
Gypsies and Travellers Short Stay Stopping Sites: Call for Sites

23 September 2015 – 16 November 2015

Suffolk's Public Sector working together
www.suffolk.gov.uk/shortstay

Foreword



**Cllr Sarah Stamp,
Cabinet Member for Communities
Suffolk County Council**



**Russell Williams,
Gypsy and Traveller Lead for
Suffolk Chief Executives Group**

We – as political leaders and chief executives of public services across Suffolk – have a responsibility to ensure the needs of all of the people that live in our county are met.

While the needs of many of our residents are easily, and readily, identifiable, we must also ensure that the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community are met too.

Suffolk's county, district and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk's health services, have pledged their commitment to this. One of the first steps is to identify where best to locate a number of Short Stay Stopping Sites. At present, Suffolk does not currently have any to help us accommodate the Gypsy and Traveller community.

We believe this means that we are dealing with more unauthorised encampments across the county as a result – costing the taxpayer more money in a time of increasing pressure on already tight budgets.

Between 2009 and the early part of 2015, Suffolk has seen 280 unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments. Valuable public resources are used to deal with the encampments and any clean-up operation afterwards.

The number of unauthorised encampment across the county this year alone, only reinforces the growing need for a permanent solution.

In Norfolk, where there are a number of Short Stay Stopping Sites already in use, the number of unauthorised encampments has fallen dramatically. We have this vision for Suffolk too.

Short Stay Stopping Sites strengthen the position of local authorities and the police when dealing with unauthorised encampments, whilst meeting their duty of care to the Gypsy and Traveller community.

We are looking to put in place three Short Stay Stopping Sites across the county. We believe these sites will save the taxpayer money, help meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and reduce unauthorised encampments. The sites will not be used as a permanent base.

This Call for Sites is the start of a process which will be open, thorough and carefully managed to ensure the needs of both the settled community and the Gypsy and Traveller community are considered before any decisions are taken. Our commitment is to provide the right sites, in the right locations, with strict suitability criteria that any potential site will have to meet.

At this stage, we are looking for landowners, parishes and any other interested party who may have suitable land to consider registering it as a possible location for one of these Short Stay Stopping Sites.

Once the Call for Sites ends, each site will be assessed against detailed criteria to enable the Public Sector Leaders Group to decide which sites we want to consult the public on in December this year.

Views received as part of the consultation will be analysed and will help inform the decisions the Public Sector Leaders Group take in February 2016 about which sites to put forward to the planning process. As part of the planning process there would be further periods of public consultation. We are aiming to have the sites up and running by the end of 2016.

We value your opinions and urge you to respond at all stages of the process.

What is a Short Stay Stopping Site?

A Short Stay Stopping Site is a permanent site used on a temporary basis by Gypsies and Travellers. There is likely to be six to eight pitches at each of the three sites in Suffolk. A weekly rent is payable for each pitch.

A 'short stay' can be no longer than 12 weeks.

The sites in Suffolk will be basic, consisting of concrete bases for caravans and a water stand pipe. Temporary facilities like toilets and waste collection would be provided, as and when a site is in use. This cost would be added to the weekly rent. Soakaways would also be installed to manage oil and fuel waste.

Anyone who wants to use a pitch would need to sign a license agreement before they are given access to a site. If the agreement is broken, legal action can be taken.

Unauthorised encampments in Suffolk

The table below outlines the unauthorised encampments in Suffolk over the past seven years.

