

# Crawley<sup>2029</sup>

September 2013

## **Additional Site Consultation Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Site Consultation Report**

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# Identifying a site for Gypsies and Travellers

This report examines opinions and views about the proposal to identify land within the Local Plan to accommodate a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site. It includes the following information:-

- The numbers of people agreeing and disagreeing with the two proposed sites as well as those people who couldn't decide whether it was a good idea or not,
- Some profiling information about the type of people responding to the questions to understand whether there were differences of opinion between different types of people living in different area within the town,
- Maps to pinpoint where agreement and disagreement came from within the borough to better understand how localised the issue was,
- Reasons why the sites were not being supported,
- Alternatives that were being proposed by respondents, and,
- Some issues emerging from the two questions that need to be taken into account going forward.

In total 2,068 people took part in the Crawley 2029 consultation. Within the consultation, respondents were asked to consider two specific sites that might be used to accommodate a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site in the future; Broadfield Kennels close to Buchan Park and Langley Walk in Langley Green. Of those 2,068, 94% (1935) specifically answered the questions about the proposed site at Broadfield Kennels and 94% (1946) answered the question about the site in Langley Green.

***When reading the report percentages are based on the total number of people who answered each specific question rather than the total number of respondents.***

This section of the consultation attracted a lot of interest from the public. As part of the consultation 606 people submitted the same comment although each response was signed and submitted by an individual. Some comments that were considered by the council to be inappropriate, offensive or racist have been removed. For a full list of those comments received, please refer to Appendix B. Within this report a number of comments have been used to give a 'flavour' of the views being expressed; they are not necessarily representative of all the comments received.

In terms of who said what, the report examines the differences of opinion held by those across neighbourhoods and age groups. Findings indicate there was little difference between ethnic groups.

In some cases, respondents have provided postcodes that have enabled us to map these to better understand the geography of the responses. However, because not everyone provided a postcode the maps are not representative of all the views expressed.

## Key messages

- Most people who took part in the survey did not agree with the proposal to allocate land in Crawley as a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site.
- 72% of respondents said 'No' to the Broadfield Kennel site while 82% said 'No' to the site at Langley Walk.
- Almost two thirds of the respondents who answered the questions about a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site said 'No' to both the locations in Langley

Walk (62% of the Langley Walk sample) and Broadfield Kennels (62% of the Broadfield Kennels sample).

- Even people who agreed that a permanent site should be provided for Gypsies and Travellers within the town found the idea difficult to understand. Comments made by these people often reflected similar issues and concerns raised by those people who were against the proposal.
- Respondents disagreed with the Broadfield Kennel site for three main reasons;
  - 1) the perceived negative impact it would have on the neighbourhood both in terms of its reputation and the affect on property values;
  - 2) the environmental impact it would have on the flora, fauna and wildlife within Buchan Park with some users indicating that they would stop visiting if a site were to be developed; and
  - 3) users of Cottessmore Golf Club who were already experiencing vandalism thought that a site might exacerbate the situation. Comments regarding this issue were fewer in number compared to the other two issues raised.
- The main arguments against the Langley Walk site included:
  - 1) poor road access;
  - 2) noise levels would be too high particularly with its proximity to Gatwick Airport;
  - 3) flooding was considered to be a problem for the site;
  - 4) the site was not considered to be big enough to accommodate ten caravans. Respondents thought the Broadfield Kennels site was bigger.
  - 5) the perceived negative impact it would have on the neighbourhood both in terms of its reputation and the affect on property values.
  - 6) Respondents also thought Broadfield Kennels was a better site because it was on the edge of town and slightly removed from the settled community which would cause less tension.
- We must remember that most responses tended to be drawn from those residents next to the proposed sites and within the overall Crawley 2029 consultation respondents from Langley Green far outnumbered respondents from other parts of the town. This point needs to be considered when reflecting on what the consultation is telling us.
- There was more support for the Broadfield Kennels site (22%) than the Langley Walk site (12%).
- Identification of a site within the Local Plan was welcomed by the small number of representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- The comments received suggest the Council needs to be more confident about why a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site needs to be found within the town and explain that clearly to residents. There was confusion as to why a site was needed and why this group of people were being treated differently.
- Within this part of the Crawley 2029 consultation, there were a number of strongly held negative views about the Gypsy and Traveller community and their lifestyle choice. Some of these were based on perceptions portrayed through different media channels as well as experiences of living alongside illegal encampments within the town. Comments that were made did not

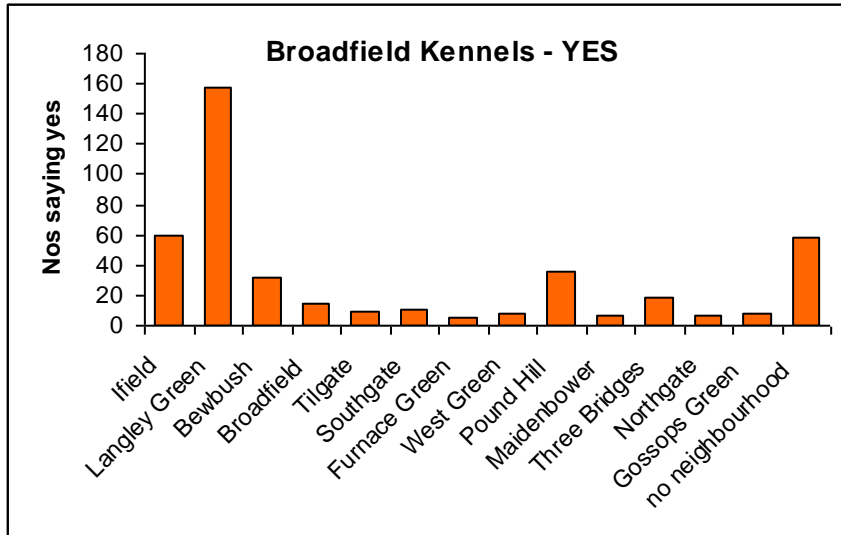
always appreciate that members of this community are already settled within bricks and mortar accommodation in the town, with some people indicating that no site should be allocated under any circumstance. The council needs to be mindful of possible community tensions that might arise following the consultation.

