

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

24 May 2010

Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

Cabinet Member: Councillor Toby Sturgis – Waste, Property and Environment

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

The new Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Gypsies and Travellers. Wiltshire Council now needs to take the opportunity to interlock these services, develop a strategy and put in place an action plan to provide an improving, integrated and supportive approach to engaging with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

A project group was formed in September 2009 of strategic and frontline officers from across the organisation, with representatives from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire PCT.

The project group defined the strategy aims and objectives for next 5 years, and an action plan for the next 12 months in order to achieve strategy aims and objectives.

*The overall aim of Gypsy and Traveller Strategy is that by 2015, service provision and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will **be strengthened, coordinated and in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities**, with the needs of those communities balanced against the needs of the settled population.*

The Environment Select Committee has been overseeing the progress of the project, and a representative from the group has been working with the project group. At the Environment Select Committee meeting on the 2nd of March 2010, the Committee recommended that Cabinet accept and adopt the new approach outlined in the strategy, and commit to its implementation.

The purpose of this report is to ensure Cabinet awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy, and to gain Cabinet approval of and commitment to a change of approach for service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Proposal

The Gypsy and Traveller strategy project group propose that Cabinet;

1. Note the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy and action plan
2. Approve and commit to the aims and objectives of the strategy

3. Approve delegated authority to the Service Director for Housing to oversee the next steps and potential staffing implications of the project, in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for Gypsies and Travellers, and in consultation with Human Resources.

Reason for Proposal

Service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities is spread across the organisation, and changes are now needed to interlock these services, develop a strategy and put in place an action plan to provide an improving, integrated and supportive approach to engaging with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

This strategy provides a framework to change the approach to service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities in order to achieve the aims of the strategy.

Members play a key part in the service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities, so Cabinet commitment to a change of approach is needed to ensure the success of the strategy.

Mark Boden, Interim Chair of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy project group, Corporate Director, Department of Neighbourhood and Planning

Mayur Bhatt, Project Advisor for the Gypsy and Traveller strategy, Equality Manager

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to ensure Cabinet awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy, and to gain Cabinet approval of and commitment to a change of approach for service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Background

2. The need for a Gypsy and Traveller strategy

- 2.1. Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Gypsies and Travellers. In September 2009 the Corporate Director for EDPH commissioned a project to look at this issue in order that these services can be interlocked, and an action plan can be put in place to provide an improving, integrated and supportive approach to engaging with Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 2.2. A project group was formed in September 2009 of strategic and frontline officers from across the organisations, with representatives from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire PCT.
- 2.3. The Environment Select Committee has been overseeing the progress of the project, and a member of the Committee has been working with the strategy project group. At their meeting on the 2nd of March, the Environment Select Committee recommended the acceptance and adoption of the approach and commitment to the strategy to Cabinet.
- 2.4. During 2010 consultations will be held about the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Planning Document (DPD) that will set out potential land for use as Gypsy and Traveller sites. This is a key piece of work that will be coordinated with the implementation of the strategy over the coming months.

Next steps

- 2.5. The delivery of coordinated and needs focused services and the engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will require internal commitment and dedication to a change of approach to the method, quality and style in which we plan and deliver services. This change of approach will also need a drive towards creating a refreshed mindset and culture within the council overall, so that we promote inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller communities in line with our overall aims to create strong and resilient communities
- 2.6. Public sector service providers, including Wiltshire Council, need Gypsy and Traveller communities, and settled communities, all have rights and responsibilities to each other. This strategy is the starting point for the Council to provide low cost, customer focused services that support the creation of resilient communities, whilst balancing the needs of both Gypsy and Traveller, and settled communities.
- 2.7. In order to effectively support and achieve the aims of the strategy, commitment and buy in to a change of a approach is needed from across the public sector. Without this, real change that impacts on the lives of Gypsy and Traveller communities can never hope to be achieved.
- 2.8. Member commitment to a new approach to service delivery and engagement is an essential component of a change in approach to Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 2.9. Partner organisations and thematic delivery partnerships will be asked to consider the strategy in June, following Cabinet consideration of this paper and the strategy.

Introduction of the strategy

- 2.10. There are two phases in order to achieve the aims outlined below in the strategy. This 2010 strategy sets out the current situation in service delivery for Gypsy and Traveller communities, and a plan of actions to begin achieving the strategy aims, to gather information and to work with both Gypsy and Traveller, and settled, communities to understand what they want and need from public sector services.
- 2.11. Frontline officers, as well as voluntary and community sector partners and other stakeholders will be involved in this process to ensure that by April 2011, a clear picture can be built up of the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and that any gaps in our knowledge have been filled.
- 2.12. Voluntary and community sector partners and other stakeholders will be involved in this process to ensure that by April 2011, a clear picture had been built up of the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and that any gaps in our knowledge have been filled.

- 2.13. Phase two of the strategy will use the data that is collected on how services are now, and how communities want them to be in the future, to inform the implementation of the long term aims of the strategy.
- 2.14. A new revision of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will then be produced on an annual basis to build on the new knowledge gained over the year. More targeted services can then be provided, whilst working towards the aim of creating strong and resilient communities, with the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities being balanced against the needs of settled communities.
- 2.15. During autumn 2010, consultation will be undertaken to inform the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD. This will seek comments on potential site options and a draft policy for assessing potential sites that may come forward. The rolling programme for strategy consultation enables all comments and feedback gained during the autumn to be fed in to the next version of the strategy.
- 2.16. In April 2011 a new version of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will be produced, building on the consultation feedback and new knowledge and information that have been gained.

Main Considerations for the Council

Key issues in Wiltshire – why a strategy is needed

This section sets out the key issues for current service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire.

3. Disparity in Wiltshire Council's approach and service delivery

- 3.1. A broad range of departments and service areas interact with and provide services for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Although most of the services attempt to engage with each other, this does not form effective, coherent and informed services to Gypsies and Travellers. Individual departments largely operate independently of each other.
- 3.2. Different service areas interact with different areas of the Gypsy and Traveller community, some with a process focused approach, some with a welfare focused approach, and some with a mixture of the two. The breadth of the scope and diversity of the interaction is highlighted in broad terms by the project group list in appendix 2, which shows the number of departments who are involved in different areas of service provision without clear, strategic coordination.
- 3.3. Without clear ownership of the issue and an overarching strategy for service delivery and interaction with Gypsy and Traveller communities, a polarity of messages is presented, which often leads to conflicting responses by our services (i.e. welfare conflicting with process and vice versa). It also causes lack of trust and confidence in authority, leading to

tensions between the Gypsy and Traveller communities and the council itself. Such problems need to be addressed both within Wiltshire Council and the public sector in the county.

4. Cost

- 4.1. The cost of unauthorised encampments nationally is £18million, but there is very limited data on the costs at a regional or a local level.
- 4.2. The costs of applying processes relating to unauthorised encampments include legal costs and enforcement action, for example. The legal duty to enforce unauthorised encampments needs to be balanced against the longer term costs relating to the welfare of Gypsy and Traveller communities, for example the wider costs of limited health care and unmet educational needs.

5. Draft Regional Spatial Strategy site requirements

- 5.1. The Gypsy and Traveller DPD aims to identify new sites to meet the site requirements in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The Draft RSS pitch allocation for 2006-2011 is unlikely to be delivered by 2011. As stated in paragraph 2.15, work is underway through the preparation of this document to define criteria to consider Gypsy and Traveller site applications.
- 5.2. .As the Draft RSS only sets requirements to 2011, it is likely that a review of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will be required to identify any further need for pitches beyond 2011.
- 5.3. The DPD work is an essential part of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy project as it will have important implications for the provision of accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The consultations as part of this work will play a key part in gathering evidence to feed in to the next version of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy.

6. Poor quality of existing Local Authority managed sites

- 6.1. A site conditions survey in 2008 identified that Local Authority managed sites are in a poor state of repair. No capital budget has been identified to undertake larger scale refurbishment or rebuilding of these sites.

7. Knowledge and data

- 7.1. Public services across Wiltshire currently have limited knowledge on all areas of the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire.
- 7.2. This ranges from a lack of understanding of travelling routes through the county, to limited consideration of the needs of a family as a whole rather than as separate service areas. The need to have such information is important for two reasons. Firstly as a council our priority around building

resilient communities means that we need to know who are communities are and what they need, including the Gypsy and Traveller communities; Secondly, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will also need renewing soon, and such information will provide a more informed approach to an effective assessment.

