

WMRSS Phase Three
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the
Policy Statement on Provision of New
Accommodation for Gypsies,
Travelers and Travelling Showpeople

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SUMMARY

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Phase 3 Revision is to be taken forward into the new Regional Strategy (RS) through Policy Recommendations and two Policy Statements. A review of the implications of the Policy Recommendations for European Sites is presented in a separate report (TEC 2010a).

Treweek Environmental Consultants (TEC) was appointed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly to consider the possible implications of the proposed Regional Interim Policy Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This report summarises the results of a review carried out to identify the likely implications of the policy for European Sites as set out in the Policy Statement.

The Regional Interim Policy Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is intended to become a material consideration in minerals planning processes across the region pending the publication of the Regional Strategy, but the process for finalising the Interim Policy Statement and consulting on it is currently unclear.

This report summarises the implications of the Regional Interim Policy Statement for European sites.

Key conclusions are as follows:

- The risk of impacts on Cannock Chase SAC was identified during the HRA process and this influenced the proposed allocation for Cannock District.
- The possibility of adverse effects on Cannock Chase SAC remains. The WMRSS Phase 2 housing policies have already been identified as a source of likely adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and the proposed allocation for Accommodation for Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople would add to the quantum of development proposed, albeit by a relatively small amount.
- For other sites, the scale and type of development proposed is not expected to result in the necessary location of accommodation in locations where adverse effects on European sites would necessarily result.
- Impacts associated with specific site allocations are appropriately addressed at Core Strategy level.
- Establishment or precautionary limits is suggested by reference to site sensitivities. Such limits could be applied during the screening of potential locations.
- There are certain sites that could be affected if it proved necessary to allocate sites or pitches within the green belt. These are the Midlands Meres and Mosses Phases 1 and 2 Ramsar sites); River Mease SAC; Ensor's Pool SAC and Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC.

Detailed locations associated with the Regional Interim Policy Statement will be selected following the development and consideration of options in lower-tier plans. In terms of regional scale impacts, the extent of development is minor in absolute and relative terms compared with the overall level of development set out in the RSS as a whole.

At a regional level it is not possible to identify any clear links between the distribution proposed and likely impacts on European Sites. The policy statement does not direct the

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development, directly or explicitly to locations where a European site will necessarily be affected.

Detailed spatial distribution of pitches will be determined through Local Authorities' Core Strategies at which point it will be possible to identify specific impacts on European sites. At this strategic level it should be possible to accommodate the quantum of development proposed without necessarily affecting a European Site, with the possible exception of Cannock Chase SAC.

The Regional Interim Policy Statement already makes reference to the need to safeguard Cannock Chase SAC:

“Pitch allocations in Cannock Chase, Stafford, Wolverhampton and Walsall are not increased despite their proximity to South Staffordshire because of their relatively high current provision and need where it arises requirements. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Review of the draft Policy Statement highlighted the sensitivity of Cannock Chase as a significant European site”.

However HRAs of Core Strategies and individual proposals will need to give detailed consideration to conclusions of the Footprint Ecology Report (2009) and in particular the need to avoid site allocations within approximately 500m of Cannock Chase SAC will need to be considered.

It is suggested that Policy 4 should make specific reference to European sites as follows. Otherwise no specific mitigation recommendations are given and it is considered appropriate to review site-specific impacts at Core Strategy level.

Policy 4 : Identification of Sites / LDF Process:

- a) **Local Development Frameworks** – each Local Planning Authority should identify the location of specific sites within their Development Plan Documents, to ensure the requirements set out in the Regional Interim Policy Statement (see ODPM Circular 01/2006) are met. These locations must be attractive to Gypsies and Travellers and take into account factors such as: impacts on significant environmental assets (*in particular European sites*), access to the highways network and key services, any local evidence in relation to unauthorised encampments and historical patterns of travel and annual events. Where joint LDFs are prepared, the distribution of pitch numbers between authorities can be adjusted, where appropriate.

The Regional Interim Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site.

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1 Introduction

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Phase 3 Revision is to be taken forward into the new Regional Strategy through Interim Policy Statements that will provide guidance to assist the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and Policy Recommendations. Treweek Environmental Consultants (TEC) was appointed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the proposed Policy Statement on Gypsies and Travellers.

The report should be read in conjunction with the HRA of the proposed Regional Policy Statement on Minerals and Aggregates (TEC 2010b) and a review of policy recommendations which will not have material standing but is intended to feed into the new RS (TEC 2010a).

1.1 Requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment of Development Plans

The European Habitats Directive (European Communities, 1992) requires assessment of the possible effects of certain plans on the integrity of 'European Sites' before the plan is adopted. The overall process of determining whether a plan complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive is referred to as 'Habitats Regulations Assessment'.

In this context, 'European sites' - comprise:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), for habitats;
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs), for birds and potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs) ; and also
- Sites designated under the Ramsar Convention as wetlands of international importance.

The purpose of HRA is to determine whether a proposed plan might have adverse effects on the integrity of any European Site, taking into account the reasons why a site was designated and its 'conservation objectives'.

Article 6(3) of the Directive requires an assessment of the effects of any plan or project (which is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of a site). This assessment must consider effects of the plan itself and its possible effects in combination with other plans or projects. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, the competent national authorities can agree to the plan or project only when they have ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) of the Directive discusses alternative solutions, the test of "imperative reasons of overriding public interest" (IROPI) and compensatory measures:

"6(4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted."

European guidance recommends that HRA should be undertaken in four stages:

1 Screening: Determining whether the plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - is likely to have an adverse effect on any European site

2 Appropriate Assessment: Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan - 'in combination' with other plans and projects - would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of European site (s). If it doesn't, the plan can proceed.

3 Assessment of alternative solutions: Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of any European site, there should be an examination of alternatives.

4 Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain: The 'IROPI test' and compensatory measures (European Commission, 2001).

A Screening assessment was undertaken for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 3 in June 2009 and this included consideration of Likely Significant Effects associated with proposed policies on provision of sites and pitches for gypsies and travellers. This report presents the results of a Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

1.2 Approach

An iterative process of review was adopted to allow the WMRA to take account of possible implications for European Sites during development of policy.

The Interim Policy Statement was reviewed and amended based on results of consultation with Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales as well as the findings of the HRA and SA.

Relevant information was obtained from previous HRA work undertaken in the region, the JNCC website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/>) and other sources in the literature as well as through consultation with the statutory nature conservation bodies and the Environment Agency. Suggestions for avoidance or mitigation of effects on the integrity of any European site are included in the report.

Draft guidance from the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) on the application of the Habitats Regulations to RSSs (2007) was taken into account as well as Natural England's (2007) draft guidance on Habitats Regulations Assessment of RSSs and Sub-Regional Strategies.

