

Briefing for Cambridge Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Group (CSHG):

Assessing housing needs in relation to caravans and houseboats

Purpose

To facilitate discussion around taking work forward to assess housing needs in relation to caravans and house-boats, so that a recommendation can be made to CRHB.

Summary

The housing authority duty to periodically assess housing needs now includes a duty to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to the district with respect to sites for caravans and the mooring of houseboats.

This supplements the planning authority requirement to assess the needs of those who meet the new planning definition of Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople.

Once needs are assessed, authorities need to plan for how those needs can be met.

Background

Duty to assess needs

The Housing & Planning Act 2016 amended the statutory duty on local housing authorities to assess and understand the accommodation needs of people residing or resorting to their district, adding a specific requirement for authorities to: consider the needs of people residing or resorting to the district with respect to the provision of caravan sites, and places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored ^{1 2}

The government issued [draft guidance](#) in May 2016 on how to carry out such assessments. ³ This lays out some basic principles, although states that the exact approach taken may vary depending on local circumstances.

The guidance covers those who have a housing need and need to live in a caravan or houseboat, regardless of race or origin. This may include bargees, Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, new-age travellers and travelling show people, but extends wider than that. It states that needs of these groups may differ from the rest of the population in relation to, for example, nomadic/semi-nomadic way of life, preference for caravan or houseboat living, movement between bricks and mortar and caravans/ houseboats, presence on unauthorised encampments/ developments, etc.

¹ Housing Act 1985, section 8

² Housing & Planning Act 2016, section 124

³ Draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs - caravans and houseboats:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/507289/clause_115_draft_guidance.pdf

As well as looking at those currently in caravans and houseboats, assessment needs to include people in bricks and mortar housing – for example whose accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, including unsuitability by virtue of cultural preference for a different way of life.

In carrying out an assessment it recommends close engagement with the communities throughout the process, and suggests some potential sources of data. It also recommends a specialist survey and/or some other qualitative research, and states that authorities will need to consider co-operating across boundaries, both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions.

The assessment should identify accurately the current number of households, and current and future level of need for caravan and houseboat accommodation in the area.

Link with Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Gypsies & Travellers are defined for planning purposes in the revised DCLG [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015](#). This needs to be read in conjunction with the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), and requires local planning authorities to assess the needs of gypsies and travellers of ‘nomadic habit of life’, or who have given up travelling temporarily on grounds of educational or health needs or old age. It also defines Travelling Showpeople. Assessment of these needs has been carried out through the sub-regional [Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\) 2016](#).

The housing authority requirement to assess housing needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople is wider. The needs of those who do not meet the planning definition need to be periodically assessed, to form a subset of the wider assessment of housing need.

Although one is stated as a planning requirement, and the other a housing requirement, there is a clear need for housing and planning colleagues to work closely together to ensure that needs are assessed effectively. The different assessments need to complement each other, and to fit in with the Overall Assessment of Needs (OAN) for each district.

The potential transient nature of caravan and houseboat dwellers means that assessments almost certainly need to be carried out on a cross-boundary basis.

Cambridge area assessment

The need to carry out a needs assessment in relation to caravans and houseboats has been raised at CRHB and Chief Planning Officers’ Group. A decision needs to be made around how and when to take the work forward, which districts should be involved and how it is to be funded.

CSHG are asked to make a recommendation to CRHB which, once agreed, can be shared with Chief Planners.

**Helen Reed, Housing Strategy Manager
Cambridge City Council
April 2017**

Discussion at CSHG

GTANA and related

Need to work on addressing need in caravan dwellers and houseboats, those who fall OUTSIDE the GTANA definition. The GTANA work by ORS identifies in its survey of sites:

- are residents a Gypsy or Traveller
- are residents in housing need

So non GTANA and not in need are quantified (to an extent) in the ORS report. (There were a number of non-respondents.) If not a Gypsy or Traveller, they can still apply to Home-Link if in housing need.

So the remaining unknown is houseboats.

Who has the information?

There are number of local individual marinas e.g. Iselham, between Prickwillow and Iselham, Upwell, Stratton Fish & Duck.

Becca clarified that these people will be counted as part of the population in the demographic projections are used to calculate housing need.

What are our current policies on houseboats and moorings? Suspect all districts may have a number of houseboat dwellers, given the rivers running throughout the county. Would like to take a joint approach to the subject.

Julie to ask ORS - they may be able to help, and advise what they are doing elsewhere on this (if being asked by other customers). They are continuing to meet in a practitioner group, so can raise as a question there.

Sue to ask Marianne if there is a code on Home-link for houseboat dwellers, and any need data.

