



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

November 2023

Kicking the can down the road: The planning and provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in England 1960-2023

Appendix 8 of 15: Leeds area profile

Leeds City Council

Gypsy and Traveller population (Census 2011)	687
Any specific site allocations in the Local Plan?	Yes
Year of last Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	2014
Provider of most recent GTAA	LPA and Leeds GATE
Level of accommodation need	62
Acknowledgment of need to meet the needs of those who do not meet the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites definition?	Yes
Public provision?	Yes
Number of sites built before 1994	1
Number of sites built after 1994	1
Number of pitches on publicly-owned sites	49
Number of pitches on privately-owned sites	Not stated

Description of the area

Leeds is the second-largest planning authority outside of London with a population of 784,000 people. 1.2% of the population of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales recorded in the 2011 census live in Leeds. This is the 5th largest community of Gypsies and Travellers.

Outside the main urban area, there is an extensive rural area with a large number of discrete settlements. Two thirds of the entire area of Leeds City Council is designated as Green Belt.

The Gypsy and Traveller community also benefits from its own member organisation, Leeds GATE¹, who have been instrumental in the dramatic improvements in accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

¹ <https://www.leedsgate.co.uk/>

A note on negotiated stopping

One such improvement has been the development of the negotiated stopping model, described on the Leeds GATE negotiated stopping website² in these terms:

Families have the right to travel. Evictions are harmful. There are better solutions.

These are the simple beliefs that a successful negotiated stopping approach are built on.

Negotiated stopping is an alternative solution for the whole community and local authority to make space for Gypsies and Travellers to stop safely and legally.

It works by all parties coming to a common agreement for Gypsies and Travellers to use an unused piece of land as a temporary stopping place.

Terms are agreed, including time stopped on the land and services to be provided by the local council. This should include water, rubbish disposal and sanitation. Stopping can be agreed for a couple of weeks or months, but most are for around 28 days.

The benefits of this approach were set out in an evaluation report produced by De Montfort University³:

Better community cohesion around Negotiated Stopping – in addition to the potential combined savings of £238,350 per year.

Sustainability of Negotiated Stopping principles politically – has potentially been stronger outside of Leeds, rather than inside, and has led to amplification of the idea nationally.

Wider sharing of Leeds model on Negotiated Stopping, resulting in a positive image of the city's approach more broadly, but importantly got other organisations, such as the London Mayor's office, interested in the possibility of the idea.

² <https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/ns-explained>

³ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61389384969cff6899502b7d/t/61967563e13bcf5c62c8fb15/1637250408498/Evidence+of+Success.pdf>

It is fair to say that there has been national recognition of the approach, notably in a report produced by the Greater London Assembly.⁴

History of planning policy and assessments

West Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – May 2008 (Produced by Sheffield Hallam University)

In 2008, the then West Yorkshire Regional Housing Partnership commissioned Sheffield Hallam University to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the West Yorkshire region, covering the five West Yorkshire authorities of Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Wakefield and Calderdale. This assessment calculated that Leeds needed to provide an additional 48 pitches by 2015. The 2008 assessment calculated that Leeds would need a further 34 pitches for Gypsies in the period 2016 to 2026.

Review of Gypsies and Travellers Site Provision within Leeds Scrutiny Inquiry Report - Published 18th January 2011

In 2010 Leeds City Council undertook a Scrutiny Inquiry to review the Council's policy concerning Gypsy and Traveller site provision. The introduction to the report sets out that:

2. Since the last Scrutiny Board inquiry in 2004/05 there continued to be a high number of unauthorised encampments within Leeds particularly during the summer months. Some of these encampments cause considerable local difficulties both in terms of management and impact on local events, the environment and the community as a whole.

3. At the same time the Council and other agencies continue to incur significant costs in what are often cyclical evictions of gypsies and travellers [sic] from one unauthorised encampment to the next.

The report goes onto to note that:

23. The legal and departmental costs for the period between 2003 to 2010 are estimated to be over £1,994,000. The table below gives a breakdown over this

⁴ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ad_36_negotiated_stopping_report_final_jan16.pdf

period. These costs do not include those of the West Yorkshire Police which we believe will be substantial.

The inquiry heard from a range of people including Gypsies and Travellers living on the roadside. It had a number of recommendations including (amongst other matters):

- The piloting of a negotiated stopping scheme
- Provision of further pitches for families living on the roadside
- Consideration of extra provision on the exiting council site at Cottingley Springs

As will be shown below, all of these recommendations have been taken forward with varying degrees of success.

