

Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations (including Travelling Showpeople) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD)

Project Scoping Report

December 2010



Contents

page

1	Introduction	1
2	Legislative and policy context	3
3	Scope of the DPD	7
4	Evidence of local needs	8
5	Initial communication and engagement	11
6	Key issues	16
7	Sources of potential sites	19
8	Policy guidance on identifying criteria	20
9	Key site requirements	20
10	Site assessment criteria and the selection process	23
11	Delivery	25
12	Impacts assessment	26
13	Programme	27

Appendix A Final recommended site assessment criteria

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council, East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council, Borough of Poole, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council have decided to prepare a Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller (including Travelling Showpeople) Site Allocations Joint Development Plan Document (DPD) to allocate Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites within Dorset.
- 1.2 Baker Associates has been appointed as planning consultants to assist the Dorset authorities in the preparation of the DPD and to support the DPD at examination as the lead witness.
- 1.3 This project scoping report draws together the results from the inception meeting, initial information gathering and stakeholder engagement, to set out the key issues for the DPD and sets the framework for the site selection process.

Background

- 1.4 Gypsies and Travellers have been resident within England for many hundreds of years. Within Dorset the total residing population is estimated to be between 2,400 and 3,000 people, although it is thought that this figure probably underestimates the numbers of the travelling community living in housing. There are marked seasonal differences with increased number of Travellers during the summer months.
- 1.5 Government policy relating to Gypsies and Travellers has changed over time. The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 allowed local authorities to stop the unlicensed development of caravan sites and prohibit encampments on commons and resulted in the closure of many sites traditionally used by Gypsies and Travellers up until that time. The Caravans Act 1968 (Part 1) then required local authorities to provide adequate accommodation for Gypsies and for those authorities that did, provided additional powers to remove unlawful encampments. Dorset was the first county to make permanent Gypsy site provision under this Act. The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act then abolished any statutory obligation for local authorities to provide accommodation and made it a criminal offence to camp on land without the owner's consent.
- 1.6 As a result of this last Act, most local authorities stopped identifying new sites for Gypsies and Travellers in Local Plans during the 1990s and relied instead upon criteria based policies to manage the future provision of sites. Many of these were very restrictive and fewer sites than required came through the planning process. This has resulted in an overall backlog of need, resulting in unauthorised developments and encampments.
- 1.7 Since the Housing Act in 2004, there has been a requirement for local authorities to identify sufficient sites through the planning process to meet identified needs.
- 1.8 Travelling Showpeople do not in general share the same culture or traditions as Gypsies and Travellers but have a separate rich tradition associated with the holding of fairs and circuses across the country. Generally across the country the number of

Showpeople sites have diminished and remaining sites have had a tendency to become overcrowded as single family units have expanded. The 2004 Housing Act and subsequent legislation place a similar requirement on local authorities to provide for the site requirements of Travelling Showpeople.

- 1.9 The intention of the Dorset councils is to seek to make positive provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the allocation of sites in a Development Plan Document (DPD). Providing sufficient caravan pitches will help meet the needs of the travelling communities and it should also reduce the number of unauthorised sites and the conflict they cause and help make enforcement more effective.

Definitions

- 1.10 Gypsies and Travellers are defined as :

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such”. (Circular 01/2006 para. 15)

- 1.11 Many Gypsies and Travellers continue to pursue an active itinerant lifestyle and are generally self employed people. However, increasingly communities are becoming more settled.

- 1.12 There are three types of sites identified as required to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs. These are:

- Permanent sites – these provide residents with a permanent home;
- Transit sites – these are permanent sites that provide temporary accommodation for their residents, normally between 28 days and 3 months; and
- Emergency stopping places – these are pieces of land in temporary use as authorised short term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities.

- 1.13 Sites can vary in size, although they should be at least large enough to accommodate one pitch. A pitch is an area of land where a Gypsy or Traveller household can reside; typically this may contain a building, parking space and one or more caravans with sufficient space to enable the easy manoeuvrability of caravans up to 20 metres in length.

- 1.14 Travelling Showpeople are defined as:

“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel

temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers” (Circular 04/2007 para. 15)

- 1.15 Travelling Showpeople have different site requirements from Gypsies and Travellers. They normally require sites which have both residential and business uses on site, to enable the storage and repair of fairground equipment. Larger sites are often subdivided into individual family ‘plots’ or ‘yards’.

Purpose and objectives of the Development Plan Document (DPD)

- 1.16 The broad objectives for the DPD are:
- To identify sufficient suitable residential and transit sites to meet the long term needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
 - To set out a clear delivery strategy, identifying how much development is to happen, where, when and by what means it will be delivered.
- 1.17 The main spatial issues to be addressed in the DPD include:
- The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment and other national and local data demonstrates a need to provide a number and range of residential and transit sites to meet the differing needs of the various travelling communities;
 - There is a need to consider a spatial distribution of site provision across Dorset which meets the identified needs of the travelling communities, creates mixed and balanced communities and conserves the open countryside and natural environment;
 - Dorset is one of the most environmentally constrained counties in the country, containing significant areas of Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site Coastline, Sites of International Wildlife Importance and floodplains.

2 Legislative and policy context

- 2.1 The following section summarises some of the key legislation and policy which provide a context for the development of the DPD. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report sets out a more comprehensive list of relevant legislation and policy. The DPD will need to meet legislative requirements, be in accordance with national policy and fit within the local policy framework.

Housing Act 2004

- 2.2 All local authorities are required to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA), under the 2004 Housing Act, and to produce strategies to deliver these needs which may include the provision of extra sites.
- 2.3 The Act also outlines that the cessation of a nomadic way of life does not reduce a Gypsy or Traveller’s cultural identity.

Circular 01/06 - Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites

- 2.4 The Circular emphasises the importance of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen. Its main intention is to create and support sustainable and inclusive communities, where Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation.
- 2.5 The Circular sets out arrangements to ensure that sufficient sites are brought forward through the planning system to meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The approach can be summarised as:
- GTAA are to be produced to assess needs and identify pitch requirements for each local authority area;
 - Local authorities are to allocate sufficient sites to meet the pitch numbers through their DPDs; and
 - Local authorities are to set out a criteria-based policy in their Core Strategies.

Circular 04/07 - Planning for Travelling Showpeople

- 2.6 Circular 04/2007 addresses the planning requirements of Travelling Showpeople. The requirements are similar to those which apply to Gypsies and Travellers (see chapter 9 of this report).

Coalition Government Ministerial Statement 2010

- 2.7 In August 2010, the new Secretary of State declared the intention of the Coalition Government to replace the above circulars with more light-touch guidance outlining councils' statutory obligations. This would include removing regional targets for the provision of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople contained within Regional Strategies, which will be abolished. However, he went on to say that local authorities would continue to be required to identify sufficient sites in their areas to reflect local need and historic demand.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 – Housing

- 2.8 National government policy on housing is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3. It states that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing and for a mix of different types of households over the plan period. Paragraph 21 sets out some of the diverse range of requirements and groups that the plan should have particular regard to, "including the need to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers".
- 2.9 The Coalition Government has declared its intention to replace PPSs with a streamlined National Policy Framework to be in place by April 2012.

