

Assessment of Need and Supply of Traveller Pitches and Travelling Showpeople Plots (October 2024)

1. Introduction

1.1 In 2024 the South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) of Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council, and Wychavon District Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) published in 2019. The update covers the period 2019 – 2041 with any unimplemented planning consents counting towards supply. The results will be used as an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning, to support the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review at Public Examination and to inform the determination of future planning applications.

1.2 The Assessment was prepared in accordance with national guidance including Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (Dec 2023). To achieve the study aims, the research drew on a number of data sources including:

- i) Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTAAs, and analysis of secondary data. This included analysis of the most recently published (January 2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
- ii) Consultation with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
- iii) Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs

1.3 The consultation has taken into account all known Gypsy and Traveller households residing in the study area on authorised and unauthorised pitches, with a response rate of 89% and the accommodation needs of all (100%) known pitches being considered by the Assessment.

1.4 The Assessment identifies that there is an overall accommodation need in the study area, for the local plan period to 2041, of 167 pitches using the PPTS 2023 definition which increases to 200 pitches using the ethnic definition. In addition, there is a need for 16 Travelling Showpeople plots over the plan period. With regard to the preferred location of any new provision, respondents did not state any preference but were more likely to state that they would prefer to be close to family members already residing in the area.

2. Policy Requirements as set out in the South Worcestershire Development Plan Regulation 19 Publication Document – Extract from Policy SWDPR20

2.1 The policy regarding gypsy and travellers within the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review is based upon the 2019 GTAA and is set out below. The policy is under consideration as

part of the examination to determine whether the Gypsy and Traveller need and supply can be determined through the SWDPR or whether a DPD is required to provide further detail in terms of allocations.

A. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) will identify and update annually a five-year supply of deliverable pitches for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in order to meet the local targets set out in Tables 5 and 6, subject to subsequent reviews of the South Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The LPA will identify sites in a Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), unless sufficient sites can be identified through SWDPR 20 C.

Table 5: Minimum Requirements for Permanent Traveller Pitches and Travelling Showpeople Plots 2019-2023 (source: South Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, 2019).*

District	Permanent Traveller Pitches	Permanent Travelling Showpeople Plots
Malvern Hills	15	7
Worcester	1	0
Wychavon	14	0
South Worcestershire Total	30	7

*2019-2023 is the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2023

Table 6: Longer-term Requirements for Permanent Traveller Pitches and Travelling Showpeople Plots 2024 – 2041 (source: South Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, 2019)

	2024 to 2028		2029 to 2033		2034 to 2041	
	Traveller Pitches	Travelling Showpeople Plots	Traveller Pitches	Travelling Showpeople Plots	Traveller Pitches	Travelling Showpeople Plots
Malvern Hills	3	1	3	1	4	1
Worcester	1	0	1	0	2	0
Wychavon	16	0	18	0	26	0
Total	20	1	22	1	32	1

B. The GTAA (2019) identifies a need for 167 Traveller pitches to meet the ethnic need for the plan period. This figure includes the 104 pitches (i.e. to meet the PPTS need) in Tables 5 and 6 above.

3. GTAA Update 2024

3.1 The update of the GTAA completed in 2024 identifies an increased need as set out below. The recommendation within the updated GTAA is that the Councils adopt the ethnic definition of Gypsy and Travellers (meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers whether they have ceased to travel or not). Alternatively, the authorities could adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures (which includes those who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to education or health needs or

old age (but not due to other reasons)) with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and ethnic definition being an additional need that the Council(s) may choose to meet. It is intended to first meet the required need of 167 pitches (63 within the first 5 years) but accept the need of a further 33 pitches (23 within the first 5 years) as potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls (refer Table ES.1 below). For Travelling Showpeople the need for the plan period is 16 plots with 12 required for the first 5 years (refer Table ES.2 below). Each year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Table ES.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs (pitches)

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-28	86	63
2029-33	40	38
2034-38	44	42
2039-41	30	24
Total	200	167

Table ES.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs (plots)

Period	Study area
2024-29	12
2029-34	1
2034-38	1
2039-41	2
Total	16

3.2 Since the GTAA was first published in 2019, there has been an increase in need of:

- 63 pitches for those who meet the PPTS definition,
- 33 pitches for those who meet the ethnic definition and
- 6 plots for travelling showpeople.