Leeds Core Strategy Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Requirement Study, 2013 (Produced by Leeds City Council)

This study was produced in-house, and was contextualised in a statement produced for the core strategy examination in response to the examining Inspector's questions:

*6. The local study is based on the statutory framework relating to meeting the housing need of Gypsies and Travellers. This is considered to be in line with the Government guidance "Planning for Travellers" which states that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning. A number of neighbouring authorities have followed an approach of compiling local evidence, as shown in **Appendix 3**. [Emphasis added]*

7. The key difference between the GTAA and the Leeds approach is the way in which potential needs are considered; the Leeds approach identifies those Travellers who expressed an intention to live on pitch based accommodation by registering a housing application, whereas the GTAA contained a significant level of aspirational needs.

8. It concludes that there is currently a need for 19 pitches for Leeds-based Gypsies and Travellers and that with a compound growth rate of 5% per annum there would be a need for 40 pitches to be provided during the plan period.

The study was the subject of an objection from Leeds GATE. The council's response continues:

Question. 2: Has the Council, as required by national guidance, engaged with traveller communities in order to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of need?

RESPONSE:

14. The Council has used the Gypsy and Traveller Exchange as the chief means of engagement. Leeds GATE is a members organisation for Gypsy and Traveller people in West Yorkshire.

15. In relation to the Core Strategy policy (as submitted) the Council has consulted GATE at all stages of plan preparation and GATE has been positive about Policy H7. One of their key concerns; that provision for transit sites should be kept separate from permanent sites; helped shape Policy H7.

16. In relation to the needs assessment a meeting was held with two officers from GATE in July at the Council's offices. At this meeting GATE were made aware of the Council's approach to Policy H7 and asked to formally consider the Draft Study. The meeting also discussed the progress of the Core Strategy and provided assistance to GATE in submitting representations to the Site Allocations Plan issues and options consultation. Following that meeting further e-mail contact was had around identifying specific sites for the Site Allocations Plan.

17. A subsequent meeting was held at GATE's headquarters in late August where members of the Gypsy and Traveller community also attended. At this meeting the Council and GATE discussed the pitch requirements study and GATE provided the Council with detailed concerns about the approach. There concerns relate to:

- underestimation of current needs and especially concealed Travellers who have not approached the Council for housing*
- lack of arrangements for private provision*

- *the lack of a clear approach to non-Leeds based Travellers*

18. These concerns have necessitated further engagement with GATE and meetings will be held prior to the hearing sessions, where it is hoped that the Council and GATE will have an agreed position.

The examining Inspector found that the GTAA did not conform with government guidance, and asked the LPA to re-work it.

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2014 (Produced by Leeds City Council and Leeds GATE)

Following the above, the LPA and Leeds GATE worked together to produce an assessment. The approach is set out within the assessment:

The Council worked in partnership with GATE, Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, to carry out the updated accommodation need assessment. The Council was mindful of the need to achieve a community mandate for the work and to ensure that it sought out the accommodation needs and preferences of ‘hard to reach’ Gypsies and Travellers.

The first stage of the needs assessment was for the Council and GATE to jointly develop a questionnaire that would be completed separately by each Gypsy and Traveller household who agreed to participate in the exercise. The questionnaire was designed to capture detail relating to a household’s current circumstances. This would give the Council an indication as to whether a household had an unmet housing need: a household living, with legal consent, on a local authority managed pitch/site was deemed to be adequately housed; whereas a household living on the ‘roadside’, without any legal consent, was deemed not to be adequately housed.

The questionnaire also captured housing preference with a household asked to numerically preference up to six housing options: local authority managed site, privately owned house/flat/apartment/bungalow, privately owned site, privately rented site, rented house/flat/apartment/bungalow or roadside/negotiated stopping.

GATE selected a group of community enumerators who would complete the questionnaire with participating households. This was done to get a community mandate for the work and to find 'hard to reach' Gypsies and Travellers.

The questionnaire work was carried out in January/February 2014. In total, 115 separate households completed questionnaires. In comparison 63 Gypsy and Traveller households completed questionnaires as part of the 2008 West Yorkshire accommodation assessment (Table 4.2 West Yorkshire GTAA). Leeds City Council is therefore satisfied that sufficient households were involved in the questionnaire process and that 'hard to reach' households were sought out.

The results of the 115 questionnaires were collated by Leeds City Council officers using the following framework:

The household's current housing situation was recorded.