8. Communication and engagement

- 8.1. Current service provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities is very much structured around the functioning of internal council departments, with very limited evidence of efforts to engage the Gypsy and Traveller communities (to identify what their needs and quality of life experiences are) from Wiltshire Council and public services as a whole. It is essential that communication, information, support and involvement can be better offered and available from the Council if there was a joined up and coordinated service response.
- 8.2. It is envisaged that considerable awareness raising and education is required at all levels within Wiltshire's communities to help break down the prejudices that still exist in relation to Gypsy and Traveller communities. In some areas, a cultural mindset is held in relation to Gypsies and Travellers which is not conducive to empowering or building resilience in these communities. The creation of a coordinated strategy and service delivery ethos will maximise the opportunity to change mindsets for the benefit of not only the council, but also the wider communities.
- 8.3. Effective communication and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will enable Wiltshire Council to become more innovative in delivery of services that the communities need and want, to contribute towards the empowerment and resilience of those communities. Communication and engagement is also needed with settled communities in order to understand their needs and wants from services, and to be able to balance the needs of both communities.

9. Inspection concerns

- 9.1. Wiltshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2009
As part of the 2009 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), engagement work was undertaken with Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire to assess their current and future health and wellbeing needs. In addition to the health and wellbeing issues as highlighted in the strategy, the report identified that there is need for an outreach approach towards improving health and well being within Gypsy and Traveller communities. The JSNA also identifies that work needs to be commissioned to find out in greater detail the health and social care needs to Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire.
- 9.2. Comprehensive Area Assessment, 2009
The Organisational Assessment for Wiltshire Council as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009 (CAA) noted that more needs to be done to tackle inequality in Wiltshire. The report also noted that the

Council and other public services have a good understanding of where inequality occurs and are working together to meet the needs of people such as Gypsies and Travellers, who do not find it as easy to get the services they need.

- 9.3. However, the CAA report also highlighted some of the concerns raised in the JSNA around Gypsies and Travellers finding it difficult to access services and that organisations do not routinely make information available in pictorial form, although many Gypsies and Travellers do not read or write.
- 9.4. The CAA also noted that some attitude problems towards Gypsies and Travellers persist that will need to be overcome if they are to receive equal access to services.

10. Wiltshire Council Gypsy and Traveller Strategy Definition

- 10.1. As a Local Authority Wiltshire Council provides services to all people regardless of their lifestyle.
- 10.2. For the purposes of the strategy document, the definition of Gypsies and Travellers will incorporate the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers as in 01/2006, as well as the planning definition of Travelling Show People as in 04/2007. The definition of Gypsies and Travellers, for the purpose of this document is;
- 10.3. "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 or permanently;

As well 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 the 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 or permanently".

- 10.4. The strategy therefore includes Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as Travelling Showpeople, New Travellers, Bargee Travellers, and any other groups with a nomadic lifestyle, 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 or permanently.

11. Strategy aims and objectives

- 11.1. The overall aim of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy is that by 2015, service provision and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities *will be strengthened, coordinated and in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities*, with the needs of those communities balanced against the needs of the settled population.

The strategy aims are;

- That service provision and engagement is co-ordinated throughout the council and involves consultation with Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- The improvement of services and facilities are aimed to empower Gypsy and Traveller communities, through joint working, participation and involvement.
- The needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities are recognised and addressed in partnership, in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities.

By 2015 the strategy hopes to achieve;

11.2. Accommodation

- Clear pathways to providing appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers, with standards of accommodation on local authority sites being equitable to that of the settled population

11.3. Knowledge and information

- Better utilisation of data, information and knowledge to help in analysing the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities and inform the delivery of and access to services
- Better use being made of existing resources and identification of new resources

11.4. Community engagement and involvement

- Regular engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities, and also local settled communities, in order to enable needs to be identified and more targeted services provided in order to more effectively meet those needs.
- Partnership working with Gypsy and Traveller communities wherever possible, to try to increase the resilience and empowerment of these communities.

11.5. Health, education and safer communities

- To understand the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities for health, education and safer communities, particularly the identification of existing

inequalities and disadvantage, which has disproportional and adverse impacts on the quality of life for this community.

- Better planning and appropriate targeting of services to enable all partners to effectively meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in relation to health, education and safer communities.
- We can encourage greater service take up by ensuring are accessible for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Key actions needed to achieve aims of strategy

12. Communication, education and training

- 12.1. The issue the project group felt was central to achieving the successful implementation of fair and equitable services for Gypsy and Traveller communities in 5 years time, is a joined up approach to service delivery internally and communication with stakeholders, the settled community, Gypsy and Traveller communities, officers, Councillors and frontline service workers.
- 12.2. It is clear that a joined up approach to service planning and provision needs to be established across the organisation, which needs to ensure a coordinated and cost effective delivery of services overall. A joined up approach to service planning and delivery will mean that council officers and staff will
- have greater awareness of how their specific service delivery links in with other services areas / provision
 - be able to share resources affectively
 - share expertise and experience of working with Gypsy and Traveller communities – including exchanging information and knowledge
 - increase capacity without additional staffing costs to deliver services
 - be able to be cost affective in service planning and delivery
- 12.3 There is also a need to look at how services provided by our external partners fit with our service provision – this includes NHS Wiltshire, Wiltshire Police, Fire & Rescue Service and services provided by the wider Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 12.4 There is a need to review communication materials that are provided by the public sector, for example ensuring that planning guidance information is accessible and appropriate for communities who may have low literacy levels.

- 12.5 Successful communication of the strategy and its purpose is also a key part of this process. Without understanding the context of and need for the strategy, it can never be completely effectively implemented.
- 12.6 A central action in beginning the process of communication, education and training is a Councillor training session run by the Improvement and Development Agency on the 23rd of March.
- 12.7 This training session will provide support and advice to Members and senior officers on the issues faced by both the Gypsy and Traveller communities and the settled communities with the aim of enabling delegates to appreciate the local authority role in the provision of decent homes for all and the importance of this for the health and well-being of communities.
- 12.8 Further briefing and training events are likely to be able to be undertaken. The production of training and education packs, and of officer time required to deliver sessions will look to be achieved within existing resources.

13. Rebuilding of Local Authority managed sites

- 13.1. As the 2008 site conditions survey identified, local authority managed sites are in a poor state of repair. In order to achieve the aim of 'provision of appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, with equal standards to that of the settled population', sites must be rebuilt over the medium term. The current refurbishment programme is not a long term option and is not delivering low cost or customer focused services.

14. Alignment of site management with housing

- 14.1. In order to ensure that the accommodation provision on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites is of equal standard to that provided to settled communities, the project group proposes that Gypsy and Traveller site provision and management be moved from the highways department, to the housing department.
- 14.2. The allocation of pitches, site management, and the delivery of new pitches would move to housing, separating these functions from the enforcement of unauthorised encampments.

15. Community engagement

- 15.1. As discussed above, a current issue for Gypsy and Traveller service delivery in Wiltshire is that there is no real knowledge on the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, so effectively targeted services cannot be provided.
- 15.2. Gypsy and Traveller communities will be extensively consulted on the 5 year strategy aims as from June 2010, a 6 month customer engagement programme will begin. During this time, frontline officers will work with

Gypsy and Traveller communities to understand what they want and need from our services. Voluntary and community sector partners and other stakeholders will be involved in this process to ensure that by April 2011, a clear picture had been built up of the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and that any gaps in our knowledge have been filled.

- 15.3. A new revision of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will then be produced on an annual basis to build on the new knowledge gained over the year. More targeted services can then be provided, whilst working towards the aim of creating strong and resilient communities, with the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities being balanced against the needs of settled communities.

16. Future strategy ownership and management

- 16.1. In order to ensure actions are properly coordinated and are achieved, officers from across the public sector will need to continue to work together. The Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will need to be owned and managed to ensure that a change of approach is maintained across the organisation.
- 16.2. It has become clear during the project that the multi-agency group needs to continue to meet in order to ensure the strategy is implemented, and that the actions are achieved.
- 16.3. initial workload will exist to ensure that the projects in the action plan are properly coordinated. Some actions need to be delivered by thematic delivery partnerships, and if this work is not coordinated and led, only limited improvement in service delivery and engagement can ever be secured.
- 16.4. This coordinating role for the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy is not a full time role, and work will decrease over the short to medium term. This responsibility will be taken on by the Corporate Equality and Diversity team, within existing budgets.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

17. It is envisaged that the strategy will have a positive effect upon environmental issues relating to Gypsy and Traveller communities occupying unauthorised sites. For example, waste and pollution, disturbing wildlife etc, will look to be minimised through a coordinated response to Gypsy and Traveller community needs.
 - 17.1. A wider environmental impact is on the perceptions of local communities – the potential risk of not adopting and actively promoting the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy may mean adverse PR and potential damage to the reputation of the Council, with possible accusations of perpetuating

inequalities and disadvantages exercised by Gypsy and Traveller communities.

- 17.2. Media and community relations will need to be managed effectively and with a view that our approach towards coordinated and consistent service delivery to Gypsy and Traveller communities is in line with the council's commitment to provide fair and equitable services to all, and not as preferential treatment to a particular group.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

18. Our organisational goals are based on creating strong and resilient communities, and focus on lives and not services. Current service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities is not coordinated nor consistent, leading to the possibility of unfairness and discriminatory service provision.
 - 18.1. The development and delivery of a robust and coordinated Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will enable the inclusion of this disadvantaged group, and our overall work in creating strong and resilient communities to be strengthened.
 - 18.2. The adoption of and commitment to a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will provide evidence towards the CAA and other assessments, including Wiltshire Assembly's priority to tackle inequalities and disadvantage
 - 18.3. Overall, the development of a robust and coordinated strategy will have a positive impact on the promotion of equality in Wiltshire.

Risk Assessment

19. Without a comprehensive strategy which is focused on promoting engagement, we will not achieve our legal duties under the Race Relations legislation to promote good community relations. This risk has the biggest implication on the community relations between Gypsy and Traveller communities, and nearby settled communities
 - 19.1. During the Gypsy and Traveller DPD consultations, both settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities are going to need support in order to better understand each other, in order to tackle prejudice and discrimination. There is also a duty for the Council to ensure that adequate numbers of sites are provided across Wiltshire. The strategy aims to work alongside this duty to promote wider actions to ensure that any new sites are as successful as possible for both settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities.
 - 19.2. The actions in the plan have been risk assessed and mitigating actions have been identified to lessen the impact of risks. Actions with a high potential risk to their achievement are only being taken forward if there is also a high potential risk if that action is not taken.

Council reputation

- 19.3. The CAA highlighted that the public sector is not doing enough to tackle the inequality and potential discrimination faced by Gypsy and Traveller communities. Wiltshire Council has engaged consultants to produce a Gypsy and Traveller DPD as a priority document that the council will prepare as part of Wiltshire's Local Development Framework. The purpose of the DPD is to ensure that the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers are met through the allocation of suitable and sustainable sites. Without the wider strategy development to ensure that service delivery and engagement is coordinated and consistent, we will not be meeting our aims to create strong and resilient communities effectively.
- 19.4. Without proactive measures to gather more evidence about the issues raised in the CAA and JSNA, and to put in place a strategic framework to improve service delivery and engagement, future inspection reports cannot hope to improve in relation to Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 19.5. To ensure the strategy and action plan are aligned with wider corporate aims and objectives, appendix 3 contains a list of LAA or LAW targets, and partnership objectives which the strategy will impact upon. A key risk is that if action is not taken alongside the DPD work to support both settled and Gypsy and Travellers communities, the consultations and future site delivery may have an adverse impact on NI 001, the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

Financial Implications

20. Capital financing of refurbishment/rebuilding of sites
 - 20.1. The poor state of repair of local authority managed sites requires that the future rebuilding and refurbishment of sites be built in to the capital financing programme.
 - 20.2. The amount of this cost is unknown at present, but will be built in to the capital building programme for a rolling programme of rebuilding sites over the coming years.
 - 20.3. By having a clear strategic framework for developing service delivery and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will clearly set our priorities in relation to this community. This can then be built in to the Local Investment Plan for Wiltshire, and the rebuilding or refurbishment of existing sites, or building of or of any new Gypsy and Traveller sites can be a consideration for future spending priorities.

Staffing implications

- 21.** There are staffing implications of the actions to align site management with housing, and with the future management and ownership of the strategy.
 - 21.1. It is anticipated that existing roles will need to be redefined in order to allow for the change. This will involve redesigning job roles and applying the Council's appointment process to restructure the way in which this service is delivered. The site management policies and procedures will be then be reviewed to ensure greater alignment with housing. The key objective of the restructure will not be to reduce the levels of staff, but to redeploy them effectively in the job roles that best support organisational design. The next step is for the staffing implications to be considered in more detail.
 - 21.2. Should the recommendations of this report be adopted, affected staff will be consulted in accordance with due policy and process.
 - 21.3. It is proposed that the management of potential staffing implications and consultation with staff members on the changes is delegated to the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for Gypsies and Travellers, and in consultation with Human Resources.

Legal Implications

Unauthorised encampments

- 22.** The council has a legal obligation to enforce laws relating to trespass on highways in the county. When Gypsies and Travellers are moved on from unauthorised encampments, they often have no other legitimate place to move on to if they are not able or willing to use the transit site in the south of the county.
 - 22.1. The Gypsy and Traveller strategy proposes that the council continue with a firm but fair approach to unauthorised encampments, but that this is supported by more effective, coordinated responses to unauthorised encampments.
 - 22.2. As well as taking a more balanced approach to short term issues, the strategy also proposes that work also takes place to gather data and evidence on the need for a transit site in the north of the county and emergency stopping places across Wiltshire.
 - 22.3. The overall aim will be the planning of and provision of appropriate sites across the county, to make it easier to support people to stop in a safe place that is appropriate to their needs, and to also the needs of the settled communities.

- 22.4. There are legal implications in the planned restructuring and therefore during restructuring the legal department will be consulted to ensure that there is compliance with Wiltshire Council's legal obligations as an employer.
- 22.5. There are also significant legal implications with the development of site management. Wiltshire Council has statutory legal responsibilities relating to the Human Rights, the Race Relations and Disability Discrimination legislation. Furthermore there is legislation which has been passed but which has not as yet come into operation relating to site licences (Housing and Regeneration Act) which needs to be considered in respect of any changes to site management in which Wiltshire Council needs to ensure compliance.
- 22.6. In respect of any amendments to the site management legal advice will be sought.

Unauthorised developments

- 22.7. The Council also has a legal duty to enforce planning policies when members of any community begin unauthorised developments. The Gypsy and Traveller strategy aims to make clear to Gypsy and Traveller communities that unauthorised developments are not acceptable from any member of the community, and to support those communities with low literacy issues to access paper based planning systems.
- 22.8. The strategy aims to support This Wiltshire Council to be able to maintain a firm but fair approach to unauthorised encampments and developments, whilst putting in place a strategic framework to strengthen the assessment of provision of sites across the county.

Options Considered

23. Not tackling the issues around Gypsy and Traveller service provision and engagement is not perceived to be an option.
- 23.1. By not taking a more consistent, coordinated approach to meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and balancing the needs of these communities with the needs of and settled communities, the strength, resilience and sustainability of those local communities will be weakened, and possible perceptions of unfairness and discrimination will be increased. Low cost and customer focused services are also currently not being delivered. .

Conclusions

24. Taking above in to account, the Gypsy and Traveller strategy project group propose that Cabinet;

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- Note the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy and action plan
- Approve and commit to the aims and objectives of the strategy
- Approve delegated authority to the Service Director for Housing to oversee the next steps and potential staffing implications of the project, in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for Gypsies and Travellers, and in consultation with Human Resources

Mark Boden
Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

12th of January 2010 Environment Select Committee paper

<http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeed=154&MeetingId=1388&DF=12/01/2010&Ver=2>

2nd of March 2010 Environment Select Committee paper

<http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MId=677&Ver=4>

23rd of February 2010 Cabinet paper on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Planning Document

<http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=250&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Wiltshire's Gypsy and Traveller Strategy 2010

Appendix 2 – Gypsy and Traveller strategy project group, highlighting range of Council departments that interact with Gypsy and Traveller communities

Appendix 3 - LAA/LAW targets that the strategy impacts upon

Wiltshire Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

2010

DRAFT

Introduction

The new Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Gypsy and Traveller communities. Wiltshire Council now needs to take the opportunity to interlock these services, develop a strategy and put in place an action plan to provide an improving, integrated and supportive approach to engaging with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

A group was formed to assess the current situation for Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire, including looking at what services are like at the moment, and what information is currently known about the needs and wants of the communities. A current issue for is that there is no real knowledge on the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, so services that are effectively targeted cannot be provided.

The overall aim of Gypsy and Traveller Strategy is that by 2015, service provision and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will ***be strengthened, coordinated and in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities***. The needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities will be balanced against the needs of the settled population.

There are two phases of the strategy in order to achieve this aim. This document sets out the current situation in service delivery for Gypsy and Traveller communities, and a plan of actions to begin achieving the strategic aims. As part of this first phase of the strategy, frontline officers will work with Gypsy and Traveller communities to understand what they want and need from our services. Voluntary and community sector partners and other stakeholders will be involved in this process to ensure that by April 2011, a clear picture had been built up of the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and that any gaps in our knowledge have been filled.

