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RIBBLE VALLEY COUNCIL

GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND SHOWPERSON

ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE



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1. Introduction

The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Ribble Valley Council to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.
- 1.2 The study seeks to provide an evidence base to enable the authority to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 2004, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012. The main objective of this study is to provide the Council with robust, defensible and up-to-date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Ribble Valley in the 15 years period until 2028.
- 1.3 We would note at the outset that the study covers the needs of Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, but for ease of reference we have referred to the study as a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.

Definitions

- 1.4 For the purposes of the planning system, Gypsies and Travellers means:

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, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012)
- 1.5 Within the main definition of Gypsies and Travellers, there are a number of main cultural groups which include:
 - » Romany Gypsies;
 - » Irish Travellers; and
 - » New Travellers.
- 1.6 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 1.7 Alongside Gypsies and Travellers, a further group to be considered are Travelling Showpeople. They are defined as:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their family's or dependent's more localized pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased

to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.
(Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012)

Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

- 1.8 Decision-making for policy concerning Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sits within a complex legislative and national policy framework and this study must be viewed in the context of this legislation and guidance. For example, the following pieces of legislation and guidance are relevant when constructing policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:
- » Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012;
 - » National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
 - » Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance October 2007;
 - » Environmental Protection Act 1990 for statutory nuisance provisions;
 - » The Human Rights Act 1998, when making decisions and welfare assessments;
 - » The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended);
 - » Homelessness Legislation and Allocation Policies;
 - » Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (sections 61, 62);
 - » Anti-social behaviour Act 2003 (both as victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour);
 - » Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 - » Housing Act 2004 which requires local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Showpeople as part of their housing needs assessments. This study complies with the this element of government guidance ;
 - » Housing Act 1996 in respect of homelessness.
- 1.9 To focus on Gypsies and Travellers, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Sections 77, 78) is particularly important with regard to the issue of planning for Gypsy and Traveller site provision. This repealed the duty of local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. However, Circular 1/94 did support maintaining existing sites and stated that appropriate future site provision should be considered.
- 1.10 For site provision, the previous Labour Government guidance focused on increasing site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and encouraging local authorities to have a more inclusive approach to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within their Housing Needs Assessment. The Housing Act 2004 required local authorities to identify the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, alongside the need for other types of housing, when conducting Housing Needs Surveys. Therefore, all local authorities were required to undertake accommodation assessments for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople either as a separate study such as this one, or as part of their main Housing Needs Assessment.
- 1.11 Local authorities were encouraged rather than compelled to provide new Gypsy and Traveller sites by central government. Circular 1/06 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites', released by the CLG in

January 2006, replaced Circular 1/94 and suggested that the provision of authorised sites should be encouraged so that the number of unauthorised sites would be reduced.

- 1.12 The Coalition Government announced that the previous government's thinking contained in Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (Circular 01/06) was to be repealed, along with the Regional Spatial Strategies which were used to allocate pitch provision to local authorities. The CLG published 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' in March 2012 which set out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

- 1.13 The document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' sets out the direction of government policy. Among other objectives the new policies aims in respect of Traveller sites are (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Page 1-2):

- » that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;
- » to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- » to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;
- » that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- » to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- » that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;
- » for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- » to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- » to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;
- » to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure;
- » for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

- 1.14 In practice, the document states that (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Page 3):

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.

1.15 Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:

- » Identify, and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
- » identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- » 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);
- » 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;
- » protect local amenity and environment.

1.16 A key element to the new policies is a continuation of previous government policies. Local authorities now have a duty to ensure a 5 year land supply to meet the identified needs for Traveller sites. However, 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' also notes on Page 3-4 that:

Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

1.17 Therefore, criteria based planning policies sit at the heart of the new guidance, irrespective of whether need is identified or not.

Tackling Inequalities for Gypsy and Traveller Communities

1.18 In April 2012 the government issued a further document relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the form of 'Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers' (CLG April 2012).

1.19 The report contains 28 commitments to help improve the circumstances and outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers across a range of areas including: Identifying ways of raising educational aspirations and attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children;

- » Identifying ways to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers within the proposed new structures of the NHS;
- » Encouraging appropriate site provision; building on £60m Traveller Pitch Funding and New Homes Bonus incentives;
- » Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers and improving their interaction with the criminal justice system;
- » Improving knowledge of how Gypsies and Travellers engage with services that provide a gateway to work opportunities and working with the financial services industry to improve access to financial products and services;

- » Sharing good practice in engagement between Gypsies and Travellers and public service providers.