2 The West Midlands RSS

The RSS for the West Midlands was published in June 2004, and became a statutory development plan in September 2004. The current revised RSS, containing amended policies relating to the Black Country, was published in January 2008.

The purpose of the RSS is to guide the preparation of local authority development plans, local waste plans and local transport plans, so that together they can provide a coherent framework for regional development up to 2021.

When the RSS was published in June 2004, the Secretary of State supported the vision and objectives of the strategy, but suggested that several issues needed to be developed further by the Regional Planning Body (the West Midlands Regional Assembly). Given the range of matters to be considered, it was agreed that these issues should be looked at in three phases, as follows:

- Phase 1, Black Country Study, a plan for the long-term change and development of this sub-region including the City of Wolverhampton and the Boroughs of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley, begun in February 2005, submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2006, and completed in January 2008 when the revised RSS was published.

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- Phase 2, including housing needs, urban capacity, employment land, airports, road user charging and waste management, began in November 2005. A Preferred Option and Policies were submitted to the Secretary of State on 21 December 2007. Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) is currently setting out the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the WMRSS Phase 2 in response to the EiP which was completed in June 2009.
- Phase 3 (this phase) started in November 2007, with the launch of the Draft Project Plan.

2.1 Summary of approach to Phase 3

The process of developing policies for Phase 3 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy has had two distinct phases:

2.1.1 Development of Policy Options

Development of options for RSS3 policies began in October 2008, led by the WMRA Policy Leads team. Policies were drafted, reviewed, and redrafted in an iterative process. A final set of policy options were developed in February and March 2009, and outlined in a consultation document entitled West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Revision – Options (known as the 'Phase Three Options Paper'). This paper was submitted to the Assembly Board of Directors on 25 March 2009, and issued for public consultation on 29 June 2009. A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report was issued for consultation at the same time.

2.1.2 Development of Policy Statements and Recommendations

Following consultation on the policy options, it was decided at a 'stock-take' meeting on 9 September 2009 involving WMRA, Government Office West Midlands and Advantage West Midlands that RSS3 would be taken forward through the new Regional Strategy rather than the RSS. Interim policy statements would be developed to provide guidance for the preparation of LDFs, and policy recommendations would feed into the development of the Regional Strategy. Development of draft policy statements and recommendations began in November 2009. Statements and recommendations were drafted, reviewed and redrafted in an iterative process. Final draft policy statements and recommendations were developed in January 2010 for publication and consultation beginning in February 2010.

Local authorities are expected to give the Interim Policy Statement similar weight to a submitted draft Regional Spatial Strategy. The Interim Policy Statement will therefore also constitute a material consideration in relation to Local Development Framework examinations and planning enquiries.

2.1.3 Summary of the Regional Interim Policy Statement

Government Circular 01/2006, states that "RSS revision should identify the number of pitches required (but not their location) for each local planning authority in the light of local authority Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) and a strategic view of needs across the region (ODPM Circular 01/2006, paragraph 23).

The numbers of pitches set out in the RSS must then be translated into specific site allocations in local planning authorities' DPDs.

Until the new Regional Strategy for the West Midlands has been completed, the status of the Regional Interim Policy Statement for Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision has been confirmed by GOWM as having 'similar weight to a submitted draft RSS' and discussions with the Planning Inspectorate indicate that the Statement will 'carry weight in both

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Development Plan Document (DPD) examinations and Planning Inquiries'. The proposed Regional Interim Policy Statement is included in this report as Appendix 2.

The main objective is to address current under-provision of accommodation in the region for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople and therefore to increase the number of residential and temporary pitches available. There is currently a major shortage of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, with 1,729 caravans in the Region but only 1,166 authorised pitches. Over the first five years of any plan to provide for Gypsies and Travellers accommodation needs, an additional 685 pitches would be required to address current shortages and meet new demand (based on expected family formation), increasing the provision of pitches across the Region by 59%. A further 287 pitches would be required over the next five years to meet expected demand (based on expected family formation).

The development of the Interim Policy Statement was influenced by a number of factors including:

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) which were undertaken on a sub-regional basis by local authorities in the West Midlands Region in 2007/08;
- Responses to the RSS Phase Three Options consultation in Summer 2009;
- Results of SA and HRA; and
- Responses to further consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders in November 2009.

The geographical distribution of residential and temporary pitches proposed in the Regional Interim Policy Statement broadly reflects the results of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments undertaken by local authorities.

Similarly proposed plots for Travelling Showpeople were distributed on a County basis according to "need where it arises as evidenced by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments".

2.1.1 Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision

Consultation revealed very mixed opinions concerning the total number of residential pitches required. WMRA has decided to retain 939 additional residential pitches as the planning total for the Region since it was based on the local authorities' Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments and represents the best and most robust evidence available. The Sustainability Appraisal noted that the provision of 939 extra pitches would be vital to ensure that the Gypsy and Traveller community would have access to decent housing, services and opportunities, and that issues around poverty and deprivation, health inequalities and poor health could be addressed. Three Options for how to allocate this total number were consulted on and were also considered in the HRA Screening Report (TEC, 2009). The latter concluded that Option 1 could have implications for some European sites, in particular Cannock Chase SAC and emphasised the need for any re-distribution (Option 3) to take implications for European Sites into consideration. The proposed approach to development of Option 2 already included European sites as a consideration.

With respect to transit pitches, the Regional Interim Policy Statement retains the 244 additional pitches and the geographical distribution consulted on. Both were based on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments undertaken by local authorities, and were considered to reflect best available evidence.

Table 1 presents the proposed allocations for residential and temporary pitches suggested in the Regional Policy Statement.

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Table 1 Proposed allocation of pitches

Local Authority	Allocation 2007 - 2017	
	Transit pitches	Residential pitches
Staffordshire & Stoke:		
<i>Cannock Chase</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>35 pitches</i>
<i>East Staffordshire</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>
<i>Lichfield</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>14 pitches</i>
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5 pitches	20 pitches
<i>South Staffordshire</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>42 pitches</i>
<i>Stafford</i>	<i>2 pitches</i>	<i>37 pitches</i>
Staffordshire Moorlands	2 pitches	2 pitches
Stoke-on-Trent	10 pitches	40 pitches
Tamworth	5 pitches	7 pitches
Warwickshire:		
North Warwickshire	5 pitches	21 pitches
Nuneaton & Bedworth	5 pitches	29 pitches
Rugby	5 pitches	42 pitches
Stratford-on-Avon	10 pitches	42 pitches
Warwick	15 pitches	20 pitches
Worcestershire:		
Bromsgrove	0 pitches	14 pitches
Malvern Hills	10 pitches	33 pitches
Redditch	18 pitches	13 pitches
Worcester	20 pitches	22 pitches
Wychavon	20 pitches	42 pitches
Wyre Forest	0 pitches	42 pitches
Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry & Solihull		
Birmingham	15 pitches	19 pitches
Coventry	5 pitches	20 pitches
Dudley	3 pitches	23 pitches
Sandwell	3 pitches	5 pitches
Solihull	5 pitches	26 pitches
Walsall	3 pitches	39 pitches
Wolverhampton	3 pitches	36 pitches

Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin		
Herefordshire	10 pitches	109 pitches
Shropshire	35 pitches	93 pitches
Telford & Wrekin	10 pitches	37 pitches
REGIONAL TOTAL	244 pitches	939 pitches

3 European Sites

European Sites considered in this assessment are listed in **Table 2**. This includes sites identified during the WMRSS Phase 3 Revision Screening process and some further sites added following consultation with Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales carried out as part of the screening process and subsequently.

