

Proposed temporary gypsy and traveller transit site Consultation 2020 Survey Report

December 2020



1. Background and Methodology

Shropshire Council consulted on the proposed temporary five-year gypsy and traveller transit site between 1 October 2020 and 14 December 2020. The consultation was designed to gather views relating to the proposal and to inform next steps for implementation. A transit site fact sheet was provided to explain the proposals and enable more informed consultation responses.

The aim of the site is to address the problem of unauthorised encampments in and around Shrewsbury (in the last 5 years there were 153 unauthorised encampments on Shropshire Council land and 200 on private land). A site would provide a safe place for families to stay.

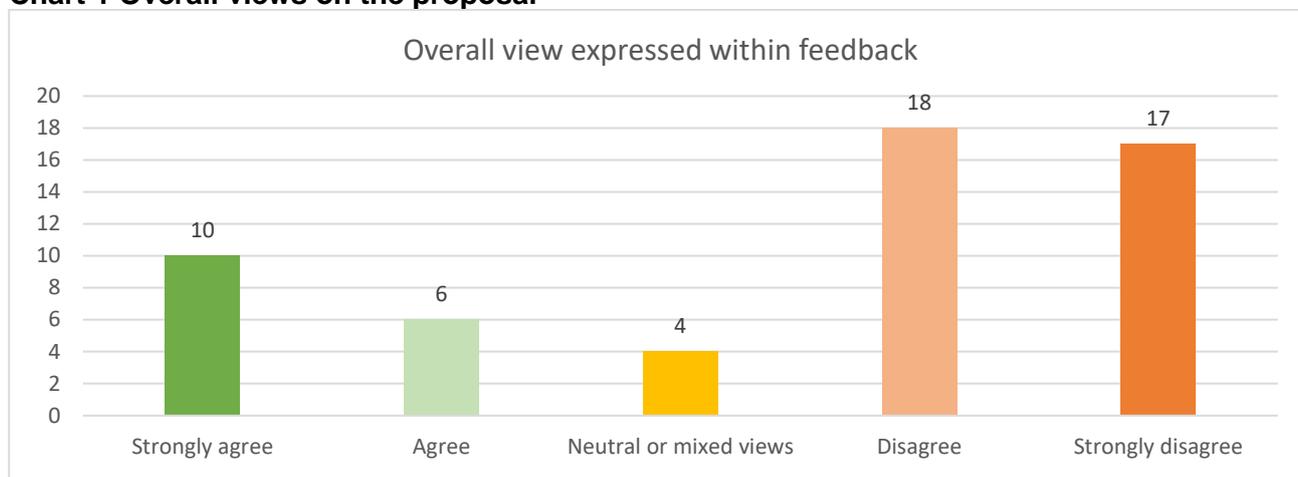
The proposed site highlighted within the consultation is owned by Shropshire Council and lies close to Ellesmere Road roundabout between the A5124 Battlefield Link Road and the A528 Shrewsbury Road. The site itself would be screened by a belt of trees. The consultation also highlighted that national planning policy for gypsy and traveller sites requires local authorities to identify and to seek to meet the permanent and transit accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers via the planning process.

The consultation was promoted widely within Shropshire, across members of the public and among key stakeholders. The consultation was hosted on the 'get involved' section of Shropshire Council's website and a range of communications were issued to direct people to the consultation including a Newsroom press statement on 2 October 2020 and articles in local newsletters. Consultation responses were encouraged by email or letter.

2. Response and Overall Feedback

Consultation responses were received throughout the consultation period, with most responses received between the 2nd October and 6th October. All responses were in writing by email or post and in total 55 responses were received. Each response was considered and categorised to understand the key issues raised and identify common issues. Chart 1 below provides an overview. Of all the responses 29% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 64% disagreed or strongly disagreed (the remainder were neutral comments or from people with mixed feelings).

Chart 1 Overall views on the proposal



16 of the 55 responses more specifically mentioned the proposed location of the temporary five-year gypsy and traveller transit site. Of the 16, 13 disagreed with the proposed location (81%) and 3 agreed (19%).

