

Lancaster Three Tier Forum 15th September 2014

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

This paper provides an update of the paper presented to the Lancaster Three Tier Forum held on 9th December 2013, paper attached for information.

The work is still ongoing, but we had limited success with the engagement work with the Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) community. It is our intention to meet with the Head Teacher of one of the local primary schools where there is a high number of pupils from a GRT background to see if we can ask for their help in identifying willing parents from GRT community to talk to us either individually or as a group. With school holidays, contact will be made with the school in late September.

We actively participate with the local GRT Practitioner Group in Lancaster district, and we have also asked other members of the Group to pass on details of anyone from the GRT community who is willing to meet with us, but again there has been limited success with this too. That said, Gill Cookson who chairs the group has been extremely supportive and has identified a small number of families that we have been interviewed. We are also hoping to join our colleagues in Environmental Health when they next do their statutory caravan count across the district, but we have not, as yet, been informed when this is.

The Lancaster City Council is still intending to draft a specific Development Plan Document around Gypsies and Travellers which will tie in with the Land Allocations DPD and there will be further work to be undertaken once the Council gets to a point where specific sites are identified as being potentially suitable for traveller sites, and guidance on the criteria that will apply etc. The provisional date for the Local Plan to be adopted is November 2017 (which has partly been delayed because of decision making processes and the election) but we expect to have a draft document by the end of next year which can be reported to Full Council, and then there will be further processes to go through before the Local Plan is presented to the Planning Inspectorate and subject to Public Examination etc.

Kathy Beaton
Housing Strategy Officer,
Planning and Housing Policy Team
Regeneration and Planning Service

Lancaster Three Tier Forum 9th December 2013

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Lancaster district has a history of being a popular location for Travellers to make their home. It contains approximately 16 private sites, mostly in Heysham Central and Westgate wards, and 19 pitches on [Mellishaw Park site](#), which the Lancaster City Council manages on behalf of Lancashire County Council.

National planning policy

The government published [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) in March 2012; it focused on the use of evidence in plan-making, and decision-taking. Two key national policy requirements are the need:

- to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople to address their likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs; and
- to identify and update annually, a five year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet site targets, and for later years, a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth.

Evidence base

A new [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\) \(pdf, 1MB\)](#) was completed in July 2013. It highlighted that:

- There are approximately 158 Traveller pitches in the district;
- 139 of these pitches are on private sites with the remainder on the Mellishaw Lane site;
- An additional 44 Traveller pitches are required between 2013-2026;
- During the first five years the need for additional pitches is low;
- The future need for Traveller pitches comes from the formation of new households; and
- There are currently no Travelling Showpeople plots in the district;

Please note that issues around health and education provision are considered within the GTAA (pages 26 and 27).

This work will feed into the preparation of the new [Local Plan for Lancaster District](#).

The GTAA replaces the 2007 [Lancashire Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Service Assessment \(pdf, 82KB\)](#).

Community engagement

The new GTAA provides evidence for the accommodation needs of Travellers and will help set targets to address this. Lancaster City Council will also collect qualitative

data on accommodation issues through direct engagement with Travellers in the district.

The council is undertaking engagement with the Traveller community and a traveller engagement event was held in late September 2013 at the Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Lancaster. The council is also looking at other ways to engage with Travellers in the district, including Travelling Showpeople. This work is still in progress, and it is too early to draw any real conclusions.

Next steps

The council is currently looking at the implications of the GTAA in terms of setting targets to address the accommodation needs of Travellers. The outcomes of the community engagement work will feed into this.

In order to meet future targets, a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth must be identified. One of the ways of achieving this will be to invite landowners, members of the public and prospective developers to suggest locations for Traveller sites.

Any sites proposed would need to be assessed for their suitability, their availability and their achievability. Sites that pass this stage will then be assessed against development management policies. The sites that fulfill all the above criteria will then be allocated in a Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document.