Each European site has a set of designated interest features for which it is selected, as well as conservation objectives set by the conservation agencies. These have been fully described in earlier reports and are not repeated here (TEC, 2008; TEC, 2009a; TEC 2009b).

Appendix 1 summarises site sensitivities to different types of impact. The following chapter considers likely impacts in more detail.

Table 2: European sites considered

SAC	SPA	Ramsar
Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC	Elenydd Mallaen SPA	Humber Estuary Ramsar
Brecon Beacons SAC	Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast (Phase 2) SPA	Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar
Bredon Hill SAC	Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA	Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar
Brown Moss SAC	Severn Estuary SPA	Severn Estuary Ramsar
Cannock Chase SAC	South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA	Walmore Common Ramsar
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Walmore Common SPA	
Dixton Woods SAC		
Downton Gorge SAC		
Elan Valley Woodlands SAC		
Elenydd SAC		
Ensor's Pool SAC		
Fens Pools SAC		
Fenn's, Wixhall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SAC		
Llangorse Lake SAC		
Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC		
Montgomery Canal SAC		
Mottey Meadows SAC		
Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC		
Peak District Dales SAC		
Rhos Goch SAC		
River Clun SAC		
River Dee and Bala Lake SAC		
River Mease SAC		
River Usk SAC		
River Wye SAC		
Severn Estuary SAC		
South Pennine Moors SAC		
Sugarloaf Woodlands SAC		
The Stiperstones and the Hollies SAC		
West Midlands Mosses SAC		
Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC		
Wye Valley Woodlands SAC		

4 Results and recommendations

This chapter summarises the results of the HRA process and makes recommendations for further development of policy to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites. It draws on the results of the HRA screening assessment for WMRSS Phase 3 (TEC 2009b) and also on the results of the HRA of the WMRSS Phase 2 in terms of some of the main drivers for adverse effects (TEC 2008).

4.1 Key assumptions

“Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople” can be expected to have similar impacts on European sites to those associated with housing and general effects of urbanisation and recreational use. This expectation is based on certain assumptions about the nature and use of pitches, however, as follows:

- That each pitch accommodates a single caravan or similar vehicle;
- That typically, as many as 15-20 pitches may be contained within a single site;
- That all sites will be serviced with connections to mains drainage and mains water supply; and
- That there will be waste collection services for all sites.

4.2 Types of impact

The main types of impact associated with development of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are closely related to those associated with development of housing, recreational pressures on sites associated with local increases in population, possible local increases in traffic emissions and general effects of urbanisation. Based on results of other HRAs (for example ERM, 2009; Scott Wilson, 2008), possible impacts can therefore be expected to include:

- Physical damage to vegetation caused by recreational use.
- Damage to vegetation caused by fires or arson.
- Damage to vegetation and wildlife caused by fly-tipping including dumping of vehicles.
- Erosion of soil and associated damage to vegetation caused by motorcycle scrambling and off-road vehicle use.
- Disturbance to sensitive species from recreational use.
- Predation caused by cats.
- Localised eutrophication caused by dog fouling.
- Increased pressure on water supplies and water treatment infrastructure.

The location of pitches in close proximity to a European site could increase the risk of the adverse effects identified above. Appendix 1 summarises the main sensitivities of European sites to different types of impact.

4.2.1 Impacts caused by urbanisation and recreational use

The impacts identified above can be associated with all urban development and are not necessarily specific to provision of accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people. As a general rule, site-specific measures are likely to be required to regulate damaging activities associated with off-road vehicle use, damage caused by fly-tipping and general damage caused by recreational use.

However it may also be appropriate in some cases to establish precautionary limits to ensure that sites and pitches are not located too close to sensitive European sites. When developing a delivery plan for the Thames Basin Heaths, Natural England identified 400 m from the SPA as the distance within which they felt no new development could be allowed and Footprint Ecology (2009) also refer to a 400m limit with respect to recreational impacts on Cannock Chase SAC. Scott Wilson (2008) suggested a slightly increased limit of 500m. It is possible that local authorities could consider establishment of precautionary limits based on site-specific sensitivities which could be used to screen proposals for residential and transit pitches.

4.2.2 Overall scale of development

Overall the scale of development required is negligible in comparison with the level of development proposed through Phase 2 of the WMRSS and is not expected to add significantly to the impacts identified through HRA of the WMRSS Phase 2 (TEC 2008).

4.2.3 Water supply and waste treatment infrastructure

It is assumed that the proposed accommodation will be serviced with water supply and mainline drainage. While increasing the number of sites will not necessarily result in an increase in the number of travellers, it is important to ensure that there is sufficient water supply and also waste water treatment infrastructure and capacity to accommodate additional use. Such provision is addressed by water companies (through their investment in future sewage treatment infrastructure) and the Environment Agency (through its role in consenting effluent discharges). The need for development to be contingent on adequate water supplies and waste water treatment capacity has been given thorough consideration as part of the Phase 2 Revision of the WMRSS and additional measures are not considered to be necessary to address the particular requirements of Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. Local authorities should ensure that any proposals can be accommodated without placing excessive demands on the sewage treatment system.

4.2.4 Traffic-related impacts

With respect to transport and traffic-related impacts, the Sustainability Appraisal (URSUS 2010) recommended that the policy approach should make clear reference to the need to deliver the additional pitches and plots in ways that protect (and ideally enhance) the environment, and are as low carbon as possible. There are a range of other policies in the RSS which introduce high standards of environmental protection on conventional housing (eg SR2 on Sustainable Communities and SR3 on Sustainable Design and Construction) and it is recommended that similar provisions are applied to the development of pitches and plots. Furthermore, the policy approach should also encourage the siting of new pitches/plots in locations that are accessible to services, facilities and opportunities, and that are accessible by public transport (similar to the provisions set out on policies for housing). These recommendations would also be beneficial for European sites by helping to minimise traffic emissions and thereby reducing risks of additional air pollution effects on sensitive sites. Additional mitigation measures are not considered necessary.

