



Report of	Meeting	Date
Joint LDF Officer Team	Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2016

## **CENTRAL LANCASHIRE GYPSY, TRAVELLER & TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE'S LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS VERSION – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To inform members about the results of the public consultation on the Issues and Options version of the Central Lancashire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan – May 2016.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. It is recommended that the group note this report..

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

3. Statutory formal public consultation on the Issues and Options version of the Central Lancashire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Local Plan took place between 20<sup>th</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.
4. The consultation exercise generated XX responses in total across Central Lancashire. 15 in Chorley, X in Preston and 17 in South Ribble. The results of consultation will inform the next Preferred Options stage of this Local Plan.

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

#### **(If the recommendations are accepted)**

5. Officers consider that this Local Plan process should continue to progress as planned to ensure an appropriate planning policy document is prepared and adopted to guide Traveller and Travelling Showpeople development.

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

6. None.

## **BACKGROUND**

7. The Issues and Options paper is the first stage in the process of preparing the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan. It explained the purpose of the Local Plan and the current planning policy context relating to the provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
8. It set out the evidence of need as contained in the Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (May 2015); identified the key issues that should be addressed to meet this need, and presented a number of options on which views were sought.
9. In order to allocate sites for future provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, the Central Lancashire authorities must identify potential sites. The Issues and Options Paper therefore also included a 'call for sites' exercise encouraging potential sites to be put forward for consideration.
10. Any sites suggested through the 'call for sites' will be assessed, along with potential sites identified by the three Central Lancashire authorities, using the assessment methodology as set out in section 5 of the Issues and Options paper. Preferred sites for allocation will then be proposed and consulted on before the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan is finalised and submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. More detail on the process of preparing the Local Plan is set out in section 6 of the Issues and Options paper.
11. The consultation exercise was carried out between 20<sup>th</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. Over 200 consultees from the Chorley Local Plan contact database were consulted including all relevant statutory bodies. XX in Preston and XX in South Ribble. These generated 15 responses (largely from statutory organisations) in Chorley, XX in Preston and 17 in South Ribble.
12. It is anticipated that the next stage of plan preparation will generate more representations as it will move away from general issues to be considered and suggest specific sites to meet Traveller and any Travelling Showpeople need.

## **CHORLEY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

13. In Chorley, the respondents were as follows:
  - Network Rail
  - Highways England
  - Historic England
  - The Coal Authority
  - Canal and Rivers Trust
  - Natural England
  - United Utilities
  - Environment Agency
  - Bretherton Parish Council
  - Heath Charnock Parish Council
  - Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council
  - West Lancashire Borough Council
  - Michael Hargreaves on behalf of the Linfoots
  - Cowling Action Group – 2 residents

## **SUMMARY OF CHORLEY'S REPRESENTATIONS**

14. The Statutory bodies generally made comments asking that their respective areas of control/interest be included in a design criteria policy and be used to inform any further sites selection and that they be involved in the various stages to Local Plan adoption.
15. In terms of Parish Council responses Bretherton Parish Council supported Chorley Council's approach. Heath Charnock Parish Council suggested that Cowling Farm be used to accommodate any additional need and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council had no comments to make.
16. Michael Hargreaves, the consultant acting on behalf of the Linfoots supported the figures contained in the GTAA. He also supported the masterplanning approach to site delivery at Cowling Farm which he considered should be solely to meet the needs of the Linfoots who would wish to privately own their site.
17. West Lancashire Borough Council support Chorley Council's approach to meeting its identified need within its own boundaries and welcomed further consultation.
18. Mrs Valerie Brown, acting on behalf of Cowling Action Group and Mr Kevin Brown criticised the approach of Chorley Council on the grounds that it was driven by one family's need. They suggested Hut Lane be used as a traveller site. They considered transit need should be accommodated near major road networks and that there is no travelling Showpeople need. They also suggested appropriate screening and separation be added to a Design Criteria policy and welcomed further consultation and involvement in the process, criticising how consultation (and the sustainability appraisal) had been undertaken by Chorley Council to date.