3.3 There are several reasons for the overall increase in need, including:

- The change to the definition in the PPTS 2023 which now includes Gypsies and Travellers that have permanently given up travelling due to education or health needs or old age (in response to the Court of Appeal judgement in Smith v SSLUHC & Others October 2022) - previously it just included those who had temporarily stopped travelling.
- The overall baseline figure has increased since 2019. In essence the overall number of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the area is higher than it was and in short more people/households creates more need.
- Demographics and household formation within the Gypsy and Travelling community mean that new households tend to be created earlier than within the settled population.

4. Transit Sites

4.1 With regard to transit provision, it is recommended that the South Worcestershire Councils continue with the existing Joint Protocol policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments. It is intended to continue implementing the Joint Protocol which, in certain circumstances, allows for the deferral of enforcement action by up to 21 days for unauthorised encampments on council owned land.

5. Allocation of sites:

5.1 The allocated sites are shown in Table 1 of the South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) – Publication: Regulation 19 Stage [South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy - South Worcestershire Development Plan \(swdevelopmentplan.org\)](https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org)

Table 1: Non-strategic allocated sites

Site Name and Location	District	New or Existing Site	Potential No. New Pitches	For Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use
The Paddocks, Newlands	Malvern	Existing	4	Traveller
The Hill, Canada Bank, Charlton	Wychavon	Existing	2	Traveller
The Orchard, Knowle Hill, Evesham*	Wychavon	Existing	See below*	Traveller
Blossom Hill, Village St, Aldington**	Wychavon	Existing	See below**	Traveller
South Worcs Total			6	Traveller

5.2 The pitches on the above 2 crossed out sites have already been taken into account in the GTAA Update (2024) and therefore are excluded as new allocated sites. This is because they are either:

- existing built out sites and therefore included in the ‘Current occupied permanent residential site pitches’ in step 1 of *Table 5.4 Estimate of the need for permanent residential site pitches 2024-29*; or
- on sites where planning permission has been granted for additional pitches which have not yet been completed and therefore are included in the supply figure (refer Step 6, para 5.21 of the GTAA Update (2024)).

5.3 It should be noted that a current planning application for 2 new pitches remains pending at The Hill, Canada Bank, Charlton in Wychavon (application W/23/02091/FUL).

6. Pending and Approved Planning Applications since 1st January 2024

6.1 Over the years there has been a steady stream of planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller pitches that has continued up to the present day. Since 1st January 2024, an additional 5 pitches have been granted planning consent in Wychavon and a further 2 pitches in Malvern

Hills, i.e. 7 pitches in total. These have not been taken into account in the GTAA Update (2024) and are therefore classed as additional supply.

6.2 Similarly, there are several planning applications either pending a decision or at appeal (as at 21 Oct 2024), which total some 44 pitches. This includes 10 pending planning applications within Wychavon (including at The Hill, Canada Bank) for a total of 33 pitches (net) plus one application at appeal for 2 pitches (no date yet given for informal hearing) and two pending applications for a total of 6 pitches and one application at appeal for 3 pitches in Malvern Hills (informal hearing in November 2024). Again, these have not been taken into account in the GTAA Update (2024) and although it is unlikely that all of these will be granted planning approval, some will be, thereby helping to address the need within the area and are likely to come forward in the first 5 years.

6.3 It is noted that there are no pending applications for new Traveller Showpeople plots and no plots have been granted approval since 01 Jan 2024.

7. Windfalls

7.1 There is substantial evidence that windfall could continue to contribute to meeting the supply for the provision of gypsy and traveller sites: between 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2023, planning permission has been granted for 139 pitches in total, all of these are windfall and average 13.9 pitches per annum. This clearly demonstrates that there is a consistent pattern of windfall applications and permissions for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. It is therefore considered reasonable to make a cautious allowance of 10 pitches per annum for windfall provision.

7.2 In projecting the supply of pitches and plots going forward (as set out in Table 2 below), the windfall figure is introduced at year 2. Windfall will also be required over the plan period to meet the full ethnic need of the additional 33 pitches over and above the 167 to meet the PPTS definition need. As explained above, a windfall of 10 pitches per annum is therefore expected to contribute to the supply in Table 2 from 2025 onwards. This amounts to 170 pitches over the plan period. The total supply figures are shown in green.