Chart 2 General feedback on site location

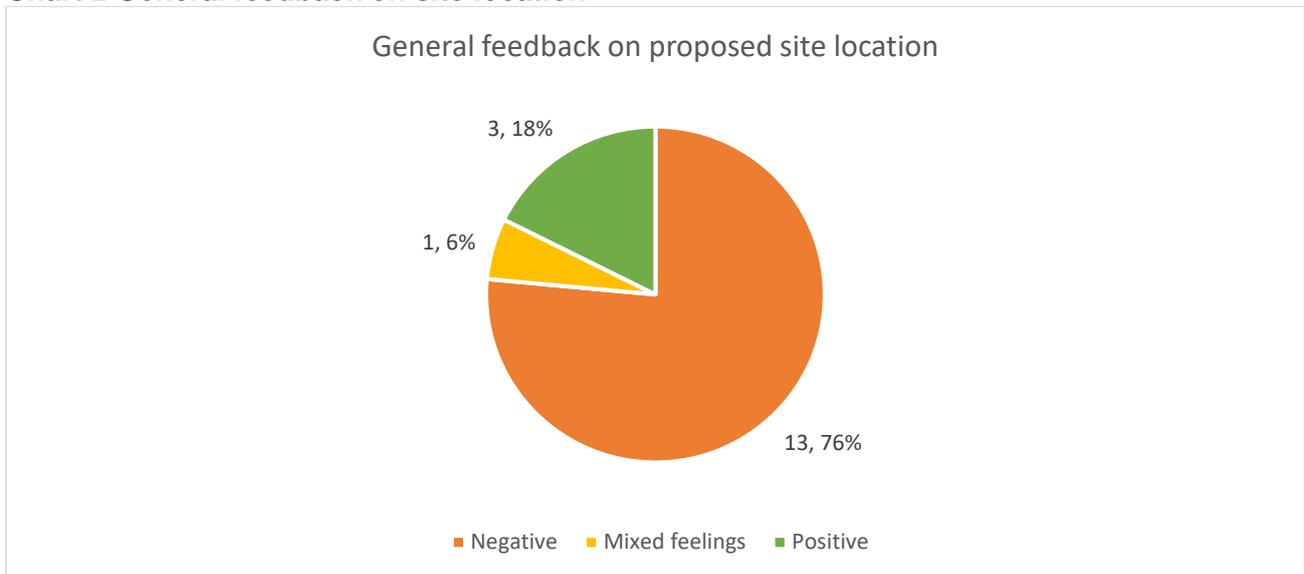
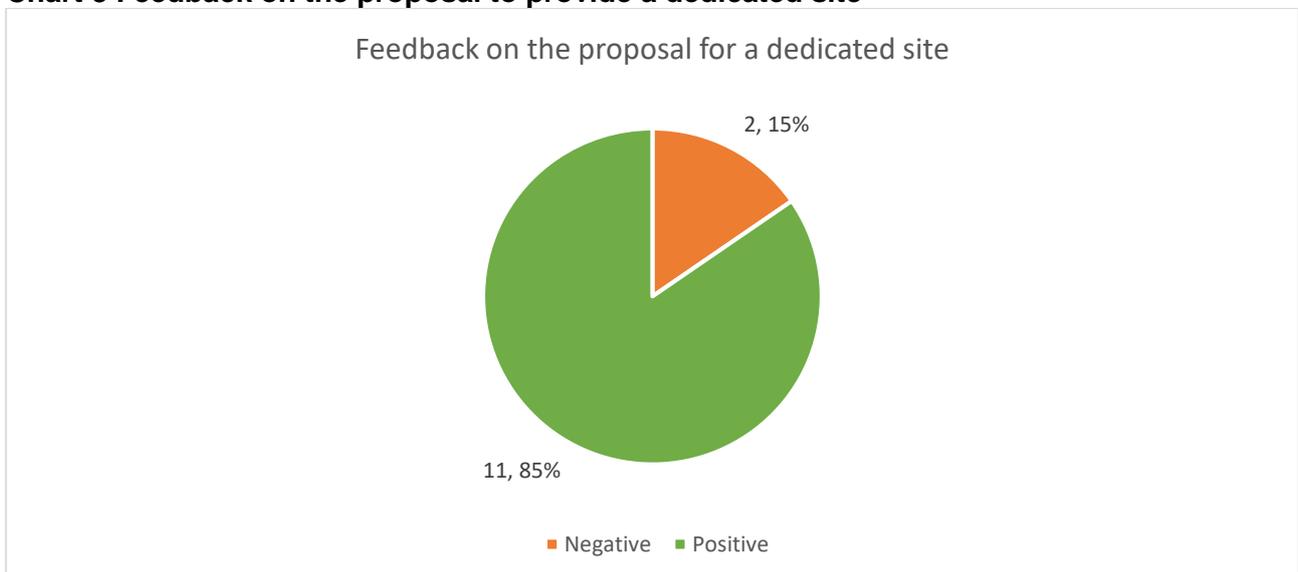


Chart 3 below highlights the sentiment within comments relating to the proposal to have a dedicated site. Although there were some concerns about the location of the proposal, there is overall support for the provision of a dedicated site. 10 people commented that a dedicated site will be welcomed (83%) and 2 disagreed (17%). Many people did not mention this element of the consultation proposal within their comments.

