



# CRAVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## TRAVELLER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY



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# 1. Introduction

## The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Craven District Council to undertake a Traveller Housing Needs Study.
- 1.2 The main objective of this study was to provide the Council with robust, defensible and up to date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies & Travellers and Showpeople in Craven during the period until 2028 in five year sections covering 2013-2018, 2018-2023 and 2023-2028.
- 1.3 The study also had a number of other objectives, including;
  - To propose targets for future provision in Craven to address the identified need
  - To provide the Council with the means to explain this evidence, and these proposed targets clearly, simply and effectively to a range of audiences, including the local community.

## Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

- 1.4 Decision making for policy concerning Gypsies & Travellers and 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 & Travellers and 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 & Travellers and Showpeople as part of their housing needs assessments. This study complies with this element of government guidance ;
  - Housing Act 1996 in respect of homelessness.
- 1.5 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Sections 61, 62) 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 This repealed the duty of local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.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.

- 1.6 The previous Labour Government guidance focused on increasing site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and encouraging local authorities to have a more inclusive approach to Gypsies and Travellers within their housing needs plans. 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 either as a separate study such as this one, or as part of their main Housing Needs Assessment.
- 1.7 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 DCLG 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.
- 1.8 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. This happened in 2012 with the publication of the CLG document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' in March 2012.

## Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

- 1.9 The document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' sets out the direction of government policy. Among other objectives, the new policy's 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.
- 1.10 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.*

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 six to ten and, where possible, for years eleven to fifteen
- 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.

- 1.11 A key element to the new policies is a continuation of previous government policies. This is that, while local authorities now have a duty to ensure a 5 year land supply to meet the identified needs for Traveller sites, if no need is identified they should set criteria based policies to assess potential sites which may arise in the future. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites notes on Page 3-4 that:

*Criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. 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.*

- 1.12 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

- 1.13 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)’.
- 1.14 This report contains 28 commitments to help improve the circumstances and outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers across a range of areas including (Page 6) :
- 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

- 1.15 The new Coalition Government policies also involve financial incentives for new pitch provision in the form of the New Homes Bonus. Gypsy & Traveller and Showpeople sites receive a New Homes Bonus of 6 times the Council Tax plus £1,800 per pitch provided. This is the equivalent of around £10,000-£15,000 per pitch.
- 1.16 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 providing 88 new or additional pitches and 179 improved pitches.
- 1.17 HCA have now confirmed allocations for £47m of future funding which will support 71 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. As of January 2012 a further £12.1m of funding was available for scheme outside of London and bidding will remain open until all the money is allocated.

## Research Methodology

- 1.18 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 Craven 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.
- 1.19 This 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.
- 1.20 This study also included extensive stakeholder engagement with council officers from Craven and neighbouring councils, members and other stakeholders. The aim of this engagement was to help understand the current situation in Craven, in particular to households not on known existing sites and also to discuss Duty to Cooperate issues with neighbouring councils.



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## 2. Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Population

### Sites in Craven

- 2.1 A mainstream Housing Needs Survey typically focuses upon the number of dwellings required in an area, and how many of these should each be provided by the public and private sector. The central aim of this study was to follow a similar format for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation requirements.
- 2.2 The main consideration 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 & Travellers. Throughout this study the main focus is upon how many extra pitches are required in Craven.
- 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 by 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. Therefore, public sites are a direct equivalent of social housing among bricks and mortar tenants. There are currently no public sites in Craven.
- 2.4 The alternative to public residential sites is private residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers. 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 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 & 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.

### Caravan Count

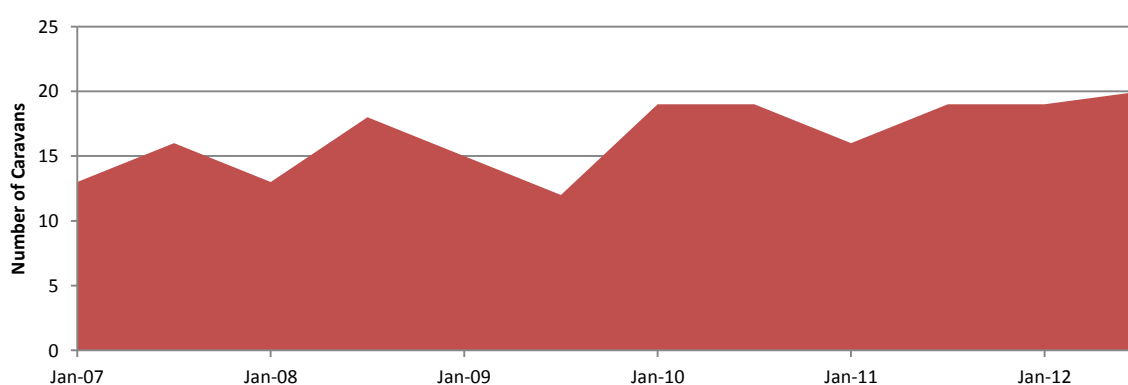
- 2.7 The best quantitative information available on the Gypsy and Traveller communities derives from a bi-annual survey of Gypsy and Traveller caravans which is conducted by each local authority in England on a

specific date in January and July of each year. This count is of caravans and not households which makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this. It must also be remembered that the count is conducted by the local authority on a specific day and that any unauthorised encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded. The count also only features those caravans the local authority is aware of. Therefore, it may not reflect all of the Gypsy and Traveller caravans in the authority.

- 2.8 Craven contains one private site with permanent planning permission and one with temporary permission. It also contains one long-standing site which does not have formal planning permission. The area contains no authorised Showperson's yard.

**Figure 1**

**Gypsy Caravan Count for Craven: Jan 2007 – July 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)**



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## 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 November and December 2012. Interviews were undertaken with officers from Craven District Council's Planning, Enforcement and Housing Departments. In order to understand the issues relating to unauthorised encampments in Gargrave, a representative from the Parish Council was interviewed. 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 North Yorkshire County Council and neighbouring local authorities also contributed to the study.
- 3.2 This section also draws upon the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment conducted by ORS on behalf of Selby District Council and Harrogate Borough Council during November and December 2012.
- 3.3 Interviews allowed interested parties to reflect and provide feedback on the general situation - as well as on how matters relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople are currently handled and perceived within Craven District Council and surrounding areas. Qualitative research of this type attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and is used to supplement the statistical information gathered through quantitative surveys of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities. In some cases, the information stakeholders share with interviewers will be factually incorrect or considered inappropriate; however, this section is based upon their perceptions rather than evidence corroborated by data sources.
- 3.4 The interviews also gave stakeholders the opportunity to share any information on and contacts for, Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople who live in bricks and mortar but would prefer site accommodation.
- 3.5 Due to issues surrounding data protection and, in order to protect the confidentiality of those who took part, this report represents a summary of the views expressed by interviewees.

### Main Policy Tools

- 3.6 Officers referred to national strategy and guidance and were not aware of local policies specifically related to the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities. Two officers referred to broader local policies relating to caravans and mobile homes but argued that these do not take into account the cultural needs of the Travelling communities.
- 3.7 The lack of a local policy has apparently been addressed through the work of the North Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group, with some officers referencing the delivery of training for local officers and the distribution of guidance on dealing with: encampments; when a family presents as homeless; the issues around bricks and mortar accommodation; and other relevant legislation.

