

# Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Version

## Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Background Paper

June 2014



**GOSPORT**  
Borough Council

# **Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

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## **Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document is a background paper to the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 relating to the housing needs of Gypsy and Travellers and of Travelling Showpeople. It sets out the relevant national and local policy context and includes a summary of evidence and consultation responses.
- 1.2 Providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of all members of the community and creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities are key Government objectives and are established in national planning policy and other relevant guidance and legislation.

### **2.0 Policy Context**

#### **National Policy**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy framework was published in March 2012. The Government also published Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012). The Government's policy is to ensure fair and equal treatment for members of the travelling community in a way that assists the traditional way of life for travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The key aims in the national policy for doing this are set out as follows:

- need for the purposes of planning
- to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites
- to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale
- that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development
- to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites
- that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective.

*(Source: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012))*

- 2.2 Local Plans should plan positively for meeting the accommodation needs of travellers where this has been identified through local evidence studies. In cases where local studies have not identified an accommodation need, Local Plans should nevertheless develop appropriate criteria based policies in order to provide a basis for decisions to be made on planning applications.

- 2.3 Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are required under the Housing Act 2004 to assess the accommodation needs of travellers, with the original intention of informing the regional planning process, and allowing regional bodies to set pitch/plot targets for each LPA. However, the revocation of regional strategies, including the South East Plan, means there is no longer a mechanism for maintaining a regional perspective on pitch number and provision, or to ensure that enough pitches are created. The Government believes that 'top-down' targets have failed to deliver and favours a local approach in line with the Duty to Co-operate requirement under Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011. In Hampshire a number of local authorities have worked in partnership to review accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Hampshire, the findings of this review are set out in Section 3: Evidence below.

### **Local Policy**

- 2.4 Policies R/H11 and R/H12 of the saved Gosport Borough Local Plan Review (2006) set out the current policy position on making provision for sites for Gypsies and Travellers and short stay Travellers respectively these policies remain broadly in line with the provisions of Government policy for planning for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.5 The most relevant 'Strategic Priorities' outlined in the Corporate Plan include:
- Improving social inclusion
  - Promoting health and well-being; and
  - Strengthening community cohesion.

## **3.0 Evidence**

- 3.1 In 2006 the local authorities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight commissioned David Couttie Associates to carry out a study into the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (2007). This study and the Travelling Showpeoples' Accommodation Assessment (2008) prepared by the Hampshire Authorities, provided the evidence base for the development of draft policy LP26 in the draft Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 3.2 However, in line with national policy, it was considered appropriate to review the evidence base as this only ran to 2011. Therefore in May 2012, the Borough Council as part of a consortium of 11 Hampshire local authorities (including Hampshire County Council and the New Forest and South Downs National Park Authorities), commissioned a new study on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The new study provides an updated assessment of need across a large part of Hampshire to 2027 and replaces the previous Hampshire and Isle of Wight Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007) and Travelling Showpeoples' Accommodation Assessment (2008). The new study was prepared in accordance with *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012)* and it provides both an assessment of current provision and an indication of future permanent pitch needs across the study area. This is broken down into 5 yearly intervals to 2027 in line with national policy.

Permanent provision

3.3 The recommended pitch provision is set out in section 4 of this background paper and is used as the key evidence for making planned allocations in local plan preparation. In Gosport’s case the findings of the study recommended that 1 permanent site is required to meet identified need in the Borough over the local plan period.

Transit provision

3.4 Information from the survey showed this to be an important issue in Hampshire. The survey interviewed a number of households (17 individuals from 15 households) who were living on temporary and unauthorised encampments in various locations across the study area. In addition to the information collected from the survey, the study also drew on Hampshire County Council’s Traveller Database. This database provides a comprehensive overview of the families travelling and stopping across Hampshire throughout the year. Even allowing for the fact that there will inevitably be an element of double counting as families move from one district to another, the figures in the table below show the scale of the issue in relation to the study area:

Table 2: Unauthorised encampments 2012

<b>Local Authority<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Caravans</b>
East Hampshire	6	15
Eastleigh	8	39
Fareham	10	71
Gosport	2	15
Havant	6	49
New Forest	8	65
Test Valley	20	67
Winchester	40	126

Source: Hampshire County Council Traveller Database, 2012

3.5 The figures from the County Council’s database also illustrated the seasonal fluctuations of travelling patterns with the highest counts of camps in 2012 was in June with 36 sites and 2011 caravans and the lowest in December with 6 sites and 8 caravans recorded.