- There were some concerns about how a possible site might be managed. Respondents appeared to be concerned about:
  - 1) whether the size of the site might expand in the longer term as more families come to join those already settled there. It was recognised that this group of people lived alongside an extensive family network and there were concerns about numbers growing over time. Questions were also asked as to how this would be managed and controlled. A representative from the Gypsy and Traveller community also touched on this issue.
  - 2) how would services to the site be paid for.
- Respondents strongly felt that any site coming forward would need to be on the edge of town because this would cause the least friction within the settled community. This principle was certainly reflected in the comments made by some of those people in support of the Broadfield Kennels site.
- Respondents did come up with many alternative sites and a full list is included in the main body of the report. Manor Royal and land near Gatwick Airport were two alternative sites that were more likely to be suggested than other area. These two sites were put forward because they were considered to away from residential area.

# 1. Broadfield Kennels

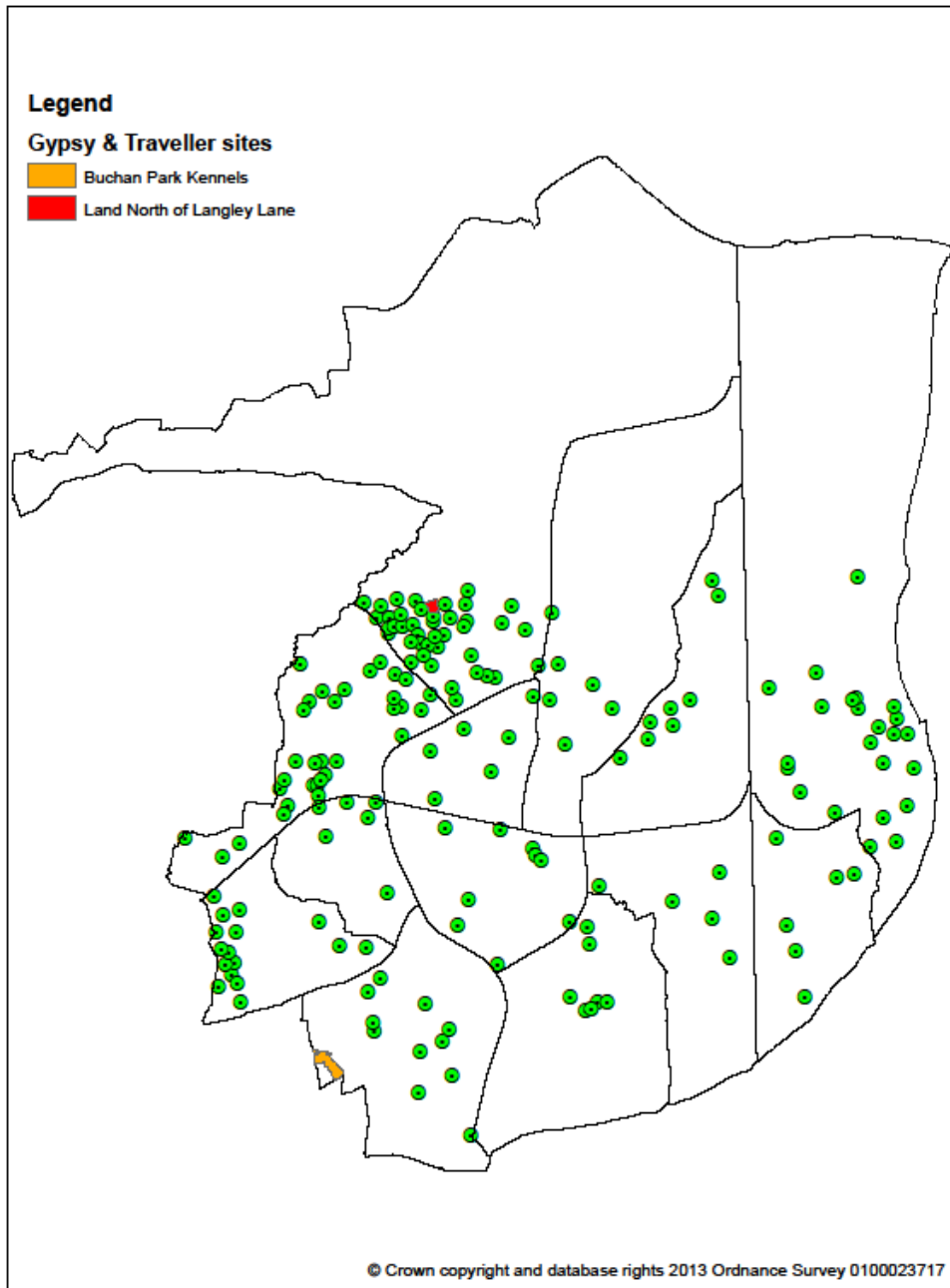
## Who agreed with the proposal and why did they agree?

- 1.1 Of the 1,935 people who answered the question about the Broadfield Kennels site, only 22% (430) agreed with the proposal.
- 1.2 37% (157) of those respondents resided within Langley Green with a further 14% (60) coming from Ifield and 8% (36) from Pound Hill. Only 15 respondents (4%) lived within Broadfield itself although there was representation from across all other neighbourhoods.



- 1.3. 41% (176) of the 430 respondents who supported the Broadfield Kennels site provided postcodes that have enabled locations to be mapped. This gives us a indication as to where support was located within the town. It corroborates the neighbourhood data outlined in the graph above. There was certainly very little support within Broadfield for the site. However, Langley Green respondents were more likely to agree with the Broadfield Kennels site.

## Broadfield location of Yes



- 1.4 Respondents supporting the site at the Broadfield Kennels were drawn from a wide range of people. Only 58% (251) were aged 46 years or over with all other age groups being represented and as many men as women supporting the proposal.
- 1.5 Looking at the comments received, respondents were very clear that they were supporting the Broadfield Kennels site because they did not think Langley Walk was suitable and they thought the other site was the better option.

