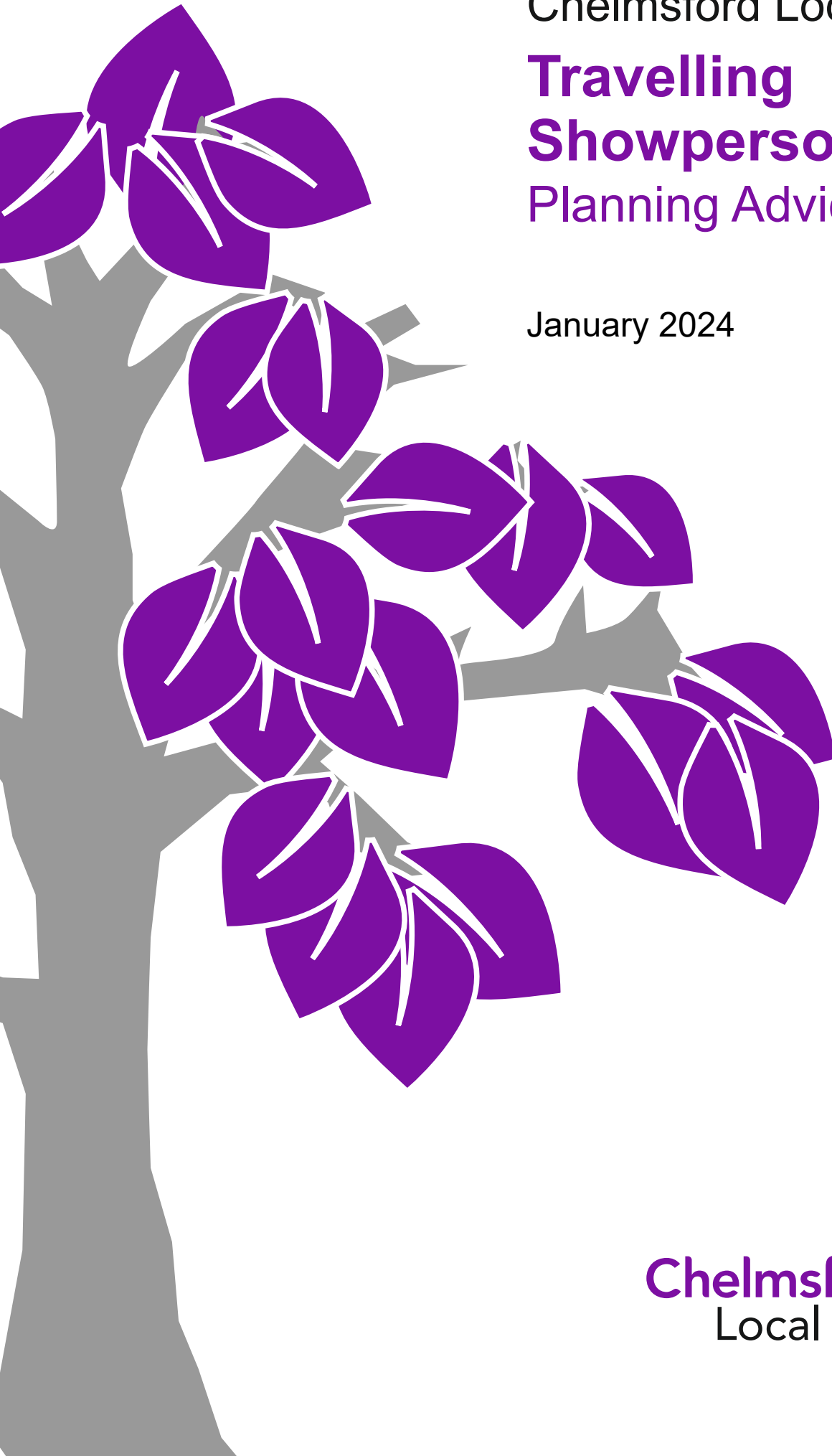


Chelmsford Local Plan

**Travelling
Showperson Sites**
Planning Advice Note

January 2024



Travelling Showperson Sites: Planning Advice Note

1. Background

- 1.1. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the government's aim of ensuring 'fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.' This includes 'provision of suitable accommodation'.
- 1.2. Within the travelling community, the PPTS identifies two distinct cultural groups: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This Planning Advice Note deals only with provision for Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.3. PPTS defines Travelling Showpeople as:
'members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers'.
- 1.4. The cultural lifestyle of Travelling Showpeople often means that accommodation in the form of flats and houses etc. is not suitable for this community. Travelling Showpeople are generally accommodated on 'plots' (sometimes informally known as 'yards').
- 1.5. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and PPTS, local planning authorities have a responsibility to identify and address the accommodation needs of different groups of the community, including Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.6. Chelmsford City Council adhere to this requirement in the undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) to identify the number of plots required and duly allocating the required amount within the Chelmsford Local Plan.
- 1.7. The Chelmsford Local Plan has allocated 24 plots to be provided to meet the identified needs of the Travelling Showperson community.

2 Purpose

- 2.1. This planning advice note has been prepared to focus upon the design and layout of emerging Travelling Showperson provision. Information is provided about the standards that should apply to all new Travelling Showperson sites in Chelmsford, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular site circumstances require a different design approach.
- 2.2. This note applies to both allocated and non-allocated sites which may come forward. It seeks to ensure that Travelling Showperson plots are delivered to the same high standard and high quality as would be expected by Chelmsford City Council on any other form of residential development, therefore achieving the government's aim of ensuring fair and equal treatment and provision of suitable accommodation.

- 2.3. This note should be read in conjunction with:
- **Chelmsford Local Plan Policy DM3**
This sets out some general provisions on Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites. This planning advice note does not supersede policy, but design related elements from the policy are reiterated and elaborated upon.
 - **Chelmsford Local Plan Appendix B – Development Standards**
This provides standards relating to privacy, amenity space, natural light, open space, internal space and recycling and waste applicable to new residential development within settled communities. This planning advice note refers to the standards where they are also applicable to Travelling Showpeople plots.