4.2.5 Location of pitches within the Green Belt

Reference is made in the Regional Interim Policy Statement to potential use of land in the greenbelt in exceptional circumstances. Some European sites in the region are particularly vulnerable to changed land use in the greenbelt due to their location and the need for supporting habitat. Any land use changes in the following areas should be given careful consideration from an HRA perspective when Core Strategies are developed:

- Newcastle-under-Lyme District (Midlands Meres and Mosses Phases 1 and 2 Ramsar sites);

- Lichfield District (River Mease SAC);
- Nuneaton and Bedworth District (Ensor’s Pool SAC) and
- Worcester (Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC).

This should not be regarded as a comprehensive listing.

4.2.6 Site-specific considerations: Cannock Chase SAC

Some issues have been identified for individual European sites which might require specific measures. This includes the possibility of adverse impacts on Cannock Chase SAC, which was taken into account in developing the Regional Interim Policy Statement and influenced the proposed allocation for Cannock District.

Cannock Chase SAC is exposed to several threats and pressures and TEC (2008) concluded that there were residual concerns for Cannock Chase SAC associated with proposed levels of housing development in Cannock District itself and in other districts and boroughs which adjoin Cannock Chase SAC. This housing growth is expected to exacerbate existing threats and pressures on the site, particularly with respect to local impacts of air pollution, increased pressure on water supply and fragmentation of supporting habitat. Provision of new accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople would add to this pressure but constitutes a very small proportion of overall housing provision.

Table 3 Proposed pitches in districts and boroughs adjoining Cannock Chase SAC to 2017

	<i>Transit pitches</i>	<i>Residential pitches</i>	<i>Plots for Travelling showpeople</i>
<i>Cannock Chase</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>35 pitches</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Lichfield</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>14 pitches</i>	
<i>South Staffordshire</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>42 pitches</i>	
<i>Stafford</i>	<i>2 pitches</i>	<i>37 pitches</i>	
	<i>22</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>23</i>

The five authorities adjoining Cannock Chase SAC (including Cannock Chase, Stafford Borough, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Councils), commissioned Footprint Ecology to prepare an 'Evidence Base relating to Cannock Chase SAC and the Appropriate Assessment of Local Authorities Core Strategies' and a 'Visitor Impact Management Strategy.'

When this study was completed it was not possible to conclude that water abstraction from the boreholes at Milford and Shugborough was not having a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC and therefore whether increased abstraction would be possible. Any proposals for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in a location requiring abstraction from these boreholes would have to be contingent on an assured supply and conclusive evidence that this would not have adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC.

In addition the report confirmed the following potential risks to the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC:

- Increasing recreational use could create a future need for additional supporting infrastructure or facilities, which could potentially require land-take within or near Cannock Chase SAC.
- Another possible consequence of increased recreational use could be impacts on water quality and localised eutrophication.

- All these effects could be further exacerbated by the in-combination effects of the South Staffordshire Economic Regeneration Strategy and Visitor Economy Strategy.
- Recreational pressure and disturbance, particularly from dog-walking, horse-riding, mountain-biking and off-track activities: all of these cause or contribute to erosion, creation of new tracks and damage to vegetation

Footprint Ecology's report (2009) refers to a wide variety of 'urban effects' which are known to affect heathland sites surrounded by high levels of housing. "These are largely related to access / recreation and include deliberate and accidental fires, litter, predation from people and pets, eutrophication and dumping / fly tipping".

The Footprint Ecology report suggested avoidance of development within 400m of the Cannock Chase SAC boundary and also recommended a 'Zone of Influence' defined as the area within 12 miles of the perimeter of the SAC (measured as the crow flies from the primary point of access to the curtilage of the dwelling) within which new housing proposals might be considered likely to increase recreational pressure on Cannock Chase SAC. The Zone of Influence is intended to apply to housing proposals, and is intended to define an area within which developer contributions might be collected to fund measures such as wardening, creation of alternative sites, support for fire services, on site management and a series of education and awareness raising initiatives. It is not clear how proposals for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople would be implemented with respect to this proposed Zone, but this will need to be taken into account in Core Strategies produced by the following:

- Birmingham City Council
- Walsall metropolitan Borough Council (The four Black Country authorities).
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council

A new policy SR4 was proposed at the EiP which would allow for housing levels to be reduced if there were no other means possible to avoid significant adverse effects on the integrity of the site and alternative, effective mitigation could not be assured. Assuming that accommodation for Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople constitutes a form of housing, it is possible that this policy could apply in any case where it proved impossible identify the number of sites required without necessarily affecting a European site. In the vast majority of cases this should be necessary, given the scale of the requirement and the area potentially available within which sites can be chosen.

4.3 In combination effects

There are possible in combination effects of changes in the West Midlands for neighbouring regions in England and in particular in Wales, as some Gypsies and Travellers move between the West Midlands and Wales. The possibility that under-provision of accommodation in the West Midlands might potentially displace gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople into Wales was identified during consultation on the WMRSS Phase 3 HRA Screening Report (TEC, 2009). However it has not

been possible to confirm the significance of this risk on the basis of existing evidence. The Welsh Assembly Government is in the process of developing a policy framework for the provision of services to Gypsies and Travellers in Wales with the objective of ensuring that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are assessed, planned and implemented in a more strategic way. Improved provision of services and support for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales and in the West Midlands can be expected to reduce the overall risk of adverse impacts on European sites as standards of waste management, waste water treatments and access are all likely to improve.

The Regional Interim Policy Statement is based on “need where it arises” and this is expected to reduce the risk that any particular European site would be disproportionately at risk.

5 Conclusions

Detailed locations associated with the Regional Interim Policy Statement will be selected following the development and consideration of options in lower-tier plans. In terms of regional scale impacts, the extent of development is minor in absolute and relative terms compared with the overall level of development set out in the RSS as a whole.

At a regional level it is not possible to identify any clear links between the distribution proposed and likely impacts on European Sites. The policy statement does not direct the development, directly or explicitly to locations where a European site will necessarily be affected.

Detailed spatial distribution of pitches will be determined through Local Authorities’ Core Strategies at which point it will be possible to identify specific impacts on European sites. At this strategic level it should be possible to accommodate the quantum of development proposed without necessarily affecting a European Site, with the possible exception of Cannock Chase SAC.

The Regional Interim Policy Statement already makes reference to the need to safeguard Cannock Chase SAC:

“Pitch allocations in Cannock Chase, Stafford, Wolverhampton and Walsall are not increased despite their proximity to South Staffordshire because of their relatively high current provision and need where it arises requirements. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Review of the draft Policy Statement highlighted the sensitivity of Cannock Chase as a significant European site”.