## **CHORLEY COUNCIL'S RESPONSES**

19. In respect of any Travelling Showpeople need, the GTAA identified an aspiration for Travelling Showpeople plots in the area. The Travelling showpeople did not respond to this consultation, therefore officers will contact their representative in order to ascertain whether any of this aspiration constitutes an actual need which should be provided for in the preferred option version of this Local Plan.
20. As regards any permanent need generated from Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar, no comments were received from such households and as the government requires that such households to demonstrate that they travel before they can be considered to constitute a need, it would seem prudent to remove the bricks and mortar need from the Central Lancs GTAA until such times that such a need presents itself and can be quantified. Should such a need arise outside this Local Plan process, Core Strategy Policy 8 can be used to assess the appropriateness of any proposed site.
21. The statutory bodies will continue to be consulted as the Local Plan progresses to adoption allowing them the opportunity for further comment and to scrutinise any proposed additional sites.
22. It is considered that many of the consultation responses can inform a detailed Design Criteria Policy which will be included in the next stage (preferred options) of the Local Plan.
23. At present the Council does not consider it necessary to expand the existing allocation at Cowling Farm as the existing Traveller community at Hut Lane have indicated that it would satisfy their needs to 2026. The nature and location of any transit provision or travelling showpeople need will be progressed through this Local Plan process.

## **PRESTON CITY COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

24. In Preston, the respondents were as follows:

- a. Historic England
- b. Highways England
- c. United Utilities
- d. The Canal and River Trust
- e. The Environment Agency
- f. Whittingham Parish Council
- g. Woodplumpton Parish Council
- h. Blackburn with Darwen Council
- i. Two residents

## **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

25. A number of the statutory bodies who responded to Preston City Council made representations to all three Councils. Comments made by United Utilities, Historic England, Highways England, United Utilities, The Canal and River Trust and the Environment Agency are identical to those made to Chorley and South Ribble Councils. It may also be the case that some bodies have responded to one Council whilst not to others. The comments made by those bodies should be taken into account by all three authorities in the next stage of plan preparation.
26. In general the bodies listed above made requests to be kept informed as the plan preparation progressed. A number of them are prescribed bodies in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
27. Of the parish councils that responded, one felt that the GTAA was the best way of identifying the level of provision while the other questioned the apparently large variations in allocation between authority areas. Both were agreed that there is no identified need for a site for travelling showpeople, nor was there a need for rural exception sites for the gypsy and traveller community. There was a broad view that sites should be subject to design criteria and that, for sustainability reasons, some parts of the rural areas should be excluded, nor should there be blanket policy allowing provision on mixed use sites identified in the local plan. Sites should be assessed against CS policy 8 criteria. Identified sites should be on PCC, LCC or HCA land; Red Scar and Bluebell Way were specifically suggested. It is suggested that the community should contribute to the infrastructure needs arising from any development proposals
28. Blackburn with Darwen Council stated that the definition of Gypsies and Travellers has changed and the impact of this should be considered to ensure that the accommodation needs reflect current guidance.
29. Individual comments focused on the need for sites to be identified on publicly owned land with the provision of adequate facilities.

## **PRESTON CITY COUNCIL RESPONSES**

30. Requests to be kept informed have been noted and further discussion will take place as the plan progresses to ensure compliance with regulation 4 of the 2012 regulations.

31. City Council officers have started a process of identifying and assessing suitable land in public ownership as part of the next stage of plan preparation.
32. Comments on the changes in definition have been noted but the City Council considers that the approach being taken by the Central Lancashire authorities is consistent with the new guidance

### **SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

33. In South Ribble, the respondents were as follows:

- j. Historic England
- k. Highways England
- l. Network Rail
- m. Little Hoole Parish Council
- n. Canal and River Trust
- o. The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside
- p. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- q. United Utilities
- r. National Trust
- s. Economic Development, South Ribble Borough Council
- t. West Lancashire Borough Council
- u. Environment Agency
- v. 5 local residents.

### **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

34. The Statutory bodies all made comments asking to be kept informed at all stages of the Plan production. Both the Wildlife Trust and the National Trust felt that not enough emphasis had been placed on ecological considerations in the Issues and Options document. Historic England also indicated that Heritage Assets must be protected from harm throughout the process.
35. In terms of neighbouring Local Authorities, West Lancashire Council welcomed the approach taken, whilst Blackburn with Darwen stated that the methodology used for the GTAA was now out of date and further work should be undertaken. Little Hoole Parish Council felt a site should be accommodated in the central areas of the Borough, such as Leyland, Bamber Bridge or possibly within the M6/M65/M61 triangle.
36. The Economic Development section at the Council supported the Issues and Options Paper, but would not wish to see any employment sites being lost in order to accommodate a site for Gypsies and Travellers.
37. 5 residents of the Borough responded to the consultation, one suggested some changes be made to the consultation to make it easier for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to respond. Of the others, 3 supported the GTAA and one didn't. One resident suggested that sites should be located close to the major road network, and away from residential properties. One resident felt that the consultation was a waste of time as no notice was taken of comments made as part of other consultations.

