

## Planning Policy

# Status of Traveller Sites

As at October 2024



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# Contents and Policies

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Status of sites.....	2

## Summary

This report considers the status of all Gypsy or Traveller sites known to the District Council, as at October 2024. This information will be used to inform the new, emerging, Local Plan. The report will be used to support and inform future Gypsy and Traveller provision in the emerging East Devon Local Plan.

## Introduction

The emerging East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042 identifies that traveller accommodation will be provided in the follow ways:

- Up to 32 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, to be accommodated on allocated sites identified in Local Plan policy and on the proposals map.
- Unquantified windfall pitches for those who can demonstrate that they meet the definition and have a local connection to East Devon.
- 0 plots for Travelling Showpeople, as there are existing vacant plots available.
- Transit pitches in a location to be agreed following ongoing assessment work to determine the likely level of need.

This report lists the status of Gypsy and Traveller sites in the District and considers their contribution to the overall supply of sites and the level of outstanding need that has yet to be met. Reviews will be undertaken regularly so that an up-to-date record is available to inform planning decisions.

## Identified need for pitches

- 1.1 The East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042 recognises the importance of providing sites for Gypsies and Travellers (in this report 'Travellers' encompasses both of these groups) Whilst Travellers are a relatively small population in East Devon, they are protected under equalities legislation and suitable accommodation (in the form of pitches) must be made for them.
- 1.2 National planning policy requires us to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and to set pitch and plot targets for Gypsies and Travellers and for Travelling Showpeople that address their likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs.
- 1.3 Work to assess the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was commissioned by the partner authorities of East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge. The consultants, Opinion Research Services (ORS), completed a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (referred to as a GTAA) in September 2024 East Devon Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment September 2024. This forecasts need for the period 2024-2045 and is the main source of evidence for this topic.

- 1.4 The purpose of the GTAA is to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in East Devon. The GTAA forms part of the evidence base used to inform the preparation of the Publication version of the new local plan for the district and also as a technical document that can be used to help inform planning applications for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites that are submitted to the Council for determination and the decisions made on these. This GTAA replaces a previous GTAA completed in 2015 and the findings of that study. It should be noted that much of the need identified in that earlier study remained unmet when the new study was undertaken despite extensive efforts to identify, purchase or otherwise bring sites forward by the Council. Just one household in that study was financially able to purchase their own pitch, all other need would need to be met through a registered social landlord. This unmet need has been taken into account in calculating the current need figure but the latest GTAA does not take account of affordability and it is very likely that many of the households will still not be able to purchase their own pitches. Our previous experience demonstrates how difficult it is to identify and bring sites forward unless they are allocated in a Local Plan.
- 1.5 Evidence in the GTAA 2024 establishes that there are existing pitches distributed throughout East Devon, mainly concentrated in western areas, close to main travel routes, particularly the A30. Most of the immediate need arises from overcrowding of, and newly formed families (usually children reaching maturity and having their own children), on existing sites who wish to stay close to their extended family.
- 1.6 There are also several unauthorised but tolerated sites in the District, mainly on Devon County Council highway land.

## Assessed needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches

- 2.1 The GTAA has found that:
- 2.2 Transit Provision- The GTAA does not identify a specific need for a transit site, or indicate a preferred scale of provision or location within the 4 Districts. Instead, it recommends making temporary or 'negotiated' stopping places available at times of increased demand such as fairs or cultural festivals. It is recommended that the authorities jointly monitor and manage unauthorised encampments and work collectively to consider a joint protocol for addressing transit need, and the potential for permanent public transit provision.
- 2.3 Permanent Provision- The GTAA shows that in the period up to 2045 there is a need for :
  - **20 pitches for households that met the planning definition.** This is made up of 1 household on an unauthorised development; 8 concealed or doubled-up households or single adults; 3 pitches from a 5-year need from teenage children; and 8 from new household formation, using a rate of 1.20% derived from the household demographics.
  - **Up to 8 pitches for undetermined households.** This is made up of 4 households on unauthorised developments; and 4 from new household formation, derived from the household demographics using the ORS national formation rate of 1.50%.
  - **4 pitches for households that do not meet the planning definition (but are recognised as 'cultural' Gypsies or Travellers).** This is made up of 1 household on an unauthorised development; 1 concealed or doubled-up household or single

adult; and 2 from a 5-year need for teenage children. There is no need from new household formation as there are no children under the age of 13.