## Accommodation: Authorised Sites and Unauthorised Encampments

- 3.8 When discussing authorised sites, officers were of the opinion that, in comparison to neighbouring areas, Craven has a small Gypsy and Traveller population and therefore the number of sites is low. Officers were aware that there are no County-owned sites in Craven and referred to the following privately-owned sites:
- Bold Venture - permission for eight pitches (not double) and one mobile home
  - Clay Barn, Burton in Lonsdale - private Site for one household (one tourer caravan and one mobile home)
  - The Paddock & Stables, Keighley Road, Skipton - nine pitches.
- 3.9 Few issues were raised by interviewees about the quality and conditions of the above sites - although, most reported that they have had no direct contact with them. One officer, who has been in contact with the sites, felt that living conditions are in need of improvement, but felt that there is little CDC can do to address the situation given that public funding is not available for private sites.
- 3.10 One officer referred to the Skipton site and claimed that the number of caravans identified through the bi-annual count is continually higher than permitted. However, the officer felt this is not due to overcrowding but the likelihood that families have more than one caravan per household.
- 3.11 When officers were asked their opinion on the extent to which the current level of supply meets demand they argued that, on the basis that CDC has not addressed the shortfall of seven pitches identified in the previous GTAA in 2007, a lack of accommodation is a possibility. Overall, officers were reluctant to make assumptions of unmet need and are awaiting the result of this study.
- 3.12 One officer did identify an example of where additional need was evidenced:
- I have dealt with an application of someone who wanted a settled site because of their personal circumstances and we have no sites in the District to direct somebody to. There has never been any movement on identifying sites. It is needed.*
- 3.13 The regularity and volume of unauthorised encampments was thought to be low, a view officers considered to be substantiated by the caravan count in July which identified no such encampments. When asked to provide an explanation for the low numbers, an officer argued that unauthorised encampments are uncommon because of the lack of connections to the area. Indeed, when there have been encampments, the Travellers have tended to move on to West Yorkshire because they have family in the Keighley, Bingley and Bradford areas. Officers also considered the predominantly rural nature of the area to be less attractive to Gypsies and Travellers. Overall, unauthorised encampments are apparently tolerated by Craven District Council, primarily due to the infrequency in which they occur.
- 3.14 One officer did, however, express some surprise that there isn't more traffic across the A684.
- 3.15 Although generally there are very few encampments, Craven experiences a steep rise in numbers before and after the Appleby Fair. One officer said that, besides this period, there are usually around two unauthorised encampments per year.
- 3.16 When discussing the increased number of encampments during the Appleby fair, one interviewee explained that Gypsies and Travellers move upwards along the A65 and through the district and then camp

overnight where a grass verge is wide enough – locations they felt are not ideal and, to a certain extent, dangerous. Overall, the favoured stopping point within Craven is Gargrave, which is discussed below.

- 3.17 In summary, officers perceived a need for additional provision. However, only one example was given in support of this view and overall the number of unauthorised encampments is small, with no unauthorised encampments present at the time of this study. However, although the amount of unauthorised encampments is low, officers recognised that there is a rise during the Appleby Fair and one has witnessed encampments parked in dangerous locations.

## Gargrave, Unauthorised Encampments and Transit Provision

- 3.18 When discussing the issues relating to unauthorised encampments in the Gargrave area, officers contributed and provided comment - but most of the background was provided by a representative of the Parish Council.
- 3.19 Historically, due to the geographical location and topography of the area, Gargrave has been a stopping point for Gypsies and Travellers en route to the Appleby fair. The village is situated around the River Aire, with village greens either side. A representative of Gargrave Parish Council explained how, traditionally, Travellers would use the river and grass for their horses. During the last 10 to 15 years, horse-drawn Travellers from the Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield areas were said to stop in the area (which was said to be at the 26 mile point) in order to rest their horses.
- 3.20 The representative went on to explain that efforts have been made by the Parish Council to enable Travellers to use this area without disruption to the settled community. For example, Travellers have been asked to leave their vehicles on the road rather than pulling them onto the grass, which is used by children for football games. Further, a designated area of long grass is left to cater for the horses and the Parish Council has opened public toilets from 8am until around midnight. The representative reported that there is an amicable relationship between the Travellers and the Gargrave community, with friendships forming between them.
- 3.21 However, the representative explained that, over recent years, groups with large caravans and motorised vehicles also stop in the area. These groups are said to have caused issues which have galvanised the local community into attempts to stop Gypsies and Travellers residing in the area. The representative highlighted some incidents that have caused problems, for example three years ago one group arrived on the May Bank Holiday and stayed until June 27th, allegedly chopping down trees, dismantling five cars on the green and cutting off the water supply which affected some residents.

- 3.22 The representative described another incident as follows:

*We had 100 horses left on our green without any supervision. It turned out that the police in Cumbria were using animal passports and they were checking them. Our North Yorkshire Police were not doing that, so whether these horses didn't have the proper documentation...but suddenly they were all left with us because the Travellers went up to Appleby. What do we do with all these animals? They came back after about a week and a half! It was mayhem! You don't need randy stallions chasing old women into the Co-op!*

- 3.23 The representative explained that such behaviour has led to preventative action being taken by the Parish Council, which took advice from Eden District Council and the Police and erected 2 foot high posts around

the two village greens during the Royal Wedding (2011) and the Jubilee (2012) to prevent the temporary occupancy of the sites by Gypsies and Travellers. This ensured that the settled community had access to these areas.

3.24 Despite the preventative measures, in the summer of 2012 Travellers reportedly burned the posts and set up an encampment and the Parish Council, for the first time and at its own expense, employed bailiffs to remove them. From the point of view of the Parish Council the process was effective and was said to have taken under 24 hours.

