

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE
ACCOMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

INTERIM DRAFT DOCUMENT

May 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 2011 Census confirmed that the number of individuals who identify themselves as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' living within Crawley is 77. Currently, four Gypsy and Traveller households reside on two private sites in caravan accommodation. Three Travelling Showpeople households are located within the borough sharing a single site. Notwithstanding this, in Crawley, the majority of the travelling community population is known to be housed within bricks and mortar accommodation. These were the families addressed as part of the Accommodation Needs Assessment survey to understand the ranges of their issues, needs and aspirations.

PART A: ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

For the purpose of this study 'pitch' means a pitch on a 'Gypsy and Traveller' site and refers to residential provision. 'Plot' refers to a pitch on a 'Travelling Showpeople' site (often called a yard) and refers to a mixed-use site suitable for both employment and residential activities.

This assessment seeks to identify accommodation 'need'. In terms of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, 'need' has been defined by the Government² using the

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The 2011 Census confirmed that there are seventy-seven individuals within Crawley who have identified themselves as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller', with the largest concentration of the GTTS community in the Langley Green neighbourhood.

Currently in Crawley, four Gypsy and Traveller households reside on two private sites in caravan accommodation. One of these sites is authorised for two pitches; the other site is currently unauthorised but a planning application for two pitches is currently being considered. The unauthorised site contains two caravans housing members of the same extended family; this could conceivably become three separate households within the life of the Local Plan.

Three Travelling Showperson households reside on an authorised private site (one household within bricks and mortar accommodation, the other two households are currently in caravan accommodation within the same site; these households are members of the same extended family.

Notwithstanding this, in Crawley, the majority of the travelling community population is housed within bricks and mortar accommodation, this is supported by the locational information provided by the Census data. From information provided by West Sussex County Council Communities Commissioning Directorate have suggested that their records indicate an estimated 30 Traveller families reside within Crawley. National guidance confirms that Gypsies and Travellers, and their children and other relatives, in bricks and mortar housing may form part of the source from which future site need may arise.

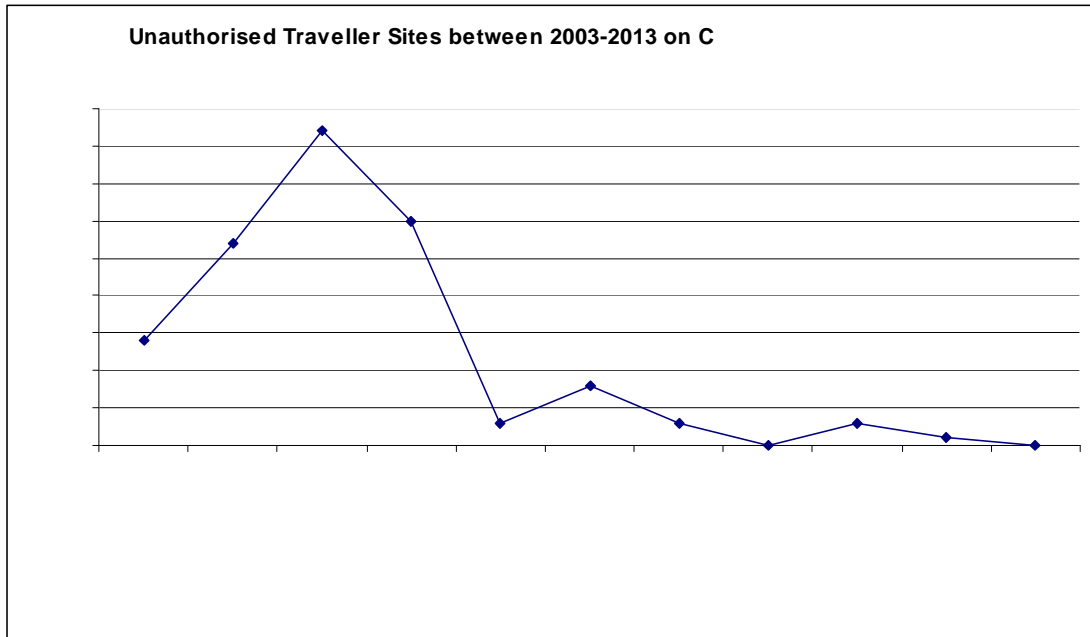
Demand from Unauthorised Traveller Sites and/or Encampments

The number of illegal incursions into the borough can be used to inform the overall demand for Traveller sites³.

