

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,

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

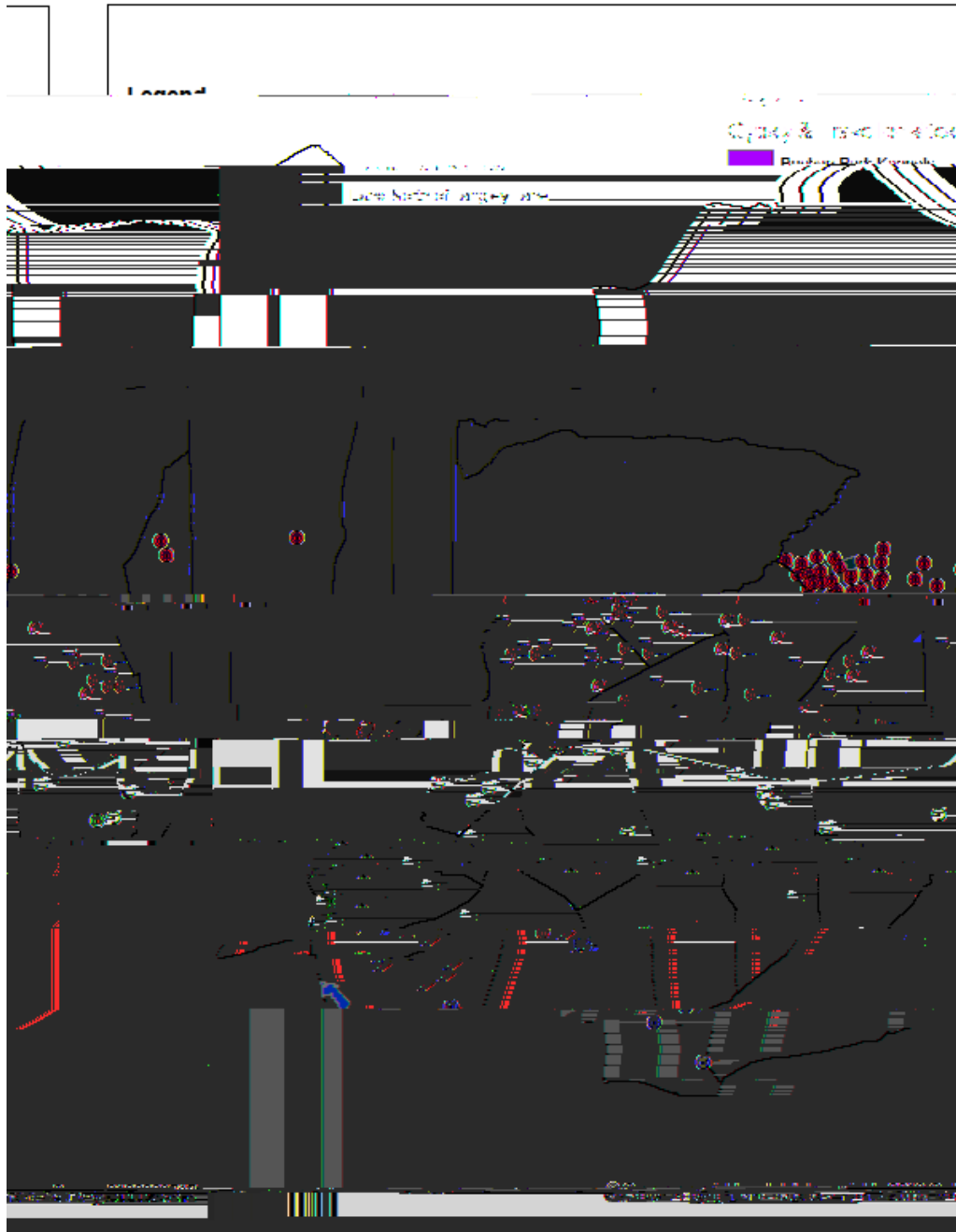
- Even people who agreed that a permanent site should be provided for Gypsies and Travellers within the town found the idea difficult to understand.

always appreciate that members of this community are already settled within bricks and mortar accommodation in the town, with some people indicating

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



- 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.