3.25 Considering the issues surrounding Gargrave, the Parish Council representative and CDC officers were of the opinion that providing temporary transit provision for around a month (before and after the Appleby Fair) would be a welcome answer to what seems to be an on-going issue:

*You would believe that there might be some way forward of delivering temporary sites that would meet the needs at a particular time of year. Fields could just be allocated for a couple of months and then return to their usual use.*

3.26 Officers felt that a temporary transit site would be mutually beneficial and would be accepted by both the settled and Traveller communities:

*From a human point of view I wouldn't fancy camping out on those verges with horses tied up and a load of kids right next to the busy A65 roads*

*If they are managed, it might be more appropriate because if there were any clean-up issues it would be easier to locate. The facilities can be better organised and it would be easier to manage.*

3.27 Although there was much support for transit provision, most officers were also aware of the inherent problems and constraints (the availability of land in particular) and suggested that this solution has been explored in recent years with little success:

*We don't have any land to do it. Because these village greens are right in the centre of the village with houses and cottages*

*We have asked farmers if they are interested, but because we are a valley it is very fertile ground and that time of year you are right in the middle of your growing period*

*I did look into that [transit provision] but it was highly complex. I spoke to someone about planning and the roads you'd have to go down to do it and it was difficult and also trying to get the land initially.*

3.28 Considering the aforementioned difficulties in Gargrave, when asked to what extent other land opportunities are available, most interviewees argued that it has to be as near to Gargrave as possible or Travellers would not use it. One officer did, however, put forward an alternative:

*Between Skipton and Hellifield that's the levelish bit – so they have come from the Pennines down to Keighley and then to us. It would have to be before Skipton I suppose, because of the topography of the land.*

3.29 Importantly, it was argued by its representative that the Parish Council can do little without the backing, support and funding of CDC. They also explained that, in future, Gargrave Parish Council will only have the

means to clear-up any mess left by Travellers or facilitate eviction via bailiffs - both resulting in considerable cost. A CDC officer revealed that, if a landowner could free up some land during the Appleby Fair, then the Council could look at resources and finance. It would be like a partnership approach to provide toilets, refuse and washing facilities.

- 3.30 Overall, taking the views of CDC officers and the representative of Gargrave Parish Council together, there is overwhelming support for the provision of a transit site during the Appleby Fair. However, it was acknowledged that, in order to meet the needs of the Travellers, the location would have to be as near as possible to the traditional stopping places. The problems locating it in this area are well-documented, but interviewees agreed that a long-term solution is required before: further preventative measures are employed; the settled community is further alienated; and there is no suitable stopping place for the Travellers.

## Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

- 3.31 One objective of a stakeholder consultation is to contact Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation but would prefer to live on a site. Interviewees were asked if they are aware of any such individuals and, if they are, to provide contact details. Interviewees were reminded of the Data Protection Act and were advised that they would need to seek the permission of the individual before providing any contact details to ORS, or alternatively that they could pass ORS' contact details on to anyone who wished to take part in a confidential interview. One officer offered to refer ORS to the housing advice database - although no contacts were received through this source.
- 3.32 Officers claimed to have been made aware of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation by other agencies:

*I am constantly being told about the high proportion of Gypsies and Travellers that are in bricks and mortar...we have a big hotel here and they do have a number of Gypsy weddings and funerals there.*

- 3.33 However, officers stressed that this is simply anecdotal evidence and discussed the difficulties involved in collating any reliable data to back it up. For instance, the homeless register records ethnicity, yet positive declaration was considered to be difficult as most Gypsies and Travellers fear discrimination if they reveal their background.
- 3.34 Interestingly, officers reported that some agencies have made them aware of Gypsies and Travellers who, despite living on a site, would prefer to live in bricks and mortar accommodation. Further, one officer claimed that Housing Officers have recently said that some Gypsies and Travellers have been asking for housing instead of pitches.

## Showpeople

- 3.35 Although fairs do occur in the area, the officers interviewed apparently have limited contact, and therefore experience, with Showpeople. In fact, only one officer reported seeing vehicles (not people) parked up in lay-bys for a couple of days. As a result, no issues were reported.

