

# **Rapid Health Impact Assessment**

for

**Possible Disposal of**

**Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field**

**Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

at

**Salisbury.**

## **Purpose of report**

1. To determine the health impacts upon the affected population should the Council proceed with the disposal of the Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field gypsy and traveller sites at Salisbury.

## **Background**

2. Travellers (including Gypsies) are usually visibly identified with caravans, but mobility is not their defining characteristic. Travellers comprise of many groups, each with their own lifestyle, culture and traditions. Only Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as distinct ethnic groups under the Race Relations Act 1989. However, the experiences of second or third generation new Travellers, although not a distinct ethnic group, are believed to be like those of Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Other Travellers include show-people and people living on boats (boaters).
3. The precise number of Travellers in England and Wiltshire is unclear. The most recent ONS analysis released in 2014 (using 2011 Census data) recorded 58,000 in England and Wales who identified themselves as a Gypsy or Irish Traveller (this doesn't include those who identify themselves as other forms of Traveller); suggesting Travellers as the smallest ethnic group accounting for 0.1% of the population in England and Wales. According to the 2011 Census, 757 people in Wiltshire identified themselves as being of Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnicity; 0.2% of the population. Appendix 1 shows the distribution of gypsies in Wiltshire by Output Area. According to the latest Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Wiltshire, in 2014, there were 200 traveller families on permitted traveller sites in the county, totalling 634 people.
4. The Housing Act 2004 and the PPTS6, put in place a framework which means every local authority must identify land for the Gypsy and Traveller sites that are needed in its area. Wiltshire Council has responded to the Government's policy changes by adopting its Core Strategy which is compliant with national policy. Core Policy 47 sets out pitch and plot targets for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, show people plots and transit pitches. The policy is also applied when assessing the locational effects of traveller sites coming forward via planning applications.
5. In addition, the Council is in the process of preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) which will allocate sufficient land to meet the housing needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people. The latest housing need figures are set out in the 2014 GTAA which was prepared independently. According to that document, there is a need for 90 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 7 show-people plots in Wiltshire between 2014 and 2029. The study also recommended the development of a network of emergency stopping places.
6. The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in their accommodation assessments and to take a strategic approach, including drawing up a strategy demonstrating how the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met, as part of their wider housing strategies.
7. Wiltshire Council currently owns and/or operates 5 residential Gypsy and Traveller sites around the county, providing a total of 100 pitches for their semi-

permanent residents. A further 12 (As stated in Site disposal doc) pitches are available at an established transit site in Salisbury. Gypsies and Travellers can stay on the transit site for up to 28 days whilst they are travelling through the county. There are currently no emergency stopping places where Gypsies and Travellers could stop for very short periods determined by the Local Authority.

This current level of provision is: Area of the county	Number of local authority sites in each area	Numbers of pitches in each area
North Wiltshire (1 site)	Thingley	31
East Wiltshire (0 sites)	0	0
South Wiltshire (3 sites)	Lode Hill Dairy House Bridge Oak Tree Field	12 18 32
West Wiltshire (1 site)	Fairhaven	7
Odstock (Transit Site)	1 site	12
Total	6	112

8. Findings from national research highlights the impact of environmental and social conditions upon Travellers and their families who are more likely to experience poorer general health when compared to the wider population. Poor health is reflective of poor and inappropriate accommodation. Site conditions can lead to poorer mental health and insecurities. Poorer health is seen at a younger age compared to the wider population. Research suggests that privately owned sites tend to be healthier sites.
9. The sites of interest in this Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) are Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field which are in the south of the county in and around Salisbury.

### **Background on Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

10. Dairy House Bridge plot covers 1.16 acres. The site has 18 pitches with 13 licensees, 5 void pitches (vandalised). There are currently 35 people on site including 14 aged under 16 years old, 2 aged between 16-24 years old, 10 aged 25-44 years old, 7 aged 45-64 years old and 2 aged 65 plus. 42% of the population are male. Families are defined as 1 married couple, 6 couples cohabiting, 3 single occupancies and 2 single parent families. There is also a concern about the proximity of the homes as a potential risk to health. See appendix 2 and appendix 4.
11. Oak Tree Field site covers 7.61 acres (9.58 acres including transit site). The site comprises of 32 pitches, 26 licensees, 6 voids (3 of which are vandalised), 29 of the 32 pitches are lettable. There are currently 56 people on site, of which 48% are male; 18 are aged under 16 years old, 7 are aged 16-24 years old, 15 aged 25-44 years old, 13 aged 45-64 years old, and 3 aged over 65. Family status includes 19 cohabiting, 12 in single occupancy and 1 married couple. See appendix 3.

