



Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Issues and general approach
consultation report

November 2010

Wiltshire Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report documents the activities that took place during April and May 2010 to involve the Wiltshire community in discussions to progress a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) for Wiltshire. The consultation document was titled 'Issues and General Approach'.
- 1.2. The purpose of the consultation was to:
 - discuss the issues around providing new sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
 - develop a method for assessing what is a good location for new sites
 - invite land to be put forward to be considered as possible new sites.
- 1.3. The council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in February 2010 and identifies several broad opportunities for community involvement in the preparation of development plan documents (p15, SCI):
 - Evidence gathering
 - Early community involvement
 - Draft document
 - Publication/Submission to the Secretary of State
 - Independent examination
- 1.4. The consultation carried out in April and May presented the evidence gathered so far in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Wiltshire. It gave an opportunity for early community involvement in identifying the main areas that need to be addressed in the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation DPD and forms part of the informal consultation required when developing a DPD. The issues raised through this consultation will be used to develop options for policies and proposals at the next stage of consultation.

2. Consultation methodology

- 2.1 The Wiltshire Statement of Community Involvement identifies the categories of consultation that should be considered. For the issues and general approach consultation, to help develop the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD, the following methods were used:

Awareness raising

- Press and media
- Website
- Written material (posters, leaflets, flyers)
- Audio material (CD)
- Display panels
- Direct mail
- Member and officer training

Existing networks

- Area boards
- Gypsy and Traveller fora
- Parish and town councils
- Wiltshire Assembly (WA)

Direct involvement

- Drop-in events
- Questionnaire
- Face-to-Face interviews
- Consultation software

2.2 A crucial element of the consultation was the production of a summary leaflet and the main consultation document. These are available on the council's web site www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpd As part of the main consultation document there was a questionnaire which sought views on some of the issues raised. Everyone was also invited to submit general comments in writing. Full details of the consultation methods are set out in Section B.

3. Details of process of stakeholder engagement

What	Purpose and brief comments	Copy available at:
Awareness raising (before and during the consultation)		
A5 summary leaflet	<p>Main interface with the public and Gypsy and Traveller community.</p> <p>Distributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • libraries • Wiltshire Council planning hubs in Trowbridge, Chippenham, Devizes and Salisbury • all town and parish councils • Wiltshire Council councillors • managed gypsy sites via Traveller liaison officers • private sites via face-to-face interviews. 	<p>A copy of the A5 leaflet is available on the council's web site</p> <p>www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc</p>
A4 summary leaflet	<p>Initial tool for awareness raising. A handout version of small display prepared for the area boards (see page 5). Used primarily for member and officer training but also available to the public at Wiltshire Council's main planning hubs.</p>	Appendix 1
Audio version of consultation leaflet	<p>Distributed with the leaflet where it was made available to the Gypsy and Traveller community</p>	www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc
Consultation document – Issues and General Approach	<p>Document prepared by CDN Planning on behalf of Wiltshire Council for consultation. It contained a summary of the existing evidence in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Wiltshire and raised questions about the issues faced in Wiltshire and the general approach to assessing sites for allocation.</p>	www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc

What	Purpose and brief comments	Copy available at:
A4 flyer	<p>Distributed to area boards and libraries to raise awareness of the consultation. The flyer included dates for the proposed drop in events.</p> <p>It provided a brief outline of the consultation with key dates and where to access information.</p>	<p>A copy of the A4 flyer is available on the council's web site</p> <p>www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc</p>
Advert in local press	<p>Placed in the local press to raise awareness of the consultation during the week commencing 29 March. The advert included dates for the planned drop in events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gazette and Herald • Andover Advertiser • Salisbury Journal • Wiltshire Times 	Appendix 2
Press call	To inform press in a positive way of the need to meet housing needs of everyone. There were a number of radio interviews including with Spire FM on 13 May 2010	
Poster	Circulated to the council's main offices in Trowbridge (County Hall and Bradley Road), Devizes, Salisbury and Chippenham and to all libraries advertising the consultation.	<p>Copies of the poster can be found on the council's web site</p> <p>www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc</p>
Web site	All information was made available on the council's web site from	www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc

What	Purpose and brief comments	Copy available at:
	29 March 2010, until the end of the consultation.	
Letters/E-mails	<p>To inform people already on the council's database of the consultation.</p> <p>The letter went to all parish and town councils (within Wiltshire and adjoining Wiltshire), all Wiltshire Council Councillors, all Community Area Partnerships, main statutory consultees (GOSW, RA, NE, EA) and site promoters in Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). A sample letter is included in the Appendices.</p>	Appendix 3
Existing networks (before and during the consultation)		
Area boards	<p>A small display was used at all 18 area boards. The display comprised 4 boards dealing with brief facts, issues, criteria and how to contact the council. A copy of the display and the dates of each of the meetings where the display was used is included in the Appendix. At the area board meetings a short chairman's announcement was made to draw attention to the boards and highlight the dates of the consultation.</p> <p>Area board managers were also asked to distribute electronic versions of the A4 flyer to their network of contacts.</p>	Appendix 1 and 4
Wiltshire assembly	The small display was used in the 'market place' entrance to the Wiltshire Assembly held at Hartham Park on the 18 March 2010. The assembly's theme for the day was equality and included a facilitated discussion about equalities in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community.	
Member and officer training	An event was run by the IdEA on 23 March 2010 to provide general member and officer training with a slot at the end to discuss the local strategy for gypsies and travellers. There was a short discussion about the proposed consultation.	

