

Submission from roadside families - Compiled by Connors, Maloneys and Herons at current camp. 29/11/10

*We would like this submission to represent the majority of roadside families who are local to Leeds, please take time to read these key points we would like to share with the Scrutiny Board.*

- Although it is a hard life living roadside with the constant threat of eviction, feeling the coldness of the winter and lack of running water and basic facilities a caravan is where we were born and where our families have lived for many generations, there is no question that we could make a house a home.
- The main thing that adds to our difficulty is the evictions we have to go through; weekly our children arrive home from school not knowing where they are going to sleep that night.
- Many people on the camps are in ill health with poor access to doctors, one man on the camp is recovering from a brain haemorrhage, another has bad angina there are also children who need to attend doctors regularly.
- We could identify 12-15 families who, right now, need a safe place to stay, they are Leeds people who intend to stay in Leeds 11 out of 12 months of the year.
- We would propose a small site for those people or more ideally two smaller sites of 6-7 pitches each to be the solution, we do not think this would stop out of town Travellers coming to Leeds but do feel it would reduce numbers (and open the way for negotiated stopping for them).
- Until a site could be built we ask for negotiated stopping places; we propose a piece of land ideally with a tap be located in an appropriate part of the city (refer to map) where each family could put a deposit down for a toilet each and pay for them as well as paying for skips or just on normal refuse collection routes with wheelie bins.
- We would ask that mistakes made in the creation of Cottingley Springs are learnt from and small, more manageable, less isolated sites are created.
- We ask for open and honest dialog with senior figures in the council and offer an open door to discuss this solvable problem

*We would also like to give some examples of positive action from families in the camps in recent months, using the camp on Armley Gyatory for example two people (one a Traveller from Wakefield and one a non-Traveller) were stopped by people on the camp from tipping commercial waste on the site. Secondly, although we know there were complaints about this camp there was also a lot of positive interaction that went on, reports of settled children knocking on the doors of the caravans asking if the children were coming out to play and parents of those children calling in for cups and having very positive conversations.*