

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

- 7.1 This final chapter draws conclusions from the evidence. It then makes a series of recommendations relating to meeting the identified need for new provision, facilities, and recording and monitoring processes.
- 7.2 The chapter begins by presenting an overview of the policy changes, followed by review of the needs and facilitating the needs of Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showpeople, and then concludes with key recommendations.

Accommodation needs

- 7.3 The following outlines the accommodation needs in relation to Gypsies and Travellers (Table 7.1) and Travelling Showpeople (Table 7.2) for the period 2021-2041.

Gypsies and Travellers

| Period | Ethnic definition | PPTS 2015 definition |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2021-26 | 14 | 10 |
| 2026-31 | 8 | 8 |
| 2031-36 | 9 | 8 |
| 2036-41 | 10 | 9 |
| Total 2021-41 | 41 | 35 |

Source: GTAA 2022

Travelling Showpeople

| Table 7.2: Summary of Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs 2021-41 (plots) | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 2021-26 | 6 |
| 2026-31 | 1 |
| 2031-36 | 1 |
| 2036-41 | 1 |
| Total 2021-41 | 9 |

Source: GTAA 2022

The location of new provision

- 7.4 This is general consensus that smaller sites and yards are preferred by Gypsy, Traveller, Showpeople, and residential caravan dweller communities due to better management and

maintenance of provision and security. Ongoing monitoring of provision and vacant provisions should be undertaken by the local authorities alongside discussions with different community groups, to ensure that any additional need that may arise is identified.

7.5 Ensuring that new accommodation provision is located in a safe environment is important although the impact of land costs on determining feasibility must also be considered. The settled community neighbouring sites or yards should be involved in consultations. As discussed in previous chapters, households and organisations are interested in increasing current permanent accommodation provision on existing sites or yards, or developing new provision elsewhere in the study area. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is the potential to address some of the existing need for Gypsies and Travellers in land either already owned by the households or land the families intend to purchase.

7.6 In terms of identifying broad locations for new permanent sites and yards, there are a number of factors which could be considered including:

Costs

- How do land costs impact on feasibility i.e. is it affordable?
- Implementation of services – is it possible for the new site to connect to nearby mains services e.g. electricity, gas, water or sewerage?
- Can good drainage be ensured on the new provision?

Social

- Does the proposed location of the new provision lie within a reasonable distance of school catchment areas?
- Sustainability – is the proposed location close to existing bus routes?
- Proximity of social and leisure services – is the proposed location close to leisure facilities such as sports centres, cinemas etc. or welfare services such as health and social services etc.

Availability

- Who owns the land and are they willing to sell / rent?
- Is access easy or will easements across other land be needed both for residents and services/utilities?
- Are utilities close enough to service the provision at realistic prices?

Deliverability

- Does the proposed location meet existing general planning policy in terms of residential use, (for example in relation to Green Belt, flooding and the historic environment)?
- Can the owner sell the land easily and quickly?
- Can utilities connect to the proposed provision?
- Can highways connect to the proposed provision?

- 7.7 It is important that new provisions are located close to amenities such as shops, schools and health facilities or where there are good transport links or within reasonable distance for households to access the necessary facilities and amenities. DCLG (2015) guidance suggests that local planning authorities should strictly limit new Gypsy and Traveller site development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas do not dominate the nearest settled community and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. As stated in Chapter 2, the study area local authority Local Plan policies contain locational criteria to help determine suitable locations for the development of new sites or yards.
- 7.8 PPTS (2015) states that when considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:
- a. effective use of previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land
 - b. sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness
 - c. promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d. not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community
- 7.9 In some cases, it may be necessary for the identified need to be met outside of the local authority where it arises, and local planning authorities should work together under the Duty to Co-operate where this is the case. For example, if a household is unable to gain planning permission or find a site or yard in the local area, they might have to consider alternative options in neighbouring or nearby local authorities.
- 7.10 One option is to provide new pitches as part of sustainable urban extensions. Local authorities may choose to include a requirement for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be included in an urban extension and stipulate that they are developed in that location because it has good access to schools, shops, community facilities and places of employment. There are yet no examples of local authorities successfully developing new Gypsy and Traveller pitches as part of urban extensions. However, some local authorities have incorporated the principle into local planning policies including Mid Devon District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, and Worcester City Council.