Funding for New Sites

- ^{1.20} The Coalition Government policies also involve financial incentives for new affordable pitch provision in the form of the New Homes Bonus. For all new annual supply of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson pitches/plots on local authority or Registered Social Landlord owned and managed sites, local councils receive a New Homes Bonus equivalent to council tax (based on the national average for a Band A property), plus an additional £350 per annum for six years. This equates to around £8,000 pounds per pitch.
- ^{1.21} Direct grant funding is also available for Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took over delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant programme from CLG in April 2009. Since then they have invested £16.3m in 26 schemes across the country to provide 88 new or additional pitches and 179 improved pitches. The HCA welcomes bids from local authorities, housing associations and traveller community groups working with Registered Providers.
- ^{1.22} The HCA has now confirmed allocations for all of its £60m of future funding which will support 96 projects around the country for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller sites and new pitches on existing sites, as well as the improvement of existing pitches.
- ^{1.23} While all HCA funds for Gypsy and Traveller pitches have now been allocated, further funding may become available as a result of slippage over the course of the programme. Providers are advised to continue to work closely with HCA area teams to develop their proposals should any funding become available.

Research Methodology

- ^{1.24} This section sets out the methodology we have followed to deliver the outputs for this study. Over the past 10 years ORS have developed a methodology which provides the required outputs from a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment and this has been updated in light of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
- ^{1.25} The stages below provide a summary of the process undertaken by ORS, with more information on each stage provided in the appropriate section of the report.

Stage 1: Background

- ^{1.26} At the outset of the project we sought to understand the background to the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Ribble Valley. The study sought to identify the location of all known sites in the study area and the number of pitches or plots on each one. The study also gathered information from recent caravan counts.

Stage 2: Stakeholder Engagement

- ^{1.27} This study included extensive stakeholder engagement with council officers from Ribble Valley and neighbouring councils and other stakeholders. The aim of this engagement was to help understand the

current situation in the study area, particularly in relation to households not on known existing sites and also to discuss Duty to Cooperate issues with neighbouring councils.

Stage 3: Household Survey

- 1.28 For most Gypsy and Traveller studies we seek to interview all known households in a study area using a detailed questionnaire. Given the very limited size of the population in Ribble Valley, instead of conducting interviewer facilitated detailed personal interviews, all sites were visited by ORS researchers. They conducted qualitative interviews with the households to determine if they have any current or likely future needs and how these may be addressed.
- 1.29 These interviews had a number of objectives. One objective was to analyse the provision of services on existing sites to assess if more, or improved, service provision was required within the existing sites. Another main objective was to view travelling patterns and likely future household formation to analyse the future need for extra site provision.

Stage 4: Future Pitch and Plot Requirements

- 1.30 The methodology used by ORS to calculate future pitch and plot requirements has been developed over the past 10 years and has drawn on lessons from both traditional housing needs assessments and also best and worst practice for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment conducted across the country.
- 1.31 The overall principles behind assessing future needs are relatively simple. The residential pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers are identified separately from those for Travelling Showpeople and for each group the requirements are identified in 5 year periods to 2028 in line with the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

Stage 5: Conclusions

- 1.32 This stage draws together the evidence from Stages 1 to 4 to provide an overall summary of the requirements for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Ribble Valley.

2. Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Population

Background

- 2.1 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment focuses upon the number of dwellings required in an area, and how many of these should be affordable. The central aim of this study was to follow a similar format for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation requirements.
- 2.2 One of the main considerations of this study is the provision of pitches and sites for Gypsies and Travellers. A pitch is an area which is large enough for one household to occupy and typically contains enough space for one or two caravans, but can vary in size. A site is a collection of pitches which form a development exclusively for Gypsies and Travellers. For Travelling Showpeople the terms most common used are a “plot” for the space occupied by one household, and a “yard” for a collection of plots (typically occupied exclusively by Travelling Showpeople). Throughout this study the main focus is upon how many extra pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and plots for Travelling Showpeople are required in Ribble Valley.
- 2.3 The public and private provision of mainstream housing is also largely mirrored when considering Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. One common form of Gypsy and Traveller site is the publicly-provided residential site, which is provided by the local authority or a registered provider (usually a housing association). Places on public sites can be obtained through a waiting list, and the costs of running the sites are met from the rent paid by the licensees (similar to social housing). We would note that there are currently no public sites in the study area.
- 2.4 The alternative to public residential sites is private residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. These result from individuals or families buying areas of land and then obtaining planning permission to live on them. Households can also rent pitches on existing private sites. Therefore, these two forms of accommodation are the equivalent to private ownership and renting for those who live in bricks and mortar housing.
- 2.5 The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population also has other forms of sites due to its mobile nature. Transit sites tend to contain many of the same facilities as a residential site, except that there is a maximum period of residence which can vary from a few weeks to a period of months. An alternative is an emergency stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time for which someone can stay on it, but has much more limited facilities. Both of these two types of site are designed to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers whilst they travel.
- 2.6 Further considerations in the Gypsy and Traveller population are unauthorised developments and encampments. Unauthorised developments occur on land which is owned by the Gypsies and Travellers, but for which they do not have planning permission to use for residential purposes. Unauthorised encampments occur on land which is not owned by the Gypsies and Travellers.

Sites in Ribble Valley

- 27 The chart below documents all sites and pitches known to exist in Ribble Valley. At the time of writing, there are 9 pitches across two Gypsy and Traveller sites, both with permanent permission. There are no known unauthorised sites.
- 28 At the time of writing, Ribble Valley has no known Travelling Showperson sites and this has been confirmed by the North West Showmen’s Guild.

Figure 1
Current Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Pitches in Ribble Valley

Site	Number of Pitches
Private Sites with Permanent Permission	
Acorn Lodge, Longsight Road, Clayton-le-Dale	8
Balderstone	1
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	
TOTAL PITCHES	
	9

3. Stakeholder Consultation

Introduction

- 3.1 In order to set the context of the research and ensure the study is based on a sound understanding of the relevant issues, ORS conducted 15 semi-structured, in-depth telephone interviews during February and March 2013. Interviews were undertaken with officers from Ribble Valley Borough Council's Housing Department. As stated in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Local Authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, and for this reason Lancashire County Council and neighbouring local authorities also contributed to the study. Consultation was also carried out with The North West Showmen's Guild. The views of the Ribble Valley officers and Showmen's Guild are summarized below. The findings of the consultations with neighbouring authorities are reported separately.

Main Policy Tools

- 3.2 Officers referred to Ribble Valley's emerging core strategy, which includes a stipulation that the Council will find suitable sites for any future need, with a site allocations document planned for the future. Currently, any applications for potential sites would be assessed under general housing policies (SHLAA) and the national policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers (National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites). However, at the time of writing, no applications for additional sites had been received.
- 3.3 It was also noted that there had been no applications from the Gypsy and Traveller community for the housing waiting list.

Accommodation: Sites and Unauthorised Encampments

- 3.4 Officers felt that the current provision of sites in the district was largely sufficient. It was noted that the previous GTAA (Lancashire 2007) had identified a need for 6 pitches in the area, but officers reported no applications for new or expanded sites, and did not feel there was any pressure from the Travellers themselves for any additional provision.
- 3.5 Though officers referred to unauthorised stops and encampments in the area, it was felt that these were primarily due to Travellers passing through the district on their way to other destinations, rather than households looking to establish sites in the area.
- 3.6 Officers identified unused industrial land near the A59 as the primary location for such unauthorised encampments, with most lasting no more than a week. Officers reported short lived unauthorised encampments at Sabden and Barrow Brook.
- 3.7 Officers reported an increase in families moving through the district around the time of the Appleby Fair in Eden.

Bricks and Mortar

- 3.8 Officers were not aware of any households in bricks and mortar accommodation. Census figures indicate a minimal population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation, if any (see para. 5.16 of this report).

Travelling Showpeople

- 3.9 Officers reported that there were no Travelling Showpeople in the district, a view that was confirmed through consultation with representatives from the North West Showmen's Guild. The Guild also advised that Ribble Valley was not attractive to their members as a location, and there are no Travelling Showpeople looking to establish a site within the district.