12. It is noted that the lack of investment and repairs on these two sites are leading to conditions which could be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of residents. Conditions on site are extremely poor and the drains are becoming unsustainable, resulting in constant blockages and contributing to rat infestations. See appendix 4
13. The Fire Safety and Layout requirements set out in the Government's Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England are not being met on Dairy House Bridge. Units are either too close to each other or the boundaries to comply with the Design Standards. Even if repairs/ remedial action is carried out on the sites, the layout and access to the site would still be non-compliant without substantial investment.

### **The Rapid Health Impact Assessment**

14. The International Association for Impact Assessment (2006) defines a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as “a combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, programme or project on both the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIA identifies appropriate actions to manage those effects.”
15. WHO suggests that by completing the HIA it allows decision-makers to “make choices about alternatives and improvements to prevent disease/injury and to actively promote health” (WHO, 2011).
16. Although a comprehensive HIA methodology has been selected, due to the information, time and resources available, a ‘rapid’ HIA (RHIA) has been undertaken. A RHIA begin defined as a HIA method has been adapted to a ‘desk-top’ activity based on the time, intelligence and resource available and completed within a short time scale. A full HIA, which would be recommended, requires sufficient planning involves not only data gathering but extensive engagement with partners, stakeholders and the population affected.
17. This RHIA is to use the Department of Health HIA approach to assess the proposed disposal of Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field Gypsy and Traveller Sites and identify the positive and adverse effects on the health of those that might live in these communities.

### **Description of what is being assessed**

18. The Wiltshire’s Cabinet have requested officers to bring forward the implications of an option to consider the disposal of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites at Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field in and near Salisbury. This follows the loss of external funding originally intended for the redevelopment of both sites.
19. Recent discussions with Homes England have highlighted that some new external grant funding might be available for these sites but that the Council would need to find the remaining funding. At a time when the Council needs to find substantial savings and cut back on some service provision, finding the funding required for these sites was always going to be difficult to achieve. However, this new funding would only be available for the redevelopment of the existing sites, which came to a total of some £5m, therefore, it is likely that the Council would need to find something in the realm of £3m to progress this work, subject to successful bids to obtain the balance in grant funding.

20. In a paper taken forward with the options for investment into these sites, officers were asked to examine the option for disposal to be layered in as an additional and potentially favoured solution, given the financial constraints placed on the Council. This HIA is therefore to consider the implications of this one solution of disposal
21. It could be construed that that Council is not acting in a fair manner to the existing residents, who up to this point have been led to believe that the Council would invest in the redevelopment and creation of sustainable housing solutions on these sites. Due of this previous decision, the council has held off some repairs and patched to keep facilities going rather than spend additional funds on areas that would originally have been down for complete replacement.
22. At present, there are now 10 plots on these sites that are no longer fit for letting due to fly-tipping, vandalism and poor site conditions. This means both a loss of rental income to the Council and an under provision of accommodation to the wider traveller community.
23. What is becoming obvious is that the option to dispose will not come without some expense on the part of the Council and so it comes down to a comparison of all the options to reach a sustainable decision. Any decision not to proceed with the redevelopment option could be discriminatory towards the traveller communities affected without a full and proper explanation that clearly demonstrates a transparent decision-making process.
24. A Gypsy and Traveller project team have been established to give an indication of the level of impact a decision to dispose would have on the Council. The team includes officers from Housing (lead officers), Strategic Assets, Legal Services, Finance, Strategic Procurement, Public Health, Public Protection, Corporate Services, Planning and Communications.