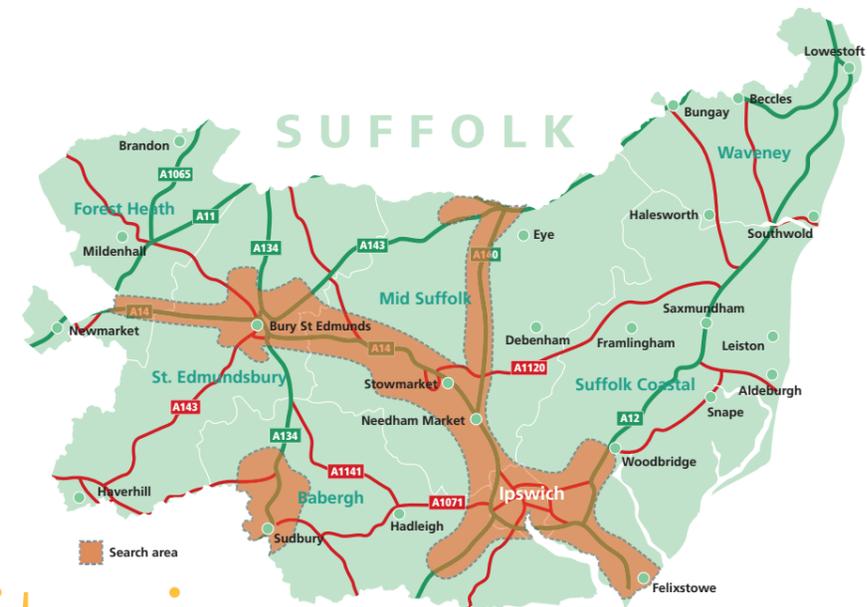
It is important to note that many of the higher figures for encampments are the result of multiple encampments from the same travelling families.

District	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	To July 2015	Total
Babergh	3	7	12	1	4	5	5	44
Forest Heath	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	12
Ipswich	9	4	3	2	7	2	3	41
Mid Suffolk	3	17	18	3	3	6	9	73
St Edmundsbury	1	9	2	5	14	9	10	58
Suffolk Coastal	2	1	2	2	7	2	4	27
Waveney	1	1	3	2	1	7	6	25
Total	20	40	41	15	36	34	37	280

Each unauthorised encampment has a cost to the public sector, and therefore the tax payer. Costs do vary from encampment to encampment but tend to vary from between £2,000 a time to over £20,000 in some instances. It is estimated that the average cost of dealing with a single encampment is about £5,000.

Proposals for Short Stay Stopping Sites in Suffolk

The areas for potential Short Stay Stopping Sites have been identified using the evidence gathered over the last seven years and looking at the main travel routes Gypsies and Travellers take through Suffolk. The map below shows the search area for potential Short Stay Stopping Site locations.



Criteria

Anyone who is considering proposing land for a Short Stay Stopping Site should consider the following criteria:

- Is it in the search area (see map)?
- Does it meet the minimum size requirements (minimum of 0.15 hectares)?
- Does it have road frontage or access to the highway?
- How far is it from the nearest residential property (in metres)?
- How level is the ground?

More detailed criteria (available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/shortstay) relating to highways, impact on neighbours, site user needs and landscape designations will then be used to measure the suitability of any sites that meet the initial criteria. Any sites that are still deemed suitable will be put out for public consultation before the end of the year.

Those putting forward a site will also be asked if they own the site and if not, if they know who does and whether they have notified them that their land has been put forward. A site would only be considered for a Short Stay Stopping Site if it meets the criteria and the landowner gives their permission.

How to propose a site

- Complete the online form at www.suffolk.gov.uk/shortstay or
- Download the form from www.suffolk.gov.uk/shortstay, complete it and then either email it to: shortstaysites@suffolk.gov.uk or post it to:



Freepost RTAC-HSKL-CSAY
SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
IPSWICH IP1 2EB
Section: Business Development

You can ask for a form to be sent to you by emailing: shortstaysites@suffolk.gov.uk or calling: 0345 603 1842 (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm).

All responses must be received by 5pm, 16 November 2015.

What will happen next?

Once the Call for Sites has closed and all sites submitted have been assessed, the Public Sector Leaders Group will decide which sites to put out for consultation in December 2015. Once all responses from the specific site consultation have been analysed, the Public Sector Leaders Group will decide in February 2016 which sites to apply for planning permission on.

These sites will be in place by the end of 2016.

If you need help to understand this information in another language please call 03456 066 067.

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Bengali

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Russian

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