



ASSESSING THE NEED FOR GYPSY and TRAVELLER and TRAVELLING SHOWMEN'S ACCOMMODATION IN NORTH SURREY (GTAA)

Local authorities are required to undertake an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This involves undertaking a survey called a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

The 4 boroughs in North Surrey (Elmbridge, Runnymede, Spelthorne and Woking) came together in 2006 to commission Anglia Ruskin University to undertake the assessment for North Surrey. This work has now been completed, and the key findings are set out below. A copy of the final version of the assessment is available on each of the Local Authorities websites.

The information in the North Surrey GTAA has been used to formulate Advice to SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly) on the potential future requirements for accommodation to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in North Surrey in the period to 2016.

However, before submitting their Advice to SEERA, the North Surrey authorities want to obtain the views of Gypsies and Travellers and their representatives, Travelling Showpeople and their representatives, statutory and voluntary organisations, and others with a particular interest in this issue.

Below are several statements and questions that we would welcome your responses to.

Your feedback is important to us and we would ask you to return the questionnaire **by Friday, 14 September 2007**

Thank you for taking the time to respond.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Halliwell'.

Greg Halliwell
Housing Strategy Officer
Spelthorne Borough Council
On behalf of Elmbridge, Runnymede, and Woking Borough Councils

Introduction

Based on the GTAA, and other recent data, it has been agreed that there is a need to provide an additional 53 pitches for gypsies and travellers during the period 2007-2012 and a further 34 during the period 2012-2016.

SEERA will determine the final distribution of pitches between Boroughs and there are a number of ways in which this can be done. Three Options A, B, and C are set out below.

You are invited to consider these Options. We would then like you to answer our questionnaire.

Factors to consider

You may wish to bear in mind the following when considering the various Options:

- Gypsies and travellers who were interviewed for the North Surrey GTAA expressed 'no specific geographical preference' for new accommodation
- Surrey has the highest concentration of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, per hectare, in the South East, and North Surrey has the highest proportion of larger sites
- Any future provision needs to be sustainable and capable of being supported by services and opportunities for employment

Option A – based on where existing need arises

Option A is proposed on the basis of meeting the need where it currently arises. If this Option were adopted, it would result in the following provision in each of the four Boroughs:

Borough	2007-12 (pitches)	2012-2016 (pitches)	Total provision of new pitches
Elmbridge	11	7	18
Runnymede	21	14	35
Spelthorne	8	5	13
Woking	13	8	21
Totals	53	34	87

Option B – based on environmental, social, and economic factors

Option B allows for some variation in the pitch distribution between Boroughs to take account of the environmental, social, and other aspects of site provision. It also has some regard to land supply. However, it assumes that all need is met in North Surrey. If this option were adopted, it would result in the following pitch distribution between the four Boroughs:

Factor	Elmbridge	Runnymede	Spelthorne	Woking
1.Natural environmental Constraints	1	2	2	1
2.Amount of PDL	2 (122K)	0 (78k)	1 (90k)	1 (90k)
3. Infrastructure	2 (231 dwellings pa)	1 (146 dwellings pa)	1 (151 dwellings pa)	2 (242 dwellings pa)
4. Existing Distribution of Sites	2 (20% of provision)	3 (40% of provision)	1 (16% of provision)	2 (24% of provision)
Total 'Score'	7	6	5	6
% of additional pitch provision	29%	25%	21%	25%
Additional pitch provision				
2007-2012	15	14	11	13
2012-2016	10	9	7	8

Option C – based on a distribution of pitch requirements across a broader geographic area

Option A is proposed solely on the basis of need where it arises and such an approach inevitably tends to perpetuate current provision.

While Option B, as requested by SEERA, allows for some variation in the pitch distribution to take account of the environmental, social and other aspects of site provision, no opportunity is provided within this Option for provision outside of the GTAA area. Given that North Surrey is within one of the smallest GTAA areas in the South East, it is felt reasonable and appropriate to consider provision that goes beyond the North Surrey GTAA area.