Community, Health and Education Issues

- 3.10 Officers did not report any community cohesion issues in relation to the existing private sites, though one officer noted that the unauthorised encampments in the district sometimes caused tensions due to Travellers littering. This litter is usually cleared by the council, but the officer suggested that the provision of wheelie bins to any future encampments could lessen the impact on the surrounding settled community.
- 3.11 Officers were not aware of any health or educational issues within the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Cross Boundary Issues

- 3.12 Officers reported little in the way of cross-boundary issues, though one officer noted that there was a striking disparity between the Traveller population in Ribble Valley and that in Hyndburn. The officer felt this was likely due to the rural nature of Ribble Valley and the lack of work opportunities in comparison to the relatively populous area of Hyndburn.
- 3.13 In terms of cross-border working, officers mentioned the various housing and planning groups where officers from Lancashire districts meet to discuss issues. However, officers reported no on-going discussions relating to Gypsies and Travellers. Officers did not regard this as a particular issue for Ribble Valley, given that the district currently has no significant problems with Travellers, though they were open to cooperative working should they be approached by another local authority.
- 3.14 In terms of cross-boundary movements, the A59 was identified as the primary route through the district.

Consultation Activities

- 3.15 Officers reported no direct consultation with the inhabitants of the permanent sites, but noted that there was consultation on broad issues with representatives of the Travelling community through the Showman's Guild and Gypsy Council.
- 3.16 One officer foresaw that if there were any issues in the district, they would be identified through the current study.

Future Site Provision: Criteria, Management and Geographical Location

- 3.17 When asked to consider what criteria were important for locating any future sites, officers considered access to major transport links to be essential, with the A59 identified as the primary route through the area. Proximity to services and facilities and impact on the landscape were also felt to be important considerations. One officer reported that any site search would be treated in a similar manner to a standard residential development. It was noted that any future site development would be constrained by the by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which cover 70% of the district.
- 3.18 In terms of management, officers expected that any future need would be accommodated through extensions to existing sites, preserving the existing management of the sites by the families themselves. There was not felt to be any impetus for a publicly managed site in the area, and any future household formations would be likely to remain on the existing sites.
- 3.19 Given the infrequency and unproblematic nature of the unauthorised encampments in the district, officers did not feel that any formal transit provision would be necessary, and envisaged that any such site would see little use. Unauthorised encampments that do occur can be dealt with through informal measures such as providing Travellers with bin for disposing of litter.

Neighbouring Authorities

- 3.20 As stated in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Local Authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Therefore, as part of the stakeholder consultation, ORS conducted 12 interviews with Officers representing the following neighbouring authorities:
- » Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council;
 - » Burnley Borough Council;
 - » Chorley Borough Council;
 - » Craven District Council;
 - » Hyndburn Borough Council;
 - » Lancashire County Council;
 - » Lancaster City Council;
 - » Pendle Borough Council;
 - » Preston City Council;
 - » Rossendale Borough Council;
 - » South Ribble Borough Council; and
 - » Wyre District Council.

Main Policy Tools

- 3.21 Stakeholders from neighbouring authorities referenced a number of local and national policies and guidance in relation to Gypsy and Traveller issues, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the supplementary Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, various Local Plans (which included site allocations

DPDs and criteria based policies which in most cases were still under preparation), and a Central Lancashire Core Strategy, covering Chorley, South Ribble and Preston.

- 3.22 One officer also mentioned an East Lancashire unauthorised encampment enforcement policy that included Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale and Ribble Valley which was currently under development. The officer argued that the policy would ensure that the districts and boroughs are consistent in their treatment of unauthorised encampments, and that both the settled community and Travellers know what to expect in terms of enforcement.
- 3.23 Interestingly, Burnley reported that their local plan preparation was being aided by input from a Traveller family currently in bricks and mortar accommodation who were looking to move onto a site. Contact with this family had been established through their previous Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- 3.24 Craven's officer referred to the North Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group as an important influence on policy.
- 3.25 While many of Ribble Valley's neighbouring authorities are currently relying on data from the 2007 Lancashire-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment to inform their policies, most were either looking to update this information with a new study within the near future and or had already updated this information with more recent studies.

