

Walsall Council

GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE SITE SURVEY



TYM & PARTNERS
Planners and Development Economists

Final Report

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Statements in this document represent the views of Roger Tym and Partners and are not necessarily endorsed by Walsall Council, except that the Council has made certain factual corrections.

This document does not reflect changes since 2010.

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CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION3**
 - Purpose of the Study 3

- 2 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GUIDANCE, AND POLICY5**
 - Gypsies and Travellers 5
 - Showmen 7

- 3 THE BLACK COUNTRY GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT 9**
 - Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the Black Country 9

- 4 SITE SELECTION CRITERIA 13**

- 5 SITE ASSESSMENT 16**
 - New and existing sites availability and suitability assessment..... 16
 - Part 1 - Existing provision 17
 - Part 2 - Potential new sites 22

- 6 AVAILABLE, SUITABLE AND DELIVERABLE SITES 27**

- 7 COST OF DEVELOPING NEW SITES AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING..... 31**

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

- 1.1 Roger Tym & Partners (RTP) was commissioned in April 2009 by Walsall Council to undertake a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites Survey (GTTSS) to inform the evidence base of the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2 These two studies have been completed by RTP in parallel, but are reported separately, with this report focusing on the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople site survey.
- 1.3 The main objective of this study was to assess current and potential sites to meet the need for additional authorised gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople site provision within Walsall. This need has been identified by the Black Country Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). More details of the GTAA are given in chapter 3.
- 1.4 The study will be used to inform the Local Development Framework and in particular the Walsall Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SAD). Preparation of the SAD is expected to commence in 2011 following completion of the Black Country Core Strategy (JCS). The JCS has been prepared by the four Black Country local authorities and completed its examination in the summer of 2010. Subject to the outcome of the inspectors' report, which at the time of writing was due in October 2010, the Councils expect to adopt the JCS in the spring of 2011.
- 1.5 It is important to note that the GTTSS is only a technical study that will be used as part of the evidence base to inform future Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The identification of any site within the GTTSS does not in any way imply that the site will be allocated in a DPD and does not imply that support for any future planning application will be forthcoming. The capacity of pitches and plots indicated in the GTTSS does not imply that the Council accepts there is need for such capacity or that such capacity should be found either on the identified sites or elsewhere..

2 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GUIDANCE, AND POLICY

Gypsies and Travellers

- 2.1 Decision making for policy concerning gypsies & travellers and Showmen sits within a complex legislative and national policy framework and this study must be viewed in the context of this legislation and guidance. This framework has been in a state of flux since production of this report commenced, both as a result of the emerging regional planning framework prior to the General Election in May 2010 and the change in Government after it. The comments below attempt to set out the situation as it exists at the time of writing.
- 2.2 Published Government guidance focuses on increasing site provision for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople and encouraging local authorities to have a more inclusive approach to these groups within both their planning and housing plans and strategies. The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to identify the need for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople as well as other types of housing within housing needs assessments. Therefore all local authorities are duty bound to undertake accommodation assessment either as a separate study or as part of their main housing needs assessment.
- 2.3 Walsall Council and the other three Black Country Local Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton) commissioned Fordham Research to complete a Black Country wide accommodation assessment. This was completed in July 2008 and forms the basis to identify need for additional sites in Walsall.
- 2.4 Local authorities have been encouraged to provide new gypsy and traveller sites by central government. Circular 01/2006 "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites" set out a new impetus for the creation of additional pitch provision when need is found. The Circular emphasised that the provision of authorised sites should be encouraged so that the number of unauthorised sites is reduced. To that end it set out a three stage planning process for the identification of sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation:
 - The first step follows the 2004 Housing Act in that a gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) was required to evaluate need and identify pitch requirements for each local authority area
 - Step two was for the Regional Planning Board to specify in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) pitch numbers for each local planning authority
 - Step three was for the number of pitches specified in the RSS to be translated into specific site allocations in a Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 2.5 As discussed step one was implemented with the completion of the 2008 Black Country Accommodation Needs Assessment.
- 2.6 In response to step 2, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy was intended to be prepared in several stages, to address particular issues. The Phase 1 Revision was issued by the Secretary of State in January 2008 whilst the Phase 2 Revision was examined in public in the summer of 2009. The Phase 3 Revision that was prepared by

the Regional Assembly was intended, amongst other matters, to set out figures for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites to be provided in each local authority area. An Interim Policy Statement on gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople was agreed in April 2010 by the West Midlands Leaders Board (which replaced the Regional Assembly from 1st April 2010) to provide interim guidance prior to the completion of the RSS Phase 3 Revision process. The figures in the Interim Policy Statement were based on those in the GTAAs that had been prepared for each part of the region, but with some re-distribution between certain local authorities to provide a more even spread. For Walsall, the figures matched those in the GTAA. The Government Office for the West Midlands advised that this Interim Policy Statement should be given considerable weight.

