

Greater Norwich Local Plan Hearing Statement Matter 6 - Homes

Introduction

This Hearing Statement has been produced by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council, working with Norfolk County Council as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP).

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The councils have responded to each question directly in the body of the hearing statement. Proposed modifications to Policy 5 Homes for discussion at the examination hearings and subsequent inclusion in the main modifications to the plan, along with proposed additional modifications to supporting text, are in Appendix A to this document.

Issue 3 Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and Residential Caravans

Question 1

Q1 Is the evidence base supporting the identified need for residential pitches and Travelling Show People plots robust, taking into account factors such as existing provision, household growth, hidden need (those in bricks and mortar housing), unauthorised sites and encampments and any engagement with the gypsy and traveller community?

Answer to Question 1

1. Yes, the Partnership has commissioned research studies that take into account the various factors that affect the supply and demand for pitches and plots. In 2017, the Caravans and Houseboats Accommodation Needs Assessment ([B8.1](#)) was published, and in January 2021 an update to this study was completed in respect of the pitch and plot needs for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People ([B8.2](#)). Then, in June 2022, an entirely new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), referenced [B8.3](#), was published. This assessment superseded documents B8.1 and B8.2 in relation to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People.
2. Paragraphs 44-48 of the Topic Paper for Policy 5: Homes ([D3.6](#)), which was published in September 2021, explains the evidence the Partnership had at that time. Paragraph 47 says that the Partnership estimated its need as “64 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, 48 plots for Travelling Show People, and 106 pitches for residential caravan dwellers”. Since September 2021, the needs evidence has been updated for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People, but the figure of 106 pitches for residential caravan dwellers that is cited at paragraph 47 of [D3.6](#) remains the most current information the Partnership has. As outlined at paragraph 48, the Partnership’s approach for residential caravans is to allow market-led provision of pitches guided by the criteria listed in policy 5 on the basis that this accommodation is a tenure of choice often chosen for reasons of lifestyle.
3. The Partnership has reviewed its evidence for the accommodation needs of Travelling Show People. Originally, a need for 46 Travelling Show People plots were calculated as being required for the period 2017-2036 – see Table 8.3 of the Accommodation Needs Assessment ([B8.1](#), page 91). However, this was subsequently revised to 48 plots over the period 2017-2038 in the Addendum update ([B8.2](#), page 3).
4. The most up-to-date evidence for the number of Travelling Show People plots needed is in the June 2022 GTAA ([B8.3](#), page 51). This concludes that 43 plots are required over the period April 2022 to March 2038. Pages 46-51 summarise how this figure was reached by a process of gathering information in conjunction with the Eastern Regional Showmen’s Guild and applying a 14-step methodology that accounts for

factors like the current supply of plots, vacancies, overcrowding, future gains and losses in the stock, population changes, migration, and how many families want to move between a plot and bricks and mortar housing.

5. The June 2022 GTAA ([B8.3](#)) is also the Partnership's most up-to-date evidence of the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. As explained in Table 5.11, page 52, this identifies a need for 50 pitches over the period April 2022 to March 2038. Although the GTAA also provides a lower figure of 29 pitches based upon the definition found in the 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), the Partnership aims to meet the higher requirement of 50 pitches to meet the evidenced full ethnic need.
6. This approach is in line with the legal judgment made in the Lisa Smith v SSLUHC [2022] EWHC case in October 2022 regarding the interpretation of the PPTS and the application of that policy to Gypsies and Travellers who have ceased to pursue nomadic lifestyles referred to by the inspectors' letter of November 2022 ([D5.4G](#)). The judgment concluded that any PPTS definition that excludes some Gypsies and Travellers is discriminatory. As a result, the Partnership has concluded against applying the PPTS 2015 definition of needs.
7. Section 4 of the June 2022 GTAA ([B8.3](#)) outlines the stakeholder consultation undertaken in producing the evidence. This included questionnaires and telephone interviews with site owners and managers and local and national services providing support to the different communities including the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy Roma Traveller Service (NSGRTS), the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.
8. The research gathered was then used to calculate the required number of pitches using a 15-step methodology that is summarised from paragraphs 5.17 to 5.38. Factors in the 15-step methodology are existing pitches, vacancies, overcrowding, future gains and losses in the stock, use of temporary and unauthorised pitches, as well as population changes like births and deaths, migration in and out of the area, and understanding how many families want to move between bricks and mortar housing and caravans.
9. The GTAA should be read in conjunction with the 'Topic Paper – Policy 5 Homes: Addendum on Gypsy and Traveller Sites' ([H3.1](#)), as well as the topic paper's appendices on the existing supply of pitches ([H3.4](#)) and pitches with planning permission that are yet to be built ([H3.5](#)). This information brings the Gypsy and Travellers accommodation needs evidence up to date to May 2023. The key figures are set out in Table 2 of [H3.1](#). This states that 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches are required over the period April 2022 to March 2038, of which 30 pitches are required between April 2022 and March 2027.