- 1.6 So why was Langley Walk unsuitable? Comments suggest that the area has poor road access which is already well used from the respondents' point of view; both by residents and landowners with live stock. There was a view that positioning a Gypsy and Traveller site there would worsen the situation. There were also some concerns about noise levels and flooding and there was also a feeling amongst some that the Langley Green site was simply not big enough.
- “Langley Walk is a small road that wouldn't cope with additional traffic. The location is currently in use for live stock whereas Broadfield Kennels has better access and wouldn't impact on the surrounding area as much.”**

**“The area identified for the site in Langley Walk is approximately half the size of that at Broadfield Kennels for the same 10x fixed pitches.”**

- 1.7 Because the Langley Walk site was unsuitable, those agreeing with the proposal also suggested that the Broadfield Kennels site was the better option. Reasons why it was better included better access, since it was seen as being less disruptive for the local community. In addition, the site itself was bigger, it was quieter and there was a perception that the area was not as well used as the Langley Walk site.
- “Broadfield is a much larger site and would be able to house more people.”**

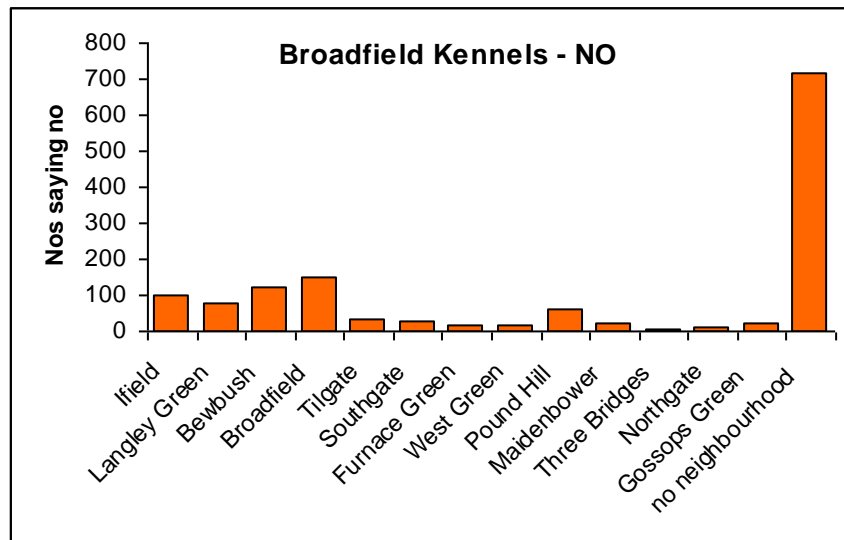
**“...the kennel site would meet their needs, give access to the town but avoid, or at least minimise any friction...”**

**“The Broadfield site is more conducive as it is not directly beside an existing community but on the edge of town.”**

### **Who disagreed with the proposal and why did they disagree?**

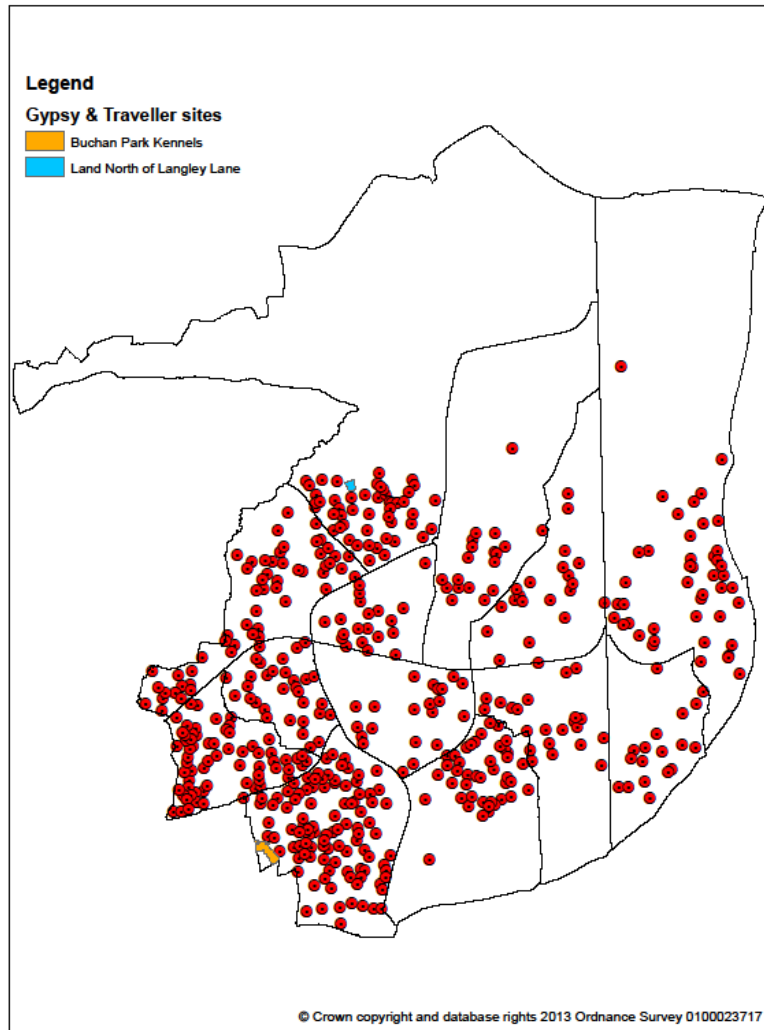
- 1.8 Of the 1,935 people who answered the question about the proposed Broadfield Kennels site, 72% (1387) disagreed with the proposal.
- 1.9 Of those people 44% (606) were made up of respondents who individually submitted a collective view; one statement. These people did not indicate what neighbourhood they resided in and as a result we do not have specific neighbourhood information about them. However, they did include their postcodes and these have been mapped to indicate residence (please see map below).
- 1.10 Of those respondents who indicated which neighbourhood they live in, most resided in Broadfield (150 (11%)), Bewbush (124 (9%)), Ifield (100 (7%)) and Langley Green (77 (6%)).





1.11. 37% (509) of those respondents who disagreed with the Broadfield Kennels site provided a valid postcode that could be mapped. Again this gives us an indication of the 'geography' of responses which is useful when so many respondents did not indicate what neighbourhood they lived in. The map clearly indicates that respondents were drawn from across the town, including Broadfield, which the graph above does not necessarily reflect.