Table 2 Need and Supply to 2041:

	2024-28 Traveller pitch requirement	2029-33 Traveller pitch requirement	2034-38 Traveller pitch requirement	2039 – 41 Traveller pitch requirement	2024-41 Totals	Travelling showpeople 2024 to 2041
Total need (PPTS) for South Worcestershire	63	38	42	24	167	16 TS plots
Total need (ethnic including PPTS) for South Worcestershire	86	40	44	30	200	
	2024-28 Traveller site provision	2029-33 Traveller site provision	2034-38 Traveller site provision	2039-41 Traveller site provision		Travelling showpeople
Allocations in DPD/Policy	6				6	2
Worcester South (SWDP45/1)	0	0	0	10	10	
Worcester West (SWDP45/2)	0	0	0	10	10	
Parkway	0	10	10		20	10
Rushwick	0	0	0	0		10 (2024-2028)
Throckmorton	0	0	10	0	10	
Pitches granted planning consent from 01 Jan 2024	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	
Windfall (of 10 pitches pa)	40	50	50	30	170	
Total Supply	53	60	70	50	233	22
Difference between (PPTS definition) need and supply	-10	+22	+28	+26	+66	+6
Difference between ethnic need and supply	-33	+20	+26	+20	+33	

7.3 The final two rows (in red) of the above table shows the difference between the need for pitches/plots and the supply of pitches/plots for each base period comprising 5 years with each year from 1 Jan to 31 December. The difference is either a negative and therefore a shortfall for that period or a positive and therefore a ‘surplus’ for that period – although it is acknowledged that there is no maximum figure for the supply. For clarity, separate figures are given for the difference between the supply and the PPTS need, and the supply and the ethnic need (which includes the PPTS need)

8. Proposed Approach for Meeting the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs:

Gypsy and Traveller pitches:

8.1 The above table, Table 2 Need and Supply to 2041, indicates that there is a shortfall within the first 5 years in the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches but thereafter the supply exceeds the needs with an overall total by the end of the plan period of 66 pitches above the minimum need for the PPTS definition and 33 pitches for the ethnic need.

8.2 Although the above Table 2 indicates that whilst the full need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches can be met within the plan period, there is a clear deficit for the first 5 years. This deficit equates to 10 pitches for the PPTS definition and 33 pitches for the ethnic definition.

8.3 The consultants who prepared the GTAA, RRR Consultancy Ltd, are confident regarding the Council's ability to meet the needs identified within the Assessment and at paragraph 7.22 state that;

“Based on the consistent use of windfall sites to meet accommodation needs in the study area, this assessment is confident that this trend will continue. RRR believes South Worcestershire local authorities have effectively addressed accommodation needs since the 2019 GTAA by granting planning permissions for windfall sites. With 47 pitches approved since 2019, fulfilling the identified requirements for the first five years, the council's collaborative approach with local households has proven successful. RRR is confident that by maintaining this approach, the council will continue to meet the accommodation needs of the local community, as identified in this study.”

8.4 In order to plan for meeting gypsies and traveller needs beyond the plan period, an additional Gypsy and Traveller site is proposed to be designated at Parkway thereby providing for the inevitable future growth in the gypsy and traveller population as well as to provide a sustainable settlement for gypsies and travellers.

Travelling Showpeople:

8.5 There have only been two Travelling Showpeople plots granted since 2014 which is insufficient to demonstrate an annual windfall – these were granted on a new yard in Wychavon. In order to help meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople it is suggested that an additional 2 plots are allocated in Wychavon at Kimberleys Field, Cropthorne. This site has not previously been included in the Travellers DPD and would therefore be a new allocation, however there would still be a shortfall of 4 plots by the end of the plan period.

8.6 The proposed new 10 plot Traveller site at Rushwick is clearly crucial to the supply of Travelling Showpeople plots because there is not an alternative site within Malvern Hills where the need is greatest. However, even with this site there remains a shortfall.

8.7 The above table, Table 2 Need and Supply to 2041, indicates that there is a shortfall of TS plots for both the first 5 years and the plan period, i.e. 10 and 4 plots respectively. If the 2 plots allocation at Kimberley's Field, is not included then the shortfall figures would be 12 and 6 plots.

8.8 It is therefore intended that an additional Travelling Showpeople Yard is allocated in the SWDPR at Worcestershire Parkway. This approach, in combination with the Travelling Showpeople yard allocation at Rushwick, would meet the need for Travelling Showpeople plots for the plan period.

