

**OXFORD CITY, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT AND VALE OF WHITE HORSE
DISTRICT COUNCILS**

**GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING
SHOWPEOPLE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS
ASSESSMENT UPDATE**



September 2014



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1. Update

The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Oxford City, South Oxfordshire District and Vale of White Horse District in 2012 to undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.
- 1.2 The main objective of this study was to provide the Council with robust, defensible and up to date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in the period until 2026 for Oxford City, 2027 for South Oxfordshire and 2029 for Vale of White Horse. The final report was published in March 2013.

Overall Needs in the Original Report

- 1.3 This update should be read in conjunction with the full report published in March 2013 which contains the survey results and detailed information about the existing Traveller sites and population. In the original report, the estimated extra site provision that was required from 2012 up until 2026 for Oxford City was zero pitches, with 13 pitches required in South Oxfordshire until 2027 and 13 pitches in Vale of White Horse until 2029. This was almost entirely driven by growth in household numbers due to household formation.
- 1.4 The table below shows the original requirement by local authority in 5 year intervals.

Figure 1
Extra Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision by Local Authority for the period 2012-2026/27/29 (Source: ORS Housing Market Model)

Local Authority	2012-2017	2018-2022	2023-2026/27/29
Oxford City	0	0	0
South Oxfordshire	7	3	3
Vale of White Horse	3	4	6

Changes Since 2013 and Updated Overall Needs

- 1.5 Since the time of the original report, Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessments have been extensively tested at Examination in Public, public inquires and planning appeals. This has effectively created a series of test cases for the implementation of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012. We would also note that the time period for the local plans has been extended to end in 2031 and this has also been accommodated in this update.
- 1.6 A list of all known Gypsy and Traveller sites in the study in November 2012 is shown in Appendix A.

Out-Migration, Bricks and Mortar and the Waiting List

- 1.7 In terms of the original assessment, the on-site survey identified a small out-migration from the public sites in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, both to sites in other areas of the country and also to bricks

and mortar. This out-migration reduced the overall needs for these two areas. However, under the Duty to Co-operate and developing practice for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessments an out-migration from one area must be an in-migration to another area. However, these households would not have been assessed as needs in other areas. This has been seen as a problem by a number of Planning Inspectors.

- 1.8 Therefore, this update neutralises these flows, so that it is no longer assumed that a small number of households will be leaving the area. The result of this is to assume that the net movement from migration is zero.
- 1.9 We would note that, as a counter to movements off sites for South Oxfordshire there were 5 households seeking to move on to sites from the waiting list, while one pitch was vacant at the time of the survey. Therefore, a net 4 households were seeking to move on to sites in South Oxfordshire. It must be remembered that these households may be on authorised sites elsewhere, or counted in other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. Therefore, a need for 4 pitches from the waiting list was potentially too high a figure for the real overall need.
- 1.10 Therefore in the original needs assessment we projected 18 households seeking to leave the sites with 2 going to bricks and mortar and 16 wishing to move to other areas, but only 4 households seeking to move on to sites. For this update we have set this figure to zero to ensure that no households leave the sites without being accounted for. In summary, while the on-site survey indicated that some households might wish to leave the area or move to bricks and mortar, we have chosen to set the net migration figure to sites at zero. If the moves do occur out of the area or to bricks and mortar then more pitches will be available on existing sites, with consequently less need for new pitches.

New Household Formation

- 1.11 It is recognised that an important group for future pitch provision will be children and young adults from existing households who will wish to form their own households in future years. Historically studies of Gypsy and Traveller population have assumed a net growth in the population of 3.00% per annum. However, the UK Census of Population 2011 and ORS' own national survey data both indicate the population of Gypsies and Travellers grows at a rate which could be as low as 1.50% per annum.
- 1.12 More recently in a letter dated 26th March 2014 Brandon Lewis MP, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, clarified the Government's position on household formation rates and stated:

'I can confirm that the annual growth rate figure of 3% does not represent national planning policy. The previous Administration's guidance for local authorities on carrying out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments under the Housing Act 2004 is unhelpful in that it uses an illustrative example of calculating future accommodation need based on the 3% growth rate figure. The guidance notes that the appropriate rate for individual assessments will depend on the details identified in the local authority's own assessment of need. As such the Government is not endorsing or supporting the 3% growth rate figure, though in some cases we are aware that inspectors have, in considering the level of unmet local need when demonstrating specific traveller appeals, used the 3% growth rate figure in the absence of a local authority's own up-to-date assessment of need.'

- 1.13 We agree with the position being taken by CLG and firmly believe that any household formation rates should use a robust evidence base, rather than simply relying on precedent. The household formation rate that ORS will use for this study will be based on local evidence tied to the site surveys. In addition a range of new household formation rates from 1.50% to 3.00% has also been considered.