Accommodation: Sites and Unauthorised Encampments

- 3.26 The accommodation situations of the authorities surrounding Ribble Valley (as reported by their respective stakeholders) is summarized below:
- » Blackburn with Darwen currently has two larger sites; one public site of approximately 20 pitches, and a private site of 17 pitches. A number of smaller private sites provide a further 10-15 pitches. The district is currently using data from the 2007 Lancashire GTAA, but expects to carry out either a full study or review of the previous work in the near future. Though the borough has experienced unauthorised encampments in the past, they have declined in recent years and are not considered to be an issue.
 - » Burnley currently has one unauthorised pitch of approximately 4 pitches. A joint study with Pendle (2012) identified a need for 28 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the borough. The officer interviewed suggested that regularisation of the current unauthorised site may be undertaken to help meet the identified need. The officer also reported that there were a number of Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation in the district who would prefer to live on a site. There have been a number of unauthorised encampments in recent years, with 7 recorded in 2011. The officer suggested that many of these were due to Travellers visiting family members in bricks and mortar.
 - » Chorley currently has one unauthorised site. At the time of writing, enforcement proceedings are underway. The 2007 Lancashire GTAA identified no need in the borough.
 - » Craven has 18 pitches spread across three private sites. The District has experienced a number of issues with unauthorised encampments around the time of the Appleby Fair, which have created tension with the settled community, especially around Gargrave, which is a traditional stopping place for Travellers. At the time of writing, Craven District Council has yet to publish the results of its 2013 GTAA.

- » Hyndburn is one of the more populous boroughs in the area in terms of Travellers, with a Travelling Showperson site of 18 plots, and 14 Gypsy and Traveller sites of varying sizes totalling 110 pitches, including one Lancashire County Council owned public site, managed by the local authority. The officer also reported a high number of Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation in the borough.
- » Gypsy and Traveller provision in Lancaster is more extensive than most districts in the area, with one public site and 8 private sites. Unauthorised encampments are an occasional occurrence, especially around the time of the Appleby Fair, but generally last only a few days. Lancaster is currently undertaking a GTAA.
- » Pendle's 2012 GTAA (carried out jointly with Burnley) did not identify any need in the borough and there is currently no site provision. Pendle's officer reported no serious issues with unauthorised encampments, with most moving on after a single night.
- » There is one local authority site in Preston of 12 pitches, as well as private site of approximately 6 pitches with temporary planning permission. The 2007 Lancashire GTAA identified a need for 18-21 pitches in the area up to 2016, though the officer did not feel that there was any pressure from the Travelling community for more provision in Preston.
- » Despite having no current site provision, Rossendale's 2010 update of the 2007 Lancashire GTAA identified a requirement for 7 permanent and 6 transit pitches until 2026.
- » South Ribble currently has no sites and no identified need from the 2007 Lancashire GTAA. The officer for South Ribble reported occasional unauthorised stops in the area, but did not feel that these were a particular issue.
- » Wyre has one temporary Travelling Showperson site of 10 plots (expiring May 2014), and one unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller of 8 plots. The latter is currently subject to enforcement action. The district sees very few unauthorised encampments. A new GTAA is due to be undertaken in cooperation with Fylde and Blackpool Borough Councils.

3.27 As noted above, a number of stakeholders reported unauthorised stops and encampments due to Travellers passing through the area. In most cases, these were seasonal movements related to Appleby Fair and were not considered to be problematic. The provision of transit or temporary sites was therefore not considered necessary, with most authorities preferring to deal with any encampments on a more informal basis. Even in those districts which did report problems, such as Craven, transit sites were not necessarily considered to be a solution.

3.28 As noted above, unauthorised stops in Burnley are thought to be a result of Travellers visiting those in bricks and mortar. In light of this, the officer for Burnley felt that the provision of a permanent site for those currently in bricks and mortar (rather than a transit site) would largely solve any problems, with visitors able to stay on the site with their relatives rather than setting up on unauthorised areas.

3.29 However, the officer for Hyndburn favoured the provision of transit sites across Lancashire, so as to provide secure places for Travellers moving through the county to stop. Lancaster and Rossendale also suggested that transit provision might be useful in order to prevent tensions arising with the settled community and to give councils more powers in terms of enforcement.