What	Purpose and brief comments	Copy available at:
Town and Parish Council's	Town and parish councils were contacted directly by letter and asked to display a small poster about the exhibition. They were also informed via the council's electronic parish newsletter.	
North and West Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller Forum	Representatives of the local Gypsy community, the police and Wiltshire Racial Equality Council received a short presentation about the consultation and were invited to 'spread the word' and submit comments. The meeting was held on the 23 February 2010 at Trowbridge Fire Station.	
Joint North, South and West Gypsy and Traveller Forum	Representatives of the local Gypsy community, the police, Salisbury NHS Trust, fire and rescue service, Salisbury Diocese and Wiltshire Racial Equality Council took part in a discussion about the issues and general approach report and Gypsy and Traveller issues in general on 12 April 2010 at Fire HQ in Potterne. A second discussion took place on 26 May 2010 at the same venue to reflect on how the consultation was received and how events could be improved in the future.	
Direct involvement (during the consultation)		
Drop in events	<p>Open events to discuss issues and proposed site search methodology.</p> <p>These were held at:</p> <p>11 May Corn Exchange, Devizes, 4pm – 8pm</p> <p>13 May City Hall, Salsbury, 4pm – 8pm</p> <p>19 May Neeld Hall, Chippenham, 4pm – 8pm</p>	<p>Copies of the display material, handouts and additional information available are on the council's web site</p> <p>www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpcd</p>

What	Purpose and brief comments	Copy available at:
Site Visits	There was concern that members of the Gypsy and Traveller community would not attend the drop in events planned. A number of existing authorised sites were visited to raise awareness of the consultation within the community and to seek views directly about the issues they face. Residents on local authority owned Traveller sites were made aware of the consultation via the Travelling Liaison Officers.	

4. Results of stakeholder engagement

Nature of responses

4.1 A wide range of comments were received and are summarised in Appendix 5. All comments can be viewed on the council's consultation portal available at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpd. Some issues were raised repeatedly by a number of different respondents. These are briefly summarised below.

- Respondents challenged the circular definition of Gypsy and Traveller included in the report as it seemed to exclude new travellers and boaters which were specific types of Traveller in Wiltshire that should be recognised.
- There was a lack of confidence in the amount of new accommodation being provided especially as they were taken from the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which was likely to be revoked.
- There were questions about providing access to employment and the need to provide for business uses within new sites.
- There was a real sense from many respondents that Gypsies and Travellers should be treated in the same way as everyone else when looking for a home.
- There was a difference of opinion not necessarily in relation to the need for sites to have access to facilities but in relation to acceptable distances to facilities.
- There was support for the approach taken and criteria within the methodology from key agencies, for example, Environment Agency and Highways Agency.
- There were concerns about how new sites would impact on local communities and the local environment with comments suggesting that small (<5 pitches), private, family run sites would have less impact on the local area and encourage integration.

Nature of respondents

4.2 In all the council received letters of comment from 79 different organisations and individuals. Of these 21 per cent were from parish/town councils, 30 per cent from organisations such as the Trust for Devizes and the Coal Authority and 39 per cent from individuals. A full list of respondents is set out below.

Parish/Town councils

Ashton Keynes Parish Council
Box Parish Council
Bratton Parish Council
Bremhill Parish Council
Cheverell Magna Parish Council
Dilton Marsh Parish Council
Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council
Godshill Parish Council
Heywood Parish Council
Hilperton Parish Council
Lea and Cleverton Parish Council

Limpley Stoke Parish Council
Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council
Minety Parish Council
Redlynch Parish Council
Semington Parish Council
Tisbury Parish Council
Warminster Town Council
West Tisbury Parish Council
Westwood Parish Council
Whiteparish Parish Council
Wingfield Parish Council
Wootton Bassett Town Council

Organisations/Businesses

British Waterways
CABE
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
Environment Agency (Wessex Area)
Friends, Families and Traveller and Traveller Law Reform Project
Government Office for the South West
Highways Agency
Ministry of Defence
National Farmers Union
Network Rail

New Forest National Park Authority
North Wessex Downs AONB¹
Persimmon Homes Wessex
Ps and Qs
Rail Future Severnside
South East England Partnership Board
South Western Industrial Plasters
Southern Water
Thames Water Property Services
The Coal Authority
The Trust for Devides
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Area boards
Hampshire County Council

Individuals

Allan, Mr M
Barthram, Mr P
Bishop, Mr M
Bucknell, Mrs A
Bueruer, Mrs L
Clarke, Mr J
Clough, Mr I
Coole, Mr J
Deighton, Mr J
East, Mr E
Eddington, Mr P
Elforf, Mr J
Hartnell, Mr N
Hill, Mr S
Hughes, Mr F and Le Quesne, J
Mackay, M