 - **Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (POSPD)**
This sets out some general provisions on Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites. This planning advice note complements and elaborates upon elements in this document.
 - **Making Places SPD**
This provides detailed guidance on additional design elements to be considered that are not addressed in this note.
- 2.4. The following design standards are covered in this Planning Advice Note:
- Site sizes
 - Site boundaries
 - Vehicle access and parking
 - On-site services
 - Suitable living and working environments
 - Amenity green spaces

3. Site Sizes

- 3.1. Local Plan Policy DM3 states that sites must be of a sufficient size to accommodate the proposed number of caravans, vehicles, and ancillary areas and to enable the storage, repair, and maintenance of equipment.
- 3.2. It is expected that 0.2 hectares per plot should be provided. This is considered an appropriate size to accommodate the above and to account for turning space required by the larger vehicles and amenity space for residents. Larger plots may be acceptable to facilitate future sub-division of plots to accommodate any anticipated rise in need.
- 3.3. To help sites integrate into existing communities and to ensure sites are suitable for an extended family unit, new Travelling Showperson sites should seek to provide a maximum of 10 plots.
- 3.4. In accordance with the approach set out within the POSPD and Making Places SPD, all new Travelling Showperson provision should seek the planting of three trees per net new plot. In line with the Environment Act 2021, all development proposals (except where exemptions apply) will be required to provide a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain above the ecological baseline for the application site. Where it is possible to achieve, the Council will encourage the delivery of a greater than 10% biodiversity net gain.

4. Site Boundaries

- 4.1. Local Plan Policy DM3 requires sites to provide a suitable living environment for the proposed residents. To work towards achieving this requirement, the perimeter of any Travelling Showperson site should be suitably bounded. This is to provide a level of safety and security to site residents, deterring unauthorised entry onto the Travelling Showperson site.
- 4.2. Site boundaries should be clearly marked, and materials chosen should be sympathetic to the character of the area. Consideration should be given towards location of access points in the boundary to ensure connectivity between the site and the surrounding amenities can still be achieved.
- 4.3. Further, each plot should have a clear boundary defining the area each individual household occupies. This ensures clarity over land responsibility and protects the living, working and amenity space of individual households.
- 4.4. In designing plot boundaries, consideration needs to be given towards achieving a balance of preventing overlooking onto individual households to provide privacy and retaining a level of natural surveillance across the site for resident safety.

