

Planning Policy

Proof of Evidence Summary

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Section 78 appeal against the refusal of planning permission

Witness: Miss Cheryl Willett BSc MSc MRTPI

Subject of Evidence: Gypsy and Traveller Need and Supply

Appeal: APP/W0340/W/24/3356688 (LPA reference
23/00815/FUL)

Site: Land south of Sandhill, Hermitage, Thatcham

Proposal: Change of use of land for the formation of 5
Gypsy/Traveller pitches comprising of 1 mobile home, 1
touring caravan, and 1 utility building per pitch

Date: April 2025

Council Reference: 23/00815/FUL

Summary Proof Gypsy and Traveller Need and Supply

Name: Cheryl Willett. Planning Policy.

Month: April 2025

Council Reference: 23/00815/FUL

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1. Summary

- 1.1 My evidence addresses the need and supply of Gypsies and Travellers in West Berkshire. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
- 1.2 Section 2 of my proof sets out my professional credentials, and relevant experience.
- 1.3 Section 3 of my proof sets out the findings of the 2021 Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA), existing supply, residual need, planned supply, failure of policy, alternative sites, and planning policy updates (NPPF, PPTS, Local Plan Review). Maps are provided in Appendix 1 to locate the existing authorised and tolerated sites.
- 1.4 In West Berkshire, the GTAA 2021 identifies that, after taking into account the existing supply of sites, there is a residual need of 30 pitches between 2021 and 2038. Breaking this down, in the short term, up to 2026, the need is 13 pitches, and the longer term need between 2026 and 2038 is 17 pitches. This need is based on meeting all of the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community, which now conforms with the amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers as defined by the 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).
- 1.5 In meeting this need, 13 pitches have planning permission. These comprise 8 pitches at Paices Hill, an allocated site; 1 pitch at Ermin Street, Lambourn; 2 pitches at Wash Water; 1 pitch on land south of Abbottswood, Newbury; and 1 additional pitch at Four Houses Corner, Padworth, counted over and above the 16 pitches counted in the existing supply. Thus, this supply leaves a residual need of 17 pitches over the period to 2038. There is no short-term shortfall of pitches up to 2026. This assessed need is a minimum, as a new GTAA will need to consider the need of Four Houses Corner when it is repopulated.
- 1.6 It is not considered that there has been a past failure of policy, as confirmed in both the Lawrence's Lane, Thatcham and the Blacknest, Brimpton appeals.

- 1.7 There is a limited supply of authorised sites within West Berkshire. The Council-run site at Four Houses Corner in Padworth is due to be re-opened in the Spring/Summer of 2025, though the waiting list extends beyond the number of pitches which could be available. There may be another site outside of the District within the appellant's control.
- 1.8 No new allocated sites are proposed in the Local Plan Review, which is currently at examination. This is despite efforts made to find land leading up to submission of the Local Plan. The Local Plan Inspector queried whether the evidence of need was robust, proportionate and up to date, though did not query the methodology of the GTAA or the residual figure of need. The Inspector has directed the Council to include only the figures in the GTAA labelled 'cultural' need, as a minor modification.
- 1.9 A new GTAA will be required to reassess need, and will likely be undertaken following the repopulation of Four Houses Corner. A positively worded development management policy is proposed in the Local Plan Review to manage sites coming forward across the District. The new GTAA will guide pitch provision through a new Local Plan.
- 1.10 In conclusion, there is an assessed need for 17 pitches up to 2038, with no short term shortfall of pitches up to 2038. It is planned to meet the need through a new Local Plan, and through the development management process. A new GTAA will be prepared.