



Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Appendix 5 – Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Surrey Heath Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough, which will set out the strategies and policies that will guide development within the borough up to 2038. As part of the plan-making process, Surrey Heath Borough Council is required to address the needs of groups with specific housing requirements; this includes making provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites within the Local Plan. This can be achieved through the provision of pitches and plots where possible and through criteria-based policies where the identification of pitches and plots has not been possible.
- 1.2. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ('PPTS') (2023) requires the Council to:
1. Make its own assessment of the need for Traveller accommodation for the purposes of planning in our borough,
 2. Develop fair and effective strategies to meet the identified need through the identification of land for sites,
 3. Protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development,
 4. Promote more private traveller site provision and reduce unauthorised development,
 5. Identify deliverable sites to provide five years' worth of accommodation against a locally set target, and
 6. Identify developable sites or broad locations for growth for the next six to ten years and where possible 11-15 years.
- 1.3. The Council commissioned consultants ORS to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the borough, which was completed in June 2020. The GTAA indicated a significant uplift in the number of pitches and plots required across the Plan Period when compared to the previous GTAA (June 2018). The identified need for Traveller accommodation is set out in the GTAA (2020)¹.
- 1.4. As with other types of housing, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) identifies land in the borough that are considered to be realistic '*deliverable*' or '*developable*' candidates for development for Traveller accommodation. In identifying these sites, the SLAA has deployed the methodology as set out in Appendix I: Methodology².

¹ Available online at: www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base.

² Guidance is available in National Planning Practice Guidance PPG (Guidance category – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment)



- 1.5. However, for the assessment of Traveller accommodation, no minimum site size threshold has been used, which means that sites that could accommodate even just one Traveller pitch or Travelling Showpeople plot have been considered.

2. Planning for our Travelling communities' needs

- 2.1. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out current Government planning policy for traveller sites and provides guidance, alongside relevant Case Law, in respect of how reviews of the housing needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople should be assessed.
- 2.2. PPTS must be taken into account in the preparation of development plans. Local planning authorities preparing plans for and taking decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework so far as relevant.
- 2.3. The Government published an update to the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF')³ in July 2018 (Subsequently revised in 2019, 2021 and 2023). An updated Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ('PPTS')³⁴ was published in December 2023.
- 2.4. The NPPF states that:

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay⁵.
- 2.5. PPTS states that local authorities should set targets for Traveller accommodation that address the identified needs⁶. Additionally, local authorities are required to identify a supply of *deliverable* sites to meet the need for Traveller accommodation for the next five years, and identify sufficient *developable* sites or broad locations with potential to meet the need for Traveller accommodation arising in the 6 – 10 and 11 – 15 year periods of the Local Plan.

³ Available online at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2.

⁴ Available online at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites.

⁵ NPPF Paragraph 60.

⁶ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 Paragraph 9: 'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1'.



- 2.6. The definitions of what constitute ‘*deliverable*’ and ‘*developable*’ sites are set out in the PPTS, on page 3, footnotes 4 and 5⁷.
- 2.7. Since the preparation of the first GTAA, Council officers have liaised with key stakeholders, including members of the Traveller community and landowners of sites providing Traveller accommodation. Engaging more with our Traveller community will continue to help us to understand concerns about accommodation and the planning process.
- 2.8. Planning applications for Traveller accommodation may come forward on land not identified in this SLAA. Any permission for permanent Traveller accommodation will count towards meeting identified need. This SLAA seeks to identify sites on land that meets the assessment criteria.

Identified Need and Requirement

- 2.9. The identified need for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation is set out in the GTAA (2020) and the associated letter from ORS, dated December 2023, which confirms that the reversion to the 2012 PPTS planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople does not result in changes to the categorisation of the Council’s identified needs. Following the publication of the GTAA, a planning application (Reference: 19/2047/FFU) was permitted for the development of two Traveller pitches. This has reduced the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the first five years of the plan period to 21 pitches.
- 2.10. Therefore, the identified need for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople meeting the planning definition is set out as follows:

Table 1: Identified Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need

Years	2020-25	2026-30	2031-35	2036-40	Total
Pitches	21	3	3	3	30

⁷ PPTS Footnote 4: ‘To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within 5 years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans’.

PPTS Footnote 5: ‘To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for traveller site development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged’.



Table 2: Identified Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Need

Years	2020-25	2026-30	2031-35	2036-40	Total
Pitches	8	2	2	2	14

- 2.11. The Council has developed a methodology to identify and assess the suitability of sites to meet this need, which is detailed in the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Identification Paper (GTTSIP) (2022). The GTTSIP should be read in conjunction with the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation (GTTSA) Topic Paper.
- 2.12. Approximately 45% of land within the borough is affected by policy or environmental constraints that represent an absolute constraint to residential development. This includes the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and its associated 400m buffer zone and flood zone 3.

3. Call for Sites (2022): Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

- 3.1. In order to identify the most appropriate sites for new pitches and plots, the Council is undertook a Call for Sites from the 19th April to the 10th June 2022, alongside other site-identification work, to invite landowners, developers, local organisations and other interested parties, to submit land in Surrey Heath for consideration as sites to deliver new Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.

4. Draft Surrey Heath Local Plan: Preferred Options (2019 - 2038) Additional Site Allocations for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Regulation 18 Consultation

- 4.1. This consultation set out a series of additional proposed site allocation options for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. The consultation was open from 12:00 midday on Monday 8th August to 12:00 midday on Monday 19th September 2022. Please refer to the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper (2022) for further information.