The Government has said, “We believe that Regional Planning Boards should, when taking a strategic view of regional needs, give more weight to pitch allocations between Local Planning Authorities in GTAA’s which take into account factors other than solely the pattern of need as it arises.”

Surrey supports 25% of all authorised sites in the South East Region, despite being only one of nineteen principal authority areas. Many of the other areas in the region report **no** authorised sites or only extremely low provision, often less than 5% of Surrey’s own provision. This is considered to be indicative of a failure to make adequate provision for Gypsies and Travellers since 1994.

It is felt that an Option A or B approach to future provision in North Surrey will exacerbate this trend, creating a concentration of Gypsies and Travellers, overburdening access to specialist services and employment opportunities, reducing the choice of sites for travellers, and failing to achieve national standards for inclusive, cohesive and sustainable communities.

The Government guidance also states that “Councils that have already made site provision are entitled to expect that, in this shared responsibility, every authority – and particularly those that neighbour high concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers – should make a contribution to future site provision.”

Option C therefore proposes that a proportion of the need for additional pitches in North Surrey is met from elsewhere within the County or the Region.

Provision of pitches for Travelling Showpeople

The North Surrey GTAA attempted to estimate the needs of Travelling Showmen, but as only one showman was interviewed, it was felt that the data obtained was not sufficiently robust.

The North Surrey GTAA refers to the requirement within the WPS Planning Study for an additional 66 pitches throughout Surrey. It has estimated that, assuming the findings of the study are correct, and assuming an Option A approach, there would be a requirement for 37% of the total of 66 units to be met within North Surrey. This would mean a pitch requirement of 24.

The GTAA has added to this a 2.5% annual natural growth rate from the completion of that study in 2004, leading to a total estimated pitch need, on an Option A approach, for North Surrey of 29 pitches.

The Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain has undertaken an internal assessment of 45% of their own members to assess current shortfalls and the likely future need until 2012.

Their own study suggests that a total need of between 24 and 32 pitches arises in North Surrey in the period to 2012. However, of this number only 12 should be provided in the North Surrey districts with the remainder willing to relocate to other areas, promoting equity, choice and sustainability. Beyond 2012 the population, and therefore need for further pitches, is anticipated to rise by 2.5% year on year allowing for a prediction of need to 2016.

There are currently between 58 and 66 pitches for Show People in North Surrey. This high level of provision is unusual within the region and lack of provision in other areas prevents this group having any real choice about location. It is felt that an Option C approach, whereby a proportion of need is met within other areas, would also be appropriate for this group. This approach is supported by the Showmen’s Guild.

Engagement questionnaire for stakeholders in GTAA

We would like your feedback on the different Options. Please note that your responses will remain confidential and will not be directly attributable to you in any report that we produce.

Please give just one answer and delete those that don't apply to you

1. Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches should be provided where there is already an identified need (Option A)

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

2. Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches should be provided within North Surrey but only after considering the issues of sustainability, equity and choice, social inclusion, environmental protection, and flexibility of provision (Option B)

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

3. Distribution should be made across a wider area than North Surrey and met within other parts of the County or Region (Option C)

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

4. Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be provided only through the expansion of existing sites rather than providing new ones

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

5. Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be provided through the provision of entirely new sites *

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

6. Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be provided through a mix of expanded existing sites and entirely new sites

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

7. If more sites/pitches are required, these should be provided by the local authorities

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

8. If more sites/pitches are required, the need should be met through private provision

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

9. If more sites/pitches are required, these should be provided through a mix of local authority and private sites

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

10. If more sites/pitches are required, these should be provided through large sites (10 pitches or more)

Strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree

It will then be for each local authority to incorporate those requirements in their individual Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

To ensure we get a wide representation of views from this engagement exercise, it would help us if you could complete the following details about yourself:

Name:

Address:

Organisation:

Gypsy/Traveller/Showman (delete accordingly)

Either return this document with your responses in the enclosed, pre-paid envelope, or e-mail to: g.halliwell@spelthorne.gov.uk

**Please note that the deadline for the return of this form is:
Friday 14 September 2007**