5. Vehicle Access and Parking

- 5.1. Local Plan Policy DM3 requires sites to have safe and convenient vehicular access to the local highway network.
- 5.2. Travelling Showpeople sites need to accommodate a range of vehicles including cars, vans, lorries, trailers, mobile homes, and caravans and be accessible to emergency vehicles and refuse collection vehicles. Access is required both into the site as a whole and into individual plots.
- 5.3. Access into and within the site needs to be able to accommodate the turning space required by large trailers as well as emergency vehicles, refuse collection, without compromising the safety of residents nor the function of the connecting strategic highway. Early consultation with Essex Highways is advisable to ensure this is achieved.
- 5.4. The following parking provision is suggested for each plot as a minimum:
 - 2 bays to accommodate private cars
 - 1 bay to accommodate a static mobile home
 - 1 bay to accommodate a touring caravan
 - 4 bays to accommodate lorries and/or trailers
- 5.5. Bays allocated for static mobile homes or touring caravans must be at least two meters away from any road. On each plot, at least one bay allocated for use by private car must be suitable to accommodate drivers/passengers who are wheelchair users.
- 5.6. Provision of a Site Office should include at least two bays to accommodate a standard car. At least one bay for the Site Office must be suitable to accommodate drivers/passengers who are wheelchair users.

- 5.7. All parking provision is to be provided on hardstanding areas and clearly designated to deter unsafe or obstructive parking. These areas must be constructed with material suitably able to sustain large weight and regular movement attributed with the range of vehicles on site.
- 5.8. For fire safety reasons, no bay allocated for static mobile home nor touring caravan should be placed within three metres of the site boundary; and the distance between bays allocated for static mobile homes or touring caravans needs to be at least six metres.
- 5.9. Allocated bays for private cars ought to have a separation distance of at least six meters from a touring caravan or static home. Where this is not achievable, a separation distance of at least three meters can be allowed so long as the private cars would not obstruct entrance to the touring caravan or static home.
- 5.10. All separation distances must also be clear of any combustible structures. Early consultation with the Fire Services is advisable.

6. On-Site Services

- 6.1. Local Plan Policy DM3 and the POSPD set out that essential services including mains water, electricity, drainage, and sanitation should be available or are made to be available on-site. In addition, surface drainage (which may take the form of SuDS¹), and gigabit broadband and mobile infrastructure are to be provided where possible.
- 6.2. Further, reflective of Local Plan Policy DM25, each plot will be required to provide electric vehicle (EV charging points at a rate of at least 1 EV charging point per plot. The EV charging point provided must be on plot and accessible to vehicles parked within the allocated bays for cars and/or static mobile home and/or touring caravan. Provision of at least 1 EV charging point to serve the Site Office parking bays is also required. Provision of any additional EV charging points on plot will be welcomed.
- 6.3. Any amenity building provided on plot shall meet the Building Regulations optional requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres/person/day.
- 6.4. Recycling and waste provisions are to be provided in the same manner as are expected for any other residential development. Space to store recycling and waste receptacles and ability for refuse collectors to reach these needs to be considered. See Appendix B of the Chelmsford Local Plan for details.
- 6.5. Infrastructure facilitating on-site energy generation and sustainable living will be supported. This may take the form of solar PV/solar thermal, rainwater harvesting, heat pumps, etc.

¹ See the SuDS Design Guide for Essex.

