

NEWS RELEASE

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Regional Plan Outlines Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

How many new caravan pitches and plots are needed for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople over the next ten years, and how should they be distributed throughout the Region? These are some of the key questions being asked in a seven-week consultation launched this week as part of the Phase Three Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS).

Prepared by the Regional Assembly, and led by local government in the Region, the Strategy sets out targets for homes, the economy, infrastructure and the environment through to 2026. Amongst several other topics, the Phase Three Revision suggests a regional need for 939 additional residential and 244 additional transit pitches for gypsies and travellers over 2007-2017 period, as well as 118 additional plots for travelling showpeople over 2007–2012 period.*

“Research has shown a clear under-provision for gypsy and traveller accommodation in the Region. Government guidance requires us to plan for travelling communities to give them places where they can live.” said Mark Middleton, Assembly Director of Policy.

“Providing authorised sites for accommodation will reduce the level of illegal camping and the difficult problems this can cause. The Strategy presents realistic and inclusive policies that aim to address the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, at the same time as respecting the interests of settled communities.”

The consultation presents a number of Options on the broad geographical distribution of these sites across the whole Region. It will be up to individual local authorities to decide on the specific locations in their Local Development Frameworks.

The consultation will run from 29th June – 14th August, and members from both the settled and travelling community will have the opportunity to submit their views via an online questionnaire or in

writing. As a follow on to this consultation process, a Preferred Option will be drafted later this year and be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

To view the Phase Three Options Consultation Document and Questionnaire, please visit:

[http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning and Regional Spatial Strategy/RSS Revision/RSS Revision Phase 3.aspx](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/RSS_Revision/RSS_Revision_Phase_3.aspx)

* These figures were obtained through the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) undertaken by local authorities in the West Midlands

ENDS

Please see the accompanying Information Pack on the Review of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs.

For further information, contact Mark Middleton, Director of Policy on 0121 678 1024

For further information or to arrange a briefing, contact:
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Notes to Editors

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands Region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 elected members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body,
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk