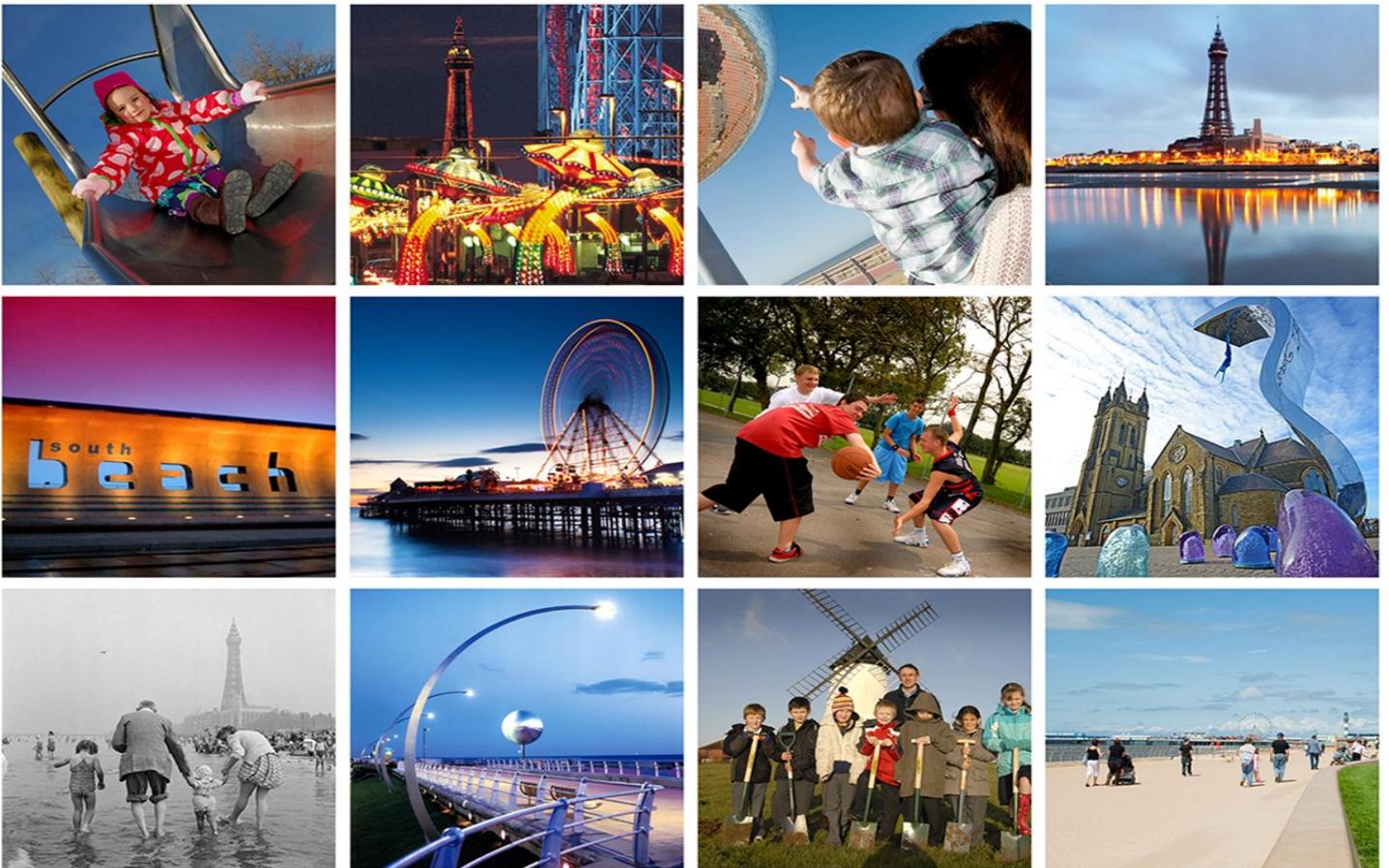


Blackpool Local Plan Part 2 Evidence Base

Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper (November 2019)

Blackpool Council



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Topic Paper has been produced to accompany the Publication version of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2 and it forms part of the evidence base. It sets out key information and data and explains the approach taken to gypsy/traveller and travelling showpeople provision.
- 1.2 The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 1.3 Local planning authorities are required to make provision for traveller sites to meet objectively assessed needs, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. Provision needs to be made for gypsies/travellers and travelling showpeople.
- 1.4 For the purposes of planning policy, "gypsies and travellers" are defined as:
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 dependants' educational or health needs, or old age have ceased to travel temporarily.
- 1.5 For the purposes of planning policy, "travelling showpeople" 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 grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily.
- 1.6 The Government's planning policy relating to travellers is set out in **Planning Policy for Travellers** (2015).