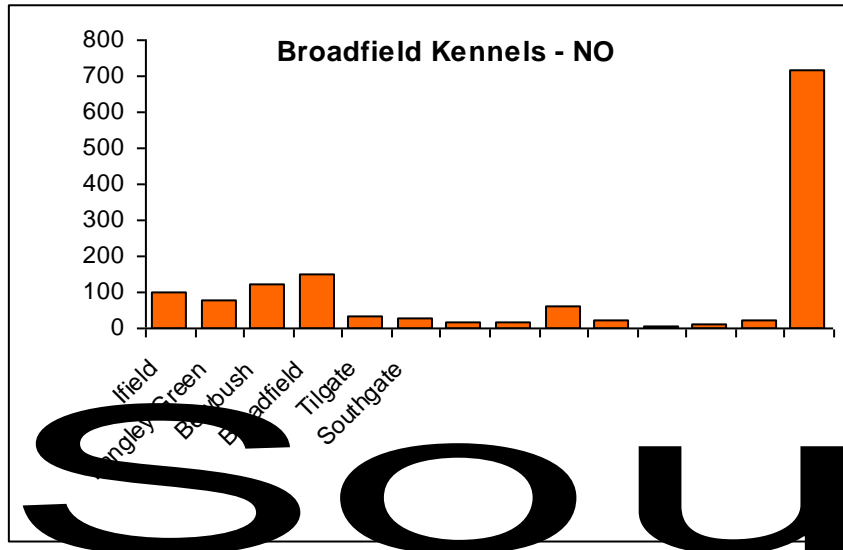
- 1.6 So why was Langley Walk unsuitable? Comments suggest that the area has poor road access which is already well used from the respondents' point of view; both by residents and landowners with live stock. There was a view that positioning a Gypsy and Traveller site there would worsen the situation. 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.”

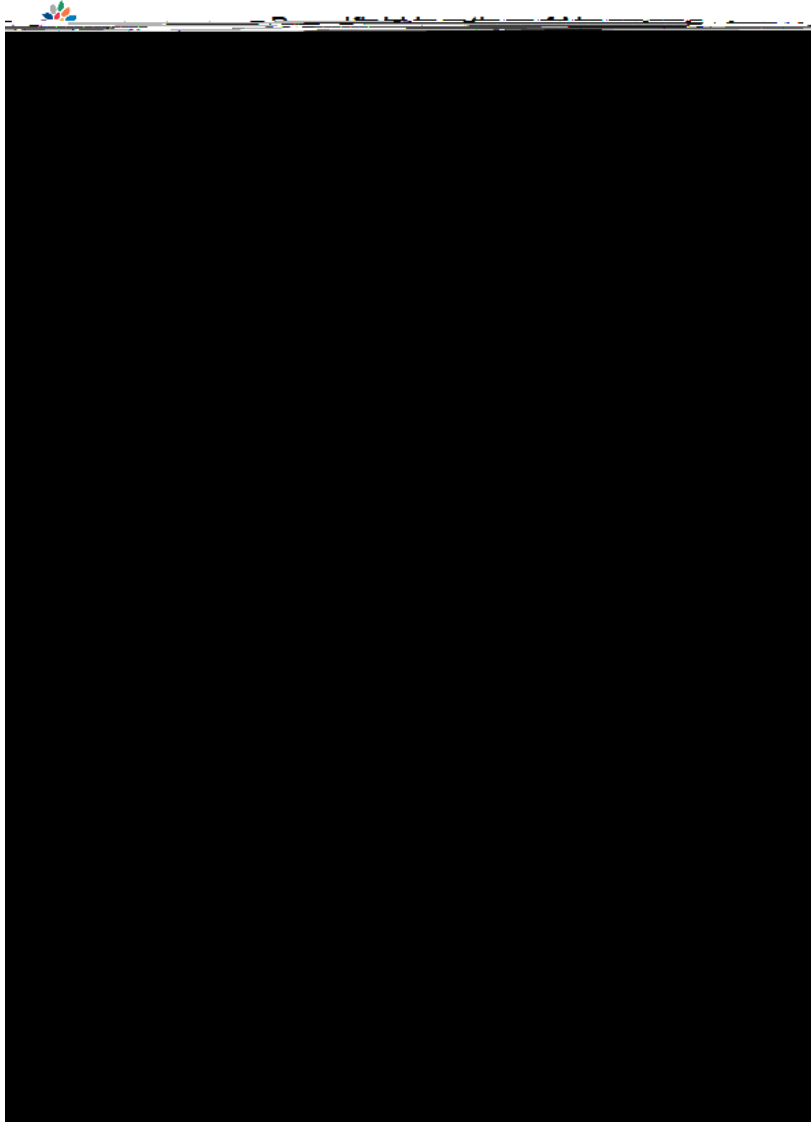
“The area identified for the site in Langley Walk is approximately half the size of that at Broadfield Kennels for the same 10x fixed pitches.”

- 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 t



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.



- 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....”

