

Gypsy and Traveller Site Options review

Dover District Council

Final Report

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Main Contact: Dr Michael Bullock
Email: Michael.bullock@arc4.co.uk
Telephone: 0800 612 9133
Website: www.arc4.co.uk

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Registered Address: arc4, 41 Clarendon Road, Sale Manchester M33 2DY

Email: contact@arc4.co.uk www.arc4.co.uk

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Directors - Helen Brzozowski – Michael Bullock

1. Introduction and context

Background

- 1.1 arc⁴ prepared comprehensive Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Dover District Council which was published in September 2018. This established an overall cultural need for 30 pitches over the full Local Plan period (2014 to 2037) and a need for 18 pitches from households meeting the qualifying criteria set out in the MHCLG 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Site document.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Site Options Review is to consider how additional pitches can be delivered across the district to address this need. This will be achieved by engaging with local Gypsies and Travellers to identify potential sites. A further stage of work would provide a detailed appraisal of the sites identified and their potential to be brought forward.

Existing evidence

- 1.3 During the preparation of the GTAA, survey respondents were asked if the sites they lived on could be expanded or intensified (i.e. more pitches could be created on the site) to help address need. A small number were identified in the GTAA including:
 - Local authority 2-3 pitches;
 - Authorised 10 pitches in total: 4 pitches (4 respondents stated their pitches could be expanded but did not specify a number, so assume one per site) and intensification of one site with 6 additional pitches
- 1.4 However, the potential expansion of sites was based on the views of respondents and not a technical appraisal of sites.
- 1.5 A note was subsequently prepared for the Council setting out where potential expansion and intensification of sites could take place to help address pitch need. It is understood that the Council expects windfall and site intensification/expansion to address the identified need. However, the delivery of additional pitches on existing sites may not come to fruition and therefore the council needs to engage further with the community to explore the potential development of additional sites in the district.

Method statement

- 1.6 Stage One builds upon the relationships already established with the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the district. During the original GTAA arc⁴ visited all sites discussed to discuss the assessment with local residents and we also engaged with a local Parish Councillor at Ewell Minnis who was from the Traveller community.
- 1.7 On revisiting sites, confirmed to the G&T population that a need was found and the council are being proactive in working with the community to identify potential

additional sites. A short leaflet was left with residents explaining the purpose of the site visits (Appendix A)

- 1.8 The 2018 GTAA identified a total of 21 sites (one permanent local authority site, 11 private permanent sites, 4 private tolerated sites and 5 unauthorised sites). There have been some changes to the planning status of sites and some additional pitches created at Hay Hill which have been considered in this review.

Note on Hay Hill

- 1.9 The 2018 GTAA identified 4 pitches at Hay Hill of which two were occupied and two unoccupied. By January 2020, permission for 7 pitches has been granted. Further subdivision may have taken place, resulting in a total of 9 pitches of which 7 appear to be occupied through site observation.

	Pitch No.	Name of Site	Site name (planning)
(Closest to A256)	1	The Oaklands	Plot 1A, Land at Hay Hill
	2	Unnamed pitch	Plot 1C, Land at Hay Hill
	3	Plot B	Plot 1B, Land at Hay Hill
	4	Alice Gardens	Plot 2A Alice Gardens
	5	Blue Bell Place	Plot 2B Bluebell Place
	6	1 Strawberrys Place	Plot 3 Strawberry Place
	7	Not occupied	
	8	Unnamed pitch	
(Furthest from A256)	9	Rose Garden	Caravan plot 4, Rose Garden

Site visit statistics

- 1.10 A total of 28 sites were identified (which included new sites created from the subdivision of sites at Hay Hill) All sites were visited by a Managing Partner at arc4 who carried out previous site visits. Of the 28 sites visited:

- 4 were vacant ;
- 1 was not approached (Caravan, Red Barn Lane);
- Residents on 13 sites were spoken to;
- A note was left on 10 sites requesting residents to contact arc4.

- 1.11 Residents were asked:

- there is potential for their current site to be expanded (which would be cross-referenced with findings from the GTAA);
- if so, would they be willing to share their site with other members of the travelling community;

- if they are aware of any land which could be considered as a site (either owned by themselves or someone else); and
- if they know of anyone with land or who may be considering developing sites.

