



GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY STRATEGY

2009 – 2012

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY STRATEGY
2009 - 2012**

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Foreword

South Cambridgeshire District Council, in consultation with key service providers and stakeholders, has developed its first Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy and Action Plan.

A number of factors including the multiple disadvantages that Gypsies and Travellers experience and Government guidance and good practice have contributed to the development of the strategy. We aim to:

- improve understanding and cohesion between the settled community and Gypsies and Travellers
- identify and consult on options to provide additional sites that will meet the assessed accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities and
- to address unauthorised encampments fairly and efficiently

The strategy and its action plan focuses on the areas where we need to change or improve, and sets out how we will strengthen practice and existing provision. It demonstrates our commitment to improving our approach to Gypsy and Traveller communities. The action plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it is effective in meeting our aims and objectives.

Councillor Ray Manning
Leader of the Council

Executive Summary

Gypsies and Travellers constitute South Cambridgeshire's largest minority ethnic community, comprising 1% of its population. The Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment (CSTNA) highlights that Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education.

The vision for this strategy, our first focusing on Gypsy and Traveller communities, is:

To ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities enjoy equality of service and are part of cohesive communities within which people from different backgrounds participate together and share equal rights and responsibilities.

Our objectives are to:

- Provide a consistent, co-ordinated approach across the Council, and through its partnerships, to its work with Gypsies and Travellers.
- Improve access to services and the responsiveness of mainstream services and ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated into existing policies and mainstream services.
- Foster good community relationships, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and positively promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of our rural communities.
- Work with partners, including health, police, voluntary agencies, and other local authorities to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Ensure that the accommodation and other needs of Gypsies/Travellers are met whilst taking account of cultural issues or specific requirements.
- Seek to manage unauthorised camping in an efficient and effective way, having regard to the welfare requirements, rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers, the environment and the potential level of nuisance for local residents.
- Provide a clear policy and practice framework for the guidance of agencies, staff, elected members, Gypsies and Travellers, landowners and the wider public.

Whilst there are some good examples of service delivery by the Council and by our partners we recognise that there are areas where we need to strengthen our work with, and our approach to, the Gypsy and Traveller community. This strategy reviews where we are now, identifies areas for improvement and how we will address these.

The key priority areas for action are:

- Providing strategic direction and co-ordination
- Establishing two-way engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Promoting community cohesion
- Raising awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture, the duty to promote equality and practical ways to achieve this
- Improving partnership working
- Improving access to, and experience of, services

This strategy, when referring to Gypsies and Travellers, includes new travellers and Travelling Showpeople as well as Gypsies and Irish Travellers, who are distinct ethnic groups covered by Race Relations legislation.

The Travellers Strategic Officer Group will have primary responsibility for regular monitoring of the strategy and the implementation action plan. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will also oversee its implementation as part of its wider remit to support the development and implementation of policies and practices to enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and achieve its commitment to equality and diversity given in the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity will consider progress reports on delivering the strategy and consider recommendations as required for decision or referral to Cabinet as appropriate.

More Information

If you would like more information or to comment on our Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy or if you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact:

Phone: 01954 713465

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Profile of South Cambridgeshire

The district:

- is completely rural set in 350 square miles of countryside
- has a population of over 130,000 residents dispersed among [102 parishes](#)
- consists of only rural settlements with no towns
- is a prosperous area with high levels of economic activity and low levels of unemployment; but with increasing house prices and a shortage of affordable homes a healthy area, with high life expectancy compared with national rates
- has the lowest crime rate in Cambridgeshire

The population of the district is undergoing a transition. South Cambridgeshire has an ageing population. The percentage of the population aged 65 or above is expected to rise from 14.8% in 2001 to 21.3% in 2016. Conversely, the percentage of children and young people is forecast to decrease from 25% in 2001 to 22.6% in 2021. The aging of the population has implications for the number of our residents affected by disabilities.

Migration is becoming a major factor in South Cambridgeshire. Migration between South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the UK shows net in-migration, with the incoming population having a younger age profile. Recent immigration from outside the UK has included workers attracted by opportunities for employment in the food industry and in the local service economy. Migrant workers have traditionally formed an important sector of the seasonal labour force and recently, migrant communities are becoming more established and less 'seasonal'. There has been a distinct increase in migrant workers numbers since the last Census, particularly after the accession to the EU in May 2004 of several European countries. Whether migrant workers will remain as economic conditions change, remains to be seen.