Local Plans

- 2.10 All the local authorities have saved Local Plan policies which form part of the statutory Development Plan, except for Purbeck which approved a "final edition" for development management purposes. These Local Plans are listed below:
- Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (adopted 2002)
 - Borough of Christchurch Local Plan (adopted 2001)

- East Dorset Local Plan (adopted 2002)
- North Dorset Local Plan (adopted 2003)
- Purbeck Local Plan (consolidated 'final edition' 2004)
- West Dorset Local Plan (adopted 2006)
- Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (adopted 2005)

2.11 Within these Local Plans there are a number of Gypsy and Traveller related policies which are either criteria based or location specific.

- East Dorset Local Plan policy HODEV7 Land at Mannington Park
- East Dorset Local Plan policy HODEV8 New Gypsy sites
- Poole Local Plan policy H8 Gypsy Site at Mannings Heath
- Purbeck Local Plan policy MN8 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers
- Christchurch Local Plan policy H17 Gypsies
- West Dorset Local Plan HS9 Sites for Gypsies
- North Dorset Local Plan policy 2.21 Gypsy Sites

Poole Core Strategy

2.12 Poole Core Strategy, adopted in February 2009, provides a criteria based policy to be used for the selection of Gypsy and Traveller sites, to increase the levels of authorised site provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

Policy PCS9 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

The Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment indicates that the Borough needs to provide both transit Gypsy and Traveller pitches and residential pitches. The existing Mannings Heath site in the Borough will be redeveloped to accommodate 15 pitches in total. The remaining required provision of allocated permanent and transit pitches will be addressed in the Borough's Site Specific Allocations DPD and through joint working with Bournemouth and the other Dorset local authorities to provide a coordinated approach to provision.

The following considerations will be taken into account in the determination of locations for gypsy and traveller sites:

- i. sites should be well located to the highway network, & enable access to schools, shops & healthcare;*
- ii. sites should provide for adequate on site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity;*
- iii. sites should allow for adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for the occupiers;*
- iv. sites should not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of adjacent occupiers; and*
- v. sites should not result in a detrimental impact upon the natural environment.*

The Council is committed to working in partnership with Gypsies and Travellers and with their representative groups, and with local residents to seek solutions to issues regarding Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

The New Plan for North Dorset (March 2010)

- 2.13 North Dorset District Council has produced a draft Core Strategy and Development Management DPD, which provides a criteria based policy for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Draft Policy Development Management 6: Caravan sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Permanent caravan sites, transit caravan sites and emergency stopping places for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be permitted provided that:

- a) the occupation of the site is restricted to Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople;*
- b) there is a demonstrable need for the site in North Dorset and there are no existing suitable sites elsewhere in the District that could meet the needs of the intended occupants;*
- c) the site is located within, on the outskirts of, or within a reasonable distance of, a settlement that offers local services and community facilities; and*
- d) there is safe access to the highway network and adequate space within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles.*

In addition, in the case of permanent residential and transit sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:

- e) the proposal secures the provision of on-site facilities to meet the needs of the intended occupants including, if necessary, the servicing of vehicles and the keeping of horses that are used as a means of transport;*
- f) there is adequate space for the storage and servicing of rides, where it is intended that the site would be occupied by Travelling Showpeople; and*
- g) there are satisfactory arrangements for site management (where it is intended that the site would be managed), both in terms of site maintenance and liaison between the manager and the intended occupants.*

Other relevant plans and strategies

- 2.14 The following strategies and policy documents will be particularly relevant when preparing the DPD.

Sustainable Community Strategies

- 2.15 There are 3 Sustainable Community Strategies that cover the DPD area:
- Draft Dorset Community Strategy – Shaping Our Future
 - Bournemouth Vision 2026 – Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2011

- Poole's Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 to 2026

2.16 The draft Dorset Community Strategy provides a shared vision across Dorset:
“a living thriving Dorset where everyone has a part to play in creating a better quality of life”.

Gypsy and Traveller Policy 2003

2.17 Dorset County Council has approved a policy approach to the provision of services relating to Gypsies and Travellers. The broad objectives of the policy are:

- To balance the rights and needs of resident communities with those of Gypsies and Travellers.
- To respond to unauthorised encampments in an efficient and effective way, taking account of the level of nuisance for local residents and the rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers.
- To work with partners in other authorities, the voluntary sector and the Police, to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities and encourage reporting and action in respect of “Hate Crime”.

2.18 The statement contains a number of policies relating to site provision and the management of unauthorised encampments, including a commitment by the County Council to continue to provide permanent Gypsy sites in partnership with the appropriate District and Borough Councils and to work with Dorset Police to ensure a consistent and balanced approach is taken in response to unauthorised encampments, including identifying tolerated temporary stopping places for agreed fixed periods.

3 Scope of the DPD

3.1 The DPD will allocate permanent residential and transit sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole to meet identified needs from 2006 to 2026 at least. At the present time it is envisaged that Core Strategies and other DPDs will set out the policy framework for determining future planning applications on other sites within Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.

3.2 The DPD will focus on the provision of permanent and transit Gypsy and Traveller sites in response to the urgent need for sites evidenced by the Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment and other local needs based information and the continuing pressure for sites through planning applications and unauthorised developments. There is also a smaller need to find permanent sites for Travelling Showpeople.

3.3 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment has identified that the needs of the travelling communities can be identified within all of the Dorset districts, and within the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole. Therefore the DPD will identify sites within each administrative area, to meet identified local needs.

- 3.4 The Coalition Government has signalled its intention to reform the development plans system through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill published in December 2010. The Dorset authorities will review the form and scope of future development plans to take account of any agreed and relevant changes to the system.

4 Evidence of local needs

Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment (2006)

- 4.1 The first Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment was prepared by Anglia University for Dorset County Council in 2006. The assessment involved a survey and face to face interviews with 143 Gypsies and Travellers on sites of all types and in housing, within Dorset in 2005.
- 4.2 The assessment estimated the total residing population of Gypsies and Travellers in Dorset to be between 2,400 and 3,000, although it was thought that this figure probably underestimated the numbers of the travelling community living in housing.
- 4.3 The survey suggested that the breakdown of the travelling communities by group is:
- 25% English Gypsy
 - 7% Irish Traveller
 - 60% New Traveller
 - 4% Travelling Showpeople
 - 2% Welsh or Scottish Gypsy
 - 2% "Other"
- 4.4 The assessment identified the current supply of council and private pitches to be 58 pitches across the survey area, derived from the six monthly caravan count returns and local information provided by the councils.
- 4.5 Taking account of the existing supply, the assessment estimated the need for additional Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches to be between 585 and 609 from 2006 to 2011.
- 4.6 The principal recommendations from the assessment were:
- An approximate ratio of 1 long stay to 1 transit pitch is required;
 - There is a need for transit sites for those who are travelling, particularly in the summer months;
 - The provision of 2 or 3 transit sites in the south east of Dorset may meet need for a wider area;
 - There is scope for transit places on existing sites, if limited to relatives and associates of current occupiers;
 - Separate sites for English Gypsies and New Travellers are a practical necessity reflecting different cultural attitudes and travelling patterns;

- There is a significant scope for more private sites, with the potential for Council owned land to be made available for sale;
- There is a need for additional publicly owned pitches to at least make up for past pitch reductions;
- There is potential for the use of commonhold on New Traveller sites, making such sites effectively self managing;
- A policy of tolerance to “green lane” encampments by New Travellers should be explored;
- Councils should consider providing sites to allow rehoused Gypsies and Travellers to return to a public site if they cannot settle;
- The concept of small group housing schemes should be further explored;
- Long stay sites should include some larger pitches to accommodate 3 caravans, to provide for larger and extended families (and to meet the additional space requirements of Travelling Showpeople);
- There are opportunities to pioneer new approaches to site design. For example, greater sustainability and low environmental impact.

Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy: Gypsy and Traveller Provision

- 4.7 The Coalition Government has resolved to remove Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. However, during the preparation of the South West RSS in 2007-8, a number of bodies including local authorities and representatives from the travelling communities submitted evidence relating to local needs. This evidence remains relevant to this proposed DPD.
- 4.8 The Dorset authorities' initial submission to the RSS examination reviewed the requirement for Gypsies and Travellers as being 228 pitches to meet needs from 2006 to 2011.
- 4.9 The Panel appointed to conduct the examination recommended that 425 pitches should be provided to meet needs to 2011 and this figure appeared in the Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to the draft RSS in July 2008.
- 4.10 Subsequently the Dorset authorities submitted a response which rejected the RSS target and recommended that the number of pitches to be provided to meet local need should be 255 to 2011, a reduction of 40% on the RSS figures.
- 4.11 Table 1 summarises the different estimates of Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements for 2006 to 2011.
- 4.12 Travelling Showpeople were included within the Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment but no specific separate requirement was identified. At the RSS examination a Report on Travelling Showpeople was considered which was based upon data from the Gloucestershire and West of England GTAAs, a local authority questionnaire and consultation with representative bodies. The Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to the draft RSS in July 2008 subsequently proposed that 2 plots should be provided in Dorset to meet needs to 2011.

Table 1: Estimates of additional Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements 2006 to 2011

Authority	Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment (Anglia Ruskin University) 2006	Draft RSS Additional Pitch Requirement (Table 4.3) 2007		Dorset Authorities Submission to RSS EiP January 2008		Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to draft RSS (Table 4.3) July 2008		Dorset Authorities Joint Committee Response October 2008	
	(a)	(b)		(c)		(d)		(e)	
	Residential and Transit	Residential	Transit	Residential	Transit	Residential	Transit	Residential	Transit
Bournemouth	48-51	28	20	8	10	28	12	13	12
Christchurch	48-51	33	27	11	13	33	16	12	16
East Dorset	88-92	50	38	12	20	50	30	13	20
North Dorset	165-168	37	128	20	20(*)	37	20	20	20(*)
Poole	48-50	35	13	8	7	35	8	13	8
Purbeck	79-83	44	35	20	17	44	21	20	21
West Dorset	80-84	44	36	20	17	44	22	20	22
Weymouth and Portland	29-30	0	29	0	25	0	25	0	25
DORSET	585-609	271	326	99	129(*)	271	154	111	144(*)

After 2011, a compound growth of 3% per annum on residential pitches had been proposed in RSS

(*) Plus 100 pitches for Steam Fair

5 Initial communication and engagement

- 5.1 Effective engagement with a range of stakeholders, together with communities participation, will be an essential part of developing the DPD.
- 5.2 Councils have Statement of Community Involvements which set out the principles for engaging with communities during the preparation of planning documents.
- 5.3 A more detailed Engagement Strategy has been developed for the DPD which includes an agreed approach towards communication, engagement and consultation, the stakeholders and communities to be involved and the methods and timings of engagement. This can be found at:
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=150159&filetype=pdf>
- 5.4 A dedicated web section has been developed on the Dorset County wide website <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches> The website will be updated on a regular basis to provide up-to-date information and provide a central location for consultations, such as the 'request for sites' consultation which was carried out in July 2010. The website to date has also been used for the draft site criteria consultation and consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal scoping report.
- 5.5 At these early stages, initial consultation and engagement has been undertaken to establish site requirements and inform key issues relating to Gypsy and Travellers in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole. These included:
- An initial Stakeholder Group launch event;
 - Face-to face discussions with representatives from Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, including attending the Dorset Steam Fair;
 - Attendance at parish and town council area committees, LSP meetings and circulation of questionnaires intended to obtain the views of representatives of settled communities.
- 5.6 The initial Stakeholder Group launch event was held on 17 June 2010. Attendees included representatives from the travelling communities, council officers from a range of different departments, statutory environmental organisations, legal and planning agents and other organisations. The group helped to:
- Shape the initial stages of the DPD process;
 - Identify key issues for the DPD;
 - Provide information about potential sites; and
 - Inform the site selection process, including site requirements and suitable site criteria.

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities

- 5.7 Liaison with Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities will be continuous throughout the project, and so far has helped to inform on key issues relating to Gypsy and Travellers, identifying potential sites and the type of site which

would suit their needs and inform on the site assessment. This has been achieved through various face-to face meetings in July and August 2010. The main findings from these interviews are detailed below:

- 5.8 The main findings of an interview with a Romany Gypsy living in Dorset were:
- Romany Gypsies prefer a base from which to go travelling for around 4-5 months, usually for work – patterns have changed dramatically with the loss of fruit picking work and now there is more reliance on landscape gardening and tree topping etc.
 - Prefer private sites as they can pass these down through generations and are more flexible. Public sites have many unreasonable conditions and do not allow travelling for extended periods.
 - It is very important to identify small sites for single extended families as many do not really want to share with others. A private site would be ideally about 1 acre and contain up to 4 pitches, able to accommodate all family members over time. A site needs to be able to accommodate 2 touring caravans, a mobile home, storage and a day unit.
 - Site facilities should include a day room utility block with cooking areas, shower, toilet, laundry, telephone, internet, TV. All sites should have electricity, water, rubbish area, secure compound for tools etc, hardstanding for cars and touring caravan, space for animals, dogs and horses. Generally they use bottle gas.
 - Access to medical facilities is very important but to access this you need an address and a postcode – which means a site. Access to local schools is also important but access to a local village shop is not so important – often Gypsies are not welcome and there are better choices in bigger locations. Access to employment, often part time is going to be increasingly important as women have to work. Distances are not so important – they are used to travelling!
 - Keep sites away from noisy uses such as railways, busy roads and employment sites.
- 5.9 Through discussions with a member of The National Romany Rights Association, a number of potential sites within Dorset were identified and visited by the project team.
- 5.10 A member of Kushti Bok provided the following feedback:
- Different groups require different types of sites. Irish Travellers require hardstanding. New Travellers want to live in smaller groups in woodland and countryside. Irish Travellers and English Gypsies like to have land for horses, about 5 acres for 2 horses.
 - Small sites are better, as individual families are likely to be more acceptable to the local communities. Large sites can cause problems in terms of families not getting on and suspicions of local communities.
 - 0.5 to 1 acre for a pitch. Should provide enough land for future extensions to allow for families to grow. Probably sufficient land for 3 or 4 pitches, but don't make all of land available from start.