The household's top three housing preferences were recorded.

A summary of the Council's assessment was also recorded.

A decision on whether the achievement of a household's housing preference would release existing pitches for re-letting.

The Needs Assessment then arrived at the following calculation:

Pitch Calculation

The calculation is as follows: current pitch need + compound growth – turnover.

Pitch Need up to 2027/28 is as follows:

Council Pitches – 26 (unmet demand) + 21 (household growth on existing supply) + 13 (household growth on unmet need) – 35 supply turnover) = **25 pitches.**

Private Pitches – 26 (unmet demand) + 4 (household growth on existing supply) + 13 (household growth on unmet need) – 15 (supply turnover) = **28 pitches.**

Negotiated Stopping – 6 (unmet demand) + 3 (household growth on unmet demand) = **9 pitches.**

Total = 62 pitches

[Emphasis added.]

Whilst the author of this report has issues with the use of turnover (see the reflections), the GTAA was an excellent example of effective engagement between an LPA and the community.

The examining Inspector then asked a series of questions with regards to the revised GTAA, and the LPA and Leeds GATE produced a joint statement which summarised how the cooperation had worked:

- *Leeds GATE played a lead role on the steering group for the work*
- *Leeds GATE worked with Council officers in preparing an agreed methodology for the local assessment including ways to identify and engage previously concealed need*
- *Leeds GATE's involvement led to meaningful engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community, including those who were previously reluctant to interact with the Council – this improved the range of the survey*
- *Council has provided Leeds GATE with funding to cover the costs of their time and that of community enumerators in carrying out the survey*
- *Leeds GATE supervised and conducted the survey themselves in collaboration with community enumerators from the local G&T community who completed 115 surveys*

What is also notable is that the need was disaggregated between private, public and negotiated stopping.

Leeds Core Strategy Adopted November 2014

The figures from the needs assessment were then included within the core strategy. The Inspector's report stated:

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

43. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local planning authorities to set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers [sic] and plot targets for travelling showpeople based on a robust assessment of need. Following concerns I

expressed with regard to Policy H7, the Council worked with Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) and carried out site surveys to assess the needs of the travelling community in Leeds. Policy H7 and its reasoned justification were subsequently revised, setting targets for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople. GATE was critical of Policy H7 as submitted but, at the hearing in May 2014, praised the Council's officers and the collaborative approach taken in compiling the survey. This is to be commended and I have no reason to consider that the new evidence which supports the modified targets is not robust.

Direct provision - 14/03263/FU | Retrospective application for a temporary use as residential site for Gypsies and Travellers with 8 pitches for 3 years. | Land Off The West Side Of Kidacre Street Hunslet Leeds LS10 1BD

It is understood that this site came into being as a direct result of the negotiated stopping approach. The officer's report sets out that:

Leeds City Council Housing Services established this temporary Gypsy and Traveller residential site at Kidacre Street in May 2014 and a planning application was submitted in June 2014...

...The families at Kidacre Street were previously at roadside encampments around Leeds. In accordance with Government guidance, a welfare needs assessment exercise was carried out and the Housing Authority determined that these arrangements were not suitable, and alternative arrangements had to be put in place immediately. Therefore Housing Services determined to move these families onto this site prior to securing planning permission.

It is incredibly unusual for a council to establish a site on its own land and then apply retrospectively.

Leeds City Council Site Allocations Plan 2019

This plan allocated several sites for Gypsy and Traveller use. Following a court challenge, part of this plan was remitted back to the examining Inspectors. This did not include the Gypsy and Traveller elements. The examining Inspector's reports found that:

57. In line with the findings of the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (August 2014) (GTAA) and recorded in the CS supporting text, the

need is split into provision for 25 pitches on Council managed sites, 28 pitches on privately managed sites and 9 pitches on negotiated stopping sites.

58. Council-run provision is provided at Cottingley Springs, Gildersome (HG6-1). The site is however overcrowded. Scope for an additional 2 pitches has been identified on this site which will assist and contribute to the supply of pitches. Since the base date of the GTAA, temporary planning permission has been secured at an existing site at Kidacre Street (HG6-2) for 8 pitches on the edge of the City Centre. Further feasibility work in relation to this Council managed site concludes that an additional 5 (rather than 3) pitches can be accommodated to address some of the need. A MM is required to record this within both Policy HG6 and the site-specific policy [MM18 & MM48]. This will address much of the immediate public need in the area throughout most, if not all, of the plan period and is in a sustainable location. However, its future availability is likely to be compromised by the High-Speed Rail Phase 2 (HS2) route. The Council has identified a replacement site in the immediate area that could be made available to address some of the potential displacement of the 13 public pitches due to HS2 (HG6-3 – Former Moored Training Centre, Tulip Street, Hunslet) (8 pitches), if necessary. This does not form part of the supply to meet the CS requirement.