- 2.7 Following the general election in May 2010, the new Secretary of State in July 2010 revoked the RSS. This decision was subsequently found by the High Court to be unlawful. However, the Interim Policy Statements remain, as they were agreed by the Leaders Board rather than the Secretary of State. The numbers of sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople that were set out in the RSS Phase 3 Revision Options Consultation were incorporated in the publication version of the JCS that went to examination in July 2010.
- 2.8 Step 3 requires the pitch requirements to be shown as allocations in a DPD. The purpose of this study is to provide the evidence on suitable sites to be included within a DPD. It will be assumed that for the purposes of this study that the Local Authority will be seeking sufficient sites to meet the minimum requirements set out in the GTAA and the published JCS.
- 2.9 The Circular also identifies a need for local authorities to include criteria within their LDFs to guide decision making for new sites. However, this criteria must not be used as an alternative to allocating sites where need has been identified. It indicates that local authorities should set fair, reasonable, realistic and effective criteria for allowing the development of gypsy and Traveller sites. In particular they should offer positive guidance under which a private gypsy and Traveller site will be granted planning permission. The criteria should incorporate a means of assessment of the sustainability of the proposed site, although this is not only in terms of transport mode and distances to service. The promotion of community cohesion, access to services including healthy and education and pollution and contamination are also important considerations.
- 2.10 Site selection guidance within the Circular also states that sites in the countryside should not necessarily be ruled out and could be considered as 'rural exception' sites. There is a general presumption against development in the Greenbelt. However in exceptional circumstances, such as where no other suitable sites outside the Greenbelt exist, then it may be acceptable.
- 2.11 In seeking to identify sites the Circular advises that there are a number of options available to local authorities:
- local authorities have discretion to dispose of their own land for less than best consideration where it will help to secure the well being of the area

- they can also make use of the registers of vacant or surplus land owned by other public bodies.
 - they could consider use of compulsory purchase
 - they could work with neighbouring authorities to identify the most suitable sites for the wider area
- 2.12 There are number of other important pieces of legislation for handling gypsy and travellers issues. These include the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act. These become important as both Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as separate ethnic groups and therefore the local authority must be careful to prevent any unlawful discrimination or disproportionate action. Consultation is also required with ethnic groups on policies that are likely to affect them.

Showmen

- 2.13 Whilst many of the policies and guidance which apply to gypsies and travellers also apply to Showmen it is important to note that the lifestyles of Showmen differ from that of gypsies and travellers and subsequently they have different needs and requirements.
- 2.14 Guidance on providing gypsy and traveller sites is provided in Circular 1/06, but this does not include travelling showpeople. Separate guidance for showmen sites is provided in Circular 4/07 'Planning for Travelling Showpeople' which replaced Circular 22/91 'Travelling Showpeople' in August 2007.
- 2.15 The Circular was preceded by a consultation exercise on planning for travelling showpeople, which had the agreement and cooperation of the Showman's Guild. The consultation looked at the need for more clarity and more fairness in planning guidance when considering applications for permanent sites and as a result of this consultation the new circular was produced.
- 2.16 Travelling showpeople are defined, for the purposes of Circular 04/2007, as:
- Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). 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 in ODPM Circular 01/2006.
- 2.17 Circular 4/07 is very similar in tone and structure to Circular 1/06 and includes;
- a requirement that local authorities identify suitable sites for travelling Showmen in their development plan documents
 - to increase the number of travelling showpeople's sites in suitable locations with planning permission in order to address current under-provision over the next 3 - 5 years, and to maintain an appropriate level of site provision through RSSs and LDFs
 - to recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional way of life of travelling showpeople, creating sustainable, respectful and inclusive communities where travelling showpeople have fair access to suitable accommodation and services

- improved guidance on identifying the criteria in development plans against which applications for sites not allocated in the development plans will be judged
- the inclusion of advice for local authorities on how they should seek to engage with travelling Showmen and build trust
- guidance on trying to help avoid travelling showpeople becoming homeless through eviction from unauthorised sites without an alternative
- the inclusion of advice to travelling Showmen and their representatives on how to engage with the planning system

2.18 The Secretary of State announced in August 2010 his intention to revoke Circulars 1/06 and 4/07, subject to necessary impact assessments. However, these circulars remain in force at the time of writing. The Black Country GTAA also remains as evidence of need in the area.

3 THE BLACK COUNTRY GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the Black Country

- 3.1 The four Black Country Local Authorities of Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton commissioned Fordham Research to conduct a Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the Black Country. The overarching aim of the study, which was completed in 2008, was to assess the housing and accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople within the Black Country. It considers the need requirements in the ten year period 2008 - 2018.
- 3.2 The following tables are taken from the assessment and show the estimated number of gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople families in Walsall and the other Black County Authorities. The information is presented with the caveat that it is only an estimate as no reliable secondary data exists on exact numbers.

Table 3.1 Estimated number of gypsy and traveller families

Area	Authorised site	Unauthorised site	Housing	Total
Walsall	20	4	300	324
Dudley	29	4	158	191
Sandwell	15	3	50	68
Wolverhampton	40	10	74	124
No fixed location	-	8	-	8

Source: Black Country GTANA (table 6.1), Fordham Research 2008

Table 3.2 Estimated number of travelling showpeople families

Area	Authorised yards	Unauthorised development	Housing	Total
Walsall	55	1	0	56
Dudley	10	0	52	62
Sandwell	13	3	7	23
Wolverhampton	5	0	3	8

Source: Black Country GTANA (table 13.1), Fordham Research 2008

- 3.3 The assessment uses these estimates to determine a sample size which will be surveyed and the results used to help inform the assessment of need. The assessment of need follows a stepped approach, which according to the report closely follows the model suggested in DCLG guidance. The main drivers of the additional need are considered to be new family formations from existing sites and the needs of unauthorised sites.
- 3.4 The following table 3.3 identifies the needs in Walsall over the ten year period 2008 - 2018, following this stepped assessment.

