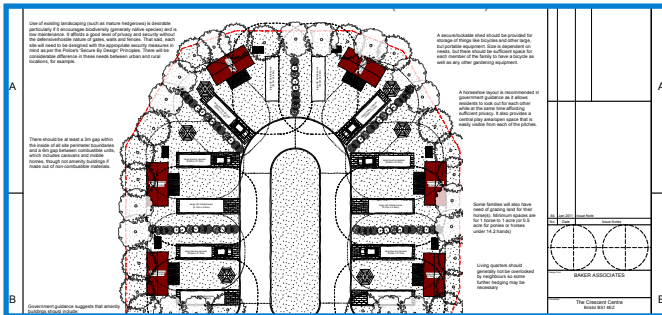


Have your say: finding sites in Dorset for Gypsies and Travellers

Consultation – November 2011

Site options summary and response form (Weymouth & Portland)



Produced by Baker Associates on behalf of Dorset councils

Introduction

Councils in Dorset (including Bournemouth and Poole) are working together to identify sites to meet the current and future needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the area.

The councils would like to hear your views on the content of the site options included in this booklet.

We would also like to hear your views on the full Issues and Options Consultation Document which is available to view, together with other background documents, at council offices and at www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches

Public exhibitions to explain the need for this plan and the options suggested are being held at the following places in and around the Weymouth and Portland area:

- 9 January 12-3pm, Corn Exchange, Dorchester, DT1 1HF
- 9 January 5-8pm, The Ocean Room, Weymouth Pavilion, DT4 8ED
- 10 January 12-3pm, The Ocean Room, Weymouth Pavilion, DT4 8ED
- 10 January 5-8pm, Beaminster Town Hall, Beaminster, DT8 3EF

You can have your say by:

- Completing and returning the attached response form
- Completing the online questionnaire at www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches
- Completing the questionnaire available at the public exhibitions

The deadline for comments to be received is **10 February 2012**.

Background

Gypsies and Travellers have been living in England for hundreds of years. The number living in Dorset is estimated at between 2,400 and 3,000 people. There are seasonal differences, with more Travellers arriving during the summer months. Many Gypsies and Travellers move around the country and need temporary transit sites in the areas they

travel to. However, travelling communities are becoming increasingly settled and need permanent residential sites which also act as a base from which to travel.

Travelling Showpeople play an important role in the leisure economy, travelling the country to hold fairs and circuses. They need secure, permanent bases in which to live and store their equipment. There are established family businesses currently based in Dorset.

Why should councils find places for Gypsies and Travellers to stay?

The Government wants to significantly increase the number of Traveller sites with planning permission and address the shortage of sites in recent years.

It's important that local councils plan for the needs of all of their communities, including Gypsies and Travellers. Councils will help meet the needs of the travelling communities by producing a plan that identifies enough sites for them. This should help reduce the number of illegal camps. It should also reduce tension and help make enforcement by councils and the police more effective.