Chart 3 Feedback on the proposal to provide a dedicated site



It is important to obtain an overall understanding of the sentiment within the feedback provided but it is also helpful to take a closer look at some of the main themes within the comments and to explore example comments to illustrate the feedback. Several common issues were mentioned within the consultation responses and qualitative analysis techniques were applied. The next section looks at each main theme in turn.

3. Feedback Themes

Location and Site

The example comments below highlight some of the more positive comments about the proposed site and location alongside some concerns. Although these categories were recorded separately the example comments have been brought together because some people touched on both themes within the comments and it is helpful to read the comments without splitting them. Positive comments generally refer to the importance of providing a dedicated site rather than the choice of location. The concerns about the location are more varied, but some are from people living in the area who are concerned about the impact. Overall the concerns appear to suggest that the site could be too close to existing developments. These concerns are explored more under the other main themes highlighted within the comments.

Positive feedback

- *“I believe that it is important for Shropshire Council to fulfil its obligation to provide sites for the gypsy and traveller population. It is evident that they will stop on unauthorised sites in Shrewsbury and I believe that it's preferable for both local residents and the gypsy and traveller population that these stops are on authorised sites. It's to be expected that there will be objections from some who live close to any proposed site; however, this doesn't mean that it's wrong for the land to be used for that purpose. I therefore support the proposal as set out in the consultation document.”*
- *“I have lived in Shropshire for much of my life (1972-1981 and 1989 to present). I support this proposal because Throughout this time I have seen Gypsy and Traveller families on their normal annual routes and at their regular stopping places. Particularly along the A53 I have noticed over recent years how the stopping places have been removed or otherwise affected by developments and increasing levels of traffic. I am very glad that this development can offer a safe stopping place for these families.”*
- *“I think it's great idea having a dedicated site for travellers, this would mean that the travellers could have their own protected site and they wouldn't have to break barriers such as those at the battlefield retail park.”*
- *“I like the idea of having an area set aside for travellers. I feel it would help them as it gives an actual place for them to stay and hopefully gives them security. I know that they sometimes camp in areas both legally and illegally and I hope that this will reduce the amount that illegally will stay in places they shouldn't be. Sometimes they have to break locks and gates to get into a new area and fixing it costs and making a place for them will reduce any fixing costs.”*
- *“I would like to say that I strongly support the creation of a traveller site in the area and would push for there to be a permanent one rather than a temporary one. Across the UK there is a shortage of sites, forcing travellers to camp illegally (and in turn provoke racist ire). Unless more settlements are created the crisis is only going to worsen and the traveller community is only going to continue to get more and more marginalised....”*
- *“It is important that Shrewsbury has a transit site that provides an area that Gypsies and travellers can stop and have facilities for washing, cooking etc.”*
- *“Totally in favour of temporary gypsy and traveller site. Seems like a good location to me at first glance. Provision needs to be made – good work.”*
- *“I was very pleased to read about this proposal. As you say there have been problems fairly regularly with travellers stopping in unrecognised sites around the town. But then there has been a serious lack of traveller site provision. This proposal is a positive step to making life easier for travellers and local residents alike...”*
- *“I think the proposed travellers' site is an excellent idea. It will give travellers a safe and secure place to stay, without criminalising them.”*
- *“I fully support the temporary traveller site and feel this has been needed for many years in the Shrewsbury area, I hope having a dedicated site will help to reduce the negativity travellers receive in the Community and are subjected to on a regular basis.”*

- *“...I hope you can put this transit site in place quickly and that it has the desired effect you and everyone, that is effected by these encampments is after.”*

Concerns about the location

- *“I would object to the siting of the travellers’ site where it is proposed.”*
- *“I wish to voice my disapproval of the plans for a travellers’ site to be situated on the Ellesmere Road at Battlefield. I could not think of a worse place...”*
- *“I can't in my right mind think why you would put a traveller's site right next to an industrial estate!!!”*
- *“Extra burdens on the villages of Albrighton and Bomere Heath infrastructure.”*
- *“...Why has it been decided to have it on this end of the town and not the Welshpool end of town? We already have an incinerator, that's smells at times. That's enough to put up without the thought of travellers permanently on the door step up to five years.”*
- *“I am very disappointed that the travellers site is proposed north west of the town there is enough traffic with all the shops this end of town and also the health centre is fit to burst while I think there should be a place for travellers why this area, what other areas have been looked at, Severn fields medical practice already has 17,000 patients and it's difficult to get an appointment as it is this area would come under their catchment area.”*
- *“I do not agree with the placing of the site, so close to residential and commercial properties. As well it being so close to a heritage site. The area is dealing with enough issues. Adding to these by providing a site for travellers will only add to the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.”*
- *“I feel that, if you do see the need, it is put further out of town, not close to businesses and homes.”*
- *“I wish to object to this site being situated on the north side of Shrewsbury it will affect all are house prices once in situ and there must be other areas for consideration that are not in a built-up housing area.”*
- *“There are a number of Gypsy sites already located within travelling distance to Market Drayton. The site is far from discrete with the location mentioned. The site is located towards an important junction taking visitors / tourists and local residents into Market Drayton. ...The small number of supporters to this site are residents who objected to the David Wilson housing development and now see this as “revenge” on those residents who have bought on the site – feel free to confirm the addresses of those who support the site. ”*
- *“How dare you just dump a traveller site by a very busy and highly populated business and residential area! I notice that you've not considered putting this site up at new buildings areas in Radbrook or Oteley Rd, or in Copthorne. Is this because you value the middle classes more than those in social housing or cheaper private housing?”*
- *“How are you as our council going to protect the value of my home should I wish to sell in the next 5 years. This decision of placing the camp so close to my house is making me want to sell up and leave.”*
- *“Other locations are available which some of the councillors will know well which as they voted for this site, I am sure will be welcome in their area.”*