An annual revision of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will take place, the first in May 2011. This will be based on knowledge gained during the preceding year. The annual review will allow more targeted services to be provided, where appropriate, whilst continuing to work towards the overall aim of the strategy.

What else is happening?

During 2010, consultations will be held about the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Planning Document (DPD) that will set out potential land for use as Gypsy and Traveller sites. As part of the DPD, work is underway to define criteria to consider Gypsy and Traveller site applications. In 2010 a consultation will be undertaken on identifying specific site options.

The DPD work is an essential part of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy project as it will have important implications for the provision of accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The consultations as part of this work will

play a key part in gathering evidence to feed in to the next version of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy.

Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

There are several definitions of 'Gypsies and Travellers' used in different legal and policy documents.

According to the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, and the Human Rights Act 1998, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as having ethnic status.

The planning guidance in Planning Circular 01/2006 defines Gypsies and Travellers for planning purposes as a wider group than just those who belong to the ethnic groups. The planning definition of Travelling Show People is in Planning Circular 04/2007. The Housing Act 2004 also defines Gypsies and Travellers as being a wider group than those who belong to the ethnically recognised groups.

For the purposes of this document, the definition of Gypsies and Travellers will incorporate the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers as in 01/2006, as well as the planning definition of Travelling Show People as in 04/2007. The definition of Gypsies and Travellers, for the purpose of this document is;

"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 or permanently; (Planning Circular 01/2006)

As well 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 the 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 or permanently". (Planning Circular 04/2007)

The strategy therefore includes Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as Travelling Showpeople, New Travellers, Bargee Travellers, and any other groups with a nomadic lifestyle, 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 or permanently.

Why do we need a Gypsy and Traveller strategy?

Wiltshire Council provides services to all people, regardless of their lifestyle, and at the moment, Gypsy and Traveller communities do not have equal outcomes and life chances with settled communities.

The first step to tackling the causes of this inequality is to find out what Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities want, so that targeted

support can be provided. Services across the public sector then need to work together to empower and support both Gypsy and Traveller and settled communities to live together and form resilient communities.

Public sector service providers, including Wiltshire Council, need Gypsy and Traveller communities, and settled communities, to understand that all have rights and responsibilities to each other. This strategy is the starting point for the Council to provide low cost, customer focused services that support the creation of resilient communities, whilst balancing the needs of both Gypsy and Traveller, and settled communities.

Wiltshire Council Gypsy and Traveller strategy

The overall aim of the Gypsy and Traveller strategy is that by 2015, service provision and engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities will *be strengthened, coordinated and in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities*, with the needs of those communities balanced against the needs of the settled population.

The strategy aims are;

That service provision and engagement is co-ordinated throughout the council and involves consultation with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The improvement of services and facilities are aimed to empower Gypsy and Traveller communities, through joint working, participation and involvement.

The needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities are recognised and addressed in partnership, in line with our aims to create strong and resilient communities.

By 2015 the strategy hopes to achieve;

Accommodation

- Clear pathways to providing appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers, with standards of accommodation on local authority sites being equitable to that of the settled population

Knowledge and information

- Better utilisation of data, information and knowledge to help in analysing the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities and inform the delivery of and access to services
- Better use being made of existing resources and identification of new resources.

Community engagement and involvement

- Regular engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities, and also local settled communities, in order to enable needs to be identified and more targeted services provided in order to more effectively meet those needs.
- Partnership working with Gypsy and Traveller communities wherever possible, to try to increase the resilience and empowerment of these communities.

Health, education and safer communities

- To understand the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities for health, education and safer communities, particularly the identification of existing inequalities and disadvantage, which has disproportional and adverse impacts on the quality of life for this community.
- Better planning and appropriate targeting of services to enable all partners to effectively meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in relation to health, education and safer communities.
- We can encourage greater service take up by ensuring are accessible for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Action plan

There are two phases of the strategy in order to achieve the aims outlined above. This document sets out the initial actions to gather information and to work with both Gypsy and Traveller, and settled, communities to understand what they want and need from public sector services. Frontline officers, as well as voluntary and community sector partners and other stakeholders will be involved in this process to ensure that by April 2011, a clear picture can be built up of the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and that any gaps in our knowledge have been filled.

Phase two of the strategy will use the data that is collected on how services are now, and how communities want them to be in the future, to inform the implementation of the long term aims of the strategy.

Next steps

An annual revision of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy will take place, the first in May 2011. This will be based on knowledge gained during the preceding year. The annual review will allow more targeted services to be provided, where appropriate, whilst continuing to work towards the overall aim of the strategy.

The current situation for Gypsy and Traveller communities

This section of the paper sets out the current information and evidence, and the key issues experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities, with actions identified on how to tackle these issues.

1. National context of Gypsies and Travellers

Changes have taken place over recent years that impact Local Authority duties in relation to Gypsy and Traveller communities across various service areas.

a. Government Commitment to Gypsies and Travellers

The Government's objective is that Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully, as outlined in *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: a guide to responsibilities and powers* (Communities and Local Government, May 2007).

The Government is committed to ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller community should have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen.

b. New Legislative Environment

The Housing Act 2004 and Planning Circular 01/2006, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, has put in place a framework which means every local authority has to identify land for the Gypsy and Traveller sites that are needed in its area.

Changes in Planning

Major changes to the planning system have been introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Planning Act (2004)). The planning tools which the Planning Act (2004) makes available - and the associated move to more positive planning - will help deliver communities that are sustainable and work better for people.

During 2010 consultations will be held about the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Planning Document (DPD) that will set out potential land for use as Gypsy and Traveller sites. As part of the DPD, work is underway to define criteria to consider Gypsy and Traveller site applications. In 2010 several public consultations will take place on this process.

The Housing Act 2004

The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to include Gypsies and Travellers in their accommodation assessments and to take a strategic approach, including drawing up a strategy demonstrating how the

accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met, as part of their wider housing strategies.

Other Relevant Acts and Bills include;

- Race Relations Act 1996 (Amendment Act, 2000)
- Human Rights Act 2000
- The emerging Equalities Bill 2009 (2010 implementation)

2. National profile of Gypsies and Travellers

The precise number of Gypsies and Travellers in England is unclear. Estimates of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Britain vary widely – some approximate that between 180,000 and 350,000 Gypsies and Travellers live in England today, of whom the majority live in conventional 'bricks and mortar' housing¹.

According to *The road ahead: the final report of the independent task group on site provision and enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers, Communities and Local Government*, December 2007:

- 75% of Gypsies and Travellers who live in caravans are on authorised sites
- The remainder require 4,000 pitches, which is equivalent to around one square mile of land across the county.
- An average of £18million annually is spent on enforcement action on unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments in England.
- All available data suggests that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the most excluded ethnic minority groups in British society.

Health

- Research has found that 18% of Gypsy and Traveller mothers had experienced the death of a child, compared to around 1% of mothers in the settled population.
- More than 40% of Gypsies and Travellers report a life-limiting, long term illness.
- Life expectancy for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities is 10-12 years less than for members of settled communities.

Education

- In 2006, 19% of Irish Traveller children and 9.9% of Gypsy children achieved 5 A* to C passes at GCSE, compared to 62.4% nationally.
- It is estimated that nationally, over 10,000 Gypsy and Traveller children are unregistered with a school.

¹ Ivatts, A. 2005. *The Education of Gypsy/Roma Traveller and Travelling Children*. Department for Education and Skills in *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*. 2006: Commission for Racial Equality

3. Wiltshire profile of Gypsies and Travellers

Local Authority sites in Wiltshire

Wiltshire Council currently owns and/or operates 6 residential Gypsy and Traveller sites around the County, providing a total of 96 pitches for their semi-permanent residents.

A further 12 pitches are available at an established transit site in the south-east of the County. Gypsies and Travellers can stay on the transit site for up to 28 days whilst they are travelling through the county.

There are currently no emergency stopping places where Gypsies and Travellers could stop for very short periods determined by the Local Authority.

This current level of provision accommodates 169 semi-permanent residents and a further 48 residents if the transit site is fully occupied, so a nominal total of 217 Gypsies and Travellers overall.

