



Report of	Meeting	Date
Joint LDF Officer Team	Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2014

## **FINDINGS OF THE CENTRAL LANCASHIRE GYPSY, TRAVELLER & TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE'S ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT (GTAA)**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To inform members about the Central Lancashire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. It is recommended that the group note the findings of this report and endorse the progression of a joint Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document in accordance with the timetable set out in Appendix 1.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

3. A new GTAA has identified the provision need for 5 permanent pitches for Travellers in Chorley Borough, 15 in Preston, and a Central Lancashire wide need for 15 transit pitches to 2026.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**(If the recommendations are accepted)**

4. The GTAA provides an up to date assessment of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople's housing needs in the Central Lancashire area. Its findings inform the approach taken to cover this issue in each of the Central Lancashire Authority's Local Plans and the related Development Plan Document.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

5. None.

### **BACKGROUND**

6. The May 2007 GTAA covered a 10 year period to 2016. It was used to evidence the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, found sound and adopted by the Central Lancashire Councils in July 2012.

7. However, at the Chorley Local Plan Examination hearing (April 2013), the Inspector did not accept that this study was sufficiently up to date and only issued a Partial Report (on 25 October 2013) on her findings into the soundness of the Plan on all matters other than those relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It is her intention to re-convene the Examination following completion and consultation on the Central Lancashire GTAA and consultation on proposed sites and policies. This will enable the progression of the Chorley Local Plan to adoption.
8. Arc4 was commissioned by the Central Lancashire Authorities (Chorley Council, Preston City and South Ribble Borough Council) in July 2013 to undertake a Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment to determine the need for any additional pitch and plot provision in the area.
9. This study has now been completed and has identified a need for 5 permanent pitches for Travellers in Chorley Borough, 15 in Preston, none in South Ribble and a Central Lancashire wide need for 15 transit pitches to 2026.
10. No need for Travelling Showpeople accommodation has been established in Central Lancashire.

## **DEFINITION OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER**

11. The definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers' is set out in the Government's 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012) as:  
*'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently....'*

## **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT**

12. In March 2012 the Government published both the National Planning Policy Framework and its Planning policy for traveller sites. These documents replace all previous national planning policy and guidance in respect of Gypsies and Travellers. This national guidance is a material consideration in determining local planning applications and its overarching aim is 'to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers'.
13. Under this guidance Local authorities should make their own assessment of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs for the purposes of planning, and plan for sites over a reasonable timescale.
14. The policy also states that:
  - Plan making and decision taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective.'
  - Planning policies need to be fair, realistic and inclusive; and
  - Planning policies should increase the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under-provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.
15. It is within this policy context that local planning authorities have to plan future provision for Gypsies and Travellers across their respective areas. The Framework emphasises the role of evidence and how it should be used within this context. Policy A: Using evidence to plan positively and manage development stresses the need for timely, effective and on-going community engagement (both with Travellers and the settled community); in addition the 'use of a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of Local Plan and make planning decisions' is advocated.

16. Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Planning policy for traveller sites state that;
- ‘Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities’.
- Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local plan:
- a) Identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets;
  - b) Identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15;
  - c) Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);
  - d) Relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population’s size and density; and
  - e) Protect local amenity and environment.
17. Despite the revocation of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (North West of England Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021) in May 2013, the need for strategic planning remains, especially to ensure coherent planning beyond local authority boundaries. To this end the Localism Act (2011) introduced on local planning authorities the Duty to Co-operate in relation to planning sustainable development. Under this Duty local planning authorities must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in the preparation of development plan documents, other local development documents, and activities that can be considered in any way to prepare the way for development plan documents. Under the Act the sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas is considered to be a strategic matter falling within the Duty to Co-operate<sup>1</sup>.
18. Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) states that “Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination”.
19. The Framework also provides further guidance on the duty, focusing on “planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities set out in paragraph 156”. (Para 178, The Framework). The Framework is clear that local planning authorities (LPAs) and other public bodies should work collaboratively on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople provision and reflect this in Local Plans.

## **STUDY METHODOLOGY**

20. The methodology used for the study was as prescribed by the legislation, and guidance contained in the Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. It also included the ‘Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance (CLG 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> The Localism Act 2011 Part 6 Chapter 1 Duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development Section 110

21. It comprised; interviews with Gypsies and Travellers, desktop analysis of existing documents, data and pitch information, a key stakeholder on-line questionnaire for professionals who have direct contact with Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, a review of the bi-annual caravan count for DCLG and Local Authority information on existing site provision (permanent and temporary) and unauthorised encampments.
22. The results of the study are set out below:

#### HEADLINE FINDINGS – PERMANENT PITCH REQUIREMENTS BY AUTHORITY

	Chorley	Preston	S Ribble
2013 Baseline number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches/households	2	19	0
Identified five year shortfall of Gypsy and Traveller pitches 2013/14 to 2017/18	2	6	0
Identified five year shortfall of Gypsy and Traveller pitches 2018/19 to 2022/23	2	5	0
Identified five year shortfall of Gypsy and Traveller pitches 2023/24to 2027/28	1	5	0
Total 15 year additional requirement for Gypsy and Traveller pitches 2013/14 to 2027/28	5	16	0
<b>Total 14 year additional requirement for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to fit to Local Plan timeframe 2013/14 to 2026/27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
Identified five year shortfall of Travelling Showperson plots 2013/14 to 2017/18	0	0	0
Identified five year shortfall of Travelling Showperson plots 2018/19 to 2022/23	0	0	0
Identified five year shortfall of Travelling Showperson plots 2023/24to 2027/28	0	0	0

23. Chorley's figure is based on the Traveller Community currently residing at Hut Lane projected forward to 2026 (the emerging Chorley Local Plan period). The prescribed model takes their presence as a current indication of need for a permanent site.

