carefully considered; preference should be given to turf stone or sunken stone mesh, rather than standard tarmac, as this could be grown over to reduce visual impact and flood risk;
- The entrance area and boundaries should have appropriate treatment to reduce visual impact;
- Additional tree planting would be beneficial, especially along the entrance, to reduce any visual impact;
- Careful consideration should be given to any lighting of the site, which should be sensitively designed;

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the SHLAA 2018 assessed a larger site area (which was in multiple ownerships), than the one currently proposed; the information here relates to the proposed site only

- Road signage, including any advertising screens, should be kept to a minimum and in keeping with the rural character;
- Any buildings will need to be sensitively located within the site, designed appropriately for a rural area, and use materials such as stone or timber cladding, with attention paid to the impacts of lighting on the surrounding area to the site.