

# Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Sites and Policy Consultation (January 2024)

Borough Council of  
King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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**Q: Is it necessary for the Council to allocate land to meet accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers?**

A: Yes. This is both a legal requirement and a national planning policy requirement.

Legal requirements:

- 2004 Housing Act – places a duty on local authorities to provide sufficient accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers
- 2010 Equalities Act – protects the characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic group, and local authorities are required to actively seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Gypsies and Travellers have particular needs due to their nomadic culture.

National planning policy requirements:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to provide land to meet housing and accommodation needs for all people, including for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS).
- The NPPF is supported by the 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which sets out what local authorities are required to do to meet the legal requirements in planning for the accommodation needs of GTTS.

**Q: Why is the Borough Council now putting forward proposals to allocate land, to accommodate Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?**

A: The council was required to undertake a specific Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), which was published in June 2023. This report identified a future need for an additional 102 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the remaining Local Plan period (2023-2039). Of this, a need for 76 pitches must be provided within the first 5 years of this period (2023-2028). The GTAA also identified a need for 5 additional plots for Travelling Showpeople within the first 5 years.

Since publication of the GTAA the need for Gypsies and Travellers has reduced by 5 pitches, to 71 pitches within the first five years, as a result of appeal decisions which have been allowed.

The Planning Inspectors carrying out the examination into the council's Local Plan have directed that the allocation of sufficient land to accommodate Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is a necessity for the Local Plan to pass

examination, as indicated in the Planning Inspectors' 20 June 2023 letter to the Council.

**Q: What happens if the Council decides not to (or is unable to) follow the requirements regarding Local Plan policies for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?**

A: The Inspectors wrote to the Borough Council on 20 June 2023, setting out the Council's obligations regarding planning for Gypsies and Travellers. The Inspectors' letter is clear and unequivocal, that the Local Plan must allocate land to meet the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople identified in the latest (2023) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

Failure to do so, to the satisfaction of the Planning Inspectors, would be highly likely to lead to the Local Plan being found "unsound", thereby failing at examination. Failure at examination would lead to the failure/ loss of the Local Plan in its entirety.

**Q: Where is this accommodation need coming from?**

A: Kings Lynn and West Norfolk has a long-established Gypsy and Traveller community. There are over 70 existing sites across the Borough of which nearly all are privately owned. Just like the needs of other communities, the accommodation needs on some of these sites has increased. This is mostly coming from teenage children or other relatives who are, or will be, seeking their own pitch on existing family sites. This is why the Council are proposing to provide most of the current and future accommodation needs on or through extensions to existing established sites.

There is no need arising because of general inward migration.

**Q: What happens if the Local Plan cannot progress further, due to the requirement to allocate land for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?**

A: As stated, without allocating sufficient land to meet the identified need, then it is highly likely that the Local Plan will be found "unsound"; i.e. fail at examination.

In this situation there would then be little/ no up-to-date policy framework for directing development and delivering infrastructure requirements. This would **not** prevent unwanted development. Instead, the lack of an up-to-date Local Plan would likely lead to "planning by appeal", whereby the Borough Council could not demonstrate 5-year development land supplies. In this case it is likely that unwanted/ undesirable developments would be approved (including Gypsy and Traveller sites) by Planning Inspectors (on behalf of the Secretary of State), often in locations that the Council would wish to see protected.

**Q: What is the process for the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople work and the wider Local Plan examination, going forward?**

A: The council is carrying out a public consultation exercise regarding Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople potential site allocations options, which

will take place for 6-weeks from the 26 January to the 6 March 2024. It is emphasised that this consultation is about potential options. Following the consultation, final recommendations for site allocations will be presented to a meeting of Full Council (likely end of April 2024), to be approved for submission to the Planning Inspectors. Therefore, proposed site allocations for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople can only be taken forward with the specific approval of Full Council. Assuming this is approved for submission to the Inspectors by Full Council, then a timetable going forward, is then likely to be as follows:

- Winter 2023 – Confirmation by Planning Inspectors that Local Plan examination hearings can be reconvened;
- Spring/Summer 2024 – reconvened Local Plan examination hearings, including a session specifically on the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople policy. ;
- Autumn 2024 – Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan;
- Late 2024 – Publication of Inspectors' Report;
- Early 2025 – Local Plan adoption.

**Q: How were the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople assessed?**

A: The methodology for assessing needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation is set out in the 2023 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). This was assessed through a series of questionnaires and engagement between the appointed consultant (ORS) and travelling communities. Most need has arisen from the creation of new households/ family units coming of age, from established communities. The study was carried out in accordance with current best practice guidance.

**Q: Where is the accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople located in West Norfolk?**

A: Accommodation needs are mostly localised, as these arise from existing communities. 72% of the need for Gypsies and Travellers is identified in three parishes – Outwell, Upwell and Walsoken. For Travelling Showpeople, the outstanding need has arisen from existing sites at Methwold and Northwold.

It is emphasised that the overwhelming need for Gypsies and Travellers is situated in the area of the Fens around Wisbech. This is reflected in the proposed site allocations.

**Q: Are the sites, locations and policies within the consultation document subject to, or likely to, change?**

A: Yes. These policies and potential site allocations are only draft/ indicative at this stage. All feedback from the forthcoming consultation (January – March 2024) will be reviewed and used to update documents where appropriate before the Council makes its final decisions.

**Q: Are the pitch and plot numbers subject to change?**

A: Yes. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) sets out the defined need, as at summer 2023. This has already reduced due to recent appeal decisions (i.e. reduction by 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches), and could change further if there are further approvals, either through planning applications, or appeal decisions allowed.

These pitch/ plot numbers are therefore only indicative at this stage and may be subject to further change following the consultation.

**Q: Why does the consultation document propose more than the minimum requirement/ identified need proposed?**

A: As the Council has not yet made a final decision on the locations of site allocations or detailed policy wordings, all reasonable options are subject to consultation. This enables flexibility and would allow for the Council to still meet its obligations if any of the potential site allocations were to be discounted through the consultation.

**Q: Who will be consulted?**

A: In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, all statutory consultees and interested parties will be consulted, subject to the requirements of the 2018 Data Protection Act.

**Q: How and when can I respond to the consultation?**

A: The consultation will commence on Friday, 26 January 2024, running for 6 weeks (closing date, Friday, 8 March 2024). Details will be set out on the Local Plan examination web page:

- [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20079/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_local\\_plan/951/local\\_plan\\_review\\_2016-2036\\_examination](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20079/planning_policy_and_local_plan/951/local_plan_review_2016-2036_examination)).

To assist the consultation, there will be a representation form. This should be used, to ensure we can capture the information required to allow us to process your response. Please note that representations must be received within the 6-weeks period to be considered.