Trends

- 3.30 For the most part, officers from neighbouring authorities did not identify any specific trends, though some suggested that the number of unauthorised stops by Travellers moving through their areas was declining.
- 3.31 Lancaster's officer reported a trend for non-Traveller households to occupy pitches on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Consultation

- 3.32 In terms of consultation with members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, officers referred to a number of different mechanisms:
- » As has already been noted, Burnley Borough Council have consulted with a Traveller family in bricks and mortar accommodation for input on their future strategy.
 - » The officer for Hyndburn reported positively on the district's use of researchers from the Gypsy and Traveller community during their previous study on the health and housing needs of Travellers. The officer also referred to a biannual Gypsy and Traveller network group including partners who work with Travellers, as well as with members of the Traveller community itself.
 - » Lancaster's officer noted a Gypsy and Traveller forum for officers in the district.

Cross-Border Issues

- 3.33 Officers from surrounding districts reported few cross-border issues, and none were aware of any specific issues concerning Ribble Valley. In terms of Travellers moving through into Ribble Valley, officers could not identify any specific routes, though some suspected that there were movements through the district around the time of the Appleby Fair.
- 3.34 A more general cross-border issue was raised by the officer for Hyndburn regarding the geographic spread of Traveller provision across Lancashire. The officer was concerned that the current distribution was inequitable, with those districts with extensive provision already being called on to provide for any future need. The officer believed that while there were Traveller populations in other districts and boroughs, they were not being provided for.
- 3.35 Similarly, one officer argued that there was split amongst authorities; those with already extensive provision were looking for opportunities for joint work, while those with minimal or no provision saw no reason for engagement with other boroughs regarding Gypsies and Travellers.
- 3.36 In terms of cross-border working, a number of officers referred to various groups, such as the Lancashire and Pennine Lancs Planning groups, but reported that so far Gypsy and Traveller issues had not been discussed in any detail. However, these groups were seen as a possible platform for any future cross-border working or dialogue on Gypsies and Traveller issues.
- 3.37 As already noted, an East Lancashire unauthorised encampments policy is currently being developed.
- 3.38 A number of officers pointed to the differences between Ribble Valley and the surrounding authorities (i.e. mostly agricultural or rural rather than urban) as a possible reason for the lack of joint work.

- 3.39 The officer for Wyre District noted that while movement between the district and Ribble Valley was not an issue due to the barrier of the Forest of Boland, the two authorities are united by their Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 3.40 The officer for Blackburn with Darwen noted that the consultation of neighbouring authorities was an important part of Gypsy and Traveller Assessments, as it allowed for the sharing of any information and issues.

Recommendations

- 3.41 From the information provided by interviews with neighbouring authorities, ORS recommends the following:
- » Though no pressing issues between neighbouring authorities and Ribble Valley were raised, it is important that dialogue is maintained with other authorities, so that any future issues can be identified and dealt with. The existing Lancashire officer groups could provide the mechanism for this dialogue.
 - » Though there appears to be little desire amongst officers for the provision of transit sites, close monitoring and information sharing regarding any unauthorised encampments across Lancashire could provide a sounder basis for any decision as to the provision and location of any such sites in future. Again, the existing planning group could provide the platform for this work.
 - » In previous studies carried out by ORS, issues have been raised in relation to the consistency of planning policy between boroughs regarding Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It may therefore be pertinent for Ribble Valley to engage in discussion with Wyre, Lancaster, Pendle and Craven to ensure that applications for Traveller sites on AONB land are dealt with consistently across the relevant authorities.

4. Gypsy and Traveller Interviews

Introduction

- 4.1 Face to face interviews were conducted with representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community who are currently residing in Ribble. The interviews were conducted within the interviewee's place of residence in February 2012. Both known sites in Ribble Valley were visited and the outcome of this process is detailed below.

Site 1

- 4.2 The site has permission for 8 pitches where each is allowed to contain a residential and a tourer caravan. The site is occupied by the owner and their immediate family and other unrelated households who are renting the remaining pitches. However, the site owner is currently away from the site and was not available for contact
- 4.3 The site visit did not indicate any specific issues relating to the site. No household reported any problems or concerns about the site and all residents reported that they were satisfied there. Again we would reiterate that we were not able to speak to the site owners due to their personal circumstances so we are not able to confirm if they will seek to expand the site in the future.
- 4.4 The site visit indicated that it contained relatively few children. Therefore, the site is unlikely to yield any new household formation in the near future.