10. Recent work to bring sites forward, as outlined in the topic paper Policy 5 Homes: Addendum on Gypsy and Traveller Sites' ([H3.1](#)) section 8 (pages 10 and 11), by NSGRTS and GNLP officers has involved direct liaison with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, including a large number conversations on potential site allocations.
11. Thus, there has been extensive engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community and their representatives in both evidencing the amount of accommodation required and subsequently in identifying appropriate sites to meet that need.

Question 9

Q9 Have the sites proposed for allocation been selected using a robust, objective, and consistent process?

Answer to Question 9

12. In comparison with other types of development fewer landowners have promoted Gypsy and Traveller sites. Consequently, the Partnership has made extensive efforts to identify every possible available site, and has then applied a robust, objective and consistent assessment methodology. Details of this work are set out in the topic paper [H3.1](#) and are summarised below.
13. Paragraphs 6.1-6.2 and 7.1 of the topic paper describe how the Partnership was unable to identify Gypsy and Traveller sites prior to the plan's submission in 2021 and that only three sites had been identified by July 2022.
14. Since then, the Partnership has worked with the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Service (paras 8.1-8.3) to carry out a re-analysis of allocated sites to accommodate pitches (paras 9.1-9.3) and commissioned an agent to search for sites on the Partnership's behalf (para 10.1). The Partnership has also separately considered publicly and privately owned land for its potential to be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller use, as well as land owned by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Consequently, the Partnership is confident that it is selecting its sites from the widest available choice.
15. Throughout preparation of the GNLP a robust, objective and consistent approach has been taken to assessing and selecting sites based on the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) ([B11](#)). The methodology was adapted with criteria specific to the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community including access, landscaping and acoustic screening. Appendix A of a letter to the inspectors on 2nd September 2022 ([D5.4C](#), pages 4-5) provides further details.

16. Paragraphs 12.1-12.4 of [H3.1](#) explain how the HELAA methodology was integrated into Site Assessment Information documents [H2.1 and H2.2](#). Both documents follow a consistent approach for each site, consisting of a 'red', 'amber', or 'green' rating against each of the 15 HELAA criteria, followed by a written assessment of the site's suitability, availability and achievability for development. H2.1 considers the 14 sites that were part of the Focussed Consultation that ran between 30th January and 20th March 2023. H2.2 considers the 3 most recently promoted 'New Sites June 2023' that were consulted upon between 5th June and 3rd July 2023.
17. Paragraphs 13.1-13.3 and 14.1-14.3 of the topic paper ([H3.1](#)) explain how all the Gypsy and Traveller sites have undergone Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). To do this, the Partnership commissioned its consultants Lepus to assess each available Gypsy and Traveller site against the agreed sustainability framework, and similarly consultants the Landscape Partnership have undertaken an HRA that covered every site.
18. The result is a robust and consistent process which aligns with the approach that has been applied to all other types of sites the GNLP has proposed for allocation.

Question 10

Q10 Is the approach to provision for Travelling Show People effective, justified and consistent with national policy? Should the Plan set a target for travelling show people plots?