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## Site Location, Criteria and Constraints

- 3.36 When considering site location and criteria it was argued that there has been a tendency to tuck these things away in not very nice places. Overall, officers felt that, ideally, sites should be located a certain distance away from the community – but also that due consideration needs to be paid to the accessibility of services.
- 3.37 The availability of land for site provision was subject to debate amongst those interviewed. Some officers believed that the lack of suitable land is the main constraint, particularly when considering the amount of green belt land that exists. On the other hand, another officer felt that, considering its rurality, land availability should not be a major issue in Craven.
- 3.38 Due to their lack of contact with Gypsies and Travellers in the area, when discussing the potential location of permanent sites, officers felt unable to provide guidance based on what the communities preferred. Two officers referred to potential locations - a lay-by that runs from Skipton to Grassington (which had come to their attention by way of a pre-application discussion) and land near Loversdale, which is occupied by a couple of horses and ponies. Another officer argued that planners should look at each site on its own merits and explained that each one will have its own issues.
- 3.39 When discussing the potential location of a transit site, officers were of the opinion that proximity to the A65 and the Gargrave area would be desirable. It was argued that anywhere outside these stopping areas would not be used by Gypsies and Travellers.

## Community Relations

- 3.40 Generally, officers were of the opinion that there are no community relations issues. However, they argued that community tensions can arise when numbers of unauthorised encampments are at their highest. As aforementioned, issues in the Gargrave area have resulted in preventative measures being undertaken by the community to prevent Gypsies and Travellers using the area. Most officers considered this to be regretful, as the alleged behaviour stemmed from a minority and, in particular, those with the large vehicles.
- 3.41 Officers considered ways of improving community relations and argued that the provision of temporary transit sites could diffuse some of the anxiety felt when village greens are used. Some felt that working with Elected Members to generate awareness of the issues could also improve relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community. It was also noted that CDC's Leader has been very proactive and was fully involved with a previous encampment, even going out to visit the family.
- 3.42 Officers were also of the opinion that community tensions inevitably rise when new sites are proposed. However, as one officer explained, community opposition also occurs in the case of new housing developments. It was explained that people come here to retire and they don't want it to change.

## Consultation Methods

- 3.43 Stakeholders were unaware of any regular consultation activities with Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople. A few officers were under the impression that consultation is undertaken by Horton Housing and Gateway. In fact, one officer facilitated a joint session with Horton Housing looking at adult social care.



## The Future

- 3.44 When asked what they envisage will happen over the next fifteen years, officers argued that this will depend upon the findings of this GTAA.
- 3.45 Overall, officers' perceptions of the future were negative and they were of the opinion that, on the basis of past activity in this area, the lack of action by the District Council to address the shortfall in the 2007 GTAA (7), and the limited amount of planning applications/interest, very little will change:

*I've come to the conclusion that we will be forever in this position and nobody will make any progress*

*I guess there will probably still be a shortfall. There won't be that many sites coming forward. We have enough trouble getting members to accept development sites just for housing or employment. I think sites like this tend to be a bit more difficult. I don't think Members would be easy to sway, but then again we haven't had any discussions.*

## Cross-Boundary Issues

- 3.46 Interviews were achieved with officers representing North Yorkshire County Council and 9 surrounding local authorities, including<sup>1</sup>:

Selby District Council

Harrogate Borough Council

Hambleton District Council

Lancaster City Council

Leeds City Council

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Richmondshire District Council

Ryedale District Council

South Lakeland District Council.

- 3.47 In general, interviewees representing the North Yorkshire areas (including CDC) could not identify any clear cross-boundary issues and there are said to be different circumstances and varying levels of need across the area:

*There are a number of unauthorised encampments across the County and some Districts have more than others. York, Selby and Hambleton, they are the areas with the larger Gypsy population and then Harrogate and Ryedale have their population with Craven, Scarborough and Richmondshire with less.*

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<sup>1</sup> Two of these interviews were undertaken as part of the Hambleton GTAA and were updated for the purpose of this study.

