

Three Rivers District Council

# **Sub Committee Report**

7 August 2025

## **LOCAL PLAN SUB COMMITTEE – 7 August 2025**

### **PART I**

#### **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Topic Paper (DoF)**

#### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), dated July 2025 which has been prepared to assist with the formulation of the emerging Local Plan and introduces Members to the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper.
- 1.2 The officer recommendation is for Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee to note the contents of this report, agree to publish Appendix 2 to the emerging Local Plan Evidence Base which can then also be used by Development Management during decision-making, and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the update to the “Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” policy.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is an evidence study which can be used to aid the implementation of Local Plan Policies and, where appropriate, the provision of new gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots to cover the Council’s Local Plan period and the 15-year requirements set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).
- 2.2 In June 2024, the Council commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation within the District. This GTAA dated December 2024 (Appendix 1) was published onto the Three Rivers website following agreement at a Local Plan Sub-Committee in March 2025.
- 2.3 However, during the final drafting of the GTAA in December 2024, the planning definition of a traveller (Annex 1 of the PPTS) expanded to include “all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan”. As set out in a note in the GTAA, because of this amended definition, an updated version of the GTAA report has been prepared that reflects the changes in the PPTS and any planning permissions granted in the intervening period. The most recent GTAA is dated July 2025 (Appendix 2).
- 2.4 A more detailed breakdown of the findings from the July 2025 GTAA can be found within the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper (Appendix 3).
- 2.5 The draft “Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” policy is shown at Appendix 4.

#### **3 Key Findings from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025)**

- 3.1 In terms of gypsies and travellers, the need of 37 pitches arising from those households who meet the planning definition is required to be met directly from site allocations (either by allocating new sites or expanding existing sites). The need of 4 pitches arising from households with undetermined need will be met through criteria-based policies.
- 3.2 In terms of travelling showpeople, the need of 6 plots arising from those households who meet the planning definition is required to be met directly from site allocations (either by allocating new sites or expanding existing sites). The need of 10 plots arising from households with undetermined need will be met through criteria-based policies.
- 3.3 As suggested by the GTAA, there are a range of different methods in order to meet identified need, and often a combination of methods is most effective. The approaches can be categorised as a criteria-based policy approach, extension of existing sites, allocating entirely new gypsy and traveller sites, or allocating parts of strategic general needs housing sites. Given the scale of need identified in Three Rivers recently, it is likely that a combination of approaches may be required.

#### **4 Call for Sites**

- 4.1 Despite previous call for sites consultations being open for all types of housing, these have not resulted in any sites being put forward for specifically gypsy and traveller pitches or travelling showpeople plots.
- 4.2 Given the significant identified need for both gypsy and travellers and travelling showpeople, and the relatively limited number of private sites within the District (which may have limited scope for expansion), it was deemed necessary to undertake a call for sites exercise for solely gypsy and travelling showpeople sites, to help identify any potential additional sites, in addition to the existing sites.
- 4.3 The gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople call for sites period started on Friday 4 July and ends at 5pm on Monday 4 August 2025. At the time of writing this report the call for sites was still underway, however, Members will be verbally updated of any submissions at the Local Plan Sub-Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> August, which is after the call for sites exercise ends.
- 4.4 It is not expected that there will be much response to a call for sites, so any subsequent Regulation 18 consultation would involve minimal officer input or time delay.

#### **5 Draft Policy**

- 5.1 The draft “Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” policy was brought to the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 Local Plan Sub-Committee where it was agreed by Members. Since then and following the update to the GTAA in July 2025, the reasoned justification of the policy has been updated. The policy (including the reasoned justification) can be seen at Appendix 4.
- 5.2 Once a final strategy to meet the identified need has been finalised, the reasoned justification may need to be updated further.

#### **6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets.

7      **Financial, Legal, Staffing, Equal Opportunities, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

7.1      None specific.

8      **Recommendation**

8.1      That the Local Plan Sub-Committee:

- Note the contents of this report
- Agrees to publish the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment June 2025 (Appendix 2) to the emerging Local Plan Evidence Base (available on the Local Plan webpage).
- Recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the update to the “Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” policy.

9      **Background Papers**

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Planning Practice Guidance (2024)

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2024)

10      **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Three Rivers District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (December 2024)

Appendix 2 - Three Rivers District Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025)

Appendix 3 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper

Appendix 4 - Draft “Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” policy

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