3.6 Although the information shows there is a significant demand for provision of additional transit sites across the study area, the study did not consider it to be appropriate to specify the exact location and specific number of sites to be provided. Instead it recommended that collaborative working between local authorities based on the recommendations of the report would be more appropriate. The recommendation is based on an east – west split for the provision of accommodation pitches which reflects the established patterns of Gypsy and Traveller movements across the county.

3.7 Therefore the study recommended adopting targets across the study area in respect of transit sites to provide for 47 pitches in total up to 2027 and where possible, this provision should be met by 2017. The study further recommended that the target figure and the best means of delivery should be agreed on a collaborative basis (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in Hampshire and beyond) and be based on the identified need for sites both in

<sup>1</sup> Note the figures for East Hampshire, New Forest and Winchester include the areas within the respective National Parks.

the west and east of Hampshire with a notional capacity of 27 and 20 pitches respectively.

Travelling Showpeople

- 3.8 Travelling Showpeople have very different traditions and subsequent site requirements from the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Research has found that Travelling Showpeople's sites tend to be larger and longer established, this had an impact on the findings of the study which secured a higher proportion of interviews at Travelling Showpeoples' sites some 42% compared to 30% for Gypsies and Traveller sites.
- 3.9 Geographically speaking, the majority of sites identified in the baseline data were in the mid Hampshire part of the study area, no sites were identified in the south eastern part of the study area as shown in Table 3 of the baseline information for Travelling Showpeople sites.
- 3.10 There are currently no travelling showpeople sites in Gosport. The findings of the study considered it unnecessary for additional provision to be made in the Borough.
- 3.11 In terms of Travelling Showpeople, the study recommends adopting 25 plots across the study area to be met by 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. The study recommends that the targets and the optimum means of delivering them, should be agreed on a collaborative basis (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in Hampshire) and be based on the identified need for sites both in the west and in the east of Hampshire with a notional capacity of 9 and 16plots.

## **4.0 Recommendations from the Study**

4.1 The study made the following recommendations for the local authorities to:

1. Acknowledge the existing level of local provision, and the current and future need for additional accommodation, in respect of **permanent** pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, as set out in Table 1 below;
2. Adopt locally-set targets in respect of **permanent** pitches for Gypsies and Travellers based on the respective totals set out in Table 1;

Authority	Current provision on Identified Sites (April 2013) <sup>2</sup>	Estimate of current notional need for additional pitches <sup>3</sup>	Estimate of projected future need for pitches in addition to the current (April 2013) provision on Identified Sites (including current notional need) <sup>4</sup>		
			Total by 2017	Total by 2022	Total by 2027
	Number of pitches		Number of pitches ( <b>cumulative</b> )		
East Hampshire	26	2.5	18	20	22
Eastleigh	24	2.5	12	15	21
Fareham	5	1.5	6	7	8
<b>Gosport</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Havant	0	0.0	0	0	0
New Forest	45	0.5	10	12	12
NFNPA	2	0.5	2	2	2
SDNPA	13	2.5	5	6	7
Test Valley	13	1.5	4	7	10
Winchester	41	3.0	12	19	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>109</b>

3. Adopt targets in respect of **transit** sites for Gypsies and Travellers that reflect an estimated potential need across the study area of 47 pitches up to 2027, but one that should be met wherever possible, by 2017. These targets, and the optimum means of delivery through the planning process, should be agreed on a collaborative basis (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in Hampshire and beyond), and be based on the identified need for sites both in the west and east of Hampshire with a notional capacity of approximately 18 and 29 pitches respectively; and

<sup>2</sup> The current provision in column 2 of Table 1 includes authorised and unauthorised sites.

<sup>3</sup> The estimate of current notional need for additional pitches in column 3 includes an allowance for need resulting from unauthorised pitches.

<sup>4</sup> The estimate of projected future need for additional pitches in columns 4-6 includes the need to provide a pitch to meet demand resulting from unauthorised pitches during the study period. In circumstances where an unauthorised site is granted planning permission this would contribute towards meeting the projected need throughout the study period.

4. Adopt targets in respect of plots for **Travelling Showpeople** that reflect an estimated potential current need across the study area of 25 plots, to be met by 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. These targets, and the optimum means of delivery through the planning process, should be agreed on a collaborative basis (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in Hampshire), and be based on the identified need for sites both in the west and east of Hampshire, with a notional capacity of approximately 9 and 16 pitches respectively.

*(Source: Travellers Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire 2013, Section 9: Recommendations, pages 39-40)*

## 5.0 Moving forward

- 5.1 The Joint Authorities' Gypsy and Traveller Panel (JAGTP) was originally set up by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association (HIOWLGA) to develop and maintain a collaborative approach in relation to Travellers (including Gypsies & Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and their communities).
- 5.2 The Panel met to consider the most appropriate way to take forward the recommendations of the study. At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013, the Panel endorsed the study and established a transit site officer task group, under the direction of a lead Chief Executive, to report back (via the Joint Authorities' Gypsy and Traveller Panel) within 1 year with recommendations as to specific sites to be allocated / acquired, proposed management arrangements and the funding implications for all Hampshire authorities.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

### **Main Consultations to date including:**

- Consultation at each plan-making stage:
  - Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Consultation Draft (Dec 2012- Feb 2013);
  - Core Strategy : Preferred Options (GBC December 2009);
  - Core Strategy: Issues and Option (GBC December 2006);
  - The Community Strategy and Local Development Framework: Make Your Mark December 2006 events (held in December 2006 Gosport Partnership); and
- On-going meetings with key stakeholders

- 6.1 As part of the Council's consultation on its Core Strategy: Issues and Options Paper asked whether the Council should identify a site for Gypsies and Travellers and what factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the suitability of a site. The issues raised through earlier consultation are set out below and include:

- the issue of Gypsies and Travellers should be tackled jointly with adjoining authorities;
- services, safety, security and policing are important for housing;
- location of workplace;
- must be near a primary school;
- sites for Gypsies and Travellers should be self contained and well managed;



- sanitation arrangements will have to be considered when choosing a site location for a Gypsies and Travellers site;
- travellers should use private camping sites; and
- no land or funds available to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

These issues were taken into consideration in the formulation of the draft policy on Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (draft policy LP26.) Comments were received on the draft policy see published schedule of responses these can be summarised as follows:

6.2 A number of responses were received on the draft Local Plan on draft policy LP26 when this was out for public consultation in December 2012. These included the following points:

- The Plan is not compliant with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, as it not based on a robust and up-to-date Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment;
- In preparing the Local Plan evidence base, the Council must demonstrate it has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate;
- Gypsy and Traveller provision is not given sufficient priority in this Local Plan;
- The Council must demonstrate the early and effective engagement and cooperation with Gypsy and Traveller communities, representative bodies and support groups in preparing the Local Plan;
- The draft policy should specifically mention heritage assets; and
- Sites should be capable of served by essential utility infrastructure.

## **7.0 KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE LOCAL PLAN**

7.1 At the time of consultation on the draft Local Plan the study was still at a draft stage and therefore in line with the Government's Planning Policy for traveller sites (March 2012) it was considered appropriate to develop a locally-based criteria policy as the basis for making decisions on planning applications. Since then the study has been finalised and endorsed by the participating local authorities to use as the latest baseline information to underpin local plan policy making.

7.2 The Borough Council received a number of comments relating to the draft policy. These were considered alongside the recommendations of the study when revising the draft policy. It is considered the most appropriate way to take this forward in the publication document is to allocate land at Fareham Road for 1 permanent pitch accommodating up to 3 caravans in order to meet identified local need and to provide clear policy criteria in order to assess any future proposals that may come forward during the plan period.

### Transit site provision

7.3 The Travellers Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire (2013) recommended further work should be jointly undertaken by the local authorities in Hampshire. The findings of this future work are not expected to be available until late 2014. If a site for transit provision is required in the Borough then it

would be considered under policy LP26 and the other relevant policies of the publication local plan.

Travelling Showpeople

- 7.4 The Travellers Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire study recommended a provision of additional plots across Hampshire for 25 plots for travelling showpeople based on an east-west geographical split of 16 plots in the east and 9 in the west of the County respectively. Based on the evidence collected, the study concluded that no additional provision is required in Gosport. However should a planning application come forward during the plan period the Borough Council considers that part 2 of policy LP26 along with other policies in the local plan will provide clear policy guidance for the consideration of planning applications for Travelling Showpeople sites.

## **List of Evidence Studies and other references**

### **National Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG) (March 2012)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG) (March 2012)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites)

The Housing Act 2004

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/pdfs/ukpga\\_20040034\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/pdfs/ukpga_20040034_en.pdf)

### **Local Planning Documents**

Travelling Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire 2013 Study Report, Forest Bus Ltd (on behalf of the consortium of eleven Hampshire Authorities), April 2013

<http://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/planning-section/local-development-framework/gosport-borough-local-plan-2029/gosport-borough-local-plan-2011-2029-consultation-draft-december-2012/evidence-studies/housing/?Housing>

Gosport Borough Council (2006) – Gosport Borough Local Plan Review

[www.gosport.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.gosport.gov.uk/localplanreview)

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Published: June 2014

Gosport Borough Council  
Town Hall, High Street,  
Gosport,  
Hampshire,  
PO12 1EB

Tel: (023) 9258 4242

[www.gosport.gov.uk](http://www.gosport.gov.uk)



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