As the graph below illustrates (Figure One), the number of incursions onto CBC land reached a peak in 2005, where just over 40 incursions occurred during the year. However, since 2007, the number of unauthorised incursions has significantly lowered, with each year thereafter having fewer than ten incursions (in 2010, there were actually no incursions). It should be noted that the number of incursions onto CBC land does not in itself represent the number of different families residing on unauthorised sites; for example, during the peak period (2004-2006), the incursions were related almost entirely to four families.

³ See Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance, 2007, DCLG, Para 62.

Figure One: Incursions onto CBC Land by Travellers, 2003-2013



From the initial questionnaire, 14 pitches have been requested outside the borough, but it is not clear where. Quite often, the preference is for a pitch rather than a house and the location appears secondary.

The Second Questionnaire

Analysis of the initial questionnaire suggested that more work was required in order to establish whether the 'demand' which had been identified in the initial survey represented 'need' which should be met through site allocations in one form or another in the Local Plan.

As a consequence, the council identified seven households, chosen on the basis that they had an aspiration to move onto a GTTS site within the borough (answering question 11 of the initial questionnaire (see Appendix A) accordingly)⁴ and asked them to take part in a follow-up interview. Whilst seven households have confirmed that members of their household would wish to reside on a Gypsy and Traveller site within Crawley, only four were willing to be interviewed⁵.

Results Summary

The four interviews that were undertaken (wholly with residents in bricks and mortar accommodation) revealed a number of issues with respect to the Gypsy and Traveller community in bricks and mortar accommodation. om com0048(c)-0.300048(o)1cin i,a

- 5) All those that were interviewed discussed the importance of their culture and heritage, and moreover, suggested that living in bricks and mortar accommodation was not necessarily the way they would choose to live. There was also concern for the younger generation within the community, and that the culture could be lost.

Although this was a small sample size, the interviews provided an in-depth snapshot of some of the issues being faced within the GTTS community, including mental health problems. Mental health problems have also separately been discussed for Gypsies and Travellers living in settled housing⁷ within West Sussex as a whole and the Crawley GTAA interviews confirmed that depression and anxiety amongst the participants was common.

Notwithstanding the very real issues which the survey highlighted, the interviews did not identify a specific and immediate 'need' for travelling accommodation when judged against Government guidance. There are instances where there is a concern that cultural traditions may be lost in the next generation, where families are

PART B: MEETING NEEDS

4. CORPORATE APPROACH FOR BRICKS AND MORTAR ACCOMMODATION

As previously discussed, the council understands that Gypsies and Travellers living within bricks and mortar accommodation may form part of future site demand, with an aspiration to move onto sites.

However, in accordance with current planning guidance¹⁰, when assessing the needs of housed Gypsies and Travellers, the council should also be seeking to 'identify the ways in which housing may be made to work better for them, and made more

5. RESERVE SITE IDENTIFICATION

Whilst the surveys of those in bricks and mortar accommodation has, so far, not identified any immediate need for additional sites, it is inherently improbable that within the next ten years there will be no new household formed requiring additional site provision.

Based on the existing population, and the number of unauthorised sites within the borough, it has been estimated that a site (or 2 smaller sites) suitable to accommodate up to 10 Gypsy and Travellers pitches is necessary to meet an emerging, potential future need.

Appendix E establishes the criteria used for the initial assessments of sites within the borough. The borough is heavily constrained by its administrative boundaries, which in most parts of the borough do not extend significantly beyond the built-up area. The presence of Gatwick Airport also renders a significant amount of land to the north of the borough unsuitable for residential development, due to noise constraints, and other areas of land are constrained by flood risk.