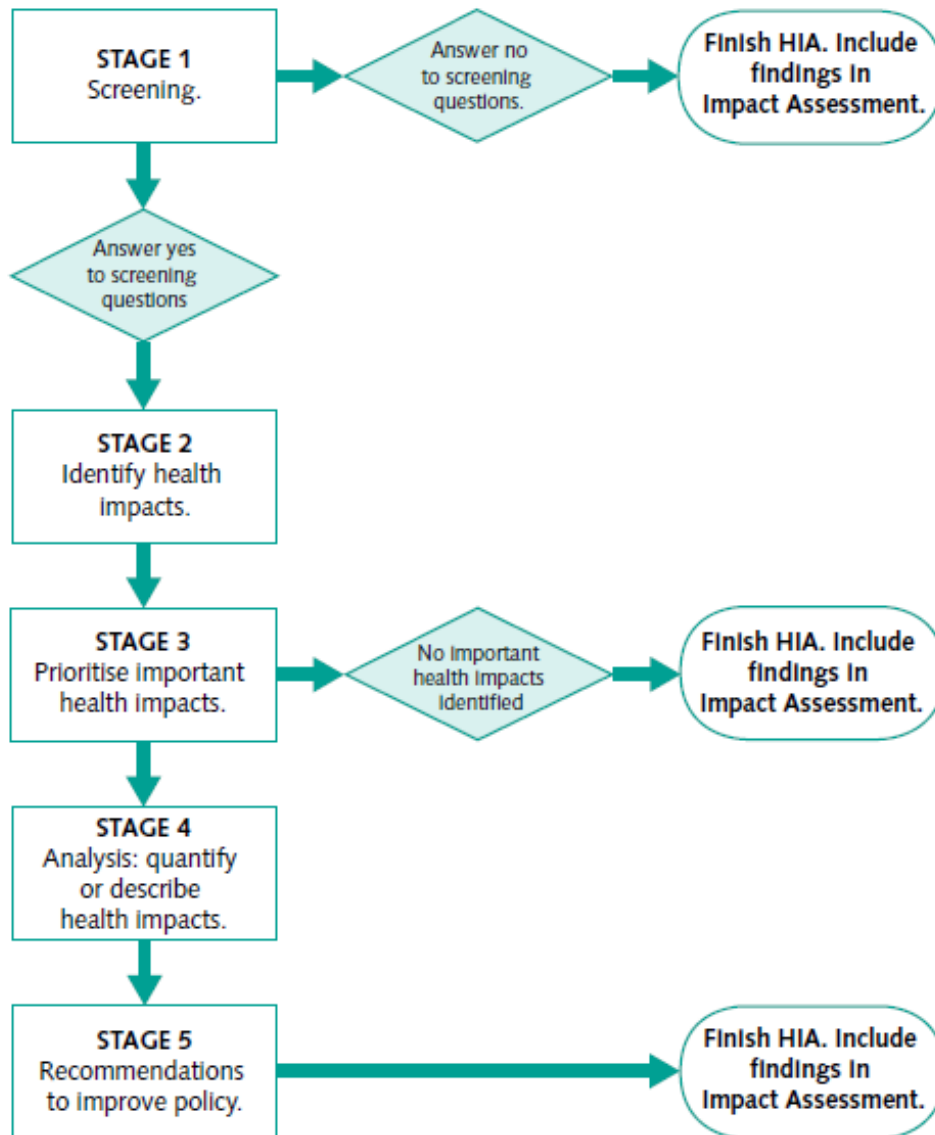
#### **What is not being assessed**

25. Other options include a variety of alternative funding arrangements to improve these sites and maybe subject to the council obtaining external funding for these options to be feasible. Other options Council management of these sites including the repair, refurbishment and/or redesign of these sites. These alternative options have not been considered as part of this RHIA.

#### **Rapid Health Impact Assessment Methodology**

26. Based on the [Department of Health's Health Impact Assessment Tools - Simple tools for recording the results of the Health Impact Assessment](#) process has been followed (see figure 1 overleaf).

**Figure 1 - Health Impact Assessment Tools - Simple tools for recording the results of the Health Impact Assessment (DoH, 2006)**



## Stage 1 – Screening

<b>Screening Question</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b> To Consider the implications of an option to dispose of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites at Dairy House Bridge and Oak Tree Field in and near Salisbury.	
<b>Will the proposal have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing?</b>	<p><b>Yes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty and stress for residents will impact on mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Disappointment of residents as Council has changed its approach to managing these two sites</li> <li>• Current conditions of sites do not comply with government design standards for caravan sites</li> <li>• Drainage on both sites is cause for concern</li> <li>• Two sites are reflecting lack of responsive repair, if action is not undertaken subsequent non-action will be potentially harmful to human health</li> <li>• Should redesign or refurbishment be undertaken by current or new site owners there is a potential this may require displacement of the population which will have implications for residents, including children (consider schooling options etc).</li> </ul>
<b>Will the proposal have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?</b>	<p><b>Yes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> <li>• However, a solution is being sought as a result of potential disinvestment.</li> <li>• Selling the sites could have positive and / or negative impact on the health of residents. One of the conditions of sale will include that the land of the site will be for traveller use. The new land owner will be obligated to improve site conditions, in line with national and local regulations – we are selling them as non-compliant.</li> </ul>
<b>Will the proposal affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</b>	<p><b>Yes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst work is being undertaken, there will be disruption, which could contribute to a negative impact on health and wellbeing (e.g. noise, access to facilities).</li> </ul>
<b>Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?</b>	<p><b>Yes - Potential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impact on social services, education services, health care services (e.g. seeking mental wellbeing support).</li> </ul>