The 2001 Census data shows that in South Cambridgeshire 93.2% of the population were White British, and a further 3.7% were White Irish and White Other, with 3,800 people identified as from minority ethnic groups. The largest identified minority ethnic groups were Indian, Chinese, and Other Ethnic group which overall do not represent more than 1% of the population.

Gypsies and Travellers were not identified separately in the 2001 Census although they are an ethnic group. The Cambridge Area Travellers Needs Assessment 2005 estimated that South Cambridgeshire's Travellers estimate was 1,330, which equates to 1% of the 2005 district population and makes them the largest ethnic minority group.

Gypsy and Traveller Communities

The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK are not accurately known as they are not included as separate categories in the census, and the twice-yearly caravan count for the department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) does not yield reliable data. However, these official counts currently record over 15,000 caravans in England

and estimates of the total Gypsy population range between 75,000 and 300,000¹. The absence of reliable data on population size is reflected in the lack of information about Gypsies and Travellers' access to, and experiences of, public services.

Romany Gypsies have been a part of British society since the 1500s, Irish Travellers since the 1800s, and both groups are legally recognised as ethnic groups with distinct cultures and traditions. The courts have made clear that travelling is not a defining characteristic of the groups but only one among others, which is significant because the majority of Britain's Gypsies and Travellers live in conventional 'bricks and mortar' housing. Some do so by choice, others because of the severe shortage of Gypsy sites. Those living in caravans travel to varying degrees. While a small number are highly mobile, some travel only during the summer months and some travel little or not at all but still want to live in a caravan, surrounded by their extended family. The shortage of authorised residential and transit sites means that some camp unlawfully leading to regular 'enforced' nomadism through constant evictions. For those who do not travel, travelling is more a 'state of mind' than a day-to-day reality. The courts have ruled that nomadism and living in a caravan is a reflection of Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' cultural heritage and not simply a lifestyle choice that can be ignored.

Gypsies and Travellers constitute South Cambridgeshire's largest minority ethnic community, comprising 1% of its population. Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education.

South Cambridgeshire has recorded more Gypsy and Traveller caravans than any other district in England, a total of over 600 in recent years. A significant majority of these caravans are located on authorised sites, with planning permission. There is an important distinction between individual caravans and what is known as a "pitch" which can accommodate several caravans belonging to an individual family. The number of caravans can be considered comparable to the number of bedrooms in a house.

Scope and definitions

This strategy, when referring to Gypsies and Travellers, includes new travellers and Travelling Showpeople as well as Gypsies and Irish Travellers, who are distinct ethnic groups covered by Race Relations legislation. The definition of Gypsies and Travellers used is²:

- (a) persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan; and
- (b) all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:
 - (i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and
 - (ii) members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

¹ Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment, 2005-2010 (2006)

² Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance, Communities and Local Government, 2007

Chapter 2: Vision and objectives

Our vision

The vision for this strategy, our first focusing on Gypsy and Traveller communities, is:

To ensure that Gypsy and Traveller communities enjoy equality of service and are part of cohesive communities within which people from different backgrounds participate together and share equal rights and responsibilities.

Our objectives

- Provide a consistent, co-ordinated approach across the Council, and through its partnerships, to its work with Gypsies and Travellers.
- Improve access to services and the responsiveness of mainstream services and ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated into existing policies and mainstream services.
- Foster good community relationships, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and positively promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of our rural communities.
- Work with partners, including the Health Service, Police, voluntary agencies, and other local authorities to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Ensure that the accommodation and other needs of Gypsies/Travellers are met whilst taking account of cultural issues or specific requirements.
- To seek to manage unauthorised camping in an efficient and effective way, having regard to the welfare requirements, rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers, the environment and the potential level of nuisance for local residents.
- Provide a clear policy and practice framework for the guidance of agencies, staff, elected members, Gypsies and Travellers, landowners and the wider public.

Our key priorities

There are some good examples of service delivery by the Council and by our partners but we recognise that there are areas where we need to strengthen our work with and our approach to, the Gypsy and Traveller community. This strategy reviews where we are now, identifies areas for improvement and how we will address these.