Mozley, Mr A
Narainen, Mr C
Olding, Mr A
Pearce, E.A
Pheby, Prof D
Potts, H.N
Smith, Mr P
Spettigue, Mr M
Streeter, Miss H
Symonds, Mr P
Turner, Mr A.E
Ward, Mr M
Ward, Mr P
Warwick, Mr N
Watt, Mr
Wright, Mrs

Drop-in events

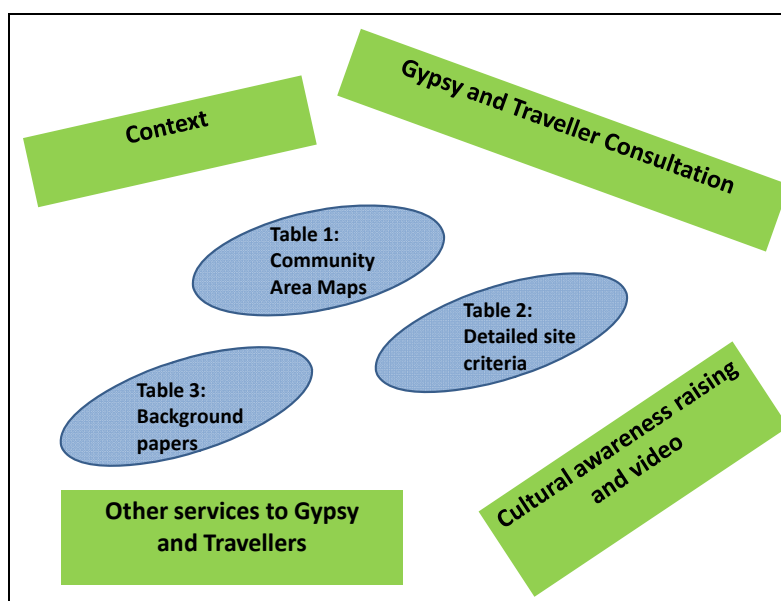
- 4.3 These were held at the Corn Exchange in Devizes on 11 May, at City Hall in Salisbury on 13 May and at the Neeld Hall in Chippenham on 19 May. The events comprised a mixture of display information (on the context for the consultation as well as the content of the consultation), activities to discuss potential criteria for assessing the suitability of sites and cultural awareness raising (as illustrated in Figure 1, below). Copies of the display material, handouts and additional information available at the events are on the council's web site at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc

Chippenham event



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty¹

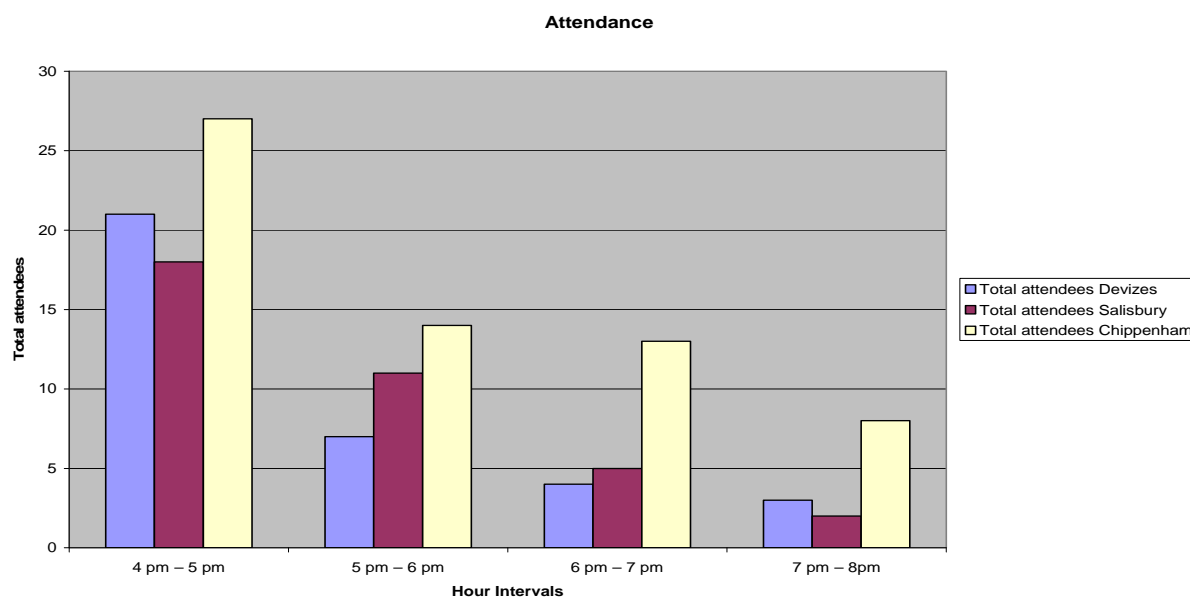
Figure 1: Plan of activities at drop in events



4.4 A record of the comments submitted at these events is attached in Appendix 5. In Devizes and Salisbury attendance was low although these events did attract members of the travelling community which enabled a wider debate on the day. The event at Chippenham received more interest, in part due to a previous experience of consultation on providing new Gypsy and Traveller sites in the former North Wiltshire District Council area. The number of people who attended each event is summarised below.