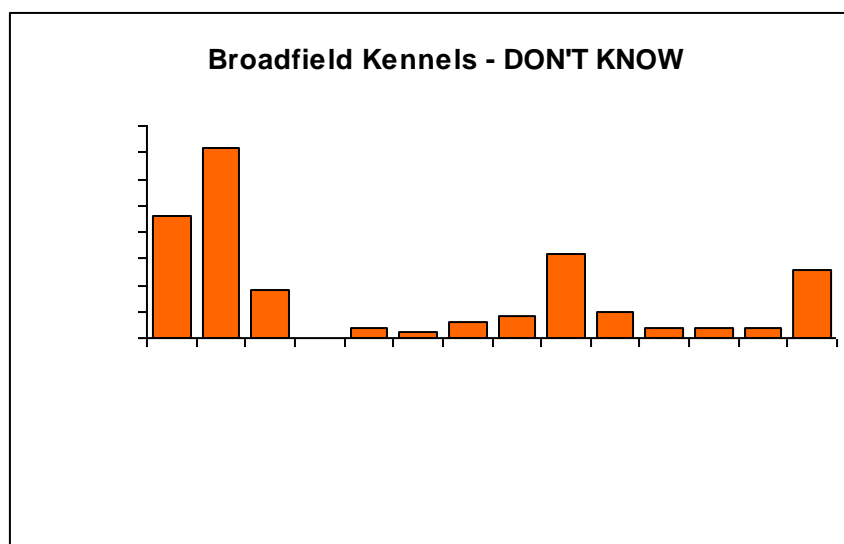
“Broadfield already has a poor reputation (unfounded in my opinion). However to continue with the plan for Broadfield Kennels will only cause this opinion to become lower still.”

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

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.

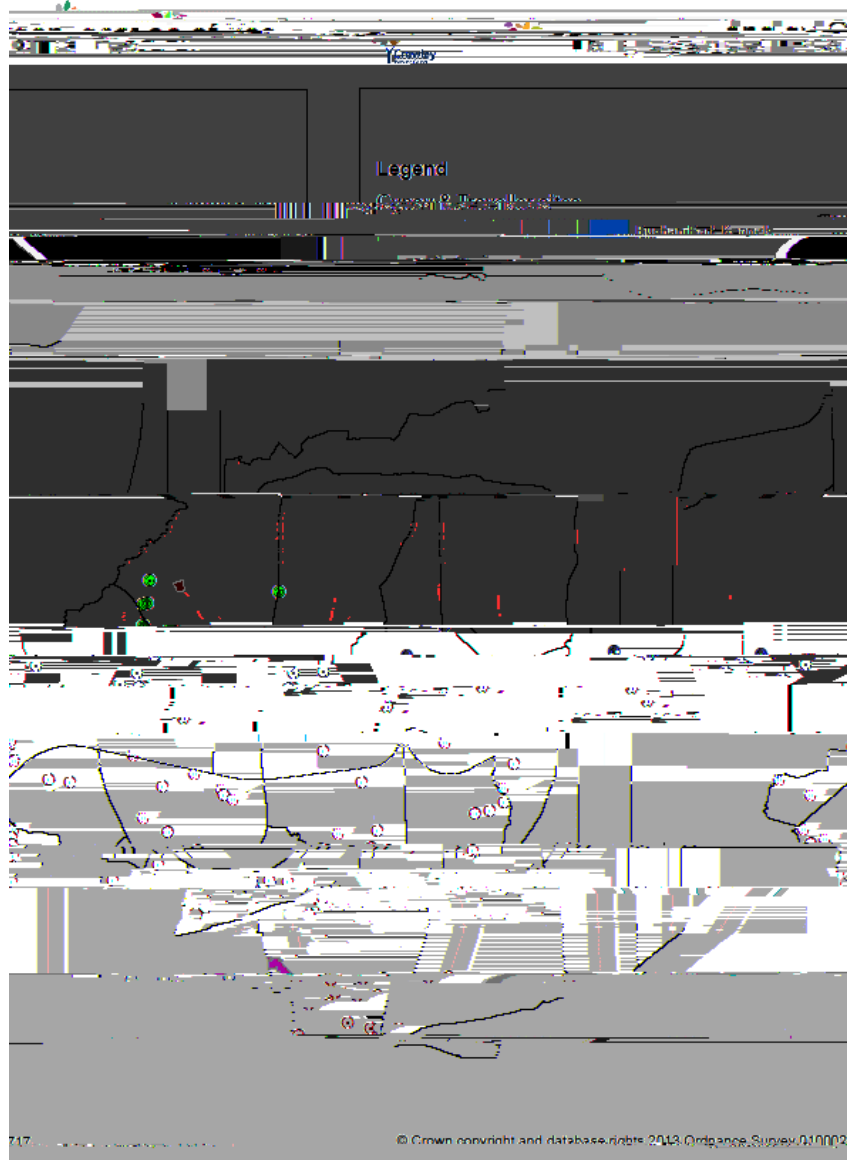
Who didn't know whether this was a good site and why were they undecided?

