

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	PLANNING POLICY	Item 6	Page 1 of 5
Report Originator	Head of Development Services	Fwd Plan Ref No:	
Wards Affected	All	10 th September 2019	
Title	GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT (GTAA) 2019		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), and initiatives being explored to meet the accommodation needs identified.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members may recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 5th July 2017 (Minute 17.PP.05 refers) it was agreed that the preparation of a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy be removed from the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (SSP2). This was to prevent delay to the SSP2 whilst the preparation of a Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is undertaken.
- 2.2 National planning policy for gypsies and travellers is provided by the Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (PPTS), of which a revised version was published in August 2015. The key change in definition provided by the August 2015 PPTS occurs with the removal of the term *...who have ceased to travel permanently*. This means that those families who have ceased to travel permanently will no longer fall under the planning definition of a Traveller for the purposes of assessing accommodation need in a GTAA. The GTAA requires that local planning authorities set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers in their area, and that this should use a robust evidence base establishing the accommodation need from this assessment. For those families not meeting the definition, their need will as a consequence be considered through general housing policies, some of which may be pitches. The last full GTAA was published in 2008, and subsequently updated in 2011.
- 2.3 Discussions took place with officers from each of the other North Northamptonshire authorities, and it was agreed to share the preparation of a GTAA across each of the four authority areas (Corby, Kettering Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Councils). Opinion Research Services (ORS) were appointed to undertake the GTAA. The methodology used to undertake the GTAA involves early and effective community engagement with the traveller communities to identify permanent and transit accommodation needs, and establishing which households fall within the planning definition for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and which fall outside the definition. A copy of the GTAA can be viewed at the following link:

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	PLANNING POLICY	Item 6	Page 2 of 5
------------------	------------------------	-----------	----------------

https://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/file/18695/north_northamptonshire_gtaa_march_2019

GTAA Outcomes

- 2.4 The headline future accommodation need findings for Kettering Borough for the period 2018-33 are provided below:

	Kettering Borough	North Northants
Gypsies and Travellers		
Meet Planning Definition	23	34
Undetermined	4	32
Do Not Meet Planning Definition	21	44
Sub Total	48	110
Travelling Showpeople		
Meet Planning Definition	0	14
Undetermined	0	0
Do not Meet Planning Definition	0	0
Sub Total	0	14
TOTAL	48	124

- 2.5 The GTAA reports there are 2 public sites providing 22 pitches in total; and 13 private sites with planning permission for 69 pitches. Of these, 16 unimplemented pitches are provided as a part of 2 sites. In addition, 8 further pitches are provided temporary planning permission on a single site.
- 2.6 Interviews were attempted at all Gypsy and Traveller sites, the success of which is provided in the table below:

Pitches	No Contact	Vacant/Non- Travellers	Refusals	Complete Interviews	Incomplete Interviews
99	9	44	6	45	15

- 2.7 The conclusions of the GTAA with regards to need were that there is a need for 24 pitches for families that meet the planning definition, and also 24 pitches for families that do not meet the planning definition.

Proposed Actions Going Forward

- 2.8 The Council proposes to explore various options in supplying gypsy and traveller pitches to meet the need identified in the GTAA, as it relates to Kettering Borough.
- 2.9 **Site Intensification** – some existing sites have sufficient capacity within them to allow, where possible and appropriate, for the intensification of the site through reconfiguration of the pitches. It is proposed to explore whether this potential can be realised, to potentially accommodate growth in pitches at these sites, brought about by need emerging from these same sites.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	PLANNING POLICY	Item 6	Page 3 of 5
-----------	------------------------	-----------	----------------