Traffic and infrastructure

Of the 55 consultation responses, 7 highlighted concerns about traffic and the impact on road infrastructure. There are concerns that there will be a negative impact and cause some traffic management issues or congestion. All 7 comments are shown below.

- *“The site will increase traffic on an already busy road, near a sharp bend. Traffic control measures to facilitate this site will only place further strain on a main artery which is subject to long delays during rush hours. Not only negatively impacting on the environment but also being a direct driver of increased financial, time and stress costs for commuters.”*
- *“You have already decided to build a relief road ending at battlefield, with the amount of traffic hitting that island at peak times it's going to be at a standstill and backed up all the way back to Shrewsbury Town centre. You are planning on building thousands of houses opposite the old*

riverbed, going to destroy the entire road with thousands more cars being in the area that roads can't handle right now."

- *"I also feel that the traffic going in and out of the site will cause havoc on a very busy major roundabout and road!"*
- *"The A5124 has regular congestion problems in the mornings - I am a commuter between Telford and Shrewsbury and am regularly delayed on my journey to and from work, development and increased population here will add to this."*
- *"I notice that there is provision for a height restriction barrier in this proposal. How will the height of the barrier be decided upon? The target market for this site usually travel with large caravans, horseboxes and light commercial vehicles. Will the site be overseen by permanent personnel who will be able to rapidly open the barrier to accommodate travellers arriving with larger vehicles? Vehicles entering the site need to be able to access the site safely without having to queue on the main road whilst awaiting the opening of the barrier. Will first-time visitors be able to summon assistance easily if necessary?"*
- *"We can't understand with all the land available on both south east and west of Shrewsbury why in the north area. There are better link roads to the A5 A49 from the south and west."*
- *"Highway safety / road access – opposite an already densely populated housing estate with access to the main relief road. Traffic generation – additional cars along with mostly vans and 4.5-ton trucks typically seen on a traveller site."*

Impact of development/ building

There were 3 main comments highlighting concerns about the potential impact of development. The concerns related to the environmental impact, and impact on infrastructure including electricity supply and roads. This was not a main theme within the consultation responses, but it does help to highlight that there could be some community concerns.

- *"The area planned is valuable wildlife corridor where I have seen nut hatches, stoats, hares and badgers - further development will compromise their future. The lack of management outline poses consequences for wildlife here."*
- *"You are planning on building thousands of houses opposite the old riverbed, going to destroy the entire road with thousands more cars being in the area that roads can't handle right now."*
- *"The villages outside of Shrewsbury already suffer from intermittent brown and blackouts of the electricity supply, placing further strain on the infrastructure is only going to negatively impact on existing, tax paying residents."*

Crime and antisocial behaviour

Concern about crime and antisocial behaviour was the dominant theme within all the consultation responses received. 18 of the 55 consultation responses mentioned concerns over crime and antisocial behaviour. Among general concerns relating to crime 5 comments were made about dog thefts and a few people highlighted concerns over the potential impact on more vulnerable members of the community including children, young people and the elderly. The comments are shown below:

- *"You know when the travellers have arrived because the local coop shop on Mount Pleasant road has to block off one aisle of the store to prevent shop lifting."*
- *"I was given abuse and was threatened, they told me to keep away from the area during the time they was on site. The theft rate in the local area was very high during their stay."*
- *"Crime will now go up tenfold in our community and for what? Just to keep them happy?"*
- *"The antisocial behaviour that the people using these sites is well documented and even stated in your proposal."*
- *"We and everyone knows crime rates will sky-rocket once they are all moved into the area."*
- *"...ongoing concerns around drug dealing and criminal activity in the town. I am not suggesting that all travellers are criminals, but I wish to use the Craven Arms site for comparison this site"*

has caused a lot of crime in the local community, which has affected innocent local people, ' and some of its residents have exploited children and young people, which has affected the course of their lives."

