

Appendix 2 – Analysis of sites for Traveller temporary stopping and/or alternative transit provision.

The sites below are those which are in the ownership of the local authority and have a history of trespass by Travellers. There are a number of locations which were historically used for temporary stopping, where land is now used for a completely different purpose – such as where there has been development. In such cases where there is no scope to reopen they are not included in the analysis. We have also considered if there were any other less sensitive sites which have not been used for trespass in recent years but we have not been able to identify any .

Hangleton Bottom

This is a large area of hard stand that was historically used by New Travellers, Irish Travellers and Gypsies. It is in the BHCC planning area and is not an environmentally sensitive location.

This land is designated as land for waste facilities in the Waste Local Plan and could only be considered in the short to medium term as a place that could be open to trespass and toleration. In addition there are a number of calls on the land for other uses which are under consideration.

Location and Access

The land is located on the Hangleton link road near to the bypass and is in the North Portslade ward but adjacent to the Hangleton & Knoll ward and South Portslade ward. The land is not visible from the road. It is not near housing but it is surrounded by leased paddocks and small holdings many of which have grazing horses. There are high chain link fences separating it from the paddocks and farm land.

No longer in use because of:

Hangleton Bottom was deliberately blocked in order to prevent trespass by Travellers. There is a very big bund and large concrete blocks blocking the access. There is also a food van business operating in a layby across the entrance. City Parks has recently reopened access to the land, to use a small area to provide temporary storage for equipment.

Issues to Consider

Travellers have expressed a strong interest in having Hangleton Bottom reopened and this would indicate that they would be likely to use this location rather than a city park.

This site offers the best option for opening land and it could be opened on the basis that an alternative low impact location is needed travellers while Horsdean is closed for development.

19 Acres

Location and Access

Land in the SDNP, north of the A27 Brighton by-pass, to the east of Devil's Dyke Road, approximately 30 metres north of the northern slip road.

Site size approximately 10 ha. and is not near to housing.

This site borders the Withdean and Hangleton & Knoll Wards and is located within the South Downs National Park

Access has previously been gained by removing bunding on Devil's Dyke Road or via a track leading to Waterhall Golf Course. This is hilltop land and exposed to the wind and rain, as such it was more suitable for toleration in the summer months than in winter.

No longer used because

The area is now fenced off, unmown and has sheep grazing on the land.

The council is in receipt of grant funding for this land, being part of the High Level Stewardship scheme (HLS). The HLS payments received from Natural England are dependent on BHCC keeping the land in good agricultural condition. Any toleration of Travellers, without City Parks negotiating that area out of the HLS scheme could result in the loss of all payments associated with this scheme in the city, currently £80k per annum. Natural England has threatened to withhold on the basis of previous unauthorised encampments and City Parks have had to reassure that encampments on HLS land will be evicted swiftly.

Any encampment in the spring would have an impact on ground nesting birds here.

Opening access

This would require removal of the grazing sheep, mowing some of the area. There is a gate on to the land. There would need to be internal bunding put in place to restrict the area used by Travellers, and a further wire gate at a cost of £500.

Issues to consider

This location was used by both New Travellers and Irish Travellers and English Gypsies when it was in use and the impact on the settled community was relatively low because of its location north of the A27 and distance from housing.

When more accessible 19 Acres attracted extensive amounts of commercial flytipping as a result of the topography which means that rubbish can be tipped while hidden from view. This was extremely costly to the council and ran the risk of environmental damage.

This land was blocked and grant funding achieved to graze the land in part to prevent the risk and costs of flytipping. This has been a successful project and

the council would lose funding and risk loss of credibility should we deliberately reverse this to allow occasional trespass.

This site has been trespassed despite defences. We risk losing HLS funding and generating flytip removal costs if we reduce protection and encourage access. We therefore would not recommend using this site for temporary transit provision.

Devils Dyke Road

Location and Access

North of the A27 away from housing.

A strip of land adjacent to Devil's Dyke Road, which straddles the cycle path to Devil's Dyke. This site runs in between Dyke Approach Picnic Site and Boundary Halt Car Park, opposite Brighton & Hove Golf Course, adjacent to Dyke access trail. The site is also opposite Golf Farm.

This location is in Hangleton & Knoll Ward bordering Withdean Ward. Is located within the South Downs National Park.

Frequently used by dog walkers, cyclists and joggers.

2 bunded (soil and rubble) entrances at car park end of land. Can be driven onto straight from road running alongside with removal of some soil.

No longer used because

The area is no longer mown in places and has waist-high grass on the site.

The entrances that may have previously been used (on either side of the fork in the road) are now bunded.

The longer grass disguises the height of the ground where people have previously accessed directly off the road, which makes it seem like it is no longer possible to access.

Opening access

This would require mowing the grass and either removing a bund or digging out a section on the road-facing side of the land. Removal of bund and the bunded gate would cost approximately £200.

Issues to Consider

Some of this strip is accessible to trespass now but is rarely trespassed and when it is normally by New Travellers who tend to camp in less sensitive areas anyway.

This strip is in front of farmer's land; the removal of bunding would also remove the farmer's defences.

The nature of this narrow strip would necessarily mean any encampment would have some impact on the cycle path/bridle way.

This site is still accessed from time to time by trespassers. Having taken the above into consideration we would not recommend making this site

any more easily accessible as it can be accessed and is used for temporary stopping as it stands.

