

Planning Policy Update on Gypsies and Travellers

This note has been prepared to provide an update on the planning policy team's response (12 April 2024) and the note prepared in November 2024 in advance of the postponed hearing to planning application P24/S0941/FUL for the Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 3 gypsy families. This note covers supply, progress on the new GTAA and the Joint Local Plan and should be read alongside comments previously submitted by the team.

South Oxfordshire District Council is currently unable to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites.

Need

The new Oxfordshire-wide joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has now been published and submitted for examination in support of the Joint Local Plan. It is available online at <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2025/02/LPA01-Gypsy-and-Traveller-Travelling-Showperson-and-Boat-Dweller-Accommodation-Assessment-December-2024.pdf>.

The 2024 GTAA assesses a single cultural need for gypsy and travellers, which is in accordance with the revised definition contained within Annex 1 of the planning policy for traveller sites (PPTS, December 2024).

The GTAA identifies the need for pitches resulting from four variant scenarios (Table ES6 of the GTAA), this results in an upper and lower potential pitch need for South Oxfordshire. Table 7.5 of the GTAA identifies the short term five year need and long-term need for the principal scenario A1 and Table 7.9 to 7.11 identify the five year and long term need for the three variant scenario A2, B1 and B2. The five year and long-term need under each scenario are set out below in table 1. **The need is between 48 and 68 pitches, of which 33 or 34 pitches are needed in the first five years.**

Table 1: Five year and long term need up to 2042 by variant scenario 2024 GTAA

South Oxfordshire	A1 (includes migration; household demographic data)	A2 (includes migration; household growth rates)	B1 (excludes migration; household demographic data)	B2 (excludes migration; household growth rates)
Five-year need	34	34	33	33
Longer-term need	34	14	34	15
TOTAL				
Total need	68	48	67	48

Supply

To support of the Joint Local Plan, the council has prepared a Topic Paper on Housing Requirement, Affordable Housing and Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople¹. The topic paper identifies how the plan will make provision for pitch to address the need identified within the 2024 GTAA within the plan period.

Table 13 of the topic paper identifies a **potential supply within the plan period of between 45 and 61 pitches**. The supply of pitches is made up of:

- a) implementation of extant planning permissions (0),
- b) expansion/intensification (1),
- c) regularisation (12),
- d) allocations (24 to 40),

Other sources: household dissolution (7)

Vacant pitches on unauthorised sites (1).

Sources of supply identified through regularisation (minus sites where there are known constraints that would prohibit development of a site) and other sources are identified within the 2024 GTAA Table 7.8.

The supply of pitches identified within Table 13 of the topic paper only identifies capacity where this is known. In addition, the GTAA identifies land potentially available adjoining the public site at Ten Acre Park in South (HELAA site SH101), which has previously been promoted for traveller use and could be used to extend the existing site. However, the GTAA consultant did not test the feasibility of extending these sites or apply possible pitch supply numbers, but recommended them for future exploration, therefore this site is not counted within the identified supply of pitches. There may also be capacity for intensifying or scope for expanding other sites which were not promoted to the GTAA consultant or do not benefit from permanent permission; however, these have not been included within the supply.

Additionally, the GTAA assesses the potential for re-lets of pitches on public sites to contribute to the supply of pitches. Table 15 of the housing topic paper summarises the outputs from the GTAA and identifies there could be as many as 3 pitches in South becoming available through re-lets each year. While we do not consider it likely that the total number of pitches that are suggested by the GTAA will become available in the study period through relets (**a further 48 pitches in South**) evidence does suggest it will contribute to supply. Supply from social site re-lets contributes to addressing any residual need for pitches. Table 16 of the housing topic paper identifies the **total potential supply of pitches in the study period, including social re-lets, could provide for up to 109 pitches between 2023/24-2041/42**.

¹ <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2024/12/TOP03.2-Housing-Requirement-Affordable-Housing-and-Gypsies-Travellers-and-Travelling-Showpeople-Topic-Paper-Submission-Version.pdf>

Joint Local Plan

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils submitted the Joint Local Plan 2041² to the Secretary of State on Monday 9 December 2024 for independent examination. Alongside the submission plan the council also submitted a schedule of proposed modification. The council has proposed amending the supporting text to policy HOU10 through MM08 and MM09 to incorporate results of the GTAA study which is now available.

Two Inspectors have been appointed to undertake an independent Examination of the Joint Local Plan. They submitted their Preliminary Matters and Initial Questions to the Councils (5 February 2025) and Councils responded to the Inspectors' Initial Questions which have been added to the Examination library³ (Documents LPA02). The Councils' response to IQ60 to IQ62, are relevant to this appeal as they provide a comparison between needs identified in the 2024 and 2017 GTAA, identify how we will make provision for sufficient pitches and whether any changes are required to the evidence or the plan to reflect changes in the PPTS. Our response to IQ62 includes a minor proposed modification to the supporting text of HOU10 to reflect changes to the PPTS 2024 definition of a traveller.

Kind regards

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South Oxfordshire District Council

14 November 2024

² <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/app/uploads/2024/12/CSD01-Joint-Local-Plan-2041-Publication-Version.pdf>

³ <https://www.southandvale.gov.uk/joint-local-plan-2041-examination-library/>