#### TRANSIT NEED REQUIREMENT

24. In addition to a permanent Traveller site requirement, the study also identifies a need for 15 transit pitches across Central Lancashire. This need is calculated using data on unauthorised encampments from each of the three authorities (numbers of caravans and duration of stay). If the transit need was apportioned to each authority based on the number of illegal encampments it would result in 9 pitches in Preston, 3 in Chorley and 3 in South Ribble. However, no preference for location was established in the study therefore the

report recommends that Central Lancashire authorities work together to explore the opportunities of a joint provision to satisfy this need.

## **TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE NEED**

25. In respect of Travelling Showpeople, none live in the area, and none presented themselves as having a need to locate within Central Lancashire during the course of the study, therefore no accommodation need has been established.

## **DESIGN AND LOCATION OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES**

26. The study includes a section on the design and layout of Gypsy and Traveller sites, listing the necessary facilities such as a hot and cold water supply, an electricity supply, a separate amenity building, communal open space and grazing space etc. However, the main source of guidance for the design is set out in the DCLG document 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide' – 2008.
27. The guidance isn't prescriptive in terms of an optimum size of pitch. Rather, it states that the average trailer size is around 15m, though some are up to 25m, so a site should be designed to accommodate these and the necessary facilities. A rough guide, based on recent local authority permissions, is to assume a 5 pitch permanent Traveller site size of approximately 0.3 hectares (Preston's Leighton Street permanent individual pitch sizes are roughly 15x11m). However, local authorities are urged to work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to ensure that a site design and layout is tailored to their specific needs.
28. As regards location, a site should be at a sustainable location, being close to services and facilities such as shops, schools, a doctor, post office/cashpoint, public transport and main roads. Any assessment of potential sites also needs to consider deliverability issues such as contamination, land assembly, acquisition and planning issues.

## **NEXT STAGES**

29. The Final GTAA Report was submitted to the Chorley and South Ribble Local Plan Inspectors. Unfortunately, they did not consider the study robust and asked that further work be undertaken considering that there may be a need for additional permanent and transit Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople provision which the study failed to capture.
30. Chorley Council will progress a permanent site for travellers through its local plan and undertake a joint DPD with Preston and South Ribble on Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to deal with the outcomes of the additional study work. South Ribble Council will progress their local plan with additional text committing to the preparation of a separate joint DPD. The timetable for the DPD is set out in Appendix 1.
31. Central Lancashire officers and Members will agree how and where the transit need can be best provided and proposed sites will be subject to a sustainability and deliverability assessment. Preston and Chorley will also explore how best to satisfy their respective permanent Traveller site needs.
32. Outside Central Lancashire, surrounding authorities are all progressing their own GTAA's, therefore their respective Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's needs will be covered by these. Any cross boundary need will be satisfied through the arrangements set up under the duty to cooperate.
33. The consultants recommend that the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople need is kept under review and the GTAA is reviewed every 5 years to allow for the 'need'

assessment to be updated and any necessary policy/allocations implications to be appropriately implemented.

34. Should any additional need be demonstrated in the more detailed study, sites and policies will be progressed through the DPD. Beyond this, should a need be demonstrated in the future, Central Lancashire Authorities will apply their Core Strategy Policy 8: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in order to assess the appropriateness of any proposed sites.

background papers:

Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Chorley Council, Preston Council and South Ribble Council – available on respective Council's websites.

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## Appendix 1

Indicative timeframe for the preparation of a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Development Plan Document, including Transit Site provision and additional GTAA work

Task	Timescale
Prepare tender brief details for additional work on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Study / GTAA	April - May 2014
Tender process	May - June 2014
Commission additional GTAA work	June 2014
Consultants to undertake additional GTAA work	June – November 2014
Results of additional work on GTAA	November 2014
Report findings to LDF Working Group	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2014
Report findings to JAC	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2014
Begin process of DPD preparation	December 2014
6 week consultation on Issues and Options and call for sites process at same time	February – March 2015
Review Issues and Options stage and prepare responses to representations/preferred options stage	March – April 2015
6 weeks consultation on Preferred Options	April – May 2015
Review preferred options consultation stage and prepare responses to representations/publication stage	May – June 2015
6 week consultation on Publication DPD	July – August 2015
Review publication stage and prepare responses to representations/ prepare for submission	September 2015
Submission to SoS	October 2015
Examination	November 2015
Inspector's Report	January 2016
Adoption of DPD	March 2016