Having carried out an assessment of current provision the key priorities areas for action are:

- Providing strategic direction and co-ordination
- Establishing two-way engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Promoting community cohesion
- Raising awareness of Gypsy and Travellers culture, the duty to promote equality and practical ways to achieve this
- Improving partnership working
- Improving access to, and experience of, services

Chapter 3: Background Policy Context

National Context

Our strategy for Gypsy and Traveller communities is supported by a number of developments at a national and European level. There are a range of factors that have contributed to and driven the development of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy.

Promoting Community Cohesion

The ODPM Guidance 'Local Authorities and Gypsies and Travellers; a guide to responsibilities and powers' sets out the objective that Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully. To achieve this, both must respect the rights of the other and both must discharge their responsibilities to the other. This includes making adequate provision for authorised sites, ensuring respect for the planning system and property rights and prompt and effective enforcement action taken against problem sites; the small minority who indulge in anti-social behaviour must be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Promoting Race Equality

Since April 2001 public authorities have had a legal duty to promote race equality and good race relations, and to produce a Race Equality Scheme showing how they will achieve this. Research by the Commission for Race Equality³ (CRE) has identified failures by councils to understand that this duty is not only about promoting race equality, but also about promoting good race relations⁴. The research also identified a failure to see Gypsies and Irish Travellers as racial groups, with specific needs based on ethnicity rather than land use, which led to their omission from corporate work to promote race equality and good race relations. Our Race Equality Scheme (RES), identifies Gypsy and Traveller issues as the most relevant to race equality, since they are the largest ethnic minority group in our district and identifies ten service areas most closely associated with their issues.

Assessing and meeting needs

The late 1990s saw a review of law and policy in response to the consequences of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 2004, which withdrew the duty for local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies. The Housing Act 2004 and Planning Circular 01/2006, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* put in place a framework to 'create and support sustainable, respectful, and inclusive communities where Gypsies and Travellers have access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision'; to 'reduce the number of unauthorised encampments and the conflict and controversy they cause'; to 'offer alternative provision to campers'; to 'increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations with

³ The creation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), has now replaced the Commission for Racial Equality, The Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission.

⁴ Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales, 2006.

planning permission'; and to 'recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community.

The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and to produce a strategy to meet these as part of the wider Housing Strategy. Circular 01/2006 sets out the obligation of local authorities to allocate sufficient sites for Gypsies and Travellers in site allocation Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and identifies a set of criteria that should be considered. The document also sets out a directive to:

- Create and support sustainable, respectful and inclusive communities in which Gypsies and Travellers have access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare services.
- Reduce the number of unauthorised encampments and the conflict and controversy they cause.
- Offer alternative provision to campers.
- Increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission.
- Recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community.

Supporting People

Supporting People is the national programme that covers both supported housing and housing support to vulnerable people in their own homes. Housing support covers those services such as home improvement agencies, community alarms, counselling and advice that enable people to sustain tenancies and remain in the community. It was introduced across the country from 1 April 2003.

The vision for the Cambridgeshire Supporting People Strategy is:

'To improve quality of life and well-being by ensuring housing and housing support is available that reduces risk and enables vulnerable people to live as full a life as possible'

The Supporting People programme in Cambridgeshire is committed to the following priorities:

1. Prevention
2. Community development
3. Social inclusion
4. Promoting independence
5. User control

These priorities are closely aligned to wider priorities for the health, housing and social care partners. The Supporting People programme is seen as a mechanism for ensuring these priorities are delivered.

Supporting People is relevant to people in the following client-groups:

- Care leavers
- Teenage parents and other vulnerable single parents
- Vulnerable young people (under 25)
- Travellers
- Offenders/ex-offenders (including mentally disordered offenders)
- Those at risk from domestic violence
- Homeless people and families (including rough sleepers)
- People with AIDS/HIV
- People with a substance misuse problem (drugs and alcohol)
- People with mental health difficulties
- People with a learning disability
- People with a sensory impairment
- People with a physical disability/chronic illness
- Older people (including the frail elderly and elderly mentally infirm people)
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- Other vulnerable adults

Regional Context

The pattern of movement of Gypsies and Travellers, and responsibilities on regional housing and planning bodies regarding Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, necessitates a regional approach. Local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) inform the Regional Housing Strategy and provide a strategic view of need across regions. Based on identified need, the relevant regional planning body (The East of England Regional Authority (EERA) in South Cambridgeshire's case) determines how many pitches should be provided across the region and specifies the number in each local authority area. This has led to a single-issue review of the East of England Plan, which is nearing adoption. This provides the planning framework at the sub-regional housing market area and local levels, although decisions regarding site locations are made at a local level.