- Should not mix permanent pitches with transit pitches on the same site.
 - Do not require electricity on site, as travellers use generators.
 - Younger families prefer to be close to settlements, so that their children can go to school.
- 5.11 A meeting was held to discuss Gypsy and New Traveller requirements for a new public site at Shaftsbury. Some of the points raised included:
- New Travellers like having a central area with a firepit. Firepits need to be designed into sites, otherwise they are unsafe.
 - Some New Travellers were happy with a formal layout (hardstanding, amenity building, grass, hedge plot boundaries), while others wanted a more 'organic' layout and space with few facilities. Some just wanted a tap and toilet facilities (compost) on-site and no formal layout or amenity building.
 - There was a difference in opinion between New Travellers and Gypsies over pitch sizes. Gypsies stated a preference for a set size standard with all paying the same rent. New Travellers appeared to be more sympathetic to different sizes to reflect single/family groups.
 - New Travellers wanted a workshop on site for vehicles and for crafts.
 - New Travellers didn't want road lighting as they don't currently. If they had to, they wanted the ability to turn them off.
 - New Travellers and Gypsies want low rents, and this is more important than facilities.
- 5.12 Comments from other Gypsy and Traveller representatives included:
- New Travellers are not as mobile as they used to be, as they are often tied to employment, such as market gardening. However, some move away in the summer to festivals and then move back to the forest for the winter.
 - Some New Travellers prefer to live in vans on their own in remote countryside while others travel in big groups and enjoy a communal lifestyle.
 - Some New Travellers want shower blocks and facilities on site, while others require hardly anything.
- 5.13 The project team also engaged with Gypsies and Travellers at the Dorset Steam Fair with Planning Aid in the summer 2010. While this did not provide specific information about travelling through Dorset, as was hoped, it did provide the opportunity to discuss general site issues and requirements with the wider Gypsy and Traveller community.
- 5.14 At the initial Stakeholder Group launch event, a local family of Travelling Showpeople identified the following issues:
- Showmen need large sites which are subdivided into plots for individual families containing storage areas and residential areas.
 - For showmen, 0.25 acre for each family - good scenario might be 6/7 families together.

- There is a need for permanent sites in Dorset as existing sites are cramped with no room to expand.
- Sites need to have good access to local roads and can be in town locations, such as existing sites at Dorchester and Weymouth.

Settled communities

- 5.15 Initial engagement with representatives of settled communities has been achieved through attending existing relevant group meetings across Dorset and Bournemouth and Poole. These included:
- 7 September - Northern Area Committee
 - 23 September - Western Area Committee
 - 1 October – Dorset Towns and Larger Parish Committee
 - 6 October – LSP Bournemouth Environment Forum
 - 7 October – Christchurch LSP
 - 12 October - Central Area Committee
 - 20 October - Eastern Area Committee
 - 16 November - Poole LSP
- 5.16 At these meetings the project team explained the process and timetable for the DPD and sought the views of settled communities regarding their past experiences of living with Gypsies and Travellers, their views on good site locations and site characteristics and on site assessment criteria. A presentation was made at each meeting and questionnaires were distributed. Responses have subsequently been received and some of the comments expressed include:
- Past experience of Gypsy and Traveller sites has been bad, due to unsocial behaviour, fear of dogs, rubbish, noise problems, trespassing and vandalism.
 - Sites can be violent and need to be very closely monitored by strong resilient staff who can liaise with other agencies such as police, social services, RSPCA, schools.
 - I used to live near...(a site). I was living nearby from 1988 to 1997. I was not aware of any trouble relating to the site and cycled by it twice a day. The occupants kept themselves to themselves.
 - Gypsies do not cause trouble but they do not keep to planning conditions. The public feel that Gypsies are permitted to do more than the public.
 - Edge of town sites are good locations, preferably on disused light industrial sites with existing hard-standing. Not greenfield sites. Smaller sites are preferable - easier to supervise.
 - Outside towns and villages and not taking up valuable summer parking spaces. Not near schools or Green Belt. Use disused land. Brownfield sites. Old MoD sites. Edge of town so children have access to schools and community facilities.
 - The criteria for Travellers' sites should be those that the rest of the community experience. No more...no less. Access to services i.e. fuel, water,

rubbish disposal. Sites should be policed as the rest of the community. Liaison services should enable respectful integration.

- Travelling communities should not be ghettoized or isolated. This results in a total lack of understanding and tolerance on both sides.
- There should be different criteria for individual Gypsy and Traveller groups. Gypsies will not stay on the same site with others. Travellers need access to facilities (e.g. schools). Showpeople need permanent sites for winter/families.
- Access to community facilities, convenient location, fresh water, grazing, some distance from existing communities.
- Keep away from SSSIs, Nature Reserves.
- Transitory sites need proper sanitation and refuse facilities. Longer stay sites require schools, shops, sanitation, recycling and employment opportunities in the area. Should be run-down or disused brown-field sites. Stakeholders

5.17 Landowners, agents and service and infrastructure providers have been contacted to explore the issues and to shape the process of site identification and site assessment. This has been achieved through invitation to the first Stakeholder Group launch event, through the 'request for sites' consultation and through consultation on draft site assessment criteria.

5.18 In response to the consultation on draft site assessment criteria, the main comments received were:

- Rigid application of site selection procedure based on a sieve system can mean that otherwise suitable sites (when a balancing procedure is undertaken) can be rejected at an early stage.
- Many other councils have found that current unauthorised sites represent an 'easy win' when seeking to meet allocations and certainly have huge benefits for the Travelling community who occupy them.
- Green Belt: the issue of very special circumstances has been recognised but as this includes whether or not enough sites are available elsewhere (case law) then sites in Green Belt should not be rejected until it is clear that enough sites can be found elsewhere. If enough sites are not available then Green Belt and other national designations may be able to provide needed sites.
- All sites which are not in Flood Zone 3 should go forward to stage 3 where a suitable assessment can be carried out. It is becoming increasingly apparent that EA flood indicative maps can be very wrong.
- Site access and safety: To reject sites on the basis of an initial assessment of unknown degree of detail may miss out sites where access road standard is capable of amelioration.
- Access to facilities: The establishment of distance thresholds is problematic and may mean the rejection at stage 1 of quite suitable sites.
- Residential amenity: Challenge the rejection of sites because there may be a potential impact. Opens the door to NIMBY objections based on prejudice.

- Sewerage only - Any site which would be located within a sewage treatment odour consultation zone should be rejected - to protect the inhabitants from odour and fly nuisance.
- Utilities: Something best left until later in the process. New Travellers will form a significant part of the demand for sites to be met and their wish to develop low impact sites makes the availability or otherwise of utilities less important at an early stage in the site selection process.

5.19 Comments and views expressed by all stakeholders and communities have informed the development of the key issues for the DPD and the site assessment criteria.