Becca will identify if there are any Census figures or other useful background

Sue investigate the guidance and when it was published on this issue

Note to put together for CRHB in June or July (SB/HR). **DONE**

Sue to investigate; Council tax may have info **SEE BELOW**

September for planning inspection session on this. Outcome after that.

Update since CSHG

Sue's research: VOA / council tax data

DCLG website gives a district count of houseboats using council tax records, published nationally by the VOA in a spreadsheet in response to a freedom of information request.

You can see our area has a relatively small number of houseboats as far as this data goes, but then again there are not very many across the whole of England. Just to summarise:

Houseboat count	2015	2016	2015	2016	Notes
	Total	Total	% of England total	% of England total	
ENGLAND	2750	2800			
Cambridge	60	50	2.2%	1.8%	
East Cambridgeshire	10	10	0.4%	0.4%	
Fenland	-	-	-	-	Fewer than 5, more than 0
Huntingdonshire	60	50	2.2%	1.8%	
South Cambridgeshire	-	-	-	-	Fewer than 5, more than 0
Forest Heath	10	10	0.4%	0.4%	
St Edmundsbury	0	0			Zero reported
Peterborough UA	0	0			Zero reported
8 district total	140	120	5.1%	4.3%	

Evidently Cambridge and HDC are hotspots, with ECDC and Forest Heath seeing a small number.

I will investigate if there are any mops around to give some more local flavour regarding actual locations (just for the 4 districts in question I'd suggest), but this helps with the scale of the issue I think. Will be interesting to see if this tallies with whatever Becca can find via the Census.

Created a page of data at <http://opendata.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/houseboats> mapping local marinas and moorings (some more to be added but it's a first step).

Planning to add more sites and create a new "story" setting out the local picture and linking especially to Cambridge City's web pages on moorings, which are quite complex but need adding in.

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Home / Datasets / Houseboats / List and map of local marinas and moorings

List and map of local marinas and moorings

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Here is a list and map of local marinas and moorings across Cambridgeshire, West Suffolk and Peterborough. If you click on the "map" view a flag will appear at each location listed, based on the centre point of the marina's postcode. If you click on the flag, the name of the marina and simple address details will appear in a bubble.

[Map-marina-and-moorings-apr-2017-csv](#)

Grid Graph Map 29 records

Search data ... Go

Marina	Street	Village	Town	Postcode	District	Longitude	Latitude
Bill Fen Marina	Mill Drove		Ramsey	PE26 2RD	HDC	-0.109098	52.4645
Brearley Marina	South Street		St. Neots	PE19 2BW	HDC	-0.269187	52.2273
Bridge Boatya...	Bridge Road		Ely	CB7 4DY	ECDC	0.268371	52.3916
Buckden Marina	Mill Road	Buckden	St Neots	PE19 5QS	HDC	-0.222651	52.2908
Cathedral Mar...	Waterside		Ely	CB7 4AU	ECDC	0.27035	52.3967
Crosshall Mari...	Crosshall Road	Eaton Ford	St Neots	PE19 7GE	HDC	-0.278973	52.2351
Daylock Marina	The Meadow,...	Wyton	St Ives	PE28 2AA	HDC	-0.138869	52.3376
Fish & Duck M...	Popes Corner,...	Little Thetford	Ely	CB6 3HR	ECDC	0.252548	52.3476
Floods Ferry...	Staffurths Bri...		March	PE15 0YP	FDC	0.01272	52.5317
Hartford Marina	Banks End	Wyton	Huntingdon	PE28 2AA	HDC	-0.138869	52.3376
Hermitage Ma...	Earith Bridge	Earith		PE28 3PR	HDC	0.046588	52.3535
Huntingdon B...	The Avenue	Godmanchester	Huntingdon	PE29 2AF	HDC	-0.176354	52.3245
Huntingdon M...	Hartford Road		Huntingdon	PE29 3RP	HDC	-0.176	52.3313
Isleham Marina	Fen Bank		Nr Mildenhall	CB7 5SL	FHDC	0.421639	52.3546
Jones Boatyar...	Low Road		St Ives	PE27 5ET	HDC	-0.075856	52.3148
Littleport Boat...	Littleport		Ely	CB6 1QG	ECDC	0.31816	52.4627
Oundle Marina	Barnwell Road	Oundle	Peterborough	PE8 5PA	PCC	-0.474175	52.4705
Pike & Eel hot...	Overcote Lane	Needingworth		PE27 4TW	HDC	-0.0058	52.3233
Rivermill Mari...	School Lane	Eaton Socon		PE19 8GW	HDC	-0.285086	52.2152

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Latitude / Longitude fields
 GeoJSON field
 Latitude field
 Longitude field
 Update
 Auto zoom to features
 Cluster markers

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