

North West Plan Partial Review

Travelling Showpeople Dialogue Meeting Notes

Date 18th February 2009
Sub Region Lancashire
Venue The Learning Centre, Blackpool

Agenda for the day

Welcome and context
The allocations (How and Why)
The numbers
Next steps
Feedback

The Allocations

	GTAA	Interim Draft	1 st Draft
Blackburn with Darwen	0	5	4
Hyndburn	1	0	1
Burnley	0	0	0
Pendle	0	0	0
Blackpool	0	10	12
Flyde	0	10	15
Wyre	3	10	12
Lancaster	0	5	6
Chorley	0	10	14
Preston	0	10	21
South Ribble	0	10	9
Ribble Valley	0	0	0
Rossendale	0	0	2
West Lancs.	3	5	6

Points noted about the context

- An 'ideal site' is 10 to 15 pitches

Points noted about the process

- LA's can influence the figures – this is the purpose of the consultation stage.

Issues Raised

Methodology

- How many questionnaires were completed by the Travelling Showpeople and how were these weighted to measure need?
- Clarity of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment (GTAA) evidence was requested.
- Is there a hidden need of those Travelling Showpeople who are not a member of the Guild?
- How is need calculated and what other indicators or measures of need are there?
- Are the proposed allocations to meet current need or future needs? (re:South Ribble /Chorley)

Sites

- What facilities are needed on sites?
- What exactly is being asked of the LA's? LDF/Criteria/allocations?
- What range of site sizes are anticipated and what is meant by plot/yard?
- Would Travelling Showpeople be willing to share sites with other travelling communities?
- What would be the primary use of the pitch?
- Who would be responsible for the management of the site?
- How is equipment stored?
- To what extent is affordability an issue?
- What would be an ideal location for a site?
- Is the Guild actively looking for land to buy and seek planning permission on?
- What is the best way to engage in dialogue over specific sites?
- Do travelling showpeople live in a caravan because houses are too expensive?

Responses

Methodology:

Approximately 300 questionnaire responses were received. This survey was undertaken to supplement the evidence of the GTAA. The figures produced for the sub-regional totals were based on a single preference expressed in the survey.

The questionnaires were only completed by members of the Guild and it is recognised that this will represent the majority rather than all the views of the community.

The shift from the 1st to the Interim draft is based on feedback and information obtained during consultation. The allocation figures assume that existing sites would remain occupied. After 2016 a compound increase of 3% applies and the figures are no longer rounded in multiples of 5. This is to ensure that the policy has a future life beyond 2016. The allocations are not to be treated simply as figures but need to be incorporated in policy (LDF). The figures are minimums in all cases. Delegates noted that where there was no comment made on the figures this should not be taken as agreement.

Regarding the allocations for South Ribble and Chorley, the need has been identified based on the preference survey which suggests central or optimum locations for travelling to clusters of fairs etc.

Sites:

The sites need to accommodate both residential and commercial storage. There would also be some maintenance activities. For security reasons and because of the overlap in use, all equipment needs to be kept on site. Although light industrial areas are preferred there is flexibility over location. No permanent fixtures are usually necessary (except where there are static caravans). Each yard (½ acre) would usually be occupied and managed by one extended family in 5 plots. A site might have one or more yards. The family would be responsible for paying for water, electricity, council tax etc. Often there would be locked security gates.

Caravans/ chalets are a cultural way of life for the Travelling Showpeople, as outlined in the Guild's Best Practice document.

Historically, there have been a high percentage of refusals for planning permission to establish such yards which has led to a reluctance within the communities to speculate on planning applications and waste significant costs.

LA's are therefore encouraged to engage in dialogue with the Guild and other neighbouring LA's to identify suitable sites and to discuss the allocations. A criteria base is best avoided as this is likely to lead to conflict/inappropriate sites.

Other evidence:

Delegates referred to other evidence that would assist them in the process:

- Further information regarding the distribution of fairs (individual fairs and exact number of days).
- Availability of land in different areas.
- Numbers of households and overcrowding data for the region.
- Details of planning applications made.
- More information from the Guild on sites e.g. a diagram in the Best Practice document.

The process

- Is there any flexibility in the timescales?
These are set by central government – see next steps on web site
- How can we discuss figures we haven't yet seen?

The current process is designed to discuss the figures and get views from all stakeholders. It is these views that will help shape the final figure – so the current figures are the ones to comment on. 4NW needs to hear all your comments.

Actions from the meeting

For 4NW and the consultation team

- Note of this meeting will be produced by CAG Consultants
- Note clarifying how the allocations were reached will be prepared by 4NW (See **Technical Note on how the Interim Draft Policy Figures for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople (North West Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review) were derived (February 2009)** – available at <http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/>).



- 4NW to include some information on the assumptions used in the process of redistributing the figures
- Revised figures will be produced at the end of the consultation process, based on what people say in this process

For local authorities

- 4NW need formal responses on the figures on what the districts are 'comfortable with' by [27th March 2009](#)