39 Acres – Ditchling Road

Location and access

Land to the east of Ditchling Road, north of Hollingbury Golf Course and woods. This is in Hollingdean and Stanmer ward adjacent to Patcham ward. At the eastern edge, the land slopes steeply away in to Wild Park. Access is through a recently bunded and width restricted car park from Ditchling Road. Access has also been gained by Travellers digging out bunding at the north end of 39 acres, immediately adjacent to leased farm land.

No longer used because

Enhanced security measures have recently been put in place at the car park entrance to this land. There have been public complaints because of the frequent use of this land by Travellers. This land is part of the HLS and funding received on this basis. There is likely to be a grazing scheme here, and consideration is being given to open grazing in the area.

This land has been trespassed since the recent additional security measures. Given the risk of loss of HLS funding we would not recommend and current use of the land we would not recommend making access to this land more accessible or using it as a temporary transit site.

Ladies Mile Open Space

Location and access

This is open land to the north of Ladies Mile Road, adjacent to Carden Avenue. This is in Patcham Ward.

There is access via a lockable barrier and chicane at the end of Ladies Mile Road. Access is required to service a TV relay station and mast situated on the land. There is also a footpath entrance at the north of the land, leading from the roundabout accessing the A27 by-pass.

The eastern side of the land, from housing in Ladies Mile Road to the radio mast is Education land and deemed to be part of the playing field for Patcham School; it is not however currently utilised. Land to the north and west of this site forms a Nature Reserve and part of the HLS; the northern end of this is highly valuable chalk grassland.

No longer used because

This land was frequently used by van dweller and Gypsy and Irish Traveller groups; however they were moved on speedily because of community tension. In more recent years the security at the access from Ladies Mile Road has been improved and prevented incursions.

Issues

The Education land is likely to be protected, being designated as school playing fields. It would be necessary to secure permission from the Secretary of State to change this use. This would probably not be forthcoming as there is a presumption against change in the pattern of provision of playing fields. Any use of this land for Temporary Stopping would require internal bunding to restrict access to more sensitive areas. Movement of Travellers on and off this land via the entrance adjacent to housing on Ladies mile Road is likely to cause community tension.

Having taken the above into account we would not recommend making this land more accessible or use it for temporary transit provision.

Coldean Woods

Land and access

This is agricultural land, within the SDNP, not currently used. It is accessed via a woodland track from Coldean Lane, opposite Park Road, and situated in the south east of Stanmer Park. This is in the Hollingdean and Stanmer ward. The land slopes eastward towards the Lewes Road. There have been recent incursions of 30-40 van dwellers and it is a favoured spot for the van dweller community in the city.

Issues

This land is being considered for use by City Parks in the medium term, as a storage and yard area.

Consideration would need to be given to the access route on to this site. The public footpath leading through the woods would need to be enclosed to prevent vehicular access to the rest of the woods. Transit provision here could cause a Highway safety issue with access being on to the busy Coldean Lane, with the entrance/exit point 100 mtrs from the junction with Lewes Road. There would be a need for internal bunding to restrict access to the rest of this large swathe of land.

This land is occasionally trespassed by New Travellers and so is accessible. It is the SDNP and any significant changes to access such as a roadway would require planning permission. Building a roadway to the site would be very costly. Having taken all of the above into consideration we would not recommend making this more accessible or use it for temporary transit provision.

Coldean Lane/adjacent Varley Halls

Location and Access

This is agricultural land, currently not used, to the north of Coldean Lane, quarter of a mile further west from Coldean woods. This is in Hollingdean and Stanmer ward. The only access on to this land is in the ownership of Brighton University and was developed as part of the Varley Halls development which

is likely to be why it is now less used. Access is via the driveway to Varley Halls through a locked gate onto a narrow track.

The land slopes fairly steeply from north to south and flattens out adjacent to Coldean Lane.

Not used because

Access was blocked for approximately a year in 2011 while there were building works at Varley Halls; since then there has been no attempt by Travellers to access this site. The site has historically only been used by van dwellers.

Issues

This land is badly affected with brambles over the ground; it would require assistance from City Parks to clear and then several mows a year to eradicate. If an additional access point on to this land was needed directly from Coldean Lane, there would be road safety considerations.

In light of the fact that access is required over land which is not in the council's ownership or by building a new access point from Coldean Lane it is not recommended that we take further steps to make this more accessible to use it as temporary transit provision.

Land adjacent to Racehill Allotments

Land and access

This is a piece of land within Sheepcote Valley, to the west of Wilson Avenue, South of the Racecourse and fairly close to Council Allotments that share the same access road from Wilson Avenue. This land is in East Brighton Ward. The land is not immediately visible from Wilson Avenue but is visible from Bear Road/Warren Road.

This land is not currently part of the High Level Stewardship scheme, although it may be assessed for it.

Not used because

There have been width restrictors put at the entrance to the track leading to this land and the allotments. Recent access by Travellers has been through bunding from Wilson Avenue. This location is favoured by the van dweller community; there have been no encampments set up here by ethnic Travellers.

Issues

The current access road is immediately adjacent to the race track and a busy road junction at Warren Road/Wilson Avenue.

There has previously been an assertion that this land is colonised by the Whitehawk Soldier beetle and that this is its only habitat. However, there is no evidence of this and it may require an ecology survey to establish the facts.

This land has recently been accessed by Travellers despite site protection measures and is already used as a temporary stopping place. It is therefore not recommended that we take steps to reduce site protection measures or use this location for temporary transit provision.