

## **Annex A**

Full report including annexes available here:  
[http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sep\\_gtts.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sep_gtts.html)



COUNCILS AND  
COMMUNITIES  
IN PARTNERSHIP

# **South East England Regional Assembly**

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople  
Single Issue Review

**Pre-Submission Consultation Statement.**

March 2009

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has been prepared to accompany the submission to the Secretary of State of the review of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs for South East England. It describes the consultation process undertaken by the South East England Regional Assembly during the preparation of the review.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the South East Plan *Submission Draft Policy H7: Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople*, submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2009. Along with the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

## **2. Duties and Background**

- 2.1 Circular 01/2006 - Planning for Gypsy and Caravan Sites (ODPM February 2006) requires that a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - in our case the South East Plan - identifies the number of caravan pitches required (but not their location) for each local planning authority in light of local authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) and a strategic view of needs across the region. This circular was published shortly before the draft South East Plan was submitted to Government, and before GTAAAs had been carried out in our region.
- 2.2 In light of the impending Circular 01/2006 and in response to an interim policy statement issued by the Government, the Assembly agreed at its Regional Planning Committee meeting on 7 December 2005 to an early partial review of the South East Plan to provide a full assessment of regional and district level pitch requirements for Gypsy and Traveller caravan accommodation. An interim statement was added to the Draft South East Plan submitted to the Government in March 2006<sup>1</sup>. Initial work on this partial review commenced shortly thereafter.
- 2.3 Circular 04/2007 - Planning for Travelling Showpeople (DCLG August 2007) extended the approach in Circular 01/2006 to include Travelling Showpeople; and the scope of this partial review was expanded accordingly.
- 2.4 The interim statement was updated to reflect progress on the partial review in July 2008, within the Government's published Proposed Changes to the South East Plan.
- 2.5 Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS11) Requirements  
PPS11 sets out the requirements for preparing a Regional Spatial Strategy revision along with the criteria for assessing whether it is sound. Criteria (vii) assesses "*whether community involvement and partnership working have been satisfactory, including whether the RPB has taken proper account of the views*

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex A of the Project Plan

[http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt\\_update\\_early\\_info.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt_update_early_info.html)

expressed". The legislative requirements for community consultation, along with recommended measures to facilitate community involvement are outlined in Annex D (paras 12 to 41) of PSS I I.

- 2.6 In preparing this partial review, the Assembly has exceeded the consultation requirements as set out in PSS I I, particularly in the context of a single policy issue for the South East Plan. A detailed report of the consultation process is set out in this report and a summary of the consultation opportunities in included in Table I below.

**Box I: Submission Resources Website**

Details of the documents referred to in this statement (including meeting minutes) that are not included as an annexe can be found on the Assembly's submission resources website:

[http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sep\\_gtts.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sep_gtts.html)

Table I. Partial Review formal consultation opportunities.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Consultation Opportunity</b>
Project Plan and SA Scoping Report (See Section 4)	Six week consultation period ending on 13 October
Advice to the Assembly from Local Authorities. (See Section 5)	Authorities undertook their own consultation as part of the formulation and submission of advice to the Assembly.
Issues and Options Consultation (See Section 6)	Twelve week consultation process held between 1 September and 21 November 2008.
Preferred Option Consultation	Following submission (immediately after 4 June 2009 local government elections) a 12 week consultation period will be held by the Secretary of State.

**3. Partnership Working**

- 3.1 Three strands of partnership working, two formal and one informal, were agreed by Regional Planning Committee (RPC) on 20 May 2006 to guide the partial review process.

A Gypsy and Traveller RPC Steering Group

- 3.2 A member sub-group of Regional Planning Committee was set up to oversee and provide the necessary political steer at key stages in the review process. The Chair of the steering group provided direct feedback to Regional Planning Committee.

### Engagement with GTTS representatives

- 3.3 The needs assessment stage of the Partial Review led by local authorities required direct and extensive local GTTS community engagement including surveys and interviews (See section 5.5 below). Regional engagement sought to build on this by ongoing informal dialogue with GTTS community representatives. Assembly officers attended and gave updates to several planning committee meetings at the offices of the Guild of Travelling Showmen, and at committee meetings of the National Federation of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller Liaison Groups (Southern Network) - and before that similar meetings held by Friends, Families and Travellers.
- 3.4 As the Partial Review progressed towards issues and options development and public consultation there was closer liaison including on production of the consultation DVD and press coverage. Gypsy and Traveller community representatives helped the Assembly improve consultation questionnaire and advised on approaches to engage their communities directly, including the survey (which they essentially delivered) and focus groups (coordinated by RAISE, see Section 6.6 below).

