

Matter 4 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

March 2018

Local Plan Examination Matter Statement



*Oadby and Wigston
Borough Council*

Issue 1: Whether the LP makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of the gypsy and traveller community and travelling showpersons?

(The Inspector notes and welcomes the Council's suggested changes to Policy 16 as set out in the response to the Inspector's Initial Questions (Q11))

Q1. Does the GTAA provide a realistic assessment of the needs of the gypsy and traveller community?

Council response;

1. Yes. The Leicester City and Leicestershire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2017) (LP2/03), prepared by Opinion Research Services Ltd (ORS) on behalf of all Local Planning Authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire, including Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (but excluding Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council), provides a realistic and robust assessment of the needs of the gypsy and traveller community in Oadby & Wigston.
2. The study provides an evidence base to enable the councils to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2014 (and as amended), PPTS (2015), and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
3. The GTAA is a robust and credible evidence base which can be used to aid the preparation and implementation of development plan policies and the provision of Traveller pitches and plots into five year increments covering the periods in accordance with the Councils' plan periods. As well as identifying current and future permanent accommodation needs, it also seeks to assess any need for the provision of transit sites or emergency stopping places.
4. The approach used by ORS to complete the GTAA was considered in April 2016 and July 2017 by the Planning Inspector for the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy. The Inspector concluded in the final Examination Report that was published in October 2017:

'The methodology behind this assessment incorporates a full demographic study of all occupied pitches, a comprehensive effort to undertake interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households, and consideration of the implications of the new national policy. I am satisfied that the GTAA provides a robust and credible evidence base and I accept its findings.' (Paragraph 148, Inspector's Report October 2017)

5. Based upon the work completed by ORS for the production of the GTAA, the conclusions and requirement recommendations are seen as robust, realistic and justified and have been endorsed by all of the local authorities involved in the studies production. The GTAA did not identify any Gypsies or Travellers sites or Travelling Showpeople yards in Oadby and Wigston, and no households living in bricks and mortar were identified to be interviewed (the 2011 Census only recorded 3 Gypsy or Irish Traveller households living in bricks and mortar in Oadby & Wigston). Chapter 7 of the study therefore sets out a zero need for Gypsy or Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots for the Borough area over the Plan period. Paragraph 7.117 then goes onto confirm that the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of the previous GTAA study (2013) that also stated that the Borough area has a zero need for gypsy, travelers and travelling showpeople pitches.

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Q2. Would Policy 16, incorporating the changes suggested by the Council, be consistent with national policy?

Council response;

6. Yes. The Council considers that Policy 16, incorporating the suggested changes, has been prepared in accordance with and is consistent with national planning policy and practice guidance, as well as with other relevant national planning legislation including the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

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