

**Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIA)**  
**Part One Screening Record 2020**

**A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions**

<b>Name of proposed service change</b>
Proposal for Temporary Gypsy and Traveller Transit site(Stopping Place)

<b>Name of lead officer carrying out the screening</b>
John R Taylor

**Decision, review and monitoring**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Part One ESIA Only?	yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		no

*If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.*

**Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations**

Gypsies and Travellers are a recognised ethnic group and are protected from discrimination by the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on public authorities, including Shropshire Council to promote race equality for all racial groups. Many still lead a nomadic or semi nomadic lifestyle; some have no fixed base and are constantly travelling between one temporary stopping place and another. Community tensions can arise between the Traveller and the settled communities because of the difference in lifestyle and a lack of understanding of culture and customs.

Like any other section of society, Gypsies and Travellers have their own identity, differences and traditions and what is true of one group of travellers is not necessarily true for all others. All Gypsy and Traveller groups do however share common cultural values of independence and a strong emphasis on the family group.

The Council view ahead of consultation about this proposed service is that there will not be any adverse impacts on any group with Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

It is anticipated that the site will have a positive impact on Gypsies and Travellers and community relations between traveller and settled communities and that it will in so doing promote equality through progress with the national quality aim around fostering good relations.

The failure to develop the transit site would have a negative impact on the following:

- Continuing the current problem of unauthorised development and encampments, as well as tensions with the settled community;
- Restricting the ability to enforce against unauthorised development as the ability to enforce is related to how proactive the council is in meeting the need for sites; and
- increasing the difficulty of ensuring that the Gypsy and Traveller community has access to all the support and services they need including; welfare, health and education needs.

### **Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations**

The management of the site would be undertaken by the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service and robust procedures would be put in place to ensure the facility is not abused misused and it is suitable for the purpose of accommodation prior to anyone moving on.

Further actions planned, which may be added to or amended following the public consultation, are as follows:

- Meet with the local policing team after each of the families have vacated the site to discuss how/if anything could have been managed differently.
- Meet quarterly with the local inspector/SGT, Local elected Member, Asset & Estates manager, Gypsy & Traveller Service and education services to discuss the overall management and effectiveness of the site.
- Request and review feedback from each of the families pitched on the site, this will be used to review/change how the site is managed.

Efforts will need to be made to ensure that ongoing engagement will continue across all groupings, particularly those where low or no responses are received during the consultation itself and/or from Gypsy Roma, Irish Traveller and other travelling families settled in Council or private fixed provision.

The Council will also continue to research and share approaches from elsewhere towards Gypsy and Irish Traveller site provision, including from other rural authorities, in order to identify and share good practice.

### **Associated ESIIAs**

Highways Maintenance ESIIAs  
Local Plan Partial Review ESIIAs  
North West Relief Road equality impact documentation

**Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and well-being considerations**

The provision of the site would enable the police to direct those on unauthorised sites to move to the transit site, so reducing the impact on the community and reducing costs to the Council associated with dealing with unauthorised sites. These include environmental costs associated with clean ups of unauthorised sites.

The provision of the site would also facilitate time saving efficiencies for the Council and partner agencies such as the police, due to the development of clear interagency protocols for assisting travelling families to be able to access the site.

Evidence sought in May 2020 about known impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic indicated the following

- Many of the families are self employed and the manner of their work (tree surgery, window plastics, building driveways) has had a major financial impact generally.
- We do provide benefits advice and in general complete their benefit applications, we also have a good network of contacts within the DWP and HB departments which can help speed up the process.
- There had been an increase in the number of families site & plot hoping between family members and several others leaving their allocated plots from out of the county to stay with family/friends on our managed sites.

There is thus a need for a continued information and support service around keeping safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the provision of a transit site would facilitate sharing of such information with vulnerable families

This was evident after the Covid-19 outbreak on the Traveller site in Craven Arms. The outbreak was contained within the site boundary and health and support measures were able to be put in place swiftly and effectively.

**Scrutiny at Part One screening stage**

<b>People involved</b>	<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><i>Mr J R Taylor, Senior Gypsy &amp; Traveller Officer</i></b>	John Taylor	<b>25<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>
<i>Any internal support*</i>		
<b><i>Any external support** Mrs Louis Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist</i></b>		<b>24<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>

*\*This refers to other officers within the service area*

*\*\*This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

## **Sign off at Part One screening stage**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Accountable officer's name</i>		

*\*This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

### **B. Detailed Screening Assessment**

#### **Aims of the service change and description**

The search for suitable Gypsy and Traveller accommodation has been an ongoing matter, pursued by the Council's Asset and Estate Management Team over a number of years.