2. Review of existing sites and potential sites

Permanent authorised sites

- 2.1 Table 2.1 summarises the potential number of pitches which could be delivered on existing sites and details of a new potential site.
- 2.2 In summary, analysis indicates there are:
- 10 vacant pitches on existing authorised sites;
 - 22 potential pitches which could be delivered through the intensification/expansion of existing sites (15 on authorised sites and 7 on sites which are not permanent authorised);
 - 28 pitches which could be delivered on a new site;
 - 2 transit pitches could be delivered on existing sites.
- 2.3 When reviewing potential pitch capacity, the general assumption is that one pitch will accommodate a static caravan, a tourer, an amenity shed and space for a vehicle. Analysis prepared by the council indicates an average of 18 pitches per hectare (or one pitch being 0.06 of a hectare)

Table 2.1 Potential additional pitches and sites in Dover district

Site Reference	Review of site capacity Jan 2020	Address	A. Pitches on sites currently vacant	B. Additional pitches on sites which could be expanded / intensified	C. Pitches on new sites	D. Transit site provision	Notes
Priv 10 (1)	Plot 1A, Land at Hay Hill (The Oaklands)	Ham, Eastry, CT13 0ED		2			Owner interesting in increasing number of pitches on the site
Priv 10 (2)	Plot 1B, Land at Hay Hill (Plot B)	Ham, Eastry, CT13 0ED	2				Owner interesting in increasing number of pitches on the site
Priv 10 (5)	Plot 2B Bluebell Place (Bluebell Place)	Ham, Eastry, CT13 0ED		1			Owner interesting in increasing number of pitches on the site
Priv 10 (6)	Plot 3 Strawberry Place (1 Strawberrys Place)	Ham, Eastry, CT13 0ED		2			Owner interesting in increasing number of pitches on the site
Priv 10 (7)	Subdivision of either Plot 3 or 4; hardstanding and electric points provided; est 4 pitches	Ham, Eastry, CT13 0ED	4				Hardstanding and electric power in place.
Priv2	Land to the south of Alkham Valley Road / Land to the rear of The Meadows, AVR, Alkham	Alkham Valley Road, Alkham, CT15 7EW		10		2	This site now has a total of 8 pitches. The owner would be happy to expand by a further 10 pitches (possibly more) for family, wider family and others who would meet with the owners approval. Additionally there is scope for some transit pitches (2 estimated)

Site Reference	Review of site capacity Jan 2020	Address	A. Pitches on sites currently vacant	B. Additional pitches on sites which could be expanded / intensified	C. Pitches on new sites	D. Transit site provision	Notes
Priv3	Cobb's Yard	Longmete Road, Preston, CT3 1DN	3				Currently unoccupied and for sale
Priv9	Hollyoak	Hollyoak, Marshborough Road, Marshborough, Nr Ash, CT13 0PF	1				Currently unoccupied and legal challenge to occupation ongoing
PrivTol1	Summerfields	Newcastle Lane, Ewell Minnis, CT15 7DY		1			Spoke to resident. Potential to expand and apparently son has permission to do this
PrivTol4	Romany Acres	Caravan, Romany Acres, Belsey Lane, Ewell Minnis, CT15 7DY		4			Currently unoccupied. Large site capable of 3-4 pitches
Unauth2	The Paddock	Ferne Lane, Ewell Minnis, CT15 7FF		2			Currently unauthorised. Would consider expansion and possibly +2 pitches but would need to be known/family occupiers
Potential site 1		Land East of Kestrels Fen and South of Ash Road, Sandwich			18		Family are interesting in selling the land on for someone to develop it. 3 acre site. Potential capacity for 18 pitches. Currently there is one shed, awning and two caravans being stored under the awning.
Potential Site 2		Land North of Snowden caravan site			10		Site north of Snowden Caravan Site. Part of a large allocation and the developer may gift a parcel of land for G&T use
TOTAL			10	22	28	2	

Transit sites and other temporary options

- 2.4 The 2018 GTAA identified 7 unauthorised encampments over the period 2011 to 2017. The GTAA recommended no transit provision is provided based on available evidence. However, the Council had reported recent incidences of households passing through the district and this situation should be carefully monitored to establish whether households need transit provision within the district.
- 2.5 There are three main transit options for local authorities:
- Transit pitches on sites: intended for short-term use while in transit. Sites are usually permanent but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.;
 - Stop-over places: designated temporary camping areas tolerated by local authorities, used for short-term encampments and sometimes with the provision of temporary toilet facilities, water supplies and refuse collection services; and
 - Negotiated stopping: involves the local authority making an agreement with Travellers on unauthorised encampments.