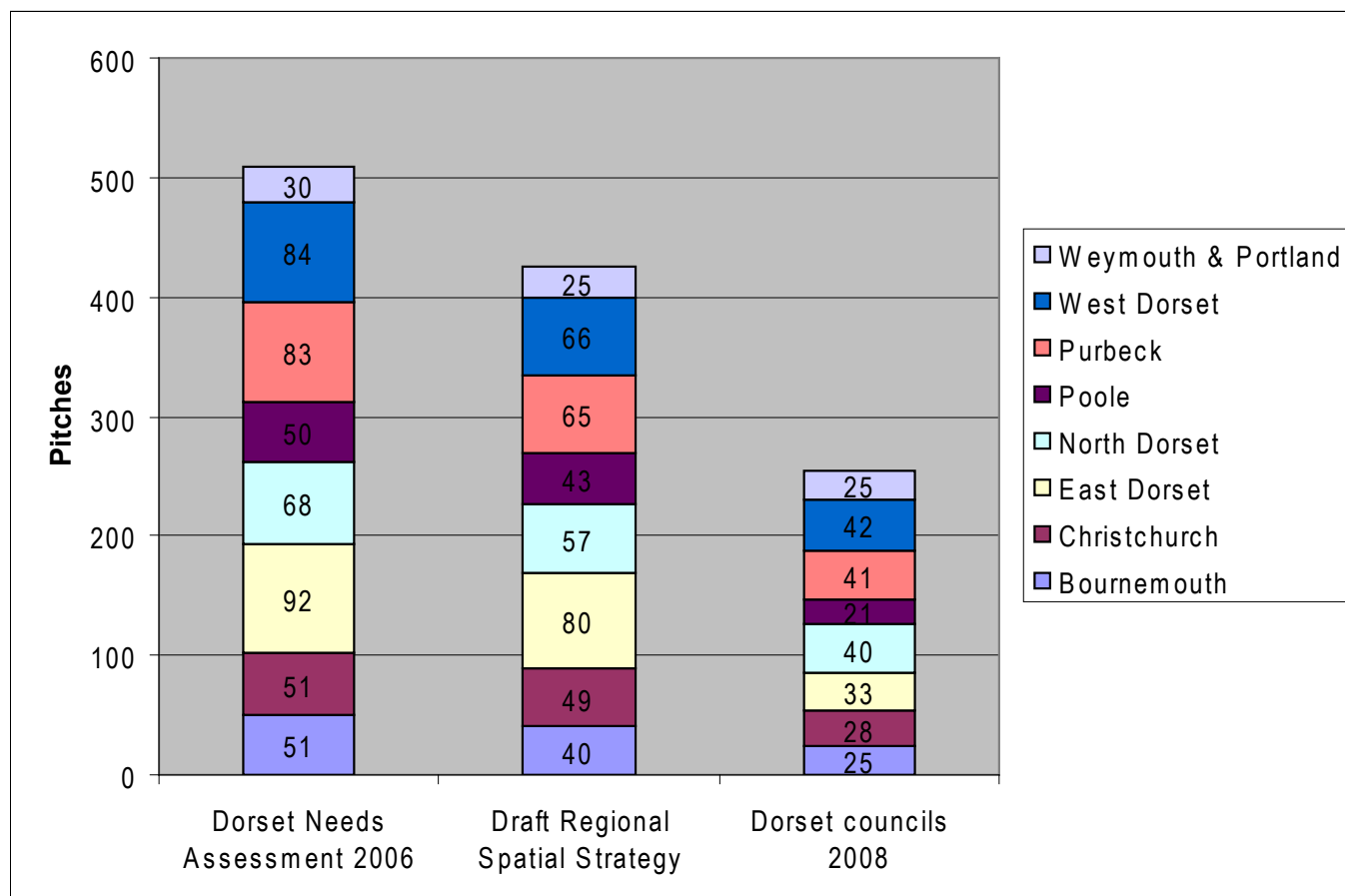
More generally, councils have a duty to promote good race relations, equality of opportunity and community cohesion.

Meeting needs

There is currently a shortage of permanent residential and transit Gypsy and Traveller pitches¹ in Dorset. A site can contain up to 15 pitches, although travelling communities prefer small sites with up to six pitches.

A number of estimates have been made for the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Dorset, mainly based on local surveys of need.

Recent estimates of Gypsy and Traveller need in Dorset



The following table shows three different recent estimates of need. In addition a further 100 transit pitches are required on a temporary basis each year for the annual Great Dorset Steam Fair in North Dorset².

A regional report on Travelling Showpeople in the South West has estimated that two plots³ should be provided in Dorset to meet current needs.

More work will need to be done to identify future needs. The plan will need to identify local targets for 5, 10 and 15 year periods.

Site options

The councils have started to assess potential sites within their areas. Independent planning consultants Baker Associates have identified two sites which may be potentially suitable, available and achievable for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople in Weymouth and Portland.

The councils have yet to decide which, if any, of the identified sites are appropriate for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople uses.

Your views are sought to help the councils come to an informed decision.

1. Gypsy and Traveller site needs are measured in terms of pitches. A pitch is an area of land where a Gypsy or Traveller household can reside. Typically, this may have a building, parking space and one or more caravans, with sufficient space so that caravans up to 20 metres in length can be moved around.