However HRAs of Core Strategies and individual proposals will need to give detailed consideration to conclusions of the Footprint Ecology Report (2009) and in particular the need to avoid site allocations within approximately 500m of Cannock Chase SAC will need to be considered.

It is suggested that Policy 4 should make specific reference to European sites as follows. Otherwise no specific mitigation recommendations are given and it is considered appropriate to review site-specific impacts at Core Strategy level.

Policy 4 : Identification of Sites / LDF Process:

- b) Local Development Frameworks** – each Local Planning Authority should identify the location of specific sites within their Development Plan Documents, to ensure the requirements set out in the Regional Interim Policy Statement (see ODPM Circular 01/2006) are met. These locations must be attractive to Gypsies and Travellers and take into account factors such as: impacts on significant environmental assets (*in particular European sites*), access to the highways network and key services, any local evidence in relation to unauthorised encampments and historical patterns of travel and annual events. Where joint LDFs are prepared, the distribution of pitch numbers between authorities can be adjusted, where appropriate.

6 References

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7 Appendix 1 Sensitivities of European Sites

Error! Reference source not found.The table overleaf indicates the recorded sensitivities of the European Sites considered in this report. These reflect key threats and pressures as recorded in “Information on Natura 2000 sites in the West Midlands (TEC, 2009), drawing on Natura 2000 site summary information and data forms submitted to the European Union.

Note that local assessments vary in the degree to which recorded sensitivities also reflect current levels of impact: inclusion on this list does not necessarily mean that an impact is already occurring, or that any additional relevant impact will automatically compromise the integrity of the site. Similarly absence from this list does not necessarily mean that the site will not be affected by adverse changes with respect to any particular threat.

WMRSS Phase 3 HRA of Policy Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Site	Air pollution		Water quality		Water Supply		Biological Disturbance			
	Acidification	Eutrophication	Eutrophication	Siltation/ turbidity	Flow reduction	Reduced water level	Inappropriate grazing or management	Invasive species	Physical damage	Disturbance
Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC						X	X	X	X	X
Brecon Beacons SAC									X	X
Bredon Hill SAC										
Brown Moss SAC	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Cannock Chase SAC	X	X	X			X		X	X	X
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	X	X	X		X				X	
Dixton Woods SAC								X		
Downton Gorge SAC	X	X						X		
Elan Valley Woodlands SAC	X	X					X	X		
Elenydd SAC	X	X					X		X	
Elenydd Mallaen SPA							X			
Ensor's Pool SAC				X		X		X		
Fenn's, Wixhall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses SAC	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Fens Pools SAC	X	X		X		X			X	
Humber Estuary Ramsar	X	X	X		X			X	X	

WMRSS Phase 3 HRA of Policy Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Site	Air pollution		Water quality		Water Supply		Biological Disturbance			
	Acidification	Eutrophication	Eutrophication	Siltation/ turbidity	Flow reduction	Reduced water level	Inappropriate grazing or management	Invasive species	Physical damage	Disturbance
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast (Phase 2) SPA	X	X	X		X				X	
Llangorse Lake SAC			X							
Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC	X	X		X	X			X	X	X
Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Motley Meadows SAC	X	X	X						X	
Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC	X	X	X	X		X			X	
Peak District Dales SAC	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA	X	X							X	
Rhos Goch SAC	X	X	X			X	X			
River Clun SAC			X	X	X			X	X	X
River Dee and Bala Lake SAC			X	X	X			X	X	
River Mease SAC			X	X	X			X	X	X
River Usk SAC			X		X					
River Wye SAC			X	X	X			X	X	X

WMRSS Phase 3 HRA of Policy Statement on Provision of New Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Site	Air pollution		Water quality		Water Supply		Biological Disturbance			
	Acidification	Eutrophication	Eutrophication	Siltation/ turbidity	Flow reduction	Reduced water level	Inappropriate grazing or management	Invasive species	Physical damage	Disturbance
Severn Estuary Ramsar/ SAC/SPA			X	X	X			X		X
South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA	X	X	X		X				X	
South Pennine Moors SAC	X	X						X	X	
Sugarloaf Woodlands SAC	X	X					X			
The Stiperstones and the Hollies SAC	X	X							X	
Walmore Common Ramsar/ SPA			X		X					
West Midlands Mosses SAC	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC	X		X							X
Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	X	X	X					X	X	

8 Appendix 2: Summary of Interim Policy Statement

Policy on Residential Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 2007 – 2017

9.1 In view of the work undertaken by the West Midlands Regional Planning Body, as part of RSS Phase 3 process, the Options Consultation and further consultation on a Draft Interim Regional Policy Statement, the Interim Policy Statement recommends the delivery of the following level of new accommodation:

Policy 1 : Pitch Requirements for Gypsies and Travellers, 2007 – 2017

- 660 additional Residential pitches required between 2007-2012
- 278 additional Residential pitches required between 2012-2017
- 224 additional Transit pitches between 2007-2017

9.2 At a District level the proposed allocation of additional RESIDENTIAL pitches for Gypsies and Travellers is:

Policy 1A : Local authority allocation of additional Residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 2007 – 2017

Local Authority	Allocation 2007-2017
Staffordshire & Stoke:	
Cannock Chase	35 pitches
East Staffordshire	15 pitches
Lichfield	14 pitches
Newcastle-under-Lyme	20 pitches
South Staffordshire	42 pitches
Stafford	37 pitches
Staffordshire Moorlands	2 pitches
Stoke-on-Trent	40 pitches
Tamworth	10 pitches
Warwickshire:	
North Warwickshire	16 pitches
Nuneaton & Bedworth	29 pitches
Rugby	42 pitches
Stratford-on-Avon	42 pitches
Warwick	23 pitches
Worcestershire:	
Bromsgrove	14 pitches
Malvern Hills	33 pitches
Redditch	14 pitches

Worcester	22 pitches
Wychavon	42 pitches
Wyre Forest	42 pitches
Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry & Solihull	
Birmingham	19 pitches
Coventry	15 pitches
Dudley	23 pitches
Sandwell	5 pitches
Solihull	28 pitches
Walsall	39 pitches
Wolverhampton	36 pitches
Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	
Herefordshire	109 pitches
Shropshire	93 pitches
Telford & Wrekin	37 pitches
REGIONAL TOTAL	938 pitches

9.3 Appendix 3 sets out for each local authority its pitch requirement on the basis of need where it arises (Consultation Option 1) and its proposed requirement for provision in this Regional Policy Statement. The final column explains derivation of the proposed figure.

