

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 21 May 2008

Subject: **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Partial Review: Pitch numbers and distribution options for public consultation**

Report of: Director of Planning
South East England Regional Assembly

Recommendations:

That Regional Planning Committee commends to the Assembly the following for the purposes of public consultation:

1. Provision of an additional 1,064 residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers between 2006 and 2016.
2. Provision of an additional 231-273 residential plots for Travelling Showpeople between 2006 and 2016.
3. Four distribution options A – D for both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, as tabulated at Annexes A and B respectively.
4. The proposed approach to provision for transit purposes.

Purpose of Report:

To agree what overall level of provision of permanent residential accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and the options distribution, should be recommended to the Assembly for the purposes of public consultation.

Key Issues:

- The Assembly is required to advise Government on the provision of new pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This requirement is being addressed by a partial review to the South East Plan, for the period 2006 to 2016.
- Local authorities provided advice to the Assembly in October 2007 on the overall level of new pitches required (for gypsies and travellers to

district/unitary level), and pitch distribution for two agreed options:

- Option A: need where it arises; and
- Option B: redistribution based on planning and sustainability criteria.

- The two local authority recommended options (A and B) and two further options based on a regional re-distribution, were considered by the Committee in January and commended to the Assembly at its meeting in March.
- Following a motion to the Assembly meeting in March, local authorities were given the opportunity to update their advice, building on developing methodologies in the region. So far Surrey and Kent have submitted revised advice, and Portsmouth will do so shortly. All other authorities have agreed to retain their original advice.
- We continue to work with local authority officers to ensure that the final submitted provision and distribution is robust. In the meantime, we are satisfied that the local authority advice is sufficient for the purposes of public consultation. On this basis the total regional residential Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement for consultation purposes is 1,064.
- This report continues to recommend for the purposes of public consultation the two further options C and D, both wider/regionally redistributive variants of current option B – as previously supported by the Committee in January 2008.
- Based on advice to date there is a need for an additional 231 plots for Travelling Showpeople. For consistency at consultation stage options C and D are also generated for this group. Provisionally there are a further 42 plots required for regionally identified need that cannot be attributed to a specific authority. This element is included in consultation options C and D.
- The partial review will not provide district-level pitch allocations for transit purposes. Authorities are encouraged to make appropriate provision for transit use including temporary stopping places, taking account of seasonal variations in unauthorised camping and local knowledge.

1. Introductory comments and background

- 1.1 On 5 March 2008 Plenary deferred decision on the numbers and options for public consultation to allow local authority advice groups the opportunity to update their advice in the light of practice elsewhere in the region. Deferral provided time for further evidence to be gathered, in particular completion of local authority assessments of need for plots for Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.2 This report thus incorporates additional advice on Gypsy and Traveller pitches, updating the figures presented to this Committee on 30 January 2008. Background material on Gypsies and Travellers is not repeated. The report also includes new information on provision for Travelling Showpeople and outlines an approach on provision for transit purposes.
- 1.3 There was no discussion at Plenary of district-level distribution options. Those set out in this report are as previously supported for consultation purposes by this Committee on 30 January 2008.
- 1.4 A comprehensive set of politically endorsed and district/unitary advice is not yet available. The figures in this report are thus provisional, but should closely resemble the final figures to go to Plenary on 16 July 2008. For this reason analysis is at county group level only.

2. Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers

- 2.1 Following the decision at Plenary the regional position on pitch and plot requirements proposed for public consultation purposes is the sum of figures recommended by local authorities in the latest advice submitted. Revised figures were submitted by Surrey and Kent, with Portsmouth (originally 8 pitches under Option A) to follow. The three Surrey GTAAs all introduced site turnover/vacancy findings into account on the supply side, offsetting forecast need. Kent further advice increases consistency across its GTAAs and also took turnover into account¹. As matters stand² revised advice on total Gypsy and Traveller residential pitch requirements for the region amounts to **1,064 additional pitches 2006-2016**. This represents 87% of original advice, and 79% of audit recommendations. The most significant change is in Surrey, a 38% reduction. Table I below sets out for information the latest position.
- 2.2 The secretariat continues to have reservations about some of the local authority advice, and we will continue to work with local authority officers to ensure that the final submitted provision and distribution is robust. In the meantime, we are satisfied that the advice is sufficient for the purposes of public consultation, to allow wider scrutiny before the Assembly makes a final decision.

