

STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE 2016

Prepared by Warwickshire County Council

May 2016



1.0 Introduction

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has commissioned Warwickshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Service to undertake an review to its Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to identify the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople from across the District. Opinion Research Services (ORS) and Peter Brett Associates (PBA) were commissioned to carry out a GTAA in 2011, with ORS being subsequently re-commissioned to provide an update in 2014. The objective of the review was to up-date the evidence in respect of housing needs to form the basis for the Stratford-on-Avon District Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

The review provides information on the current and future accommodation needs of local Gypsies and Travellers. The review also included survey questions about the additional support needs of Gypsies and Travellers. A separate report, if required, can be produced once supporting agencies have been consulted on the responses.

The overall purpose of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment study is to assess overall accommodation need and distribution for each participating local authority, undertaken in a manner which conforms to national policy and guidance. The objectives of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment are therefore:

- To establish trends and characteristics of the sub regional Traveller population, households and their accommodation, including an assessment of drivers of need and demand;
- To establish provision, supply and characteristics of Traveller accommodation;
- To provide a clear and robust understanding of the permanent, transit and other accommodation needs of Travellers; and
- To identify key criteria for new provision, including broad locations, and optimum site size and number of pitches etc.

For the purpose of this review the definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ is set out within the Government’s Planning Policy for Travellers published in March 2012 and updated in August 2015. The definition is:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Show people or circus people travelling together as such”

The August 2015 update adds the following;

“In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of the planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst others relevant matters:

- a. Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life*
- b. The reason for ceasing their nomadic habit of life*
- c. Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances,”*

The following definition of ‘Travelling Show people’ is;

“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows. This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above”

In addition

“For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use pitches for “travelling showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.”

For the purposes of this study, therefore, Gypsies and Travellers live on pitches on sites, whilst Travelling Showpeople live on plots on yards.

2.0 Review Components:

The study comprised four stages, which are set out below:

- **Stage 1:** Collation and review of existing information and literature;
- **Stage 2:** Stakeholder consultation;
- **Stage 3:** Survey of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the study area;
- **Stage 4:** Calculation of needs and report production;

2.1 Review

The review will look at the current need and the forecast for the next 10 years. The service has worked within the travelling community for over ten years and has carried out the bi-annual caravan count for the last 5 years.

There is no statutory guidance on the methodology to be used when calculating need, therefore we have looked at the history and growth of the community over the last 10 years as well as establishing where that need has come from.

A total of 49 interviews were carried out with occupants of the sites within the District and 19 were either unavailable or did not wish to take part in the review, stating they had no accommodation need.

Two unauthorised encampments were approached and 12 interviews took place. All interviewee's stated they only required a short stay site and had no wish to settle in the area.

2.2 Supply of Pitches

Total additional supply is:

- Current vacant pitches (those that have been vacant for more than 12 months)
- Pitches with permanent planning consent due to be developed within study Period.

Table 1 shows the number of sites including pitch numbers and vacant pitches with planning permission within Stratford-on-Avon District. There are 30 public pitches, and 44 private pitches (of which 21 pitches are vacant and available and 4 pitches are unavailable for development at the present time).

Table 1: Traveller sites with Permanent Planning Permission:

| Site Name | Pitches | Vacant Pitches |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Pathlow Park, Birmingham Road, Pathlow (District Council). | 30 | 0 |
| The Crossroads, Darlingscote Road, Tredington. | 16 | 5 |
| Greenacres, Old Railway Yard, Waterloo Road, Bidford-on-Avon. | 8 | 2* |
| Rainbow Nurseries, Long Marston Road, Welford-on-Avon. | 8 | 8 |
| Rainbow Nurseries, Long Marston Road, Welford-on-Avon. | 6 | 6 |
| The Stables, Mollington Lane, Warmington. | 1 | |
| Land between Harvest Camp & Vine Cottage, Mill Lane, Broom. | 1 | |
| Land at Black Hill | 4 | 4* |
| Total number of Pitches on Permanent Sites | 74 | 25 |

Note:

Greenacres – It was difficult to establish if the occupants would meet the criteria of being either a Gypsy or Traveller. At the time of interviewing only two families came forward.

