

**Revised Core Strategy Policy H4:
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

Adopted Council Policy

**Following a Special Meeting of South Staffordshire Council
held on Tuesday 5th October 2010**

Revised Core Strategy Policy H4: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Council will meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople, as set out in the Interim Policy Statement of the former West Midlands RSS (March 2010), in accordance with the following phased provision: -

Gypsy & Traveller Residential Pitches

- a) 2007-2012 = 30 pitches
- b) 2012-2017 = 12 pitches
- c) 2017-2022 = 15 pitches
- d) 2022-2027 = 17 pitches

Gypsy & Traveller Transit Pitches

- a) 2007-2017 = 5 pitches

Plots for Travelling Showpeople

- a) 2007-2012 = appropriate contribution towards 23 plots for Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

The Council will grant planning permission in suitable locations for additional pitches and allocate suitable sites in the Site Allocations DPD where there is evidence of need compared with current planned provision of pitches within South Staffordshire. Proposals will be expected to meet all of the following criteria: -

1. The intended occupants must meet the definition of Gypsies & Travellers (as set out in Circular 01/2006 or any subsequent replacement of the Circular), or the description of Travelling Showpeople as set out in Circular 04/2007 (or any subsequent replacement of the Circular); and
2. The site is on the outskirts of, or within reasonable travelling distance of, a settlement which offers local services including shops, community facilities and access to schools, medical facilities and the public transport network; and
3. Essential services such as power, water sewerage, drainage and waste disposal are either available or can be provided to service the site; and
4. The site will be well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches; for the occupiers of the site and between the site and adjacent users to protect the amenities of the occupiers of the site and the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, including 'boaters'; and

5. Transit sites should have good access to the strategic highway network; and
6. Sites for Travelling Showpeople will be large enough to accommodate ancillary yards for business uses and be located in areas where there is no unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential properties, including 'boaters', by reason of air pollution, noise or risk to the health and safety of local residents arising from the storage of large items of mobile equipment; and
7. The site can adequately and safely be accessed by vehicles towing caravans, is well related to the established local highway network and there is safe pedestrian and cycle access to the site and adequate space within the site to accommodate vehicle parking, turning space and to accommodate the occupants of the site having regard to the provision of adequate amenity space and play space for children; and
8. Proposals for an extension to an existing site will be considered where there is evidence of local housing need arising from those living on the site or, exceptionally, their immediate families – proposals that lack evidence of a local need will normally be resisted to avoid problems of community safety arising from poor social cohesion with existing families; and
9. The proposal, either in itself or cumulatively having regard to existing neighbouring sites, must be of an appropriate size so as to not put unacceptable strain on infrastructure or dominate the nearest settled communities – sites shall not exceed 15 pitches in size for occupation by a single family or, exceptionally, by an extended family, although local circumstances may, exceptionally, justify greater provision having regard to the assessment of the individual merits of the proposal; and
10. Proposals shall be sited and landscaped to ensure that any impact on the character and landscape of the locality is minimised, including impacts on biodiversity and nature conservation. In areas of nationally, sub-nationally or locally recognised designations, planning permission will only be granted where the objectives of designation would not be compromised by the development – examples will include: -
 - a) The Green Belt – where demonstrably harmful impact on the 'openness' of the Green Belt will be resisted;
 - b) Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – where proposals that will harm the setting, function and integrity of Cannock Chase will be resisted;
 - c) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), including Kinver Edge, Conservation Areas, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), including Motte Meadows Wheaton Aston, Local

Nature Reserves (LNR), including Shoal Hill Common, or any other protected sites - where proposals that will harm the setting, function and integrity of these areas will be resisted;

- d) Recognised tourism and heritage assets of South Staffordshire, including historic parks and gardens and the environs of the canal network within the District - where proposals that could undermine the economic vibrancy of South Staffordshire, by harming the aims, objectives and planned actions within the Council's Tourism Strategy, will be resisted; and

11. Proposals must be capable of being assimilated into the existing landscape, taking advantage of natural boundaries such as trees and hedges, providing mitigating measures such as suitable landscaping and planting where necessary; and
12. Proposals must not be located in areas at high risk of flooding including functional floodplains (flood zones 3a and 3b).

The Council will monitor and manage the provision of additional pitches within South Staffordshire against the phased provision set out above. Where there is no shortfall against the phased provision within each time-frame, in determining planning applications for additional pitches the Council will firmly resist any proposals within the Green Belt or the open countryside within South Staffordshire or proposals in locations that could introduce problems of social cohesion with the settled community or with the occupants of authorised sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

The Council will not tolerate the occupation by Gypsies & Travellers of unlawful sites and will seek the assistance of the Courts to remove them from such sites and to recover the costs of such removal and the cost of restoring the site to its original state.

The Council anticipates that the requirements to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople in South Staffordshire will be met through the provision of private sites. However, the Council will monitor the situation locally and liaise with the local Gypsy & Traveller Communities (including Travelling Showpeople), and seek to secure the provision of a suitably located public site(s) if there is a proven need for such provision having regard to the health, welfare and educational needs of the local travelling communities.

The Council will engage with the occupiers and owners of existing Gypsy & Traveller sites and sites of Travelling Showpeople in order to establish the local housing needs arising within existing sites and, where justified and subject to the criteria set out above, will consider the appropriate extension of existing sites.

The Council will collaborate with local planning authorities within Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent in order to facilitate the provision of 23

plots for Travelling Showpeople (2007-2012) and give consideration to an appropriate contribution towards future provision (2012-2027)

The Council will seek to collaborate with neighbouring authorities regarding the longer term provision for Gypsy & Traveller Transit pitches (2017-2027).

Applications for new sites and the refurbishment of existing sites will normally be expected to meet the design guidelines detailed in National Guidance (Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Good Practice Guide).

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council stipulates that a pitch for Gypsies & Travellers shall comprise of a maximum of 2 caravans/mobile homes.