Table 2: Attendance at drop-in events

Hour interval	Total attendees		
	Devizes	Salisbury	Chippenham
4 pm – 5 pm	21	18	27
5 pm – 6 pm	7	11	14
6 pm – 7 pm	4	5	13
7 pm – 8pm	3	2	8
Total	35	36	62



Site visits

- 4.5 To ensure the views of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities were fed into the development of the DPD, officers undertook a series of visits to residential sites across Wiltshire. This was a proactive approach to engagement with this 'hard to reach group' designed to raise awareness of the consultation to understand the issues faced by Wiltshire's travelling communities. Visits to sites were organised by the separate Area Enforcement Teams who have established relationships with many of the county's travellers and ensured that officers were welcomed on to the site and also reassured the residents of our intentions allowing them to talk openly about their concerns and needs. A range of different types of sites were visited, this included Romany Gypsy sites, Irish Traveller sites, and Travelling Showmen sites. In addition the site visits were planned to ensure that sites with permanent and temporary planning consent were visited, this was considered to be particularly important as the concerns and needs of residents can be different according to the status of their encampment. Residents on public owned / managed sites were made aware of the consultation through the council's Traveller Liaison Officers, who also distributed summary leaflets to the residents on local authority site.

Site visits took place across Wiltshire on the following dates.

19 April 2010 – Sites in the Northern Area (two sites visited)*

24 April 2010 – Sites in the Western Area (four sites visited)

25 May 2010 – Sites in the Southern Area (two sites visited)

*It was the intention to visit an additional two sites in the northern area but on the day of the visit the residents of those sites were either unavailable or unwilling to allow officers to enter the site.

5. Lessons learned

- 5.1 A number of issues were raised about how the consultation was run, that should be addressed in the next round of consultation:
- Lack of an event in Trowbridge.
 - Complexity of some of the exercises at the drop in events.
 - Levels of staff support. At the Chippenham event there were times when there was an insufficient number of officers to respond to questions being raised.

- Interaction with the on-line consultation portal. Some respondents felt it was cumbersome to use, whilst others felt the e-mails and communications sent out automatically by the portal were unclear and confusing.

5.2 There were also some very positive comments such as:

- the informal nature of the drop in events
- appreciating that visitors at the events had the opportunity to speak on a one to one basis with officers from the council
- the amount of information available to raise awareness about the lives of Gypsies and Travellers, especially the short DVD
- the opportunity for local residents and Gypsies and Traveller representatives to meet in a neutral environment
- the opportunity to submit comments directly online.

5.3 There were also opportunities missed to raise awareness of the consultation and to have greater contact with the local traveller community, for example, using existing activity buses that visit several sites in the north and south. The drop in events could also have been used to highlight other services available to the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Appendix 1 – Small display used at area boards



Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Issues

The facts

Wiltshire Council has a responsibility to plan for the housing needs of everyone. This includes planning for the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.



Distribution of Traveller sites

Gypsy and Traveller caravans in Wiltshire are clustered around the M4 and Swindon, the A350 and Salisbury. Since July 2007 there has been an increase in caravans of just over 55% - evidence of the growing demand for sites. Wiltshire Council needs to respond by finding suitable and sustainable new sites.

Date	No. of caravans counted
Jul 2009	340
Jan 2009	309
Jul 2008	258
Jan 2008	254
Jul 2007	219

Research from an assessment in 2006 on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers was used to inform the emerging South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SW RSS) which identifies a need in Wiltshire for:

- 85 new permanent residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers
- 27 transit pitches for Travellers moving through Wiltshire
- 5 plots for Travelling Showpeople

Distribution of permanent pitches in SW RSS			
North (N.Wilts)	South (Salisbury)	East (Kennet)	West (W.Wilts)
48	18	5	14

A 'pitch' is an area of land that can accommodate a hard standing for at least 2 caravans, 2 parking spaces, a small storage shed and an amenity block for services.

Wiltshire Local Development Framework

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The issues

This consultation is the first step towards preparing a plan that will identify land for Gypsy and Traveller sites and provide criteria to test any new sites proposed in planning applications.



The purpose of the consultation is to:

- discuss the issues around providing new sites
- develop a method for assessing what is a good location for new sites
- invite land to be put forward to be considered as possible new sites.

For more information on the issues considered so far, please see the 'Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD – Issues and General Approach' report.

Issues raised in the report include:

- How many new permanent and transit pitches are needed.
- How could more pitches be provided.
- What is an appropriate size of site.
- What makes a good site.

Some points to note:

- Planning permission has been granted for 36 new pitches since 2006. This leaves a current need for 49 new permanent pitches.
- No permissions for new transit pitches have been granted since 2006.
- There may be opportunities to redevelop, expand or intensify the number of pitches on existing sites or to review temporary permissions.
- There is no national minimum site size, but Gypsies and Travellers in Wiltshire prefer smaller permanent family sites of no more than 15 pitches. This means 3-5 new permanent sites could be needed.
- Travelling Showpeople need sites to provide for the storage of fairground equipment as well as caravans.
- Locations with access to a range of facilities and services is needed, as is the case for all types of housing.
- Locations close to key travel routes are generally preferred for transit sites to minimise distances travelled.



Each year in November and July the council undertakes a count of the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in its area in accordance with Government guidance.