Answer to Question 10

19. Yes, the Partnership has complied with national policy by engaging with the Travelling Show People community and has undertaken robust evidence into this group's accommodation needs, but it agrees that the plan could be strengthened by including a target for plots to be delivered by the end of the plan period in 2038. Annual delivery would be monitored as proposed through the modifications to the monitoring framework, allowing a clear view to be established on any need for further actions should there be limited delivery by 2027.
20. The Partnership's approach is the criteria-based policy to permitting sites as set out in Policy 5. This is explained at paragraph 46 of topic paper [D3.6](#). This resulted from dialogue with the Eastern Region branch of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain about a Statement of Common Ground, which was agreed in November 2021 ([D4.5](#)).
21. The statement with the Guild covers the three themes of 1. Needs Evidence, 2. The Approach to Policy, and 3. Commitment to the Delivery of Sites. Because of this, the Partnership has followed a process that is effective, justified and consistent with

national policy. The Guild agrees with the Partnership that the criteria-based approach taken in Policy 5 “will allow plots to come forward at a pace that will meet needs”, and that this process will be assisted by a “mutual commitment to collaborate on the delivery of new sites”. Thus, the approach provides the flexibility about site location required by the Guild.

22. The Partnership has reflected on whether the plan should include a target for plots and is of the view that this would be beneficial. Consequently, a main modification to Policy 5 is proposed which includes the Travelling Show People plot target.
23. The proposed main modification is intended to add clarity that the criteria-based policy will seek to deliver the required number of plots, which is evidenced as 43 (see paragraph 25 below). The newly proposed text says: “Planning applications for new pitches or plots to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and for residential caravans can come forward at any time in the plan period. This will enable the delivery of a minimum of 43 new Travelling Show People plots by 2038”.
24. An additional modification to the supporting text of Policy 5 is also proposed to explain how the Partnership will work proactively with the Guild to find plots and enable schemes through the planning process. The modified paragraph is proposed to say: “The policy also allows for Travelling Show People and Residential Caravan needs to be met through market-led solutions through the criteria-based policy. The Partnership will work with the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain (Eastern Region) to address the need for 43 plots over the plan period to 2038”.
25. The approach to provision for Travelling Show people is effective, justified and consistent with national policy as the GNLP is informed by the latest June 2022 GTAA ([B8.3](#)). Table 6.6 states that the requirement is 43 plots over the 16-year period from April 2022 to March 2038, of which 27 plots are required over the current 5-year period to March 2027 and there is a need for 6-10 plots for years 6 to 10 which when annualised is 2 plots. The Partnership intends to include this information in its proposed monitoring framework for the GNLP and doing so will mean there is a quantifiable target that the Partnership can actively monitor and manage.
26. Consequently, the GNLP proposes that plots and yards for Travelling Show people be provided through market led solutions through a criteria-based policy. This will allow sites to come forward if and where there is a demand for them. This approach has been agreed through a Statement of Common Ground agreed between the GNLP authorities and the Eastern Region of Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain ([D4.5](#)) in November 2021. The Guild and the Greater Norwich authorities agree to have a mutual commitment to collaborate on the delivery of new sites through the planning applications, or for example if government grant funding opportunities arise.

Question 11

Q11 If negotiated stopping arrangements are to be used for transit provision, how would this work, and which land would be used? What procedures are in place to ensure any such approach is effective?

Answer to Question 11

27. Currently the Partnership does not intend to introduce negotiated stopping for transit provision. This is because the Partnership already has effective procedures in place for managing unauthorised encampments in the Greater Norwich area.
28. The 2017 Caravans and Houseboats Accommodation Needs Assessment ([B8.1](#)) recommended the introduction of negotiated stopping in Greater Norwich. The glossary of the study gives a definition of negotiated stopping and paragraphs 6.42-6.43 advise that the local authorities should have negotiated stopping allowing caravans to be sited on suitable land for an agreed and limited period.
29. The Partnership understands that negotiated stopping was pioneered by the [Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange](#) and some discussions have taken place at an operational level about following the Leeds model.
30. To date, the Partnership authorities have not adopted the Leeds model as effective procedures for managing transit encampments are in place, with a tolerated approach taken where it is deemed suitable to do so.
31. The Greater Norwich approach to unauthorised encampments has similarities to negotiated stopping. When an unauthorised encampment occurs, the practice is to hold a multi-agency protocol meeting which the travelling family and the landowner are also invited to attend. The outcome is generally that the unauthorised encampment is tolerated for a period that can range from a few days to several months, and basic facilities like refuse collections are often provided.
32. This approach is successful as each authority has effective coordination between its planning, housing, and environmental health roles to manage transit encampments, and there is cooperation between the councils.
33. Both the political and officer-level structures exist for introducing formal negotiated stopping policies if this becomes the preferred approach, either sub-regionally via the Greater Norwich Development Partnership ([GNDP](#)), or at a county-wide scale via the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework ([NSPF](#)).

34. A further important project for managing unauthorised encampments is the ongoing work by South Norfolk Council to refurbish its transit site at Bawburgh (planning reference [2021/2766](#)). Planned improvements include an access gate, bollards, a vehicle recognition system, CCTV, and a refuse store to serve 6 temporary pitches.

35. Proposed amendments to policy 5 set out in Appendix A will clarify the criteria for providing additional transit pitches should they be required:

‘for Transit pitches providing temporary accommodation the following additional criteria apply:

- The site is conveniently accessible to the main ‘A’ and ‘B’ class road network; and,
- An agreement is place is in place for satisfactory site management, including maximum period and frequency of stay’.

Question 12

Q12 Is Policy 5, including the modifications proposed by the Partnership, justified, effective and consistent with national policy with respect to gypsy and traveller, and travelling show people sites?

Answer to Question 12

36. Policy 5: Homes, with proposed main modifications set out in the topic paper ([H3.1](#)) and as amended in this document, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People sites.

37. The proposed main modifications to policy 5 set out in the topic paper, serve three purposes:

- a. The first is to provide protection in planning policy terms to the existing stock of Gypsy and Traveller pitches so that a shortage is not inadvertently created by future planning applications that seek the redevelopment of sites for other uses.
- b. The second is to outline how the plan will meet the evidenced needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation from 2022 to 2038 through a mixture of site allocations and windfall sites. As supplemented by the proposed Site allocations identified in the response to Matter 17, would provide for the pitch need with a buffer.
- c. The third is to provide the criteria-based policy for the granting of new pitches which will apply both to new sites and the expansion of existing sites. This will assist both allocated and windfall sites to come forward

38. Further modifications are now proposed and are included in appendix A. These are:

- a. Firstly, the inclusion of the site recently consulted on at Hevingham. The consultation has not identified any issues and constraints which cannot be addressed. Therefore, the inclusion of the site at Hevingham is proposed because this site scores well through the appraisal process in comparison with other sites, is deliverable because it is an existing site promoted by the landowner with the capacity for expansion and because this brings the supply of pitches 40 over the 5-year period from April 2022 to March 2027. This results in a 6.7-year land supply, thus providing a larger buffer and greater certainty that evidenced needs will be met.

- b. Secondly the inclusion of a target for Travelling Show people in policy 5. This is to make clear that the criteria-led approach to permitting sites for Travelling Show People will enable the requirement for 43 pitches by the end of the plan period to be met. To do this, the Partnership proposes to amend policy 5 to include the 43-pitch target, so that the policy states “Planning applications for new pitches or plots to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and for residential caravans can come forward at any time in the plan period. This will enable the delivery of a minimum of 43 new Travelling Show People plots by 2038”. This will be followed in the policy by the criteria for assessing submitted sites. It is also proposed to amend the supporting text to Policy 5 by adding a sentence to say: “The Partnership will also seek to work with the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain (Eastern Region) to address the need for 43 plots over the plan period to 2038.” In addition, proposed modifications to the monitoring framework will ensure that the delivery of sites is monitored, and appropriate actions will be considered if there is a lack of delivery of plots.

Appendix A: Proposed Main and Additional Modifications to Policy 5: Homes

The following main modifications are proposed to policy 5. The relevant section of with new text underlined and strikethrough text for deletions.

Proposed main modifications to Policy 5

Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and Residential Caravans

~~Development~~ Planning applications that result in the loss of authorised pitches or plots will not be permitted unless:

- alternative replacement pitches or plots are being provided elsewhere; or
- evidence demonstrates that the pitches or plots are no longer needed.