Table 3.3 Walsall - Ten year summary of estimate of the need for gypsy and traveller site pitches (2008 - 2018)

	Base numbers 2008	Additional need 2008 - 2013	Additional need 2013 - 2018	Additional need 2008 - 2018	Numbers as at 2018
Unauthorised encampments	0	0	0	0	0
Unauthorised developments	4	0	0	0	0
Residential pitches	20	30	9	39	65*
Housing	300	71	62	133	433

Source: Black Country GTANA, Fordham Research 2008
* includes 6 new pitches that were planned in 2008 (these have since been provided)

Table 3.4 Walsall - Net accommodation requirements for travelling showpeople

Area	2008 - 2013	2013 - 2018	Total 2008 - 2018
Walsall	20	15	35

Source: Black Country GTANA, Fordham Research 2008

- 3.5 The report concludes that Walsall has a need for 39 gypsy and traveller pitches in addition to those that had planning permission at the base date. It states that this could be reduced to 34 pitches if planning permission was granted to the current unauthorised developments. It concludes that the need be met for the remaining 34 pitches through the creation of two 17 pitch mixed sites in the Borough.
- 3.6 It should be noted that the number of existing pitches stated to exist at the base date, 20, is significantly lower than the current number of 42 as set out in table 5.1 below. The GTAA does not give details of the locations of all the existing pitches, but much of this increase is the result of the refurbishment of the local authority site at Willenhall Lane, which was largely empty at the time of the base date survey because of building work. The 6 planned pitches referred to in table 3.3 above formed part of this refurbishment.
- 3.7 In terms of travelling showpeople the report states that Walsall has a need for accommodation for 35 family units. It recommends that granting planning permission to extend the current yards to take into account newly forming households should be explored and that suitable land for development should be identified in a DPD.
- 3.8 It is useful to compare the results of the assessment with the biannual returns for the caravan counts. Whilst these counts have been criticised for potentially underestimating the gypsy and Traveller population they do provide a long term pattern of population, pitch number and status (i.e. authorised and unauthorised). The table below shows the latest count together with the previous four.

Table 3.5 Count of gypsy and Traveller Caravans: Last seven counts

Count	Authorised sites (with planning permission)		Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)			
	Number of caravans		Sites on gypsies own land		Sites on land not owned by gypsies	
	Socially rented	Private	Tolerated	Not tolerated	Tolerated	Not tolerated
Jan 2010	29	45	0	0	0	0
July 2009	23	38	10	0	0	0
Jan 2009	13	41	8	6	0	0
Jul 2008	11	27	10	0	0	0
Jan 2008	13	28	0	8	0	0
Jul 2007	12	30	0	4	0	0
Jan 2007	14	29	3	0	0	0

Source: DCLG Bi-annual Count of Gypsies and Travellers

- 3.9 The increase in the number of socially rented pitches from July 2009 was the result of the completion of refurbishment of the Willenhall Lane site, whilst the number of private authorised pitches has also risen significantly. The number of unauthorised sites has fluctuated, although it should be noted that their occurrence is always on gypsy owned land rather than land outside of their control. The granting on appeal of temporary planning permission for a private site has resulted in this site being reclassified in the above figures.
- 3.10 Following discussion with the Council, this survey will seek to find sufficient sites to meet the range of needs identified within the GTAA..

4 SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- 4.1 The assessment is based on the information provided by DCLG guidance for the provision of a variety of sites (permanent, transit and temporary stopping places), with particular emphasis on the sustainability factors that will guide the selection of suitable sites. Policy HOU4 of the emerging Black Country Core Strategy includes site criteria that are essentially an abridged version of those listed below. However, the criteria below are “policy neutral” in that they only take account of physical and social requirements rather than their policy acceptability, for example in relation to the Green Belt.
- 4.2 The assessment criteria have been agreed by Walsall Council and broadly accepted by contacted consultees and stakeholders.
- 4.3 The assessments are both qualitative and quantitative and are based around the principles of sustainable development and in relation to the particular needs for permanent, transit and temporary stopping places for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.
- 4.4 We consider, based on national guidance, that the following descriptions identify the key elements of each particular site type needs.
- Permanent gypsy and traveller sites are permanent residential areas which are licensed and enjoy similar benefits to permanent housing. The sites generally have an amenity block which contains at least a brick built toilet and kitchen area. However, residents will live in mobile/trailer homes and generally keep additional touring caravans for travel. Permanent sites should have a wide range of facilities and amenities located on site or within walking distances and not be located in areas where housing would not normally be permitted.
 - Permanent travelling showpeople sites are suitable for mixed use combining residential, storage and maintenance uses. The sites generally have an amenity block which contains at least a brick built toilet and kitchen area. However, residents will live in mobile/trailer homes and generally keep additional touring caravans for travel. Areas will be set aside where vehicles and fairground equipment can be stored, repaired and tested. The site is then used as a base for travel to fairs, although younger and older members of the family may remain at this base year round. Permanent sites should have a wide range of facilities and amenities located on site or within walking distances and not be located in areas where housing would not normally be permitted.
 - Transit sites are permanent sites intended for temporary use by residents. The length of stay generally varies, but may range between 1 and 3 months. As transit sites are not intended to be used as a permanent base, the site requirements are different. Basic amenities and services including boundary fencing, hard standings, water supply, toilet and washing facilities, waste disposal and electricity supply should be available.
 - Emergency/Temporary Stopping Places are different to transit sites in both length of anticipated stay and facilities. It is usual for transit sites to offer stays up to 3 months

with stopping places being for a few days and having fewer facilities with water and rubbish disposal possibly the only services provided. They provide a legal, alternative location to unauthorised encampments. Emergency pitches may be located on transit sites.

- 4.5 These descriptions provide broad characteristics of each type of sites that will be used to assess site options. In addition, national guidance identifies a number of key criteria which should be considered when forming an assessment of suitability. These are identified below and have been categorised into locational, social and site specific categories.

