

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CUSTOMER SERVICES, SPORT AND  
LEISURE CABINET MEMBER**

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

1.1 To advise the Cabinet Member of the response from interested parties to consultation on the assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in North Lincolnshire.

1.2 Key points in this report are:

- The council is currently reviewing its housing strategy
- Legislation requires that the council considers the needs of gypsies and travellers as part of its housing strategy.
- The council has sought the views of Gypsies and Travellers as well as Town and Parish Councils regarding the need for accommodation and how such need can be met.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2.1 Local authorities have a duty under the 2004 Housing Act to identify the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers as part of their overall strategy for meeting housing needs in North Lincolnshire.

2.2 Cabinet Members considered a report assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in May 2012. Appendix 1 to this report reproduces that assessment and the summary of estimated need.

2.3 Members agreed that interested parties should be consulted over an eight week period to see if the estimate of need was appropriate. They were also invited to suggest how and where accommodation need could be met.

2.4 A questionnaire was developed based on research undertaken by the University of Salford in 2008 to guide the consultation with Gypsies and

Travellers. It was made available on the council website and in local libraries and council local links. Copies were delivered directly to Gypsy and Traveller families on existing sites and encampments.

- 2.5 All the town and parish councils in North Lincolnshire were invited to express their views. The consultation was advertised on the council's website and in press releases to the local media.
- 2.6 The responses to the consultation are set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.7 They are consistent with the assessment of need set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.8 The council can now plan to meet the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation that will arise over the next five years. At present there are vacant pitches on the Manifold Road site available to meet existing need.

### 3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 **Option 1** - To accept the responses to the consultation and the assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 **Option 2** – Take no further action.

### 4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 **Option 1** – This is the preferred option. The government guidance requires local authorities to engage effectively with both settled and traveller communities to produce robust evidence of local need.
- 4.2 **Option 2** – This option fails to fulfil the duties of the Local Authority in accordance with The Housing Act 2004 and comply with Government Guidance issued in March 2012.

### 5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 Financial – there are no financial implications arising directly from this report as the cost of the consultation was met from agreed budgets
- 5.2 Staffing - There are no direct staffing implications.
- 5.3 Property – there are no property implications arising directly from this report.
- 5.4 Information Technology – There are no IT implications.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 Statutory – as set out above this report arises from the requirements of the 2004 Housing Act.

6.2 Environmental – there are no direct implications arising from this report.

6.3 Diversity – No implications.

6.4 Crime and Disorder – meeting the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers is likely to discourage anti social behaviour.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment set out in Appendix 1 to this report be approved.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Date: 11 July 2012

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**  
University of Salford report 2008.

## Draft

# North Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

**2012 – 2017**

### Overview

Local authorities have a duty under the 2004 Housing Act to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers.

North Lincolnshire Council fulfilled this obligation in 2008 having commissioned The University of Salford to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA).

Since 2008 there have been a number of changes locally and in the government's guidance to local authorities that make it appropriate to review accommodation needs again.

In particular, the government published the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites on 23 March 2012 which should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Framework published on 27 March 2012.

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) paragraph 3 states:-

“The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.”

To help achieve this, Government's aims in respect of traveller sites are that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning

The PPTS goes on to say in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local planning authorities should:

- pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups)
- co-operate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities

- use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

Local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should (paragraph 159):

- prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries.
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (note 39) should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period which:
- meets household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change;
- addresses the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes, see note 34); and
- caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand;

Note 34 in the NPPF says - The planning policy for traveller sites sets out how travellers' accommodation needs should also be assessed (as cited above).

### **Local Policy Context**

At the Full Council meeting of 28 June 2011, North Lincolnshire Council adopted the Core Strategy DPD as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It will be used to guide the location and quantity of development in the area and as well as to determine planning applications to meet identified up to date needs. This follows an independent examination at which a Planning Inspector found the DPD to be "sound" subject to a number of changes.

The Core Strategy includes a criteria based policy that will be used to assess any future planning application for a Gypsy and Traveller site. The Inspector requested that the policy and ancillary text be amended to reflect that sites for Gypsy and Travellers may be allocated through the General Policies DPD and that this be demonstrated through an up to date needs assessment.

In 2007 the council proposed to consider Gypsy and Traveller sites through its Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD of the LDF and during its Issues & Options consultation it asked for potential sites

to be put forward as site options during a 'Call for Sites'. During this consultation no suitable sites were received.