7. Suitable Living and Working Environment

- 7.1. When not holding fairs, circuses, shows or the like, Travelling Showpeople require space to reside with their troupes and/or families and space to store and undertake maintenance on their equipment. Each plot therefore needs to be able to accommodate a suitable work/home lifestyle with consideration given to the layout to minimise potential conflict between residents, vehicles and storage/maintenance works.
- 7.2. An amenity building must be provided on each plot with connections to all on-site services. As a minimum, the building must include a WC with sink basin, a shower and utility room, kitchen, lounge, and a dining area.
- 7.3. The amenity building should suitably accommodate residents of all abilities and stages of life. In designing the amenity building, consideration must be given towards accessibility and adaptability provision.
- 7.4. Consideration must also be given towards resident privacy in the siting and orientation of the amenity building. In accordance with Appendix B of the Local Plan, all habitable rooms must have at least one window in a wall allowing outlook and ventilation. Walls which form a boundary with another plot or a boundary to the site should not have windows.
- 7.5. An external shed should be provided to serve as residential storage, and a secure enclosure to be provided for the storage of metal gas bottles.
- 7.6. A maintenance/storage workshop of at least 100m² floorspace is to be provided on each plot. Water and electricity provision must be available as a minimum. Where feasible, the height should be around 1.5 storeys to accommodate the height of a standard lorry/trailer.
- 7.7. If site constraints prevent delivery of maintenance/storage workshops on each plot, provision of these can be within a communal areas. It is expected in this instance that at least 100m² floorspace per plot is still achieved.
- 7.8. The maintenance/storage workshops should be positioned at a distance of at least six metres away from any amenity building, or parking bay for static or touring caravans to minimise the impact of visual, noise and odour pollution on residents. Conditions may be required to establish permissible activities/use classes and set operation times to reduce risk of nuisance.
- 7.9. The Site design and layout need to appropriately consider ways of 'Designing out Crime' and it is recommended that the applicant seek early engagement with Essex Police to help achieve this.
- 7.10. Each Travelling Showperson site should have a site office provided on-site, where a site manager can be based and residents on site can reasonably access. The Site Office would serve as a hub for residents to report and discuss issues and where appropriate accommodate site health, safety and wellbeing sessions. It is expected that the site owners/other residents of the site would collectively own and manage the office building. Planning conditions will be put in place to retain the use as a site office for site management in perpetuity.

- 7.11. To promote safety and security on site, consideration must be given towards the design, layout, and positioning of the site office. This site office must be situated within a suitable distance of the residential plots to provide security to the site without being intrusive and should be clearly visible to visitors entering the site. The site office must be designed to ensure it is easily accessible to all residents on site, and suitably accommodate all abilities and stages of life.
- 7.12. A site office must have connections to all on-site services. As a minimum, the building must include a WC with sink basin, kitchen, and lounge area.
- 7.13. For fire safety, the amenity building, site office, maintenance/storage workshop and any other storage units should be constructed from non-combustible materials such as masonry brick. Strict adherence to the Fire Safety Order and relevant Building Regulations will be sought and it is recommended that the applicant seek early engagement with the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service.

8. Amenity Green Spaces

- 8.1. Local Plan Appendix B sets the Council's expectation that all new homes provide easy access to private or communal garden space and that this space be provided to a high standard.
- 8.2. The principle behind this requirement is applicable to the traveling community also. Access to green space can serve as a space for relaxation, for play, for socialising, and for connecting with nature, all of which help to promote wellbeing.
- 8.3. Provision of amenity green space should be made on Travelling Showperson sites in accordance with Table 1 below.

Table 1: Amenity Space Provision on Travelling Showperson Plots

Private/Communal Amenity Green Space	Form	Amount
Where amenity green space can be delivered on plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassy and/or woodland space without hardstanding. Within boundary of plot. Not accessible to motorised vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80m² minimum private green amenity space
Where amenity green space cannot be delivered in full on plot*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demarcated private zone on each plot capable of use as a clothes drying area. Within boundary of plot. Not accessible to motorised vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10m² minimum demarcated private zone
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communal space, overlooked by other plots on site to promote safety through surveillance. Within site boundary Grassy and/or woodland space without hardstanding - with exception being the presence of children's play equipment if appropriate. Not accessible to motorised vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20m² minimum per-plot communal green amenity space (100m² minimum in total).

