

TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

Final Version March 2008

*Commissioned by the Strategic Housing Officers Group on behalf
of local authorities in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and
the Isle of Wight*

Executive Summary

1. Background

- 1.1. In January 2007 the Government redefined the accommodation assessment definition of Gypsies and Travellers to include travelling showpeople. Local authorities are now therefore required to assess travelling showpeople's accommodation needs.
- 1.2. This is the first time that an assessment of travelling showpeople's accommodation needs has been carried out in Hampshire. Advice was taken from the Showman's Guild and Government Office for the Southeast (GOSE), and the Communities and Local Government (CLG) guidance for the conduct of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2006) was followed wherever possible.
- 1.3. Information on the present accommodation situation in Hampshire was collected from travelling showpeople and the Showman's Guild. Secondary information was collected from district licensing, planning and community safety departments, and from Southampton, Portsmouth and Hampshire police and education services. Information has also been included from recent government documents relating to travelling showpeople.
- 1.4. The survey revealed the following distribution of travelling showpeople sites across Hampshire and Isle of Wight:

Table 1: Distribution of permanent sites in Hampshire (2007 planning record)

District	Number of sites per authority	Total number of sites
Havant, Gosport, Fareham, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight	0	0
Basingstoke, Eastleigh, New Forest National Park, Hart and Southampton	1	5
Test Valley, East Hampshire	3	6
New Forest District, Rushmoor	4	8
Winchester*	9	9
Total	NA	28

* Four of these sites are unconfirmed as showmen's sites

- 1.5. Information supplied by the Showman's Guild indicates that there are some 28 travelling showpeople sites in Hampshire:

Table 2: Estimated Hampshire travelling showpeople population

Sites	28
Yards	65
Households (accommodation units)	174

Source : (2004: Showman's Guild and University of Sheffield project)

- 1.6. The figures set out above are used throughout this report as they are considered to be the most accurate and up to date assessment of the

showpeople population of the study area. They are used as the baseline figure for the assessment of need set out in the model in Chapter 5.

- 1.7. It is difficult to identify accurately some sites as they are known by several names. Others are the addresses of permanent accommodation with no equipment storage that are occupied by retired showpeople who have kept their membership of the Showmen's Guild. Also, planning data is sometimes unclear about the status of planning permissions, and may confuse Gypsy and Traveller with showpeople's sites.

2. Survey conduct and outcomes

- 2.1. The questionnaire survey: A questionnaire was sent out to all SHOG members in the study area, and to individual travelling showpeople sites as identified in the 2004 survey. A total of 34 returns were received. The information about need that was included in these returns indicates that there is considerable need for an increased supply of permanent sites in the county, as well as authorised pull-ins for those travelling between shows.
- 2.2. This information was incorporated in the model supplied by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG)¹. The outcomes from the survey were multiplied up to represent an approximation of the level of need likely to be evident across the whole population. The model revealed the following level of need across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Table 3: The present and arising need for travelling showpeople accommodation: 2007 to 2011*

	Sites	Yards	Accomm. Units
Present supply	28	65	174
Future need			
• Current shortfall (immediate need)	10	31	85
• Arising need to 2007 - 2011	3	10	26
• Total need to 2011	13	41	111

* It is not possible from the existing data to predict the accommodation need for 2011 to 2015. It is therefore recommended that a further travelling showpeople's accommodation assessment should be carried out in the winter of 2009-10 to accurately predict this need

- 2.3. Government requires that the assessment of need includes a district level distribution of that need. However, as a result of the complexity of the issues involved in such a distribution, members of SHOG have agreed that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Planning Officers Group will meet with representatives of the Showman's Guild to agree the criteria for Travelling Showpeople's sites for inclusion in Development Plan Documents.

¹ Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments: Guidance, October 2007
Department of Communities and Local Government

3. Information from stakeholder organisations:

- 3.1. Information about showpeople was sought from the police, and local authority licensing, planning, community safety, and Traveller Education Services. The main points from their assessment of the relationship which showpeople presently have with their local communities and agencies have been summarised below:
- 3.2. Travelling showpeople in the study area provide their own sites at their own expense, and do not ask for local authority provision;
- 3.3. All travelling showpeople sites in the area are privately owned, some include renting tenants; but most are straightforwardly owner occupied by a single extended family and work team;
- 3.4. Showpeople are a law abiding community who cause no problems with the police or community safety staff;
- 3.5. Travelling funfairs bring entertainment to many low income areas, often this is the highlight of the year. They contribute to local culture and traditions across every part of the study area. Councils often overlook these benefits;
- 3.6. They contribute to the local economy by paying temporary site rents, council tax and business rates on their permanent sites and spending in local businesses;
- 3.7. They make little claim on the public purse, since in addition to providing their own sites, they look after their own older and disabled relatives and workers.

4. Main Recommendations

- 4.1. A Hampshire & Isle of Wight Travelling Showpeople Planning Forum should be established with representatives of the Showman's Guild, local planning authorities and other relevant stakeholders, to enable travelling showpeople communities to provide new, self-funded accommodation sites in accordance with the Government's Communities Circular 04/2007;
- 4.2. Local authorities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight should be asked through their representative bodies to agree in principle that travelling showpeople have a need for a further 13 new sites, with a capacity for 111 accommodation units, by 2011. All local authorities should accept their responsibility in ensuring that the community is adequately accommodated;
- 4.3. That the Showman's Guild meet with representatives of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Planning Officers Group to agree the criteria for Travelling Showpeople's sites for inclusion in Development Plan Documents;
- 4.4. Local authorities should implement the recommendations and guidance of Circular 4/07 which states that Development Plan Documents should include fair and achievable policies, ensure identified need is dealt with fairly and effectively, and make provision for the resultant land and accommodation requirements;
- 4.5. Existing showpeople's sites need protection from alternative development and restrictive neighbouring development;
- 4.6. Outstanding planning permissions and disputes over planning permissions on showpeople site should be resolved at the earliest opportunity.