As a result of a lack of potential site options in August – September 2008 the council undertook bespoke consultation for Gypsy and Traveller sites through its 'Housing & Employment DPD Additional Issues & Options for Gypsy and Traveller Sites', and identified 7 sites as potential options for the public and statutory agencies to consider. Specific consultation was also undertaken with North Lincolnshire's Gypsy and Traveller community to ensure they had a say as well. The sites identified were as follows:

- GT7-1 Falkland Way, Barton upon Humber.
- GT7-2 Falkland Way, Barton upon Humber.
- GT7-3 Caistor Road, Barton upon Humber.
- GT10-1 Station Road, Brigg.
- GT10-2 Station Road, Brigg.
- GT10-3 Station Road, Brigg.
- GT36-1 Normanby Road, Scunthorpe.

The consultation identified significant opposition from the public to the majority of the sites, and also significant opposition from the Gypsy and Traveller community to certain sites (particularly the three Brigg sites). The total number of objections was as follows:

- GT7-1: 52.
- GT7-2: 42.
- GT7-3: 33.
- GT10-1: 252.
- GT10-2: 236.
- GT10-3: 231.
- GT36-1: 64.

Opposition was also received from statutory agencies to certain sites. For example the local highway authority had issues with GT7-1 and GT7-2 in Barton upon Humber, and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust objected to all three sites at Brigg. Therefore based on this opposition from both the settled and Traveller community and statutory agencies the decision was taken by the council to remove all but two sites (GT7-3 Caistor Road, Barton upon Humber and GT36-1 Normanby Road, Scunthorpe) from the list of potential site options to be considered as deliverable sites in the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD. The GT10-1 Station Road site in Brigg is currently the subject of a pending town/village green application that is yet to be determined.

The next iteration of the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD, 'the Pre-submission Second Stage' in January 2009 therefore removed all but two sites (GT7-3 Caistor Road, Barton upon Humber and GT36-1 Normanby Road, Scunthorpe) from the next consultation period and re-opened the 'Call for Sites' process for both the settled and Gypsy and Traveller community.

On 29<sup>th</sup> August 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government announced its intention to replace it Circulars 01/2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' and 04/2007

'Planning for Travelling Showpeople' and replace it with new guidance. In November 2010 the council took the decision to put the allocation of Gypsy and Traveller sites on hold until this new guidance came out as it may have implications on the way sites are allocated.

The council is reviewing its strategy for meeting housing needs and has commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) that is currently underway. The results of the SHMA will be available in May 2012 and will be published on the council's website.

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to include the needs of gypsies and travellers in any housing strategy they produce. This assessment is designed to fulfil this requirement.

### **Assessment methodology**

This accommodation assessment has been carried out with reference to the University of Salford (Housing & Urban Studies) report March 2008 which in turn took into account the government's guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (2007).

The Salford University study included 57 interviews with gypsies and travellers from a range of tenures and communities as well as consultation with key stakeholders. The study team interviewed a number of stakeholders as well as sending a letter to all parish and town councils inviting their views on local issues. They received 9 responses of which three were detailed.

For this revised assessment an estimate of need has been prepared following Salford University's recommendations as set out below. The second stage of the assessment is to consult with all interested parties via our website, relevant newspapers, the council's local link offices, and visits to gypsies and travellers in the area.

The base data for this 2012 assessment is drawn from records maintained by the council's Infrastructure Services' assets and estate management unit together with details of planning applications that have been approved by the council. The asset and estate management unit has maintained records since 2008 on behalf of the council of all reports of gypsy or traveller encampments in North Lincolnshire as well as established developments whether they have planning permission or not. The circumstances and needs of each encampment or development have been established by visits by council officers so that records can be maintained of families resorting to the area or just passing through.

In compiling the assessment of need in 2012 a number of the assumptions set out in the 2008 Salford report have been shared. In particular:-

- consideration of new households likely to arrive from elsewhere – "It is felt that those Gypsies and Travellers who arrive from elsewhere will probably be balanced by those Gypsies and Travellers who move on from the area and leave vacancies" (paragraph 15.6, page 102).

- Inclusion of the Westrum Lane site outside Brigg as meeting demand in North Lincolnshire (paragraph 15.7, page 103)

The estimate of new household formation is based on comments by gypsy and traveller families made during assessment visits by assets and estate management staff.

### Assessment of need for residential pitches

The results of the assessment of need are set out in the table below. The table is based on data in the spreadsheet in Appendix 1.

#### Summary of estimated need for residential pitches

##### Current residential supply

1. Socially rented pitches	3
2. Private authorised pitches	45
3. Total authorised pitches	48

##### Residential pitch need 2012-2017

4. End of temporary planning permissions	0	
5. New household formation	4	
6. Unauthorised developments (Riverview 12, Graiselound 1)	13	
7. Movement between sites & housing	-1	
8. Closure of sites	0	
9. Unauthorised encampments	13	
10. Additional residential need	29	incl. 4 new households being formed

##### Additional supply 2012-2017

11. Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	0
12. Pitches with planning permission but not developed	0
13. New sites planned	0
14. Vacancies on socially rented sites (Manifold Road)	7
15. Supply 2012 – 2017	7

**16. Requirement for extra residential pitches 2012 - 2017** **22** (10 if Riverview given planning permission)

**17. Suggested requirement for extra transit pitches 2012 - 2017** **13**

**18. Requirement for plots for travelling showpeople 2012 -2017** **0**

Summary of need.