Site 2

- 4.5 This site has planning permission dating back to 1937. When it was visited by ORS researchers no-one was present. A letter was left at the address providing contact details if the household wished to take part in the survey, but no subsequent response occurred. We would note that the site has been recently redeveloped with a new residential caravan and landscaping added, so the household clearly intend to occupy the site for the foreseeable future.

5. Future Site Provision

Pitch Provision

- 5.1 This section focuses on the extra site provision which is required in Ribble Valley currently and over the next 15 years by 5 year segments.
- 5.2 The March 2012, CLG document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', requires an assessment for future pitch requirements, but does not provide a suggested methodology for undertaking this calculation. However, as with any housing assessment, the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case, the key issue for residential pitches is to compare the supply of pitches available for occupation with the current and future needs of the households. The key factors in each of these elements are set out below:

Supply of pitches

- 5.3 Pitches which are available for use can come from a variety of sources. These include
- » Currently vacant pitches;
 - » Any pitches currently programmed to be developed within the study period;
 - » Pitches vacated by people moving to housing;
 - » Pitches vacated by people moving out of the study area;
 - » Pitches vacated due to the dissolution of households (normally through the death of a single person household).

Current Need

- 5.4 There are four key components of current need. Total current need (which is not necessarily need for additional pitches) is simply:
- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
 - » Concealed households;
 - » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites; and
 - » Households on waiting lists for public sites.

Future Need

- 5.5 There are three key components of future need. Total future need is simply the sum of the following:
- » Households living on sites with temporary planning permissions;
 - » New household formation expected during the study period; and

- » Migration to sites from outside the study area.

5.6 We will firstly provide the model as set out above for Gypsies and Travellers before repeating the calculation for Travelling Showpeople.

Current Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision

5.7 There are currently 9 pitches on private sites in Ribble Valley.

5.8 The next stage of the process is to assess how much space is, or will become available on existing sites. The main ways of finding this is through:

- » Current empty pitches;
- » New sites or site extensions which are likely to gain planning permission;
- » Migration away from the area;
- » Movement to bricks and mortar;
- » Dissolution of households.

5.9 Currently, there are no unoccupied pitches on the two private sites in Ribble Valley, and no current plans for any new sites or extensions to existing sites.

5.10 For out-migration to other areas or movements to bricks and mortar, households will also wish to move in the opposite direction. Therefore, we have treated these as being part of the current and future need sections of the calculation.

5.11 The dissolution of a household occurs when all the members leave the household. Common ways for a household to dissolve are for a person living on their own to die, or to move to an existing household. Given that households will also form in the future we have treated the net growth in household numbers as being part of the future need.

Additional Site Provision: Current Need

5.12 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are currently seeking pitches in the area. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:

- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
- » Concealed households;
- » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites; and
- » Households on waiting lists for public sites.

Current Unauthorised Developments

- 5.13 There are currently no known households on unauthorised developments in Ribble Valley.

Overcrowded Households

- 5.14 There is no evidence of any concealed households in Ribble Valley and each household appears to have a distinct pitch.

Bricks and Mortar

- 5.15 Identifying households in bricks and mortar has been frequently highlighted as an issue with Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.
- 5.16 However, the 2011 UK Census of Population identified a population of 6 Gypsy and Traveller persons in Ribble Valley. The figure of 6 persons is clearly an under-estimate of the total population due to some Gypsies and Travellers not declaring their ethnic status or completing the Census at all, but it would seem to indicate an extremely minimal population in bricks and mortar.
- 5.17 We would also note that for a number of recent studies undertaken by ORS we have worked with national Gypsy and Traveller representatives to identify households in brick and mortar. For a number of recent studies the representatives reported over 100 known households in housing and they encouraged them to come forward to take part in the survey. The actual number who eventually took part in the surveys ranged from zero to six household per area, and not all wished to move back to sites. Therefore, while there is anecdotal evidence of many Gypsies and Travellers in housing most appear to be content to remain there and when provided with the opportunity by national representatives to register an interest in returning to sites few choose to do so.
- 5.18 It is also the case that within most face to face surveys undertaken on-site by ORS a small number of households are seeking to move to bricks and mortar. Therefore, it should be remembered that movement between housing and sites runs in both directions and typically comes extremely close to balancing out to zero. However, the on-site survey found no evidence of households seeking to leave the site. On this basis we have modelled the future pitch requirement on the basis that there will be no movement between bricks and mortar and housing.