¹ Note revised advice for Kent was updated to 2008 to reflect considerable provision made since 2006, 43 pitches. This has been recalculated to a 2006 base for regional consistency, but the provision made counts as progress towards this target.

² Berkshire's 'no change' position is reserved subject to changes elsewhere.

Table I: Comparison of requirements: Advice, Audit and provisional Updated Advice

2006 - 2016 County grouping	Original advice		Audit position		Updated advice	
	Option A	Option B	Option A	Option B	Option A	Option B
Berkshire	78	78	78	78	78	78
Buckinghamshire	113	113	165	165	113	113
East Sussex	47	47	60	60	47	47
Hampshire*	100	100	100	100	100	100
Kent	385	387	385	387	320	320
Oxfordshire	42	42	98	98	42	42
Surrey	260	261	260	261	163	163
West Sussex**	201	201	201	201	201	201
SOUTH EAST	1,226	1,229	1,347	1,350	1,064	1,064

*Pending further advice for Portsmouth which may vary the Hampshire figure slightly.

**Pending clarification of Chichester's continued acceptance of the audit position.

3. Plots for Travelling Showpeople

- 3.1 The partial review did not initially address Travelling Showpeople, although some GTAAs addressed their needs from the outset. Following publication of Circular 04/2007 Showpeople assessments and advice have been provided by the remainder³. Showpeople figures and advice have been provided solely on the basis of 'need where it arises (Option A), and due to the different production timescale have not been benchmarked or audited.
- 3.2 Advice⁴ indicates a total Showpeople requirement of 231 plots 2006-2016, as set out in table 2 below. The table also shows that Showpeople and their arising accommodation needs are distributed very unevenly in the region.
- 3.3 Guild assessments suggest a further 75 plot may be required. They have identified 42 families in the region whose needs they do not consider to be addressed in assessments, but that they cannot attribute to a specific local authority⁵. With regards the 42 unallocated families, it is recommended that - once fully validated - these needs be incorporated into the distribution options and consulted upon, using the approach set out at paragraph 5.3 below.
- 3.4 The Guild's view is that a further 33 families need accommodation that can be spatially allocated – in essence they dispute some advice submitted, as shown in table 2. For consistency with the Gypsy and Traveller position we recommend that no specific adjustments are made at this stage for differences between Guild estimates and local authority advice. But it is important that differences are identified and explored through the consultation process.

³ Oxfordshire have provided an interim estimate in advance of a needs assessment. Hampshire advice has not been formally ratified and is only available as a county-wide figure at this stage.

⁴ Showpeople advice is the latest figures available as at 30 April 2008, rolled forward to 2016 where not otherwise specified using a 1.5% growth multiplier (net of site turnover) - agreed with the Guild for use 2011 onwards.

⁵ Note these figures preceded the latest advice and will be scrutinised further prior to Plenary, although there is a clear case for at least some of the families identified.

Table 2: Advice on Travelling Showpeople plot requirements 2006-2016.

County Group	Showpeople Plot Advice	Guild identified additional need
Berkshire	4	12
Buckinghamshire	21	5
East Sussex	0	2
Hampshire	126	0
Kent	10	0
Oxfordshire	7	14
Surrey	58	0
West Sussex	5	0
SOUTH EAST	231	33