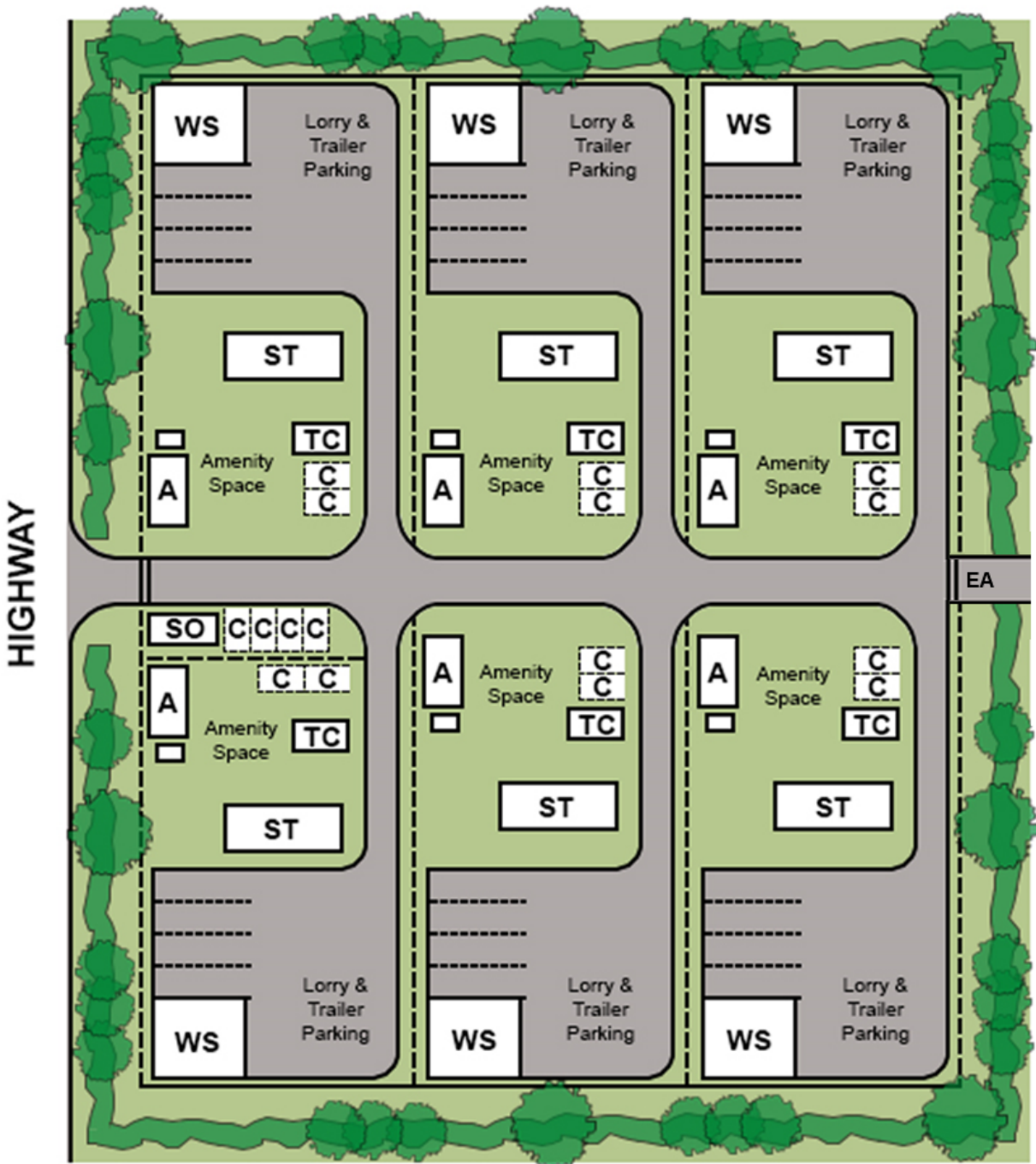
*both demarcated private zone AND communal space to be provided in this instance

- 8.4. Spaces need to feel safe and be accessible to all intended users. It is advisable to consider the boundary treatment of the amenity green space provision to protect its users – particularly children – from the surrounding vehicular traffic.
- 8.5. Members of this travelling community may keep domestic animals. The design of amenity green space therefore needs to offer flexibility to safely accommodate these animals on site.

