
Report to Bedford Borough Council

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Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State

Date: 20 December 2019

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

(as amended)

Section 20

Report on the Examination of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

The plan was submitted for examination on 14th December 2018

The examination hearings were held between 29 May and 27 June 2019 and on 22 October 2019

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the case of flooding, it is necessary that this is highlighted within the policy. These modifications are contained within **MM57** and are necessary to achieve positive planning and effectiveness.

Policy 62 – Self-build and custom homebuilding

174. Policy 62 aims to provide custom and self-build housing. Government support for this is reflected in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The Council has confirmed that Bedford Borough's register of people interested in custom and self-build has been in place since April 2016 and shows 193 individuals and one association of two individuals registered. However, the register has not been reviewed since that date to ascertain whether all those on the list are still seeking a plot. It has therefore not been possible to determine whether the Council's policy of 10% of all development on plots of 100 or more is reasonable or that it responds proportionately to need. Consequently, we cannot conclude that the policy is justified by the available evidence. **MM58** is therefore necessary to remove the policy from the plan in order for it to be justified. Nonetheless, general support for self-build, in line with national guidance, is set out in Policy 60S and in the supporting text. Furthermore, in reviewing the plan in due course the Council will be able to reconsider the case for specific requirements in respect of self-build and custom housebuilding.

Gypsies and Travellers - Policies 63, 64, 65, 66 and 67

175. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA) [SD13] credibly identifies that there is a need for 2 additional permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches and five plots for Travelling Showpeople. This is reflected in Policy 63. Policy 64 identifies land at Kempston Hardwick for two additional residential pitches during the plan period. The existing allocated site at Manton Lane has been identified as having sufficient capacity to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople over the plan period. In light of this, Policy 66 is justified in stating that any planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites should amongst other things, demonstrate a clear need for a site in the Borough in line with paragraphs 24 and 25 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). Furthermore, Policy 66 recognises that some adverse impact may arise in such cases, but that this factor can be outweighed by need, and this approach is consistent with other policies in the plan which identify appropriate circumstances for development in rural areas. Policy 67 provides criteria against which the design of such sites should be assessed.

176. The GTAA identifies a potential need for five further pitches within the plan period to meet the need of those who do not meet the current planning definition of Gypsies or Travellers. The PPTS does not require the plan to identify specific provision in this regard and directs that such an identified need forms part of the wider housing needs of the Borough. We are therefore satisfied that the suite of policies relating to Gypsy and Traveller Provision are robustly based and positively prepared. Nevertheless, **MM59**, makes explicit the need to ensure safe access and egress in relation to flood risk, the need to consider the historic environment, and the need to consider potential impact on biodiversity, including Natura 2000 sites and is necessary for the plan to be justified and consistent with national policy.