In addition, land which could be made available for development is under pressure from other uses, most notably housing. In this respect, the council is aware that, given the projected growth of the local population, it will not be able to meet locally generated needs for housing, either in terms of market or affordable housing. Much of the land which could be made available for development is itself in constrained locations or is land in use for community purposes. Therefore, the council will have to only consider allocating Gypsy and Traveller sites for only those travellers that are in genuine accommodation 'need'.

Notwithstanding these constraints, there are sites which, in planning terms, could be considered as potential traveller sites. In addition to the general site assessment carried out, these sites have been additionally scrutinised through the Sustainability Appraisal process and are subject to public consultation (3 June – 1 July 2013).

Site Assessments

Extensive assessment into suitable site availability for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within Crawley has been carried out by the council over a substantial period of time; including:

- an initial council assessment in 2004;
- followed by a consultants assessment of 29 separate sites (September 2004);
- community consultation on sites in 2005;
- Consideration of sites following the 2005 consultation during 2006;
- General 'call for sites' as part of 2009 Core Strategy Review consultation;
- General 'call for sites' as part of 2012 issues and option Local Plan consultation;
- Further site identification and assessment during 2012/13
- Sustainability Appraisal of consultation options sites 2013

The conclusions of these assessments have indicated the extremely limited options available within the administrative boundaries of Crawley. Nevertheless, 2 sites have now been identified as potential options for consultation as a reserve Gypsy and Traveller site. These are:

- **Option 1: Broadfield Kennels**
- **Option 2: Land North of Langley Walk**

Broadfield Kennels

Broadfield Kennels is located to the west of the A264, owned wholly by the council and straddles the Crawley and Horsham administrative boundaries.

Access to the site is off the A264 dual carriageway up a steep, poorly surfaced road. The site is generally level, extends to approximately 2 hectares, and sits in an elevated position adjacent to the A264. The site is outside of the flood risk zone. The site is reasonably secluded from the few surrounding uses, but includes a pedestrian link under the A264 into the Broadfield Neighbourhood. The neighbourhood centre is 900m (walking distance) away.

The site is located outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary, within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As a result of these designations, development of this site for residential use would not normally be appropriate.

Land in this area was assessed in the early stages of the previous Core Strategy for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site and was not progressed as an option because of the highway access issues. However, access arrangements may be resolvable and this issue would need further work to see if a satisfactory and workable arrangement can be designed that satisfies WSCC Highway requirements.

In terms of other planning policy considerations, recent national guidance on GTTS site provision allows Local Authorities flexibility when no other reasonable options exist and constraints such as countryside location and AONB can be addressed through consideration as part of the Local Plan policy preparations and design of a suitable scheme.

Land North of Langley Walk

Land at Little Balgair is located to the east of Fir Tree Close and directly to the north of Langley Walk. It is owned wholly by the council. Vehicle access onto the site currently exists from Langley Walk. The site is level and extends to approximately one hectare. The site is outside the flood risk zone. The site is also in close proximity to Langley Parade, Langley Green's neighbourhood centre.

This site could be considered acceptable in the short/medium term. It lies outside of all other planning designations (including nature conservation) and is immediately adjacent to the urban area in the rural fringe. The site is outside the current Built-Up Area Boundary.

However, whilst it is outside of the noise contours for the existing single runway at Gatwick Airport, it would be within the unacceptable levels for permanent residential caravans should a second runway be permitted.

Transport modelling is being undertaken to determine the acceptability of the site access for caravans.

6. ALLOCATION POLICY FOR PITCHES

As previously discussed, during the interview process, it was evident that all the households who participated had, to varying extents, a number of health and wellbeing issues. Although the participants in bricks and mortar accommodation did not demonstrate a genuine 'need' as defined by Government guidance¹¹, it will be vital for the council to tackle such issues and to identify a genuine 'need' for plots/pitches over the plan period and beyond.

The council will look into the option of producing a Gypsy and Traveller Allocations Policy to identify those in the greatest 'need' who may require sites in the future (similar to the housing register process). Owing to the constraints on the borough, as summarised previously, particularly when the council will not be able to meet its

**APPENDIX A
INITIAL GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Site/Address:

.....

Name:

Date of Interview:/...../.....

Q1. ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENT

Romany () Irish Traveller () Traveller () Showman () Circus People ()
New Age Traveller () Other () please state
Response not provided ()

Q2. COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Name
Gender
Year or Birth/Age
Relationship to Respondent

Q3. HOW MANY PITCHES/PLOTS DOES THIS HOUSEHOLD OCCUPY?

1 () 2 () 3+ ()
Response not provided ()

Q4. IS THE PITCH / HOUSE SHARED WITH ANOTHER HOUSEHOLD(S)?

1 () 2 () 3+ ()
Response not provided ()

Q5. DETAILS OF CURRENT ACCOMMODATION?

Local Authority site pitch/plot ()
Privately owned site pitch/plot () i.e. Own land with planning permission
Unauthorised development () i.e. Own land without planning permission
Unauthorised encampment () i.e. Not own land and without planning permission
Bricks and Mortar housing ()
Side of the road ()
Oth

Q

Q7a. IF LESS THAN 1 YEAR, WHERE WERE YOU LIVING BEFORE?

Address/Site:.....

Response not provided ()

Q8. ARE ANY PITCHES/PLOTS EXPECTED TO BECOME VACANT ON YOUR SITE IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Yes () No () Don't know () Response not provided ()

If so, when:

Details (i.e. pitch no./reason)

**GYPSY, TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE
TES MODIFIED VERSION FOR BRICKS AND MORTAR RESIDENTS
QUESTIONS REMOVED (Q3, Q5. Q8. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19.)**

ORIGINAL QUESTION NUMBERS KEPT FOR CONSISTENT COMPARISON

**RESPONDENT CAN REMAIN ANONYMOUS (NEIGHBOURHOOD LOCATION
REQUIRED)**

Site/Address:

.....

Name:

Date of Interview:/...../.....

Q1. ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENT

Romany () Irish Traveller () Traveller () Showman () Circus People ()
New Age Traveller () Other () please state
Response not provided ()

Q2. COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Name

Gender

Year of Birth/Age

Relationship to Respondent

**APPENDIX B
SECOND GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE
ACCOMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Gypsies and Travellers Interview Questions

Questions

Need to draw out how many people live in the house? – Cross reference to the original questionnaire.

Who is taking part in the interview?

What do you like/dislike about your house? Probe why this is the case.

Thinking about the area you live in. What do you enjoy most about living in the area?
Why is that?

What do you not enjoy about living in the area? Why is that?

Do you have friends in the area?

Do you have other family members living in the area?

What are your neighbours like?

What does living here offer you and your family?

What concerns you most about living here?

Can I ask you a few questions about the general health of you and your family?
How would you describe the general health of you and your family?

What kinds of things affect your health?

What about your family? What kind of things affects their health?

What sort of adaptations to your current accommodation would be beneficial in terms of your overall health, or that of your family? Probe whether the family would be more likely to stay in bricks and mortar accommodation in the short to medium term if such adaptations were realised.

In the questionnaire you returned to us, you indicated that you need a permanent pitch within Crawley. Can you explain why you or your family require this?

When do you think you will need this?

Visual/Environmental Impact

In particular, consideration has been given to land levels and screening, either through vegetation or buildings.

Land Levels:

This has been examined to determine whether the site is level enough to

Policy GAT2 – Safeguarded Land

Only new developments within the designated safeguarded area that are minor in nature (such as a change of use and small scale building works) will be allowed in this location.

Planning Designations

Within Crawley Borough Council's administrative area, natural environmental policy designations include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The AONBs in Crawley are the South Downs and the North Downs. The SSSIs in Crawley are the South Downs and the North Downs.