**Stage 2 & 3 – Identify and prioritise the potential health impacts**

<b>Stage 2 – identify the health impacts</b>				<b>Stage 3 – prioritise health impacts</b>
<b>Will the health impacts affect the whole population or will there be differential impacts within the population?</b>	<b>Will the health impacts be difficult to remedy or have an irreversible impact?</b>	<b>Will health be impacted in the medium to long term?</b>	<b>Are the health impacts likely to generate public concern?</b>	<b>Combining the answers, on balance will the health impacts have an important positive or negative impact on health. Provide a brief overview of the reason for your decision on prioritization.</b>
<p>The impact on one site may differ from another site. Residents will be consulted with and supported through the process. The whole population of both sites will be affected.</p> <p>Consider that this proposal can disproportionately affect the young. Out of the 85 travellers located across both sites, nearly 48% of the residents are 24 or under, if you include those aged up to 44 years old this accounts for nearly 78% of the population.</p>	<p>Selling the land may cause initial uncertainty in the existing population.</p> <p>Council will do short term work to mitigate against risks to health and wellbeing. Short-term</p>	<p>Medium to long term, with an emphasis that health and wellbeing will be improved in the long term.</p>	<p>Possibly. Some negative publicity for the council is likely, however wider population may have less concerns.</p> <p>Local impact (G&amp;T families), wider population is likely to support the council approach.</p>	<p>Current living conditions put physical and mental health at risk. The proposed way forward may cause some initial anxiety and impact on mental wellbeing but the long-term outcome should have positive benefits for those living on both sites.</p>



## **Stage 4 Analysis**

27. Consideration needs to be given to the disproportionately effect on young populations across these sites. Out of the 85 travellers located across both sites, nearly 48% of the residents are 24 or under, if you include those aged up to 44 years old this accounts for nearly 78% of the population.
28. Current living conditions put physical and mental health at risk. The proposed way forward may cause some initial anxiety and impact on mental wellbeing but the long-term outcome should have positive benefits for those living on both sites.

## **Stage 5 Recommendations**

29. Given the council current financial status and the requirements of the sites, it is important that we consider all the options available to us. The option to dispose of the site is but one of those solutions. It is accepted that the current state of both sites will have a potential to negatively impact upon health. Therefore, whichever situation is chosen will have to be carefully managed to mitigate against any major health or wellbeing issues within the affected populations.
30. If time and resource allowed then a full HIA would be recommended, noting this requires sufficient planning and implementation that involves not only data gathering but extensive engagement with partners, stakeholders and the population affected.
31. If time and resource allows, it would be worthwhile considering the health impacts of the other options, should they be feasible and viable.