- *"I object to the travellers' site in Shrewsbury due to the high rate of crime that comes with them."*
- *"We are already paying a higher Council Tax to ensure we fund the additional policing required as a result of 'county lines' drug crime and yet you propose to increase the policing resources further by the inevitable crime spree from stolen pets, stolen goods, robberies from the Battlefield Industrial Park, extortion of residents through shoddy and expensive so called 'drive cleaning', fly tipping....the list goes on and at whose expense."*
- *"Great place for them to do what travellers normally do. Break into a load of places put crime up in the area and bring the price of property down they already have no respect for the law."*
- *"These people are common criminals who dump rubbish and steal property and should certainly not be encouraged to stay in the area."*
- *"I used to live fairly close to one of these sites some years ago and it had to be moved due to the amount of crime, pubs and homes broken into, and all the intimidation the locals received...."*
- *"...bikes and dogs getting stolen more all the time round Shrewsbury."*
- *"The areas animal and property theft statistics will increase as will anti- social behaviour. This has been proven in the times that these travellers have descended on the area. The creation of this site will only encourage large car dealerships and other businesses to leave the area. No business is going to want to be there and risk property damage and theft."*
- *"However, my concern about the proposed site as a regular dog walker in the fields (off the car park on the A5124 Battlefield bypass) is about the well-known and identified propensity of travellers to steal dogs. This is particularly prevalent at the moment due to Covid movement restrictions and I can foresee this being intensified with the proximity of the proposed travellers' site."*
- *"Since Market Drayton has regular illegal encampments from travellers, which a permanent site will encourage, the level of crime rises significantly including, dog snatching, aggressive cold calling on local households which typically effects the elderly and vulnerable, intimidation of the selling of goods which can be confirmed through police reports."*
- *"I've worked in the Tesco extra for 8 years, the travellers have been aggressive and attacked staff in front of my own eyes. I've seen many, many thefts of products from the store. The litter and filth that is left behind is outrageous. The anxiety that we have all worked with for all these years is now going to be plopped on my doorstep.... Since I've lived here, we have been plagued by petty crimes and thefts from our vehicles. The police have not managed to get this issue under control until recently. I don't doubt for a second that the problem will continue when the two idiots are released from prison. Also, with all of the local dog thefts recently, this is also an issue that's not been sorted by our local police."*
- *"I worked on the battlefield enterprise park for approximately for over 15 years and during that time have encountered numerous episodes of threatening behaviour, abide and witnessed extreme violence from members of the travelling community. On a weekly basis we had travellers taking over car parks for our business and neighbours, petty thefts and people defecating on the car parks. Note this was also witnessed when a group parked on the Harlescott park and ride car park."*
- *"On one occasion my wife was driving to Condover and prevented from proceeding while two men fought it out in the road. She found this very distressing. A close neighbour to the site has also seen men fighting in the road close to his house. They take their dogs "lamp lighting " for hares in adjacent fields to me; this has been illegal for years. The farmer does not like this but finds it useless reporting this to the police as they do not take any action. I suppose the police have other more serious crimes to investigate."*
- *"Personally, I don't feel threatened or worried by travellers when they stay near me, but I know a lot of people do, so I feel this will help set their minds at ease. They get worried that they will vandalise or break into their houses to steal stuff. But I feel and hope that having a camp for them will reduce any thefts because it is one of the few places, they are actually allowed so they will behave better than previously. If I was in their position, I won't want to spoil it."*

Littering and damage

10 of the 55 comments highlighted concerns about the damage and litter that can sometimes be left at sites. Many of the same people who had concerns around crime and antisocial behaviour also commented on concerns around litter and damage. The comments were:

- *“Absolutely not, they cause too much trouble damage and rubbish.”*
- *“..... they park up at many sites not allowed leaving rubbish and wrecking the area.”*
- *“the sheer volume of litter and human waste left is unacceptable. They do not care for the local environment and do not follow any local laws.”*
- *“The areas they camp on are left in a poor state and the behaviour and disregard shown towards locals is awful.”*
- *“I was badly affected by these people when they illegally camped on land rented [name removed] in Isle Lane about 18 months ago....”*
- *“Last year some travellers stopped just down the road from this proposed site in a nature walk area and the mess was appalling.”*
- *“...the travellers leave human waste, rubbish and broken items wherever they go.”*
- *“There was no mention of services like rubbish and recycling collection. I trust this will also be put in place.”*
- *“What kind of waste disposal will be provided at the Campsite as travellers are renowned for leaving their rubbish behind when leaving site (I presume they will have 1 bin collection a fortnight and 1 recycling collection a fortnight).”*
- *“If the travellers decided to move on, who would be responsible for the clean up afterwards?”*

Traveller behaviour/ culture

There were 10 comments within the consultation responses that highlighted some fear and nervousness about living close to a gypsy and traveller site. There are perceptions that local residents will not feel safe but there is also some feeling that it isn't fair that local residents pay tax and that the investment will benefit people from outside of the local area.