2. Local Policy Context

- 2.1 Policy CS16 of the Blackpool Core Strategy relates to traveller sites. It sets out criteria to guide land allocations for traveller sites and to provide the basis for determining planning applications for pitches and plots in Blackpool.
- 2.2 The Policy states that the target for new permanent and transit pitches and plots will be set out in the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management document, according to the most recent Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment agreed by the Council.

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments

- 3.1 The Fylde Coast sub-region encompasses the area covered by Blackpool Council and the district councils of Fylde and Wyre. The three Fylde Coast authorities commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to provide an understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople within the sub-region and for each of the three authorities. The GTAA final report was published in September 2014 and it set out pitch and plot targets for the sub-region and for the individual authorities.
- 3.2 However, in 2015 the Government changed the definition of travellers and this necessitated an update of the GTAA to be undertaken. ORS published an update of the GTAA for the three authorities in October 2016. This provided updated pitch and plot targets for gypsies/travellers and for travelling showpeople that met the revised definition.
- 3.3 In terms of gypsies/travellers, the updated GTAA identified a need for 5 additional pitches in Blackpool, no additional pitches in Wyre and identified an overprovision of 2 pitches in Fylde. Therefore, only 3 additional pitches were required over the whole sub-region. The need for additional pitches for gypsies and travellers that met the revised definition is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Additional need for pitches for gypsies/travellers 2016 - 2031

Local Authority	2016 - 21	2021 -26	2026 - 31	Total
Blackpool	5	0	0	5
Fylde	-1	-1	0	-2
Wyre	0	0	0	0
Total	4	-1	0	3

- 3.4 In Blackpool a pitch at Fishers Lane was originally included as part of the future supply, but further investigation indicated that it was occupied and not available. Therefore, the need for additional pitches in Blackpool rose from 5 to 6.
- 3.5 In terms of travelling showpeople, the updated GTAA identified a need for 5 additional plots in Blackpool, 19 additional plots in Wyre and no additional plots in

Fylde. Therefore, 24 additional plots were required over the whole sub-region. The need for additional plots for travelling showpeople that met the revised definition is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Additional need for plots for travelling showpeople 2016 - 2031

Local Authority	2016 - 21	2021 -26	2026 - 31	Total
Blackpool	4	1	0	5
Fylde	0	0	0	0
Wyre	17	1	1	19
Total	21	2	1	24

4. Addressing the Need

- 4.1 The 2016 GTAA indicated a need for 6 additional pitches for gypsies/travellers in Blackpool, taking account of the occupied pitch at Fishers Lane. No need was identified in Wyre or Fylde and in fact Fylde was identified as having an overprovision of 2 pitches.
- 4.2 In August 2018 Fylde Council also granted permission for a further 2 gypsy and traveller pitches. The Committee report for this application highlighted the unmet need for pitches in the sub-region and this was a factor that was taken into consideration when granting permission.
- 4.3 When considering the sub-regional need and taking into account the 4 additional pitches provided by Fylde Council, the outstanding sub-regional need for gypsies and travellers was 2 pitches. This was the level of need that was considered in the Local Plan Part 2: Informal Consultation Paper (January 2019). The approach taken was supported by Fylde Council in their representation to the Consultation Paper. They noted that the Part 2 document identifies a net need for two pitches, taking account of permissions granted in Fylde that provide for needs across the sub-region and that the document identifies a site suitable for the pitches required. They also supported the approach Blackpool Council had taken both to the calculation of the requirement and to the methodology for site selection and allocation.
- 4.4 In terms of travelling showpeople, the 2016 GTAA indicated a need for 24 travelling showpeople plots across the Fylde Coast sub-region. 5 of these plots were in Blackpool, 19 were in Wyre and there was no requirement in Fylde. Wyre Council is making provision for its need on a site that has been allocated in the Wyre Local Plan on the edge of Garstang. Blackpool Council considered a need for 5 plots in the Local Plan Part 2: Informal Consultation Paper.