Finding sites

The biggest question is how will suitable new sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople be identified?

In the initial search it is proposed to identify areas where there is access to a doctor, a school and a food shop within 1000m as the crow flies (See example below).

The following criteria are being proposed as a way to refine the assessment by using a series of tests (there are more examples of 'tests' in the main report).

Tier 1: Location, policy and environmental constraints

Relationship to settlements	Eg. Is the site located within a safe walking distance of a local centre?
Policy constraints	Eg. Is the site within the greenbelt?
Environmental constraints	Eg. Is the site within or close to a hazardous area, such as flood zones or contaminated land.

Tier 2: Access and Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure	Eg. Has local infrastructure such as water and roads the capacity to accommodate the site.
Transport infrastructure	Eg. Is there safe, independent vehicular access to the site?
Social infrastructure	Eg. Is the site within an agreed distance of at least three local amenities/services?
Other considerations	Eg. Is the site close to an existing Gypsy and Traveller site?

Tier 3: Design and deliverability

Design and impact	Eg. What will the impact be on the local environment? Eg. What will the impact be on nearby properties?
Deliverability	Eg. Is the site available? Eg. How much will it cost to develop the site?

To begin to identify where sites may be available landowners, agents or any other interested party are being invited to submit land for consideration.

If you are aware of any land that could be suitable, please Inform Wiltshire Council.

The sites will be assessed only after the close of this consultation and agreement has been reached on the details of the proposed site selection methodology.

Comments will be invited again later in 2010 to discuss:

- proposed distribution of new sites
- proposed location of specific new sites.

Wiltshire Council currently owns or manages 6 residential sites providing a total of 96 pitches for residents.

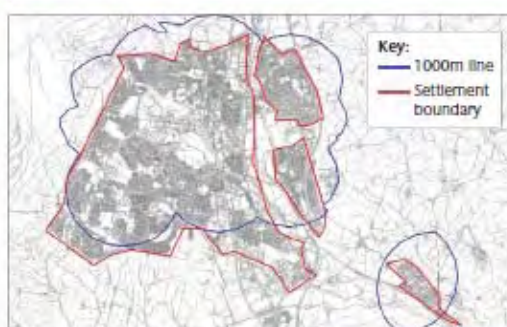


Illustration of using initial search

A transit pitch is one provided for Gypsy and Travellers travelling through the council's area.

Wiltshire Local
Development
Framework

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Contact us

The consultation on Gypsy and Traveller issues is taking place over the period Tuesday 6 April until 5pm on Friday 4 June 2010.

More detailed information relating to the issues raised in this display is contained in 'Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Issues and General Approach' report prepared by consultants (CDN Planning) on behalf of Wiltshire Council which is available on the council's website, www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpd, at the main council offices in Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge and in libraries.



Illustration of a new urban site

Views are being invited on all aspects of the 'Issues and General Approach' report but in particular:

- Have the accommodation needs of the travelling community been correctly identified? (Section 5)
- Are there any issues that have not been discussed? (Section 6)
- Do you agree with the proposed site search methodology? (Section 7)
- What makes a good location for new traveller sites?

If you would like to discuss the issues in more detail, you are welcome to attend drop-in events at the following locations from 4pm – 8pm:

5 May Neeld Hall, Chippenham

11 May Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes

13 May Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury

Our preferred method of communication is for comments to be submitted online at consult.wiltshire.gov.uk.

Alternatively comments can be sent by email spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk or in writing to Spatial Planning, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8JN.

Failing to provide land for more homes could lead to conflict between settled and travelling communities.

Appendix 2 – Press advert and press release

a) Press advert



Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

**Gypsy and Traveller
Issues Consultation**

**Wiltshire Council is preparing a plan that will
identify land for new Gypsy and Traveller sites
across the county**

**To find out more you can visit a drop-in event
from 4pm - 8pm on:**

5 May Neeld Hall, Chippenham
11 May Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes
13 May Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury

All the information is available on the Wiltshire Council website
www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc, at our main offices in
Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge and at local libraries

**Comments must be received by
5pm Friday 4 June 2010**

Wiltshire Local Development Framework

b) Press release

A series of drop in events has been organised for people to find out more about plans to identify land for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council is preparing the plan that will identify the land needed for new Gypsy and Traveller sites, in the same way as land is released for new housing for the settled community.

The series of drop in events will help explain the process that will be used for identifying where new sites for the Gypsy and Travelling community should be located.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch allocations form part of the council's responsibility to provide for the housing needs of everyone and they need to be sited where they too can make use of community facilities, such as shops, schools and doctor surgeries.

The drop in events are planned for:

- 11 May, Wessex Room, Corn Exchange, Devizes
- 13 May, Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury
- 19 May, Neeld Hall, Chippenham*

*This is a revised date replacing the original meeting scheduled for 5 May.

Toby Sturgis, Cabinet member for Gypsy and Traveller issues, said, "This is an emotive subject for the settled and travelling communities but doing nothing is not an option.

"We have to ensure that we care for everyone in our community. Local authorities can often be in dispute with the Gypsy and Traveller community over planning issues such as unauthorised development.