- *“Taxpayer paying.”*
- *“....why don't you open up opportunities for the children today, there is nothing for them and lack of jobs and things to do, but you want to spend money on some gypos? Explain how that makes any sense.”*
- *“I'm not willing to pay any more council tax for gypsy's when they don't pay any tax themselves. We already pay a ridiculous amount of money in taxes for you to waste it away on 60 different bins. Like I say, don't put my taxes up to pay for this, I will see you in court!”*
- *“What do they pay?!”*
- *“We neither want or need this site which would only harbour contempt and anger of the local residents.”*
- *“What actions are in place to prevent a similar incident to Dale Farm?”*
- *“They have chosen a nomadic way of life and we should not be encouraging them to linger in the county.”*
- *“I am a pensioner, living alone on [location removed] and feel very unsettled by the proposed travellers' site you are talking about erecting on Ellesmere road. I feel that, if you do see the need, it is put further out of town, not close to businesses and homes. I used to live fairly close to one of these sites some years ago and it had to be moved due to the amount of crime, pubs and homes broken into, and all the intimidation the locals received. It got to the point when they were afraid to use local parks and walks in case they bumped into someone from the site and were abused. This is not the way I want to live, and feel that I pay my council tax, which they will not, and want to be safe in my own home.”*
- *“They have dug up the road and laid water and electricity from one section of the site to another. This must be illegal but has any action been taken against them? Probably not. The*

tarmac that they laid is constantly breaking up and leaving potholes. They dump rubble on the roadside verge filling drainage ditches so that they have additional space to park their vehicles. Hedges separating their site from the farmer's field are rooted up to give themselves additional parking space. I don't know if this has been done with consultation with the farmer.”

- “They had fist fights outside a children’s nursery...were seen working with and taking /splitting money with bailiffs.”

Impact on business

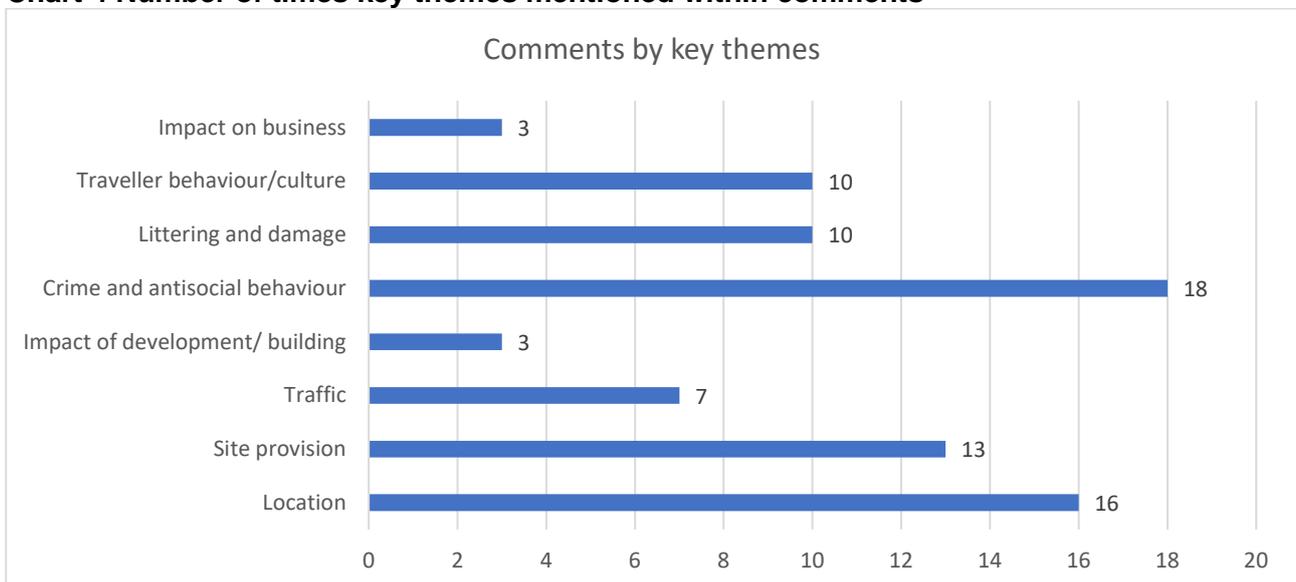
There were a small number of comments about the impact of the proposals on local businesses. Two comments were positive and one highlighted concern. The positive comments recognise that a dedicated site can help to prevent unauthorised camps and the impact on private landowners.