### Gypsy and Traveller Officer Task Group

- 3.5 An officer task group was established to help coordinate the review process and take a strategic view of the needs of the region as a whole. The group has been responsible for: preparing the project plan; reviewing the emerging GTAAs to develop a strategic picture of demand and supply across the region and address any inconsistencies in the emerging evidence base; and reviewing the final policy advice submitted by the principal authorities. The group comprised:
- Representatives of all principal authorities and some local authorities
  - GOSE
  - Assembly officers
  - A direct link to the Regional Housing Board through the representation of the Assembly's Housing Advisory Group.

## **4. Partial Review Inception (Project Plan)**

- 4.1 The project plan<sup>2</sup> was the first stage in producing a revision to the RSS and set out how the Assembly would approach the task, covering the period to submission to the Secretary of State.
- 4.2 To meet the requirements under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act the project plan included a Statement of Public Participation<sup>3</sup>. All consultation undertaken for the partial review has been carried out in accordance with

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<sup>2</sup> For further information: [http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt\\_update\\_early\\_info.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt_update_early_info.html)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, section 5

this statement. It sets out how the Assembly would conduct the partial review in relation to:

- Partnership working
- Stakeholder involvement
- Public consultation
- The list of stakeholder groups to be consulted.

#### **4.4 Stakeholder Consultation on the Project Plan.**

4.4.1 Consultation on the draft Project Plan was agreed by the Regional Planning Committee on 20 July 2006. Consultation commenced on 1 September 2006 and ended on 13 October 2006. Key stakeholders were consulted, as outlined in Table 5.1 of the project plan (See Annex B).

4.4.2 A total of 163 completed questionnaires and a further 34 letters were received by the 13 October deadline. 75% of the questionnaire responses received were from parish councils and a further 10% from local authorities. Only three responses were received from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, which may partly be a reflection of the procedural content of the consultation documents.

4.4.3 Headline messages emerging from the consultation are as follows:

- 75% of respondents agreed with the proposed objectives for the review.
- A number of additional stakeholders were identified as essential for engaging with the review process including: social landlords; travelling showpeople; land managers; and a number of existing Gypsy and Traveller representative groups
- The biggest concern expressed by consultees was in relation to the proposed timetable for the review, with only 60% considering it to be realistic.

#### Recommendations

4.4.4 The final project plan was agreed by the Regional Planning Committee on 21 November 2006. A small number of amendments were made to the final project plan, including an update to the consultation table (5.1) in the Statement of Public Participation; and adding reference to Travelling Showpeople to Objective 1 of the partial review.

#### **4.5 Stakeholder Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.**

4.5.1 The SA Scoping Report was consulted on at the same time as the Project Plan. In response to the consultation on the scoping report a significant number of consultees found the Sustainability Appraisal process complicated. However, technical responses from local authorities generally supported the

approach taken, although some questioned the relevance of a number of regional sustainability objectives<sup>4</sup> to this particular policy area.

### Recommendations

4.5.2 No changes were made to the final SA Scoping report, however a recommendation to publish a non-technical summary on the Assembly's website was taken forward; along with a recommendation that the advice submitted by local authorities to the Assembly should include data on existing and proposed Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites.

## **5. Working with Local Authorities**

5.1 In preparing options for consultation, the Assembly has worked with South East authorities who provided technical evidence in the form of accommodation assessments (GTAAAs and TSAAs) and by submitting formal advice. Consultation undertaken by authorities as part of the preparation of accommodation assessments and their advice is outlined below.

### Advice sought from S4(4) Authorities<sup>5</sup>

5.2 The Assembly sought formal Advice from local authorities on the appropriate level of provision and two ways of distributing that provision, drawing on their needs assessments. Advice was sought under Section 5(5)<sup>6</sup> of the Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) to engage the full partnership groupings of Local Authorities, and not just principal (Section 4(4)) authorities. All South East Councils feed into the process through 12 partnership groups.

5.3 Advice was submitted by:

- 31 January 2007 for confirmation of the partnership groupings of local authorities
- 30 April 2007 for the provision of site data
- 15 October 2007<sup>7</sup> for submission of district based figures for permanent pitches, two spatial distribution options and a qualitative assessment of transit provision needs
- End of March 2008 for Travelling Showpeople advice
- End of March 2008 for final Transit provision advice.

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<sup>4</sup> Set out in the *Integrated Regional Framework (IRF)*, replaced by the *Regional Sustainability Framework* in 2008.

<sup>5</sup> For further information see the Brief for Submission of Advice by Local Authorities ([http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt\\_update\\_early\\_info.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/consultation/gt_update_early_info.html)).