4. Transit provision

- 4.1 The partial review focuses on permanent provision and did not set out to provide district level allocations for transit pitches. However to meet government requirements we will need to provide interim policy guidance on providing for transit accommodation needs. To this end the brief for local authority advice requested qualitative transit advice. Transit advice was received from: Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Hampshire. Elsewhere it was broadly concluded advice could not be provided due to lack of quantifiable GTAA evidence.
- 4.2 To provide a consistent quantitative basis for transit need consideration the secretariat used an approach set out in CLG guidance⁶. Seasonal differences between the January and July Caravan Count figures for unauthorised encampments indicate a requirement for accommodation for seasonal or transit visitors. To counter snapshot weakness, four years' data is averaged (2004-2007 inclusive).
- 4.3 At the national level this approach shows that average seasonal differentials in levels of unauthorised encampments are highest in the southern regions, excluding London. As table 3 indicates the regional level seasonal differences are highest in Hampshire and East and West Sussex. Note these are point-in time figures on a given day, not annual totals. The patterns are mapped at Annex C. Localised differences are highest in Crawley, Arun, Brighton and Hove, Havant, Eastleigh, Test Valley, Aylesbury Vale and West Oxfordshire.

⁶ Preparing Regional Spatial reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies: Chapter 5

Table 3: Seasonal variations in unauthorised encampments by county group

County group	Unauthorised Encampments (caravans, average 2004-2007)			
	January Count	July count	Difference	% change
West Sussex	35	97	62	174%
Hampshire IoW	40	95	56	141%
E Sussex B&H	24	73	49	200%
Berkshire	23	44	22	95%
Oxfordshire	17	26	10	58%
Bucks MK	5	10	6	122%
Surrey	2	4	3	143%
Kent	62	29	-33	-53%
South East	207	378	172	83%

Source: CLG Caravan Count

4.4 In terms of the partial review we recommend that the supporting RSS text identify the average scale of seasonal UE increase experienced at county group level in the last four years, and also local authority hotspots, but not make authority transit provision allocations. This information would provide a guide to implementation alongside advice where submitted, but details would be for determination in LDFs, drawing on local knowledge. Regional policy would encourage a wide-ranging approach to meeting transit requirements and not just formal site provision, including tolerated stopping places and a proportionate approach to enforcement. It would also encourage effective local monitoring of unauthorised encampments.

4.5 To round out and cross-check count information we have requested local authority enforcement data and information from police incident records. This data has not yet been provided for the whole region, and is very variable in quality and level of detail, but will be used to complement this analysis and advice received in reporting to Plenary.

5. Distribution options for public consultation

5.1 Regional Planning Committee⁷ have previously considered the issue of distribution options, and supported inclusion of more widely redistributive options for the purposes of public consultation for Gypsies and Traveller pitches. The same approach is still recommended below, briefly as follows:

- i. Option A: need where it arises.
- ii. Option B: a redistribution within advice group area based on locally identified planning and sustainability considerations.
- iii. Options C and D: redistributions across advice group areas based on a simple, regionally applied option B approach (based on 'planning and sustainability opportunities and constraints'). Respectively 50% and 75% of local need is retained locally, and the remainder reapportioned regionally.

⁷ RPC 30 January 2008

- 5.2 It is recommended that for consistency the same approach is applied to Travelling Showpeople plots. A representative of the Guild has informally expressed support for this approach, and indicated that some Guild members are prepared to be flexible in terms of where their needs are met.
- 5.3 As noted at paragraph 3.3 above, a number of travelling showpeople families not spatially accounted for in needs assessments require accommodation somewhere in the region. It is further recommended that the option C/D approach be used to generate a distribution for these extra plots (provisionally 42 families), and that the results be added to Options C and D for public consultation purposes.
- 5.4 The resulting distributions are tabulated and illustrated at Annex A for Gypsies and Travellers, and Annex B for Travelling Showpeople. Given there are still some details to clarify, district/unitary tabulations have not been produced at this stage, but will be circulated to all local authorities for checking prior to completion of the Plenary report.

6. Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 6.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening concluded the proposed numbers and options are unlikely to contribute to any significant adverse effects on European protected biodiversity sites. There are also no sustainability grounds for excluding any of the options from the consultation stage. Their assessed effects are modest and broadly similar, and all positive. Annex D contains a more detailed summary as reported to Plenary on 5 March 2008.

