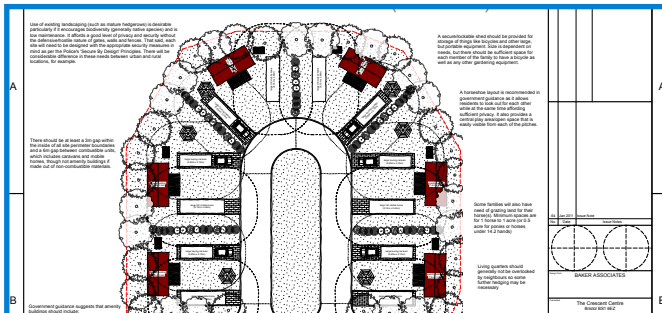


Have your say: finding sites in Dorset for Gypsies and Travellers

Consultation – November 2011

Site Options summary and response form (Purbeck)



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 Purbeck:

- 21 November 3:30-7:30pm, The Mowlem, Shore Road, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 1DD
- 1 December 2-5:30pm, D'Urberville Centre, Colliers Lane, Wool, Dorset, BH20 6DL

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 and 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.

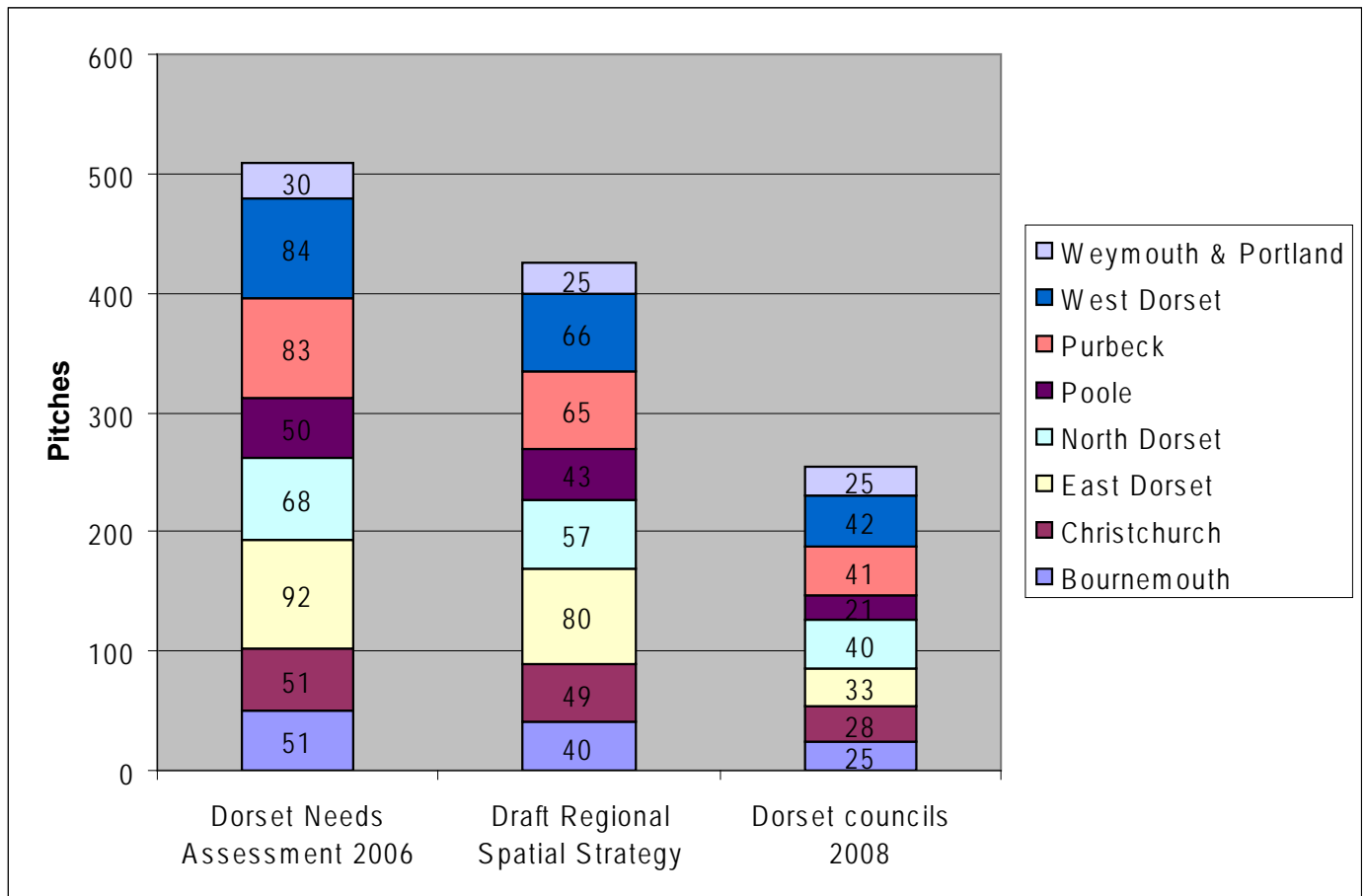
Meeting needs

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.