Table 1 above shows that there is a requirement for 22 new residential pitches. If the unauthorised Riverview site on Mill Lane receives planning permission this requirement drops to 10.

It should be noted that most of the pitches on the private sites are bought by the occupiers.

Whilst some private sites have planning permission for transit pitches the owners may not accept every family that presents itself.

### **Proposals**

The council proposes to consult gypsies and travellers and relevant interest groups as well as other local authorities regarding the accommodation needs identified in this assessment.

The consultation will invite interested parties to put forward their suggestions as how and where the identified need can be met.

Note has been taken of 2008 University of Salford report finding that the gypsies and traveller communities have a general aspiration for owner occupation. This aspiration has been confirmed during subsequent engagement with families since that time. The council is therefore open to constructive dialogue with those seeking to develop private sites.

## **North Lincolnshire**

### **Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment:**

#### **Responses from Gypsies and Travellers, Town and Parish Councils**

##### **Introduction**

A report was prepared in April 2012 updating the council's estimate of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs following the publication by the government of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites on 23 March 2012 which should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Framework published on 27 March 2012.

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires local authorities to:

- pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups)
- co-operate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities

This report sets out the initial results of engagement with Town and Parish councils on behalf of the settled as well as responses from Gypsies and Travelers themselves.

##### **Town and Parish councils**

Letters were sent to the 8 town councils in North Lincolnshire and the Scunthorpe Charter Trustees as well as 48 parish councils.

Written responses were received from Barton and Brigg Town Councils as well as the Scunthorpe Charter Trustees (copies attached).

None of the 14 parish councils that responded identified a need for Gypsy or Traveller sites in their area or where proposing to include this issue in any community or neighbourhood plans they were considering.

Barton Town Council's response referred to back to previous correspondence from January 2010 saying that Caistor Road was unsuitable for a gypsy site and that the local infrastructure was struggling to meet

demand. The letter also commented that ad-hoc illegal encampments by Gypsies and Travellers in the town had been totally unsuitable for their needs and those of local residents and businesses. No alternative sites were suggested.

Brigg Town Council's response confirmed comments made previously on the 3 Mill Lane sites, Station Road, Westrum Lane and Kettleby Lane. The letter went onto summary the views of the Town council as follows:

- They asked the council to act on the findings of the GTAA undertaken by Salford University
- Gypsies with a longstanding associations to Brigg should be given priority
- Any social housing pitch should be managed and allocated as any other social housing would be
- The Town Council consider the toleration of the unauthorized encampment on Station Road to be totally unnecessary
- The Town Council's view is that an additional site is required in Brigg irrespective of whether River View is granted planning permission
- Proper transit provision is required as a safeguard against further unauthorized encampments
- The Town Council wanted to continue to be involved in discussions on Gypsy and Traveller site and wanted North Lincolnshire Council to continue to work with West Lindsey District Council.

The Scunthorpe Charter Trustees response requested that a long term vision be developed for the Manifold Road site but made no suggestions as to other sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

### **Gypsy and Traveller responses**

The views of Gypsies and Travellers were sought via an on-line questionnaire and a paper questionnaire available via local libraries and local links. In addition some 50 questionnaires were delivered to Gypsy families on sites in North Lincolnshire by officers from the education welfare and property and estates services.

Eleven completed questionnaires were received during the 8 week consultation period. Follow up visits have so far failed to increase the number of responses despite families saying that they want to send in questionnaires.

Several families have been away from North Lincolnshire during the consultation period, for example at least 5 of the families on the River View site. There was only one roadside or unauthorised encampment in North Lincolnshire during the consultation period.

Six of the responses were made on-line.

A summary of the key responses is set out below.

- 5 respondents lived in Brigg, 4 in Scunthorpe, 1 in Kirton Lindsey, 1 did not say where they lived
- All said that they were local to the area & had lived in North Lincolnshire for more than 2 years
- 5 were living in houses or flats, 3 in static caravans and 3 in mobile caravans
- Of the caravan site dwellers 2 households were on unauthorised sites
- None of the families said they had a base elsewhere
- None of the families was planning to move (either within North Lincolnshire or to elsewhere)
- Only 3 of the families said they travelled and five families said they never travelled
- There is the likelihood that 2 new households will be formed by members leaving existing families within the next two years
- Two of the responding families contained someone over 60 and only 1 child of school age was listed.

The responses to all 33 questions in the survey are being compiled into a single spreadsheet to enable further analysis. If further questionnaires are returned they can be added to the spreadsheet.