- 3.48 When considering the transient Traveller population movement, a few interviewees raised the issue of one family that travels across North Yorkshire on a continual basis. Deciding who has responsibility for the family is apparently a complicated issue that can prompt some cross-border discussion.
- 3.49 In general, the area's main travelling route is the A65 and movement is thought to be influenced by: historic ties; movement to and from the horse fairs in Appleby, Darlington and Scarborough; traditional stopping points; and holidays. When asked to describe the aforementioned travelling patterns, interviewees stressed that they do not have that level of information and cannot make informed assessments on the extent to which this happens. For that reason, the majority felt that improving the exchange of information is a key current and future priority.
- 3.50 In fact, the North Yorkshire Steering Group has been set-up to address this issue and is thought to have made some headway in improving the availability of information:

*We have plotted all the sites etc. and all the stopping places surrounding and across North Yorkshire. We are now going to plot this on a map that can be updated every Gypsy and Traveller count.*

- 3.51 Considering the needs of Gypsies and Travellers who are looking to settle in the area, one interviewee felt strongly that information relating to available accommodation would be beneficial:

*It could be that other local authorities have vacant pitches where we could redirect people. This may already be occurring through Horton Housing. If there are vacant pitches or redevelopment in other authorities we may be able to direct some people on our waiting lists to them.*

- 3.52 The majority of interviewees referred to the work being done on the development of a single protocol for managing unauthorised encampments. Having different policies and approaches to moving families on was thought to create conflict and inconsistency – and the benefits of a consistent County-wide approach were considered many:

*We've been trying to get a more coherent approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments because that's one of the trigger points for potential intervention*

*The Districts don't actively try to move them over to another District and we are working to try to get to a point where we've got one consistent policy on unauthorised encampments across the County and City of York*

*A co-ordinated approach would be better because, if there is public interest, it is better to be done in a rounded way. It makes sure that the welfare assessments are delivered in a consistent way. So, when somebody rings up there will be some set procedure to follow instead of some random act. Ideally what we are working towards is getting a Gypsy and Traveller contact within the Local Authorities who will be the co-ordinator for the issues because what you get is a load of people ringing up customer services and they will direct it to a particular department, but then that could be environmental health, planning, housing or homelessness and everyone has a different stance on the matter - and that notification could get a different response depending on which department picks it up.*

- 3.53 One officer, however, felt that despite the necessity of a County-wide approach and the positive developments that have resulted, sustaining the work of the Group is an on-going challenge:

*There is a need for Districts and County to work together; so much overlaps, welfare needs, and health and so on. But it's getting more difficult as finances get more difficult- people withdraw from collaborative work to minimal requirements. Collaborating and putting resources together makes them much more effective.*

- 3.54 Interviewees in North Yorkshire argued that greater efforts are needed to strengthen communication with neighbouring areas, particularly regarding information on the patterns of unauthorised encampments:

*We have not talked to Durham, Teeside or York regarding those issues – we may have been a bit insular in what we have been doing. The main part would be the communication on the unauthorised side of encampments; there are travelling routes from the south up to the north through to Appleby fair. By talking to Durham, who have a lot of provision during the fair, they open up various sites for temporary usage. If we worked closer to Durham and we had people stopping on our highways and they were in reasonable distance to Durham and it was open we could redirect them to there*

*The A65 is mainly in the Craven district but it is also through the Yorkshire Dale National Park - that is another planning authority (although in Craven district) so joint agreements will need to be made.*

- 3.55 Some officers supported improving and strengthening communication with West Yorkshire, in particular Bradford, as it is thought that migration occurs from these areas:

*Chatting to a couple of Travellers that have stopped they've just told me where they're from and they're all from West Yorkshire and Bradford*

*We have two occasions where Travellers have come from there [Bradford].*

- 3.56 An officer in West Yorkshire<sup>2</sup> shared this view and argued that Traveller-related issues are difficult to understand within a vacuum. As a result, they felt that North and West Yorkshire need to establish a basis for communication:

*Because I don't have contact with any officers in those authorities I don't know what is happening there...I would assume they have a number of unauthorised encampments and have similar issues to us - for instance a need for additional pitches - the same as in other areas. I think it would make sense for cross-border working to happen.*

- 3.57 In summary, officers suggested:

Improving the exchange of information (including travelling patterns and the availability of accommodation) across North Yorkshire

Continuing the work of the North Yorkshire Steering Group

Strengthening communication with neighbouring areas, including:

Durham

Teeside

<sup>2</sup> The Local Authorities of West Yorkshire (Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Kirklees and Calderdale) meet on a quarterly basis. Issues discussed at the meetings include: site issues (three have sites); any commonalities; unauthorised encampments; movement; trends; and sharing best practice

York

Yorkshire Dale National Park

Establishing a relationship with the West Yorkshire Local Authorities.

