

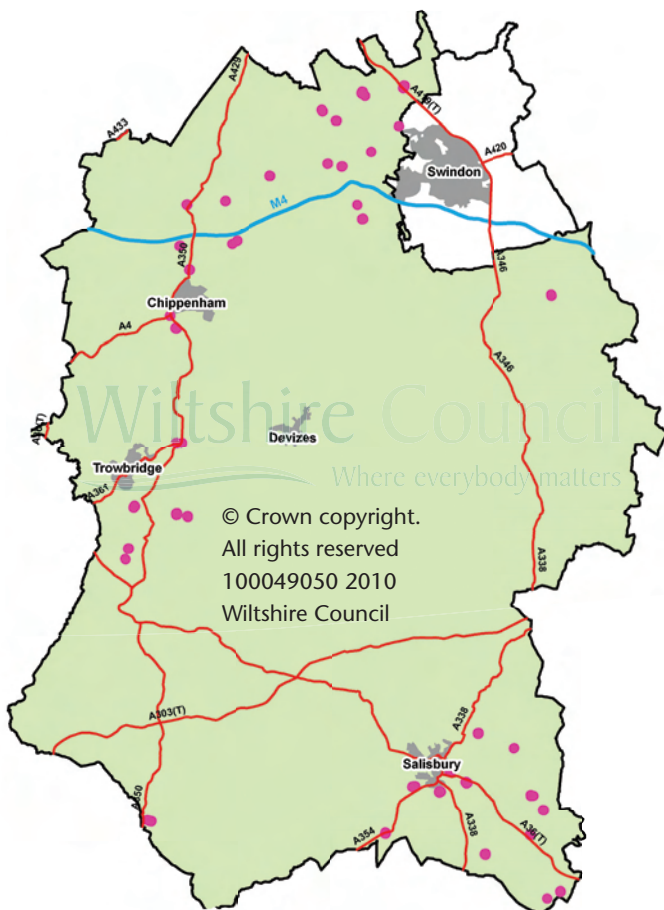


Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Issues

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.

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.



Distribution of Traveller 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.

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.

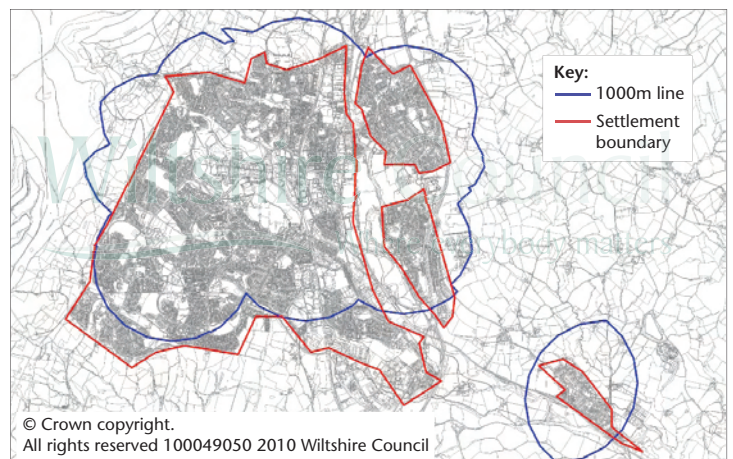


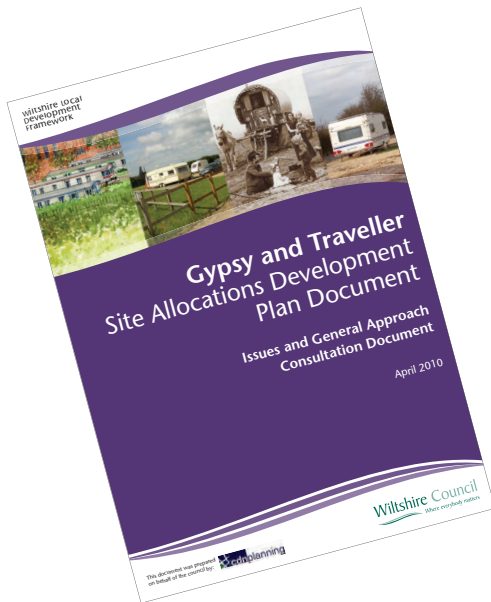
Illustration of using initial search

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

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.



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.



Illustration of a new urban site

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