"Making sure we have allocated land through an agreed process will help prevent this friction for everyone. This is a chance for everyone to comment on how we will use the plan to allocate land for the Gypsy and Traveller community".

All information is available on the Wiltshire Council website:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/gypsyandtravellersdpc, or at any of the main offices in Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge and at local libraries.

Comments must be received by 5pm Friday 4 June 2010.

Appendix 3 – Copy of letter



8th April 2010

Gypsy and Travellers DPD
Economy & Enterprise
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Sir / Madam,

Wiltshire LDF: Gypsy and Traveller Issues and General Approach Consultation.

Wiltshire Council is preparing a plan that will identify land for the travelling communities of Wiltshire and include a policy for assessing the suitability of other sites the Council is asked to consider through the planning application process. This consultation is the first stage in the process of preparing that plan which will be known as the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

An 8 week public consultation on the Issues and General Approach to identifying land to meet the accommodation needs of the travelling communities will run until **Friday 4th June 2010**. (Please refer to the attached notice for more details).

If you would like to make comments our preferred method of communication is for comments to be submitted online at <http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk>. Alternatively comments and feedback forms can be downloaded from our website and emailed to: Spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk. Please note that all comments received will be made available for public inspection and cannot remain confidential.

If you require any help in using the on-line consultation system, or if you have any other questions then please do not hesitate to contact Economy & Enterprise on 01225 713489.

Yours faithfully

Georgina Clampitt-Dix
Head of Spatial Planning

Appendix 4 – Dates of area board meetings and small display

Chippenham Area Board	Monday	1 March	Announcement
Malmesbury Area Board	Wednesday	3 March	Announcement
Warminster Area Board	Thursday	4 March	Announcement
Tidworth Area Board	Monday	15 March	Announcement and display
Bradford on Avon Area Board	Wednesday	17 March	Announcement and display
Salisbury Area Board	Thursday	18 March	Announcement and display
Devizes Area Board	Monday	22 March	Announcement and display
Melksham Area Board	Wednesday	24 March	Announcement and display
Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Area Board	Wednesday	24 March	Announcement and display
Pewsey Area Board	Monday	29 March	Announcement and display
Corsham Area Board	Tuesday	30 March	Announcement and display
Southern Wiltshire Area Board	Thursday	15 April	Announcement and display
Marlborough Area Board	Tuesday	20 April	Announcement and display
South West Wiltshire Area Board	Wednesday	21 April	Announcement and display
Trowbridge Area Board	Thursday	22 April	Display
Westbury Area Board	Thursday	22 April	Announcement and display
Calne Area Board	Tuesday	27 April	Announcement and display

Appendix 5 – Overview of comments received

A. Written responses

Qu1: Have the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities been correctly identified? (27 comments received)

Related issues included:

- sites access to the road network
- sites access to employment
- on-site requirements, such as fire access
- not making exceptions to normal planning policy for Gypsy or Travelling Showpeople sites
- not agreeing with the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in Circular 01/2006
- confusion about how need translates into new sites
- settled Gypsies should live in housing.

Specific omissions identified from the calculation of accommodation of need:

- Calculations exclude new travellers
- Haven't considered boaters
- The need for Travelling Showpeople should increase to 10 plots
- The data does not include the period beyond 2011.

Comments on the clarity of data

- The lack of information on the base population
- Data is not robust and available for scrutiny
- The large number of unauthorised caravans identified in the July 2009 caravan count indicates the need is higher
- Provide a better understanding of the types of sites: authorised, unauthorised development, unauthorised encampments
- Comments on process
- Shouldn't accept RSS figures
- GTAA failed to identify need accurately.

Qu2: Have the right issues been identified in Section 6 of the report and are there issues that have not been identified? (29 comments received)

AONB and Green Belt

- Risk to the objectives of the AONB should be considered
- Recognise the sensitive landscape of the AONB
- Sites should be ruled out only if they compromise the objectives of the AONB designation
- Green belts should be excluded from consideration.

Site location

- Access should be considered in general terms
- Consider access to employment
- Can existing sites be extended?
- Deliverability of a site should be a major factor
- Showmen sites have different requirements and are best located by an extension to an existing yard
- Number of sites in a given parish or surrounding parishes should be considered, especially when there may have been historical animosity

- Village and rural locations should score positively as these locations reflect the stated preferences in the GTAA
- Sites within, or close to, a built-up area should be considered before isolated rural sites
- Concerned about impact on farming businesses e.g. loss of agricultural land
- Agree sites should not be located in areas liable to flood
- Should not promote sites adjacent to the railway
- Access to public transport should be an essential criterion.

On site facilities

- Providing space for businesses on site can lead to un-neighbourliness, noise and pollution
- Need to build in criteria related to changing needs and potential over-crowding
- Appropriate waste facilities should be available at all sites
- Domestic sprinklers should be fitted to domestic buildings
- Support on-site facilities to promote self-containment, including business/employment uses.

Site size

- Family sites of less than 10 plots can be acceptable
- Concerned about impact of a large site on a village or rural area
- Should consider impact of a site on surrounding area
- Different site size thresholds should apply to showmen sites.