9. Indicative Layout Designs

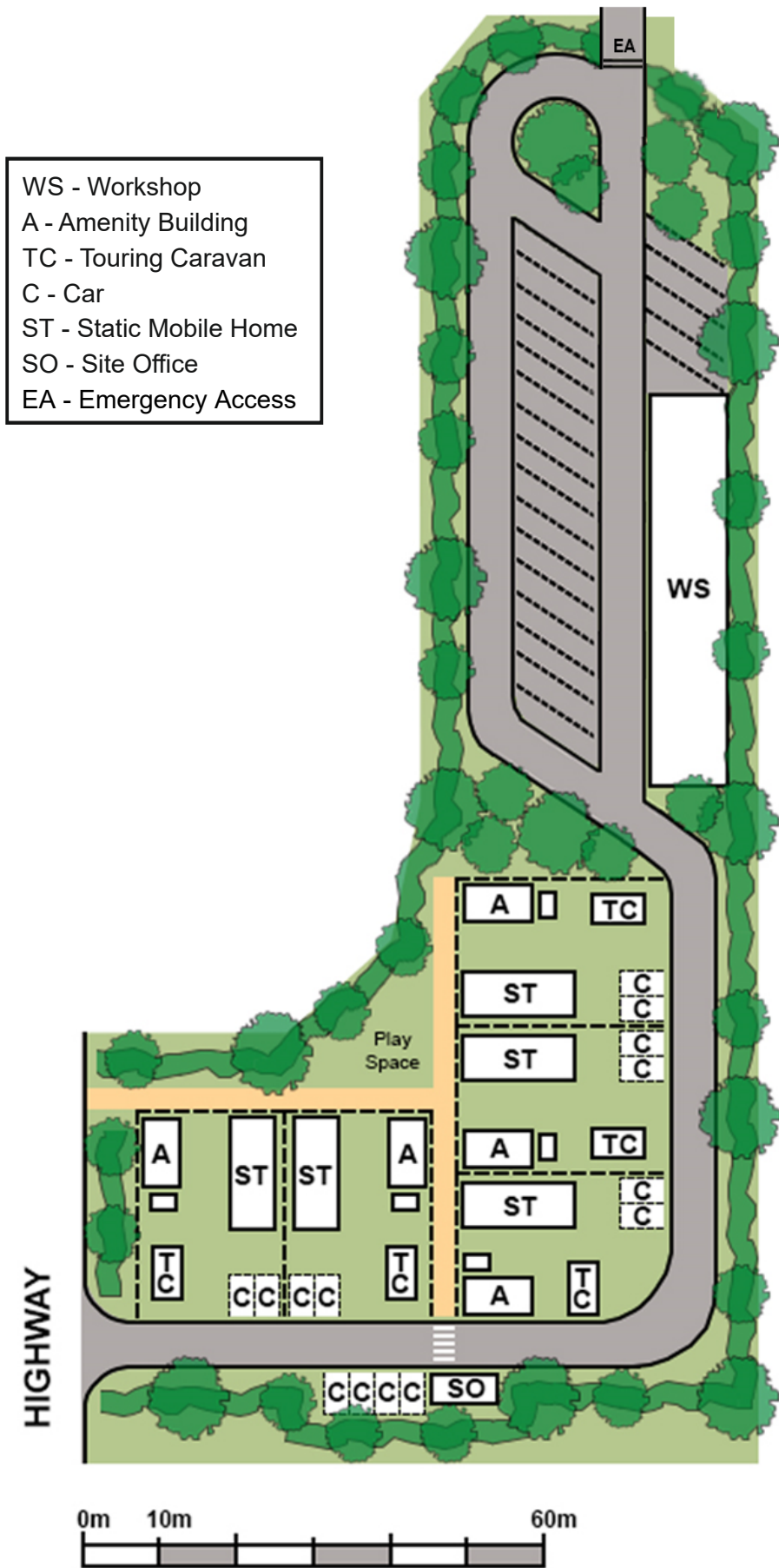
- 9.1. Though not prescriptive, the following figures provide indicative layout designs of Travelling Showpeople sites that would be acceptable.