6 Key Issues

6.1 Taking into account the views expressed by both travelling and settled communities during consultations and drawing on the review of the policy background and previous studies relating to needs, the following key issues have been identified as being central to the DPD,

The number of pitches required to meet needs

- 6.2 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment (2006) assessed the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be provided in Dorset for the period 2006-2011, after taking account of the existing supply identified in 2006.
- 6.3 However, the figures in the assessment were questioned through the development of the draft South West RSS and other estimates of pitch requirements were proposed.
- 6.4 The principal differences between the various estimates related to whether double counting had occurred in the original assessment, how growth factors should be applied beyond 2011, differing assumptions of the desired movement between housing and sites and the extent to which overcrowding requires additional pitches.
- 6.5 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment recommended that regular 5 year reviews of pitch numbers should be undertaken to take into account variations in travelling patterns and the demand for transfer from housing to caravan pitches.
- 6.6 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment made no specific recommendations regarding the provision of plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople and it was recognised by the RSS Panel that further work on identifying the needs of Travelling Showpeople needed to be carried out. Nevertheless, the RSS Proposed Modifications identified the need for 2 plots to be provided in Dorset between 2006 and 2011.
- 6.7 All of the above indicates that the DPD will need to review the findings of the Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment taking account of the latest upto date evidence of the existing supply and local needs when determining the number of pitches and plots to be allocated for the plan period.

The size of sites

- 6.8 National evidence, the result of the Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment and initial consultations would suggest that Gypsies and Travellers prefer small sites containing a small number of pitches to accommodate their immediate and extended family. Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (CLG, 2008) states that “a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable environment, which is easy to manage. However, smaller sites of 3-4 pitches can also be successful, particularly when designed for one extended family” (para. 4.7).
- 6.9 The DPD will therefore need to investigate whether small sites or a range of site sizes is the best approach to meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Dorset, having regard to other planning requirements including respecting the scale of the nearest settled community.

Accommodating the site needs of different travelling communities

- 6.10 Gypsies and Travellers are not a uniform homogeneous community, but rather a group of communities which share some features but have their own histories and traditions. Even within each main group there is fragmentation between different families which emphasises the lack of a cohesive community and the need to avoid over generalisations.
- 6.11 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment confirms that the predominant groups in Dorset are New Travellers (31.5%), English Gypsies / Romanies (24.5%), Irish Traveller (7%), Showman (3.5%) and ‘other’ (31.5%). Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Race Relations Acts.
- 6.12 The project team was told by many stakeholders that different groups do not mix on sites and have differing site requirements. The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment concluded that “separate sites for English Gypsies and New Travellers appear to be a practical necessity, reflecting differences in travelling patterns and cultural attitudes.” (para. 5.2.3.).
- 6.13 The DPD will therefore need to be sensitive to these dynamics when considering the relationship between identified local needs, overall pitch requirements and the number of potential sites. It will be important to ensure that sufficient sites have been identified to meet the needs of each community.

Meeting the legitimate planning concerns of the settled communities

- 6.14 The scope of this DPD is focused on the provision of suitable sites to meet the future needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Issues raised by individuals relating to enforcement matters regarding existing sites will not be addressed in the DPD. However, in determining suitable criteria for assessing potential sites, it will be important to recognise the needs of settled communities, particularly with regard to protecting residential amenity, encouraging social integration, ensuring that the scale of provision does not dominate the nearest settled community and impacts on local infrastructure.

Achieving mixed and balanced communities

- 6.15 The creation of sustainable communities and access for all to local services and facilities is a key aim of national policy. The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment identified problems with schooling for Gypsies and Travellers and also poor health, often associated with accommodation problems. Of those surveyed, 43% claimed to be in poor health or have close family members with poor health.
- 6.16 Therefore, it will be important for the DPD to recognise the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households when selecting sites. It will be important to consider access to local services and the relationship between new Gypsy and Traveller communities and existing settled communities.

Making pitches affordable

- 6.17 The project team was told that sites needed to be made available at low rent levels to reflect low incomes within some travelling communities. There is therefore likely to be a continuing need for affordable pitches to be provided. The DPD will need to identify delivery mechanisms for appropriate sites, and this may relate to public site provision to ensure that affordable pitches will be provided to meet local needs.

The balance between public and private provision

- 6.18 National policy and initial consultation with communities has revealed a preference for private sites and the Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment states that there is significant scope for more private sites in Dorset.
- 6.19 Currently, there are 5 Council owned sites in Dorset and Poole. These sites provide pitches at subsidised rent levels. The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment recommends that there should be further long stay public provision “at the very least to make up the pitch reductions since designation (i.e. about 30 pitches).” (para. 5.2.4). If additional public provision is to be made, the site(s) must be identified and be clearly capable of implementation, including the confirmation of funding sources.

The balance between permanent and transit provision

- 6.20 The Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment identifies that the provision of transit sites is particularly important for Dorset, given the high levels of travelling in the county during the summer months. The assessment concludes that the provision of 2 or 3 transit sites in south east Dorset may meet the needs for a wider area.
- 6.21 The Dorset authorities believe that well located transit sites could significantly reduce the cases of unauthorised encampments in the future and would enable the police and other service providers to take a more effective and consistent approach.

Deliverability of sites

- 6.22 In view of the urgency of the need for additional pitches, there must be reasonable certainty that the sites identified in the DPD will be implemented i.e. that they are genuinely deliverable. Deliverability will be a key aspect of the site assessment process.

7 Sources of potential sites

- 7.1 It will be important for the site assessment process to consider as many potential sites as possible so that all reasonable options can be said to have been investigated. Potential sources will therefore include the following:

Request for sites

- 7.2 Landowners, agents, councils, other public sector agencies, RSLs, other stakeholders and Gypsy and Traveller representatives were invited to put forward sites through a “request for sites” exercise, which was carried out during summer 2010.

Local authority land

- 7.3 All land owned by district, unitary and county councils will be investigated by the project team to identify potentially suitable land which could be made available by the councils to meet their agreed objectives.

Sites from previous and current land availability studies

- 7.4 Sites which have been previously rejected for housing on the grounds that they are located outside settlement boundaries, but may be otherwise suitable, will be investigated.

Major landowners

- 7.5 Local agents will be contacted to identify any potential from land held by large private estates, church commissioners or other public bodies.

Sites with previous planning history and/or unauthorised developments

- 7.6 Existing sites with temporary and/or personal consents and unauthorised sites will also be investigated to see if they are suitable for permanent or transit provision.

8 Policy guidance on identifying criteria

- 8.1 PPS3 identifies three key criteria for determining appropriate housing sites for delivery through the planning system. To be deliverable, sites should:
- Be available - the site is available now;
 - Be suitable – the site offers a suitable location for development now and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities; and
 - Be achievable – there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. (para. 54).
- 8.2 Circular 01/2006, in addition, states that “local planning authorities will need to demonstrate that sites are suitable, and that there is a realistic likelihood that specific sites allocated in DPDs will be made available for that purpose.” (para. 33).

- 8.3 The approach to identifying appropriate site selection criteria for the DPD will therefore build upon the framework:
- Is the site available?
 - Is the site suitable?
 - Is the site achievable?
- 8.4 A key consideration, again based upon Circular 01/2006, is that criteria should be “fair, reasonable, realistic and effective” (para. 32). Many previous studies and local plan criteria based policies across the country have used very restrictive criteria which have prevented many reasonable sites from coming forward. This is one of the principal reasons why the Government is no longer relying simply upon criteria based policies to bring forward suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 8.5 The DPD will need to take account of the various criteria set out in national policy, site guidance and views of the travelling and the settled communities, to establish a list of appropriate criteria.

