

**REPORT TITLE: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION
ASSESSMENT
REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY
DIRECTION)**

WARDS AFFECTED: ALLWARDS

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- To inform Executive members of the Hinckley and Bosworth Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (A copy of the assessment is available upon request from the report author).
- To adopt the Assessment as the evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller needs within the Borough.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- I. That the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is adopted as the evidence base in determining the need requirement within the Borough, and agree to the recommendations contained within the assessment.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

In 2007 Birmingham University carried out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodations Assessment (GTAA) on behalf of the 7 districts in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council. The results of this Assessment formed the evidence base for Development Plan Documents, including Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2009.

Policy 18 of the Core Strategy sets out the requirement for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in the Borough. It set a target for 42 residential pitches in the Borough, 6 to be for socially rented pitches, 5 transit pitches and a further 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople up to 2017. For the period 2017 to the end of the plan period of 2026 a growth rate per annum was set out for household formation.

In 2012 Government repealed previous Gypsy and Traveller guidance, replacing it with the document "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites", which placed a requirement on local planning authorities to set targets for the pitch requirement for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople for permanent and transit site accommodation. The guidance no longer set out a specific methodology for carrying out such an assessment, except that it should use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions. It also incorporates the need for a local authority to have a 5 year land supply of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

Given the length of time since the original study was commissioned, the revised guidance for Gypsy and Traveller sites, and the revocation of the Regional Plan and the targets, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council decided to commission a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. At the time that the Assessment was commissioned in 2012, there were 67 permanent pitches, 8 transit pitches and 8 Travelling Showpeople plots in the Borough. All of this provision was privately owned.

4. **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2012**

The work for the Assessment comprised two linked, but separate pieces of work:

- An assessment of need up to 2027 (over a 15 year period);
- The ability of the Borough to meet the identified need.

Opinion Research Services (ORS) carried out the first part of the Assessment, whilst Peter Brett Associates (PBA) undertook the second task once the assessment of need was completed.

Methodology

ORS use a methodology based upon surveying all of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in the research area. This includes:

- People in permanent pitches;
- People in temporary pitches;
- People in unauthorised encampments or on authorised developments (although at the time of surveying there were no such residents in the Borough)
- People living in bricks and mortar who would like to return to living on a pitch
- Households from elsewhere who are resident in the research area.

From this, ORS can project future need by looking at the emerging population, household formation, overcrowded households and the wishes and aspirations of the survey group.

PBA then surveyed current sites to provide a sequential approach to meeting those needs. This sequence was approached in the following order of precedence:

- Capacity on existing sites either through unused pitches or through the intensification of the sites within their existing boundary;
- The ability for existing sites to be extended into the surrounding land within the ownership of the residents to meet the future need;
- If these two approaches failed to find enough pitches to meet identified need, PBA would look to assess identified new sites for their ability to meet the requirements of the future need.

Findings

Needs Assessment

The need identified for the first part of the study showed the following need for permanent pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation:

Time period	For population growth	Permanent pitches for sites with temporary permission	Total
2012 – 2017	9	10	19
2017- 2022	10	0	10
2022 – 2027	11	0	11
Total	30	10	40

The survey showed that these pitches should all be for private ownership. There is no requirement for affordable pitches or for transit sites or emergency stopping places. This requirement is significantly lower than the 42 pitch target set within the Core Strategy Policy 18 which was only up to 2017 when this study identifies a 40 pitch need requirement up to 2027.

For Travelling Showpeople, it is projected that a further 7 pitches will be needed to meet the natural population growth on Carousel Park.

Site Assessment

Sites with the potential to meet the identified need were assessed by PBA as follows:

Site name	Settlement	No of additional pitches
Oak View Mobile Home	Barlestone	1
Travellers Rest	Bagworth	2
Costalot Stables, Barlestone Road	Bagworth	6**
Finney's Hill, Heath Road	Bagworth	7
The Paddock, Watling Street	Hinckley	4***
Land off Stoke Lane	Higham on the Hill	3
White Stables caravan Park, Copt Oak Road	Markfield	7*
Total		30

* Site has gained planning permission for 4 additional pitches out of this total.

** Existing planning permission for 6 pitches are currently undeveloped.

*** Existing planning permission for 4 pitches are currently undeveloped.

This leaves a shortfall of 10 pitches to meet the projected need. However, in June 2013 planning permission was granted subject to S.106 agreement for 10 permanent pitches on a site adjacent to Dalebrook Farm in Earl Shilton.

For Travelling Showpeople, the capacity is as follows:

Site Name	Settlement	No of additional plots
Land opposite Carousel Park	Barwell	7

The Assessment also suggests that a sequential approach is applied for any ad hoc planning applications which may come forward outside of the identified need. Policy 18 of the Core Strategy gives a criteria based approach to the assessment of sites, and will be used for the determination of any such planning applications which may be received in the future.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [DMe]

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However there was £40,000 base budget available for Gypsy and Travellers need and we have spent £27,000 and there is £13,000 unspent budget available if further costs do arise in the future.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MR]

6.1 The government's current planning policy for traveller sites came into force in March 2012, it must be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions

6.2 The government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers and to help achieve this its aims in respect of traveller sites include;

- a) that LPAs should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning
- b) to encourage planning for sites over a reasonable timescale
- c) to promote more private traveller site provision
- d) to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply
- e) to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan making and planning decisions

6.3 In assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach LPAs should:

a) pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups)

b) cooperate with travellers their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up to date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of the development plan working collaboratively with neighbouring LPAs

c) use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and to make planning decisions

7 CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The adoption of the evidence base will help to meet the corporate aim of “decent, well managed and affordable housing” by providing the evidence to identify the need and the possible options to meet that need up to 2027.

8 CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in preparing the Assessment of the pitch requirements, and in the capacity of the existing sites to be intensified or extended.

9 RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Dependence on an out of date evidence base may jeopardise the robustness of the planning authorities decisions	Adoption of the 2012 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	Valerie Bunting
Need to identify a 5 year land supply for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches	Adoption of the evidence base and monitoring to ensure planning applications come forward in a timely manner.	Valerie Bunting
Duty to cooperate obligation is likely to be triggered by neighbouring authorities claiming inability to meet their need within their own boundaries.	Undertaking meeting with relevant parties as and when required. Consider if the authority is able to physically assist to meet the identified unmet need.	Sally Smith

10 KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The adoption of the evidence base is to identify the needs of a community group within the Borough, and to ensure that there is capacity to meet that identified need.

11 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Study 2012

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