

# Rushwick (SWDPR 53): Deliverability of the Travelling Showpersons site

## **Need**

The identified need for the plan period within the 2024 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (Exam 22 and Exam 22A) is 167 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 16 plots for Travelling Showpeople. The Rushwick site is identified as a site for Travelling Showpeople (10 plots) within Policy SWDPR53 Rushwick. The site is currently used as a Christmas tree 'farm', is under the control of Bellway Homes and is programmed for the period 2024-28. It should also be noted that a further Travelling Showpeople site (again for 10 plots) is proposed within the Worcestershire Parkway allocation (Policy SWDPR51) later in the plan period.

## **Availability**

The SWCs consider there are a number of options afforded to them in order to deliver the Travelling Showperson site at Rushwick. The SWCs appreciate that since the allocation CFS0190 was first submitted at the Call for Sites stage, the landowner entered into an option agreement with Bellway Homes, notwithstanding, the SWCs have a requirement to identify appropriate sites to meet the needs to Travellers, Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople.

CFS0190 was identified as an appropriate site for travelling showpeople, predominantly owing to its accessibility, topology and location.

The SWCs have been in discussions with a Travelling Showperson family based at an existing site in Malvern, who have actively demonstrated their interest in the site, as their current site has become too small for the family. The site at Malvern would also continue to operate.

The SWCs have engaged with Bellway Homes over the past year and they have stated that the TSP site is not commercially viable in terms of delivery unless the site to the south (CFS0191), ruled out from the SWDPR for being within open countryside and within a Significant Gap, is brought forward for residential purposes.

It is regrettable that the TSP site cannot be brought forward in isolation in this context, however the SWCs are realistic in that they should consider all solutions, and in particular those which provide the best value to the residents of South Worcestershire.

It should be noted that outside of the proposal provided by Bellway, pragmatically, the SWCs have considered other options, such as removing allocation CFS0190 from the SWDPR and requiring an alternative TSP site to be identified by the developers at Rushwick. At the current time the SWCs are seeking to deliver the site on Claphill Lane as identified within the Rushwick Concept Plan and Policy SWDPR53.

The SWCs are engaging with Bellway Homes regarding the site and these discussions will continue. It should be noted that the Councils do have resources available to bring forward the site (some £2m from the S106 agreements at Worcester South and West). If negotiations do not progress to an appropriate conclusion, then the Council will also consider the use of its compulsory purchase powers.

Through the completion of s106 legal agreements in relation to outline planning permission granted for the Worcester urban extensions, the following has been secured for this purpose and ringfenced for the delivery of Travellers and Travelling Showpersons sites:

South Worcester Urban Extension (Broomhall)

Welbeck Strategic Land - £975,130.00

St Modwen - £164,390.00

West Worcester Urban Extension (Temple Laugherne)

Bloor Homes – £585,078.00

Hallam Land Management - £403,285.00

The above developer contributions are all payable to Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC). MHDC has the ability to utilise these funds to acquire land by entering into a sale contract or if considered necessary, acquisition through a compulsory purchase order. MHDC could also consider forward funding land acquisition and site development costs, given that the above developer contributions are payable in stages, linked to dwelling occupations.

**Transport**

As outlined in the Councils' Written Response, WS9/1 Q140 and Q151, the proposed Travelling Showpeople site off the A44 provides good connectivity to the highway network (A44, A4440 and A4103), a requirement for this community, and the proposed allocation is of a sufficient size to meet both the storage and repair of equipment, as well as sufficient plots to address the identified need.

The site on the northern section of Claphill Lane was chosen as it had almost direct access onto the surrounding main road network (A44, A4440 and A4103) without the need to travel through Rushwick or Claphill Lane, south of the bridge over the B4103.

The current site access is approximately 70 metres from Claphill Lane's junction with the A44 and this short length of road is straight and so suitable for large vehicles.

There is also potential for a site access directly from the A44 subject to new roundabout proposals serving the Worcester West Urban Extension onto the A44.

**Conclusion**

The SWCs consider that this site is in a suitable location for Travellers and Travelling Showpersons accommodation and there are no planning policy or technical reasons including transport and highway safety, that would prevent the site from being developed for this purpose. Notwithstanding issues regarding the availability of this site due to the Bellway Homes interest, the SWCs have identified funding necessary to acquire the site.