- “It will also reduce the burden of illegal camping around the Shrewsbury area and reduce the impact for local businesses when travellers/gypsies park up on private land.”
- “I believe that this transit site needs to be in place as quickly as possible, if only to enable the Police and Council to have the power to move on encampments and avoid private landowners and businesses the huge bailiff costs associated with such actions. The issue of unauthorised traveller camps has been an extremely problematic for the businesses of Shrewsbury. The lack of power by the police or council if the encampment happens on private land, has resulted in huge resentment towards these organisations. Only recently was a caravan parked on the public footpath 10ft from a business ... [details removed to retain anonymity] This is one of many examples of the total disregard to the businesses which are the driving force of prosperity in this town.”
- “The creation of this site will only encourage large car dealerships and other businesses to leave the area. No business is going to want to be there and risk property damage and theft....We have witnessed many times the effects that occur when travellers arrive, local businesses experience theft, anti-social behaviour and disturbances to business. I work in one of the local businesses and have witnessed this behaviour first-hand. The areas they camp on are left in a poor state and the behaviour and disregard shown towards locals is awful.”

Theme totals and general comments

Chart 4 below summarises the frequency of which some of the key themes explored above were mentioned within all the responses received. As mentioned above, not all the comments were negative and some positive feedback was received under the theme of impact on business (related to reducing use of private land for unauthorised camps).

Chart 4 Number of times key themes mentioned within comments



There were also some more general comments. These comments are not quite as focused on the details of the consultation proposals and are more general comments about the way Shropshire Council invests its funds, presents proposals and considers the needs of the traveller and gypsy community.

Concerns about cost and investment

- *“As a taxpayer, I feel our taxpayer's money should go to sorting out the homeless. Sadly, it's an ever-growing issue and in this current climate it's only going to get worse. A lot of homeless people have contributed to the country and have paid their taxes.”*
- *“What kind of fee will the travellers be paying to use the land? Paying the best part of £200 a month on council tax while travellers (who contribute nothing) have this park built for them due to trying to cut down THEIR illegal activities of camping up on private land.”*
- *“With regards to the traveller site, it should not be coming out of the budget, if they want land, they should buy it themselves and pay tax like the rest of us have to. There are sites In Oswestry, Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Craven Arms, Cressage etc. etc. If the traveller community wants to buy land and pay for it themselves, I have no issue, but absolutely no way should this be funded by taxpayers' money. What about homeless and mental health care money would be better spent there?”*
- *“I am appalled that you have the audacity to propose this. I take it you have heard the phrase “build it and they will come”. Well it will definitely apply to this. The Council is already up to its neck in debt and yet you feel it is logical to add this to the list of factors which question the very logic of the people we employ to run the services in this town. Given the ongoing debt and deficit levels within the Council accounts, how on earth can you suggest further capital expenditure and operational expense to fund the development and maintenance of this site. The refuse collection, electric, water supply, lighting, schooling of their children. Who pays for this? I think we, as residents know! It is untenable that you would even suggest this proposal which will have an ongoing detrimental effect on the town and I hope you do not suggest progressing it, even if you have tried the stealth approach of modifying it to a ‘temporary 5 year’ proposal. Your logic process beggars belief.”*
- *“If it's a fee-paying site, what makes the council think they would use it when they can park up at Tesco's park and ride for free? Has the council done a study on this to see if its viable? Because let's face they bought 3 shopping centres that so far have lost value.”*
- *“Disgusting proposal of spending money on this when local businesses are struggling.”*
- *“My comments are twofold: if you think this will stop illegal camping, then you are living in cloud cuckoo land, and secondly, why should Shropshire taxpayers' foot the bill when there are so many more deserving causes to fund?”*
- *“Ultimately, given the site will cost public money, under current circumstances, such monies would be better spent upon improving the local community, encouraging further tourism, visitors to the town centre (particularly on Wednesday Market Day).”*
- *“I'm concerned that a council I pay £224 a month to will pay £150,000 for this site to non-paying council tax citizens while the street I live in still hasn't been adopted by the council after the house has been here for 5 years.”*
- *“How about we move them on like they should be, and some other Council can foot the bill for non-tax paying travellers rather than mine and others in this Borough footing the bill.”*