Waiting Lists for Public Sites

- 5.19 Ribble Valley currently has no public sites, and there are therefore no individuals on waiting lists that need to be taken into account.

Additional Site Provision: Future Need

- 5.20 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are likely to be seeking pitches in the area in the future. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:
- » Households living on sites with temporary planning permissions;
 - » New household formation expected during the study period; and
 - » Migration to sites from outside the study area.

Temporary Planning Permissions

- 5.21 Ribble Valley currently has no sites with temporary planning permissions.

New Household Formation

- 5.22 It is recognised that an important group for future pitch provision will be older children who form their own households. Many studies of Gypsy and Traveller populations assume a net growth in the population of around 3% per annum, and this figure was used in the North West Regional plan and the previous GTAA for Ribble Valley.
- 5.23 However, for a study such as this it is possible to use local data to assess a more accurate level of household formation. The site visits occurred during the school half term and there is no evidence of any children on-site who are likely to be seeking to form their own household in the next 10 years. However, there were a number of younger children on the site who may need their own accommodation more than 10 years from now. Therefore, we have not allowed for any household formation in the next 10 years.

In-migration from Other Sources

- 5.24 The most complicated area for a survey such as this is to estimate how many households will require accommodation from outside the area. Potentially Gypsies and Travellers could move to the Ribble Valley from anywhere in the country. The number of households seeking to move to Ribble Valley is likely to be heavily dependent upon pitch provision elsewhere. It has been noted that a weakness of many Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments conducted across the country has been that they either allowed for out-migration without in-migration which led to under-counting of need, or they over-counted need by assuming every household visiting the area required a pitch.
- 5.25 Overall the level of in-migration to the Ribble Valley is a very difficult issue to predict. We have allowed for a balanced level of migration on to existing sites. The advantage of allowing for net migration to sum to zero is that it avoids the problems seen with other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments where the modelling of migration clearly identified too low or high a level of total pitch provision. An assumption of net nil migration implies that the net pitch requirement is driven by locally identifiable need.
- 5.26 Beyond this number, rather than assess in-migrant households seeking to develop new sites in the area, we would propose that each case is assessed as a desire to live in the area and that site criteria rules are followed for each new site. It is important for the authorities to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential sites which do arise.

Overall Needs for Ribble Valley

- 5.27 There is no evidence of any current unmet need in Ribble Valley and no evidence that any will arise in the next 10 years beyond potential in-migration from other areas. As there are no unauthorised sites, sites with temporary planning permission or public sites with waiting lists, the only potential local source of need is household formation from Ribble Valley's existing Gypsy and Traveller population. However, there is no evidence that there are any children present on the site of an age who are likely to form in the next 10 years. However, there were a number of younger children who may need their own accommodation in the following 5 years between 2023 and 2028.

Travelling Showpersons

- 5.28 There are currently no known Travelling Showpeople plots in Ribble Valley, nor any evidence of Showpeople in bricks and mortar accommodation and therefore no projected future family formation. Representatives from the Showmen's Guild have confirmed this position and also feel that there would be little interest amongst Travelling Showpeople in living in Ribble Valley. Nonetheless, it is still important for the authorities to have criteria based planning policies in place in the event of someone seeking to develop a new Showpeople's yard in Ribble Valley.

6. Conclusions

Introduction

- 6.1 This chapter brings together the evidence presented earlier in the report to provide some key policy conclusions for Ribble Valley. It focuses upon the key issues of future site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and also Travelling Showpersons.

Gypsy and Traveller Future Pitch Provision

- 6.2 Based upon the evidence presented in Chapter 5, the estimated extra pitch provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers in the next 10 years in Ribble Valley is zero pitches. However, there is likely to be a need for at least 2 pitches in the period 2023-2028.

Travelling Showperson Requirements

- 6.3 There are currently no sources of need for the provision of Travelling Showperson yards in Ribble Valley. Nonetheless, Ribble Valley should ensure that criteria based policies are in place in order that any applications for sites received from Travelling Showpeople in the future can be evaluated effectively.