Justification

9.4 The principles underlying the proposed allocations are:

- The regional total of 938 additional pitches 2007-2017, based on the GTAAs amended in the light of subsequent evidence from local authorities, is to be achieved.
- The need to take a strategic view across local authorities in accordance with Circular 1/2006, and not simply to develop strategy just on the views of the individual authorities themselves taken in isolation.
- ‘Need where it arises’ (Option 1 in the public consultation) as estimated by the region’s GTAAs is the starting point. This is in accord with Gypsy and Traveller community wishes and those of some authorities, as expressed in the consultation.
- A limited redistribution of pitches has been undertaken to reduce the number of additional pitches to be provided in some districts where Option 1 requirements are particularly high. The primary objective is, where possible, to increase deliverability by reducing the task for districts which have already made significant provision. An ideal maximum additional requirement has been set at 42 pitches, three times the figure 14 which was used as a minimum pitch requirement (for a local authority area though not

necessarily all on one site) in Consultation Option 3 as a minimum sustainable Gypsy and Traveller community to recognise family links and avoid isolation. Appendix 4 provides further information on the derivation of the 14 pitch minimum and 42 pitch maximum premises.

- In order to maintain the regional total of 938 pitches, redistribution obviously requires additional pitches to be provided in some other districts. Thus a decrease in any local authority area's allocation must be balanced by an increase in provision in other local authorities nearby. This has been done on a case by case basis, aiming to 'divert' pitches over as short a distance as possible while at the same time increasing choice for Gypsies and Travellers by raising provision in some districts with low requirements under consultation Option 1 (need where identified in the GTAA).

9.5 Given West Midlands geography and the current pattern of provision for Gypsies and Travellers, these principles play out differently in different sub-regions, and the distribution of pitches in the Policy Statement reflects necessary pragmatic decisions to balance often conflicting factors. Local authorities with a need where it arises requirement of over 42 pitches form four sub-regions:

- Shropshire and Herefordshire: both unitary authorities have relatively high current provision and need where it arises requirements. There has been no redistribution because of the large spatial size of these authorities and the extent of unconstrained land available.
- South Staffordshire: South Staffordshire has 8 pitches in excess of the 42 threshold. These have been shared between Lichfield, Sandwell and Telford & Wrekin as the geographically closest areas with either low need where it arises requirements or high capacity evidenced by the extent of unconstrained land. Individually the increased allocations are small and never exceed 3 pitches. Pitch allocations in Cannock Chase, Stafford, Wolverhampton and Walsall are not increased despite their proximity to South Staffordshire because of their relatively high current provision and need where it arises requirements. In addition, the Habitats Regulations Review of the draft Policy Statement highlighted the sensitivity of Cannock Chase as a significant European site.
- Wychavon and Wyre Forest: together these authorities have requirements for 26 pitches in excess of the 42 pitch maximum. Requirements are diverted from Wychavon to adjoining Bromsgrove and Redditch, both of which have very low current provision and "need where it arises" requirements. In both instances the allocation achieves the 14 pitch threshold set for a sustainable community. Two pitches are diverted from Wyre Forest to Dudley primarily on the grounds of geographical proximity, easing the sub regional pressure with only marginal impact on adjoining authority areas.
- Rugby and Stratford on Avon: together these authorities have requirements 34 in excess of the 42 pitch threshold. Pitches have been diverted to Redditch, Solihull, Warwick, Coventry, North Warwickshire and Tamworth. Diversions are primarily determined by proximity and/or accessibility along the A5 route which formed the underlying rationale for the Local Authorities' GTAA in this area. Diversions in excess of 3 pitches to Warwick, Coventry and North Warwickshire are made on the grounds of current provision and 'needs where they arise' requirements which are low relative to other authorities in this sub-region. The allocation to Nuneaton & Bedworth has not been increased because it has the highest current provision and requirements among potential 'importers' of pitches.

Indicative Policy on Residential Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers beyond 2017

Policy 2 : Pitch Requirements beyond 2017

A co-ordinated review of sub-regional GTAAs should be undertaken no later than 2015 or sooner if refreshed evidence is agreed by the Responsible Regional Authorities to be required from the local authorities to inform the Strategy for the West Midlands (Regional Strategy). In the meantime Local Planning Authorities are expected to use the indicative figures in Table 1 below to provide a basis for planning for pitch provision beyond 2017 if fresh GTAA evidence has yet to be established.

9.6 In the absence of new GTAA evidence and subject to further higher level strategic policy which may subsequently be approved or come into force, local planning authorities are expected to use the indicative figures in Table 2 post 2017, so that provision will be made across the region. This is based upon an anticipated household growth which is an annual 3% compound increase in the level of residential pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers, assuming the back log of provision has been made by 2017.

9.7 Indicative additional pitch allocations 2017-2022 and 2022-2027 at District Level, assuming that each District will take a similar proportion of the regional total as in 2007-2017, are:

Local Authority	Indicative requirements	
	2017-2022	2022-2027
Staffordshire & Stoke:	77 pitches	89 pitches
<i>Cannock Chase</i>	<i>13 pitches</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>
<i>East Staffordshire</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>6 pitches</i>
<i>Lichfield</i>	<i>5 pitches</i>	<i>6 pitches</i>
<i>Newcastle-under-Lyme</i>	<i>7 pitches</i>	<i>8 pitches</i>
<i>South Staffordshire</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>	<i>17 pitches</i>
<i>Stafford</i>	<i>13 pitches</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>
<i>Staffordshire Moorlands</i>	<i>1 pitches</i>	<i>1 pitches</i>
<i>Stoke-on-Trent</i>	<i>14 pitches</i>	<i>17 pitches</i>
<i>Tamworth</i>	<i>4 pitches</i>	<i>4 pitches</i>
Warwickshire:	54 pitches	63 pitches
<i>North Warwickshire</i>	<i>6 pitches</i>	<i>7 pitches</i>
<i>Nuneaton & Bedworth</i>	<i>10 pitches</i>	<i>12 pitches</i>
<i>Rugby</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>	<i>17 pitches</i>
<i>Stratford-on-Avon</i>	<i>15 pitches</i>	<i>17 pitches</i>

Warwick	8 pitches	10 pitches
Worcestershire:	60 pitches	69 pitches
Bromsgrove	5 pitches	6 pitches
Malvern Hills	12 pitches	14 pitches
Redditch	5 pitches	6 pitches
Worcester	8 pitches	9 pitches
Wychavon	15 pitches	17 pitches
Wyre Forest	15 pitches	17 pitches
Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry & Solihull	59 pitches	68 pitches
Birmingham	7 pitches	8 pitches
Coventry	5 pitches	6 pitches
Dudley	8 pitches	9 pitches
Sandwell	2 pitches	2 pitches
Solihull	10 pitches	12 pitches
Walsall	14 pitches	16 pitches
Wolverhampton	13 pitches	15 pitches
Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	85 pitches	99 pitches
Herefordshire	39 pitches	45 pitches
Shropshire	33 pitches	39 pitches
Telford & Wrekin	13 pitches	15 pitches
REGIONAL TOTAL	335 pitches	388 pitches

Policy on Transit Pitch Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

9.8 For the purposes of this Regional Interim Policy Statement, **transit pitches are identified as any type of accommodation which meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers on a temporary basis, for example a formal transit site, an informal stopping-place or designated location to address seasonal demands or instances of emergency.** A wide range of transit provision is required in the West Midlands, to facilitate movement both around and through the Region reflecting the culture and lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers.