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.



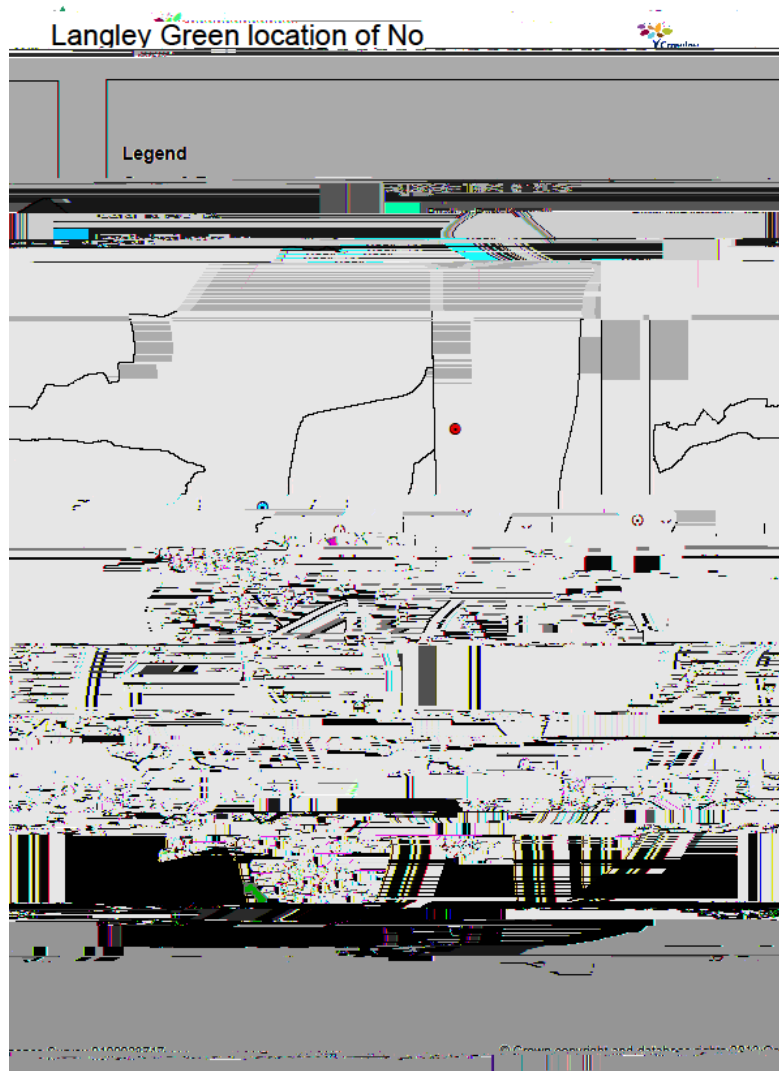
1.21 As the graph illustrates most of those people lived in Langley Green (36 (31%)), Ifield (23 (20%)) and Pound Hill (16 (14%)).

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



- 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....”



- 2.12 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.”

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...”**

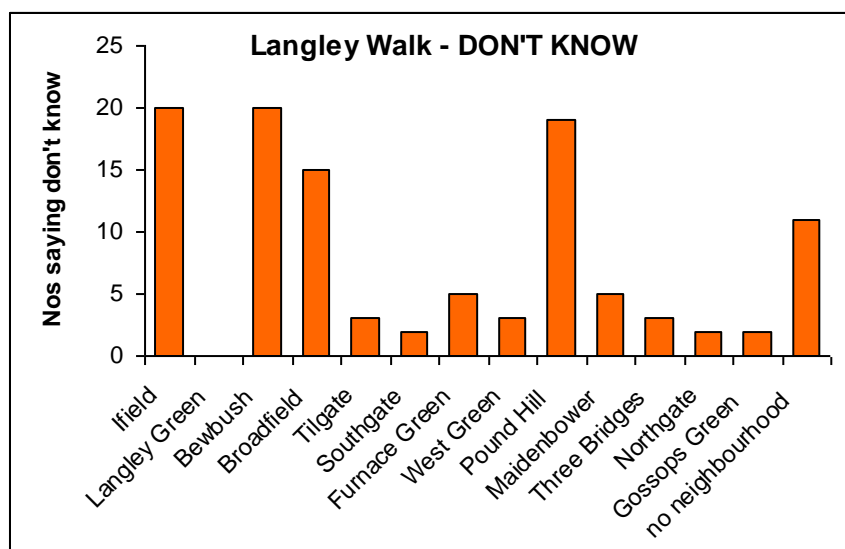
Broadfield Kennels is the better option

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 b

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“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.”

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 –