- 1.14 The original assessment of need used a growth rate of 2.50% per annum, but this figure was chosen as a conservatively high number at a time before the Minister's statement when 3.00% was still commonly being used. Local evidence on the demographic composition of the travelling community in the study area comes from the ORS fieldwork. The on-site survey found that the household size in the study area was lower than the household size typically found by ORS. Smaller households mean a smaller number of children overall, which will likely lead to a lower than average household formation in the future. This is set alongside evidence on the proportion of children in the study area households. The on-site survey showed 44% of people aged under 16, which is slightly higher than many other studies where around 40% is common. However, this included a very high number of households with adult females, but no adult males. Over 20% of all pitches surveyed contained an adult female aged under 50 years of age with no adult male. There were few equivalent households with only adult males. Therefore, it is highly likely that there are more adult males in the population and that they simply weren't declared to ORS interviewers. This is common with site surveys and we have found similar under-counts in many of the studies that we have completed elsewhere in the UK. If it is assumed that a proportion of males do in fact live on the sites and were not captured in the site survey then the proportion of children to adults in the population will fall and therefore the projected growth rates will also fall.
- 1.15 The 2011 UK Census of Population shows 25% of the population of Gypsies and Travellers in the three Oxfordshire authorities were children and that is below the national average for the Gypsy and Traveller community as a whole. It is also the case that while many pitches had many children, 20% of pitches contained a single person aged over 55 years, so there are likely to be many pitches freed through dissolution in the future. Therefore, when the evidence from the Census and on-site survey are combined we consider 2.00% growth per annum to be the most sensible long-term planning position given that the evidence for the wider population is as low as 1.50% per annum. ORS considers that a 2.00% per annum rate will provide enough pitches to accommodate all newly-forming households in Oxfordshire, and would also allow for some concealed households and those living in bricks and mortar, wishing to move to sites, although none were identified in the survey.
- 1.16 The household formation rates are based upon **no households** on sites in Oxford. In South Oxfordshire there are 37 households on public sites, 5 households on long-term tolerated sites and 1 household on a site with temporary permission giving a total of **43 households**. In Vale of White Horse there are 36 pitches on public sites, but 2 of these are empty due to a lack of demand, so there are **34 households** on site. The figure for the Vale of White Horse excludes 6 vacant pitches on a private site. These 6 pitches have also been excluded as supply. However, if they are re-occupied in the future they could reduce the number of new pitches required.
- 1.17 Overall, based on a new household formation rate of 2.00%, we estimate that a total of **33 additional pitches** will be required during the new study period to 2031. None for Oxford, 18 for South Oxfordshire and 15 for the Vale of White Horse as a result of new household formation, assuming that each forming household will require a pitch of its own.

Figure 2
Household Formations by Local Authority for the period 2012-2031

Growth rate per annum	Oxford	South Oxfordshire	Vale of White Horse	Total
1.50%	0	13	10	23
1.75%	0	15	12	27
2.00%	0	18	15	33
2.25%	0	21	17	38
2.50%	0	24	19	43
2.75%	0	26	21	47
3.00%	0	30	24	54

Overall Summary

- ^{1.18} The impacts of the changes are set out in the tables below. The situation for Oxford City is that there is still no need for pitches, but the need for South Oxfordshire rises to **19 additional pitches** and the need for Vale of White Horse rises to **13 additional pitches** (15 less 2 supply from vacant pitches on the public site).

Figure 3
Updated Extra Gypsy and Traveller Pitches which are Required in Oxford from 2012-2031

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
Supply of Pitches			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	0	
Additional supply from new sites already planned	-	0	
Total Supply		0	
Current Need			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	0	-	
Concealed households	0	-	
Net movement from bricks and mortar and waiting list	0	-	
Total Current Need	0		
Future Needs			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	0	-	
Net migration to the area	0	-	
Net new household formation	0	-	
Total Future Needs	0	-	
Total	0	0	0

Figure 4
Updated Extra Gypsy and Traveller Pitches which are Required in South Oxfordshire from 2012-2031

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
Supply of Pitches			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	0	
Additional supply from new sites already planned	-	0	
Total Supply		0	
Current Need			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	0	-	
Concealed households	0	-	
Net movement from bricks and mortar and waiting list	0	-	
Total Current Need	0		
Future Needs			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	1	-	
Net migration to the area	0	-	
Net new household formation	18	-	
Total Future Needs	19		
Total	19	0	19

Figure 5
Updated Extra Gypsy and Traveller Pitches which are Required in Vale of White Horse from 2012-2031

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
Supply of Pitches			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	2	
Additional supply from new sites already planned	-	0	
Total Supply		2	
Current Need			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	0	-	
Concealed households	0	-	
Net movement from bricks and mortar and waiting list	0	-	
Total Current Need	0		
Future Needs			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	0	-	
Net migration to the area	0	-	
Net new household formation	15	-	
Total Future Needs	15		
Total	15	2	13

Split to 2031

- 1.19 To split the need by time period, we have taken any temporary sites as being addressed in the first five years. Meanwhile, household formation has been assumed to occur evenly over the time period. In summary, Figure 6 sets out the net requirement for new pitch provision by local authority until 2031.