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. Evidence to support the review of the Local Plan (the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update 2019) considers transit requirements and provides recommendations; identifying a role for Council transit provision to support capacity and the ability to manage unauthorised encampments. The full report is available in the following location:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/14446/shropshire-gtaa-update.pdf>

There are an estimated 148 occupied pitches in Shropshire as at May 2020, across 124 sites

Feedback from the communities has been sought via the liaison officer, about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in terms of health, both physical and mental, economic impact and of any other concerns in terms of vulnerability.

The team provides a supporting people service for the G&T community within the county, Those living on private sites or in houses tend to be more independent so the contact is generally minimal. In contrast, those who reside on our owned and managed sites are less independent and rely on the supporting people service frequently. All are registered with the local health services and have permanent residential status and do use the health services without any issues.

Regular contact with the police, social services, education and health services also contribute to aid those who are/may be vulnerable.

#### **Intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

- Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller and other travelling communities
- Health care services
- Local elected Members

- Local MPs
- Local town and parish councils
- National Gypsy and Traveller support and advice organisations
- Neighbouring local authorities
- North West Relief Road stakeholders
- Shropshire Council services involved, ie assets and estates management; education, environmental services, highways, and social care services, and public protection.
- Shropshire Community and Voluntary Sector Assembly
- West Mercia Constabulary

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and may be added to following the consultation

## **Evidence used for screening of the service change**

### National policy imperatives for transit site provision

The inequality impacts of Covid-19 upon the Gypsy Roma, Irish Traveller and travelling community have been evidenced as follows through a BBC article in May 2020, and underline the importance of moving forward with a transit site in Shropshire

Janette McCormick, the deputy chief constable at the National Police Chiefs' Council, said a large number of travellers have health issues and authorities should respond "proportionately". In a letter sent to all police Chief Officers, seen by BBC News, she has encouraged forces to stop evictions in favour of "negotiated stopping". This involves councils making agreements with travellers to temporarily settle on unauthorised sites in return for better access to healthcare and public services.

Sarah Sweeney, policy manager at Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) in Brighton, said calls to its national helpline had doubled during the crisis and there had been threats of eviction in nearly a dozen local authorities. The charity has been supporting the community with food packages, practical advice, and help accessing remote schooling and relief funds.

"We have also heard a number of issues where vulnerable people have struggled to register at GPs or contact NHS 111 because they don't have fixed addresses. Many people living roadside would like to live on a site or land, but it's really difficult because there's been a chronic under delivery of traveller sites across the country," she explained.

The Government commented at the time that Public Health England was working to develop guidance for travellers and it had written to councils to underline their responsibility to provide water, sanitation and waste disposal facilities, and that Councils are also best placed to decide when to use their powers to remove unauthorised encampments in order to ensure that the rights of settled communities are respected and the local environment protected.

### Local Sites Evaluation

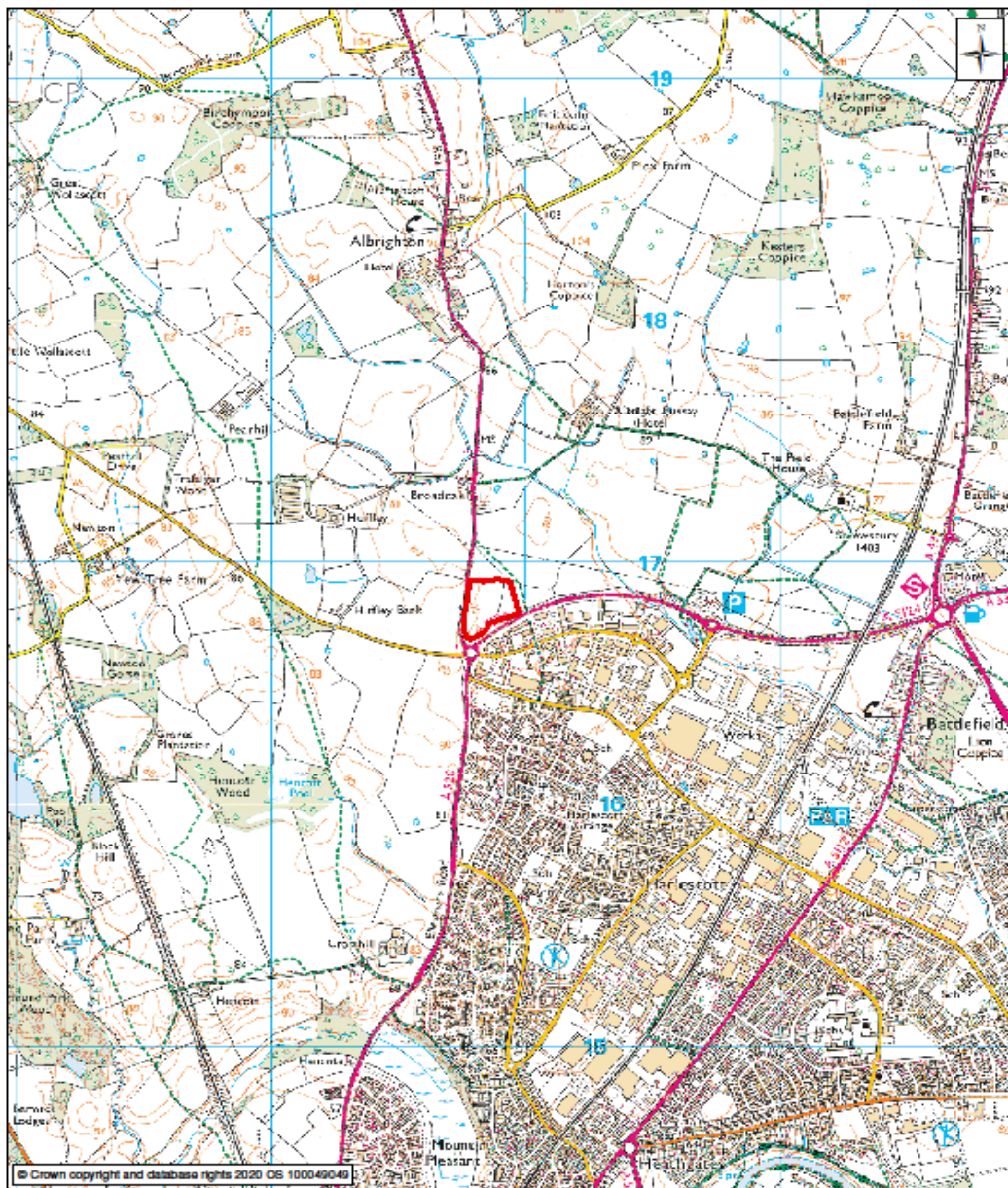
The search for suitable Gypsy and Traveller accommodation has as stated been an ongoing matter, pursued by the Council's Asset and Estate Management Team over a number of years.