Area of the county	Number of local authority sites in each area	Numbers of people in each area
North Wiltshire	1 site	55
East Wiltshire	0 sites	0
South Wiltshire	3 sites	87
West Wiltshire	2 sites	27
Odstock Transit Site	1 site	48
Total		217

Other sites in Wiltshire

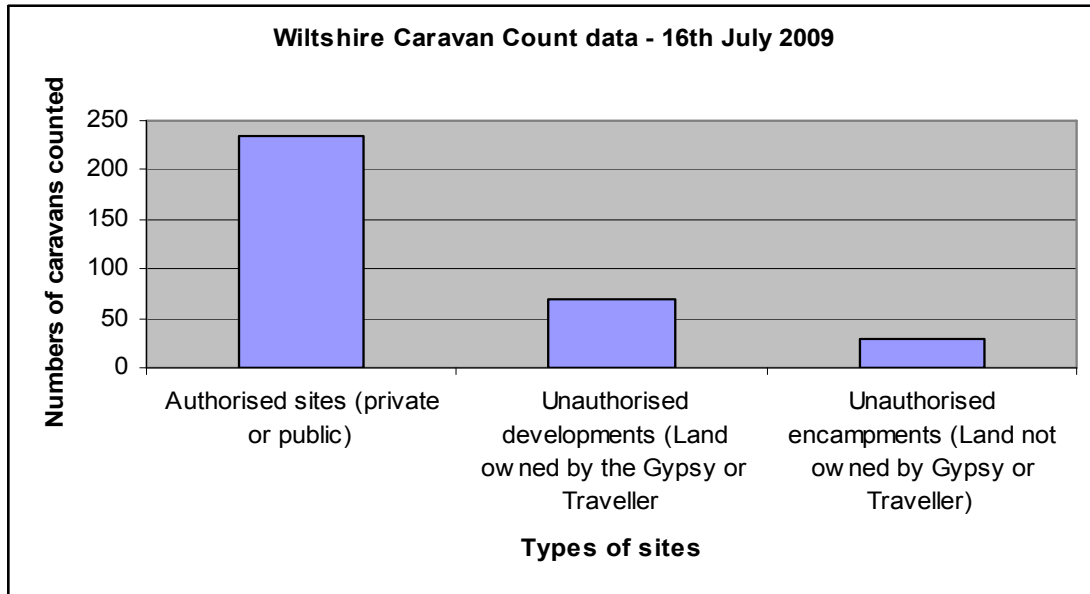
Gypsies and Travellers also live on private sites across the county, as well as living on unauthorised encampments.

Gypsies and Travellers in Wiltshire also live in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation, on houseboats on the canals (for example, Bargee Travellers), as well as living on sites that are a base for travelling with their business (for example, Travelling Showpeople).

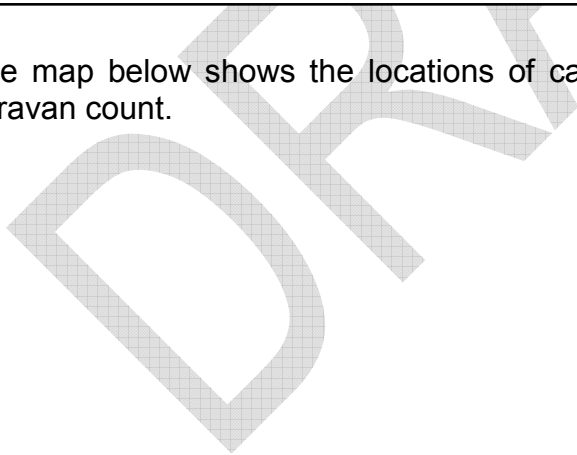
Caravan counts are conducted in January and in July every year to provide a snapshot of the number of caravans in Wiltshire on that particular day. The last caravan count was conducted in January 2010, but the data collected is not yet published.

On the 16th of July 2009 a total of 340 caravans were counted in Wiltshire. The table and graph below show that most of the caravans counted were on authorised sites.

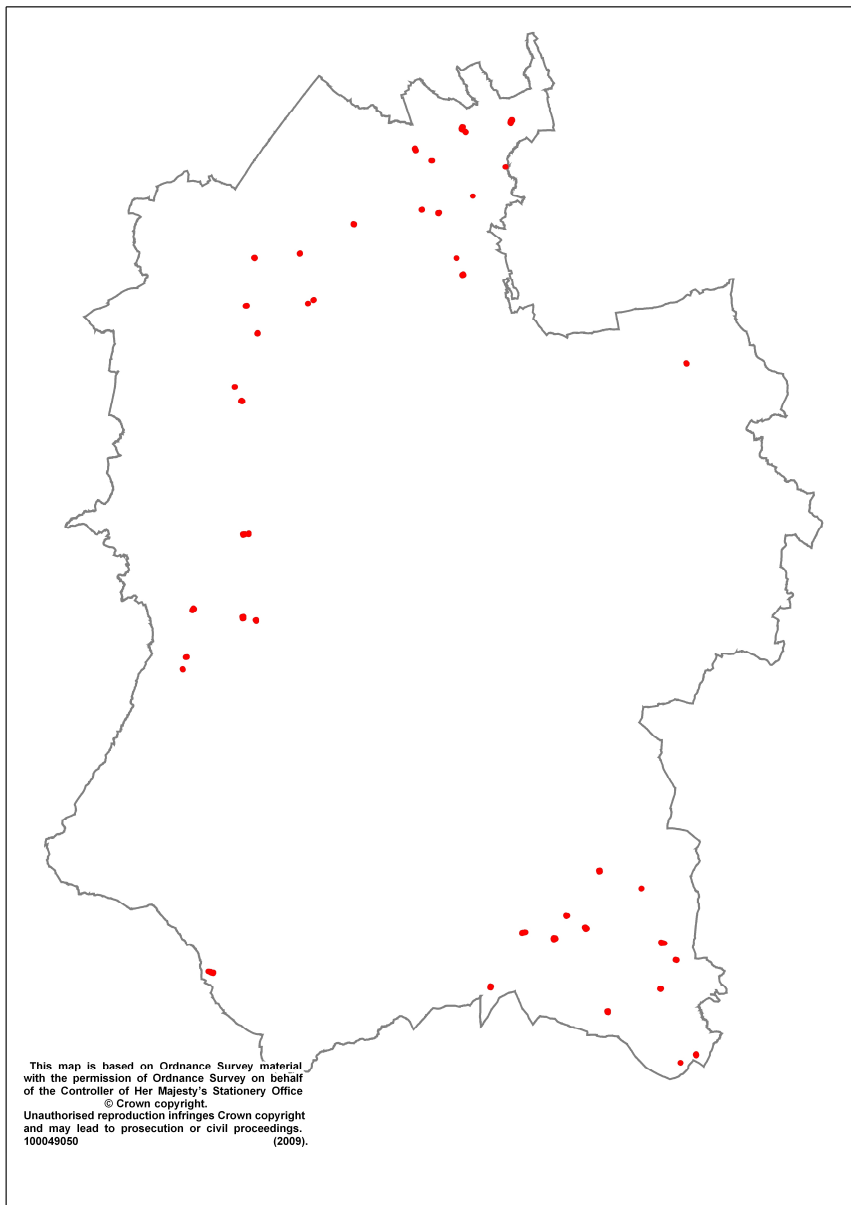
Type of site	Number of caravans	Percentage of total caravan count
Authorised sites (private or public)	235 caravans	69%
Unauthorised developments (i.e. on land that was owned by the Gypsies and Travellers).	70 caravans	21%
Unauthorised encampments (i.e. on sites where the land was not owned by the Gypsies and Travellers)	30 caravans	10%



The map below shows the locations of caravans recorded in the July 2009 caravan count.

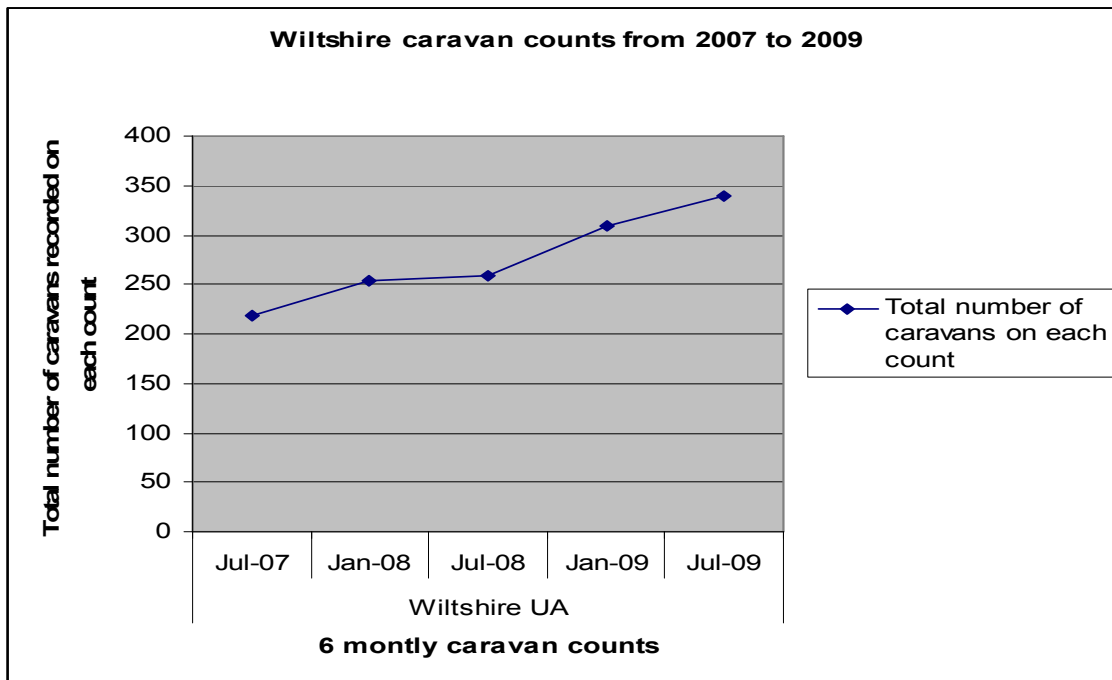


Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wiltshire – July 2009 caravan count



As with the settled population, the population of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire is increasing and will continue to increase in the near future. Previous caravan counts show that in the past two years, the number of caravans in the county has increased.