Transit sites

- 2.6 Generally speaking, a transit pitch can accommodate up to two caravans. Pitches could be used multiple times during the year but there may be situations where transit provision is insufficient to meet need, for instance if large numbers of households are travelling to major family events.
- 2.7 Former DCLG design guidance recommended that a transit pitch:
- Must include an area of hardstanding constructed of concrete or a similar suitable hard wearing material which extends over the whole area to be occupied by a trailer, touring caravan or other vehicle;
 - Pitches should be able to accommodate two touring caravans, two parking spaces and private amenities;
 - Private amenities should include a toilet, wash basin and shower with hot and cold water supply (amenities could be provided flexibly depending on the degree of usage)

Negotiated stopping

- 2.8 This involves local authorities making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to a bit of land more suitable for all parties. The length of the agreement can also vary from two weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but includes a need for Travellers to leave sites clean and not make too much noise; and the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets as a minimum. Further information is available at <https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/what-is-negotiated-stopping>

Provision in Dover District

- 2.9 The site identification work has found two potential transit pitches on an existing site within the district.

3. Updated evidence of need

- 3.1 For the plan period 2014-2037, the 2018 GTAA established a cultural need for 30 pitches and a PPTS need for 18 pitches. This is an annualised cultural need of 1.3 pitches and PPTS need of 0.8 pitches.
- 3.2 The revised plan period is now 2020 to 2040 (20 years) an applying annual needs figures results in a cultural need for 26 pitches and a PPTS need for 16 pitches. This overall reduction in need also takes account of new pitch supply at Hay Lane (at least 3 additional pitches).

4. Stage 2 work

- 4.1 Having identified a range of sites for expansion/intensification and a potential new site, the Council further work could be carried out. This would comprise a detailed appraisal for each site. 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' published August 2015 sets out some broad prescriptive requirements for identifying suitable sites for the provision of Gypsies and Travellers. The key objective is to ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. As such any potential sites should be assessed bearing in mind the following:
- promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and local community;
 - promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
 - ensure that children can have access to local schools;
 - provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
 - provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any Travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development;
 - avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;
 - do not locate sites in areas at high risk from flooding, including functional flood plains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and
 - reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some Travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.

- 4.2 Thereafter, in the actual consideration of any planning application for the establishment of a Traveller site, the planning authority should give weight to:
- Effective use of previously developed (brown field), untidy or derelict land.
 - Sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness.
 - Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children.
 - Not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community.
- 4.3 Each potential site would be appraised based on an agreed set of criteria established with the Council. This would ultimately provide the Council with a robust evidence base which has proactively sought to identify potential sites which have then been subject to a detailed appraisal process.

Appendix: Information leaflet



Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment: Site Option review for Dover District Council

In 2018, arc4 carried out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which identified a need for more Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Dover District. We were very grateful to the community for the response to the survey – we managed to speak to 32 out of 38 households.

The study showed there was a need for 18 additional pitches over the period to 2037.

The Council is now looking at how this need can be met. They have asked arc4 to visit all sites in the district and we would like to ask residents if:

- Your current site could be expanded (and by how many pitches);
- If it can be expanded, would you be willing to share your site with other members of the travelling community;
- if you know of any land which could be considered as a site (either owned by you or someone else); and
- if you know of anyone with land or who may be considering developing sites.

During January 2020 we are visiting all sites across the district to ask these questions.

If you're away or not able to speak to us when we visit, could you please call Michael Bullock on 07830 132 395 who would be happy to speak with you.

Thank you for your time

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