9 Key site requirements

- 9.1 The DPD will need to undertake a process of assessing sites within Dorset, to identify if they are suitable sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople taking account of the following issues:
- General approach to location:
 - Policy designations;
 - Access to services;
 - Relationship to surrounding land uses;
 - Site conditions; and
 - Essential services.

General approach to location

- 9.2 Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 identify the following locations as being appropriate for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites:
- Sites on the outskirts of built up areas; and
 - Sites within rural or semi-rural settings.
- 9.3 However, “local authorities should first consider locations in or near existing settlements with access to local services, e.g. shops, doctors and schools.” (Circular 01/06 para. 65).
- 9.4 For Travelling Showpeople, sites “in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated in development plan documents, should be strictly controlled: however rural areas may be acceptable for some types of Travelling Showpeople’s sites. For example, circuses” (Circular 04/07 para. 45).

Policy designations

- 9.5 Sites within international environmental designations, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites, are not appropriate and will be rejected during the assessment process. However, all sites within proximity to these designated sites will be surveyed and assessed to assess their impact on these designated sites. Any potential sites will need to be discussed with Natural England.
- 9.6 Sites can be located within nationally recognised designations but only when “the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development” (Circular 01/06 para. 52). This would apply to the following national designations:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
 - Conservation Areas;
 - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 9.7 Circulars 01/06 and 04/07 state that new sites in the Green Belt would normally be inappropriate development. Very special circumstances have to be demonstrated to justify allowing development in the Green Belt.
- 9.8 Flood risk is covered by national planning policy in PPS 25. Caravans are identified as highly vulnerable to flooding (Table D2). PPS25 states that caravans should not be sited in areas that have a high probability of flooding or in the functional floodplain. For sites with a medium flood probability the ‘exceptions test’ must be passed. Any potential sites in the floodplain will need to be discussed with the Environment Agency.
- 9.9 “Local landscape and nature conservation designations should not be used in themselves to refuse planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites. (Circular 01/06, para 53). Rather, sites should be assessed for their actual impact on landscape and biodiversity.

Access to services

- 9.10 Circular 01/06 identifies that local authorities “should first consider locations in or near settlements with access to local services, e.g. shops, doctors and schools” (para. 65). In particular, there is a need to provide easy access to a doctors surgery and other health services and to ensure children attend school on a regular basis.
- 9.11 Sites should have good means of access to the local highway network but in terms of the availability of transport modes, the circulars state that “local authorities should be realistic about the availability, or likely availability, of alternatives to the car in accessing local services” (Circular 01/06 para. 54 and Circular 04/07 para. 45).

Relationship to surrounding land uses

- 9.12 The Government is keen to promote a peaceful and integrated co-existence between a Gypsy and Traveller site and the local settled community. In order to facilitate this, Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (CLG, 2008) states that “where possible, sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential developments” (para 3.7). However, “sites should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community” ((Circular 01/06 para. 54 and Circular 04/07 para. 45).
- 9.13 Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites also emphasises the importance of locating sites away from heavy industry and states that locations adjacent to industrial areas are unpopular because of their relative isolation, distance from local facilities and because of safety fears.
- 9.14 An important consideration is avoiding noise and disturbance. This can relate to the disturbance to the local settled community, in terms of the movement of vehicles to and from the site, from the stationing of vehicles on site and on-site business activities. However, it can also be the disturbance of the caravan occupants from adjoining uses, such as from industrial areas, railway lines or from highways, given the greater noise transference through walls of caravans than through the walls of conventional housing.

Site conditions

- 9.15 Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites identifies that, in terms of living conditions, “sites should not be identified for Gypsy and Traveller use in locations that are inappropriate for ordinary residential dwellings, unless exceptional circumstances apply” (para. 3.6).
- 9.16 Consequently the following are not considered acceptable locations:
- Sites in areas at high risk of flooding, as discussed above;
 - Sites located on contaminated land on or near landfill sites; and
 - Sites near other hazardous places.
- 9.17 In addition, sites should be capable of safe access, be reasonably level and should have sufficient space to accommodate a mobile home, touring caravan, and a small building (e.g. a wash block) and adequate manoeuvring space.
- 9.18 The Showmen’s Guild has produced a Traveling Showpeople’s Sites Model Planning Package (2007) which states that sites may have existing buildings located on them which can be used for the storage, maintenance and repair of equipment.

Essential services

- 9.19 Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites states that sites must have access to water, electricity, drainage and sanitation, with electricity and sewerage for permanent sites through mains systems, although in some locations alternative provision maybe appropriate. However, the document does state that the guidance contained within it may not be appropriate for all New Traveller sites and project team discussions with

New Travellers did indicate that many prefer low impact and more environmental solutions to the provision of site infrastructure.

- 9.20 The Showmen's Guild's Model Planning Package states that sites should provide amenities normally expected for human occupation.
- 9.21 Circulars 01/06 and 04/07 state that sites should avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure (para. 54 and para. 45 respectively).

10 Site assessment criteria and the selection process

- 10.1 The broad site criteria identified from national policy, best practice and initial consultation have been developed into a set of draft site assessment criteria, which were published for consultation during September 2010. Having received feedback from stakeholders, changes have been made to take account of comments and a final set of recommended assessment criteria have been prepared by the project team (Appendix A).

- 10.2 The intention will be to apply the criteria in 3 stages.

Stage 1 assessment

- 10.3 Sites will be subject to an initial stage 1 assessment, using desk based/GIS information. This has been designed to remove sites which are clearly unsuitable (e.g. within international environmental designations) and to identify issues which will require further investigation at stage 2. Sites will be assessed against each criteria using a simple colour coding system consisting of a rejection (red), acceptance but where further investigation and/or mitigation is required (orange) and acceptance (green).
- 10.4 Those sites which are not rejected at stage 1 will be considered further at stage 2.

Stage 2 assessment

- 10.5 All sites which are not rejected at stage 1 will be subject to survey and a more detailed assessment of suitability, availability and achievability. All sites will be assessed taking a balanced approach towards performance against all of the criteria.
- 10.6 All sites which are not rejected at stage 2 will go forward for further consideration at stage 3.

Stage 3 assessment

- 10.7 Sites which have not been rejected at stage 2 will be further investigated through the DPD process, having regard to the following considerations:
- Meeting the overall pitch requirements
 - Spatial strategy
 - Traveller patterns
 - Cumulative impact

- Site needs of different traveller groups
- Types of sites required (permanent, transit)
- Site capacity
- Delivery models

Site capacity

- 10.8 All potential sites will be subject to an initial broad assessment of the number of pitches which could be provided on site.
- 10.9 This will take account, firstly, of:
- Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide (CLG, 2008);
 - Travelling Showpeople's Sites Model Standard Package (The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, 2007)
 - Any relevant planning history; and
 - Case study sites.
- 10.10 These will help to determine the optimum size and configuration of pitches (or plots) on site. On larger sites we may assume a mix of pitch sizes to reflect the needs of different families.
- 10.11 The intention will be to take account of on-site constraints and the need, where appropriate, for landscaping and other mitigation measures to achieve a suitable development. A generous approach to landscaping and access arrangements will be taken to ensure a high standard of design can be achieved on site. This will result in sufficient access and accommodation space to create a site which Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople find attractive. At the same time, sufficient space and landscaping will help to conserve the residential amenity of neighbouring uses.

