

### **Policy Approach for Travelling Showpeople**

- The policy will need set out Travelling Showpeople Pitch Provision requirements by district for sites (Yards).
- Outcome from the Options Consultation and associated workshops was overwhelmingly in support of Option 3

*Working with sub-regional partnerships and the Showman's Guild agree a more balanced share of meeting need across districts, reflecting a wider range of factors other than solely the 'need where it arises' basis. This would see pitch provision distributed to meet the requirements for Travelling Showpeople, so that they had the same chance to enjoy equal (or comparable) access to services and facilities, social and economic opportunities, as the settled community, and thus contribute towards community cohesion and sustainable communities.*

- Actual numbers and distribution for pitch provision will not exactly replicate outcomes of published the sub regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) given the acknowledged constraints \ caveats \ implications of the 'need where it arises' basis of the CLG methodology which has been used in all the sub regional GTAA's.
- Over the next few months, 4NW is proposing to have face to face dialogue, on a sub regional basis, with both Local Authorities (planning and housing professionals) and representatives from the Showman's Guild to hopefully try and reach consensus on the scale and distribution of new pitch provision.
- 4NW will also explore whether the policy approach also needs to set out any criteria relating to quality, locational or site requirement issues.

### **Recommendations from Sustainability Appraisal**

Option 1 promotes allocating pitches throughout the region on a 'need where it arises' basis. Currently Travelling Showpeople are not evenly spread throughout the region, but are concentrated around the Manchester area. Option 1 will therefore reinforce this unequal distribution. Option 3 will distribute new pitches for Travelling Showpeople throughout the region in a more 'balanced' fashion.

There is certainly potential for the Option 3 approach to impact upon the lives and, in particular the livelihoods, of Travelling Showpeople. It is highly likely that Travelling Showpeople have chosen to concentrate around the Manchester conurbation for logistical reasons, such as the need to have good access to the major road network and the pattern of fun fairs across the region throughout the year, as well as perhaps for reasons of being close to friends and family. If this is indeed the case then Option 3 will have the potential to jeopardise the viability of the business that is key to their economic well-being, as well as perhaps affect the strength of the Travelling Showpeople community.

It is likely that there would be benefits to the approach promoted by Option 3. In particular, benefits would be felt in those parts of the region that currently have a high concentration of Travelling Showpeople pitches as these areas would avoid any further concentration of pitches(as is promoted by Option 1). However, it is not entirely clear what problems might be experienced within areas with a concentration of Travelling Showpeople. There could be localised environmental, community or economic impacts, including possibly a fear of crime, but there is no clear evidence to support this. Furthermore, it is difficult to predict with any certainty negative effects on the environment or non travelling economy / community associated with Option 1 (or benefits associated with Option 3) because there might be the

possibility that Option 3 could lead to an increase in the number of unauthorised pitches. There is no evidence available currently on the prevalence or impacts associated with unauthorised Travelling Showpeople pitches. However, it is possible that Travelling Showpeople could reject the offer of authorised pitches spread around the region and choose unauthorised sites instead. This potential effect remains uncertain, but what is certain is that unauthorised pitches are much more likely to negatively impact upon the receiving environment, economy and communities.

A benefit to Travelling Showpeople resulting from an Option 3 approach is the possible increased potential for identification of suitably large sites to accommodate Travelling Show people's vehicles and equipment and to address localised issues of access to sites for large numbers of heavy vehicles. It might also be argued that perpetuation of the current uneven balance may not be in the interests of the Gypsy and Traveller community in terms of their equal access to services and opportunities.

However, it is not clear that promoting an even distribution of Travelling Showpeople pitches, as opposed to a distribution of new pitches that mirrors the current distribution, would directly result in increased access to services and opportunities. This is because the number of Travelling Showpeople within a given area will always be relatively small in comparison to the settled community, even if the number of Travelling Showpeople in an area were to increase (Option 1).

However, the key point in terms of increasing access to services and opportunities is that new pitches must come forward quickly and in areas where there are acceptable relations between the Travelling Showpeople and settled communities. If Option 1 is the Option most capable of delivering new pitches in this fashion then its major benefit will be the fact that it will address one of the key sustainability issues related to Travelling Showpeople, namely access to services and opportunities.

Option 3 promotes working with the Showman's Guild to determine the exact regional allocation. However, it also promotes starting from the premise that pitches will be distributed in a 'balanced' fashion, and so it is questionable whether any further decisions still to be made will represent anything other than fine-tuning of sub-regional allocations. Option 3, to be successful, would need to be achieved via genuine engagement with individual Travelling Showpeople families, including hidden households, as well as via identification of sites that do provide access to services and facilities. This would require strong co-operation between sub-regional authorities and would need to proceed on the basis of an agreement of how to determine what is considered equitable access to services, facilities, social and economic opportunities. These measures would provide some safeguards against the risk of political negotiations between sub-regional authorities forming the real basis for site allocations under this option.

Option 2 is an intermediary option, and the sustainability effects predicted for Option 2 reflect this. It will still require some Travelling Showpeople to live in parts of the region that are a long way from where they would ideally choose to live, with the effect that some Travelling Showpeople could become isolated from the rest of the community (many of whom would remain concentrated around Manchester. Option 2 could result in particular potential for effects to be felt by individual families, whilst Option 3 would be more likely to result in more insidious impacts on the regions Travelling show people community or communities.

Requiring some Travelling Showpeople to relocate to parts of the region that are a significant distance from where they would ideally choose to live would need to be done with a great deal of precaution to ensure that such families would not become isolated from the wider Travelling Showpeople community. If Option 3 is pursued it will be important that a robust strategy is developed for addressing the local political challenges involved in pursuing this approach.

### **Supporting text**

The policy will be drawing its justification from:

- Evidence Base - sub regional GTAA's have now been completed in all sub regions. 4NW has been given permission to and has published on its RPB technical website, the reports for:
  - Cheshire Partnership area
  - Cumbria
  - Lancashire
  - Merseyside

In addition we have been supplied with a copy of the recently completed Greater Manchester GTAA.

- Survey by Showman's Guild of its members travelling patterns and locational preferences in the region.
- Outcome of RSS Options consultation and workshops.
- Outcome of Sustainability Appraisal

### **Linkages with other policies in RSS**

Policy DP1 – Spatial Principles

Policy DP2 – Promote Sustainable Communities

Policy DP5 – Manage Travel demand; Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility

Policy L3 – Existing Housing Stock & Housing Renewal

Policy L4 – Regional Housing Provision

Policy L6 – Affordable Housing

### **Linkages to other strategies**

- Local Development Documents will identify how the provision figures set out in RSS will be delivered via site allocations \ criteria based policy approaches.
- Provision of Travelling Showpeople Pitches should be seen as part of work to tackle the wider homelessness issue and wider accommodation requirements (including the issue of overcrowding on existing sites).
- Links into the delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy in seeking to improve the quality and sustainability of the accommodation offer.

### **Monitoring**

- Need to work with sub regions and Showmans Guild to ensure that GTAA's are reviewed and kept up to date on a regular basis in the future.

### **Implementation**

- Local Development Documents will identify how the provision figures set out in RSS will be delivered via site allocations \ criteria based policy approaches.