## Broadfield location of No



- 1.12 Those respondents who disagreed with the Broadfield Kennels site tended to be slightly younger than those who agreed with 53% (740) being under 46 years of age. However, like those respondents who agreed with the proposal, all age groups were represented.
- 1.13 Comments suggest that there were three groups of people who were likely to be negatively affected if Gypsies and Travellers moved onto a permanent site within the area. These include:
- the residents of Broadfield
  - users of Buchan Park, and,
  - users of Cottesmore Golf club

### Residents of Broadfield

- 1.14 In terms of the neighbourhood, comments indicated that locating a Gypsy and Traveller site at Broadfield Kennels would further affect its reputation. The proposal was not viewed positively. Some people reflected on some of the existing problems in the neighbourhood and thought having a site close by would worsen the situation. Others reflected on past experiences and the

affect illegal Gypsy and Traveller sites had on the local community and were concerned about the same thing happening again.

**“When travellers have parked up in certain areas they have left lots of rubbish, messed up the area and in some cases have caused damage....”**

**“Broadfield already has a poor reputation (unfounded in my opinion). However to continue with the plan for Broadfield Kennels will only cause this opinion to become lower still.”**

- 1.15 Some respondents were concerned about the direct impact such a site might have on the value of their properties.

**“The house value in the area would drop considerably, are you going to compensate the home owners?”**

### **The impact on Buchan Park**

- 1.16 A number of comments focused on the environmental impact a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site might have on the area which was referred to by some as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). Some respondents referred to the council’s Green Space Strategy, its Green Flag status and the management plan for Buchan Park. Much was made of the need to protect the Buchan Park which is a habitat for Nightjars, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and dragonfly populations. Some views were concerned about the impact on the forest and mature heathland. Deer have also been spotted. Comments suggested that having a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site within this area would have a detrimental affect on the nature and wildlife of the area.

**“Crawley has several areas of derelict land sites (other alternatives), so why risk an important SBCI/ SSSI site?”**

**“Broadfield Kennels should not be used for a gypsy site as the area it surrounds is of natural beauty and a sanctuary for wildlife and fauna. Our precious green spaces are being destroyed...”**

**“The land is also a designated AONB and is home to a large variety of wildlife. Crawley’s Green Spaces Strategy quotes that the council is committed to recognise the wealth of wildlife in Crawley and try to ensure that these areas are protected and enhanced.”**

- 1.17 There were also comments which reflected the view that the area is well used by local people. Walking dogs, children on educational trips and just enjoying the open space were all cited as things that people like to do there.

**“These areas are already well used as recreational ground and dog walking land by Crawley residents...”**

**“A site should not be located next to a nature park which many people use and enjoy.”**

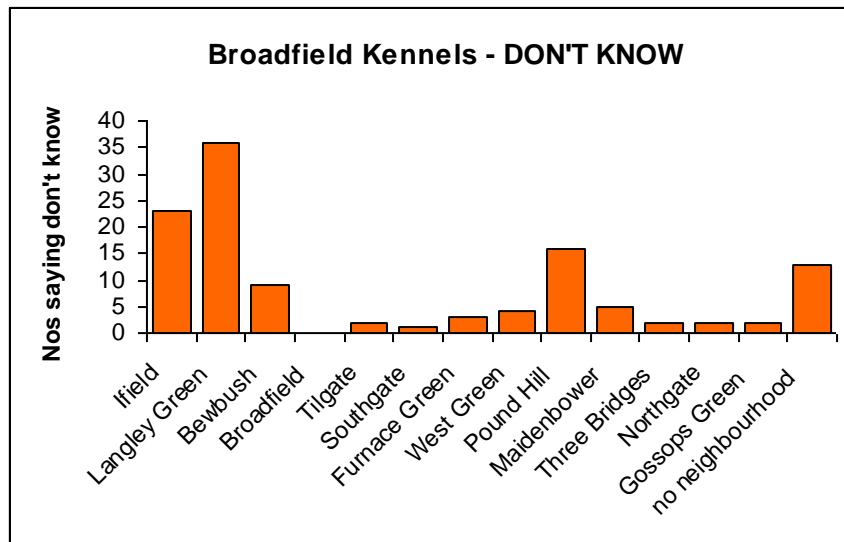
### **Cottesmore Golf Club and surrounding area**

- 1.18 A small number of comments were received from people connected with Cottesmore Golf Club. Comments indicated the club is already affected by vandalism and there was a perception that this might increase if a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site was located at Broadfield Kennels.

1.19 It is important to remember that 606 people (44% of those who disagreed with the site) submitted the same view. As well as touching on the possible affects to the natural environment and wildlife already discussed in this report, there were also concerns about the access to the site and the pressure on community infrastructure (schools, health services) to accommodate more people being housed within the area. There was also a worry that the site might become much bigger by attracting people from outside the town to reside there. This was a view reinforced by a representative from the Gypsy and Traveller community, although the nature of the concern was different. This is discussed later within the report.

**Who didn't know whether this was a good site and why were they undecided?**

1.20 Of the 1935 people who answered the question regarding the Broadfield Kennels site only 6% (118) did not know whether this would be a good site or not.



1.21 As the graph illustrates most of those people lived in Langley Green (36 (31%)), Ifield (23 (20%)) and Pound Hill (16 (14%)).

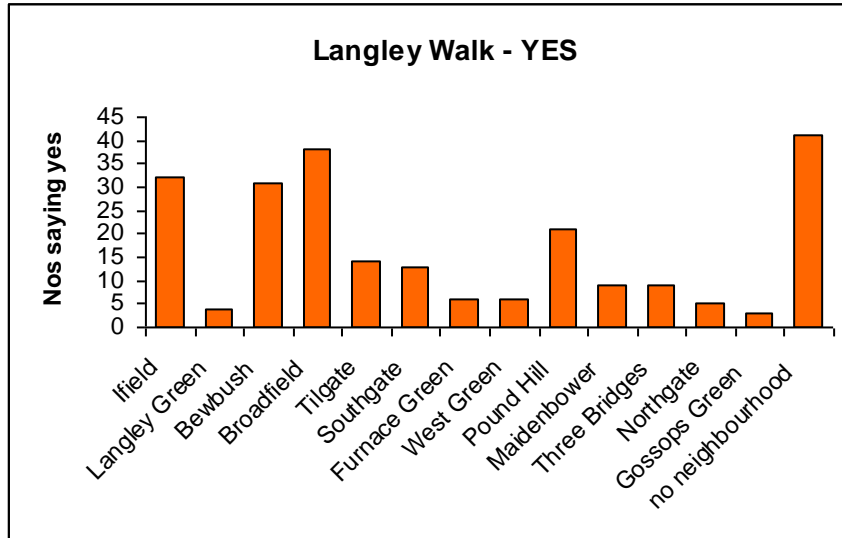
1.22 More women (71 (60%)) than men were likely to be undecided about the site at Broadfield Kennels and they were also likely to be older compared to those who agreed or disagreed. 49% (58) of respondents were aged 56 years of age or over.