9. Can the potential shortfalls in the first 5 years be addressed?

9.1 The immediate pressure is to set out a strategy for addressing the shortfall within the first 5 years of the plan period, which is for 10 pitches to meet the PPTS need (or an additional 23 pitches, so 33 in total, to meet the ethnic need) and 12 plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople. The councils focus will be on meeting the PPTS need for the first 5 years as this approach is in accordance with para 9 of the PPTS. This strategy could include exploring and progressing the following options, or a mix of options:

- Determine the pending applications, totalling 39 pitches with a further 5 pitches at appeal, currently before Malvern Hills and Wychavon – detailed at appendix 1. Clearly not all applications are appropriate and / or will be approved. However, those that are approved could make a significant increased contribution to the number of approved pitches since 1st January 2024 thereby reducing the shortfall within the first 5 years.
- The windfall rate could be increased to 13 pitches per annum which would increase the supply in the first five years by 12 pitches (clearing the deficit for PPTS with a resultant ‘surplus’ of +2 and reducing the deficit to -21 (ethnic)).
- There is the potential to intensify or expand appropriate existing sites which would have the benefit of providing pitches at sites which are either overcrowded or there are pressures from new household formation, thereby enabling extended family groups to stay together. In this regard the GTAA consultants have been asked to undertake a further piece of work, to be completed by 31 December, on the potential intensification of existing sites which have the potential for further pitches, focussing on those sites where there is an additional need.
- It is noted that there is a need for 12 Travelling Showpeople plots within the first 5 years and a further 4 plots required over the remainder of the plan period – as is the same for Traveller pitches, both of these figures are a minimum need and not a maximum one. As explained above, there is no potential to apply a windfall figure for Travelling Showpeople plots. It is unlikely that the need could be met for the first 5 years but 2 plots, through intensification, could potentially be allocated at Kimberley’s Field (in Wychavon) with the remaining 14 plots met later in the plan period with allocations for a 10 plot Travelling Showpeople site at Rushwick and a further one at Worcestershire Parkway. Working with landowners and the local community, the south Worcestershire councils may be able to encourage the submission of earlier applications at either one or both strategic allocations. This could be achieved e.g., by the establishment of an officers working group to co-ordinate matters going forward and to be an initial point of contact for the local community.

10. Conclusion:

This paper sets out the SWC latest position on the GTAA 2024 Update and how the additional needs for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are expected to be met. Once the further intensification and expansions evidence work has been completed, all matters relating to Travellers should be capable of being incorporated into policy within the SWDP Review and a separate DPD would therefore no longer be required.

Appendix 1- Current List of Planning Applications:

Malvern Hills

Planning Application	Address	Number of additional pitches	Status
M/22/00754	Dragons Orchard, Dragons Lane, Leigh Sinton	2	Pending
M/23/01701/FUL	Hillbee Farm, Upton upon Severn	4	Pending
M/23/00437/FUL	Land at Castlemorton	3	Refused, Appeal Hearing Nov 2024
Total		9	

Worcester City

No current applications

Wychavon

Planning Application	Address	Number of additional pitches	Status
W/17/02120	Orchard View, Fladbury	3 (Net gain) (6 gross)	Awaiting signing of S106 to prevent implementation of both this and the previous approval 15/010179 for 3 pitches
W/22/01598	Shorthill Caravan Park, Crossway Green	10	Pending
W/23/00331	Castle View, Eckington Road, Bredons Norton	1	Pending
W/23/01678	Duffledown Farm, Wyre Piddle Bypass, Upper Moor, Pershore, WR10 2JR	4 additional pitches + 3 transit pitches	Pending
W/23/01494	Blossom Hill, Village St, Aldington	1	Pending
W23/02091	The Hill, Canada Bank, Charlton	2	Pending
W/23/02524	Land At Kemerton Road, Westmancote, Bredon	3	Pending
W/23/02399	Land At Station Road, Blackminster, Badsey	1	Pending
W24/01768	Locks View, Charlton Lane, Torton, Hartlebury	5	Pending
W/24/01841	Honey Orchard, Doverdale	3	Pending
W22/02586	Land Os 0048, Worcester Road, Chadbury	2	Refused, Appeal
Total		35 (+ 3 transit pitches)	