Increases in the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in Wiltshire mean that more people will need accommodation in the future.



Future site requirements

The Wiltshire and Swindon Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2006 (GTAA) was commissioned jointly by Swindon Borough and the five Wiltshire local authorities including the County Council in 2006. The study explores the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire from 2006 until 2011. The GTAA identified the need for an additional 47 pitches on authorised residential sites, and an additional 12 transit pitches by 2011.

A pitch is an area of land that can accommodate a hard standing for at least 2 caravans, 2 parking spaces, a small storage shed and an amenity block for services.

GTAA figures were then submitted to the Regional Spatial Strategy and figures were increased, however it should be noted that the RSS has not yet been given final approval. The draft RSS revisions require Wiltshire to provide a total of an additional 85 residential pitches and an additional 27 transit pitches by 2011.

From 2011, a new Accommodation Assessment will be needed to establish short and long term accommodation requirements across the county.

4. Why do we need a strategy? – Key issues in Wiltshire

This section sets out some of the issues with current engagement and service provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities. There are many good things happening across services in Wiltshire, but this section looks at what needs to be improved over the next 12 months.

Issues and actions have been split in to 4 sections;
Accommodation
Knowledge and information
Health, education and safer communities
Community engagement

Timescales and priorities for the actions identified in this section are detailed in the action plan at the end of this section.

a. Accommodation

Unauthorised camping

If Gypsies and Travellers have no sites to stop at, they often stop on the side of a road and become an unauthorised encampment. Increasing the numbers of sites available to Gypsies and Travellers should reduce the numbers of unauthorised encampments, or provide another place for Gypsies and Travellers to stop whilst they are in the county. A second transit site in Wiltshire would be operationally expedient in the North and West of the County.

New sites can either be Local Authority managed sites, sites managed by other organisations, or private sites owned by Gypsies and Travellers.

Action 1

To make sure that any new sites are in the best location and are well designed to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, people from across the communities will need to be extensively involved in the identification and allocation of future sites in order to find most effective locations.

Action 2

There are currently no emergency stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers in Wiltshire, so information on preferred travelling routes and locations of unauthorised encampments for a 12 month period in order to assess the need for emergency stopping places in Wiltshire.

Site provision

Not all Gypsies and Travellers are able to afford to purchase land to build private sites.

Action 3

Alternative ways to provide sites should be researched and taken forward, for example considering shared ownership schemes or RSL development management of sites.

When a planning application is submitted for a site, local Members who decide whether that site meets planning policy criteria need to be supported to understand Gypsy and Traveller communities. With an awareness of the cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Members will be better able to ensure that sites that meet the criteria can be approved quickly and efficiently, rather than all parties spending time and money on appeal processes.

Action 4

A cultural awareness training programme will be run for planning committee Members in order to support them with knowledge and information about the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Accessibility of planning systems

Systems to apply for planning permission are very complex and paper based. Gypsies and Traveller who have literacy problems can often find it very difficult to access these systems.

Gypsies and Travellers are entitled to pre-application advice as are members of settled communities, but this process is not often accessed by Gypsy and Traveller communities. So Gypsies and Travellers do not often speak to local planning officers before buying or moving on to a site.

Action 5

Wherever possible, planning teams will take proactive steps to encourage Gypsy and Traveller communities to begin discussions about potential sites or pieces of land early in the process to reduce rework. This should include the provision of information, support, and pre-application advice on planning issues

Action 6

Clear and easy to read information will be made available in accessible formats to support communities, such as Gypsy and Traveller communities, to access complex planning systems.

Rights and responsibilities in planning

As with members of settled communities, Gypsy and Traveller communities have rights to develop accommodation, but also responsibilities to do this within the law. If enforcement action is necessary, Gypsy and Traveller communities as well as settled communities will be made clearly aware of what can be expected from the local authority.

Action 7

An easy to read guide to the enforcement policy will be made available to Gypsy and Traveller communities, along

with general advice on what all communities can expect during an unauthorised development.

Accommodation improvements

As highlighted by a stock conditions survey in 2008, accommodation provision that is owned and managed by Wiltshire Council is in a poor state of repair.

Action 8 In order to improve accommodation provision through refurbishment or rebuilding, information will be collected to assess the cost and implications of refurbishment / replacement of LA managed sites. This will also be balanced against the health/wellbeing implications and costs of not taking action.

Once refurbished or rebuilt, maintenance and renewal of sites will be built in to the capital financing programme to ensure long term sustainability for the improvements to the accommodation provision.

Site management

There are different systems for the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites compared to other housing stock.

Action 9 The management of Gypsy and Traveller sites will be moved to the housing department to ensure that policies and procedures for managing sites are aligned with the policies and procedures for managing social housing. The overall aim is to ensure that the standard of accommodation provided on local authority sites is of the same standard as is provided to members of the settled community in social housing.

Transit site

High levels of anti-social behaviour are often experienced on the transit site by residents on the transit site and also those on the adjoining residential site. The transit site has had CCTV cameras fitted in recent years, which has reduced the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Action 10 Licence conditions will be implemented on the transit site so that sanctions can be imposed for breaking these site conditions.

Different needs for future sites

Current Local authority managed site provision does not allow for different cultural needs e.g. different types of sites are not provided for New Travellers. Wiltshire provides multi-cultural sites for all different sectors of the statutorily recognised Gypsy and Traveller community, and does not currently operate and discriminatory practices when making site provision.

Action 11

The consultation for the Gypsy and Traveller site allocations Development Planning Document should enable all Gypsy and Traveller communities to represent their views to ensure the planning policy allows for different types of sites.

b. Knowledge and information**Information needed**

Information about the needs and wants of Gypsy and Traveller communities is often not known, out of date, or will become outdated over the next 12 months. This means that the public sector as a whole does not effectively understand how to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and cannot provide services in a targeted way.

Action 12

A research exercise will be undertaken to gather any missing information and to update other information, including the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities across Wiltshire, including those in bricks and mortar accommodation. The research will be over 6 months to ensure that the views of all members of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire are incorporated. Where possible, frontline staff who have built up relationships with these communities will gather the information.

The information that is gathered about the wants and needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities will be fed in to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and all held in one place.

Customer feedback

Information and knowledge is not collected on what Gypsies and Travellers think of services that are provided, or what changes or improvements they would like to see.

Action 13

A system of customer feedback will be designed and implemented to assess the satisfaction of Gypsy and Traveller communities on all types of site and in bricks and mortar accommodation to ensure satisfaction. Settled communities also have a valuable contribution to make, especially where settled residents are already living in close proximity to existing residential sites.

Local area information pack

When Gypsies and Travellers move to new sites or are new to the county, they do not necessarily have access to effective, targeted and appropriate information about the local area or how to access services.

Action 14

An information pack will be produced with practical details to meet the needs of different communities – residents on LA sites, transit site and private sites. The 'Do's and Don'ts' of sites will be included along with information on local amenities.

Multi-agency information should be included in a simple/easy to read/pictorial information pack. A pilot pack will be tested with Gypsy and Traveller communities to ensure information is accessible, appropriate and correct.

For unauthorised developments and encampments, a checklist will be provided with information to support Gypsies and Travellers to stay safe whilst in the county. This will include directions to the local hospital and post office for example.

Provision of accessible information

Information is not always provided by the public sector in appropriate formats that are clear and easy to understand.

Action 15

Training will be provided for frontline staff across the public sector on cultural awareness, and information and advice on how to interact and communicate with Gypsy and Traveller communities. Particular focuses should include verbal explanation of information and ensuring that any written information provided is appropriate and accessible in easy read formats

Public sector communication

Not all public sector colleagues maintain regular contact with each other, or share information or knowledge on a regular basis, so some services are uncoordinated or patchy across the county.

