

**Supplementary Note to the South Staffordshire Local Plan Examination 2025 – Action 8.1, 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7**

This note has been produced by South Staffordshire Council to supplement the Examination of the South Staffordshire Local Plan. It directly responds to Action 8.1, 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7

**Action 8.1 – Council to review policy and supporting text of HC9 to include reference to how proposals for boat dwellers will be treated.**

**Action 8.5 – Council to delete ‘will only’ from Policy HC9.**

**Action 8.6 – Council to review Policy HC9 in line with the discussion on the following criterion: b, c, d, f, g, j and l.**

**Action 8.7 – Council to review criterion g and h of Policy HC9 in conjunction with Policy DS1 on the treatment of windfall proposals in the Green Belt. This should include consideration of a further local exception linked to the supply position, family connections and sites comparable to the definition of grey belt.**

**Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers**

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- 7.23 The Government’s Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) - August 2015 details that Local Plans should set criteria-based policies for guiding allocations that have been proposed to meet an identified need; as well as well as for decisions on planning applications that are proposed on unallocated sites (e.g. windfall developments). The definition of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is set out in the 2012 PPTS.
- 7.24 The council is unable to meet its full 5-year requirement (92 pitches) for gypsy and traveller pitches due to a lack of suitable site options to meet evidenced locally generated needs, with an assessment of site options through the Pitch Deliverability Study 2021 identifying 42 suitable pitch options towards this 5 year requirement. However, based on representations to our Preferred Options consultation in 2021, the decision was taken to delete Land at 122 Streets Lane (GT35) when taking account of a planning inspector’s conclusions on the unsuitability of the site at a previous Section 78 Appeal. Through the 2024 GTAA update, the five year needs of families were reassessed, including the families on sites assessed as suitable for expansion, with the number of pitches proposed reflecting this latest evidence. As a result, the Local Plan has suitable sites to allocate 37 pitches towards the 5 year identified needs of families, with further provision likely to come through windfall developments that will be considered against this policy. The council will respond positively to windfall proposals

that accord with Policy HC9, including intensification or expansion of existing sites where there is a proven existing family need.

7.25 The PPTS confirms that criteria-based policies should be fair and should facilitate traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. This policy is therefore needed to ensure that the new sites/pitches are located in the right areas, are well designed, function effectively, and meet the needs of our Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities', whilst also protecting the amenity of neighbouring residential areas. Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will need to meet the relevant criteria in Policy HC9, alongside other relevant policy requirements in the plan such as those relating to flood risk and Biodiversity Net Gain.

X.XX Policy HC9 also sets out the policy requirements for residential moorings to accommodate boat dwellers. Whilst in recent times the council has not seen planning permission sought for residential moorings, as a number of important canals pass through the district, it is important that there is a policy basis for considering such proposals should they be proposed.

#### **Policy HC9: Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers**

##### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots will be supported where all of the following relevant criteria are met:

- a) Essential services such as power, water, drainage, sewage disposal and refuse/waste disposal are provided on site.
- b) The site is well designed and landscaped with clearly demarcated site and pitch boundaries using appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area. Where tree and hedgerow boundaries border the site these should be retained and strengthened where this would be sympathetic to the wider landscape character.
- c) The site is in a sustainable location.
- d) Sites must be designed to ensure privacy between pitches and between the site and adjacent users. Proposals for caravans in residential gardens will be refused where they have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- e) The site can be safely and adequately accessed by vehicles towing caravans, is well related to the highway network, and provides adequate space within the site to accommodate vehicle parking and turning space to accommodate the occupants of the site.

**Deleted:** and

**Deleted:** I only

**Deleted:** where possible

**Deleted:** The amenity of the site's occupiers and neighbouring residential properties is protected in accordance with Policy HC11. ...

**Deleted:** , including residential canal side moorings

f) The proposal, either in itself or cumulatively having regard to existing neighbouring sites, is of an appropriate scale so as to not put unacceptable strain on infrastructure and would be of a suitable scale itself and cumulatively to integrate with the nearest settled community.

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**Deleted:** dominate the nearest settled communities, to avoid problems of community safety arising from poor social cohesion with existing families.

g) Pitches are of an appropriate scale for the size and number of caravans to be accommodated, without over-crowding. Site intensification or extensions resulting in additional pitches may be considered acceptable in principle, subject to it being for a proven existing local family need, and acceptable in terms of other planning policies and licencing requirements. A single pitch to accommodate immediate family should only consist of one static caravan and one tourer caravan unless it can be demonstrated that additional caravans are necessary on the pitch to avoid overcrowding.

**Deleted:** or unnecessary sprawl.

h) Built development in the countryside outside the development boundaries is kept to the minimum required, in order to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding area.

i) Where proposals for additional pitches are in the Green Belt, proposals will be acceptable where, all relevant criteria of this policy are met, and at least one of the following applies:

**Deleted:** Where proposals are in the Green Belt, proposals will only be acceptable where they conform to Policy DS1. The proposed allocations of new pitches in the Green Belt set out in Policy SA4 will be acceptable in principle, subject to conformity with Policy SA4 and all criteria in this policy.

- The proposal conforms to Policy DS1; or
- The proposal is in conformity with an allocation within Policy SA4 and all relevant criteria in this policy; or
- There is a proven existing local family need, and the proposal is on previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b), or (d), excluding any land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 of the NPPF (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development

j) Any amenity buildings proposed are of an appropriate scale and reasonably related to the size of the pitch or pitches they serve.

**Deleted:** <#>Proposals are not located in areas at high risk of flooding.¶

k) Where the proposal is for travelling showperson provision, the site is large enough for the storage, maintenance and testing of items of mobile equipment, and does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties, including canal side residential moorings.

l) Where the proposal is for a transit site, proposals avoid locations that are accessed via narrow country lanes. Proposals must be in locations with good access to the strategic highway network.

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Applications for pitches from individuals that do not meet the planning definition set out in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites will also be considered in line with this criteria-based policy and other relevant policies on a case-by-case basis.

### **Boat Dwellers**

Development proposals for new residential moorings will be supported where:

- a) There would be no unacceptable impact on the operational, navigational or safety requirements of the watercourse or tow paths;
- b) Adequate access for emergency services to the mooring(s) exists or can be provided as part of the development to ensure safety;
- c) The site is in a sustainable location;
- d) There is adequate car parking, where relevant, taking into account the number of moorings and the location of the site;
- e) The site is connected or is capable of being connected to suitable utilities and on site services including water supply, electricity and disposal facilities for sewage and waste, as far as is practicable;
- f) There would be no unacceptable visual or amenity impacts to the watercourse and nearby land uses, with moorings designed to provide boaters privacy.

Development proposals should be consistent with other Local Plan policies