Figure 1: Indicative Travelling Showperson site example layout with separate provisions



- WS - Workshop
- A - Amenity Building
- TC - Touring Caravan
- C - Car
- ST - Static Mobile Home
- SO - Site Office
- EA - Emergency Access

Figure 2: Indicative Travelling Showperson site example layout with shared provisions



10. Planning Stages

- 10.1. Development of a new Travelling Showperson site must be in accordance with Local Plan Policy DM3 (and other relevant Local Plan policies) and requires the submission of a Travelling Showpeople Site Scheme, to be approved in writing by the Council.
- 10.2. The Travelling Showpeople Scheme (with plans/drawings as appropriate) must detail:
 - The location of the proposed Travelling Showpeople Site
 - The layout and configuration of each plot
 - Parking provision
 - Areas set aside for storage and maintenance of equipment
 - Provision for the supply of on-site services
 - Landscaping
 - Any ancillary buildings
 - Boundary treatment and screening
 - Highway access
 - The mechanism for agreeing the market value in respect of the Travelling Showpeople Site which shall be applicable to any marketing and transfer of the Completed Travelling Showpeople Site
 - Site Management Strategy
 - Any other details that the Council may reasonably require to be included
- 10.3. To understand the existing identified Travelling Showperson accommodation need and specific highways requirements, it is recommended that the applicant seek early engagement with Chelmsford City Council (as the local planning authority) and Essex County Council (as the highways authority) respectively.
- 10.4. Where Travelling Showperson sites are allocated as part of a wider strategic site, certainty surrounding Local Plan Policy compliancy and elements of the Scheme will also be required at earlier stages of the planning process as set out in the following flow chart.

Step 1 - Masterplan Submission

All potential Travelling Showpeople sites are indicated on a site plan with high level consideration given to:

- Size of site and number of plots to be provided
- Identification of any protected natural feature on site
- Impact upon character of the area, historic or natural environment assets, and flood risk



Step 2 - Outline Planning Application

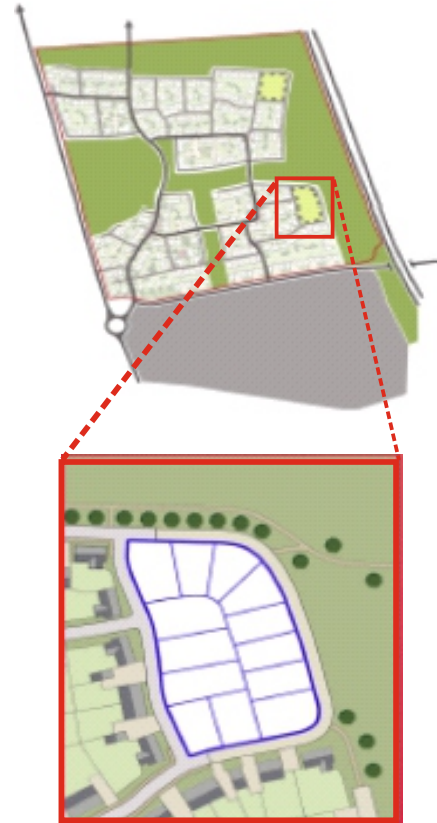
All Travelling Showpeople sites are shown on an indicative layout plan and relative parameter plans. A S106 agreement will secure the delivery of Traveller Showperson plots. Detailed consideration is to be given to:

- Vehicle access into the site and connectivity to the highway network
- Provision for the supply of all on-site services into the site boundary
- Provision of adequate community services and facilities within reasonable travelling distance to the site
- Plot boundaries



Step 3 - Reserved Matters Application

Full Travelling Showpeople Site Scheme to be submitted. This should include plans detailing the site location, plot layouts and siting of hardstanding, buildings and other provisions on-site.



11. Section 106

- 11.1. To ensure that Travelling Showperson Sites are delivered in a way that meets local need, the Council will seek to secure a Section 106 obligation to set out the number of plots, tenure, uses on site, mechanism for determining the 'market value' of the site and the prioritisation mechanism of the Traveller Showperson accommodation to be provided in perpetuity.
- 11.2. The prioritisation mechanism will ensure that each Travelling Showperson plot shall only be occupied by persons who satisfy that they are part of a Travelling Showperson household, they (or one of them if the household consists of more than one person) are aged 18 or over, and can adhere to the 'Plot Eligibility & Allocation Prioritisation Policy for Travelling Showpeople' as enforced at the time.
- 11.3. Where the Travelling Showperson site is part of a wider strategic development, the Section 106 will seek to secure that Travelling Showperson provision will be constructed in accordance with the approved Travelling Showpeople Site Scheme and the terms of the Planning Permission/Reserved Matters approval before occupation of 50% of the market housing provision.