

Policy Choices Consultation Policy H4 - March 2010



**South Staffordshire
Local Development Framework**

**Core Strategy
Development Plan Document**

**Policy Choices Consultation
Policy H4
Draft Policy on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

March 2010

South Staffordshire Council

H4: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Core Strategy Policy Choices Consultation

Draft Policy on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Policy H4: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Council will meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople as required by the West Midlands RSS Interim Policy Statement 2010, and the subsequent Regional Strategy for the West Midlands, in accordance with the following phased provision:

Gypsy & Traveller Residential Pitches

1. 2007-2012 = 30 pitches
2. 2012-2017 = 12 pitches
3. 2017-2022 = 15 pitches
4. 2022-2027 = 17 pitches

Gypsy & Traveller Transit Pitches

1. 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; subject to 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 neighbouring residential properties; and
- 5.** Transit sites should have good access to the strategic highway network; and

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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 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 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 will normally be expected to not exceed 15 pitches in size, although local circumstances may 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, regionally 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 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

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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;

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 requirements for new pitch provision set out above. Where there is no shortfall against the required provision within each phased 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 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 encourage 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.

The Council acknowledges that local planning authorities are expected to use the indicative figures for pitch provision beyond 2017 unless and until fresh Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) evidence is provided through a co-ordinated review of the sub-regional GTAA (Policy 2 of the RSS Interim Policy Statement 2010). The Council will take an active interest in the review of the sub-regional GTAA.

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).