9.9 The proposed District allocation for additional transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers is:

Policy 3 : Local authority allocation of additional Transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 2007 – 2017	
Local Authority	Allocation 2007 - 2017
Staffordshire & Stoke:	44 pitches
Cannock Chase	5 pitches

WMRSS Phase 3 Policy Recommendations: Implications for European Sites

East Staffordshire	5 pitches
Lichfield	5 pitches
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5 pitches
South Staffordshire	5 pitches
Stafford	2 pitches
Staffordshire Moorlands	2 pitches
Stoke-on-Trent	10 pitches
Tamworth	5 pitches
Warwickshire:	40 pitches
North Warwickshire	5 pitches
Nuneaton & Bedworth	5 pitches
Rugby	5 pitches
Stratford-on-Avon	10 pitches
Warwick	15 pitches
Worcestershire:	68 pitches
Bromsgrove	0 pitches
Malvern Hills	10 pitches
Redditch	18 pitches
Worcester	20 pitches
Wychavon	20 pitches
Wyre Forest	0 pitches
Birmingham, Coventry & Solihull	20 pitches
Birmingham	10 pitches
Coventry	5 pitches
Solihull	5 pitches
Black Country	12 pitches
Dudley	3 pitches
Sandwell	3 pitches
Walsall	3 pitches
Wolverhampton	3 pitches
Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	40 pitches
Herefordshire	10 pitches
Shropshire	20 pitches
Telford & Wrekin	10 pitches

REGIONAL TOTAL:	224 pitches
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Justification

9.10 Following the public consultation, the proposed provision in this Regional Interim Policy Statement for additional transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, 2007-2017, is directly based on the findings of the sub-regional GTAAs, amended for evidence provided by local authorities through consultation. These determine both the regional pitch total, the allocation between County groups and the indicative allocations to Districts.

Further Advice and Guidance

9.11 To facilitate movement around and through the West Midlands, all authorities are **encouraged to contribute to the creation of a 'Transitory Network'**. Since unauthorised encampments can occur anywhere and the resulting tensions can best be resolved through a collaborative response, this includes those authorities where the GTAA has identified nil need.

9.12 Each District will be expected to identify locations to deliver the number of additional Transit pitches identified. However, whilst indicative pitch numbers are allocated on a District basis, it is hoped that joint working between local authorities will enable the identification of suitable sites over a wider geographical area and thereby contribute to speedier delivery.

Policy on Identification of Residential and Transit Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and the LDF Process

<p>Policy 4 : Identification of Sites / LDF Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Local Development Frameworks – each Local Planning Authority should identify the location of specific sites within their Development Plan Documents, to ensure the requirements set out in the Regional Interim Policy Statement (see ODPM Circular 01/2006) are met. These locations must be attractive to Gypsies and Travellers and take into account factors such as: impacts on significant environmental assets, access to the highways network and key services, any local evidence in relation to unauthorised encampments and historical patterns of travel and annual events. Where joint LDFs are prepared, the distribution of pitch numbers between authorities can be adjusted, where appropriate. d) Criteria-based Policies – criteria-based policies can accompany site allocations in DPDs but these should be supplementary only, with primary significance given to meeting the pitch numbers in the above Policies. A criteria based supplementary policy must be fair, reasonable, realistic and should not place undue constraints on the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites. e) Identification of a Range of Sites – each LPA is encouraged to identify a range of sites within their DPDs, which will meet the variety of accommodation needs, required by Gypsies and Travellers. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. the allocation of small sites is particularly recommended to facilitate the delivery of private family sites, together with larger allocations to deliver publicly owned and run sites. II. the allocation of land to meet the specific accommodation needs of New Travellers should also be made within DPDs where locationally required. III. both stopping places and more formal transit sites, which offer a range of basic
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<p>services will be required. Where formal transit sites are required (as identified in the GTAA's) LPAs are encouraged to prioritise the delivery of these in order to directly address travelling patterns or repeated incidence of roadside encampments.</p> <p>IV. Consultation with Travelling communities -LPAs are expected to consult with the Travelling communities within their respective areas, as part of their LDF process, to determine the most appropriate type of sites which will best meet their needs.</p> <p>V. Rate of Delivery – LPAs should endeavour to actively promote policies and practices which encourage applications for new accommodation and prioritise addressing the existing backlog of need. LPAs may choose to take individual action or work in partnership with local Registered Providers (RPs) or Private providers but it is important that positive progress is made at regular stages and will be subject to a regular monitoring regime.</p>
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Policy on Plots for Travelling Showpeople

9.13 At a County level the proposed allocation of additional Plots for Travelling Showpeople is:

Policy 5 : Allocation of additional plots by County and local authority grouping for Travelling Showpeople 2007 - 2012	
County	Allocation 2007 – 12
Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin	9 Plots
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent	23 Plots
Warwickshire	1 Plot
Worcestershire	22 Plots
Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry & Solihull*	63 Plots
REGIONAL TOTAL:	118 Plots
* As at Jan 2010, 30 of these plots are required for the relocation and expansion of an existing funfair operator in Birmingham. As the operator’s area of search extends south beyond the conurbation, provision could be made elsewhere e.g. within Warwickshire, if a suitable site were to be required and identified. Please note Policy 6 b below.	

Justification

9.14 The Regional Policy Statement considers additional plot requirements at County level rather than at District level because of the problems of allocating relatively small plot numbers between districts for a group who often have a wide area of search and must satisfy commercial as well as residential criteria when developing sites.

- The time period is 2007-2012 because of difficulties in predicting requirements over a longer period in a changing occupational market.
- Following the public consultation, the WMRA proposed provision in the Regional Policy Statement for additional plots for Travelling Showpeople, 2007-2012, is directly based on the findings of the sub-regional GTAA's. These determine both the regional pitch total and the allocation between Counties and groups of authorities.

