

Local Plan Panel Meeting	
Meeting Date	29 November 2018
Report Title	Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	James Freeman
Lead Officer	Gill Harris, Spatial Planning Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<p>That the Panel note the findings of the study and recommend to Cabinet that they agree to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a 'call for sites'. 2. Continue with a criterion based policy. 3. Explore the possibility of creating a new public site.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) and 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (PPTS) require local planning authorities to make their own assessment of the site needs of the travelling community to inform the preparation of local plans and to make planning decisions.
- 1.2 The Council has been using a 'Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment' (GTAA) which was first published in 2013 and updated in 2015 following the revised definition of who is considered a 'traveller' (for planning purposes) as set out within the 2015 update to the PPTS. This identified a pitch need of 61 over the 'Bearing Fruits' plan period to 2031. It has now been updated with a new GTAA to reflect any changes within Swale's travelling community and to be in line with the emerging Local Plan period to 2037/38.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to:
- 1) Highlight the key findings from the new GTAA.
 - 2) Outline the options, and seek agreement on how to meet the identified need.

2 Background

- 2.1 Consultants arc⁴ were appointed in September 2017 to complete a new GTAA for Swale (as well as many other authorities throughout Kent). They have carried out 3 main strands of study in order to calculate the site need for the period 2017/18 to 2037/38, as set out below:
- 1) Analysis of the Council's records of authorised and unauthorised sites to determine the currently supply, met need and immediate need.
 - 2) Fieldwork, including household interviews on the known sites within the Borough to help determine future need.
 - 3) Creation and analysis of an online stakeholder survey aimed at neighbouring authorities, gypsy and traveller groups, Council officers and public service providers to help understand the challenges facing the travelling community.
- 2.2 The study is structured such that it refers to a 'cultural' need and a 'PPTS' need. Following the revised definition of who is considered a 'traveller' referenced in paragraph 1.2 above, it has been commonplace within GTAA methodology to calculate a 'cultural' need (i.e. for all those who identify as gypsies and travellers) and then extract a 'PPTS' need (i.e. for those who meet the revised definition) from it. The NPPF is clear that local planning authorities should only plan for the needs of those as defined by the PPTS, and only the PPTS need figures are discussed below.
- 2.3 The study has identified a PPTS pitch need of 30 for the 5 year period 2017/18 – 2021/22 and a longer term pitch need of 29 for the emerging Local Plan period 2022/23 to 2037/38 for a total of 59 pitches. It is anticipated that some of the need will be met through natural turnover reducing the total identified pitch need to 51.
- 2.4 The site at Brotherhood Woodyard was granted planning permission (17/502338/FULL) in May this year for a total of 40 permanent pitches and is occupied. As Members may be aware, the site is currently the subject of monitoring and enforcement action, due to evidence that the site is not currently implemented as per this or any previously approved permission.
- 2.5 At the time of arc⁴'s study work, it was not possible to obtain any information on the occupancy of Brotherhood Woodyard and subsequently, any met or future need that arises from it. As a result, for the purposes of the GTAA, the site was not included within the pitch numbers contributing to met need, supply or future need and has been excluded from the calculations.
- 2.6 Officers are confident that the monitoring and enforcement action will resolve the situation and that the latest permission should be capable of implementation as per the approved plans. At such a time, it is considered that the site should provide for 40 pitches, which alone will go some way to meeting the need identified in the study.

- 2.7 Furthermore, and as part of the fieldwork, arc⁴ asked households whether they felt existing sites could be expanded or intensified to help meet future need. From the responses, it was suggested that there is scope to gain an additional 54 pitches on existing authorised sites alone. Theoretically, this alone could meet the entire need identified, although these were the opinions of site occupants and further work would be necessary to consider the planning merits of these locations.
- 2.8 Considering paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 above, there is the potential for the supply of 94 pitches. There are of course some uncertainties surrounding matters at Brotherhood Woodyard and how many of the existing sites could actually be expanded or intensified when all material considerations are taken into account. Furthermore, all bar 2 of the existing sites in the Borough are private and experience is showing that pitches gained through intensification/expansion aren't always genuinely available for travellers outside of a specific site's family unit.
- 2.9 Nonetheless, applications do come forward in the manner indicated in paragraph 2.7 above. This is evidenced by the fact that there are already 3 applications currently seeking site expansion/intensification (14/501324/FULL, 16/503950/FULL and 18/504650/FULL) and 3 applications currently seeking temporary to permanent permission (17/500921/FULL, 17/505019/FULL and 18/503627/FULL). There are also 4 applications on windfall sites (17/503860/FULL, 17/504341/FULL, 17/506569/FULL and 18/503259/FULL).
- 2.10 It should be noted that there is also an identified need for 1 travelling showpersons plot.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are invited to note the content of the new GTAA, particularly the identified need, and agree to recommend to Cabinet the way in which this need should be met moving forwards. Officers consider the following options to be most appropriate:
- 1) Continue with a criterion based policy to deal with windfall sites, proposals for the expansion/intensification of existing sites and for the granting of temporary to permanent permissions.
 - 2) Carry out a 'call for sites' so as to avoid a complete reliance on expansion/intensification and to deal with the need to identify a travelling showpersons plot.
 - 3) Explore the possibility of creating a new public site, again to avoid a complete reliance on expansion/intensification.

Proposal 1) would facilitate the findings/evidence outlined in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.9 above and in the GTAA itself. Although not specifically recommended within the GTAA, Officers recommend the actions in proposals 2) and 3) would avoid a complete reliance

on expansion/intensification of existing sites for the local plan review period; and would also deal with the need to identify a travelling showpersons plot.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Members could advise Officers to explore other options such as allocating sites within larger development allocations; however the reality of this would depend on factors such as viability, and this has not proven to be successful to date.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Household interviews were attempted on all recorded gypsy and traveller sites in the Borough with a response rate of 68.3% achieved. (This figure excludes Brotherhood Woodyard for the same reasons set out in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5.)
- 5.2 A stakeholder survey was carried out jointly in partnership with Ashford BC, Canterbury CC, Dover DC, Folkestone & Hythe DC and Thanet DC who have also been carrying out GTAAs. Each authority provided details of key stakeholders who could provide useful information to contribute to the process. For Swale, these included groups such as the National Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Council, known gypsy and traveller planning agents, other departments within the Council and public service providers such as the NHS and police. 49 responses were received.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports the Council's corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	The study has been carried out within the existing Local Plan budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The study has been carried out so that the Council accords with the requirement to plan for the site needs of the travelling community as set out within the NPPF and PPTS.
Crime and Disorder	The study and subsequent actions should help to promote harmony between the travelling and settled communities.
Environment and Sustainability	The study forms part of the requirements set out within the NPPF to achieve sustainable development.
Health and Wellbeing	The study and subsequent actions should contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of the travelling community by providing for its needs.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this time.

Equality and Diversity	The study and subsequent actions should provide for the needs of the travelling community and help to promote harmony between it and the settled community.
Privacy and Data Protection	All data has been processed in a manner compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Swale Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2018

8 Background Papers

The National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites