

Mr D Smith
c/o Kerry Freeman (Programme Officer)
By email

Ask for: Sam Hollingworth
Ext: 3508
Direct Dial: 01702 318191
Email: planning.policy@rochford.gov.uk

My Ref: SH-AD26092013B
Your Ref:

Date: 26 September 2013

Dear Mr Smith,

Re: Delivery of Site GT1 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

I write in response to your request for additional information on the delivery of Site GT1 as part of the examination of the Allocations Document, and in particular information on potential funding.

Rochford District Council is a Partnership Authority in the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU). This unit is managed by Essex County Council and is intended to improve the outcomes experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Essex. The ECTU's key areas of activity include: fire safety on sites; improving education outcomes; health and social care; management of local authority sites; unauthorised encampments; and unauthorised developments.

The ECTU also includes a site management team who manage sites across the county, including a new site in Colchester Borough. Essex County Council has confirmed that they agree in principle to managing a municipally run site at Michelin Farm (GT1). I attach a copy of the email from Essex County Council to Cllr Hudson (Rochford District Council Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation) in respect of this.

Rochford District Council has also been in contact with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) regarding possible funding opportunities. The HCA has confirmed that in terms of Traveller Pitch Funding they have potential to fund pitches that could deliver before March 2015 in the current programme. In addition, the HCA has confirmed that the next Affordable Homes Programme starts in April 2015 and, although it is not yet known whether there will be a separate line in the Programme for Traveller Pitch Funding, it will include £957m capital funding each year for three years up to 2017/18.

Whilst there are a number of existing authorised and unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites in the District, the Council is mindful of the fact that there is not currently any land allocated in the District for the development of such sites. However, if the proposed Allocations Document were to be found sound (including Policy GT1) the Council intend to adopt the document, and then seek to work with both the HCA and ECTU to deliver the site, using the allocation of land as a basis to move forward discussions.

In the case of Site GT1, and in relation to its delivery, the Council is also mindful of the fact that the landowner is supportive of the site being developed for 15 pitches (as confirmed in Appendix 14 of EXA126).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hollingworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Samuel Hollingworth
Planning Policy Team Leader