



Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Appendix 5 – Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation



February 2022

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD
Planning.consultation@surreyheath.gov.uk



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') (2015) 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 and 2021). An updated Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ('PPTS')^{3 4} was published in August 2015.
- 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 delay*⁵.
- 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 I and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex I'.



- 2.6. The definitions of what constitute ‘*deliverable*’ and ‘*developable*’ sites are set out in the PPTS, on page 3, footnotes 4 and 5⁷. PPTS (2015) amends the definition of travellers for the purposes of planning to exclude those travellers that have ceased to travel permanently.
- 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). 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 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 Site Identification and Selection Background Paper'(GTSISBP) (2020). The GTSISBP 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.
- 2.13. The GTAA identified a range and mix of sites that could deliver a proportion of the identified need of Traveller accommodation within the borough. However, at the base-date of the SLAA (1st April 2021), no further sites have been identified as realistic candidates for the development of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots. Further work is currently being undertaken with regard to the exploration of delivery at a number of sites, including a site at Diamond Ridge Woods in Camberley.
- 2.14. In addition to this, the emerging draft Local Plan includes the provision of both a strategic requirement to include an appropriate amount of Traveller accommodation on sites delivering 100 or more dwellings, alongside development management criteria for the determination of planning applications relating to Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots.
- 2.15. Given the constrained context of the borough, the SLAA has not been able to identify sufficient sites capable of delivering the identified need. The Council has identified a range of options that seek to help identify further provision of Traveller accommodation sites, which are set out in the GTTSA Topic Paper.



3. Next Steps

- 3.1. Further work is set to be undertaken in the preparation of the draft Local Plan to identify sufficient sites to deliver the identified needs for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation during the Local Plan period. As part of this further work, the Council will conduct a further Call for Sites to identify any alternative sites that may be available for development.
- 3.2. Further investigation will also take place to identify additional *deliverable* and *developable* sites in other potential sources of supply, including:
 1. extant planning permissions or pitches/plots that are currently under construction,
 2. planning applications awaiting determination,
 3. planning applications that have been recently refused or withdrawn,
 4. sites with temporary permissions or unauthorised sites that may potentially be suitable for regularisation,
 5. pre-application enquiries (where not confidential),
 6. land in the ownership of the local authority,
 7. surplus and likely to become surplus public sector land, including land owned by bodies such as Surrey County Council and the Ministry of Defence,
 8. sites submitted by developers through formal 'Call for Sites' and/or through local plan consultations,
 9. sites suggested through engagement with local communities and the call for sites,
 10. currently vacant and derelict land, and
 11. the intensification and/or extension of existing permanent authorised sites and other sites.
- 3.3. Following the upcoming Call for Sites and Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Local Plan: Preferred Options document, currently planned for early 2022, the SLAA will be updated to reflect the revised position as in 2022. The updated SLAA will provide further information on specific sites identified to meet the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.
- 3.4. Please refer to the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper (2021), the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2020), and the Gypsy and Traveller Site Identification and Selection Background Paper (2020) for further detail.