Figure 2
Updated Extra Pitch Provision by Local Authority for the period 2012-2031

Local Authority	2012-2019	2020-2025	2026-2031	Total
Oxford City	0	0	0	0
South Oxfordshire	7	6	6	19
Vale of White Horse	3	5	5	13

Comparison of Changes by Local Authority to 2031

- 1.20 Figure 3 below sets out the changes to the assessment, with figures in brackets being negative numbers. To take an example, the original net need arising for the whole of the study area was 26 pitches for the initial time periods of the assessment. Setting net out-migration and movement to bricks and mortar to zero adds a need for 14 pitches, but changes to household formation rates to reflect more accurate rates reduces the need by 6 pitches and 2 vacant pitches in the Vale of White Horse have been counted as supply. These changes see the overall need rise by 6 pitches.

Figure 3
Summary of changes by Local Authority 2013-2023 (Note: Figures in brackets are negative numbers)

Local Authority	Total net need in 2013 assessment	Changes to supply, from out-migration	Changes due to household formation rates	Supply	Total net need in 2014 assessment
Oxford	0	0	0	0	0
South Oxfordshire	13	5	1	0	19
Vale of White Horse	13	9	(7)	(2)	13
Total	26	14	(6)	(2)	32

Travelling Showpeople

- 1.21 The original report included a need to provide for an additional 4 plots for Travelling Showpeople in South Oxfordshire based on the identification of 26 existing plots. The effect of increasing the time period to 2031 will require **1 additional plot**, increasing the total requirement from 4 to 5 as a result of increased new household formation. The original household survey suggested that no further provision was required in Oxford or Vale of White Horse to accommodate growth in the existing population. This position has not changed.

Conclusions

- 1.22 The changes in this Update Report extend the time period to 2031 to cover the authorities' new plan periods, amend new household formation rates in the light of changes to planning guidance, and remove reliance on pitches becoming available through out-migration from the area or movement from pitches to bricks and mortar accommodation. Nevertheless these outward movements from pitches may still occur and if significant vacancies emerge during the plan-making process, this may reduce the need for allocation of the number of pitches shown in the tables.

Appendix A: Traveller Sites in the Study Area (as of November 2012)

Oxford City

Site	Number of Pitches
Local Authority Sites	
TOTAL PITCHES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES	0
Private Sites with Permanent Permission	
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	0
Private Sites with Temporary Permission	
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH TEMPORARY PERMISSION	0
Unauthorised Sites - Tolerated	
TOTAL PITCHES ON LAWFUL SITES	0
Unauthorised Developments	
TOTAL PITCHES ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS	0
TOTAL PITCHES	0

South Oxfordshire District

Site	Number of Pitches
Local Authority Sites	
Middle Ground, Wheatley	16
Ten Acre Park, Sandford-on-Thames	16
Oakley Wood, Benson	5
TOTAL PITCHES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES	
37	
Private Sites with Permanent Permission	
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	
0	
Private Sites with Temporary Permission	
Kiln Lane, Garsington	1
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH TEMPORARY PERMISSION	
1	
Unauthorised Sites - Tolerated	
Manor View, Marston	4
Kiln Lane, Garsington	1
TOTAL PITCHES ON LAWFUL SITES	
5	
Unauthorised Developments	
0	
TOTAL PITCHES ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS	
0	
TOTAL PITCHES	
43	

Vale of White Horse District

Site	Number of Pitches
Local Authority Sites	
Woodhill Lane, East Challow	12
Red Bridge Hollow, South Hinksey	24
TOTAL PITCHES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES	36
Private Sites with Permanent Permission	
Twelve Oaks, Kingston Bagpuize	6 ¹
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	6
Private Sites with Temporary Permission	
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH TEMPORARY PERMISSION	0
Unauthorised Sites - Tolerated	
-	-
TOTAL PITCHES ON LAWFUL SITES	0
Unauthorised Developments	
TOTAL PITCHES ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS	0
TOTAL PITCHES	42

¹ This site was vacant at the time of the study