

Silverdale Parish Council Response to the Local Plan Examination, for Newcastle under Lyme 3 April: Inspector Ann Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI

Matter 7 Housing Policies

Policies HOU1, HOU2, HOU3, HOU4, HOU5, HOU6

7.4 c) Are the following sites allocated for Gypsies and Travellers sound?

- G&T Site 8

Have the sites allocated been selected against possible alternatives using a robust and objective process? Will they meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople over the Plan period?

d) Does the Council's approach in relation to traveller sites generally conform with the expectations of the relevant Planning Policy for Traveller Sites?

e) Are there any omissions from the policy and is it sufficiently flexible?

Summary

Site G&T8 is wholly unsuitable for the proposed allocation, based on the lack of assessment of contamination and questionable arrangements for access through a current Statutory Allotment site known as Acre Allotments.

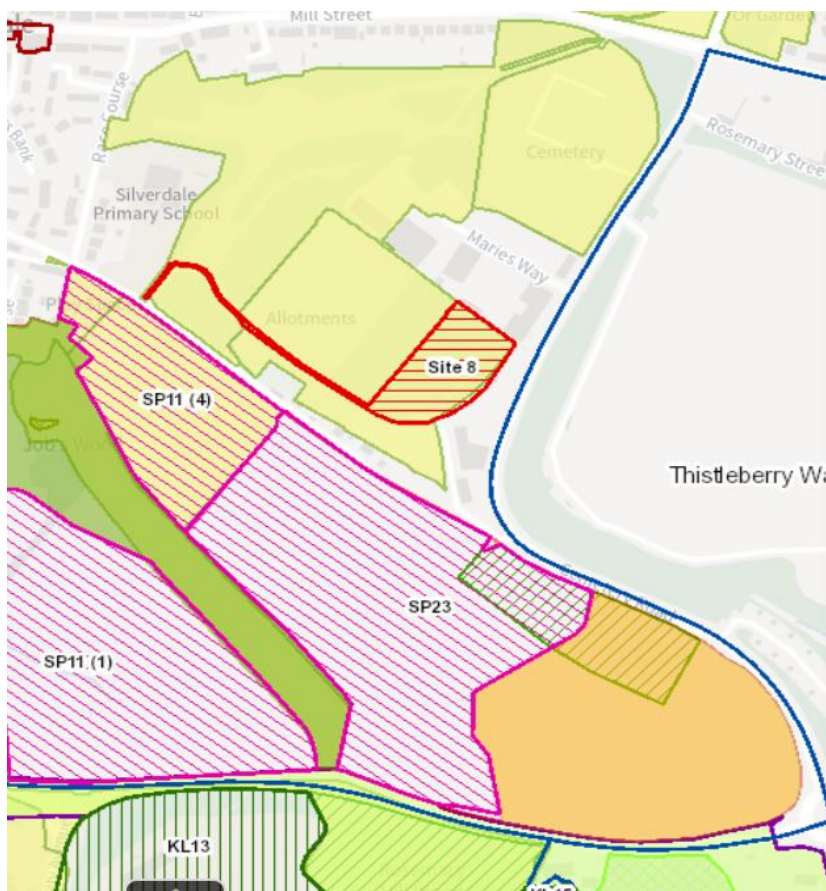


Figure 3 Location of G&T8 in red: Newcastle Staffs Local Plan 2024

Site G&T8 is unsuitable for the proposed allocation for several important reasons. SPC does not believe the land will be released mainly because the finance required to rectify contamination is prohibitively expensive in relation to the use and therefore cannot meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople over the Plan Period.

Also, the allocation of the land is challengeable in law, primarily because the parcel of land was acquired originally by the local authority for the specific purpose of being kept as allotments. The change requires Secretary of State's approval.

The proposed use passes directly through the centre of a current statutory allotment site. Acre Allotments was recorded in the 1900 OS Map and in previous years, having been previously designated so for the use of Silverdale's citizens.

The proposed allocation is unjustified, because

1 There is a long lease in place between the Borough Council and Silverdale Parish Council for the use of part of land, including the access road.

2 The proposed road access to T&G8 would be shared with Acre Allotment Association, sub tenants of Silverdale Parish Council. The proposed sharing of the road access could only occur if the road was improved to allow transport by vehicles pulling trailers. Road improvement would be a necessary for access as the paths are unmetalled and coupled with new mains supplies for the pitches would threaten the continuation of the Allotment Association.

3 Extensive remediation is required on land where there is a history of unregulated deposit of different kinds of toxic waste harmful to human ranging from unremediated cattle and pig faeces to heavy metal contamination (from mining and waste accumulation) and also buried asbestos.

4 The development of this site would be unsustainable and environmentally harmful to the environment. Northwest of the proposed access road is the Racecourse Community Woodland (SP8), between Mill Street and Park Street, containing many mature native trees and there are local springs which generate an ecology that would be harmed by the traffic and development proposed.

5 The single lane traffic access to the Acre Allotment Association is unsuitable. The access road is best classified as a country lane so the proposed development would fall foul of the policy of biodiversity impacts on rural lanes, where they need to be widened, including destruction of adjoining natural landscape.

Modification:

The proposal should be excluded from the Allocation of Gypsy and Traveller Sites or as an alternative a separate access from Maries Way could avoid the conflict with the natural environment and circulation and access at the Acres Allotment and at Racecourse Community Woodland. That second best option should include a full physical survey of the area to identify contaminants followed by remediation.