59. Two further sites are proposed to be allocated to meet the need for public provision: West Wood, Dewsbury Road, Tingley (5 pitches) (HG7-1) and Land on the Corner of Tong Road and Lakeside Road, Wortley (5 pitches) (HG7-2). The SAP therefore identifies 25 public pitches together with a replacement site should the Kidacre Street site become unavailable during the plan period.

60. In terms of private provision, some 14 pitches are identified that would contribute towards the identified requirement for 28 privately managed pitches between 2012 and 2028. These comprise pitches on 10 small scale (1-4 pitches) long term tolerated sites that are to be safeguarded to ensure they remain available for occupation by gypsy and travellers [sic] and thus contribute to the overall supply of sites. Planning permission has been granted for a single pitch at Hollinhurst, Allerton Bywater since the relevant Hearing session.

61. The suitability of the proposed sites is considered under Issue 6 below. Existing sites in the Green Belt that are generally longstanding are to be safeguarded to ensure they remain available for occupation by gypsy and

travellers and thus contribute to the overall supply of sites. Given they have become lawful over time, it is not necessary to release them from the Green Belt to ensure their continued use. New allocations within the Green Belt will need to be inset so that future applications are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

62. The Council has deliberately chosen not to identify any specific site(s) to accommodate 9 stopping places due to concerns that they are likely to become, by default, sites for permanent accommodation. Rather, the Council intends that the Environment and Neighbourhoods service will work alongside other Council services, as part of ongoing operational management, to identify an appropriate pool of short-term sites where gypsy and travellers [sic] passing through Leeds can be directed. This approach has the support of Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE), the local gypsy and traveller advocacy group. This is a pragmatic approach allowing the Council to exercise flexibility in the sites it uses although it will not strictly fulfil the requirement to identify in the SAP where stopping places will be. The Council will need to monitor closely whether it can deliver and manage a constantly changing pool of available stopping places (9 pitches) and if not, consider reviewing the SAP [MM19].

63. A shortfall of 13 permanent private residential pitches would remain over the plan period. The Council suggests in the Housing Background Paper that some of the identified need can be met through future planning permissions, using the criteria set out in the second part of Policy H7. Appendix 3 of EX37 demonstrates that in the past five years planning permission has been granted for only 1 permanent pitch, as referred to above. That permission was granted on appeal following the refusal of planning permission by the Council against Officer recommendation (planning application No. 16/06911/FU). The evidence of historical permissions does not support the Council's view that planning permissions are likely to make up the existing deficit, of 13 (private) pitches.

64. Policy H7 is clear that the whole identified need is to be met by the identification of sites in the SAP, whether permanent or transient stopping places. Overall, the SAP does not identify sufficient sites to accommodate all 62 pitches for gypsies and travellers [sic]. Setting aside the provision of stopping places, the SAP would identify sufficient pitches for years 1-12 only (to 2024). Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local planning authorities to (a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient

to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets and (b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15.

65. Whilst the SAP does not identify the number of pitches set out in CS Policy H7, it nevertheless identifies sufficient permanent residential pitches overall for up to year 12 of the plan period, albeit on predominantly public sites. Accordingly, the SAP identifies permanent pitches for years 1 – 12 which is consistent with national policy. No other suitable sites came forward as part of the call for sites to enable developable sites or broad locations for growth to be identified beyond 2024.

66. To justify the Council's approach, careful monitoring will be required together with a commitment to undertake an early review of the SAP in this regard should the Council's monitoring determine that the deficit in identified permanent pitches is not being fully addressed through the grant of planning permissions or the stopping places are not being provided as intended by the Council [MM19]. The wording of the MM has been revised as the calculation within it includes the CS total requirement of 62 pitches which includes temporary stopping pitches in addition to permanent residential pitches. The change is not of any consequence as both calculations result in provision for years 1 to 12 of the plan period.