- In its response to the RSS Phase 3 period of public consultation, the West Midlands Branch of the Showmen's Guild supported Option 1, to distribute additional plots upon the basis of 'Need Where It Arises' and has subsequently expressed its agreement with the draft Policy Statement.

Identification of Sites in Relation to Commercial Requirements

9.15 The accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are influenced by economic considerations as well as more traditional concerns of housing needs. Consequently, when allocating land for new plots/yards, both accommodation needs and commercial requirements should be taken into account. In circumstances where a part yard or whole yard (a collection of plots) relocation is required, LPAs should acknowledge that this may result in significant geographical movement across the Region.

Policy 6 : Supporting Travelling Showpeople Policy:

- a) Identification of Sites** – LPAs should allocate sufficient sites within their Local Development Frameworks, to address the level of need identified within the Interim Regional Statement after discussion with this business sector's representatives and neighbouring authorities to ensure relevant, sensitive and appropriate allocations of plots.
- b) Relocation** -By working collaboratively, LPAs should address any individual cases for re-location as they arise, which will not only meet the needs of the Travelling Showpeople communities concerned but also bring economic benefits for the individual local authorities effected and the wider Regional economy overall. Relocation requirements should be justified, and clear mechanisms and criteria, including planning constraints, for identifying any necessary alternative site(s) need to be set out.
- c) Relocation** -Where such a relocation is required between local authority areas, the resultant change over rides the plot numbers given in Policy 5. Annual Monitoring will track any such adjustments.
- d)** To ensure all allocations are appropriate, in terms of size (to meet both residential and commercial needs), design and location (to facilitate ease of movement by large vehicles from the yard to the Highways network), it is recommended that the guidelines produced by Showmen's Guild of Great Britain are referred to in assessing site capacity and scheme design.

Active Dialogue with the West Midlands Branch of the Showmen's Guild – to enable the delivery of new Travelling Showpeople plots / yards it is essential that LPAs develop an effective channel of communication with the Travelling Showpeople communities within their areas and those of neighbouring areas. The Showmen's Guild holds specific knowledge as to the accommodation requirements of Showpeople, which should be beneficial in enabling delivery and meeting need.

Plot Requirement for Travelling Showpeople beyond 2012

9.16 An annual growth rate of 1.5% compound should be assumed beyond 2012 based on plot requirements at the start of the period. At regional level this produces an indicative estimate of between 25 and 30 additional residential plots each five year period beyond 2012.

Further Supplementary Considerations and Policy to Facilitate Delivery of the Interim Regional Policy Statement

Policy 7 : Supplementary Policy for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

Consultation and Active Dialogue with Travelling communities – to enable the identification of suitable sites, LPAs or groups of authorities are encouraged to open an active dialogue with the Travelling communities within their areas, to obtain a better understanding of their patterns of residence, travel and lifestyle. Local authority support for the establishment of local / sub-regional forums or networks would be helpful in terms of improving the capacity of individual Gypsy and Travellers and organisations to contribute to the debate around new accommodation and foster a more inclusive approach to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople issues overall.

Design and Size of Sites

9.17 It is essential that Development Control understands the specific needs and issues involved in new site/yard delivery. When considering site design, Development Control policy and processes should refer to the guidance produced by both Communities Local Government (CLG) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), along with any examples of Best Practice from within the West Midlands and from other Regions, and, importantly, any advice obtained through consultation with local Travelling communities. LPAs should acknowledge the diversity and complexity of the range of communities that are encapsulated within overall Gypsy and Traveller communities, which necessitates a variety of site layouts. For example, some sites for New Travellers may be quite informal in design and may not feature all standard facilities, whereas some sites for other Gypsies and Travellers may require additional land in order to accommodate animals and/or commercial activities.

9.18 A figure of 14 pitches – not all necessarily in the same place – has been identified in the Interim Policy Statement as an approximation to an ideal minimum provision at the District level to facilitate the creation of sustainable communities and guard against potential isolation. However, it is recognised that individual sites may be much smaller or larger, as determined by local requirements, and that an allocation of 14 pitches does not have to be met in one location.

Enabling of both Private and Public Sites:

9.19 LPAs are encouraged to actively enable the delivery of both public and private provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Whilst it is anticipated that half or more of the additional pitch requirements will be met by Gypsies and Travellers themselves, it is essential that public provision is facilitated to meet the needs of the more vulnerable sections of the Travelling communities, including the elderly, young people and those with health issues.

9.20 It is likely that most new provision for Travelling Showpeople will be privately funded, but in view of the prevailing economic circumstances this assumption should be kept under regular review. Any emerging evidence of an increasing inability to make self-provision should be investigated to see whether public support can be made available.

Maintenance of Sites

9.21 As additional accommodation will only be delivered as result of the input of a considerable range of resources, it is essential that good quality accommodation is retained. Effective management and maintenance arrangements should be put in place as a condition of new and refurbished pitch provision to ensure that sites do not fall into disrepair, leading to abandonment and loss of provision.

Role of the Homes and Communities Agency

9.22 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) administers the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant Programme which provides public funding for the delivery of new and refurbished accommodation by local authorities, RSLs and Registered Providers. The HCA will use the 'Single Conversation' process to discuss the delivery of new accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople with each local authority and thereby ensure that this element of housing need is not left unaddressed.

9.23 Consequently, local authorities are encouraged to consider developing bids to the Grant programme and to seek advice from the HCA, the Assembly (or its successor body) and GOWM, where appropriate. Examples of innovation in delivery are particularly encouraged, with creative partnership arrangements between local authorities, RSLs and Registered Providers, and Gypsy and Traveller communities. Proposals for shared-ownership or self-build schemes may be suggested.

9.24 Local authorities are also asked to encourage the provision of sites through private funds, such as private developer contributions and Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision within new large-scale residential developments.

The Greenbelt

9.25 ODPM Circular 01/2006 acknowledges the difficulties that many rural authorities face in terms of the supply of affordable land to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Consequently, while development within the Green Belt is normally inappropriate, authorities in this situation should consider including a 'Rural Exception Policy' in their DPDs and bear in mind the possibility of adjustments to Greenbelt boundaries which can be made in exceptional circumstances for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Joint Working / Cross-Boundary Working

9.26 It is recognised that the delivery of additional pitches and plots will be challenging for many local authorities and it is therefore suggested that a collaborative approach may benefit some of the issues involved. The delivery of new accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople must be seen within the wider agendas of community cohesion and social inclusion. Local authorities are encouraged to consider undertaking community development work to secure improved community understanding of the issues involved and to develop local leadership in order to drive forward a sustainable pattern of delivery.

Monitoring

9.27 Progress on the delivery of new accommodation by each LPA will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The HCA will be partners with the Regional bodies monitoring this and will include the results in its Single Conversation work with local authorities.