- 2.10 **Site Extensions** – on those existing sites where intensification may not be possible, it is proposed to explore the potential for the site to be extended into a neighbouring piece of land. Again, this could be particularly beneficial where there is direct need emanating from the site in question.
- 2.11 **Delivering Unimplemented Sites** – delivering sites with extant planning permission has the potential for bringing forward at least 16 additional pitches. It is proposed to continue to explore the exact means for unlocking these stalled sites to meet need identified through the GTAA.
- 2.12 **New Site Allocations** – the Council will explore the identification and allocation of sites through the already agreed approach of preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Policy as a standalone addition to the area's Local Plan documents. The work to ensure the Council has sufficient pitches to meet the housing needs of the gypsy and traveller community could be critical in progressing the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan. The Planning Inspector is likely to want to see that housing is being provided sufficient to meet the needs of the area. Having separated off the gypsy and traveller provision whilst a GTAA is carried out, it is important to then be able to show to an Inspector how the Council also proposes to bring forward within a short timeframe, its plans to meet the housing requirement for gypsies and travellers. The threat is to the SSP2 not being found sound, or at the very least the Inspector deferring the SSP2 Examination for a period of months whilst the Council progresses this part of its responsibility. In the meantime, the Draft SSP2 could cross-reference to Policy 31 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and the criteria-based policy contained within that for assessing any gypsy and traveller pitch proposals.
- 2.13 **Strategic Working** – Kettering Borough Council will cease to exist on 1st April 2021, with a new unitary council being formed. The Councils making up the new organisation are entering into discussions about how services are provided in the future, including how housing needs are distributed across the whole of the Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA).
- 2.14 **Regularising Sites Occupied by Non-Gypsy Families** – through interviews undertaken by ORS's field workers, it was found that a number of sites were occupied by families with no gypsy or traveller heritage, in breach of planning conditions placed on permission for those sites, restricting their occupation to members of the gypsy and traveller community alone. This may necessitate the need for the Council to take enforcement action or help to find alternative homes for residents living at those sites. Resolving this situation could be complex, bringing with it challenges to those parts of the community.
- 2.15 **Greater Depth Interviews** – it is proposed that in some cases a greater depth interview with gypsy and traveller households may help create a better understanding over potential accommodation solutions some residents might find appropriate. For example, there may be cases where a bricks and mortar solution as an alternative to a mobile home or touring caravan is appropriate.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	PLANNING POLICY	Item 6	Page 4 of 5
-----------	------------------------	-----------	----------------

2.16 It is recognised that specialist consultants have a greater depth of skills in working with members of the gypsy and traveller community. The Council will be investing in further consultant input into supporting the supply of additional pitches to meet the identified need. The range of options open to the Council is quite broad and challenging in various ways to ensure the provision of pitches is successful. As such, it will take time to progress these options, but it is expected headway will be made in meeting the need identified through the GTAA.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 Consultation in the preparation of the GTAA has been undertaken primarily with members of the gypsy and traveller community. Interviews were also held with officers of the various Councils in North Northamptonshire, and neighbouring authorities, as well as the County Travellers Unit.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The GTAA will be a supporting document to the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy, which will form part of the North Northamptonshire Development Plan and will guide the allocation of land for new gypsy and traveller sites in Kettering Borough. Policy 31 – *Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People* of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy states that where necessary part 2 Local Plans will allocate further sites for accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people and already provides a series of criteria for assessing new site allocations or considering planning applications.

4.2 The cost of preparation of the GTAA was met within the existing Development Services Planning Policy budget.

5. LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The GTAA identifies gypsy and traveller accommodation needs across North Northamptonshire. This document provides the basis for the Council to understand this need and have due regard to how best to meet this need, whilst eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; provide equality of opportunity; foster good relations; and develop a robust policy and strategy involving stakeholders in the decision-making process.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None from this report but, the resultant Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Policy will be subject to sustainability appraisal throughout its evolution, inclusive of which is climate change implication.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	PLANNING POLICY	Item 6	Page 5 of 5
-----------	------------------------	-----------	----------------

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Members:

- i. note the contents of this report with regards the GTAA; and
- ii. agree that officers seek to progress the Proposed Actions Going Forward as suggested, to help meet the gypsy and traveller accommodation need.

Contact Officer: Simon Richardson – Development Manager

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref: Agreement to Remove the Gypsy and Traveller Allocations Policy from the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan

Date: 5th July 2017