Social issues

- Gypsies and Travellers should focus on self-management to improve relations and site appearance
- Concerned about impact on local schools and GPs that are already over-stretched and may not have capacity
- Concerned about additional cost for local schools and GPs
- Need to acknowledge the Gypsy community are facing similar issues as the general population in terms of an increasing elderly population which will bring certain demands
- Providing separate sites perpetuates social exclusion.

Other

- Previous permissions should be considered
- Same rules should apply as for everyone else (raised in several comments)
- Sites cannot be treated the same as general housing because of additional on-site requirements and the effect on space
- Council should not pay for on-site facilities
- Consider animal welfare e.g. space for grazing horses
- Cost effectiveness of a site should be considered
- Should not continue with consultation because of promised revocation of RSS
- Once agreed, principles should be strictly applied
- When considering new sites make sure local residents are well informed.

Qu3: Do you agree with this proposed site selection methodology? (26 comments received)

Very few respondents answered yes or no to this question. Most cited examples of the methodology they supported or would like changing.

Only comments additional to those already submitted in relation to Qu2, above, are listed.

Tier 1 – Location and constraints

- Methodology shouldn't be so reliant on walking and cycling distances; Circular 1/06 establishes sites are acceptable in rural locations
- Sites next to waste treatment works should not be considered
- Sites of fewer than five pitches should be encouraged to aid integration
- Sites need to be close to facilities
- Use a sequential approach to flood risk
- Some criteria are too demanding e.g. proximity to schools
- Should state a preference for a village or rural location.

Tier 2 – Access and infrastructure

- Pay more attention to the needs of elderly or disabled Gypsies and Travellers
- Access to employment should be given greater weight
- Capacity of and proximity to existing sewerage system needs to be considered
- Support from the Environment Agency re approach to water infrastructure and flood risk
- Extension or intensification of existing sites is not a good idea
- Sites should be located on suitable roads
- Should reflect advice in PPS1 and PPG13 in relation to sustainable transport and design principles
- Highways Agency supports the approach to transport and sustainable transport in the methodology.

Tier 3 – Impact, design and deliverability

- Need to consider impact on existing local communities more
- Circular 4/07 highlights that a site for Travelling Showpeople may be appropriate in rural areas
- Should include more about impact on surrounding area
- Need to clarify how impact assessments in relation to amenity, landscape and biodiversity will be carried out.

Other

- Need better demographic information on the Gypsy and Traveller community in Wiltshire e.g. Roma, Irish Travellers, new travellers
- Will each tier be given equal weight?
- Policy should only address transit needs and Travelling Showpeople's needs as these different site requirements from normal residential; permanent sites should be treated like all residential sites
- It should not be necessary to meet all criteria as LPA needs to be realistic about sites in rural areas (Circular 1/06).

Qu4: Are you aware of any sites/land that might be suitable for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and/or plots for Travelling Showpeople?

Wiltshire Council received details of a number of sites to be considered for potential use as sites for the travelling communities. At this stage the suitability of these sites has yet to be assessed.

Qu5: Any other comments? (71 comments)

This question raised a range of comments – some issues were only raised once and others by several respondents. The most common responses were:

- Statements that everyone should be treated equally (14)
- A view that sites should be distributed more evenly across the county (8)
- Concerns about the impact on existing local communities (6)
- Document should be reviewed in light of government proposals (5)
- Concerns about the impact on the local environment (4)
- Concerns relating to perception of the travelling community (4)
- Small sites promote better integration (3)
- Sites within or on the edge of places with facilities should be preferred (3)

Other common themes expressed in different ways were: the need for the council to be stronger in relation to enforcement; challenges to how you define a 'traveller'; concerns about how temporary and existing unauthorised encampments will be dealt with through the DPD process, the need to consider cross boundary sites and references back to the previous consultation by North Wiltshire District Council.

Two interesting points suggested that brownfield sites should be considered in reference to greenfield sites and that major housing land releases in the core strategy should include a requirement for new Gypsy and Traveller sites to be provided in the same way affordable housing is provided.

The council have been asked to consider new travellers and people who live on barges in the definition of 'traveller' and to consider protecting existing Travelling Showpeople sites from other forms of development.

Place specific comments were:

- Consider granting a new lease at Bonnie Park
- Consider Keevil Airfield
- Do not consider Lyneham
- A new site for 10 Travelling Showpeople is needed near Swindon
- Several parish councils noted they were not aware of any available land in their parish.

Other comments related to the process of consultation and the next stages of DPD preparation:

- How will comments be treated?
- Consultation at the next stage should take place within the communities where new sites are being considered.
- CPRE (Southern Branch) and Age Concern (Salisbury) should be informed of future consultations.
- Don't lose momentum for the project.
- Have an event in Trowbridge.

B) Site visits

Prior to, and during the consultation period spatial planning officers visited a number of sites across the county. It was considered more appropriate to discuss the DPD in general terms, outlining what the council is trying to achieve whilst providing the opportunity for the residents of sites to talk openly. Although residents of some sites had site specific issues, in general the comments were as follows:

- Once established a Gypsy and Traveller Site integrates well with the settled community.
- The perception that the travelling community somehow gets preferential treatment is not true.