What is notable about this extract is that the majority of the provision that has been made is publicly-owned. The Housing Background Paper also offers a nuanced approach to the location of sites:

11.10 In Leeds several factors are pertinent in implementing these criteria:

11.10.1 The first is around the preferences of Gypsy and Traveller families themselves to feel that they are not threatened by proximity to the existing settled community. On larger sites it is possible for a Gypsy and Traveller population to establish itself locally and gain a feeling of security by the fact that they are a large group. Given the desire to provide smaller sites locally there is a need to consider the implications for Gypsies and Travellers of a new small site within an area of established housing. Leeds GATE have confirmed their reluctance to see such small sites delivered within existing settled housing estates. It is important to note that the Council is not seeking to isolate Gypsies

and Travellers in this way but seeking to pragmatically identify sites which are near to local services and amenities and can also provide the opportunity for peaceful integration without any potential negative impacts which might be caused by the introduction of Gypsy and Traveller families immediately adjacent to settled housing.

11.10.2 The second factor, relates to the settled population who by and large have expressed, through consultation responses, a clear unwillingness to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers locally. Whilst noting these concerns in the context of seeking to promote a peaceful and integrated co-existence, the Council has not sought to locate Gypsies and Travellers away from the urban area or existing communities where access to services is poor, but rather has sought a balance whereby it can ensure that new sites are not immediately adjacent to settled housing. Whilst not a critical criteria the Council has also sought to identify sites which by their nature offer an element of established self-containment and privacy for new residents. These ambitions have been discussed with and are supported by Leeds GATE. Both of these factors are addressed somewhat by the intent to deliver mostly smaller sites. Third, the implementation of sites via planning approval and site design offers the potential to ensure that new Gypsy and Traveller sites are integrated into the surrounding local community and not excluded from it. This can be achieved by ensuring that sites are not overly enclosed and secluded i.e. creating strong and well-designed frontages. It also offers the chance to ensure that those families living on new sites can access services i.e. through improvements to local footpaths and routes to shops and other facilities. The opportunity also exists to improve the management of both existing and proposed new sites to assist their integration into the local community.

The other notable extract from the background paper concerned the partnership working with Leeds GATE:

Consultation with Leeds GATE

11.33 Consultation with Leeds GATE has continued throughout the process and following Adoption of the Core Strategy further meetings were held to encourage Leeds GATE to explore with their local members whether there were additional sites. They reported that Gypsies and Travellers remain sceptical about the process and the potential for sites to be found and agreed. Leeds

GATE have been instrumental in assisting the Council assess the safeguarded sites in terms of current numbers of pitches and desires of existing residents. Leeds GATE are generally supportive of the preferred sites proposed for allocation and the Council will enter into a Statement of Common Ground with them prior to the Examination hearings.

Furthermore, it is evident that officers took the time to consult directly with the communities:

Consultation with the local Gypsy and Traveller Community [sic]

11.35 The Council has facilitated and undertaken several Gypsy and Traveller specific consultation events which aimed to gain a greater understanding of local needs, obtain new site suggestions and help to breakdown historic barriers between the Local Authorities and the Gypsy and Traveller community.

11.36 These consultation events included attending Latter Lee Gap Horse Fair. Officers, located within the Leeds GATE tent, provided maps of potential new Council managed Gypsy and Traveller sites. This event allowed Officers to speak face-to-face with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community to better understand their needs and aspirations. Officers also facilitated a drop-in session at Leeds GATE offices as part of the Publication Draft consultation, where members of the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller community could come along and discuss any site specific issues. During the event Officers spoke to numerous local Gypsy and Travellers and helped them to complete representation forms for the consultation process. The event also helped to generate an additional site suggestion (extension to Urn Farm, Middleton). Material was left at Leeds GATE offices throughout the preparation process.

11.37 Furthermore Officers also guided Leeds GATE representatives and a local Gypsy and Traveller representative on site visits around the preferred Gypsy and Traveller site allocations, as well as some of the discounted sites to obtain their opinions.

This is an excellent example of good practice on consultation that meets the requirements of PPTS.

The findings of planning inspectors in appeal decision letters

In 2012 an Inspector found⁵:

i) – Need for and supply of gypsy [sic] sites

44. The following matters were agreed by the main parties:

- There is a substantial unmet need for gypsy [sic] sites within the Leeds CC area and the wider West Yorkshire region;*
- The best present estimate of need in Leeds CC area is 48 pitches for the period 2008-2015 (based on the 2008 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – GTAA);*
- The only public site in the Council area at Cottingley Springs is full with a significant waiting list;*
- No authorised private site is available within the Council area;*
- There are a large number of unauthorised encampments in the Council area and these consume considerable amounts of Council resource in addressing these breaches.*

45. Notwithstanding this background, the Council maintain that Policy H16 shows that there is a policy in place to deliver new gypsy sites and that these do not have to be located in the GB. They also say that the Council is being proactive in trying to identify the ‘Leeds’ gypsy [sic] families, and then seeking to meet their needs through an Allocations DPD which they estimate could be adopted some time in 2013.