~~The need for Gypsy 52 pitches for Gypsies and Traveller sites~~ Travellers will be provided for by:

- allocations in the Sites Plan for a minimum of 30 deliverable pitches (the 5-year land supply) from 2022 to 2027;

<u>Sites</u>	<u>Pitches</u>
<u>Land north of Shortthorn Road, Stratton Strawless</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Romany Meadow, The Turnpike, Carleton Rode</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Land off Upgate Street, Carleton Rode</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Land at the Oaks, Reepham Road, Foulsham</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Land at Strayground Lane, Wymondham Recycling Centre</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Land at Strayground Lane, Wymondham</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Land off Brick Kiln Road, Hevingham</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Land off Buxton Road, Eastgate, Cawston</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Total Pitches</u>	<u>40</u>

- an allocation for approximately 10 developable pitches at Ketteringham Depot during the period 2028 to 2032; and,
- 12 pitches through windfall during the remainder of the plan period to 2038.

Planning applications for new pitches or plots to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and for residential caravans can come forward at any time in the plan period. This will enable the delivery of a minimum of 43 new Travelling Show People plots by 2038. Such proposals for new pitches or plots can be within our outside settlement boundaries and will be permitted where the site:

- ~~• have safe and sustainable access to schools and facilities;~~
- have meets an evidenced need
- is within easy travelling distance of schools, services and shops, preferably by foot, cycle or public transport;
- has suitable vehicular access;
- provides for ancillary uses and appropriate landscaping
- are is of a scale which is in keeping with its surroundings, including small-scale extensions to existing sites; and,
- for Travelling Show People, sites provide necessary storage for equipment.

For transit pitches providing temporary accommodation the following additional criteria apply:

- the site is conveniently accessible to the main 'A' and 'B' class road network; and,
- an agreement is in place for satisfactory site management, including the maximum period and frequency of stay.

Proposed Additional modifications to the supporting text

The supporting text in relation to the Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Show People and Residential Caravans section of Policy 5 is shown below with new text underlined and strikethrough text for deletions.

~~279. The policy provides for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Evidence⁹⁶ shows planned expansion of the Swanton Road site in Norwich meets Greater Norwich's need for 15 additional pitches to 2022. A further 51 pitches will be required between 2022 and 2038. The criteria-based policy allows for additional delivery to meet need throughout the plan period and allows for the expansion of well-located existing sites. Since no sites have been submitted for consideration through the local plan, the intention is to bring additional sites forward through the Development Management process as well as having this criteria-based policy to allow further sites to come forward.~~

280. The policy provides for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers by setting criteria by which windfall planning applications can be approved, and the plan includes site allocation policies. In combination, this flexible approach to

allowing appropriately located windfall sites and the allocation of specific sites will ensure that a further 52 pitches will be developed between 2022 and 2038 to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

The plan allocates 8 deliverable sites that will provide 40 pitches to meet the need for 30 pitches over the 5-year period between April 2022 and March 2027. These allocated sites, which are distributed around the Greater Norwich area, are in Carleton Rode (2 sites), Cawston, Foulsham, Hevingham, Stratton Strawless and Wymondham.

To address the need for 10 pitches over years 6 to 10 of the plan period from April 2027 to March 2032, a developable site at Ketteringham Depot for 10 pitches is allocated. The Ketteringham Depot site, which is currently owned and operated by South Norfolk Council for its household waste collection service, is due to be vacated. This site provides the opportunity for public investment from Homes England and the construction of new pitches by a registered housing provider.

For the remaining 6 years of the plan period from April 2032 to March 2038 a windfall allowance of 12 pitches is anticipated.

The allocation of specific sites for 40 pitches in the initial 5-year period, the allocation of Ketteringham Depot for 10 pitches to be delivered by March 2032, and the allowance of 12 windfall pitches for the last 6 years of the plan period equals a total of 62 pitches, providing a buffer against the need for 52 pitches to accommodate ethnic Gypsies and Travellers.

The policy also allows for Travelling Show People and Residential Caravan needs to be met through market-led solutions through the criteria-based policy. The Partnership will work with the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain (Eastern Region) to address the need for 43 plots over the plan period to 2038. The Broads Authority plans for the needs for residents of houseboats in the area.