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.

Recent estimates of Gypsy and Traveller need in Dorset



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 a list of four sites which may be potentially suitable, available and achievable for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Purbeck.

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 sites in Purbeck




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Shortlisted sites

<p><i>Site name & settlement:</i> County Farm, Burnham Lane/ Washpond Lane, Swanage</p>	<p><i>Summary of assessment:</i></p> <p>Small south eastern part of large area of undulating and sloping farmland bounded by the railway line to the south and Washpond lane to the east.</p>	<p><i>Number of pitches:</i> 2</p>
<p><i>Site map</i></p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> The site is within the AONB and adjacent to a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The site is visible from a wide area including from the southern valley side and forms the backdrop to the distinctive High Purbeck Ridge beyond. The majority of the site is not appropriate for development but there is potential for 2 low impact units in the bottom south east corner. However, this area is liable to flood and noise from the railway line could be an issue. There are also highway concerns about the very narrow road and lack of footway.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The agent confirms availability in principle subject to detailed negotiation.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> The required mitigation measures, and cost of footway could be expensive</p>	<p><i>Type of provision:</i> Residential</p> <p><i>Type of traveller:</i> Any</p> <p><i>Delivery:</i> Site to be purchased and occupied by Traveller family</p>
<p><i>Site name & settlement:</i> Land off High Street, Herston Cross, Swanage</p>	<p><i>Summary of assessment:</i></p> <p>Small eastern part of larger site comprising three pasture fields subdivided by hedgerows, situated on central western edge of Swanage adjacent to A351.</p>	<p><i>Number of pitches:</i> 5</p>
<p><i>Site map</i></p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> The larger site is located within the AONB and is prominent in views when approaching from the west. This makes the majority of the site unsuited for Gypsy and Traveller development. However, it may be possible to accommodate a small development in the south eastern part of the site. Extensive planting would be required to reduce the visual impact on nearby properties. The site is also at risk from flooding and further assessment of this would be needed prior to development taking place. The site does have good access to local services, with a nearby shop, primary school and bus service.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The agent confirms availability in principle subject to detailed negotiation.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> Improvements to access, flood risk and landscaping works could be expensive.</p>	<p><i>Type of provision:</i> Residential</p> <p><i>Type of traveller:</i> Romany Gypsy or Irish Traveller</p> <p><i>Delivery:</i> Site could be purchased by the council or privately, possibly with grants</p>

<p>Site name & settlement: Land at Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road, Swanage</p>	<p>Summary of assessment:</p> <p>An undeveloped paddock on the edge of north Swanage.</p>	<p>Number of pitches: 2</p>
<p>Site map</p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> The site has road frontage on two sides and is well contained with vegetation on its edges. It is within the AONB. An area of flood risk extends across the lower part of the site. Proposal for Northbrook Road / Ulwell Road Highway Improvement crosses the site (policy SS22). Access to services from the site is poor, although a nearby bus stop may help overcome this.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The site is publicly owned and although currently leased out, is in principle available.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> This is dependent on the likelihood and cost of the highway improvement scheme.</p>	<p>Type of provision: Residential</p> <p>Type of traveller: Romany Gypsy or Irish Travellers</p> <p>Delivery: Site to be purchased and occupied by Traveller family</p>

<p>Site name & settlement: Land between Meadow View and Lanresse, East Burton Road, Wool</p>	<p>Summary of assessment:</p> <p>A former depot, now cleared, located immediately north of the railway line on East Burton Road.</p>	<p>Number of pitches: 2</p>
<p>Site map</p> 	<p><i>Is it suitable?</i> This flat site next to the railway is accessed by a narrow road, close to other homes, but this and possible noise impacts are capable of mitigation through appropriate screening. The site is within the safeguarded corridor for a future Wool bypass as set out in the Local Plan (policy SS 33). Contamination due to its former use should be investigated. The site has good access to local services, the majority of which are within walking distance.</p> <p><i>Is it available?</i> The site is publicly owned, no longer required as a depot and is therefore available.</p> <p><i>Is it achievable?</i> This is dependent on the likelihood of the highway improvement scheme coming forward.</p>	<p>Type of provision: Residential</p> <p>Type of traveller: Romany Gypsy or Irish Travellers</p> <p>Delivery: County Council renting or selling the site to families for occupation.</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.