46. Mrs Heine challenges these assumptions, arguing that Policy H16 has not delivered a single gypsy site and that the present situation in Leeds is dire with no suitable, available and affordable sites existing to meet the present need or indeed that which will come forward over the next five years. She also does not expect the Allocations DPD to be adopted until 2014 at the earliest. In the

⁵ APP/N4720/C/11/2166315

meantime there is no solution to the pressing need for sites, including one for the appellant and his family if they cannot remain on the appeal site...

...I agree with the claims for the appellant that there is clearly an acute shortage of gypsy and traveller sites within the Leeds CC area and little prospect of any new sites coming forward to reduce this need in the near future. I asked the Council's policy representative whether Policy H16 had actually delivered any new sites in the last 5 years. His answer was that he was not aware of any. Therefore it seems to me that it is indefensible to assert that Policy H16 is robust and is achieving what the new national guidance requires. Added to this there are large numbers of travellers living on unauthorised sites throughout the authority's area which are causing considerable problems for the local authority, the police and other public bodies, as well as local residents.

In 2015, the Secretary of State found⁶:

Unmet need for gypsy and travellers [sic] pitches

14. Like the Inspector at IR100-101, the Secretary of State accepts that there is an urgent and unmet need for additional gypsy and traveller [sic] provision. He agrees that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites as required by the PPTS and that this is a matter which attracts substantial weight in favour of the development.

In 2018 an Inspector found that:

26. The need for additional traveller [sic] sites is set out in CS Policy H7, which refers to the Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement study in 2013-2014. The supporting text to Policy H7 indicates a need for 62 pitches to March 2028 made up of: 25 pitches Council provision, 28 pitches private provision and nine negotiated stopping provision. Although sites will be allocated via the emerging SAP, there are currently no alternative sites available. Furthermore, there is no five-year supply of specific deliverable sites. I note the argument that there has been a local policy failure to provide sites, but the SAP would meet the identified need for additional public sites. There will remain an unmet need for privately

⁶ APP/N4720/V/14/2215178

owned traveller sites. Although minor, the appeal scheme would represent a way of meeting that identified and significant unmet need.

In 2021 an Inspector found that⁷:

17. Paragraph 7(b) of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of the development plan. The PPTS states that local planning authorities should identify, and update annually, a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites.

18. It is common ground between the parties that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable sites. It is also common ground that a further 13, as yet unidentified, sites will need to be provided by the end of the plan period in 2028.

19. The Council accepts that there is currently unmet need for new pitches within the Borough. Furthermore the appellant's evidence includes emails provided by adjoining Councils in Wakefield and Selby, confirming that waiting lists exist for sites in those areas. He also understands that there is a need for additional pitches within the Bradford, Kirklees and Harrogate areas. The Council does not seek to dispute that an unmet need for gypsy and traveller [sic] sites exists within these other local authority areas.

20. The Council has not been able to identify any suitable and available alternative sites for the appellant within the Borough or the wider area, a further indication that there is an immediate need for sites in the Borough.

The findings in this decision letter are in spite of the exemplary site allocations process that was carried out and are indicative of the difficulties of providing sites in an area which is predominantly just urban or Green Belt.

⁷ APP/N4720/W/20/3249610

Conclusion

Leeds has gone from being an authority with a very poor record of provision to one that has:

- Carefully considered the issues and spoken to Gypsies and Travellers (the scrutiny inquiry);
- Taken forward the recommendations of the inquiry (the use of negotiated stopping, the direct provision of a site at Kiddacre Street, and the attempt to expand Cottingley Springs);
- Where there was an urgent need – developed a site before gaining planning permission;
- Worked effectively with the local advocacy group (Leeds GATE) on the GTAA and site allocations;
- Successfully allocated sites including in the Green Belt.

We therefore conclude that Leeds City Council is a shining example of good practice in planning policy. However, it is understood that despite the efforts of the council to gain funding for the provision of new public sites, none have been built yet.



About us

Friends, Families and Travellers is a leading national charity that works to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

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