- The negative perception of the travelling communities is unfair, although it is accepted that there are some 'bad eggs' but this is no different to any section of society.
- The granting of temporary permission is a significant concern for those residents and it discourages any investment by the resident to improve the site.
- The travelling communities are becoming less nomadic due to changes in employment opportunities and the recognition in the value of an education for their children.
- Publicly managed sites in Wiltshire are not well run and are in poor condition.
- There was concern that the health needs of Wiltshire Gypsies and Travellers is not understood, or is being ignored.
- General consensus that sites which comprise transit and residential pitches do not work as there is often friction and difficulties between the two.
- Sites which hold Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies do not work and can lead to trouble between the two groups.
- Private sites are generally well looked after as the residents take pride in where they live.
- Small sites work best, usually around two to four pitches and sites should never be more than 15 pitches.
- Sites should be planned to allow for intensification and expansion as families grow.
- The location of a site near to services and facilities is generally not considered to be of concern to the residents.
- Sites should be close but not adjacent to settled communities.
- Some residents felt that the planning system was deliberately complicated to prevent further sites.
- For some sites space for a small business opportunity was needed.

C) Drop-in events

General comments

Devizes

- Why is the boating population excluded from this consultation when more people are choosing to live on canals etc, and they are travelling too.

Salisbury

- Access for fire and other emergency vehicles
- Provision of water supplies for fire fighting
- Provision of dedicated, controlled, risk-assessed burning areas
- Waste collection: Access for rubbish vehicles, space for recycling area and consider involving this in the site selection process at an earlier stage.

Chippenham

- One expects the new government to abolish RSS and this will surely affect the councils thinking!
- Why are we pampering to travelling show people when they are businesses and should afford their own sites.
- Due to the fact Wiltshire Council has many council farms within Wiltshire will any of these be looked at please.
- Great concerns that there are no sites for gypsy/traveller or proper sites for genuine Romany gypsy families in the east/west and central areas of the county.
- Has the expansion of existing sites been considered?
- Could new housing developments be required to provide a proportional number of static sites along with the affordable housing obligation?

- Q. Why so many sites in North Wiltshire? A. Salisbury Plain?
- Historically the A346 wasn't a great route. Now, with various upgrades it's a much improved route. Would it make sense to look at areas off the A346 as it's currently devoid of any sites?
- With reference to access via main routes, there is a large cluster of sites along the M4 and A350. Should sites be looked at along the A36 and A303?
- Near suitable schools?
- Why should the travelling community dictate where they want sites? Sites should be provided according to the criteria, but placed equally across the county.
- Do these people contribute anything to the economy?
- Is this approach still valid if the RSS is removed?
- Why can showmen not hire/pay for existing Industrial units when needed?

Comments for tier 1: Location, policy and environmental constraints.

- Village design statements/parish plans should be taken into account.
- Hopefully Travellers and Gypsies are consulted.
- Reference to 'valued' areas is not clear – what does it mean? A community may value an area that doesn't have any official designation.
- G and T –Why isn't this treated as affordable housing?
- The statements here are not clear.
- There are parts of Wiltshire that have no Gypsy or Traveller sites - why is this? It must be addressed.
- We cannot comment on something we do not understand i.e. 'valued areas'.
- Need to consider grazing for horses for some travellers.
- Reference is made to Irish and Romany gypsies, but why is accommodating them a UK issue. (Seconded)
- Environmental criteria – What about including protected species in the criteria (e.g. great crested newts, slow worms).
- The RSS is about to be overturned – why waste money going on if the policy is due to change.
- Existing settlement? How will this be defined?

Comments for tier 2: access and infrastructure

- Access for fire and other emergency vehicles
- Water supplies for fire fighting
- Provision of risk assessed 'burning zones'
- Maintenance of clear 6 metre zones between buildings i.e. ensure sufficient overall space is provided
- Travelling communities and Irish/Romany Gypsies would elect to be separate
- The way the questions are put is not easy to understand, especially if you are a traveller!
- All the time this consultation takes, Gypsies and Travellers arrive and choose their sites illegally. Can't the council improve in moving on illegal encampments like Oxfordshire Council! Very important
- What is a transport node? Plain English
- Vocabulary mystifying; seems designed to confuse.
- What about safety considerations – e.g. proximity to main roads (young children)
- The settled community wants a big separation between where we live and traveller sites
- Wouldn't it be nice if we all lived in a perfect location, especially if somebody else pays for it.

- Do we believe that even if we provide a site the problem goes away?

Comments for tier 3: Deliverability, design and impact.

- This question is ambiguous (Environmental health – air quality issues).
- Air quality issue – essential to be on good transport routes **but** sited far enough away from main roads so as not to cause health issues - i.e. back from main roads/ tree barriers to filter air pollution.
- Consideration should be given to protected species.
- In the current economic climate the government is pledging to cut public spending; it would be more effective to adjust site weightings based on the cost of the land in order to get better value for money
- Should be away from busy A roads, motorways etc
- Aircraft flight path overhead – for noise consideration
- Don't waste money on building/altering road layout
- Visibility of site from major routes should also be considered
- What about any increase in noise to local residence from this site?
- Too vague! (Other appropriate uses can be accommodated within the site).

This document was published by Wiltshire Council, Economy and Enterprise, Spatial Planning.

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