

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

St Albans City and District Council – September 2024

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper sets out evidence to demonstrate how the identified need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the District will be addressed.

## 2. Policy Background

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) sets out in paragraph 63 that the accommodation needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies; and footnote 28 clarifies that 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (PPTS) sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed.

- 2.2. The PPTS sets out in paragraph 9 that Local planning authorities (LPAs) should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Paragraph 10 sets out that LPAs should, in producing their Local Plan,

*a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets*

*b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15*

*c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries)*

*d) relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density*

*e) protect local amenity and environment.*

- 2.3. In addition, in Paragraph 11 it states that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need; Paragraph 13 includes a number of criteria to seek to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally; Paragraph 14 states that when assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, LPAs should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community; Paragraph 16 sets out that If a LPA wishes to make an exceptional, limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which

might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site, it should do so only through the planmaking process and not in response to a planning application; and Paragraph 19 sets out that LPAs should have regard to the need that travelling showpeople have for mixed-use yards to allow residential accommodation and space for storage of equipment..

### **3. Identified Need**

3.1. The SADC Local Plan Evidence document “Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment” (GTAA) Final Report dated September 2024 provides a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in St Albans District. The GTAA identified a need for 80 pitches for households that met the planning definition in the PPTS (as updated in December 2023). This is made up of 4 unauthorised pitches; 1 temporary pitch; 17 from concealed/doubled-up/over-crowded households or single adults; 24 from a 5-year need from teenage children; and 36 from new household formation, using a rate of 2.00% derived from the household demographics. There were also 2 vacant pitches on public sites and these have been netted off as supply. There is no identified need for a formal public transit site at this time.

3.2. It notes (Paragraph 7.17) in relation to need in the three 5-year periods:

*“In addition to tables which set out the overall need for Gypsies and Travellers, the overall need has also been broken down by 5-year bands as required by PPTS. The way that this is calculated is by including all current need (from unauthorised pitches, pitches with temporary planning permission, concealed and doubled-up households, 5 year need from teenage children, and net movement from bricks and mortar) in the first 5 years. In addition, the total net new household formation is split across the GTAA period based on the compound rate of growth that was applied rather than being split equally over time.”*

3.3. In summary, the need within the District is set out in Figures 1-4 of the document. Figure 1 summarises the total identified need for Gypsy and Traveller households in St Albans (2024 - 2041); Figure 2 breaks this down by year periods for households that met the 2023 PPTS planning definition; and Figures 3 and 4 set out equivalent information for Travelling Showpeople households. Further detail of the methodology and findings is set out in the full report.

### **4. Approach to ‘Undetermined’ and ‘Do not meet Planning Definition’**

4.1. It is noted that, as set out in the GTAA at paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9:

*Only the need from those households who met the 2023 PPTS planning definition should be formally considered as need arising from the GTAA. This can be addressed through the intensification, reconfiguration or expansion of existing sites, or through 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.*

*The Council will need to carefully consider how to address any need associated with undetermined Travellers, as it is unlikely that all the undetermined households will meet the 2023 PPTS planning definition of a Traveller. The GTAA recommends that the local proportion of those households who met the planning definition (79%) should be applied to the undetermined need when considering Local Plan Policies. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council should consider the use of a criteria-based policy (as suggested in Paragraph 11 in the PPTS) for need from undetermined households, as well as to deal with any windfall applications, need from in-migration, and need from bricks and mortar.*

## **5. Approach to Meeting the Identified Need in the District**

- 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.