- **0 (new) plots for Travelling Showpeople**

- 2.4 In general terms the need identified in a GTAA is seen as need for pitches. The now withdrawn Government Guidance on Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.
- 2.5 It is proposed to allocate sufficient pitches in the emerging Local Plan to meet all of the potential need- from those who meet the definition, those who are undetermined and those who don't meet the definition- and include a small amount of headroom to allow for unforeseen delays in delivery. This approach to allocating pitches recognises that, whilst some Gypsies and Travellers do not meet the planning definition (for example because they have ceased to travel), they have the right to live in a way which is culturally appropriate. Sufficient pitches have therefore been allocated to ensure that all of the potential need for pitches is met. Planning conditions will be imposed to restrict occupancy to Gypsies and Travellers only to ensure that pitches are occupied and retained in perpetuity for such use and do not become part of the general housing supply. This will also ensure that, if any undetermined households cannot provide satisfactory evidence that they are culturally Gypsies/Travellers, they will not qualify for a pitch.
- 2.5 East Devon District Council has a budget for acquiring and laying out sites.

## Meeting the Need

- 3.1 Allocations - Sites providing pitches for gypsy and traveller and travelling show people use are allocated in the development plan. The **Cranbrook local plan provides for 15 pitches** on the Cobdens and Treasbeare Expansion Areas in 2 site allocations. These sites will contribute to supply in the plan period and enable families on the overcrowded Sowton and Broadclyst sites (as well as others) to remain living locally as family groups. The legal agreement provides evidence that there is a realistic prospect of delivery in the next 5 years so the Council will count them as deliverable for the purposes of the 5 year supply assessment required by NPPF.
- 3.2 An **allocation at the new community (proposed in the Local Plan) will provide 15 pitches**, although delivery is unlikely to commence until the middle of the Plan period. Land for a further 15 pitches will be safeguarded beyond the plan period to meet all/some of the likely future need beyond that period but this future supply doesn't count towards the need identified in the GTAA.
- 3.3 A **further site, east of the M5 and south of the Exeter-Waterloo line is allocated for at least 5 pitches**. These could be delivered in the short to medium term and will ensure that there is sufficient supply if provision at the new community is delayed.
- 3.4 A site at Musbury was previously considered as a potential location for a site for New Travellers. This site is subject to landscape, heritage and ecological constraints and is no longer under consideration.

- 3.5 Bricks and Mortar housing - As well as a need for sites providing pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, there could be some requirement for bricks and mortar housing to meet their needs. The new GTAA has not identified any such need but the Council considers that such need will be met by the provision requirement for general housing in any case.
- 3.6 Travelling Showpeople sites supply - Prior to 2009 there was one established Travelling Showpeople site in East Devon which predates the planning system. A further site in East Devon close to Exeter and the M5, was granted planning permission for 9 plots in 2011 (09/1486/MFUL at Clyst St Mary). This accommodated three displaced plots in Teignbridge and a further 6 plots for extended family members on other, overcrowded, sites in south west England. To date, 4 of the 9 plots have been developed and the new GTAA considers that the supply of consented but as yet undeveloped plots would meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople during this plan period. In any case, the GTAA has not identified any likely additional need to 2045.
- 3.7 Windfall proposals- In addition to allocated sites the plan allows some flexibility for sites to come forward in addition to those that are allocated (ie as 'windfalls'). These will be considered against policy criteria to ensure that they are in appropriate locations and that applicants are Gypsies or Travellers and have a local connection.
- 3.8 Safeguarding Sites- Existing authorised sites, sites with planning permission, and allocations for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use will be safeguarded to ensure that the supply is maintained for their accommodation needs. If, in exceptional circumstances (such as long term vacancy and a demonstrable lack of need), changes to other uses are permitted, then, if need still exists in the District, suitably located and laid out alternative provision must be provided prior to the loss of the pitches.

## Status of existing sites

- 4.1 The tables on the following pages list all the Traveller sites which the District Council is aware of. The status of each site is assessed in terms of its location, capacity, planning status or likelihood of being developed. This assessment is informed by data collected as part of the housing and employment land monitoring undertaken by the District Council.