A comprehensive evaluation of sites, mainly in Council ownership but also giving consideration to any suitable land or premises available for purchase or to lease within the county was undertaken in 2019, A formal site assessment exercise was undertaken by a Steering Group consisting of Strategic Asset Management Officers and Planning Development and Policy Officers, also including Member representation.

Following the assessment the final recommendation for the temporary transit Gypsy and Traveller site is land in freehold ownership of Shropshire Council. The area is approximately 3.60ha and lies abutting Ellesmere Road roundabout between the A5124 Battlefield Link Road and the A528 Shrewsbury Road on the North-West edge of Shrewsbury.

The site itself would be discreetly located close to a belt of trees providing screening both visually from the road.

The area highlighted in red on the plan shown is the area of land proposed for the Transit site. It is worth noting that only a small part of this land is proposed to be used for transit provision, approximately 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the site.



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**Shropshire Council**

**Business Enterprise and Commercial Services**  
 Shirehall, Abbey Foregate  
 SHREWSBURY  
 SY2 6ND

Title:	Drawing No:	302-001-096-PL
Land Off Battlefield Link Road, Battlefield, Shrewsbury, Shropshire	Scale:	1:20,000 © A4
Location Plan	Date:	April 2020
	Drawn by:	Property Strategy and Review

**Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change**

The public consultation is designed to gather views relating to the proposal and to inform next steps for implementation

The Council wishes to consult with the public and stakeholders in order to fully understand the needs and views of as many members of the community as possible to help plan the best way

to support the provision for gypsy and traveller families now and in the future.

The initial consultation period will run for 6 weeks as of the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **Initial assessment for each group**

*Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.*

<b>Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire</b>	<b>High negative impact</b> <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	<b>High positive impact</b> <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	<b>Medium positive or negative impact</b> <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	<b>Low positive or negative impact</b> <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<b>Age</b> (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			Positive for travelling families	
<b>Disability</b> (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			Positive for travelling families	
<b>Gender re-assignment</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral or low impact anticipated
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral or low impact anticipated
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Positive for travelling families	
<b>Race</b> (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)			Positive for travelling families	
<b>Religion and belief</b> (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)			Positive for travelling families	
<b>Sex</b> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral or low impact anticipated
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral or low impact anticipated



<b>Other: Social Inclusion</b> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)			Positive for travelling families	
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**Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being**

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Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed by Public Health colleagues with regard to impact upon health and well-being, in order to more fully capture health and well-being benefits.

It is anticipated that there will be health and well-being benefits for the families able to make use of the proposed facility if approval is given for this to proceed, as the Council and other agencies will be literally better placed to assist with information and communications about keeping safe due to Covid-19, as well as other health and social care and education support.

There would be environmental benefits to having a site that can be kept serviced as opposed to economic and environmental costs associated with clean ups of unauthorised sites, and an at least notional saving for Council services and other agencies in terms of car travel to one transit site as opposed to a number of other temporary unauthorised sites.

## **Guidance Notes**

### **1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion**

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.–You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

**Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.**

*Carry out an ESIIA:*

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

*Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:*

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;

- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

## **2. Legal Context**

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

***For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email [lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk).***