11 Delivery

- 11.1 At this scoping stage, a number of potential delivery models have been developed which will be investigated further during the preparation of the DPD.

Delivery model 1

- 11.2 Firstly, there may be sites which are currently owned by individual Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople families which can be developed to meet immediate family requirements. In this case, allocation in a DPD would provide the planning policy context for early progression of a planning application and for development to take place or for currently unauthorised development to become authorised.

Delivery model 2

- 11.3 Secondly, there may be sites which are currently owned by individual Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople families where there is capacity for greater use of the site for further pitches. In this case, initial discussions will be undertaken with the owners to identify whether there are likely to be future family or extended family

needs requiring the allocation of the site for a greater number of pitches than is currently required. In this case, allocation in the DPD with a phasing programme to secure provision for future need would be the appropriate way forward.

Delivery model 3

- 11.4 Thirdly, there may be sites which are not currently owned by Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling families but which have potential to be developed for such uses. Allocation in the DPD would identify these sites to travelling communities and they could be purchased on the open market. Alternatively the Councils could consider using Homes Bonus or other monies to buy the site or identify their own public assets and then make them available to organised Gypsy and Traveller groups on a non-profit making basis for them to develop and manage. Such groups could also be offered the opportunity to buy stakes in the site, allowing the income from such sales to provide further sites. There are emerging examples of innovative acquisition and funding arrangements across the country.

Delivery model 4

- 11.5 Fourthly, there may be sites where the Councils consider that additional affordable pitch provision may be appropriate. In this case, the Councils should investigate the potential for either buying sites or developing their public assets using Homes Bonus or other monies to secure or increase affordable provision. Sites could then either be managed by a Council or a Registered Social Landlord.

Delivery model 5

- 11.6 Finally, if the Council decides to pursue the longer term option of seeking Gypsy and Traveller provision on large housing urban extension sites, there is the opportunity to require large housing allocations in Core Strategies and/or subsequent allocations DPDs to provide for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. These could then be sold on the open market or affordable pitches brought forward and managed by the Councils or RSLs.
- 11.7 Potential delivery solutions will be investigated through the DPD process with landowners and other stakeholders to ensure that sites identified in the submission DPD are capable of being developed during the plan period.

12 Impacts assessment

Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment

- 12.1 Integrating sustainability into the process of site selection from the earliest opportunity will help choose sites that contribute to more sustainable development in Dorset. Demonstrating how sustainability has informed the selection of sites from alternatives is also an important part the sustainability appraisal process. This is not only to satisfy regulatory requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment, but also good practice in the iteration of options to allow sustainable choices to be made.
- 12.2 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report for the DPD has been produced and is available to view on the dorsetforyou website <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/397367>

This sets out the principal sustainability issues for the DPD and a set of sustainable development objectives for appraising the plan. These objectives have helped in testing the suitability of criteria for assessment and will be used in the assessment of site impacts.

- 12.3 *Sustainability assessment of site selection criteria:* The first stage of assessment has been to use the sustainability objectives, developed at scoping to check the coverage of the site selection criteria. This simple evaluation of the criteria has helped make sure that no matters of importance to identifying sustainable sites are left out of the considerations for site selection.
- 12.4 *Sustainability assessment of sites:* For the assessment of individual sites a standard set of sustainability objectives is needed to ensure the systematic appraisal of sites. Therefore, Sustainability Objectives developed as part of SA Scoping will be used as the basis for these. However, it may be that they will need some adjusting to make them suitable for use in a site specific assessment, to be expressed using specific indicators rather than more broad 'directions of change'.
- 12.5 Part of the site assessment will need to be a SA of the identified sites. The SA will be incorporated into the overall site appraisal matrix for each site.
- 12.6 Reporting at this stage is likely to be integrated into the Site Options Report.

Habitats regulations assessment

- 12.7 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will need to be undertaken to examine whether the proposals emerging in the DPD will have any significant impacts on internationally important nature conservation sites.
- 12.8 An initial HRA Screening Report has been produced and is available to view on the dorsetforyou.com website.

Equality impact assessment and health impact assessment

- 12.9 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed of the DPD preparation process and outcomes. This is recommended by Dorset County Council as a way of making sure the needs of diverse groups are taken into account in preparing the plan. The assessment will be based on the Dorset toolkit methodology.
- 12.10 The SA will also include elements of a Health Impact Assessment. The sustainability appraisal will be used to demonstrate how the DPD is contributing to making a healthy place to live, creating opportunities for more healthy lifestyles.

13 Programme

- 13.1 A detailed project plan was produced in May 2010 setting out the proposed programme for the production of the DPD. This is available to view on the dorsetforyou.com website.
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=150160&filetype=pdf>
- 13.2 A separate Engagement Strategy has also been produced setting out how and when stakeholders will be involved in the production of the DPD. This is also available to view on the dorsetforyou.com website.
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=150159&filetype=pdf>
- 13.3 The table below sets out the broad timetable for the production of the DPD.

Table 2: DPD preparation timetable

Stage	Milestone
Launch conference	June 2010
Issues and Preferred Options consultation	June 2011
Publication of DPD	March 2012
Submission of DPD	August 2012
Examination of DPD	November 2012
Adoption of DPD	August 2013

- 13.4 Any changes to the project plan or engagement strategy will be produced and published on the councils' websites.

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
Availability	Stage 1	Promoted sites, public land ownership etc.	Not applicable.	There is no evidence that the site is available for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) use or land ownership is unknown. There may be legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements which will require further investigation at stage 2.	There is evidence that the site is available in principle for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) use.
Suitability					
<i>Policy constraints</i>					
International environmental designations	Stage 1	Special Protection Area Ramsar Sites Special Conservation Area World Heritage Site	Within the international designation.	Not within an international designation but is within its buffer and further investigation is required at stage 2 to determine whether it is likely to have a significant effect, individually or cumulatively on the designation objectives.	Not within the international environmental designation or its buffer.
National designations (1)	Stage 1	Site of Special Scientific Interest National Nature Reserve Geological Conservation Review Site Scheduled Ancient Monument Listed Building Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	Within the national designation.	The site is within close proximity and further investigation is required at stage 2 to determine whether it has an unacceptable negative impact.	The site is not within the national designation or within close proximity.