7. Conclusion and next steps

- 7.1 For the purposes of public consultation Regional Planning Committee are requested to make a supporting recommend to the Assembly on the pitch/plot total requirements and distributions options A-D as tabulated at Annexes B and C, and the transit provision approach set out at paragraph 4.4 (subject to minor adjustments for outstanding advice).
- 7.2 Issues and Options public consultation will run from 1 September to 21 November 2008. Consultation feedback will inform identification of a preferred option, to be agreed by full Assembly on 4 March 2009 for submission to Government Office for the South East in April 2009, with prior advisory consideration by Regional Planning Committee on 28 January 2009. The Examination in Public is likely to take place summer 2009, and adoption winter 2009~2010.

Background Papers

Regional Planning Committee 30 January 2008, Item 5
Plenary 5 March 2008, Item 7

A note on options C and D is available on request.

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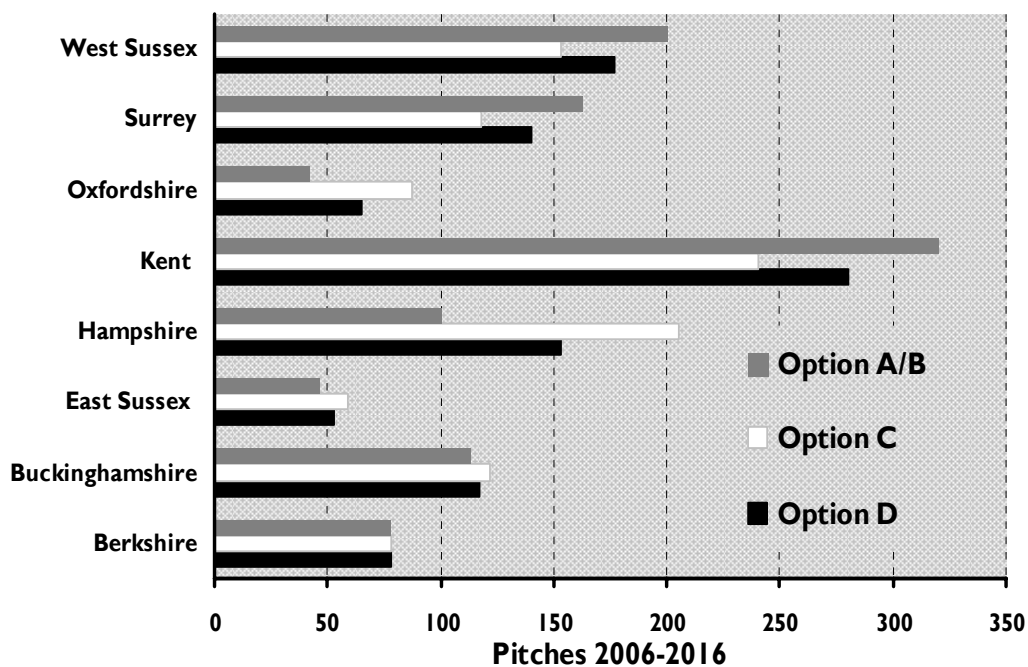
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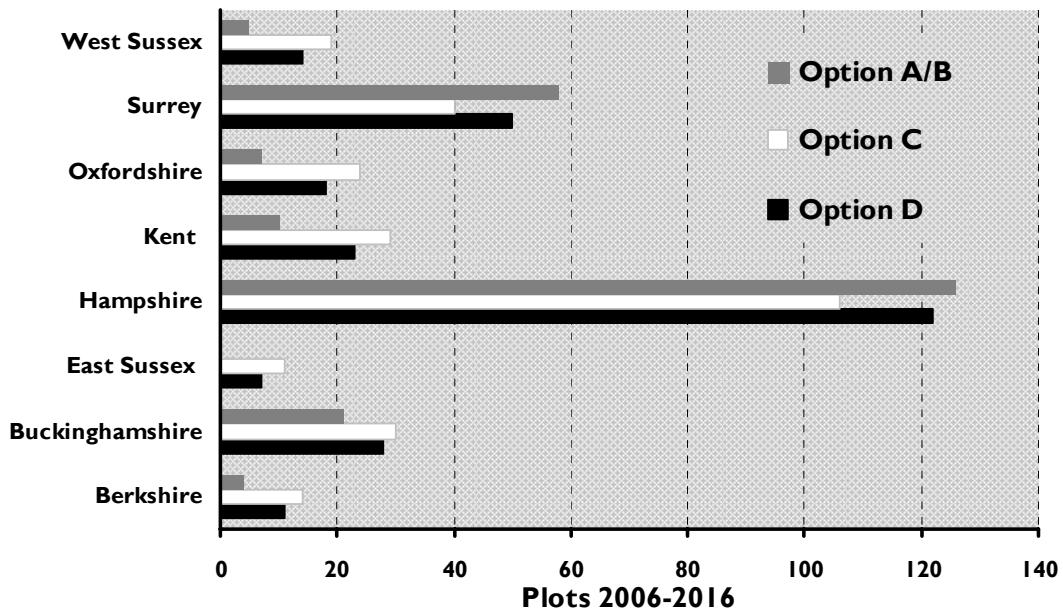
Annex A: Updated Gypsy and Traveller advice 2006-2016 and resulting consultation Options C and D

