

# Fears over 66 new traveller pitches plan

PLANS to create 66 new traveller pitches in Cambridgeshire by 2025 have been unveiled.

A total of 38 potential traveller sites have been earmarked by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) in new proposals published this week.

It includes plans for six new pitches at Hod Hall Lane, in Haddenham, and the expansion of a site on Isleham Road, Fordham, to create another six pitches. A nearby county council-owned site in Fordham could also provide another eight pitches.

Three pitches could be created in Chewells Lane, Haddenham, three more in Witchford, six in Swaffham Prior, and two each in Bottisham and Wentworth.

The council is also asking the public to suggest further sites for new traveller pitches in the future.

But Cllr Bill Hunt, who opposes the new traveller sites in Haddenham, which he represents on Cambridgeshire County Council, has questioned the need for the new sites after regional targets were scrapped by the new coalition government.

Under the previous regime, East Cambridgeshire was required to find an additional 54 pitches for travellers and 12 for travelling show people by 2025. But the targets were scrapped.

Cllr Hunt said: "I don't see why we are still pursuing the same strategy

## ■ JACK GROVE

when the targets no longer apply.

"I also think these sites are totally unsuitable. When visiting the site when the plans were last rejected, the councillors' minibus could hardly get down the lane, so access is definitely an issue.

"It is also a high flood risk area, so concreting large swathes of land is not advisable."

However, Cllr Ian Allen, who represents Haddenham for ECDC, said: "Every council has to make sure they provide sites for travellers. If we don't, we will end up with illegal campsites that can't be policed and that is in no-one's interests.

"Travellers exist and we have to develop planning policies for them in the same way that business, retail and housing also need policies."

People will be able to submit their views on the proposals – officially titled the *Site Allocations and the Ely Area Action Plan Options Papers* – either online, at local libraries or in person at the district council offices until the closing date on August 16.

For more information, call (01353) 665555 or log on to [www.eastcamb.gov.uk/local-development-frame-work/current-consultation](http://www.eastcamb.gov.uk/local-development-frame-work/current-consultation).

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