

**SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
EXAMINATION OF THE SITE ALLOCATIONS & MANAGEMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT (SAMDev) PLAN**

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY'S REPOSE

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

Inspector's Narrative

Core Strategy Policy CS12 'Gypsy and Traveller Provision' is the Council's planning policy on gypsy and traveller provision. In brief, Policy CS12 confirms that the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers will be addressed by allocating sites, supporting sustainable development proposals for sites close to Shrewsbury, the Market Towns and Key Centres, and Community Hubs and Community Clusters; and small exception sites.

Notwithstanding Policy CS12, the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan does not identify any sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation. To support this approach, the Council relies on the 'Shropshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Shropshire Council' (July 2014) (GTAA). This identifies a shortfall of 5 pitches, excluding turnover, over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19. Taking account of supply through turnover there would be an oversupply of some 30 pitches to 2018/19. It is recognised that no adjustment is made for in-migration. Over the longer-term (2019/20 to 2026/27) an additional 12 households may require pitch provision. However, the GTAA concludes that current pitch provision and likely turnover is expected to address the need for pitches from these households.

As I indicated in the relevant hearing session, I consider that it is necessary to ensure that this evidence is made available for consultation given that it forms the basis on which the Council consider it is not necessary to identify and allocate sites to accommodate pitches for gypsies and travellers and there has been no opportunity to make informed representations on the soundness of this aspect of the plan.

Warrant Road Caravan Park 2 is an extremely large privately owned site that has a total of 51 pitches. As can be seen from Table 4.1a, almost half (25 pitches) were vacant in May 2014. I heard that the owner is carrying out improvements to the site and it is his intention to enable the pitches to be occupied; indeed this may well explain the high vacancy rate as was the case with a number of the Council managed sites at that time. However, so that I may assess the likelihood of this being a suitable and available site that realistically contributes towards the identified gypsy and traveller accommodation needs in Shropshire, could the Council please provide me with some additional information (in liaison with the site owner). In particular I would like to understand the owner's intentions for those vacant pitches and how long they have been vacant in addition to how the site is managed i.e. any pitch allocation policies.

LPA Response:

Warrant Road Caravan Park - Additional Information

The site is a longstanding Mobile Home/Caravan Park with 25 pitches. The site was granted permission for 12 pitches in 1987 which increased to 15 pitches in 1989 and further permission was granted in 1993 for 10 additional pitches.

John Taylor, the Council's Gypsy Liaison Officer, has visited the Warrant Road site and confirmed that Warrant Road is a well managed site offering 51 caravan plots. It is acknowledged that whilst the site has 51 plots, the planning permission for Warrant Road granted consent for 25 pitches and it is this level of provision that should be recorded in the GTAA (2014).

John Taylor considers Warrant Road to be an attractive site which accommodates a number of long standing gypsy and traveller families who are settled in that location and happy with the site. The site has shared toilet facilities but the provision on site is moving more towards self-contained static caravans which are acceptable to a number of gypsy families.

John Taylor has confirmed that Mr William Laird (site owner) has gypsy and traveller family connections and is known through John's day to day involvement with the gypsy and traveller communities and John's role as a principal point of contact for individuals wishing to discuss their accommodation needs or potential site developments in Shropshire.

Mr Laird is known to have a long association with the Warrant Road site and to have significant experience in Shropshire and elsewhere in the UK, managing caravan and park home sites, providing for traveller and non-traveller accommodation needs.

John Taylor has spoken to Mr Laird about the request for further information and clarification as set out in the Inspector's note (see above). Mr Laird has made it clear he does not wish to present any written confirmation of his proposals for the Warrant Road site but has discussed in broad terms his intentions for managing his site.

Mr Laird has not declared a formal pitch allocation policy for considering future occupants on the site. He has however indicated that he will only have respectable occupants on the site with an established track record in order to ensure that existing site harmony is not jeopardised.

Works to upgrade the site to accommodate more park home type accommodation is ongoing and Mr Laird is looking to expand occupancy at Warrant Road by renting pitches on the site. The pitches which are available on the site will continue to be available to both Traveller and Non-Traveller families.

Inspector's Narrative

Finally, could you please provide details of the relevant planning permissions for each of the authorised sites included in the supply of available pitches included in Table 4.1a of the GTAA?

LPA Response:

The further work to investigate pitch provision on private authorised sites has been undertaken by the Local Planning Authority and the amended information on supply is summarised in Table 1 attached, which updates Table 4.1a of the GTAA (2014). (Details of the relevant planning permissions including block plans where required, have been provided to the Inspector).

The amended information on supply has applied a 'strict' definition of authorised pitches to comprise the capacity identified either in the description of the permitted development, or the conditions attached to the permission or by defining standardised 2 plot 'pitches' / separate plots on the site block plan.

The further work to investigate pitch provision encountered three particular issues: firstly: it has been difficult to source some of the legacy documentation on planning permissions granted by former District and Borough Local Planning Authorities for long standing gypsy sites. Secondly, the former Local Planning Authorities did not use consistent terminology to explain pitch and plot provision in the development descriptions and conditions for planning permissions granted. Thirdly, the permitted number of pitches or plots on a particular site might be exceeded by the actual on-site provision. The determination of the number of authorised pitches on some of the sites has therefore required the exercise of judgement which favoured the permitted and largely lower, assessment of the site capacity.

