

Prepared 14 September 2017

MAIN MATTER 3 – TRAVELLER SITE NUMBER NOTE

WALSALL COUNCIL

Part 1: Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

Although the SAD is intended to be subsidiary plan to meet the requirements set out in the BCCS, the BCCS targets for traveller sites are derived from the 2008 GTAA (Core Document SEG.3) which only indicates the requirement to 2018. This would not comply with the requirement in the PPTS to identify and update a 5-year supply of traveller sites. The GTAA Revision 2016 (Core Document SEG.8) has therefore been prepared to provide an estimate of likely need to 2026, the end of the period which the SAD is intended to cover.

The GTAA 2016 states that there were 37 permanent pitches at the base date of 1/4/16 (this includes 4 pitches that are the subject of a personal permission), together with a further 4 pitches that had been the subject of a temporary permission that was due to expire. A total of between 51 and 61 pitches will be required by 2026 (the difference depends on which annual family formation rate is used), that is between 14 and 24 more permanent pitches than currently exist. The figure of 61 includes 4 pitches to replace those that became unauthorised when the temporary permission expired (it should be noted that document EXAM 1 incorrectly states this figure as 55).

The increase from 37 to 61 pitches between 2016 and 2026 equates to 2.4 additional pitches per year. A 5 year supply would therefore equate to 12 pitches.

For reference, the existing and potential sites identified in SAD Policy HC4 comprise the following. This list also includes an additional site at Croft Street, Willenhall that was granted retrospective planning permission in April 2016 so now contributes to the supply.

The proposed pitches exclude the general housing sites HO27 (Goscote Lodge Crescent), HO29 (Goscote Copper Works) and HO62 (Former Metal Casements) as a result of the modifications to the plan discussed at the examination.

Existing Pitches as at 1/4/16			
Ref.	Site Name	Pitches	Notes
GT1	Willenhall Lane	19	In Green Belt. Permanent permission
GT2	Haywoods	1	
GT3	Trentham Cottage	11	
GT4	47A Guild Avenue	1	
GT7	Railswood Nursery	1	In Green Belt. Permanent permission
Total Existing and Unrestricted Pitches		33	
Existing Temporary or Personal Pitches			
GT5	Cartbridge Lane	4	In Green Belt. Temporary permission expired in 2016 so classed as unauthorised in 2016 GTAA
GT6	34-38 Gould Firm Lane	4	In Green Belt. Personal (but permanent) permission
Total Existing Temporary or Personal Pitches		8	

Proposed Pitches			
Not in SAD	Croft Street	1	Pitch existed at 1/4/16 but not taken into account in 2016 GTAA as planning permission was not granted until later in month
GT1	Willenhall Lane (conversion of community room)	2	Planning permission not required as existing permission for site does not restrict number of pitches
GT50	Rear of 48-72 Foster Street	3	
HO28	Dolphin Close (Goscote Site C)	10	
Total Proposed Pitches		16	

The total existing and proposed supply is therefore as follows:

33 existing, permanent and unrestricted pitches
16 proposed pitches, excluding GT5 and GT6

The 16 proposed pitches (including Croft Street) would result in a total of 49 permanent and unrestricted pitches and a 6.7 year supply from the base date of 1/4/16. Adding GT5 and GT6 would result in a total of 57 pitches, equating to an 8.3 year supply. Their exclusion from allocation as permanent sites would not affect the 5 year supply for now, but this would mean that the SAD would fail to provide for the full need over the period of the plan.

Part 2: Travelling Showpeople Plots

The GTAA Revision 2016 does not review the need for additional showpeople plots beyond the BCCS/2008 GTAA end date of 2018. SAD Policy HC4 only seeks to deliver the BCCS target (for a total of 90 plots) by 2026.

There are currently 66 plots as set out below. An increase from 66 to 90 plots over 10 years would equate to 2.4 per year and a 5 year supply requirement of 12.

Existing Plots as at 1/4/16			
Ref.	Site Name	Plots	Notes
GT9	Bridge Farm	12	
GT10	Oak Tree Farm	9	
GT11	Goscote Lane	0	
GT12	Showmen's Guild Site	20	
GT13	East of Goscote Lane	1	
GT14	Lindon Road	1	
GT15	Toberland	14	
GT46	Charlie Swann	9	
Proposed Plots			
GT45	96 and 100 Lindon Road	2	
HO11	Somerford Place	5	
HO61	Canalside Close	2	
HO157a	Former AUTOCRAFT	1	Proposed to be omitted as a result of modifications discussed at examination
HO157c	Jubilee House	3	Proposed to be omitted as a result of modifications

			discussed at examination
--	--	--	--------------------------

The 9 additional plots, excluding HO157a and HO157c, would only equate to a 3.75 year supply. Including these two sites would extend this to a 5.4 year supply.

Conclusions

Neither the identified supply of new gypsy and traveller pitches nor travelling showpeople plots would meet the full requirement for the total period of the SAD, and the supply of showpeople sites would also be less than the 5 year requirement. However, several of the existing and identified proposed pitches are on small sites. Small sites are more likely to come forward as windfalls, even within the existing urban area, and indeed one such site has been developed since preparation of the SAD began.

Plots are normally privately owned and many showpeople prefer to live in conventional bricks and mortar housing, with their equipment stored either on site or nearby in an industrial area. The SAD does not identify such sites and indeed national policy does not require planning authorities to allocate sites for showpeople other than those who live in caravans. As with traveller pitches, locations for single family plots are more likely to come forward as windfalls.

A high proportion of the showpeople who live in caravans in Walsall are retired. As such, their household growth is likely to be less than anticipated. Furthermore, many will no longer need large areas to store and maintain equipment, so more plots could potentially be accommodated on the identified sites than is indicated.

Both for pitches for gypsies and travellers, and plots for travelling showpeople, the nature of Walsall, which is largely urban, means that it is difficult to identify suitable large sites for these groups. Smaller sites, suitable for individual families, are more likely to be available, however these are difficult to identify through the local plan process.

Finally, it should be noted that the review of the Black Country Core Strategy has commenced. The latest version of the Local Development Scheme, dated 29/6/17 (core document MS5), states that the aim is to adopt the reviewed Strategy by Autumn 2021. The BCCS review will examine the need and location for all types of housing, including accommodation for travellers.