Action 16

Public sector agencies will endeavour to work together to share information on a regular basis, and as issues emerge. The agencies will also work to share data and statistical information on a regular basis to inform the ongoing development of Gypsy and Traveller services. This information will be held as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, as a central point of information to improve the provision of services.

c. Health, education and safer communities – Issues and actions**Health information**

Not enough information is known about the particular health conditions suffered by Gypsies and Travellers in Wiltshire, so preventative services cannot be targetted effectively.

Action 17

Existing local health information for Gypsy and Traveller communities should be assessed and evaluated to find gaps in existing data. Any new research should include both quantitative and qualitative information from across Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire and should look to form a complete picture of the health needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wiltshire to provide effective, targeted and appropriate services.

Cross-departmental communication

Staff across the public sector are not aware that dedicated teams such as the Traveller Services team and the Traveller Education team provide dedicated support to Gypsy and Traveller communities. This sometimes results in the police being asked to accompany staff from other agencies on site visits, rather than a member of these other teams.

Action 18

A communications protocol will be developed and put in place to ensure that where possible, any community services frontline worker visiting a local authority site speaks with a member of the Traveller Services team to ensure that services are as coordinated as possible.

Access to health services

Gypsies and Travellers can find it difficult to access health services in Wiltshire. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2009 found that particular issues included lack of accessible information being provided, and a lack of outreach mental health services

Action 19

Information and advice will be provided for communities to raise awareness about particular health conditions that are prevalent for Gypsy and Traveller communities, in order to increase take-up of preventative services. This will include the provision of face to face advice and information. Accessible information and advice will also be provided on care and support available to Gypsy and Traveller communities from Community Services.

Action 20

Frontline staff will receive guidance on personalisation and the work of adult social care in Wiltshire, as well as training in order enable effective signposting to appropriate health services.

Access to and take-up of education provision and funding

A lack of access to educational funding adversely impacts on young Gypsies and Travellers. There is also a low take-up of further and higher education programmes among Gypsy and Traveller communities

Action 21

Training will be offered to senior leadership teams in schools

to increase the support available for Gypsy and Traveller children. Also, the barriers to accessing educational funding and other forms of education, for example vocational training, should be identified and assessed to understand the reasons for higher and further education not being accessed.

Adult literacy

Literacy levels for some young people who no longer attend school, and for adults in Gypsy and Traveller communities is often low. There is currently no support provided specifically for adults in Gypsy and Traveller communities to increase their literacy levels.

Action 22

Adult literacy services should be assessed and targeted information should be provided to Gypsy and Traveller communities in order to increase their take-up.

Existing sources of information provision that visit sites i.e. mobile libraries and community buses, should be considered for use as outreach literacy services, or for providing initial targeted sessions in order to support communities in taking up these services. Specific outreach services may need to be provided to complement existing provision

Unauthorised encampments – multi-agency response

There is a tension between the legal obligation of the council to take enforcement action in relation to unauthorised developments and encampments, and sustained engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities. The tension has potential adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Action 23

To make the process as consistent as possible, agencies will share information about unauthorised encampments and new residents arriving on sites as quickly as possible. This will ensure that multiple agencies are able to respond as soon as possible, in a clear, consistent and coordinated way.

d. Community engagement – Issues and actions

Negative perceptions

Gypsies and Travellers can often face discrimination from settled communities when moving to a new site or beginning a new development

Action 24

Officers, Members and frontline staff will be supported in liaising with members of settled communities to provide reassurance and to tackle prejudices. Clear communication is needed to support local residents and members of the settled community to overcome initial fears of a Gypsy and Traveller site. A framework should be established to ensure a coordinated and consistent message is communicated from across the public sector.

Engagement with Area Boards will also take place where land options have been identified to communicate with Members and the general public. This will include appreciating the issues raised by both settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities, as well as providing support to communities to understand each other better.

Action 25

Cultural awareness training will be provided for planning officers, Members and other stakeholders by frontline officers. Part of this training will ensure that when ever someone would like further information or would like to be accompanied on a visit to a Gypsy and Traveller site for example, they are aware of who to contact.

Consultation on strategy

This strategy is the first stage of a process to gather information, and the public sector as a whole needs to talk to Gypsy and Traveller communities to discuss their needs and wants, and how services can support them.

Action 26

A 6 month programme of engagement will take place to gather comments and feedback from across Gypsy and Traveller communities.

All frontline officers should be supported to understand the needs and wants of Gypsy and Traveller communities, and to understand what the barriers are to achieving fair and equitable services

Wiltshire Gypsy and Traveller Strategy Action Plan

This action plan will be managed by the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy coordinating group (G&T coord grp)

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
Accommodation								
1	Unauthorised camping	Gypsy and Traveller communities should be extensively involved in the identification and allocation of future sites in order to find most effective locations. Comments and feedback should be gathered from all Gypsy and Traveller communities, including unauthorised encampments.	Spatial planning team	Within existing work and existing resources	Low risk - Consultation process already planned but need to be proactive to ensure comments from across Gypsy and Traveller communities are incorporated	High risk - Sites identified for potential use as Gypsy and Traveller sites will not meet the needs of these communities	1	6 months
2	Unauthorised camping	Assess the need for an emergency stopping site (or several across the county) by speaking with all unauthorised encampments for a 12 month period.	Traveller services team / Housing team / Highways team	Officer time to research and collate data Cost to put in emergency stopping places	Medium risk - expectations will need to be managed to ensure gathering information to ensure informed decisions is not a commitment to provide Emergency Stopping Places across the county	Medium risk of not taking action - Emergency stopping places need to become part of a mechanism of response and support for Gypsy and Traveller communities	4	12 months to collect information

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
3	Site provision	Not all Gypsies and Travellers are able to afford to purchase land to build private sites, so alternative ways to provide sites should be researched and taken forward, for example considering shared ownership schemes or RSL management of sites	Housing team	Officer time to research Unknown cost of providing sites - depends on delivery method	Low risk - Need full range of options for site delivery to be explored in order to find a variety of approaches for potential site delivery, even if are not successful.	Medium risk - Need to provide support for Gypsy and Traveller families that are unable to buy land as is available for settled communities	2	6 months
4	Site provision	Training for planning committee members will support the Members to enable private sites meeting the criteria set out in the planning policy to be approved quickly and efficiently.	Planning service to ensure Members receive adequate training	Training costs to support Members	Low risk - Members need to be supported as policies and approaches change in order to fully understand the implications	High risk - A change of approach will not be achieved without supporting Members in understanding Gypsy and Traveller communities.	1	6 months to begin then ongoing

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
5	Accessibility of planning systems	Planning teams will proactively encourage Gypsy and Traveller communities to begin discussions early in the planning process to reduce rework.	Planning area teams	Within existing work and existing resources	Low risk - Ensuring Gypsy and Traveller communities are aware of planning legislation and how to access advice and support could increase private site provision.	Low risk - Sites will not be delivered as efficiently or effectively as with encouragement to take up existing advice and support services	3	12 months
6	Accessibility of planning systems	Clear and easy to read information will be provided to support Gypsy and Traveller communities to access the complex planning system.	Planning area teams Strategy project group	Officer time to create pack Cost of printing pack			3	12 months
7	Rights and responsibilities in planning	An easy to read guide to the enforcement policy will be made available to Gypsy and Traveller communities, along with general advice on what all communities can expect during an unauthorised development.	Planning area teams	Officer time to create pack – planned within existing workloads.	Low risk - Ensuring Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities are aware of what processes will be followed in the event of enforcement action will ensure services are transparent	Low risk – Enforcement processes will not be clear to all communities, potentially causing confusion and misunderstanding	3	12 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
8	Accommodation improvements	Information will be collected on the cost and implications of refurbishment / rebuilding of LA managed sites, balanced against the health/wellbeing implications and costs of not taking action. Once refurbished/rebuilt, maintenance and renewal of sites should be built in to a rolling programme to ensure long term sustainability for improvements.	G&T coord grp	Cost to Capital building programme for refurbishment or rebuild	High risk of taking action - Sites need sustained, long term improvement and refurbishment or rebuilding needs to learn from existing sites, as well as adhering to government guidance on design	High risk of not taking action - Costs to maintain current accommodation is not sustainable	1	6 months to plan the phased refurb of sites into the Capital finance programme
9	Site management	The management of Gypsy and Traveller sites will be moved to the housing department to ensure that this is aligned with the policies and procedures for managing social housing.	Housing team / Traveller services team	Officer time to align practices and procedures	Low risk of taking action - Need to understand potential unfair and discriminatory systems in order to make fair and equitable	High risk of not taking action - No alignment of policies and procedures means potential disadvantage of Gypsy and Traveller communities in comparison to settled communities.	1	6 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
10	Transit site	License conditions will be implemented so that sanctions can be imposed for breaking these site conditions	Traveller services team	Within existing officer time to design and implement	Medium risk of taking action - improved licence conditions will require effective support from across the organisation	High risk of not taking action - Need to ensure management of transit site is robust in order to continue to support residents on adjoining residential site	3	6 months
11	Different needs for future sites	The consultation for the Gypsy and Traveller site allocations Development Planning Document should enable all Gypsy and Traveller communities to represent their views to ensure the planning policy allows for different types of sites.	Spatial planning team	Officer time as part of existing consultation work	Low risk of taking action - Consultation process will take place, but need to be proactive to ensure comments from across Gypsy and Traveller communities are incorporated	High risk of not taking action - If planning policies do not properly allow for all types of future pitch need, will only be partially successful.	3	12 months
Knowledge and information								