The Council is currently consulting on a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD) to meet our contribution to the East of England Plan.

Local Context

Corporate vision, aims and values

The Council has adopted the following corporate vision, which underpins the overall direction for the authority:

Our Vision:

To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.

The following **Aims** set out how we will deliver the vision.

Our Aims. We are committed to –

1. being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all
2. ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family
3. making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
4. assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family
5. providing a voice for rural life

The Council has also adopted values to guide the way that we work together and provide services to the public. These will help us work effectively together to achieve our aims. They govern every aspect of our working relationships within the Council, with the public and our partners.

Our Values.

- Customer service
- A commitment to improvement
- Mutual respect
- Trust

We have initiated a programme to embed the values into the Council. We will ensure that we have a common understanding of what the values mean. Our aim is that the values guide our decision-making; our training and skills development; our relationships; and our processes and procedures.

Corporate Plan 2009/10: achieving equality and diversity.

As an authority we are committed to eliminating discrimination and prejudice, and developing a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery. In December 2007 we achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and we expect to achieve Level 2 by June 2009. We will then put in place a work programme to achieve Level 3 (which equates to Level 2 “Achieving” in the new Equality Framework to come into effect in 2009).

Equality is an important element of our Aim to make our services accessible to all and our Value of Mutual Respect. In 2009/10 we have a challenging work programme to embed equality and diversity within the Council and to build networks with external communities around equalities issues. The main tasks to be addressed in 2009/10 include:

- undertaking equality impact assessments for high and medium priority services
- building the Equalities Consultative Forum
- agreeing a new policy to direct our work with the Gypsy and Traveller community
- adopting a Gender Equality scheme and revising our Race and Disability schemes.

The Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the planning policy framework for South Cambridgeshire. The LDF sets a vision for the future of South Cambridgeshire and includes objectives and targets, which developments must meet to secure that vision. Essentially, this framework for growth will guide where, when and how development should take place.

The LDF forms part of the Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire. The Development Plan is made up of those plans which have been statutorily adopted and which cover the district. The composition of the current Development Plan is set out in the council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). It also lists which Local Development Documents are to be produced and when. The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document will become part of the LDF.

The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD), as part of the Council's LDF, will form a vital tool for implementing the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy, and will set out policies and proposals as they relate to planning for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the district, covering the period 2006 – 2021.

Links to other key strategies and policies

The Gypsy and Travellers strategy complements a range of existing council strategies and policies, in particular:

- Comprehensive Equalities Policy (and Race Equality Scheme)
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Housing and Homelessness Strategies
- Customer Service Strategy

each of which contribute to the identification of, and response to, the needs and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers.

Sustainable Community Strategy, 2008-2011

The Sustainable Community Strategy, developed by the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), provides a framework for partnership working in the district. The LSP works with local authority partners, health services, the police, parish councils and the business and voluntary sectors, and focuses on the following four objectives:

1. *Active, healthy and inclusive communities* where residents can play a full part in community life, with a structure of thriving voluntary and community organisations.
2. *Safe and clean communities* where residents do not feel vulnerable or isolated and need not fear crime or anti-social behaviour.

3. *Building successful new communities* where developments include affordable homes to meet local needs and form attractive places where people want to live, and which are supported by a full range of services and social networks.
4. *A sustainable infrastructure and environment* with good transport links and access to the countryside of the district, which is itself protected and improved, and with sustainable measures, which minimise waste and tackle climate change.

Community Engagement Strategy 2009

The emerging community engagement strategy focuses on ensuring that communities shape and influence Council practice by developing integrated systems to engage all local communities appropriately. Its aims are:

1. To put **public involvement at the centre** of everything the council does
2. To strive for a **broad representation** of residents
3. To be **honest, open and transparent** in communications with the public to ensure there is easy access to relevant and clear information
4. To ensure that the views, needs, expectations and **outcomes of engagement** activities are used to inform decision-making processes, policy development and service planning
5. To provide **clear guidance** and promote consistent standards of engagement across the Council
6. To listen to communities and **give feedback** to participants about outcomes of engagement activities

Customer Service Strategy

The Customer Service Strategy is focused on our determination to deliver high quality, responsive, accessible, value for money services. We have used the local government Improvement and Development Agency's (IDeA) three customer service themes to provide a framework for the strategy and action plan. In summary these are:

- *Responsive services* – understanding what customers want and designing, where feasible, services to meet their needs.
- *Accessible services* – ensuring that services are accessible and convenient to all customers.
- *Efficient and effective services* – getting good value for money and making the best use of resources.

Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009-12

Our Comprehensive Equalities Policy sets out specific principles and aims that we will follow in order to achieve our 'Commitment to Equality' and the equality dimension of our Corporate Objectives and Values.

The Council has already adopted Race and Disability Equality schemes and is in the process of developing a Gender Equality scheme. We have a number of relevant human resource policies, the development of a strategy for our work with the Traveller community and other equality target groups.

Our approach to the delivery of our commitment to equality will reflect the following strategic objectives:

- Fairness and equity, while recognising that many people fall under more than one of our equality priorities.
- Being non-discriminatory in all areas and activities, including service delivery, staff recruitment and development and the purchasing of goods and services.
- Ensuring that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of our community have equal access to all of our services, particularly those associated with our key equality themes
- Ensuring that elected members and staff at all levels are clear about their responsibility to challenge discrimination, promote diversity and social inclusion, and work towards equality for all members of the community.
- Encouraging 'real' participation in local democracy by people who may normally feel excluded from decision-making processes. In doing this, we will ensure that we seek the views of groups who are particularly vulnerable or at risk of social exclusion or have found it difficult to access our services or receive favourable outcomes from them.
- Promotion of community cohesion & good community relations.
- Working with partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to promote 'best practice' equality approaches throughout the community strategy, while ensuring the best outcomes from the strategy for all the people of South Cambridgeshire.
- Working towards a workforce, which reflects the working-age population of the district and the county and conforms with 'best value' guidelines on staff diversity.

Housing Strategy 2007- 2010

The Housing Strategy document brings together all aspects of the Council's comprehensive housing role. All the different strands of the strategy have been developed in partnership with a wide range of key stakeholders inside the authority, in other agencies, and in the wider community. It is therefore fully integrated with the Council's wider community objectives, and takes full account of national, regional and sub-regional priorities.

Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011

In developing the Homelessness Strategy, key stakeholders within all sectors, including voluntary organisations, service providers, housing associations, private landlords and other statutory organisations have been involved either through attendance of the Homelessness Review Steering Group or participation of the landlords, housing associations and service provider surveys.

The overall aims of the homelessness strategy are:

- the prevention of homelessness
- ensuring that there is sufficient accommodation available to people who are, or who may become homeless
- ensuring there is adequate support for people who are, or who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again

Homelessness prevention

The outcome of a homelessness review, which informed the development of the strategy and took into account the views from service providers, RSLs and the private sector, has helped to identify where further work needs to be progressed. This included ensuring information is accessible to all in a format that is easily understood. In particular information targeted at specific individual client groups such as young people and Travellers needed to be further developed.

Providing support

One of the main findings of the review highlighted the need to ensure key agencies that work with homeless or potentially homeless applicants were aware of the services/support provided by the Housing Advice & Options Team.

To ensure that adequate support is available and utilised, the Council would:

- Increase the awareness of the prevention services, such as the Floating Support Scheme, with key agencies.
- Review the role of the Travellers Liaison Officer to ensure appropriate support is available.

Chapter 4 Legislative Context

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. The Act requires local authorities to consider the implications of taking enforcement action against Gypsies, Travellers and local residents, and to consider whether the action is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances. The Act stresses Gypsy and Traveller rights to family life.

The Race Relations 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000

The Race Relations (Amendment Act) places a general duty on statutory authorities to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good race relations.

Both Gypsies and Irish Travellers are legally recognised to be ethnic minorities against whom discrimination is unlawful. As required by the Act, the Council has produced a Race Equality Scheme (2005-2008), and a review of this, which focus on Gypsies and Travellers as the district's largest minority ethnic group. The Council's recent Comprehensive Equalities Policy (2009-2012) sets out its overall vision for equality and diversity, including a commitment to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy by September 2009. The Council achieved level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in 2007 and is expected to achieve level 2 by June 2009.

Every Child Matters and the subsequent Children Act 2004

These aim to improve the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19 and people with disabilities up to the age of 25. The aim is for every child to have the support they need to be healthy happy and safe, to achieve economic independence and to make a positive contribution to society. The framework stresses the inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller children.