**Authorised permanent sites in East Devon**

Parish	Location/Address	Planning App ref	Notes	No of permanent pitches
Aylesbeare	Caravan 1, Sunnyfield, Great Houndbeare Farm, Aylesbeare	04/3325/CPL, 07/3364/COU 10/0562/FUL, 23/2382/MFUL	Approval granted for 1 additional mobile home and stable to be added to existing mobile home on site	2
Aylesbeare	Land west of Martin Gate (at Lower Hawkerland) Sidmouth Road, Aylesbeare	13/0449/FUL		2
Broadclyst	Elbury Close	80/C1422	Historic National Trust site. The Trust have gradually reduced the pitches available, the site could accommodate 3 further pitches	4
Broadhembury	OS 1441, Land north of Pales, Kerswell	92/P1759,		2
Clyst St Mary	The Oaks, Oil Mill Lane, Clyst St Mary	88/P2726, 89/P2354,		2
Woodbury	Land at Greendale Lane, Clyst St Mary	10/0885/FUL 10/1526/FUL 16/0201/FUL	Permission allows 5 pitches, for occupation by members of the same family. This is an increase of 4 as the original permission was for one pitch.	5
Farringdon	Princes Paddock Farringdon	06/0777/FUL, 09/0390/FUL, 10/0853/COU 10/0853/FUL 10/0883/FUL 11/1371/COU	Land Registry information suggests site has been sold to a nearby landowner. No change of use has occurred so the site remains as 3 Traveller pitches, albeit unoccupied	3
Hawkchurch	Hawkwell Park, Hawkchurch, Axminster,	07/1853/COU 10/0368/VAR 10/0443/COU 13/0308/VAR <a href="#">20/2825/COU</a>	Also offers 5 transit pitches <a href="#">Refused permission for unrestricted occupancy to safeguard G+T provision in April 2021</a>	12 Permanent
Offwell	Higher Woodside, Offwell	03/P0836		1



Status of Traveller Sites

Parish	Location/Address	Planning App ref	Notes	No of permanent pitches
Ottery St Mary/Whimble	Land adj. Haldon View, Exeter Road, Ottery St Mary	09/0299/FUL 15/1031/FUL		1
Sidmouth	Bowd Bungalow, The Bowd, Sidmouth	Historic		1
Sidmouth	Sidbrook Nook	Historic		1
Talaton	Land north of Railway Cottages	11/2524/Ful		1
Talaton	Land south of Bridge View	15/0393/FUL		1
Upton Pyne	Little Ley, Upton Pyne	91/P1476		1
Uplyme	Cuckoo Lane, Happy Valley, Uplyme	01/P0793		1
Whimble	Greendale, Strete Raleigh, Whimble	91/P1164 11/2787/FUL		6
Woodbury	Meadow Rise, Woodbury Salterton	05/2681/FUL, 09/2271/COU, 10/0674/VAR	Site is not currently occupied by Travellers, but CLU refused	3 Check if this still exists?
Clyst Honiton	Treasbeare Expansion Area Land To The North Of Treasbeare Farm, Clyst Honiton	22/1532/MOUT	Approved 2022 – not yet built. These will count towards meeting need in the 2024 GTAA	5
Cranbrook	Land at Cobdens North of London Road East of Cranbrook	22/0406/MOUT	Approved 2022 – not yet built. These will count towards meeting need in the 2024 GTAA	10
Clyst St Mary	2 Cherry Trees, Greendale Lane, Clyst St Mary	22/0140/FUL	2 no. pitches for 4 mobile homes.	2
Weston	Land SW side of Weston Lane Road from Weston Cross to Cherry Bridge, Weston	22/0195/VAR	This is a permanent permission following on from temporary permission 13/1661/FUL (appeal allowed, site can be occupied on a temporary basis as per 14/F0117) where Planning application appeal	1

Status of Traveller Sites

Parish	Location/Address	Planning App ref	Notes	No of permanent pitches
			dismissed, subsequent enforcement notice was quashed on appeal and permission granted for 5 years (subject to a flooding evacuation plan) to provide occupants with time to find an alternative site. Permission allowed for a single, named family, and up to 3 touring vans on site. Expired 14 Feb 22 and this latest permission made the pitches permanent	
				Total 49 pitches Of which 6 are not occupied (owners decision) 15 pitches have outline planning permission (at Cranbrook)

Authorised Transit sites in East Devon

Parish	Location/Address	Planning App ref	Notes	No of transit pitches
Hawkchurch	Hawkwell Park, Hawkchurch, Axminster,	07/1853/COU 10/0368/VAR 10/0443/COU 13/0308/VAR	Also offers 12 permanent pitches	5

**Unauthorised Traveller sites in East Devon  
(note- these are medium to long term sites, not overnight stopping places)**

Parish	Location/Address	Planning App ref	Notes	No of permanent pitches
Ottery St Mary	Coombe Goyle, Tipton St John	99/P1143 12/0928/OUT	Enforcement action ongoing	1
Sidmouth	Land opposite the Bowd, adjacent White Barn		EDDC have a charge on the land. 5 mobile homes, no pp, no current enforcement action	5
Shute	Old Roman Road, Shute Woods		Enforcement notice served	4