Updated Pitch Advice 2006-2016			
Authority	Option A/B	Option C	Option D
Berkshire	78	78	78
Buckinghamshire	113	122	117
East Sussex	47	59	53
Hampshire	100	205	153
Kent	320	241	280
Oxfordshire	42	88	65
Surrey	163	118	140
West Sussex	201	153	177
SOUTH EAST	1,064	1,064	1,064



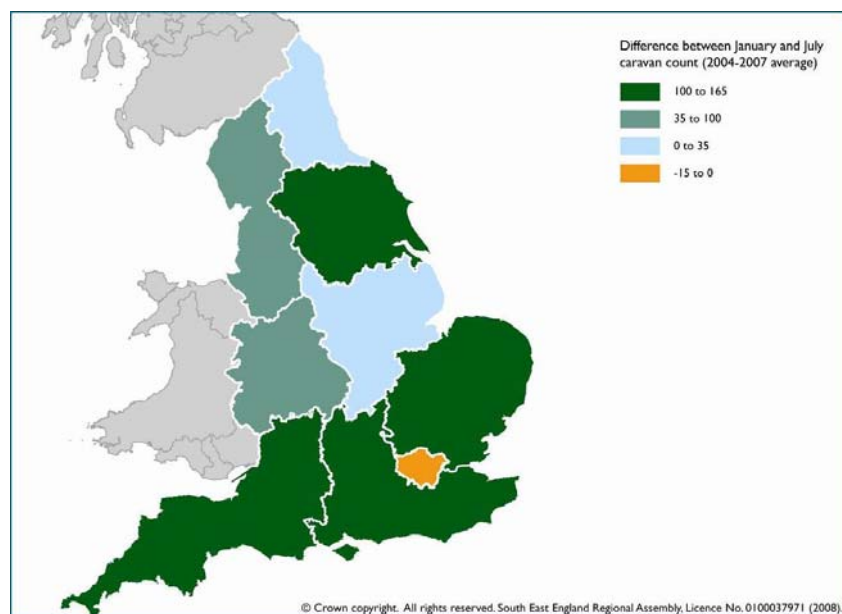
Annex B: Travelling Showpeople plot advice 2006-2016 and resulting consultation Options C and D.