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## 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 Craven. The interviews were conducted within the interviewee's place of residence in December 2012. All three known sites in Craven were visited and the outcome of this process is detailed below.

#### Site 1

- 4.2 This site is the only one in Craven with permanent planning permission. The site has permission for 8 single caravan pitches and one mobile home. The site occupied by the owner and their immediate family and other unrelated households who are renting the remaining pitches. While the site does not include any transit pitches a number of the residents are of a transitory nature with household moving on and off the site on a regular basis.
- 4.3 The site visit indicated a number of very specific issues relating to this site. It was confirmed that the site regularly turns down requests from households outside the area to live on it. However, this wasn't seen as a problem because most of the households are not known to the owners and they would not necessarily let pitches to them even if they had capacity. Therefore, the site is not looking to expand capacity for more pitches.
- 4.4 No-one on the site wished to live on a public site in Craven. One person on the site would wish to develop and manage a private site in Skipton, but currently could not afford to do so. They have a specific plot of Council owned land on Keighley Road in Skipton that they would like to develop, but it is currently not for sale and they also accept that they could not afford to buy it if the Council choose to sell it. Therefore, they anticipate remaining on their existing site for the foreseeable future.
- 4.5 It was also noted that the requirement that each pitch only have one caravan was very restrictive. It was argued that each pitch has space for more than one caravan. However, the time and cost involved in making planning applications mean that owner will not be seeking to formally change this permission.
- 4.6 The site contains relatively few children. Those children present were living in households who were renting pitches and may not necessarily remain in the area for a long period of time. Therefore, the site is unlikely to yield any new household formation in the near future.

#### Site 2

- 4.7 This site is occupied by the owner, who has been a long-term resident. While the site does not have formal planning permission, it has been in continuous use without enforcement action for a long enough period of time that formal planning permission will not be sought.

- 4.8 The site owner is the only permanent resident, but a number of family members frequently stay at the site for extended periods of time. However, none wish to develop their own site in Craven in the foreseeable future. Therefore the site cannot be anticipated to generate any future requirement for additional pitches in Craven

### Site 3

- 4.9 This site has a temporary planning permission for one pitch, which runs until 2015. 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.
- 4.10 Given that the planning permission for this site will expire in 2015 we have considered this site as likely to generate a need for one pitch at the time.

## 5. Future Site Provision

### Site Provision

- 5.1 This section focuses on the extra site provision which is required in Craven currently and over the next 15 years by 5 year segments. This time period allows for robust forecasts of the requirements for extra provision based upon the evidence contained within this survey.
- 5.2 This section concentrates not only upon the total extra provision which is required in the area, but whether this provision should be in the form of public or private sites, in which areas of Craven the provision is required and whether is there a need for any transit site / emergency stopping place provision.
- 5.3 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 the key factor in any calculation such as this is to compare the amount of extra site space which will become available with a prediction of the need for extra space on sites.

### Current Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision

- 5.4 There are currently 8 permanent pitches on a private site in Craven with a further one on a site with temporary planning permission. There is also one pitch on a long-standing unauthorised site.
- 5.5 The next stage of the process is to assess how much space is, or will become, available on existing sites. The main ways in which space is/will be freed are:
  - 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.
- 5.6 Currently, all authorised site pitches are occupied, so there is no available space and no additional pitches are expected to be granted permission.
- 5.7 Some turnover of pitches does occur on the authorised private site, but no household is currently seeking to leave the area. If a pitch does become vacant it can usually be filled quickly by a household who are living outside of Craven.
- 5.8 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. The existing main private site in Craven contains a number of older persons living on their own. If these household do dissolve then the pitches they occupy are unlikely to remain empty. Instead they will pass to family members or will be let to households from outside the area.

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## Additional Site Provision

- 5.9 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are likely to be seeking pitches in the area. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:
- seeking permanent site accommodation in the area
  - on unauthorised encampments
  - on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected to be granted
  - new households expected to arrive from elsewhere
  - new family formations expected to arise from within existing households
  - in housing but with a need for site accommodation.

## Current Planning Applications

- 5.10 Craven currently has no outstanding planning application for new sites in the area. However, it does have one sites where the planning permissions will expire in 2015. While no contact was made with this household during the household survey, current indications are that the household on this site would wish to convert their temporary permission into permanent permission. This equates to one pitch.