The Housing Act 2004

The Housing Act 2004, and the ODPM planning circular (Circular 01/2006), placed a requirement on local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and to produce a strategy to meet these needs as part of the wider Housing Strategy.

Housing Act 1996 / Homelessness Act 2002

The Homelessness Act 2002 gave local authorities a duty to develop strategies to make sure they have sufficient accommodation for everyone who is homeless in their area. Under the Housing Act 1996, a person is homeless if they have available accommodation, which is a moveable structure, for example a caravan or houseboat, and there is nowhere that they can legally place it and reside in it.

Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites

Circular 01/2006 provides updated guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for Gypsies and Travellers. The main aims of the Circular are to:

- Create and support sustainable, respectful, inclusive communities where Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health, and welfare provision
- Reduce the number of unauthorised encampments
- Increase the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites to address under-provision
- Recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional travelling way of life, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community
- Underline the importance of assessing needs at regional and sub-regional level
- Provide for land and accommodation requirements
- Ensure that Development Plan Documents include, fair, realistic and inclusive policies
- Promote private Gypsy and Traveller sites and help to avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless through eviction from unauthorised sites without an alternative to move to.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

Section 77 enables local authorities to direct unauthorised campers to leave a site. If a direction is not complied with local authorities may use Section 78 to obtain a court order for eviction. In addition the police have power, under Section 61, to direct trespassers to leave land, and further powers under Section 62 to direct trespassers to leave land and direct them to move to a more suitable pitch.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

This Act includes measures to address anti-social behaviour, littering and fly tipping. Part 7 introduces a new police power to evict unauthorised campers where there is a suitable pitch available on a caravan site elsewhere in the local authority area.

Chapter 5 Current position

Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers

Current site provision

Gypsy and Traveller communities are an integral part of South Cambridgeshire and we are committed to ensuring they have a right to a decent home alongside settled communities. Through planning and housing, we have helped to provide over 200 pitches over the past 20 years. Between January 2006 and January 2009 13 permanent pitches were given planning approval in the district. In addition, a planning consent at Chesterton Fen for 26 pitches remains under construction.

At 2006 there were 203 authorised permanent residential pitches in the district. The highest concentrations of permanent authorised sites are in the Chesterton Fen Road area of Milton parish, and Smithy Fen, Cottenham. There are a number of smaller sites located around the district, including in Rampton, Willingham, Meldreth and Histon. There are two existing Travelling Showpeople sites in the district, both located near Meldreth.

The council manages two sites owned by the County Council at Blackwell, Milton and New Farm, Whaddon. Both sites are currently at full capacity with 15 and 14 pitches occupied respectively. At Blackwell, however, there is wide dissatisfaction with its suitability as a permanent Gypsy and Traveller residential site due to its location adjacent the A14.

In July 2005 we recorded 183 caravans on unauthorised sites, at that time the second highest number of caravans on unauthorised sites in the country. As well as taking planning enforcement action where appropriate, the Council granted a number of temporary planning consents as an interim measure prior to completion of the GTDPD and the East of England Plan single-issue review. This has dramatically reduced the number of caravans on sites without either permanent or temporary planning consent, to 29 in January 2009.

Most of the remaining unauthorised caravans are located on Gypsy or Traveller owned land without planning permission, usually near authorised Gypsy-owned sites. The largest concentration of unauthorised sites is located in Cottenham. Unauthorised encampments also occur on highway verge land or on privately owned land where Gypsies and Travellers are passing through or have been displaced from other accommodation.

Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers

The South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), 2005-2010, carried out as part of the CSTNA sets out the demographic profile of the Gypsy and Traveller community and their accommodation needs.

The key findings are outlined in Appendix 1 and highlight needs arising from serious health problems and educational disadvantage as well as a pressing need for more sites of all kinds (public and private, long-stay and transit) although respondents expressed no preference for specific geographical locations.

The estimated level of need for additional pitches between 2005 and 2010 in South Cambridgeshire was assessed to be between 110 and 130.

The draft East of England Plan requires a minimum of 69 additional pitches to be provided in South Cambridgeshire between 2006 and 2011 and a further 58 will be required between 2011 to 2021 to accommodate household growth. The figure of 69 pitches is less than the 110-130 identified in the CSTNA, reflecting the regional approach to meeting need. Taking account of completed sites since 2006 and outstanding permissions at 2009, the residual minimum requirement to be found through new permanent sites is 88 pitches.

