

## **POLICY H7: ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE**

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### **Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people**

- 5.2.28 In planning for all sections of the community to have access to decent housing, there is a need to make appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. According to government guidance, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012, local planning authorities should identify a need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation for the plan-period and allocate sufficient sites (pitches and plots) to meet identified needs as well as demonstrate a sufficient supply of sites to meet identified needs within a five year period.
- 5.2.29 In Leeds there is a current supply of 48 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. The Council maintains a site at Cottingley Springs, Gildersome with 41 pitches. Elsewhere there are 7 pitches on private sites. There are currently no authorised plots for Travelling Showpeople within Leeds, although there are currently 7 families living on plots with the consent of landowners.
- 5.2.30 In accordance with national guidance, "pitch" means a pitch on a Gypsy and Traveller site and "plot" means a pitch on a Travelling Showperson's site (often called a "yard"). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and mixed-use plots for Travelling Show people, which may need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.
- 5.2.31 In order to determine an up to date level of Gypsy and Traveller needs for the plan period, the City Council worked with Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2013/14. This assessment was based on methodology derived from Communities and Local Government, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012) and also Communities and Local Government, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (2007). The approach is locally based, in accordance with Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, and agreed between the Council and Leeds GATE. The main sources of information used were Leeds' housing applications data (including housing needs assessments for Gypsies and Travellers on the housing waiting list), Leeds GATE local knowledge and a survey prepared and carried out by Leeds GATE with support from the Council.
- 5.2.32 This information provides an understanding about the needs and preferences of Leeds' Gypsies and Travellers. It suggests that there is a preference for small sites, that whilst many Gypsies and Travellers wish to live on a Council run site there is a significant group that wish to make their own provision and that there are a number of people in pitch based provision that seek a bricks and mortar house as a preference.
- 5.2.33 The GTAA (2014) shows an unmet housing preference for 58 pitches made up of 26 households seeking permanent public sector provision and having an assessed housing need and 26 households seeking permanent private pitch provision. There is also an identified expressed preference from 6 households seeking [a transit sitenegotiated stopping](#). By applying a compound growth of 3% and allowing for vacancy levels within the existing provision there is a need for 62 pitches for the plan period (i.e. up to end March 2028). For the plan period this need can be split as follows:

- Council provision = 25 pitches
- Private provision = 28 pitches
- Transit provision = 9 pitches

5.2.34 For Travelling Showpeople the Travelling Showmen's Guild has indicated that there is a need to provide suitable provision for 15 families throughout the Core Strategy plan period i.e. on 15 plots. They advise that this should be provided on either one or two sites (approximately 1 hectare in total), which would also contain some transit provision.

5.2.35 The Council will allocate land for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople on the basis of the identified needs above through the Site Allocations Plan. In order for Gypsies and Travellers to have a high quality of life it will be desirable for pitches and plots to have the same access to services as the settled population. This is a message that has arisen from consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community themselves who do not desire to live in remote or inaccessible locations. At the same time it should be recognised that sites should in all cases be deliverable to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and in reality this may mean that, for example, the most accessible sites are not viable. The deliverability of sites is therefore included as a criteria to inform the allocation of sites and decision taking. ~~in some circumstances i.e. where available land can be more readily acquired to meet needs for private pitch provision, other factors may be material.~~

5.2.36 The Site Allocations Plan will engage positively with the Gypsy and Traveller community and Leeds GATE to ensure that suitable council run sites (including where appropriate an element of transit provision) are identified and allocated to meet the full needs for the plan period. For private pitch provision, including for Travelling Showpeople, the Council ~~is reliant on sites being brought to its attention and~~ will work proactively with the Gypsy and Traveller communities, Leeds GATE and the Showmen's Guild to help identify and allocate such sites through the Site Allocations Plan in line with the criteria in Policy H7.

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5.2.37 ~~Where there remains a gap between allocated sites and need for private pitch and plot provision the Council will support applications for plots and pitches which are in line with the criteria in Policy H7.~~ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites confirms that a criteria based policy can provide a basis for decision taking as well as allocating sites, therefore the policy contains criteria to guide land supply allocations and provide a basis for decisions, should applications nevertheless come forward.

5.2.338 Consultation responses from representatives of the Gypsy and Travellers community have previously indicated a strong preference for sites to be of a small size suited to occupation by close family groups. It may not be possible to identify sites without considering exceptional and limited alterations to the Green Belt Boundary. Any alterations to the Green Belt boundary will need to be considered as part of the Site Allocations DPD. Alternatives will be explored before Green Belt locations are considered.

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The City Council will identify suitable sites in the Site Allocations Plan to accommodate the following identified needs:

- 62 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers (of no more than 15 pitches per site), and
- 15 plots for Travelling Show people (to be accommodated on either one or two sites)

▲ In identifying land or determining planning applications for pitches / plots, consideration will be based on the following criteria:

- i) pitches and plots should ~~be located near major roads and~~ have reasonable access to public transport, health care, schools, shops and local services
- ii) pitches and plots should not be located on land that is deemed unsuitable for general housing, such as land that is contaminated, adjacent to refuse sites, landfill sites, heavy industry or electricity pylons
- iii) pitches and plots should avoid zones of high flood risk (zone 3 flood risk areas)
- iv) the following order of preference for categories of land should be followed: brownfield, greenfield and Green Belt. Alterations to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate pitches and plots will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, to meet a specific identified need. In such circumstances and as part of the Site Allocations Plan, sites will be specifically allocated as a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's site only
- v) the availability of alternative deliverable sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

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