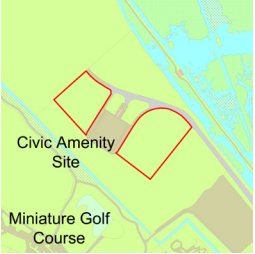
2. In July 2011, Dorset County Council granted planning permission for five years for a site off the A354 to be used during a three week period around the dates of the Steam Fair each year.

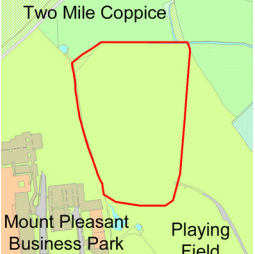
3. Travelling Showpeople needs are measured in terms of plots. A plot contains both residential and business uses for a household. It allows for the storage and repair of fairground equipment.

Location of shortlisted sites in Weymouth and Portland



Shortlisted sites

<p>Site name & settlement: Land adj. civic amenity site, Weymouth</p>	<p>Summary of assessment:</p> <p>Redundant land next to household recycling centre.</p>	<p>Number of pitches: 5</p>
<p>Site map</p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> The site may be contaminated because of previous tipping in this area. The landscape is open but development could be accommodated either side of the civic recycling centre by earth mounding and scrub planting. The site is away from residential properties. It may be noisy because of nearby uses. The site is also at risk of flooding. The site is close to a Site of Special Scientific Interest and impacts will need to be mitigated. Accessibility to the site is poor, with most services around 2km away and a bus over 600m away.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The site is owned by the Borough Council and is therefore available in principle, subject to current leases.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> The potential costs of cleaning up contaminated land may be significant.</p>	<p>Type of provision: Transit or Temporary Stopping Place</p> <p>Type of traveller: Romany Gypsies or Irish Travellers</p> <p>Delivery: Existing public owned land to be developed for publicly managed provision</p>

<p>Site name & settlement: Park and ride site, Weymouth</p>	<p>Summary of assessment:</p> <p>New park and ride car park facility.</p>	<p>Number of pitches: Not applicable</p>
<p>Site map</p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> The development of the road and car park has involved landscape and ecology measures which should not be compromised by any temporary stopping place on part of the site. The site is next to the road so noise may be an issue which will have to be dealt with. The site has good access to facilities.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The site is owned by the County Council and is available in principle.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> Any temporary use of part of the car park must not adversely affect the operation of the park and ride facility.</p>	<p>Type of provision: Temporary Stopping Place</p> <p>Type of traveller: Romany Gypsies or Irish Travellers</p> <p>Delivery: Existing publicly owned land to be developed for publicly managed provision</p>

Other sites

A number of other sites have been assessed, but the independent planning consultants have recommended they be rejected. Details of these sites can be found in the full Issues and Options Consultation Document.

The councils would also like to hear of any other sites which you think they should be considering as part of this process.

What next?

Please complete the attached response form and return it by **10 February 2012** to:

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople
Consultation
County Hall,
Dorchester,
Dorset,
DT1 1XJ

The councils will consider the responses received and will use them to develop proposals for further public consultation next year.



Site options response form Consultation – November 2011-February 2012

Dorset-wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Joint Development Plan Document

Please answer the questions below. You may use an additional sheet of paper if needed. Inappropriate, offensive or racist comments will not be accepted.

Do you have information about any of the sites in this booklet which will help Dorset councils decide whether they are suitable, available and achievable for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople provision?

Name of site: _____

Response: _____

Do you know of any other sites which the councils should be considering for future Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople uses?

Name and location of site: _____

Please attach a map if possible.

Reasons why it should be considered _____

Do you have any additional comments to make on any other matter raised in this document?

Lined area for writing additional comments.

Your name _____

Your contact address _____

Your email and/or telephone _____

Please tick here if you would like to be kept informed of progress with the plan

Please note we can only accept comments made by respondents who provide their names and contact addresses.

Thank you for taking the time to respond.