Local Plan Part 2: Informal Consultation Paper

- 4.5 In January/February 2019 consultation took place on the Local Plan Part 2 Informal Consultation Paper. This proposed a site at Faraday Way for 2 gypsy/traveller pitches and 5 travelling showpeople plots in order to address the identified need. The identification of this site followed an extensive search for potential sites.
- 4.6 The Council considered sites with potential for traveller provision from a variety of sources and engaged with the traveller community based at the public Chapel Road site to get a better understanding of gypsy/traveller accommodation issues to help inform the work.
- 4.7 In accordance with national policy, potential traveller sites were assessed in terms of their availability, suitability and achievability.
- 4.8 For a site to be considered available, the landowners needed to be willing to release the site for traveller site development. This was a significant constraint to the identification of potential sites because a site that is suitable for traveller use is often also suitable for other uses, such as housing, which is often preferred by landowners.
- 4.9 Site suitability was assessed against criteria in Core Strategy Policy CS16 and in **Planning Policy for Travellers**. Policy CS16 states that a site must:
- Be suitable in that it provides a good living environment for residents, including access to essential infrastructure and services and does not cause an unacceptable environmental impact;
 - Be appropriately located taking into account surrounding uses, with preference given to brownfield land;
 - Not cause demonstrable harm to the landscape taking account of the cumulative impact of other sites in the vicinity;
 - Be of a size and scale appropriate to the size and density of the local settled community;
 - Have good access to transport links, public transport and be close to community facilities;
 - Have safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access from the highway and provide adequate space for the provision of parking, turning, servicing and storage;
 - Be well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches/plots, and between sites and neighbouring properties.
- 4.10 In terms of site suitability it was essential that sites had good access to transport links and that there was safe and convenient vehicular access from the highway and adequate provision for parking, turning and servicing. Mobile homes, caravans and the vehicles associated with travelling showpeople can be large and therefore land accessed off minor residential streets was not suitable. Easy access to the major road

network was also important to enable travel to shows, fairs and for other work purposes outside of Blackpool.

- 4.11 Sites also needed to be appropriately located in relation to surrounding land uses. It was important that there was scope to provide the landscaping and space required to provide privacy for both the occupiers and for neighbouring properties and to ensure that potential harmful impacts by noise, light, vehicular movements and other activities were minimised. It was also important that sites were able to provide a good living environment for the residents, which may include the elderly and children. Sites needed to be in reasonable proximity to shops, schools, jobs, health facilities and local services.
- 4.12 With respect to travelling showpeople, their sites are mixed use in nature and combine residential areas with areas for the storage and maintenance of associated vehicles and equipment. This has implications in terms of site suitability and site location. The need to store and maintain vehicles and equipment means that a buffer may be required between sites and existing residential properties to protect residential amenity. Consequently sites within, or adjacent to, employment areas may make suitable sites for travelling showpeople.
- 4.13 Gypsy/traveller sites are usually more residential in nature. Pitches typically include space for a mobile home/permanent caravan, space for a touring caravan, parking provision and an amenity building, which may include kitchen, washing and bathroom facilities.
- 4.14 A gypsy/traveller pitch requires approximately 0.035 ha and a travelling showpeople plot approximately 0.04 ha. Therefore, it was estimated that 2 gypsy/traveller pitches would require approximately 0.07 ha or more, depending on site constraints and facilities provided and 5 travelling showpeople plots would require approximately 0.2 ha of land. However, many sites of this size were not suitable for gypsy/traveller or travelling showpeople use, when assessed against the criteria in Core Strategy Policy CS16.
- 4.15 Achievability was assessed in discussion with the relevant landowner.
- 4.16 In terms of the site selection process, in the first instance, consideration was given as to whether there was potential to extend, or add capacity, to any of the existing gypsy/traveller sites or travelling showpeople yards. In 2016 there was one large public gypsy/traveller site in Blackpool and 6 smaller private sites. These are listed below:
- Chapel Road Public site – 26 pitches
 - Parkway Stables – 2 pitches
 - Kinross – 11 pitches
 - 8a Fishers Lane – 1 pitch
 - Applewood – 2 pitches
 - Holmefield – 2 pitches