## **Conclusions**

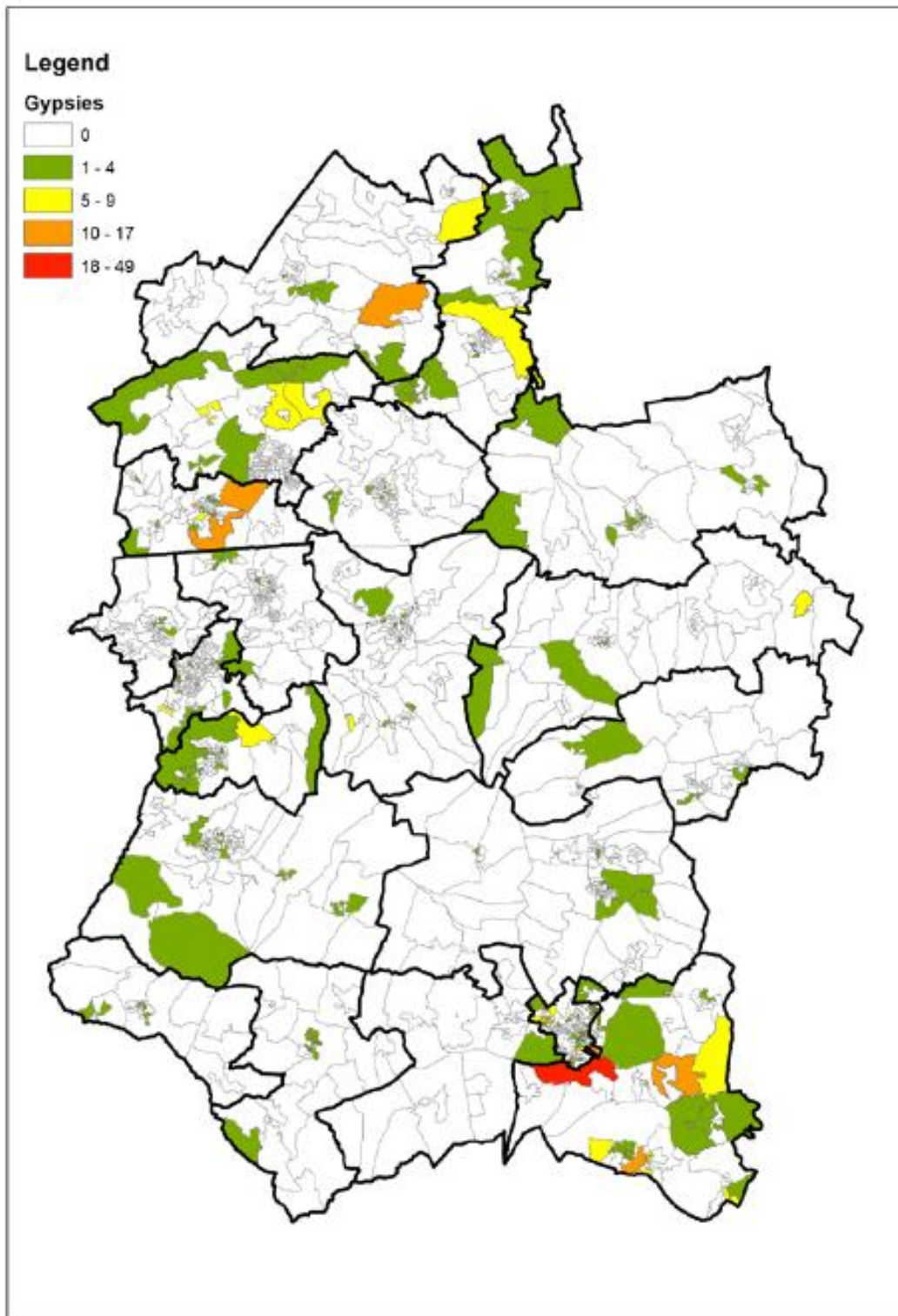
1. Findings from national research highlights the impact of environmental and social conditions upon Travellers and their families who are more likely to experience poorer general health when compared to the wider population. Poor health is reflective of poor and inappropriate accommodation. Site conditions can lead to poorer mental health and insecurities. Poorer health is seen at a younger age compared to the wider population. Research suggests that privately owned sites tend to be healthier sites.
2. It is noted that the lack of investment and repairs on these two sites are leading to conditions which could be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of residents.
3. It is recommended that all options be explored fully within appropriate timescales, including the financial impact of these options, if any, on the council, and in doing so to ensure that the final option chosen is balanced with the health and wellbeing of the residents in the short and long term.

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## Appendix 1 – Traveller locations across Wiltshire



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census

**Appendix 2 - Dairy House Bridge Site**



**Source: To be added**

### Appendix 3 - Oak Tree Field



**Source: To be added**

#### Appendix 4: Examples of site conditions



Picture 1: Dairy House Bridge Site



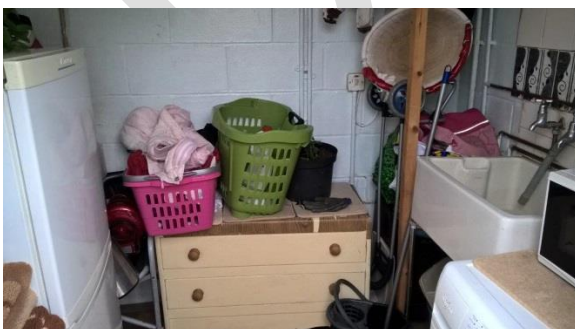
Picture 2: Dairy House Bridge Site, showing close proximity of homes



Picture 3: Oak Tree Field Site, Bathroom



Picture 4: Oak Tree Field Site, Shower room



Picture 5: Oak Tree Field Site, Kitchen

**Source: To be added**