<sup>6</sup> Section 5(5) of the Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that the Regional Planning Body must first take account of Section 4(4) authorities where it decides to make different provision for different parts of the region. Section 4(4) of the same act requires RPBs to seek the advice of bodies with strategic planning expertise. In the South East of England these comprise the 7 county and 12 unitary authorities.

<sup>7</sup> The date for submission of this advice was extended from 1 June 2007 in the revised project plan.

#### Additional Opportunity to Submit Advice

- 5.4 On 30 January 2008 the Assembly deferred its decision on options for consultation to allow Local Authorities the opportunity to update their advice in light of practice elsewhere in the region.

### **5.5 Consultation on needs assessments and advice submitted.**

- 5.5.1 Local authority groups working in partnerships were required to establish a steering group to oversee and formally agree the needs assessment studies, and to interpret the study findings to submit agreed formal advice to the Assembly on pitch provision in their area. In preparing a GTAA/TSAA, it was necessary to undertake interviews with a sample of Gypsies and Travellers as part of the study methodologies - either as questionnaires, or direct interviews, in order to determine need.
- 5.5.2 In preparing advice, partnerships were expected to consult with appropriate delivery agencies, service providers and other stakeholders (eg town and parish councils, social landlords, Gypsies and Travellers, social services, police etc). A summary of the consultation undertaken by the partnerships can be found on the submission resources website (See Box 1).

## **6. Issues and Options Public Consultation**

- 6.1 On 16 July 2008 the Assembly agreed a level of pitch provision and options for its distribution, for the purposes of public consultation. This decision endorsed a supporting recommendation by Regional Planning Committee on 21 May 2008. A twelve-week public consultation process was held between 1 September and 21 November 2008 with respect to:
- The provision of an additional 1,064 residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers between 2006 and 2016.
  - Provision of an additional 234-276 residential plots for Travelling Showpeople between 2006 and 2016.
  - Four distribution options (A – D):
    - Option A: New spaces should ALL be provided as close as possible to where GTTS currently live. This may mean some council areas have no spaces.
    - Option B: New spaces should ALL be in the same general areas where GTTS currently live. Neighbouring councils would share the duty for providing new spaces but some council areas would have none. The local redistribution takes account of local constraints and opportunities.
    - Option C: 50% of new spaces should be in the same general areas where GTTS currently live. The other 50% would be spread across the region to make sure that all areas provide some spaces. The region-wide redistribution takes account of strategic constraints and opportunities.
    - Option D: 75% of new spaces should be in the same general areas where GTTS currently live. 25% would be spread across the region to

make sure that all areas provide some spaces. The region-wide redistribution takes account of strategic constraints and opportunities.

- A delegated approach for transit provision whereby councils would identify the appropriate level and form of provision, taking into account GTAA information where available, and a regional analysis of unauthorised encampment patterns.

6.2 Amendments were made to the consultation form, based on advice from Gypsy and Traveller Community representatives.

### **6.3 Consultation events**

6.3.1 The consultation programme included 23 local public drop-in exhibitions each attended by up to 150 people, three local stakeholder/councillor meetings, four Gypsy and Traveller focus group sessions, and a regional, facilitated stakeholder workshop. Assembly officers attended most of the staffed exhibitions; and presented to the local and regional stakeholder meetings. (See Annex A for the schedule of events)

### **6.4 Local events**

6.4.1 The 23 exhibitions were delivered by local authorities with financial, technical and staff support from the Assembly, including exhibition posters and display materials, a consultation DVD (awarded the RTPI 2008 Equality and Diversity Award), and copies of the consultation booklet and questionnaire. A media pack was also provided to help councils to raise awareness of the consultation with their local and community networks such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), residents etc. This included draft editorial, logos and illustrations for use in organisations' newsletters and websites. Local authorities were encouraged to include a news article in their residents' magazines, and funding was provided for paid media advertising.

### **6.5 General Engagement**

6.5.1 The Assembly followed PPSI I guidance to ensure relevant stakeholders were consulted (see Annex B). This involved:

- A mail out of 4,100 consultation packs to relevant public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders.
- Online consultation – the same material was made available on the Assembly website, including an online questionnaire.
- Copies of all consultation materials were made available to local authorities and libraries for public inspection.
- A consultation DVD was produced that aimed to raise awareness of the issues faced by the Gypsy and Traveller community as well as the consultation process. The DVD was available on the Assembly's website

and 200 were distributed to key stakeholders. Where possible it was also shown at the consultation meetings (ie the local level exhibitions, the Kent Stakeholder meetings and the Stakeholder workshop).