### **SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCIL RESPONSES**

38. In respect of any travelling showpeople need, the GTAA identified an aspiration for Travelling showpeople plots in the area. The Travelling showpeople did not respond to this consultation, therefore officers will contact their representative in order to ascertain whether any of this aspiration constitutes an actual need which should be provided for in the preferred option version of this Local Plan.

39. As regards any permanent need generated from Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar, no comments were received from such households and as the government requires that such households to demonstrate that they travel before they can be considered to constitute a need, it would seem prudent to remove the bricks and mortar need from the Central Lancs GTAA until such times that such a need presents itself and can be quantified. Should such a need arise outside this Local Plan process, Core Strategy Policy 8 can be used to assess the appropriateness of any proposed site.
40. The GTAA used the definition that was in place at the time of the Study. The consultants have been consulted since the definition changed, and they consider the study/figures to be robust.
41. The government has confirmed that there is no further guidance planned on the new definition and its impact on undertaking GTAAs (contrary to what was stated at the time of release of the updated guidance). It has confirmed that local councils should assess locally how the new definition impacts on the specific nature of their need.
42. The current uses and designations of sites will be fully assessed when considering any future sites, and the suitability of any proposed site will be carefully considered during site assessment process. Permanent, and transit Gypsy and Traveller sites, and Travelling Showpeople sites all have different locational and site needs which will influence the final site selections.

## **NEXT STAGES**

43. Chorley Council will progress a permanent site for a minimum of 5 Traveller pitches at Cowling Farm in accordance with the Allocation in the Chorley Local Plan and the Central Lancashire Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan will be progressed to preferred options stage in line with the timetable set out in Appendix 1.
44. Central Lancashire Members will agree how and where the transit need can be best provided as proposed sites are being subject to a sustainability and deliverability assessment. Preston, South Ribble and Chorley will also explore how best to satisfy their respective permanent Traveller site needs and any Travelling Showpeople need.
45. Outside Central Lancashire, surrounding authorities are all progressing their own GTAAs, 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.
46. Before the Local Plan is adopted, as a need has been demonstrated, should any applications be submitted for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites, Central Lancashire Authorities will apply Core Strategy Policy 8: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople in order to assess the appropriateness of any proposed sites.
47. As detailed in Appendix 1, the next formal stage of the production of this Local Plan will be the Preferred Options document. This will examine and number of options and set out preferred allocations and draft policies covering design issues and rural exception sites and will be consulted on for a 6 week period. Following this consultation all representations will be taken into account and the Local Plan will be finalised and a Publication version will be published and consulted on prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination. If found sound the Local Plan will then be adopted in 2018.

<b>Background Papers</b>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment *** Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan – Issues and Options Version – May 2016	***	***	available on respective Council's websites. ***

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
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## Appendix 1 : The timetable for preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan

### Timetable for Production of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan

Task	Revised Timescale
6 week consultation on Issues and Options and call for sites process at same time	Complete
Review Issues and Options stage and prepare responses to representations/preferred options stage	Responses completed. Preferred Options document to be drafted. Anticipated October/November
6 weeks consultation on Preferred Options	Dec-Feb 2017
Review preferred options consultation stage and prepare responses to representations/publication stage <a href="#">Prepare - Soundness Self-Assessment, Statement of Consultation, Statement of Community Involvement, Sustainability Appraisal, Duty to Cooperate Statement, NPPF PAS Checklist, Equality Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Rural Proofing Assessment.</a>	Feb – Apr 2017
6 week consultation on Publication DPD	May – June 2017
Review publication stage and prepare responses to representations/ prepare for submission	July – Aug 2017
Submission to SoS	Oct – Nov 2017
Pre-Hearing Meeting with Inspector (8 weeks after submission, 6 weeks before examination)	December 2017
Examination	January/Feb 2018
Inspector's Report	March 2018
Adoption of DPD	April 2018