Location

- sites should not be developed in areas where bricks and mortar housing would not be considered e.g. areas of high flood risk
- neighbouring land use - in some areas sites have been located next to inappropriate areas such as, refuse sites, motorways, sewerage works etc and this has impacted upon the way the sites are viewed and used by the travelling community
- distance from services - there should be decent access to schools, post office, GPs, public transport. However, it may be appropriate to lessen the importance of access when thinking about the location of transit and or temporary stopping places

Social

- social environment - residential sites should have an opportunity to mix cohesively with the neighbouring communities.
- sites for the travelling community tend to have a higher density of children. Therefore the median number of people occupying a pitch is higher than that of the settled population (one study has suggested it is around 3.13 people per pitch)
- there can be higher level of special health needs
- opportunity for growth within family units

Site and access

- amenity blocks should be provided for each pitch and day rooms should be encouraged, especially on larger sites
- boundary treatment - site and pitches require boundaries e.g. fencing or hedges
- safe access - there should be enough room on entering and exiting the site for large trailers to manoeuvre safely
- pedestrians - the site should have safe access
- parking provision - is desirable in addition to individual pitch provision for family vehicles
- drainage - locations should lend themselves to good surface drainage
- utilities - water, electricity, sewerage systems should all be present
- fire safety - pitches and caravans should be situated to minimise fire risk and meet fire safety standards
- work areas - areas of the locations should be suitable to set aside for work purposes and in the case of travelling showpeople there needs to be sufficient space for storage and maintenance of equipment

- play areas - these should be safe and easily accessible

4.6 In response to these considerations we have developed an assessment criteria (described in section 8) which will assist in the analysis of the social, environmental and economic impacts of each site.

5 SITE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The site assessments have looked at pitches and plots where gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople are already located and potential new areas that could accommodate Walsall's future needs. It focuses on existing authorised and unauthorised sites, sites in the planning process and sites that have come forward through the SHLAA process or suggested by officers at the Council. No other specific land has been put forward through either the consultation or by Walsall Council.
- 5.2 The SHLAA, preparation of which has been carried out in parallel with the GTTSS, identifies and assesses a large number of sites that might be suitable for general housing. Some of these sites might be particularly suitable for gypsies, travellers and/or travelling showpeople. Such sites have been included in the assessment below.
- 5.3 Following a description of the assessment methodology, this section is set out in three parts:
- Part 1 of the site assessment considers existing provision and its suitability to continue with existing levels of provision and whether there is potential to accommodate further provision
 - Part 2 provides an overview of potential new sites
 - Part 3 outlines the current number of pitches/plots and the regional target to provide a need figure

New and existing sites availability and suitability assessment

- 5.4 In response to the considerations set out in section 4 we have developed assessment criteria which will assist in the analysis of the social, environmental and economic impacts of each site. Against each of the criteria we will traffic light the appropriateness of developing the site against the criteria for each of the different types of pitch provision. The traffic light system indicates:
- **Red** - site does not meet the required standards
 - **Amber** - site does not fully meet required standard but could be brought forward if alternatives are limited and a more flexible approach is required or if issue can be mitigated
 - **Green** - site meets required standard
- 5.5 We have set out the assessment as a check list and commentary. It is important to note that the criteria will not be considered on an equal basis, given their variety and importance in planning terms. The results of the assessment of the criteria will be drawn together with a concluding commentary as to the suitability of the site for allocation in a DPD and development of the site.
- 5.6 In criteria that involve distance we will use walking distances by a route rather than straight lines as this provides a more realistic assessment. Whilst these are ideal distances it is recognised that on balance these may not always be possible to achieve

and a degree of flexibility may need to be built into the assessment. The distance ranges used will be as follows:

- Local facilities (e.g. convenience shops, primary school, bus stop) 3-10 min walk 250 - 800m
- District facilities (e.g. health centres, railway stations, secondary school) 20min - 1 hour walk 1.5km to 5km

5.7 The assessment considers the following types of potential sites

- Authorised and unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites
- Authorised travelling showpeople sites
- Other potential sites

5.8 The following section summarises the results of this assessment, the full assessment can be found in Appendix A.

Part 1 - Existing provision

Current authorised and unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites

5.9 The majority of existing sites are either authorised or currently being considered through the planning application process. Whilst Walsall has not historically had a major issue with long term unauthorised sites, possibly due to the existing provision having met most long term needs in the past, there have recently been a number of short term unauthorised encampments, mainly on public sector land. However, the Council has clear procedures and mechanisms for dealing with these situations as and when they arise, although this could be considered as a further indicator for a need for more transit sites within the Black Country area.

5.10 The authorised and unauthorised sites are distributed across of the Borough, including within areas of Greenbelt as can be seen in Figure 5.1. There is no particular concentration in any one area.

Figure 5.1 Current authorised and unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites

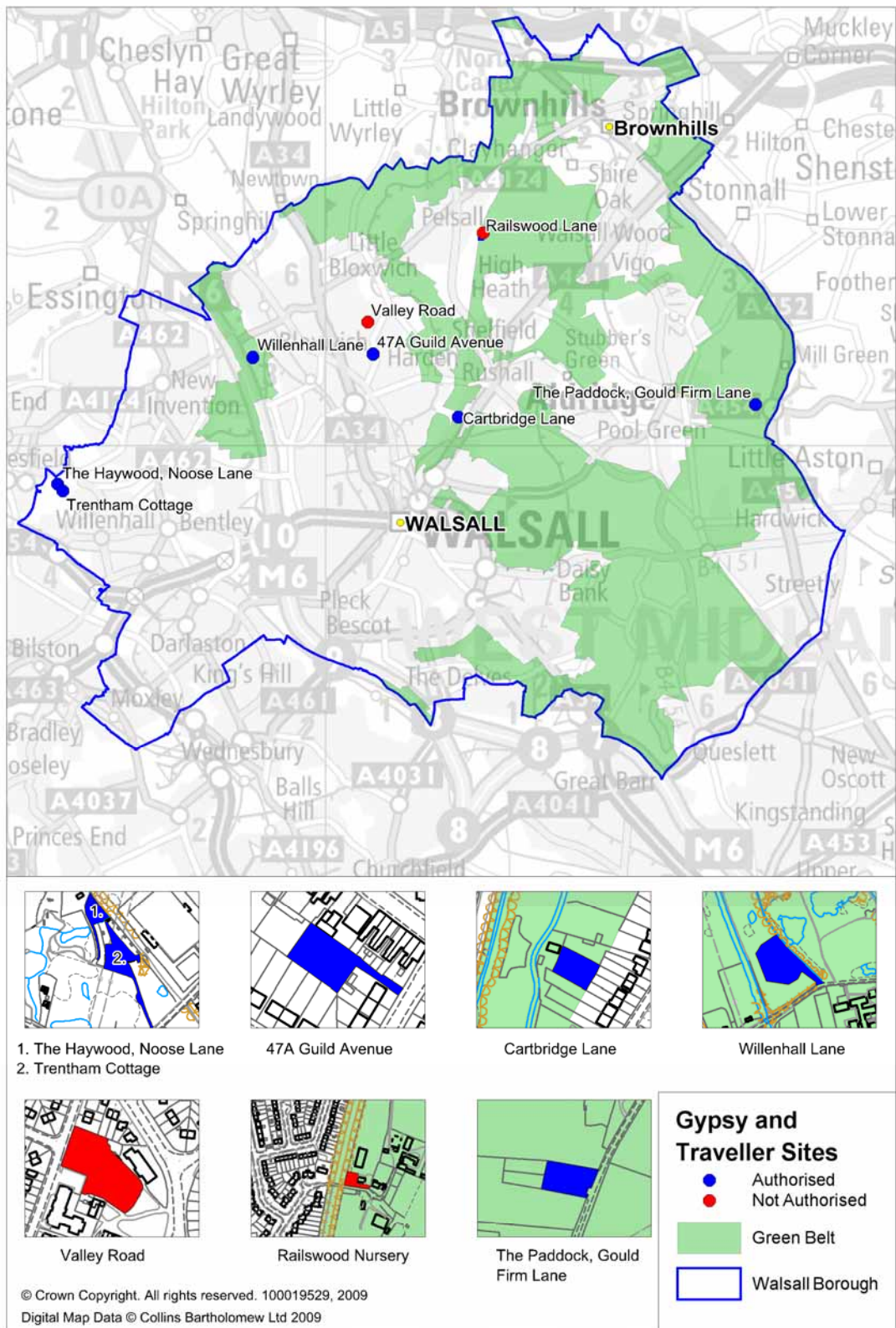


Table 5.1 Summary of existing gypsy and traveller sites

Ref	Site	Authorised	Unauthorised	Pitch/plot	Potential	Notes
1	Willenhall Lane	Yes		19		Mixed site recently redeveloped to increase capacity from 13 - 19 plots Further potential to expand existing site (see site 40)
2	2 The Haywood, Noose Lane	Yes		1	+3	Potential to increase to four plots without need for planning permission
3	Trentham Cottage	Yes		15		Gypsies only 11 permanent plots and 4 transit/emergency
4	47A Guild Avenue	Yes		1		
5	Cartbridge Lane	Temporary		4		Temporary 3 year planning permission (expires 2012)
6	The Paddock, Gould Firm Lane	Yes	Yes	1		Currently 1 plot. An application for a permanent structure has been refused
7	Railswood Nursery	Refused permission (December 09)	Yes	1	+1	Planning appeal to be heard October 2010
8	Valley Road		Yes	Varies season to season		Rents out, transit provision but not authorised
	Total			42	10	

Source: Site survey & W

Current authorised and unauthorised travelling showpeople sites

5.11 Walsall has a long standing tradition as a permanent base for travelling showpeople. The existing sites are in the Goscote Lane, Lindon Road and Leamore areas, with many long established in this area. It is understood through consultation that some of these sites suffer from overcrowding, suggesting that additional provision is needed. Figure 5.2 shows the location of existing sites with Walsall.

