

Gypsy and Traveller Call for Sites

A document with answers to some frequently asked questions

September 2023

As part of our duty to identify enough housing land for everyone in the borough, we want to hear from anybody who would like to suggest sites for Gypsy and Traveller use. We are therefore asking individuals, landowners or developers to suggest local sites which might be available and suitable for pitches.

What is a Call for Sites?

The Call for Sites is an open request for information about sites and land which may have potential for development for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the future. It is aimed at landowners, developers and their agents but it is open to anyone to submit a site.

Why are we running a Gypsy and Traveller Call for Sites?

We have carried out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA). We therefore know there is a need to provide more pitches that are suitable for members of our borough's Gypsy and Traveller communities in the future. While a few sites have previously been suggested, they may not be enough to meet local needs.

This process is part of the ongoing preparation of our Local Plan, which will set policies on all kinds of development for many years to come, to meet both local demand and Government requirements.

Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' does not cover a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers. These are ethnic groups recognised by the courts and declared to be protected "races" under the Equality Act 2010. However, some groups like showpeople and New (or New Age) Travellers fall outside the Equality Act 2010 definition.

How many Gypsy and Traveller pitches are needed in the borough?

The 2018 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) identified a need for 44 additional pitches in the period 2018 and 2041. This includes 33 additional pitches within the first 10 years (up to 2028) and 11 pitches over the remaining period.

What is a Gypsy and Traveller pitch and how big is it?

The actual size of a pitch varies but is a space of land big enough to provide for one household. This may vary depending on the size of the household in a similar way to housing for the settled

community, but generally means enough room for an amenity block consisting of a kitchen, bathroom and living room, plus space for two caravans and two vehicles. As a guideline, a pitch will require approximately 300 square metres of land.

How many pitches are there on a Gypsy and Traveller site?

There is no minimum or maximum number of pitches for a Gypsy and Traveller site. Smaller sites of three or four pitches can be suitable for one extended family.

What is the minimum required site area for a Gypsy and Traveller site?

A minimum site size requirement of 0.25 hectares has been applied to potential sites we have identified. This is the minimum size required to deliver a site comprising six pitches. There could be variations to the minimum size requirements, depending on site shape and access.

What information are we asking to be submitted?

Information is sought regarding the following matters:

- Site address/location – a location map clearly outlining the proposed site boundaries in red
- Site size
- Land ownership and current use
- Any current site constraints that may affect delivery (e.g. vehicular access, connections to utilities, infrastructure, legal covenants, ransom strips, financial viability, etc.) and the likelihood of those issues being resolved
- Current availability or anticipated timescales for when they think the site would become available for development (e.g. in the next five years)
- Other information that may be relevant to the potential delivery of the site

What are the next steps once the Call for Sites has closed?

All sites submitted to us will be carefully assessed and considered at the next stage of the Local Plan review through a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Assessment. This will include an appraisal of any sites that meet the minimum criteria and will identify whether or not any of the sites should be considered as a site allocation in the Local Plan.