The size of new provision

- 7.11 There are differences between the different communities as to the ideal size of new accommodation provision. The following presents an overview according to community type:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches

- 7.12 The CLG's '[Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide](#)' (2008) (withdrawn 2015) guidance states that there is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs. However, they do suggest that as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.
- 7.13 Based on previous and current DCLG guidance, it can be determined that a pitch of approximately 325 square metres would take into account all minimum separation distance guidance between caravans and pitch boundaries as stipulated in guidance and safety regulations for caravan development. A pitch size of at least 500 square metres (0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the following on-pitch facilities:
- Hard standing for a touring caravan (enabling households to travel)
 - Hard standing for a static caravan (including double static trailers)
 - 2 car parking spaces
 - 1 amenity block
 - Hard standing for storage shed and drying
 - Garden/amenity area
- 7.14 If granting permission on an open plan basis, permission should be given on a pitch-by-pitch equivalent basis to the above. For example, an existing pitch which has enough space to accommodate a chalet structure, 2 touring caravans and 1 – 2 static caravans along with 4 parking spaces, 2 blocks etc., could be counted as 2 pitches even if based on an open plan basis on one structured pitch. However, this would need to be recorded for future monitoring.

Showpeople plots

- 7.15 New plots need to provide sufficient space for work equipment as well as space for residential accommodation. This includes space situated away from the living quarters for the storage and maintenance of work equipment and vehicles, as well as space to accommodate domestic vehicles. Due to the need for both accommodation space and space for the storage and maintenance of large equipment, Showpeople plots tend to be much larger than Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Transit provision

- 7.16 It should be noted that Herefordshire Council propose to apply for capital funding to develop a temporary stopping place. It is also recommended that Herefordshire Council adopt a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited at a suitable location for an agreed and limited period of time, and if necessary, with the provision of services such as waste disposal and toilets.
- 7.17 Agreements could be made with households residing on sites and allowing visiting family and friends to stay for agreed periods of time. This would lead to fewer unauthorised encampments which adversely impact on the local community.

Summary

- 7.18 This report provides the assessment of levels of accommodation need needed by Gypsies, Travellers, and Showpeople. It is then for Herefordshire Council to determine how it will use the information provided in this report and address the needs via its Local Plan.
- 7.19 Local Plans have to adhere to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021), PPTS (2015), and the Equalities Act (2010). As such, in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, it is recommended that the Council incorporate both the PPTS (2015) and the ethnic calculations into their local plan. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also able to demonstrate that how accommodation need for those who do not meet the PPTS (2015) definition are being addressed. It is important to note that this only refers to Gypsies and Travellers and not Travelling Showpeople.
- 7.20 The local authorities may also need to consider additional accommodation need not identified at the time of the assessment and therefore not included in calculation of need for this assessment, or accommodation need which may materialise over the local plan period. For example, the accommodation needs of households not included in the calculation of need as part of this assessment (i.e. not living in bricks and mortar, on known authorised or unauthorised sites, encampments or transit provision, or from outside of the study area) should be considered separate to the need identified in this assessment. Such additional accommodation needs could be met through windfall allocations.
- 7.21 In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:

Planning policy:

- Implement corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.

House of Commons *Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*, April 2019.

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Mid Suffolk Development Plan Document, Adopted 2008.

Niner, Pat (2003), *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM.

Niner, PM (2004) 'Accommodating Nomadism? An Examination of Accommodation Options for Gypsies and Travellers in England', *Housing Studies*, Carfax Publishing.

Niner, Pat, *Counting Gypsies & Travellers: A Review of the Gypsy Caravan Count System*, ODPM, February 2004 located at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/158004.pdf>.

ONS 2011 *Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group* located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