The amended information on supply will enable the consultants ARC⁴ to recalculate the analysis of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs, the supply of authorised pitches and the identified pitch shortfall in the GTAA (2014) particularly in Tables 4.1a, 4.1b and Table 6.1. The revised gypsy and traveller accommodation needs in the amended GTAA (2014) will be consulted on by the Local Planning Authority to provide the opportunity for representations on the soundness of the gypsy provisions of the SAMDev Plan to be submitted for consideration by the Inspector.

The amended findings of the GTAA (2014) are set out below in relation to key Tables 4.1a, 4.1b and 6.1.

Table 4.1a - the following adjustments should be made to the pitch provision on authorised permanent sites:

Site	GTAA	Adjusted Capacity	Amendment to GTAA
	Pitches		
Unadjusted Pitch Capacity	95	95	n/a
The Caravan Site, Sheinton Road, Cressage	2	1	-1
The Caravan, Froxley, Shawbury	2	1	-1
The Bungalow, Kinnerley	12	10	-2

Orchard Cottage, Rocks Green, Ludlow	4	2	-2
Warrant Road Caravan Park 2, Tern Hill	51	25	-26
Marton Grange Caravan Park, Myddle Wood, Baschurch	12	8	-4
Sparrow Cottage, Shawbury Heath (previously unauthorised site not included in GTAA supply)	-	2	+2
TOTALS	178	144	-34(net)

Table 4.1b - the adjustments in Table 4.1a would adjust the totals in Table 4.1b as follows:

Type of Provision	Total Pitches
Total Gypsy and Traveller	154
TOTAL AUTHORISED (PERMANENT) *	144
TOTAL AUTHORISED (TEMPORARY) **	9
TOTAL UNAUTHORISED ***	1

* Adjustment to TOTAL AUTHORISED (PERMANENT) is calculated as follows – 178 pitches minus 34 pitch adjustment equals 144 pitches

** Site capacity reduced by 1 pitch on temporary authorised site at Henlle Parks Golf Club

*** Appeal against refusal of consent for Fenn Green dismissed so remains as 1 pitch unauthorised site

**** Appeal against refusal of consent for Sparrow Cottage, Shawbury Heath sustained and so, converted an unauthorised 2 pitch site to a permanent authorised site

Table 6.1 - the adjustments in Table 4.1b would adjust the totals in Table 6.1 as follows, subject to the specific amendments required by the GTAA methodology used by consultants ARC⁴:

Reconciling Need and Supply			
10	Total need for pitches (previous need of 185 families plus 2 newly identified families at Sparrow Cottage, Shawbury Heath increasing the need on private authorised sites in section 1b)	5 years	187
11	Total supply of authorised pitches (total authorised pitches (144) + Park Hall net expansion (+2))	5 years	146
12	Total supply of authorised pitches and turnover (total authorised pitches (144) + Park Hall net expansion (+2) + turnover (35))	5 years	181
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall			
12	Total shortfall excluding turnover	10-11	41*
13	Total shortfall including turnover	10-12	6*

* Manor House Lane, Higher Heath, Whitchurch – current application 14/04248/FUL for 6 permanent authorised pitches has yet to be determined.

The authority will encounter a shortfall of -41 pitches in the overall supply for the period to 2019. The inclusion of the projected turnover of 35 vacant pitches in this period would reduce this shortfall to just -6 pitches. The anticipated shortfall in the overall

supply (at -6 pitches) with projected turnover is therefore, still capable of being addressed through windfall development permitted under Core Strategy Policy CS12. It should further be noted that on the determination of current application 14/04248/FUL for a further 6 pitches at Manor House Lane, Whitchurch this remaining shortfall might be addressed in full if the proposed development is approved.

Inspector's Narrative

A response to my questions within 21 days would be appreciated. Could I then suggest that the evidence base is publicised for at least 4 weeks together with the Council's response to my questions about availability of pitches. A further hearing session should be scheduled on a provisional basis in case it is necessary to hear representors and / or for me to test the evidence further with the Council.

LPA Response:

The matters addressed above are subject to the proposed amendments to the GTAA (2014) and the further consultation proposed on the amended GTAA. The provisional programme for the completion of these further steps is that the amendments to the GTAA have now been commissioned and a 4 week consultation is expected to commence on the amended GTAA before the end of January 2015.

On completion of the proposed consultation during February 2015, any representations received will be forwarded to the Inspector for consideration and to determine whether a further hearing session to hear representors and / or to test the further evidence with the Council is required. The Council has not asked the Programme Officer to provisionally schedule a further hearing session at this time. The Council anticipate that, subject to the availability of the Inspector, a further hearing might be required in early March and confirm that a further hearing could be accommodated at that time, by the Council.

Liam Cowden
Principal Planning Officer
Shropshire Council

15 January 2015