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
National designations (2)	Stage 1	Area of Outstanding Beauty Groundwater Source Protection Zone Conservation Areas	Not applicable.	The site is within the national designation or is within close proximity and further investigation is required at stage 2 to determine whether it has an unacceptable negative impact.	The site is not within the national designation or within close proximity.
Local environmental designations	Stage 1	Local Nature Reserves Tree Preservation orders Ancient woodland Sites of Nature Conservation Interest Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological Site Heritage Coast Land Instability Zones Heritage assets (local lists) Sewage treatment odour consultation zones	Not applicable.	The site is covered by a local designation or is within close proximity and further investigation is required to determine whether it has a negative impact and whether this can be mitigated.	The site is not within a local designation or within close proximity.
Land use allocations	Stage 1	Open space Community facilities Employment areas Other allocations	Within an area protected / allocated/ safeguarded for another use where policy requirements do not allow use of the site for GTTS use.	Within an area protected / allocated/ safeguarded for another use where the policy criteria can be satisfied (e.g. surplus to requirements or loss can be mitigated).	Outside an area subject to a land use designation.
Green Belt	Stage 1	Green Belt	Not applicable.	Located in the Green Belt and further investigations are required at stage 3 to identify if any very special circumstances apply.	Located outside the Green Belt.
Agricultural land	Stage 1	Agricultural Land	Not applicable.	Located on higher quality	Located on lower quality

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
----------	------------------------------------	-------------------	--------	--	--------

		Classification Note: Data only held for grade 3, not 3a and 3b.		agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 or 3) which should be a lower priority location for development, except where inconsistent with other sustainability considerations.	agricultural land (Grades 4 or 5) where loss has little weight.
Flood risk	Stage 1	Environment Agency Indicative Flood Mapping and SFRA	Not applicable.	Within flood zone 2 or 3	Within flood zone 1.
<i>Physical constraints</i>					
Flood risk	Stage 2	SFRA Flood risk assessment / evidence	Within flood zone 3b (for potential transit sites) and flood zone 3a or 3b (for permanent sites) where no site specific evidence that the development will be safe and/or will not increase flood risk elsewhere.	Within flood zone 3a (for potential transit sites) and flood zone 2 (for potential permanent sites), to be subject to the exception test at stage 3.	Not applicable.
Safety	Stage 1	HSE Land use planning zones MoD firing zones Air public safety zones	Within a zone where the appropriate authority advises against development.	Within a zone where the appropriate authority advises mitigation measures required.	Outside zones.
Contamination and unstable land	Stage 2 Note: Will be considered at stage 1 if information available	Contaminated Land Unstable Land	Contains an area of unstable or contaminated land that is likely to undermine the site's suitability and achievability.	Could contain unstable or contaminated land that should be subject to further investigation (stage 1) and capable of mitigation (stage 2).	Not located on unstable land. Not located on contaminated land.
Air quality	Stage 1	Air Quality Management Area	Not applicable.	Site within Air Quality Management Area.	Not within Air Quality Management Area.
Topography	Stage 2	Topography	Steep slopes which make the site unsuitable and/or unachievable.	Sloping or undulating land which may require works to achieve a suitable	Level or gently sloping site.

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
----------	------------------------------------	-------------------	--------	--	--------

				development.	
Site access and safety	Stage 2	Access Proximity to major roads	Poor access and/or road of poor standard. Likely to be subject to safety issues from surrounding uses incapable of mitigation	Access poor but capable of being improved. Road of adequate or good standard. Likely to be affected by safety issues but this is capable of mitigation.	Adequate or good access off adequate or good standard of road. Not affected by safety issues.
Accessibility to facilities	Stage 2	Access to facilities: GP Surgery Primary School Shop Access to public transport: Bus stop Train station Frequency of service	Not applicable. Actual distances to be measured and sites to be considered at stage 3.	Not applicable. Actual distances to be measured and sites to be considered at stage 3.	Not applicable. Actual distances to be measured and sites to be considered at stage 3.
Utilities	Stage 2	Water Electricity Sewerage Telecommunications	No access to mains water without considerable expense.	No on-site access to mains water or electricity but connection points within vicinity.	On-site access to mains water and mains electricity.
<i>Potential impacts</i>					
Green Belt (continued)	Stage 3	Green Belt	No very special circumstances exist to justify harmful impact on Green Belt.	Very special circumstances exist to justify harmful impact on Green Belt, but mitigation measures also required.	Very special circumstances exist to justify harmful impact on Green Belt.
Landscape	Stage 2	Landscape impact and visual containment	Unacceptable impact of site upon landscape not capable of mitigation.	Impact capable of mitigation. Potential cumulative impact with other identified sites.	No unacceptable impact on landscape.
Biodiversity / Protected Species /	Stage 2	Impact on biodiversity resources or known protected species	Significant effect and unacceptable impact of site upon ecology or	Impact capable of mitigation. Potential cumulative impact with other identified sites.	No significant effect or unacceptable impact on ecology, protected species

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
----------	------------------------------------	-------------------	--------	--	--------

Important hedgerow		Site of Special Scientific Interest National Nature Reserve Geological Conservation Review Site	protected species or habitats not capable of mitigation where no overriding public interest.		or habitats.
Historic environment	Stage 2	Scheduled Ancient Monuments Listed Buildings Historic Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas Heritage assets (local lists)	Adverse impact upon a designation not capable of mitigation.	Adverse impact on a designation but this is capable of mitigation.	No adverse impact on any designation.
Water quality	Stage 2	Groundwater Source Protection Zone	Unacceptable risk to the supply and quality of water resources.	Risk to the supply and quality of water resources capable of mitigation.	No risk to the supply and quality of water resources.
Noise	Stage 2	Noise pollution from surrounding uses e.g. road, rail and air transport	Likely to be adversely affected by noise pollution from surrounding uses that could make for an unacceptable residential environment - Noise exposure categories C & D.	Likely to be affected by noise pollution but this is capable of mitigation - Noise exposure category B.	Not affected by noise issues - Noise exposure category A.
Odour	Stage 2	Proximity to and relationship with the direction of odour from sewage treatment works	Likely to be adversely affected by odour from sewage treatment works that would make an unacceptable residential environment.	Not applicable.	Residents on site could reasonably co-exist with nearby sewage treatment works.
Residential amenity (Impact of site on adjoining)	Stage 2	Relationship with existing adjacent uses	Close proximity to existing adjacent uses esp. residential properties where any	Close proximity to existing adjacent uses esp. residential properties but any potential impact (light, visual,	Unlikely to adversely affect existing adjoining uses.

Appendix A: Final recommended site assessment criteria

Criteria	Stage at which criteria considered	Designation/Issue	Reject	Accept but further investigation/mitigation required	Accept
----------	------------------------------------	-------------------	--------	--	--------

uses)			potential impact (light, visual, other disturbance) on adjoining uses is not reasonably capable of mitigation.	other disturbance) on adjoining uses is capable of mitigation.	
Residential amenity (Impact of adjoining uses on site)	Stage 2	Relationship with existing adjacent uses	Close proximity to existing adjacent uses and any potential impact from these uses (light, visual, other disturbance) on the site is not reasonably capable of mitigation.	Close proximity to existing adjacent uses but any potential impact from these uses (light, visual, other disturbance) on the site is capable of mitigation.	Unlikely to be adversely affected by existing adjoining uses.
Availability	Stage 2	Promoted sites, public land ownership etc.	There are known legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements which cannot be resolved.	There continues to be doubt over whether the site is genuinely available for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople (GTTS) use after further investigations.	There is evidence that the landowner is willing to sell and/or a developer is interested in developing within the timeframe of the DPD. There are no known legal or ownership problems, such a multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements which are not capable of being overcome within the timeframe of the DPD.
Achievability	Stage 2	Deliverability Viability	Has hope value for housing. Extensive buildings on site requiring demolition. Other constraints incapable of resolution without considerable expense.	Site constraints capable of being overcome but where extent and cost of mitigation are unclear at this stage.	In a location where housing development is contrary to spatial policy. No site constraints needing to be overcome.

Baker Associates
The Crescent Centre
Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6EZ

www.bakerassocs.com

t 0117 933 8950

f 0117 925 7714

e all@bakerassocs.com