- School Road – 1 pitch

- 4.17 There were also 2 travelling showpeople yards, with a single plot each, based at the rear of Roseway and the Midland Park Site.
- 4.18 The existing Council owned traveller site at Chapel Road was at capacity, but enquiries were made about the availability of the vacant land to the northwest of the site (accessed off Cornford Road) for a potential site extension. However, this land is allocated for employment purposes and the marketing agent confirmed that at the time of enquiry the land was not available for alternative uses.
- 4.19 In terms of the other sites, engagement with the traveller community indicated that they were private family sites that were not available to meet general needs, so these sites were not considered to be available.
- 4.20 The Call for Sites process involved asking local residents, businesses, landowners and developers to identify potential sites for development for a range of uses, with sites for gypsies/travellers and travelling showpeople specifically identified on the form. As part of this process, a landowner put forward a site in Marton Moss as a potential housing site, with gypsy/traveller use suggested as an alternative. However, site suggestions related to the Marton Moss area are being considered as part of the neighbourhood planning approach, rather than through the Local Plan Part 2. No site suggestions for traveller sites were received elsewhere in the Borough.
- 4.21 The Council identified a number of under-utilised plots of land in private ownership that could have had potential for gypsy/traveller or travelling showpeople use and contacted the landowners/agents about the availability of the land. As well as the land off Cornford Road, this included the site of the former gas cylinders off Clifton Road, but the landowners confirmed that the site was not available for traveller use. No additional land in private ownership was identified that would be available for gypsy/traveller or travelling showpeople use.
- 4.22 The Council also assessed land within its ownership for gypsy/traveller or travelling showpeople use because it has control over these sites and can influence their deliverability. However, it was very difficult to find potential sites, because they were often too small, had other uses planned for them (including other forms of housing) and were not available for gypsy/traveller use, or were not considered suitable for this use.
- 4.23 Taking into account the above and the competing demands on Council owned land, a site at Faraday Way in the north of the borough was the only land identified that was available and considered suitable to accommodate the identified gypsy/traveller and travelling showpeople need. This area of land was Council owned and was of sufficient size to meet the plot and pitch requirements. There was considered to be scope on this land to make separate provision for gypsies/travellers and for travelling showpeople.

- 4.24 The Council considered that the land had good road access off Faraday Way, which is a key part of Blackpool’s strategic road network linking the site to Amounderness Way and enabling access to the motorway network. The site could be well screened by existing trees and was not adjacent to residential properties, which should help to ensure that any potential harmful impacts by noise, light, vehicular movements and other activities are minimised.
- 4.25 This site was included in the Local Plan Part 2: Informal Consultation Paper as a potential site for a minimum of 2 gypsy/traveller pitches and 5 travelling showpeople plots. As part of this Paper the Faraday Way site was subject to public consultation during January and February 2019. The proposed site was subject to significant levels of objection.

Additional planning applications for gypsy/traveller and travelling showpeople use.

- 4.26 Since the Informal Consultation Paper was published, a number of applications for gypsy/traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots have been approved in Blackpool. The gypsy/traveller pitches approved are detailed in Table 3 below and the travelling showpeople plots approved are detailed in Table 4.

Table 3: Additional permissions granted for gypsy/traveller pitches

Application	Address	Proposal	Decision Date	Number of Pitches
18/0156	411 Midgeland Road	Use of land as a traveller caravan site for 2 caravans and 1 chalet	05/02/19	1
19/0094	Land adjacent to Greenacres, 161 School Road	Use of land as a residential traveller caravan site for 4 caravans (2 static caravan/mobile homes and 2 touring caravans)	31/07/19	2
Total number of pitches				3

- 4.27 Together, the 2 sites in Table 3 provide for 3 gypsy/traveller pitches, which exceeds the outstanding requirement for 2 pitches. Both sites were subject to conditions that they should not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, 2015. **Therefore, the identified need for gypsy/traveller pitches has been addressed.** In addition permission was granted for the intensification of the existing traveller site at School Road to accommodate the extended traveller family (increasing the total number of permitted caravans from 3 to 7). However, this proposal does not provide additional pitches for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, 2015, so has not been counted towards meeting the GTAA requirement.

Table 4: Additional permissions granted for travelling showpeople plots

Application	Address	Proposal	Decision Date	Number of Plots
19/0011	Brookeview, 516 Midgeland Road	Use of land as a travelling showperson's site for up to 5 caravans (3 static and 2 tourers)	02/04/19	3
16/0267	Land adjacent to Whalley Farm, Whalley Lane	Use of land as a travelling showperson's site for up to 5 caravans (3 static and 2 tourers)	09/09/19	3
Total number of plots				6

- 4.28 Together, the 2 sites in Table 4 provide for 6 travelling showpeople plots, which exceeds the outstanding requirement for 5 plots. Both sites were subject to conditions that they should not be occupied by any persons other than travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, 2015. **Therefore, the identified need for travelling showpeople plots has been addressed.**
- 4.29 The publication version of the Local Plan Part 2 does not propose to allocate the land at Faraday Way for gypsy/traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots because the identified need has been addressed in the sub-region through additional permissions granted in Blackpool and Fylde.
- 4.30 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy sets out criteria to provide the basis for determining any future planning applications for gypsy/traveller pitches or travelling showpeople plots that come forward in Blackpool.