

New Southwark Plan

BACKGROUND PAPER

Housing Background Paper Addendum – Gypsy and Traveller Update

July 2020

New Southwark Plan

The New Southwark Plan safeguards the borough's four existing Gypsy and Traveller sites where there is an identified need for them, as well as making provision for the identification of new sites to meet any identified need for additional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The safeguarding of existing Gypsy and Travellers sites (subject to need) is expected to have a positive impact on this group. The provision of policy criteria against which to assess potential new sites provides a greater degree of certainty as to the types of sites which will be acceptable to the Council for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, which is also beneficial.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was produced in May 2020 as part of the evidence base for the New Southwark Plan, to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation throughout the lifetime of the Plan - 2020-2034. The Assessment identifies that the need for pitches in Southwark to accommodate those falling within the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) ("PPTS") definition of 'gypsies and travellers' is zero. The PPTS definition of 'gypsies and travellers' does not include those who have ceased to travel permanently. Consistent with the PPTS, the New Southwark Plan does not seek to meet any wider need for pitches to meet the needs of settled gypsies and travellers.

Southwark's Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Southwark Council is, however, committed to working to meet this wider need through other mechanisms outside of planning policy. Southwark Council Cabinet agreed Southwark's first long-term housing strategy in January 2015. In 2019, the council took the decision to update the housing strategy to reflect changes in national policy and to reflect other agreed changes such as commitments in the Council Plan 2018-22.

One of the key principles set out in the Strategy is to demand the highest standards of quality of homes. This includes continuing our improvements to our Gypsy and Traveller sites to ensure high standards and in particular improve fire safety. This continuous improvement is currently taking place under the Reconfiguration Project to mitigate fire risks highlighted in previous Fire Risk Assessments.

Phase 1 works on Ilderton Road West were completed in February 2019. Works on Phase 2 Ilderton Road East would have been completed in March but were paused due to the impact of Covid-19. They are due to be completed by the end of July 2020. As well as making the site safer, another outcome of the project has been to improve the quality of life for residents

by constructing a modern and efficient amenity building for each plot, each containing new a kitchen and bathroom. The Gypsy and Travellers Team is currently planning a consultation strategy with residents of Brideale and Burnhill.