Land at Black Hill – Since planning permission was obtained, the site has been sold. The new site owner has confirmed that they have no intention of bringing forward the site for Gypsies and Travellers. It is therefore considered appropriate to exclude this site from potential supply.

Over the last ten years the need has mainly come from outside the District and County boundaries and this has been balanced out with those who have left the District following the closure of the tolerated site at Friday Furlong in Bidford-on-Avon in 2013.

Over the last five years there has not been any real growth in the population of Gypsies and Travellers in the District. Although a number of planning applications have been granted, these have yet to be occupied.

Both of the sites at Rainbow Nurseries are vacant and will become available in the near future for occupation. The owners of the sites have indicated they will be willing to rent these out to families within the District.

There are 5 empty pitches vacant on The Crossroads, Darlingscote Road site and these have been vacant for over 2 years. It has been indicated by the owner that these may either be sold or rented out to Gypsies within the District. The two vacant pitches on Greenacres are also available to rent.

The four pitches on Warwick Road, near Black Hill are vacant. However the site owner has confirmed that they have no intention of bringing forward the site for Gypsies and Travellers. It is therefore considered appropriate to exclude this site from potential supply.

We would also note that Greenacres in Bidford-on-Avon is a site for Gypsies and Travellers but on our visit we could not identify if the site was being occupied as such.

Taking the above into account, of the 25 vacant pitches, 21 pitches are considered to be available or will become available within the next 12 months.

2.3 Current Need

The assessment of current need has considered three groups::

- Households on unauthorised developments which are being tolerated and
- Concealed or doubled-up households and
- Households in bricks and mortar wishing to move onto sites.

Unauthorised Developments

The caravan count shows that there are two households on unauthorised developments that are long term tolerated sites (see Table 2). Although these could be removed from the need because the authority would be unable to enforce against them these have been included. Due to the length of time these sites have been in existence the authority may wish to consider these and advise the occupants to submit a planning application. It is noted that the household that is tolerated on the

site at Ardendene Manor Farm would occupy 2 pitches should an alternative site be provided.

Concealed Households

Having consulted the majority of the occupants of the existing sites, the review only identified one concealed household. The occupants stated that this was not a long term occupation; however our records show that this has been over 12 months and therefore we considered that this is a need which needs to be counted.

Bricks & Mortar and Waiting Lists

Three households were interviewed and stated a different reason why they would not move back on to a site. Our experience over the last ten years is that those that have moved into bricks and mortar have done so for personal reasons and have not wanted to live on a site. The reasons vary from health issues to intimidation and family arguments.

A review of the waiting list for the public site(which has been in existence for over 8 years)has shown that the families have either changed their telephone number and are not contactable or they have found alternative accommodation. Recently two pitches became available on the public site and only two families (from outside the District) showed an interest and applied.

There was no interest shown from those on sites to move into Bricks and Mortar and therefore the figure shown in the need is zero.

Table 2:Unauthorised Developments (Tolerated)/Concealed Households

| Site Name | Tolerated Households | Pitches Required |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| TOLERATED SITES | | |
| Oosland Barn, Honeybourne Road, Bidford-on-Avon. | 1 | 1 |
| Ardendene Manor Farm, Mappleborough Green, Studley. | 1 | 2 |
| Total number of Pitches on Tolerated Sites (a) | 2 | 3 |
| Concealed households | | Pitches Required |
| Pathlow | | 1 |
| Total number of Pitches on Tolerated Sites (b) | | 1 |
| Total (a + b) | | 4 |

2.4 Future Need

There are three components to the future need:

- Temporary Permissions.
- New households coming from the existing sites.
- Migration.

Temporary Planning Permissions

Stratford on Avon District has nine pitches over three sites with temporary planning permission (see Table 3). Because the accommodation is only permitted on a temporary basis, when permission expires these would be re-classified as current need, as the families will be displaced.