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
12	Information needed	A research exercise will be undertaken to gather any missing information and to update other information.	G&T coord grp with Corporate Research team Frontline officers will collect data	Cost of officer time or consultancy costs to complete the research	Low risk of taking action - 6 months of engagement across Gypsy and Traveller communities by all frontline officers should ensure a range of views is incorporated from across the county	High risk of not taking action - If no effective information is understood about the health needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, health inequalities cannot be understood or tackled	2	Begin collecting information within 12 months
13	Customer feedback	A regular system of customer feedback will be put in place to assess the satisfaction of Gypsy and Traveller communities on all types of site and in bricks and mortar accommodation to ensure satisfaction.	G&T coord grp	Officer time to design, implement feedback system, and to collect data	Medium risk - expectations will need to be managed to ensure gather information is not interpreted as a promise to take action in all areas	High risk - With no system to gather information, services are not able to effectively meet the needs of communities	1	6 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
14	Local area information pack	An information pack will be produced to meet the needs of different communities – residents on LA sites, transit site, and private sites. The 'Do's and Don'ts' of sites will be included along with information on local amenities and multi-agency information.	Traveller Education Team – Education Welfare Officer to produce draft	Officer time to adapt existing documents, and to verbally explain information pack Cost to print information packs	Low risk - Content needs to be effectively managed and regularly updated, with wastage costs reduced by printing small. This will ensure information is not out of date and feedback from communities is incorporated. Consistent information will be provided	Low risk - Better information provision will ensure Gypsies and Travellers are able to settle in to communities quicker, and are better able to access appropriate services and facilities if only in the county for a short time.	1	6 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
15	Provision of accessible information	Training will be provided for frontline staff across the public sector on cultural awareness, and information and advice on how to interact and communicate with Gypsy and Traveller communities.	G&T coord grp	Officer time to design Cost to implement training - if run by existing officers	Medium risk of taking action - Effective engagement of staff will be needed to ensure cultural awareness lessons are effectively applied in practice	High risk of not taking action - Without supporting staff members to provide services that are appropriate and accessible for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities, settled communities will be better able to access support and services.	2	6 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
16	Public sector communication	Public sector agencies should work together to share information on a regular basis, as issues emerge. Public sector agencies should also share data and statistical information on a regular basis to inform the ongoing development of Gypsy and Traveller services. officers need to maintain regular contact and to discuss emerging issues and share information	G&T coord grp	Officer time to record and share information Staff time to administrative meetings and to attend meetings.	Low risk of taking action - officers at the correct level need to be involved in meetings and committed to implementing the action plan they have worked to devise	High risk of not taking action - Without regular sharing of information, officers will not have a broad understanding of the situation for Gypsies and Travellers, and services will continue to be uncoordinated	1	6 months to begin regularly sharing information
Health, education and safer communities								
17	Health information	Existing local health information for Gypsy and Traveller communities will be assessed and evaluated to find gaps in existing data.	Corporate Research team	Cost to research and provide targeted services	Low risk - Any targeted health services would need to be based on clear information which is not collected at the moment	Medium risk - without local health information services cannot be targeted effectively to reduce health inequalities in relation to settled communities	3	12 months to gather and assess information

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
18	Cross-departmental communication	A communications protocol will be put in place to ensure that any community services frontline worker visiting a local authority site speaks with a member of the Traveller Services team to ensure that services are as coordinated as possible.	Community services – transformation team	Officer time to design and implement protocol	Low risk of taking action - More effective signposting and awareness should ensure greater awareness amongst staff	Low risk of not taking action – Better information and awareness of other departments working with client groups will improve coordination and provision of appropriate and targeted services.	4	
19	Access to health services	Information and advice will be provided for communities to raise awareness about particular health conditions that are prevalent for Gypsy and Traveller communities, in order to increase take-up of preventative services. This will include the provision of face to face advice and information. Accessible information will also be provided on support available to Gypsy and Traveller communities from Community Services.	Health and well-being partnership Community Services – Transformation team	Cost to provide information in alternative formats	Low risk of taking action - More effective signposting and awareness should ensure greater awareness of the services that are available	Low risk of not taking action - If not done, no effective signposting of services	2	12 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
20	Access to health services	Frontline staff will receive guidance on personalisation and the work of adult social care in Wiltshire, as well as training in order enable effective signposting to appropriate health services.	Community services – Transformation team Health and well-being partnership	Cost of training course and staff time to attend	Low risk of taking action - More effective signposting and awareness should ensure greater awareness of the services that are available	Low risk of not taking action - If not done, no effective signposting of services	2	12 months
21	Access to and take-up of education provision and funding	Training will be offered to senior leadership teams in schools to increase the support available for Gypsy and Traveller children. Also, the barriers to accessing educational funding and other forms of education, for example vocational training, should be identified and assessed to understand the reasons for higher and further education not being accessed.	Traveller Education team	Officer time to research needs and map provision Cost to fund courses or access to services	Medium risk of taking action - Expectations may be raised if funding streams are unable to be accessed as funding streams are often linked to schooling	Medium risk of not taking action - Need to ensure Gypsy and Traveller communities are choosing not to access further or higher education, not that barriers are being put in places to stop them accessing those services.	4	12 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
22	Adult literacy	Adult literacy services should be assessed and targeted information should be provided to Gypsy and Traveller communities in order to increase their take-up.	Health and wellbeing partnership Children and young people's trust board Traveller Education team.	Unknown costs - Cost to assess literacy levels in Gypsy and Traveller communities Cost to adapt existing or implement new provision	Medium risk of taking action - Expectations may be raised if funding streams are unable to be accessed. Particular issues exist around funding for transport to literacy services	Medium risk of not taking action - If steps are not taken to support access to services, the educational attainment and literacy gap between Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities will not improve	3	12 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
23	Unauthorised encampments – multi-agency response	To make the process as consistent as possible, agencies will share information about unauthorised encampments and new residents arriving on sites as quickly as possible.	G&T coord grp	Officer time to design Officer time to respond to unauthorised encampments	Low risk of taking action - Officers from across the public sector need to interact on a regular basis to ensure that any response is coordinated.	Medium risk of not taking action - If no multi-agency agreement on response to encampments, service will continue to be uncoordinated and untimely.	2	6 months
Community engagement								
24	Negative perceptions	Officers, Members and frontline staff will be supported in liaising with members of settled communities to provide reassurance and to tackle prejudices.	Communications teams of public sector	Officer time to interact with communities	Medium risk - Potential accusations of favouritism when trying to provide fair and equitable services	High risk - With no concerted effort to tackle prejudices and stereotypes against Gypsy and Traveller communities, new sites, however delivered, will not be effective at building strong and resilient communities	1	6 months

	Issue	Action	Who	Resources	Risk of taking action H / M / L	Risk of not taking action H / M / L	Priority 1 high	Timescale
25	Negative perceptions	Cultural awareness training will be provided for planning officers, Members and other stakeholders by frontline officers, and regular reviews of the content and suitability of training material will be reviewed on a regular basis.	G&T coord grp	Officer time to produce and run training on a regular basis	Low risk - Enables officers and Members to be able to raise questions and concerns	High risk - All frontline officers across the public sector need awareness of how to interact effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities	2	6 months to begin then ongoing
26	Consultation on strategy	A 6 month programme of engagement will take place to gather comments and feedback from across Gypsy and Traveller communities.	G&T coord grp	Officer time to interact with communities	Medium risk of taking action - Expectations may be raised among Gypsy and Traveller communities that everything identified through the strategy consultation will be fixed	Medium risk if not done - Gypsy and Traveller communities will not buy-in to the strategy and any revisions will not incorporate their needs and wants for the next 5 years	1	6 months