1.23 Looking at the issues raised by these respondents they were similar to those made by those respondents who agreed or disagreed with the proposals. For a full list of comments received please refer to Appendix A.

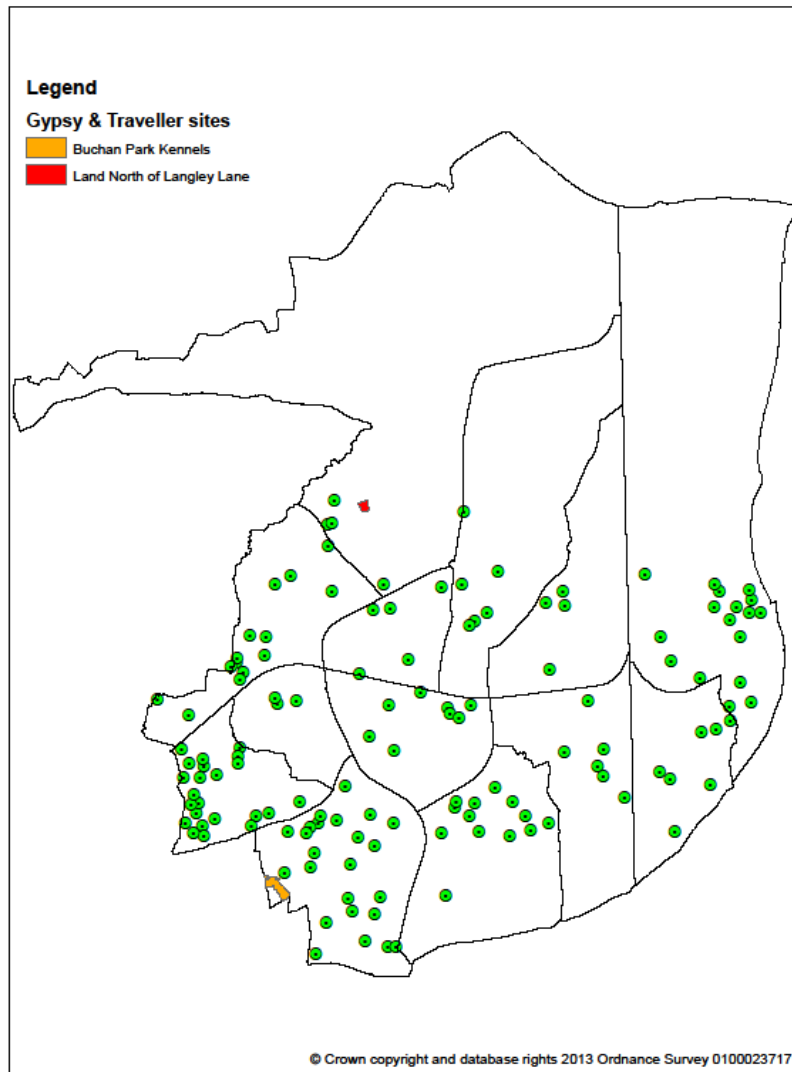
## 2. Langley Walk

### Who agreed with the proposal and why did they agree?

- 2.1 In total 1946 people answered the question about whether a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site should be located at Langley Walk. 12% (232) of respondents agreed with this proposal.



- 2.2 As with the Broadfield Kennels site there were a number of people (41 (18%)) who did not indicate which neighbourhood they lived in. Of those respondents who indicated which neighbourhood they lived in, most resided in Broadfield (38 (16%)), Ifield (32 (14%)), Bewbush (31 (13%)) and Pound Hill (21 (9%)).
- 2.3 58% (134) of those respondents who supported the Langley Walk site provided a valid postcode that has been mapped. Results corroborate the neighbourhood data provided in the graph above; there was very little support for the site within Langley Green with pockets of support being found within Bewbush, Broadfield and Pound Hill.



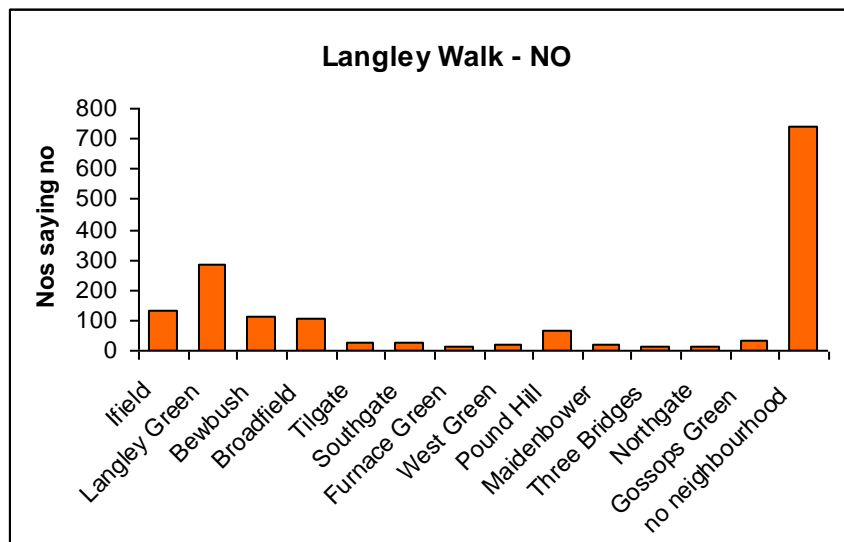
- 2.4 Respondents who agreed with the proposed site at Langley Walk were more likely to be male (52% (120)) than female and almost half (43% (100)) were aged between 36 and 55 years of age.
- 2.5 Most people who said 'Yes' to the Langley Walk site thought the Broadfield Kennels site was not suitable. They talked about the detrimental impact such a site would have on the neighbourhood of Broadfield as well expressing concerns about the impact on the wildlife and environment at Buchan Park. **“Broadfield already has enough problems; the last thing needed there is to invite more.”**

