

Reading Borough Council

Submission Local Plan March 2018

Policy H12

1 Introduction

1.1 My name is Henry Colin Hatcher. I retired in 2005 as a Chartered Surveyor with 48 years' experience in the Public and Private sectors. I am Footpath Officer for the Pang Valley Group of the Ramblers' Association.

1.2 I submitted an objection to Policy H12 in the Pre-submission Draft. I had previously made representations to the November 2017 Reading Borough Council Consultation on the proposal to establish a Gypsy and Traveller at Cow Lane via access from a gravelled track doubling as Public Footpath Reading 17.

1.3 I pointed out that Public Footpath Reading 17 is a designated public footpath and as such access is limited by Section 34 of the Roads Traffic Act 1968 to pedestrian use only. The use of a public footpath by motor vehicles is therefore unlawful.

2 Basis of objection

2.1 At the time of the Pre-Submission Local Plan Consultation on Reading Borough Council's proposal for a potential Travellers' Transit site to be located in Cow Lane, Policy H12 was linked to Policy WR4 (incorrectly at that time referred to as Policy H13). In the Submission Draft of the Local Plan the Policy has been renumbered to H12 and the wording altered to reflect that the Consultation exercise in respect of the Travellers' site had taken place. However following the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, Reading Borough Council decided that the most suitable site for a new secondary school would be the site in Cow Lane/Richfield Avenue that formed the subject of Policy WR4 but with access from Richfield Avenue. That would be acceptable to Pang Valley Ramblers since it would not affect the status of Public Footpath Reading 17.

2.2 Within the Submission Draft Local Plan the wording included in Justification Paragraph 4.4.100 should be amended to remove any reference to Policy WR4.

3 Conclusion

3.1 The wording of the Justification Paragraph 4.4.100 should be amended to (**wording in red should be deleted**):

4.4.100 The expectation in national policy is that, where a need is identified, a local authority should plan to meet that need unless there are exceptional reasons why it should not. In terms of permanent and transit accommodation for gypsies and travellers, the Council has gone through a thorough site assessment process, which culminated in a consultation on gypsy and traveller provision during September and October 2017. The conclusion was that, **whilst one site could potentially meet the identified transit needs (which is identified in policy WR4)**, there were no sites that could meet the permanent accommodation needs. The Council is exploring with its neighbours whether there are

options for meeting this need outside the Borough. In terms of travelling showpeople, the small need identified is unlikely to be able to support a new site on its own, and therefore any proposal for expansion of the existing site will need to be considered on its merits.

- 3.2 Without such an amendment, I submit that the Plan is Unsound because of the change of Policy in respect of the Richfield/Cow Lane site.

H C Hatcher
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Pang Valley Group of the Ramblers' Association