Authority	Plot Advice 2006-2016		
	Option A/B	Option C	Option D
Berkshire	4	14	11
Buckinghamshire	21	30	28
East Sussex	0	11	7
Hampshire	126	106	122
Kent	10	29	23
Oxfordshire	7	24	18
Surrey	58	40	50
West Sussex	5	19	14
SOUTH EAST	231	273	273



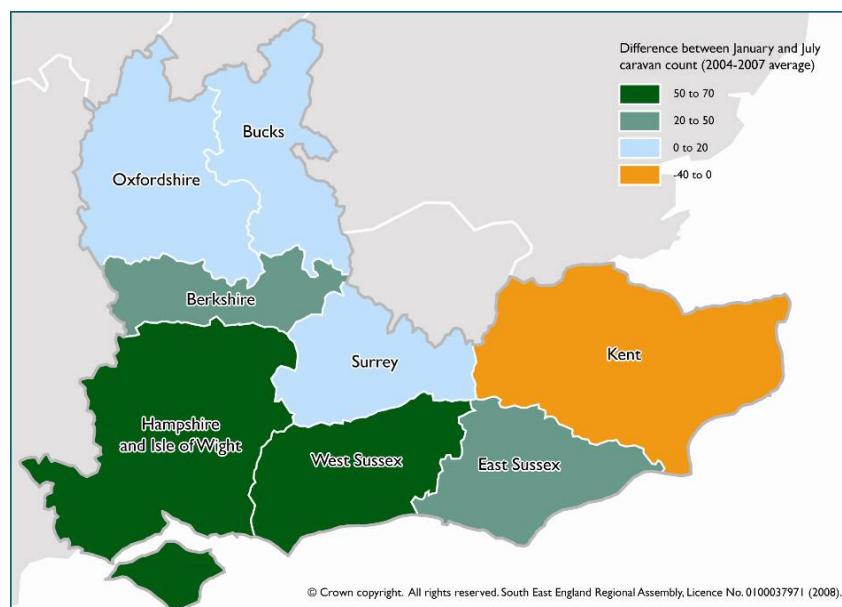
Annex C: Season patterns in unauthorised encampments

Map C1: Inter-regional differences between January and July Caravan Count (2004-7 average)



The differentials between winter and summer incidence of unauthorised camping is highest in the southern parts of England, excluding London.

Map C2: South East differences between January and July Caravan Count (2004-7 average)



In the South East the differentials between winter and summer incidence of unauthorised camping is highest in the south and west of the region, although county-level analysis masks high differentials in some individual authorities in 'lower incidence' counties.

Annex D: Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment

- D.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening was undertaken by consultants Scott Wilson, in consultation with Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. The SA and HRA reports will be published on the Assembly's website to accompany the consultation.
- D.2 The HRA screening built on the 2006 Appropriate Assessment of the South East Plan. It considered the likely impacts and effects on European protected biodiversity sites (both alone and in combination with other plans and projects). The assessment concluded that the level and patterns of pitch provision were unlikely to contribute to any significant adverse effects. Note that the appraisal could only identify potential impacts because at the regional scale no site specific proposals and impacts are capable of being identified.
- D.3 The SA considered the potential effects (both positive and negative) of the options against the SA objectives identified in the Scoping Report and its update. The effects on the more relevant SA objectives were assessed in more detail than the others. These cover securing decent homes; reducing poverty, social exclusion and reducing barriers to services, education and employment; conserving biodiversity and reducing waste and flood risk; protecting the natural environment and built heritage; reducing crime and improving cultural and recreational opportunities and community cohesion; and making efficient use of land.
- D.4 All three options for the most part scored similarly against each indicator and were positive overall. Therefore, there are no sustainability grounds for excluding any of them from the consultation stage. Identified effects tend to be most significant for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities themselves, but overall tend to be minor in scale and significance. Physical effects would be localised at the point of provision and thus could only be assessed in general terms at the regional level.
- D.5 In terms of their relative merits, each option produces slightly different patterns of effect. Option B and to a lesser extent Option C increase allocations in some authorities which are either more deprived on average, with more of their area at risk of flooding and/or with a greater number of sensitive biodiversity sites. Potentially adverse sustainability consequences of any significance would only arise if pitches were provided within the specific localities of highest sensitivity/risk within these wider areas, and this could readily be avoided.
- D.6 Option C has the potential for negative effects relative to options A (and to a lesser extent B) if Gypsies and Travellers do not take up sites that would otherwise have been provided closer to areas of higher current need (an issue to explore through public consultation). On the positive side it generally reduces provision in areas with more European biodiversity sites.