**“...this is too close to the amazing Buchan Park where the dogs are walked, children from local schools visit in large groups with teachers. The Park Rangers have done an exemplary work and take great pride in all they do. They will overlap into this public space and it will be spoilt....”**

- 2.6 There were some people who felt that the Langley Walk site was better positioned to allow the Gypsy and Traveller community to integrate and mix with the existing community.
- 2.7 Some people felt the proposal was reasonable and that it fulfilled the council's responsibility to meet its legal obligation. Amongst those that supported the Langley Walk site there were a number of comments received from Gypsies and Travellers; both individuals and representative organisations. There was nothing specific about the Langley Walk site that people talked about. Comments from this group were more likely to reflect on the technical documents posted on the website or the general approach to dealing with planning applications relating to Gypsies and Travellers. These are discussed later on in the report.

**Who disagreed with the proposal and why did they disagree?**

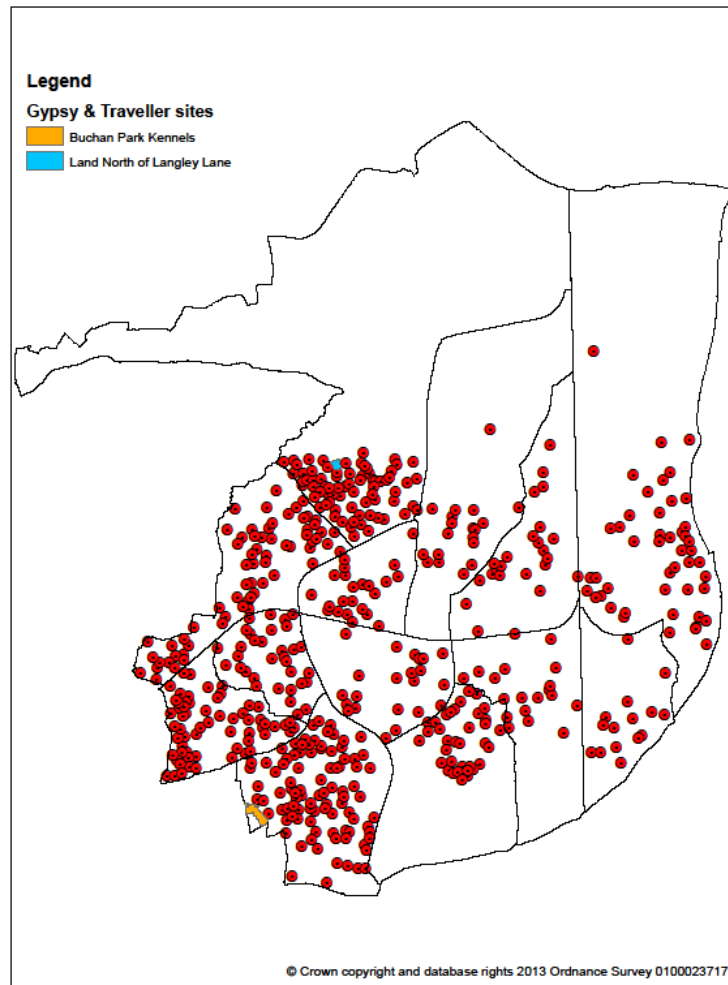
- 2.8 82% (1604) of the 1946 respondents who answered the question about the site at Langley Walk disagreed with the proposal.



- 2.9 As with the Broadfield Kennels question there was a significant number of people (738 (46%)) who did not indicate which neighbourhood they lived in. This group of people included the 606 respondents who individually signed and submitted the same opinion and view.
- 2.10 Most of those respondents who indicated which neighbourhood they lived in came from Langley Green (286 (18%)), Ifield (133 (8%)), Bewbush (112 (7%)) and Broadfield (103 (6%)).
- 2.11 33% (528) of those respondents who disagreed with the Langley Walk site provided a valid postcode that could be mapped. This provides us with useful information considering so many respondents did not indicate what neighbourhood they lived in. The map clearly indicates many people who disagreed with the site lived close to it.



## Langley Green location of No



- 2.12 Overall those respondents who disagreed with the Langley Walk site were younger than those who agreed or were uncertain whether it was a good proposal or not. 11% of respondents (216) were aged 25 years or younger, 30% (586) were aged between 26 and 45, and a further 22% (345) were aged between 46 and 55.
- 2.13 Respondents who disagreed with the Langley Walk proposal had some specific arguments why this was not a good site. These included:
- the proximity to Gatwick airport and the associated noise problems,
  - there were concerns regarding flooding of the area which would impact on any proposed development,
  - there were some concerns about access to the site,
  - the impact such a development would have on the local environment.

### **Too close to Gatwick airport**

- 2.14 With the possible expansion of Gatwick Airport back on the agenda some respondents did not feel it was right that the council should be considering developing on the site. That along with noise from the existing airport made it an unsuitable site. Through this consultation process Gatwick Airport themselves rejected this site.



**“It would be an environmental hazard and with the proposition of a new runway coming for Gatwick, this will be in very close proximity to any new development in this area.”**

**“Airport noise very excessive and can only get worse with possible additional runway at Gatwick.”**

### **Flooding**

2.15 A number of comments indicated that Langley Walk is prone to flooding which can sometimes spill out onto the road. During the consultation some residents sent in photographs of the area taken during the winter months to illustrate this point. Comments thought the proposed development might exacerbate the situation.

**“Land north of Langley Walk floods every year and over spills onto the road. Strongly against works to be done on this land. Since more houses have been built on land in Walnut Lane road floods more to the point footpath and the road cannot be used.”**

### **Difficulty accessing the site**

2.14 Quite a number of people pointed out that Langley Walk can only be accessed by a narrow lane. There would appear to be existing parking difficulties for local residents, particularly at weekends. Respondents were very clear that the existing road would not be able to cope with an increase in traffic as well as larger vehicles towing caravans.