- The Assembly also raised awareness of the consultation among public and stakeholders via:
  - E-alerts to our 1,200 website subscribers with links to the online consultation materials
  - Editorial coverage in Assembly magazine Voice, distributed to around 17,000 people and also published on the Assembly website
  - An edition of the South East Plan Update newsletter, circulated to around 2,000 stakeholders and published on the Assembly website.
- The Assembly employed Ipsos MORI to conduct research exploring public attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers in the South East. This poll of 1,000 residents was conducted between the 3 and 27 October 2008.
- Stakeholder Workshop.  
The Assembly held a workshop on 4 November 2008, which brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to consider the GTTS consultation options and the underlying information and issues. This event was independently facilitated and aimed to promote better understanding of the concerns and points of views across the stakeholders. Attendees included councillors, Assembly officers, members of the GTTS communities and representative groups, and local authority officers from housing, planning, Travellers education and GTTS liaison services. A summary of the outcomes is included in Annexe C.

## **6.6 Targeted Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people Consultation.**

- Consultation packs were sent directly to all private or Local Authority sites that the Assembly had a record of. A total of 330 packs were sent out, 80 could not be delivered.
- Gypsy and Traveller representatives<sup>8</sup> were commissioned to visit sites, both authorised and unauthorised (including roadside encampments) and also housed Gypsies and Travellers, to explain the process, the consultation questions and to help respondents complete the consultation questionnaire. Over 300 completed questionnaires were collected, spread evenly across the region.
- The Showmens' Guild did not feel it necessary to survey their members directly, instead at their recommendation the consultation was publicised in *World Fair*, the show trade gazette.
- RAISE consultation and Focus groups - Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE) was commissioned by the Regional Assembly to

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<sup>8</sup> The Thames Valley Gypsy Association supported by the National Federation of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller Liaison Groups (Southern Network), and Friends, Families and Travellers.

undertake a research project on Gypsy and Traveller communities. Four focus groups were held, in Hart and New Forest District Councils in Hampshire, and in north and west Kent. These aimed to reach Gypsies and Travellers and gain further insight into the cultural needs of these communities and their views on the key elements affecting their quality of life. The report on the Raise consultation is included on the submission resources website (See box 1).

## **6.7 Media Engagement**

- 6.7.1 The Assembly communications team attracted wide media coverage to encourage responses to the public consultation. The Assembly worked proactively with national, regional, local and trade media to ensure the stakeholders and the public were kept informed of progress of the review. Work in this area has included media liaison, supplemented by paid print advertising.
- 6.7.2 A summary of the media coverage and paid advertising is provided in Annex D and E.

## **6.8 Consultation Responses**

- 6.8.1 There were 982 acceptable responses received to the Issues and Options consultation. Of these 7% were received from South East councils, 39% from GTTS communities, 19% from South East residents and the balance of 35% from other organisations and stakeholders (mostly town and parish councils). In addition, an Ipsos MORI poll contributed 1,001 responses from telephone interviews with adults across the region, approximately 125 from each of the eight South East county groups.
- 6.8.2 Statistical and commentary summaries of the responses to the Issues and Options consultation are included within Annexe F and G respectively. The full Mori poll report is available on the submission resources website (see Box 1).
- 6.8.3 A further 147 responses were deemed to be discriminatory and were excluded from further consideration using guidance prepared by the Assembly's solicitors (which drew on the Royal Town Planning Institute and Commission for Racial Equality guidance). These responses were returned to the respondent with a factsheet to help them understand why the response was discriminatory.

## **7. Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 7.1 An independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment screening (HRA) was undertaken on the four options and proposals by Scott Wilson, and completed by the Assembly.

- 7.2 At the regional scale all the options produce a moderately positive overall effect, with no significant differences between the effects of the four options. The most important effects are the compelling socio-economic benefits to GTTS of making provision, and consequent reduction in the potentially adverse effects of recourse to unauthorised sites (which are common benefits to all four options).
- 7.3 The draft SA included an allowance for the then unknown level of provision required for Showpeople and for transit use. This top-up estimate provided to be sufficient in assessing, as part of the updated SA, the total scale of all forms of provision outlined in the submission partial review. The particular issues around the concentration of additional Showpeople pitches required in Hampshire have also been assessed and do not change the assessment conclusions in the final SA. Consultation feedback pointed out that the draft SA in places overstated the potentially negative effects of Options B to D, and it was corrected accordingly.
- 7.5 The HRA scoping (ie risk assessment) showed that it is unlikely that provision of new sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople would significantly affect areas of habitat value of European significance. Since no likely significant effects were identified a full 'Appropriate Assessment' was not necessary. Further consideration will be required at site allocation stage.