## Current Unauthorised Developments and Encampments

- 5.11 As noted earlier, Craven contains only one unauthorised site. While the site does not have formal planning permission, it has been in continuous use without enforcement action for a long enough period of time that formal planning permission will not be sought. Therefore, we have not counted it as being need in this assessment.

## In-migration from Other Sources

- 5.12 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 Craven from anywhere in the country.
- 5.13 The main private site in Craven regularly turns down requests for space from households currently outside of Craven, but the owner have no desire or resources to expand it. While one site member would wish to develop their own private site to let to others they accept that this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. Therefore there is no clear evidence that there will be a high number of in-migrant households to Craven beyond those who will occupy pitches vacated by those leaving the area or through the dissolution of households.
- 5.14 Therefore, rather than assess in-migrant households as being part of the needs for 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 site. It is important for the authority to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential sites which do arise.



## New Household Formation

- 5.15 It is recognised that an important group for future pitch provision will be older children who form their own households. The main private site in Craven contains relatively few children and it is likely that it will see as many household dissolutions as formations in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the owner of the long standing unauthorised site in Craven has many children and grandchildren, but none currently plan to live permanently in Craven.
- 5.16 Therefore, this study does not anticipate household formation amongst the local population of Craven will generate a requirement for additional pitches.

## Bricks and Mortar

- 5.17 No interviews took place with households in bricks and mortar. The 2011 Census identified a total of 54 Gypsy and Traveller persons living in Craven. Given that the pitches on-site will account for much of this population, this would indicate that the population in bricks and mortar is very low.

## Overall Needs

- 5.18 The estimated extra site provision that is required now and in the near future for Craven will be one pitch to address the requirements of the household on a site with temporary planning permission. The main private site in Craven is likely to see a balance of in and out migrants and formation and dissolutions and hence is unlikely to generate additional need while the only unauthorised site does not require planning permission. There is no evidence of any household wishing to live on a public site in Craven.
- 5.19 The site with a temporary planning permission falls within the Northern area of Craven for planning purposes and therefore that is where the need will arise.

## Transit/Emergency Stopping Site Provision

- 5.20 There is currently no transit site provision in Craven. Transit sites serve a specific function of meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who are visiting an area or who are passing through on the way to somewhere else. They do not have a function in meeting local need which must be addressed on permanent sites.
- 5.21 Therefore, the key issue in determining if there is a requirement for transit site provision is whether there is evidence of sufficient travelling through the area. We would also note that transit sites are an area where cross boundary working could prove to be particularly effective and that the transit needs of Gypsy and Travellers visiting North Yorkshire are an issue which should be considered at a more strategic level.
- 5.22 As noted in the interviews with stakeholders, there is a particular issue around Gargrave at the time of the Appleby Horse Fair as it is a traditional stopping off point. Addressing this does not require a permanent transit site in the area and historically the situation has been resolved by informal measures in the area. However, more recently it appears that relationships between the local population and those travelling to the Appleby Horse Fair have become more strained. It therefore may require a more formal management of the situation with a higher level of involvement from the District Council to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

## Showpersons

- <sup>5.23</sup> There is currently no authorised Showperson’s yard in Craven. At the time of the survey there were no planning applications or unauthorised yards in the area so there is no immediate need. Again, it is important for Craven to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential Showperson’s yards which do arise.

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## 6. Conclusions

### Introduction

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

### Gypsy and Traveller Future Site Provision

#### Current and future need

- 6.2 Based upon the evidence presented in the preceding chapters, the estimated extra provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers in Craven is one pitch on a private site in the Northern area of the district. This requirement is for a family who will see their temporary planning permissions expire in 2015.
- 6.3 A further conclusion is that there is no evidence of a requirement for a public site in Craven. The study also found no evidence of any deficiencies in service provision for any of the Gypsy and Traveller families.
- 6.4 While unauthorised encampments do arise in Craven, there is no clear evidence of sufficient travelling through the area to justify the development of a permanent transit site. However, there is a particular issue around Gargrave at the time of the Appleby Horse Fair. Recently it appears that relationships between the local population and those travelling to the Appleby Horse Fair have become more strained and it may require a more formal management of the situation with a higher level of involvement from the District Council to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

### Showmen

- 6.5 There is no evidence of extra provision being necessary for Showmen or Circus Performers in the future. Again it is still important for Craven to have criteria based planning policies in place in the event of someone seeking to develop a new Showmen's site in the area.