

Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people - Evidence Paper: Addendum

St Albans City and District Council – November 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 The 'Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people' evidence paper dated September 2024¹ sets out the position of St Albans City and District Council (SADC) for the Regulation 19 Publication Local Plan to 2041 with regards to how the identified need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the District will be addressed. Section 5 summarised the approach to meeting the identified need in the District, as follows:

- 5.1. *There have been multiple Calls for Sites between 2009 and 2021 that have included calling for potential Gypsy and Traveller sites. There was also a specific 'St Albans Gypsy and Traveller Call for Sites 2024' which ran between Monday 8 July 2024 to Monday 19 August 2024.*
- 5.2. *Policy HOU6 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan identifies two specific identified sites within East Hemel Central and East Hemel South Broad Locations that would deliver up to 40 pitches over the Plan period. It also identifies criteria based policy for provision of pitches based on the approach encouraged in the PPTS. From 'duty to co-operate' discussions, it has been identified that there is no likelihood of any of the District's needs being met in neighbouring local authority areas.*

1.2 This Addendum expands upon the above summary to clarify, with reference to the findings of the SADC Local Plan Evidence document Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report dated September 2024 (GTAA)², the following:

- a) Private pitch provision: The Council seeks to meet the identified need for additional pitches at private sites primarily through the regularisation, intensification, reconfiguration or expansion of existing sites.
- b) Public pitch provision: The Council seeks to meet the identified need for additional pitches at public sites through the two specific allocations identified in Policy HOU6, ie at East Hemel Central and East Hemel South Broad Locations.

¹ Available on the Council's Evidence Base here:

https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/R19/Meeting%20the%20Accommodation%20Needs%20of%20Gypsies%20and%20Travellers%20and%20Travelling%20Show%20people%20-%20Evidence%20Paper_0.pdf

² Available on the Council's Evidence Base here:

<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Planning%20Policy/R19/GTAA%20Report.pdf>

2. Private pitch provision

2.1 Section 8 'Conclusions' of the GTAA sets out that:

- 8.5 *Need from households who met the 2023 PPTS planning definition should be addressed through the intensification, reconfiguration or expansion of existing sites, or the allocation of new sites or pitches. The Council should also consider the regularisation of sites that currently have temporary planning permission or are unauthorised. In order to explore opportunities for need, or a proportion of need, to be met on existing sites the Council should consider completing a more detailed Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA). This approach has been successfully used by other Local Authorities in England and has concluded that a large proportion of need could, in principle, be met on existing sites.*
- 8.6 *For private sites it is also recommended that alternative approaches should be considered when seeking to address the levels of need identified in this GTAA, especially when seeking to meet the need through the intensification, reconfiguration or expansion of existing sites.*
- 8.7 *The first approach to consider is in relation to single concealed or doubled-up adults and teenagers who will be in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years. In the short to medium term it is likely that the accommodation need of these individuals could be met through additional touring caravans on existing sites as opposed to more formally set out larger pitches.*
- 8.8 *The second approach to consider is for sites occupied by larger extended family groups. Again, sites like this may be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches. It is common for conditions in Decision Notices for Travellers sites to simply place limits on the numbers and types of caravans as opposed to placing limits on the number of pitches.*

2.2 Having reviewed the sites from where existing need arises in relation to pitch density, land ownership and planning and other constraints; the Council considers that:

- a) In relation to single concealed or doubled-up adults and teenagers who will be in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years, in the short to medium term it is likely that the accommodation need of these individuals could be met through additional touring caravans on existing sites as opposed to more formally set out larger pitches, as referenced at 8.7; and
- b) sites occupied by larger extended family groups are likely to be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches; as referenced at 8.8.

3. Public pitch provision

3.1 Section 8 'Conclusions' of the GTAA sets out that:

8.9 *In addition, a large proportion of current need identified in the GTAA (26 pitches) is from households currently living on the 3 public sites in St Albans. Whilst there is a small amount of pitch turnover on these sites it is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the levels of identified need. Therefore it is recommended that the Council consider opportunities to intensify or expand the existing public sites, or opportunities to develop a new public sites(s) in St Albans.*

3.2 The Council considers that this need for public pitches would be met at the two specific allocations for new sites included in Policy HOU6 d) and subject of the Key development requirements for Part B sites H3 and H4. These policies require provision of a 15-20 pitch site at each of East Hemel Hempstead (South) and (Central) Broad Locations.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Taking the GTAA recommendations and the above points into account, the Council's position is that: all of the need for public pitches would be met at the two specific allocations for new sites included in the Draft Local Plan; and as indicated in the GTAA, all or at least a very large proportion of the need arising from existing private sites could be met on the existing sites.