**“Langley Lane which is narrow and often only one lane available due to parked cars would suffer with large 4x4s and double axle caravans plus the pick-ups and lorries that these folks use.”**

### **Impact on local area**

2.16 Some respondents valued the site for its wildlife, flora and fauna. It was viewed as a valued open space on the edge of the build up boundary and should not be developed on.

**“This is a quiet semi-rural area on the edge of Crawley, one of the few remaining ‘green’ parts of Crawley; it is also undeveloped land outside the building area. We can ill afford to lose our last remaining natural resources with regards to trees, plant, animal and insect life and other natural habitats from this town.”**

2.17 There were also concerns about the impact this development would have on the immediate area. Some people felt that this part of the town had its fair share of development over the last few years and did not feel the neighbourhood could cope with anymore. Several comments focussed on whether there is sufficient resources to support a further increase in the population particularly in relation to school places.

**“Langley Green itself has already had four major builds with the last four years. If you pack residents in too tightly you create problems, social tensions, vandalism and crime rates rise.”**

**“Langley Green has in recent years been over developed with new housing within the area with no thought for the infrastructure and roads to sustain it.”**

**“The local school is already under pressure and so may not be able to cope with the extra children.”**

2.18 There were also some very real concerns about the impact such a site might have on the local community. It was not viewed as a positive development and evoked much passion. People were concerned that the value of their properties would decrease and sometimes referred to past experiences of illegal camps which had created much rubbish and damage to the local area. **“I am strongly against the Gypsy and Traveller site being in this location. This is because it will dramatically reduce house prices in the area. As I have a young family I am not in the position to move financially...”**

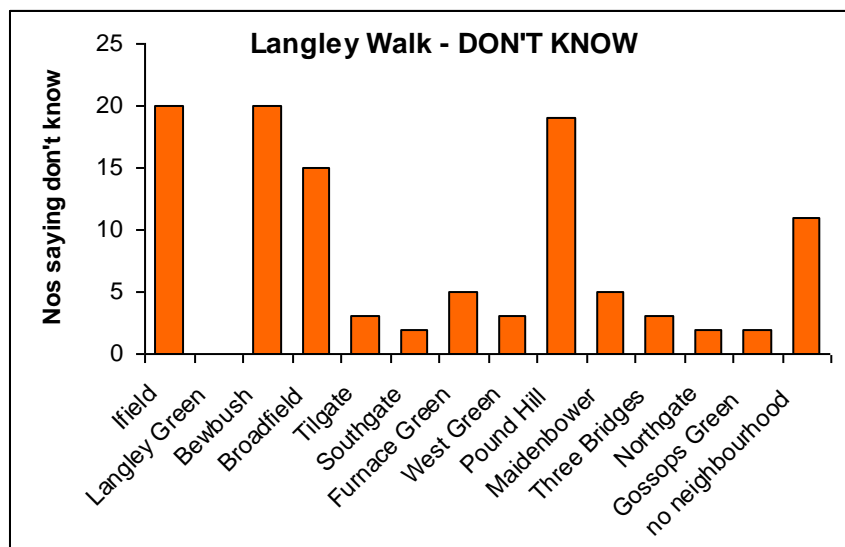
**Broadfield Kennels is the better option**

2.19 A number of people who disagreed with the Langley Walk site felt the Broadfield Kennels site was a better option. Responses suggested that the Broadfield site was bigger and was located away from the settled community.

**Who didn't know whether this was a good site and why were they undecided?**

2.20 As with the Broadfield Kennels site there were a small number of people who did not know whether the Langley Walk site was a good site or not (110 (6%)).

2.21 As the graph below illustrates, respondents were more likely to be drawn from across the town, although no respondents from Langley Green were uncertain whether the Langley Walk site was a good site or not.



2.22 Most respondents who didn't know whether Langley Walk was a good site or not lived in Ifield (20 (18%)), Bewbush (20 (18%)), Pound Hill (19 (17%)) and Broadfield (15 (14%)).

2.23 When looking at the comments made by those people who indicated they didn't know whether Langley Walk was a good site or not, it is clear to see that their main concern was regarding the Broadfield Kennels site. Comments focussed on the impact a site might have on the local community and Buchan Park itself. The issues raised echoes those made elsewhere in this report.

**“Lots and lots of people use Broadfield Kennels and Buchan Park as part of their daily walk. It’s not only a beautiful country park but offers a place for dog walkers to meet and people to walk freely and safely. Having a traveller site will dramatically change the area and the way people feel about Buchan and Broadfield. There is no need to ruin such a lovely and important part to the local community.”**

### 3. Alternative sites

3.1 As with other parts of the Crawley 2029 questionnaire, respondents did come up with other areas that might be more suitable for a Gypsy and Traveller site within the town.

3.2 As well as specific sites, there was a general feel from people that a permanent site needed to be placed completely away from the built up community, otherwise tensions would arise. This was a point of view which was raised by a large number of respondents regardless of whether they agreed, disagreed or didn't know whether both sites were suitable. There was a perception that some 'other' land on the periphery of the town must be available. Some people suggested land near Gatwick Airport and Manor Royal might fit this requirement while for some it was simply a case of looking outside the boundary of the town where land was more plentiful. Horsham, Copthorne, Crawley Down, Pease Pottage, Billingshurst, Broadbridge Heath, Haywards Heath, Henfield and Lowfield Heath were all suggested as alternative areas to be explored.

**“Nowhere in Crawley should have a permanent site for gypsy and traveller sites unless it is well out of the way of housing and business areas? Like in a field out of the way of anything that could be surrounding it.” (said NO to Langley Walk)**

**“Gypsy sites are not generally popular with residents (hence all the grass banks and yellow gates) so any site should be as far away as possible so as to avoid conflict.” (said YES to Langley Walk and Broadfield Kennels)**

**“Positioning the site away from housing areas would make for more harmonious relations with the existing residents of Crawley.” (said YES to Broadfield Kennels)**

**“No to traveller and gypsy sites. There must be plenty of green space away from residential areas.” (said NO to Broadfield Kennels)**

3.3 With regard to specific sites comments strongly suggest that developing a site on an industrial area away from the settled community was the preferred option; if the council had to fulfil a legal obligation. Land near Gatwick Airport was also suggested for the same reasons. The table below outlines the sites that were suggested by people as alternatives that might be looked at. Where possible some of the reasoning behind the suggestions has also been listed as well.