Figure 5.2 Authorised travelling showpeople yards

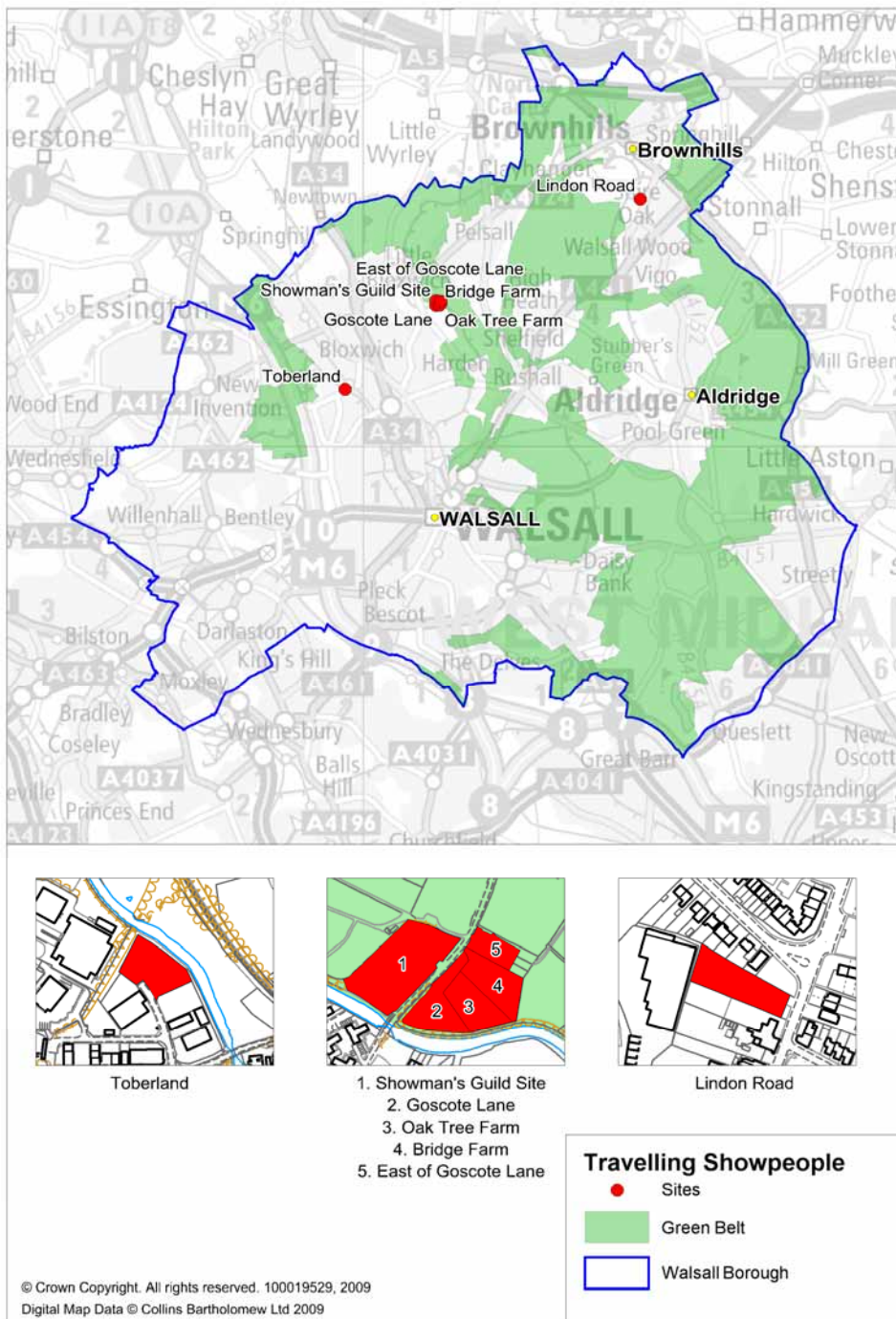


Table 5.2 Existing authorised travelling showpeople yards

Ref	Site	Authorised	Unauthorised	Yards/plots	Potential	Notes
9	Bridge Farm	Yes				
10	Oak Tree Farm	Yes		21		The figure applies to Bridge Farm, Oak Tree Farm and Goscote Lane as it is difficult to disaggregate these neighbouring sites
11	Goscote Lane	Yes				
12	Showman's Guild, Goscote Lane	Yes		20		
13	East of Goscote Lane (adj. Bridge Lane)	New			+2	Recently gained planning permission
14	Lindon Road	Yes		1		Residential use unclear, however it is thought to include 1 extended family plot
15	Toberland	Yes		14		
	Total			56	2	

Source: Site survey and

Part 2 - Potential new sites

Surrounding context and broad location

- 5.12 Walsall is characterised by its industrial heritage, some poor quality housing areas and surrounding green belt. Declining industry has led to many of the former industrial areas being released for the provision of new housing and this is likely to continue through the next plan period as the local economy restructures. Some social housing that no longer meets current requirements, for example tower blocks, has also been cleared. Such areas present opportunities to provide a wide variety of sites both suitable and developable for gypsy, traveller and showman provision. In the absence of other suitable and sufficient sites, it may also be necessary to consider the use of underused open space and green belt where development is not normally permitted at all.

Assessment of potential new sites

- 5.13 The following potential new sites have been identified through consultation with officers and the public through local knowledge and the SHLAA site identification process. Figure 5.3 identifies their location and Table 5.4 provides a summary of the main site assessment which is shown in full in Appendix A.
- 5.14 Table 5.4 identifies the main site issues likely to impact on development including land type, floodrisk, access and sustainability. Access has been scored either 1, when there are no known issues and 2 when it is considered that access issues may impact on developability. Sustainability is also shown as a score, with sites scoring 1 when they can readily access services and have less of an environmental impact.

Figure 5.3 Potential new gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites

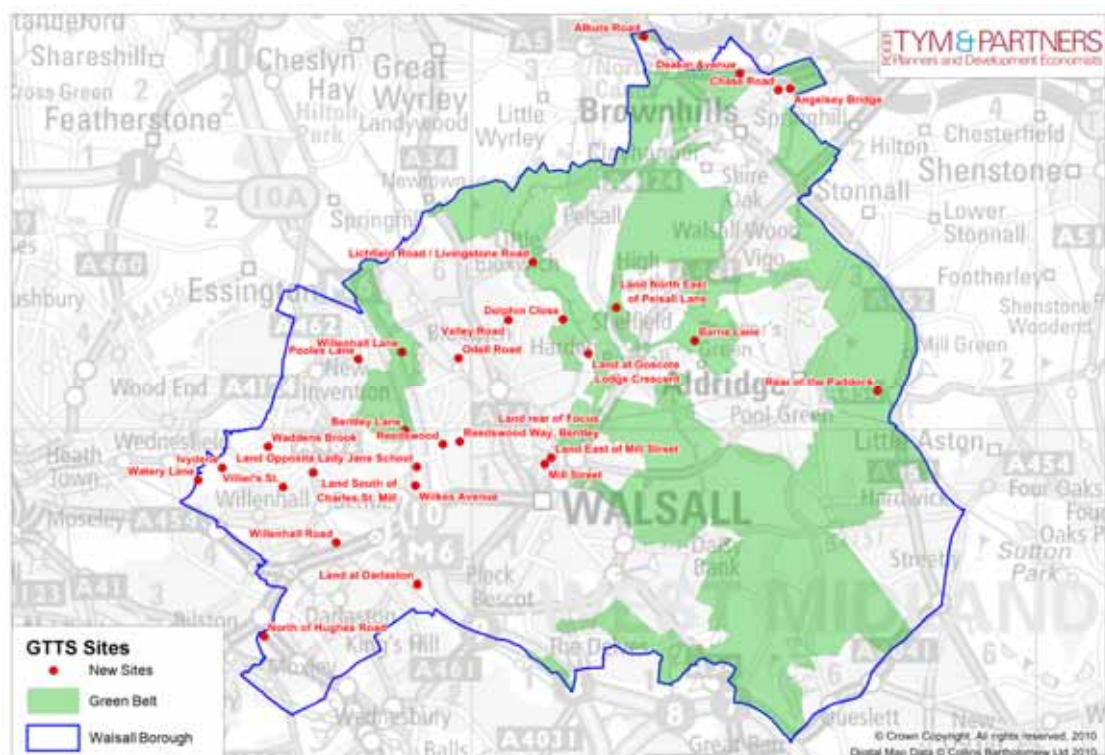


Table 5.3 Summary of site assessment

Ref	Site	Ownership	Land use type	Floodrisk	Access (1 = no issue, 2 = potential issue)	Sustainability (1= most sustainable location - 3= least sustainable location)
16	Villiers St	WMBC	PDL		2	1
17	Waddens Brook	WMBC	Greenfield		2	1
18	Land south of Charles St Mill	Private	PDL		1	1
19	Ivydene	Private	PDL	Zone 2 (part)	1	1
20	Albuts Road	WMBC	Greenfield		1	2
21	Odell Road	WMBC	Greenfield		2	1
22	Reedswood	WMBC	PDL	Zone 2 (part) and Zone 3 (part)	1	2
23	Mill Street	Private	PDL		1	1
24	Barns Lane	WMBC	Greenfield	Zone 2 (part)	1	2
25	Land at James Bridge, Darlaston	Private	PDL	Zone 2 (part) and Zone 3 (part)	1	2
26	Gould Firm Lane	Private (promoted for GTTS)	Greenfield		1	2
27	North of Hughes Road	WMBC	PDL	Zone 2 (part)	1	2
28	Goscote Lodge Crescent	WHG	Mainly PDL		2	1
29	Dolphin Close	WMBC	PDL		1	2
30	Anglesey Bridge	Private	PDL		1	2
31	Willenhall Road	Private	PDL	Zone 2 (part)	1	1
32	Chase Road	Private	PDL		1	2
33	Land rear of Focus Reedswood Way, Bentley	Private	PDL		1	2
34	Deakin Avenue	WHG	PDL		2	2
35	Pooles	Not known	PDL		1	2

	Lane					
36	Land east of Mill Street	WMBC	PDL	Zone 2 (part) and Zone 3 (part)	1	1
37	Bentley Lane	Private	PDL		1	2
38	Watery Lane	Private	PDL	Zone 2 (part)	1	2
39	South of Lichfield Road / East of Livingstone Road	WMBC	Greenfield		1	2
40	Willenhall Lane extension	WMBC	Greenfield	Zone 2 (part) and Zone 3 (part)	1	1
41	Opposite Jane Lane School	WMBC	PDL		1	2
42	Wilkes Avenue	WMBC	Greenfield		2	2
43	Land North East of Pelsall Lane	Private	Greenfield	Zone 2 (part) and Zone 3 (part)	2	1

6 AVAILABLE, SUITABLE AND DELIVERABLE SITES

6.1 A range of new sites have been identified and with those that are already established, assessed in terms of their ability to accommodate pitch and/or yard provision to meet future site needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Assuming that the existing sites will continue to function, it is important to determine whether the new sites are available (and when), suitable and deliverable. This will be considered in the following terms:

- Available
 - sites that are owned by the Council or Walsall Housing Group will, for the purpose of this study be considered as being available for development
 - sites that are privately owned but have been promoted for gypsy, traveller or travelling show people use will be considered as being available for development
 - sites that are privately owned or where ownership is not know, will be considered as requiring further investigation and will not be considered as immediately available
- Suitable
 - sites that are located in the most sustainable locations will be considered in preference to less sustainable sites (includes flood risk, access to services, social issues and community cohesion)
 - sites that require further investigation regarding land use and access constraints (unknown previous use, contamination issues, access issues) will not be considered as immediately suitable
 - sites outside of the Greenbelt will be considered more suitable than those which are within Greenbelt
- Deliverable
 - sites that are owned by either the Council or Walsall Housing Group will be considered more deliverable as no land purchase will be required in order to bring them forward for development - Local Authorities such as Walsall have discretion to dispose of land for less than best consideration where it will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area
 - it is assumed that sites being promoted by owners for the development of gypsy, traveller or travelling show people sites will be available either for the Council/RSL to purchase and manage or will be made available to the travelling community to purchase
 - sites that are privately owned or where ownership is not know, will be considered as requiring further investigation regarding deliverability and will not be considered as immediately deliverable

6.2 Sites should be available, suitable for development and have a prospect of being delivered prior to being allocated within the LDF. The following table sets out which sites, following the assessment set out in Appendix A could be considered for further consultation through the plan making process. More sites have been identified than are required to meet the pitch and yard requirements set out in the GTAA and Core Strategy.

