

West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 (adopted June 2025)

Policy DM20

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Council will meet the identified permanent and transit need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople by allocating land for pitches and/or plots.

Existing authorised sites for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be safeguarded for use by Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, unless acceptable replacement accommodation/pitches/plots can be provided. This is to ensure that there remains a good supply of pitches and plots in the District.

Permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites and sites for Travelling Showpeople will be developed:

- a. On sites allocated in policies RSA28 and RSA29;
- b. As expansions to existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites, unless in conflict with criterion d;
- c. On sites located in, or well related to, existing settlements; or
- d. When in rural settings, ensuring the scale of the site(s) do not dominate the nearest settled community, whether singly or cumulatively with any other Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople sites. Isolated locations in the countryside should be avoided.

Where possible sites will be on previously developed land. The Council will seek compatibility of use with that of the surrounding land use and promote the integrated co-existence between the site and the settled community, including adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity both within the site and with neighbouring occupiers.

Proposals for development should satisfy the following criteria:

- i. Site planning will be landscape-led and development will be in accordance with policies SP7 and SP8;
- ii. Ensure each pitch can accommodate space for a mobile home and touring caravan, parking, and if to be provided, a day room/amenity building. Provision will be made for play and residential amenity space. A layout plan shall be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate how the site and each pitch is laid out;
- iii. Provide safe access with appropriate turning space(s);
- iv. The development would not generate traffic of a type or amount that would result in substantial harm to local roads, and/or would require improvements that would adversely affect the character and nature of such roads. A Transport Assessment or Transport Statement should accompany a planning application, which would also detail appropriate mitigation;
- v. The site has easy access to local services including public transport, shops, schools and health services;
- vi. Measures to improve accessibility by, and encourage use of, non-car transport modes including internal walking routes linked to any existing Public Rights of Way network are provided. These measures should be set out in a Travel Plan for the site;
- vii. Development avoids areas of high flood risk and if required provide a Flood Risk Assessment, in accordance with policy SP6;
- viii. It is demonstrated that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Methods (SuDS), in accordance with policy SP6;
- ix. Adequate and appropriate infrastructure is provided for the supply of electricity and water, facilities for drainage and waste disposal;
- x. Development will be informed by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA). Appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures will need to be implemented to ensure any designated sites and/or protected habitats and or species are not adversely affected; and
- xi. Development will not harm the value of any heritage assets and their setting and proposals will be in accordance with policy SP9.

Proposals for Travelling Showperson sites will be required to satisfy the above criteria and additionally demonstrate that the site is appropriately designed to accommodate the storage and maintenance of show equipment and associated vehicles.

This policy supplements the detailed provisions for each of the sites set out in policies RSA28 and RSA29.

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Supporting Text

11.24 West Berkshire Council, as the local planning authority, is required to identify sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. Proposed sites within settlement boundaries are considered acceptable in principle, as with conventional housing, subject to material considerations. Some of the policy criteria will assist in providing a suitably located and designed site. In consideration of location, caravans are not permitted in Flood Zone 3 as per Table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance.

11.25 There is a corporate commitment to supporting sustainable communities, and a good supply of affordable housing including social rented housing to address housing needs. This applies to the Travelling communities as well as settled communities.

11.26 The Council is required by national policy to set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs in the area, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment⁽¹³¹⁾ was undertaken to inform the LPR.

Gypsy and Traveller sites

11.27 Table 7 sets out the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches up to 31 March 2038, correlating to the study period for the GTAA 2021.

Table 7 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation

Additional permanent pitches required 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2038	30
Additional permanent pitches planned for 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023:	
• <i>New Stocks Farm, Paices Hill, Aldermaston</i>	8
• <i>Four Houses Corner, Padworth</i>	1
• <i>Ermin Street, Lambourn Woodlands</i>	1
Total pitches planned for 2021-2023	10
Permanent pitches required 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2038	20

11.28 The GTAA 2021, in updating the 2019 study, identifies that there is a residual overall need for 30 permanent pitches between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2038, considering existing supply on established sites, and accounting for household formation and net in-migration. Taking into account the 10 pitches already planned this leaves a residual need of 20 pitches which are required between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2038.

11.29 Table 7 sets out the total need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Of the 30 pitches needed to 2038, 13 are required in the short term up to 31 March 2026. 10 pitches have been planned for in the period 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2023. The site at New Stocks Farm, Paices Hill, Aldermaston has been allocated in RSA28 to replace 8 transit pitches with 8 permanent pitches. This takes forward the allocation in the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the recommendations of the GTAA to create permanent pitches. Planning permission (reference 22/00120/FUL) was granted in September 2022 for this use and is yet to be implemented. Since the GTAA was updated, Four Houses Corner, a Council operated site in Padworth, had planning permission approved for 17 permanent pitches (reference 23/01552/REG3 approved in April 2024). This represents an increase of 1 pitch above the 16 pitches counted in the GTAA. The permission is yet to be implemented. Also since the GTAA was updated 1 pitch has been provided on land at Ermin Street, Lambourn Woodlands (reference 21/02045/FUL approved in August 2022).

11.30 Table 7 outlines that 20 permanent pitches are required between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2038. Site allocations will be made in the context of a further update to the GTAA which would follow the repopulation of Four Houses Corner, Padworth. In contributing to meeting the need planning applications will be assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in this policy.

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11.31 There is no requirement to identify a site for transit pitches. However, the GTAA 2021 recommends that tolerated stopping places or negotiated stopping places should be provided. The Council will explore this further through the Local Plan process and/or through developing a Council policy to govern this.

11.32 The GTAA does not identify a need for houseboat dwellers and thus the LPR does not provide for any permanent houseboats.

Travelling Showperson sites

11.33 There is currently one Showperson's Yard in the District which is located at Long Copse Farm, Enborne. 24 plots are allocated for use by Travelling Showpeople, as defined in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, under policy RSA29. The eastern part of the site has an authorised use for Circus headquarters and agricultural holding as a dual use. The allocation would enable a residential and operational base for staff and families associated with the Circus.