Alternative sites suggested by those people who answered the Gypsy and Traveller site	
Site	Reasons give (if any)
Manor Royal and industrial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from residential areas</li> <li>• The old Mercedes garage, the old Smithkline and Beecham site and the field next to Virgin were all specific suggestions that were made.</li> </ul>
Around the outskirts of Gatwick Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from residential areas</li> <li>• The land near Poles Lane was specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>
Stephenson Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to industrial areas</li> <li>• The specific sites within this area referred to in</li> </ul>

Alternative sites suggested by those people who answered the Gypsy and Traveller site	
Site	Reasons give (if any)
	the consultation were specifically mentioned.
North East Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a view that if included in the new proposed development people moving into the area would already know that a Gypsy and Traveller site existed. This was a view held by some respondents.</li> <li>• The Gas Holder site and the road leading to the crematorium were specific sites listed.</li> </ul>
South of K2 Crawley	• No reason given
Outreach3Way	• No reason given
Delta Force paint ball site	• No reason given
Town Centre	• No reason given
The park near Tescos in Three Bridges	• No reason given
Pound Hill and Worth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites in this neighbourhood have been considered previously. Some respondents questioned why they had not come forward this time?</li> <li>• There was also a question why the 'nicer' parts of Crawley had not come forward with suitable sites?</li> <li>• The park near the Tavern on the Green was mentioned</li> </ul>
Ifield	• No reason given
Bewbush	• Land near new housing development was mentioned.

## 4. Views from Gypsy and Travellers

- 4.1 Within the consultation a number of views from Gypsies and Travellers themselves or organisations representing the wider group were submitted.
- 4.2 There was a sense that Gypsies and Travellers living in the town would welcome a permanent site; although only a few comments were recorded. There was a recognition that their way of life sometimes clashes with the settled community. One respondent gave the example of cooking outside which is a very traditional way of living but this was perhaps viewed as them being noisy and causing disruption.
- 4.3 A representative from the Sussex Traveller Action Group asked for clarity on whether the sites would have multiple or single pitches. They used the example of people in this community needing to accommodate a wider family group and questioned whether this would be possible in the current proposals. This matter was also a concern to local people, with some respondents being worried about whether the site might grow in numbers over time. The same person thought that contrary to the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTAA), current need was not being met and the financial benefits of not having to keep cleaning up illegal sites could be better argued within the document. They also talked about common land in other areas

such as Henfield and Ditchling Common being blocked, which was adversely affecting available land to accommodate across the region.

- 4.4 There was a call from another representative from the same group for planning applications relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites to be dealt with more quickly. There was a concern about the access to the Broadfield Kennel site but there was a general feeling that it would be ok. The same person raised concerns about how the development might come forward in the town and was worried about the potential racist comments that might be generated as a result.

## **5. Things to think about**

- 5.1 Within this part of the consultation there were a number of views expressed which did not relate specifically to the sites themselves but are still relevant to the discussion. They include the following:
- There were some very strong views and opinions made about this group of people. Some of these views were based on real life experiences of people living next to illegal encampments but some were more general and based on hear say and perceptions.
  - Many of the respondents found it difficult to understand why this group of people should be treated differently from other people living in the town.
  - The nature of the proposal meant that many more questions need to be answered. There was insufficient detail in the proposals to perhaps reassure people.

### **Perceptions and views about the Gypsy and Travelling community**

- 5.2 Some respondents were very forceful in their views about this community and categorically thought that no provision should be made in the town whatsoever. Comments suggested that developing a permanent site would not have a positive affect on the neighbourhood adjoining the area or the wider town. It would be bad for Crawley's reputation.

**“No way, residents would be gutted.”**

**“There shouldn't be any site at all full stop...”**

- 5.3 Some of these perceptions were based on real life experiences of living next to illegal encampments with some people recounting tales of mess, destruction and damage caused by them. To these people it didn't matter that what was being proposed was a permanent site for Gypsies and Travellers living in the town already; the same problems would arise.

### **Lack of understanding why this group of people needed to be treated differently**

- 5.4 There were many people who found it difficult to understand why Gypsies and Travellers already living in bricks and mortar needed a permanent site. In their view, the community weren't perceived to be travelling and therefore did not warrant a permanent site. Some people used the example of other groups or individuals in the town who could not be housed. In some cases, parents talked about their children who had been born in Crawley not being able to find suitable accommodation in the town. Overall, these people didn't think it was fair that Gypsies and Travellers were being treated differently.

**“Travellers by definition are people who do not want to stay in one place. Therefore if they do decide to stay in one place they should have to rent/ buy a property...just like everyone else...”**

**“It is discriminating to have ghetto sites for travellers. We don’t have ‘sites’ for other ethnic minorities in the town – it is not right. Travellers housing needs should be dealt within the same way as everyone else’s – through the council waiting list.”**

**“I find it difficult to understand why the future generation of travellers living in Crawley must have a permanent site when many children who were born in Crawley and whose parents have lived here all their lives have no chance of getting council accommodation in Crawley. My eldest child is 25 years old and as she has worked hard in her chosen career, she is unable to get on the council house waiting list as she is earning. Why should Gypsy/ Travellers get priority?”**

- 5.5 There needs to be greater understanding as to why provision is being made for this group of people and this needs to be reflected in any communication plan going forward.

#### **Questions that respondents felt still need to be answered**

- 5.6 Within the comments made, some people had questions that still need to be answered. There were some who questioned whether people could be classed as travellers if they no longer travelled around and resided in bricks and mortar. Other respondents had specific questions about how the site would be managed and who would pay for it. There were some questions about whether residents of the site would financially contribute to the upkeep and management of the site as well as the local services they might access. **“This site should only go ahead if they are going to pay towards the site (council tax) rubbish collection etc.”**

**“Will it be paid for by the council or are the travellers going to buy the field? Will fixed permanent sites be paying the same council taxes etc as the rest of the community....”**

- 5.7 Some people were confused about the number of sites needed; with some thinking that both Broadfield Kennels and Langley Walk were being developed. A number of respondents questioned whether there was a housing need for this particular group of people.