Table 3: Sites with Temporary Planning Permission

| Site Name | Pitches |
|--|---------|
| Orchard View, Croft Lane, Temple Grafton. | 5 |
| Poolhead Lane, Tanworth-in-Arden. | 3 |
| Gospel Oak Lane, Pathlow. | 1 |
| Total number of Pitches on Temporary Sites | 9 |

New House Formation

The future growth of families in the review area is an important part of the review as children become young adults and wish to have a home of their own. Historically the population for the travelling community has been stable with neither a growth nor a decline in the requirement for extra pitches. The review looked at the family whole profiles including children's ages as well as their cultural backgrounds. It is often the case that females will marry and move with their husband and that the males will stay around the area they presently live; although this is not the case in all marriages. Therefore the review has not split this need.

The review identified 12 children between the ages of 6 and 11 and a further 15 children between the ages of 11 to 16. We have applied these to five and ten year future need. It is recommended that further studies/reviews will be required to monitor this need up to and after 2026.

Migration

Migration is difficult to estimate. However, looking back over the last ten years there seems to be a neutral effect. The closure of Friday Furlong in Bidford-on-Avon and the movement and accommodation of the majority of families outside the District and County boundaries, mitigates the introduction of new sites. The closure of the Friday Furlong site was not enforced by the local authority but the families decided to sell their land and move away from the area.

3.0 Overall Accommodation Need

The estimated extra pitch provision up to and including 2026 is 19 pitches to meet both the current and future need.

| Reason for Requirement/Vacancy | Gross Requirement | Supply | Net Requirement |
|--|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Supply of Pitches | | | |
| Available supply from Vacant Pitches | | 7 | |
| Additional supply from new sites | | 14 | |
| Total | | 21 | |
| Current Need | | | |
| Unauthorised Developments– Number of Replacement Pitches | 3 | | |
| Concealed Households | 1 | | |
| Net Movement to/from Bricks and Mortar | 0 | | |
| Total | 4 | | |
| Future Need | | | |
| Temporary Planning Permission | 9 | | |
| Net Migration | 0 | | |
| Potential New Households based on numbers of children counted in 2016 | 27 | | |
| Total | 36 | | |
| Totals | 40 | 21 | 19 |

4.0 Transit Need

Since the 2008 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Stratford on Avon District there has been little change in the number of unauthorised encampments. The majority of these are away from built up areas and are able to be tolerated. However, over the last three years a number of encampments have caused a disturbance within Stratford-upon-Avon town centre and particularly around the leisure centre. Of the 12 families interviewed none, of them indicated a need for a permanent site but stated they would welcome a transit site which they could stay on for a week or maybe two. It is therefore recommended that the Transit need from

the 2008 assessment still remains and should be provided. To accommodate the need shown a site or area should be set aside for up to 8 Caravans.

Sites Visited

The grid below shows the sites visit and number of interviews carried out.

| Ser | Site | Interviews | Remarks |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Crossroads Darlingscott | 9 | |
| 2 | Oosland Barn | 1 | Room for extending site |
| 3 | Ardendene Manor Farm | 2 | |
| 4 | Mollington Lane | 1 | Room for extending site |
| 5 | Poolhead Lane | 3 | |
| 6 | Temple Grafton | 5 | |
| 7 | Broom | 1 | |
| 8 | Welford on Avon | 4 | |
| 9 | Green Acres | 2 | Residents refused to talk |
| 10 | Pathlow | 20 | |
| 11 | Gospel Oak | 1 | |
| Unauthorised Sites | | | |
| 12 | Leisure Centre | 9 | Short Stay |
| 13 | Harbury Lane | 3 | Short Stay |

Travelling Showpeople

There is one known site within Stratford-on-Avon District and the survey was unable to make contact with the family. However, having contacted the Showpeople Guild and knowing the history of the site the family have previously indicated a need for a larger site. What cannot be established at this stage is whether the reason is for equipment or family reasons. This will need to be further investigated before a recommendation can be put to the Council.

Bargee

The review attempted to find anyone who classed themselves as Bargee's unfortunately all those visited were on holiday and therefore no need could be found. If a Bargee was to come forward the Council would have to consider their need in the future.