Concerns about lack of evidence

- *“.... The consultation says there is a need to provide a safe place for the travelling community to stay whilst passing through Shropshire but provides no factual based reasoning behind this statement. I cannot understand why there is a 'need' to provide for such a community? Throughout the document, there is no evidence to describe the benefit this community brings to the area and makes it equally frustrating as to why local, taxpayers' money should be used to provide such a resource. It is stated that 153 unauthorised encampments on council land and over 200 on private land were reported, so I would be interested to learn how the provision of just eight family pitches will alleviate this problem? The document focuses on the need to prevent illegal encampments to reduce the cost in removing the travellers, yet this new*

proposal will never prevent this from happening. For instance, if a community of ten families move through Shrewsbury, how do you believe the remaining two families will stay whilst in Shrewsbury? There isn't a single benefit listed for this proposal, yet the Council believe during a Worldwide pandemic that a suitable use of tax-payers funds is to generate a site for non-tax paying travellers who contribute no income for the local community. We have too few schools, minimal GP surgeries, a failing local NHS Trust, yet a traveller's site is still a viable use of funds? I cannot fathom any logic behind this proposal and find it truly insulting that local, hard-working people will have their taxes spent to appease a community that provides such a burden on our already stretched resources. I do look forward to hearing the benefits this scheme will bring as I don't believe that you will receive a single positive response from any Shropshire resident."

- *"I have taken a look through the Evidence Base on the Shropshire Council web site and note the Call for Gypsy and Traveller Sites alongside the Preferred Sites Consultation. I can't however seem to find any documents within the Evidence Base that detail the results of the Call for Gypsy & Traveller Sites i.e. Site locations, types, sizes or any assessment of them..."*

Concern about longer term impact

- *"When there are illegal camps, enforce the law. Making camps available will act as a magnet and increase the numbers coming here."*
- *"My opinion of the proposed short-term traveller site, although it is a good idea short term! it will not stop illegal possessions happening! Not at all, they will in fact most definitely increase because once this site becomes known it will encourage many, many more travellers to the area and will not be able to deal with the overflow, absolutely guaranteed. This comment comes with many years of experience and a close relationship with travellers as a [role removed]."*
- *"At the height of the encampments on the park, one business spent more in bailiff's fees than rent for their building that month. Is this really the solution that these businesses should expect? The site would be designed for short term accommodation whilst the community passes through the county, however the problem has arisen in part to the costly and lengthy process of evicting the community from unauthorised encampments setup in the area. This suggests to me it could prove very difficult to move people on from the proposed transit site and defeat the purpose of its creation as merely a temporary site. What will happen to members of the community who refuse to move on?, wouldn't this site act as a magnet and increase the activity of the community into Shropshire due to the attractive secure facilities?, creating a demand in supply which could in turn cause the opening of more transit sites to have to open in the area? You also mention that a fee would be used for people to use the site? If that's the case, then wont the gypsy community simply choose to setup a free unauthorised encampment in the area if they can't afford the fees and choose not to use the site at all and defeat the purpose of the project all together."*

Other comments

- *"I cannot believe that anyone in their right mind would even consider encouraging a group of people who contribute nothing at all to our society to come and live among us. I am appalled that people who pay their way, work hard and look out for each other are going to now be living in fear in our own homes. I am very fearful for my family and my neighbours as I know that travellers have no respect for us at all or have any of the normal boundaries that we have. Please, please, please do not allow this to happen, why are you doing this to us, why?"*
- *"A planning application hasn't yet even been submitted for the potential NW road and yet you use the word 'will'. See below. I think this a little strong! 'It is understood that the development can be constructed without impact on or interference with the delivery of the North West Relief Road at this principal road junction along the northern part of the route and construction of the two schemes will be sequenced to avoid any concurrent working'."*
- *"Shrewsbury is turning in to a total disaster of an area and whoever is running the council proposals needs firing, this and other proposals are not for the good of the area."*

- *“However, these are not English people they are from Southern Ireland and when we come out of the EU officially at the end of the year, they will hopefully find it a lot harder to enter the country.”*

Positive feedback

- *“I am very glad that this development can offer a safe stopping place for these families.”*
- *“I believe that it is important for Shropshire Council to fulfil its obligation to provide sites for the gypsy and traveller population. It is evident that they will stop on unauthorised sites in Shrewsbury and I believe that it's preferable for both local residents and the gypsy and traveller population that these stops are on authorised sites.”*
- *“I don't know if it will be cheaper in the long run to make a camp for travellers but I feel that it is a better solution than what is happening currently by giving security and peace of mind to those who need it, both residents of the area and the travellers themselves. It is also the kinder, humane option.”*
- *“I hope you can put this transit site in place quickly and that it has the desired effect you and everyone, that is effected by these encampments is after.”*

Summary

It is important to note that the consultation did not result in a large number of responses (55 in total). Overall, there were more concerns expressed about the consultation proposals than comments in support of the proposals. However, opinion was mixed and the aim to reduce unauthorised camps was widely supported within the feedback received. It is important to consider all the feedback and the themes highlighted within the analysis above. It may be possible to take action to minimise/address some of the concerns raised. Some issues may need closer attention at the next stages of work, and it may be possible to work closely with the local community to address some of the issues highlighted.

Analysis and report produced for the Place and Enterprise Directorate by the Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council. January 2021. SD.