

Addendum - National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

Since preparation of the Planning, Design and Access Statement, the Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework on 17 August 2026. The new Framework is a material consideration of critical importance and introduces materially stronger national support for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation outside settlements. Policy S5 expressly identifies development which would address an evidenced unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation as a form of development which should be approved outside settlements, provided that the criteria in Policy HO12 are met, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies. This is directly relevant to the present proposal, given the Council's identified need for additional pitches and its inability to demonstrate a five-year supply, as set out in the submitted Planning Statement.

Policy HO12 provides further specific support. It states that Traveller sites should provide a settled base while recognising that traditional lifestyles can contribute to sustainability and, importantly, that this may mean locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate. In determining proposals, the authority must take into account the existing level of local provision, the need for additional sites and other relevant personal circumstances. The proposal is for a single, modest pitch immediately adjoining the established authorised Traveller site at Highfield Park, close to Arborfield Cross and the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location, with access to frequently used services and with landscape mitigation capable of securing an appropriate relationship with the countryside. Accordingly, the proposal falls within the type of countryside development now positively supported by NPPF Policies S5 and HO12, and the August 2026 Framework adds significant weight in favour of granting planning permission.

National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026: Policies S5 and HO12.