Table 6.1 Summary of site suitability and potential pitch numbers

Site	Available	Suitable	Deliverable	Potential Gypsy/Traveller plots (min - max)		Potential Travelling showpeople plots
16. Villiers St	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
17. Waddens Brook	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
18. Land south of Charles St Mill	Not known	Suitable for travelling showpeople	2017 +	NA	NA	3
19. Ivydene	Not Available - alternative use is to be developed on the site	Suitable for gypsies or travellers	Not deliverable unless alternative use does not go ahead	19	38	NA
20. Albutts Road	Available	Suitable for gypsies or travellers and travelling showpeople but lies in Green Belt	2007-2017 (Greenbelt)	105	211	13
21. Odell Road	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
22. Reedswood	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
23. Mill Street	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
24. Barns Lane	Available	Not suitable - Green Belt	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
25. Land at James Bridge	Not known	Not Suitable- flood risk and motorway noise	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
26. Gould Firm Lane	Available	Suitable for gypsies or travellers but lies in Green Belt	2007-2017 (Greenbelt)	4	8	NA
27. North of Hughes	Available	Suitable but ground	2017 +	88	176	11

Road		conditions need to be addressed				
28. Land at Goscote Lodge Crescent	Available	Suitable but alternative uses may have preference	2007-2017	259	519	32
29. Dolphin Close	Available	Suitable for gypsies or travellers	2007-2017	5	10	NA
30. Anglesey Bridge	Not known	Suitable but preferred use is as employment site	2017 +	48	96	6
31. Willenhall Road	Not known	Suitable but noise from adjacent industrial development and Black Country Route	2017 +	34	67	4
32. Chase Road	Not known	Suitable but constrained by surrounding industrial development	2017 +	19	39	2
33. Land rear of Focus Reedswood Way, Bentley	Not known	Suitable but preferred use is as potential high quality employment site	2017 +	87	174	11
34. Deakin Avenue	Available	Suitable for gypsies or travellers	2007-2017	10	20	NA
35. Pooles Lane	Not known	Suitable for gypsies or travellers	2017 +	2	4	NA
36. Land east of Mill Street	Available	Suitable but alternative uses may have preference	2007-2017	38	75	5
37. Bentley Lane	Not known	Suitable Lies in green belt but is PDL	2017 + (Greenbelt)	219	439	27
38. Watery Lane	Not known	Suitable but flood risk and may be more suitable for employment	2017 +	33	66	4

		development				
39. South of Lichfield Road / East of Livingstone Road	Available	Not suitable - site lies on prominent in green belt and would be difficult to screen	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
40. Willenhall Lane extension	Available	Suitable for gypsies or travellers but lies in green belt	2007-2017 (Greenbelt)	13	26	NA
41. Land opposite Jane Lane School, Bentley	Available	Suitable subject to ground conditions and motorway noise being addressed	2007-2017	2	4	0
42. Wilkes Avenue	Available	Not suitable	Not deliverable	NA	NA	NA
43. Land North East of Pelsall Lane	Available	Not suitable due to green belt location and access difficulties	2017 + (Greenbelt)	87	175	11

- 6.3 The sites highlighted in green are those where it is considered that development could occur within the next 7 years as they are the least constrained and they are either owned by the Council, Walsall Housing Group or a known private owner who is willing to allow the site to be used for gypsies, travellers or travelling show people. Sites highlighted in yellow would meet these criteria except for current planning policy objections.
- 6.4 These sites could potential provide all the required pitch provision for gypsies and travellers on a variety of site sizes. However if the Greenbelt sites are removed then the level of potential pitch provision is greatly reduced and in order to meet the requirements, it would require the development of one of the very large sites, where competition for other uses is at its greatest, including travelling showpeople. In terms of travelling showpeople because of the requirement for larger sites, the options are more limited. To meet the immediate needs Greenbelt sites would need to be released unless other sites, for example land that is currently in employment use but which may become available in the future, became available.

7 COST OF DEVELOPING NEW SITES AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING

- 7.1 In order to develop sites there will be cost to either the local authority, RSL or the private operator. The sites will be subject to a development cost to enable their use as a gypsy, traveller or showman site. The cost of developing a pitch for gypsy and/or traveller use is around £40,000 - £80,000 per pitch¹, therefore to provide a site to accommodate 23 pitches, which is the identified need to 2017; the development cost could be in the region of approximately £920,000 - £1,840,000. Development costs for travelling showpeople sites are not known, however the figures are likely to be similar, although land cost will be higher as they require a larger site to store and maintain all their equipment.
- 7.2 The Council has a number of options to fund the delivery and operation of a gypsy/traveller/travelling showpeople site of this size on public land:
- Walsall Council provide capital funding of the site and manage it as a public site, using rental income to contribute to the operational expenditure associated with the running and maintenance of the site
 - Walsall Council applies for grant funding to help pay the capital costs of developing the site. As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, little or no direct funding from central government is likely to be available for the foreseeable future. However, the proposed New Homes Bonus, details of which were announced in November 2010, could reward the authority if it developed or made land available for a site.
 - The Council could gift or rent the land to a Registered Social Landlord for them to develop and manage the site
 - The Council could sell the land to a gypsy/traveller family for them to develop and manage the site, although this would remove the site from public ownership and the Council would have limited control regarding its future
- 7.3 The options above are not exclusive and the Council may want to mix options or may have alternative ideas regarding funding streams and future operation of the sites.

¹ The figure of £40,000 - £80,000 is based on an average cost of providing new and extended gypsy and travellers sites across the UK and should be used as a guide. The figure is taken from "Gypsies and Travellers Financial Toolkit for RSLs" Housing Corporation, 2008. As individual sites may be subject to variable site conditions and constrains a full appraisal of the potential site will be required to provide an accurate figure as to the likely development cost.