The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD)

The South Cambridgeshire GTDPD aims to reduce the occurrence of unauthorised sites by making sufficient new provision for Gypsies and Travellers in the district, within the framework provided by the East of England Plan for the region as a whole. The GTDPD will address the full range of land use and planning issues that need to be taken into account to bring forward Gypsy and Traveller sites over the plan period, including how they relate to the settled community.

A range of site options has been tested, using criteria consulted on in 2006. The sources of land that have been tested have focused on those where there is a reasonable potential for delivering Gypsy and Travellers sites, a key test of the plan-making process. These include sites with temporary planning permission, unauthorised sites, the major development sites around Cambridge and the new town of Northstowe, and land owned by public authorities. This process had identified sufficient site options to meet and slightly exceed the number of pitches required. However, it has not identified a significant number of entirely new sites that would meet the planning criteria and be deliverable.

Following a consultation process, the Council will consider the responses, choose which sites should be allocated, and prepare a draft plan. There will then be a further period of public consultation on the plan that the Council wishes to adopt before it is formally put forward for public examination by a Government Planning Inspector.

The timetable for completing the GTDPD can be found on the Council's website, and is summarised here:

STAGE	DATE
Issues and options 1	November 2006
Issues and options 2	June to October 2009
Consultation on further Site Options (if any further reasonable sites are proposed)	Early 2010
Submission plan consultation	June 2010
Submission to Secretary of State	Autumn 2010
Examination	Spring 2011
Adoption	Autumn 2011

Responding to unauthorised encampments

The recent Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report⁵ highlights examples of good practice and a proportionate policy approach where local authorities have reaped the benefits of meeting the need of Gypsies and Travellers to preserve their traditional lifestyle while accessing health and education services and maintaining good relations with other communities.

The ODPM statistics indicate that since the duty on local authorities to provide sites was removed in 1994, a growing shortage of authorised sites has resulted in unauthorised encampments causing a range of issues for Gypsies and Travellers, the settled community and local authorities. The situation has prompted an increased number of litigation cases regarding sites for Gypsies and Travellers and planning enforcement. Anecdotal evidence indicates that by maintaining meaningful and effective relationships with the Traveller and Gypsy community the impact of unauthorised encampments can be minimised, with a reduction in inter-community conflict and the costs of enforcement action. Also, whilst matters related to enforcement require individual responses, it is anticipated that a clear criteria-based policy and approach to identifying suitable and sustainable sites, outlined in the final GTDPD, will be effective in helping the Council deal with future applications for new pitches and if necessary acting on unauthorised ones.

We aim to respond to unauthorised development in line with government policies that require equality of treatment for all communities. The enforcement policy and Code of Practice for Travellers and Gypsies (2004) outline our current approach. Efforts are made to ensure that policies on enforcement, planning, provision of sites and affordable housing are linked to ensure that a decision taken in one area, such as to sell land or to evict an encampment, does not have unintended repercussions for another, for example by reducing the land available for sites, or causing homelessness. A Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Protocol clarifies the differing areas of responsibility of housing and planning services, support and enforcement respectively, and outlines the role of housing in identifying all welfare needs, including safeguarding issues for adults and children, in relation to enforcement action. The Homelessness Strategy 2003 – 2008 has been updated to incorporate information about Traveller issues, improve the monitoring of use of services and to confirm that in the event of potential enforcement action, Travellers affected are automatically referred for housing and homelessness advice.

We recognise that functions relating to planning applications, planning enforcement and appeals as being amongst those that have most scope for promoting race equality. Therefore, planning enforcement officers maintain regular contact with Travellers, making information available in a range of formats about the planning process, advice on homelessness and access to housing benefits.

The County Council currently has a Traveller Liaison Officer whose remit is to respond to Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments on county-owned land, including assessment of their health and welfare needs.

⁵ EHRC, 2009, Gypsies and Travellers: simple solutions for living together.

Promoting Community Cohesion

A Council review of its approach to Gypsy and Traveller communities (2008) recognised the primary focus was on planning and land use issues rather than promoting community cohesion. Feedback from the Audit Commission as a result of the Corporate Governance Inspection in 2008 informed the review as it identified a need for us to engage further with the Gypsy and Traveller community to develop positive relationships and promote equality.

A key step in moving forward has been the appointment of a Traveller Site Team Leader and the expansion of this role beyond the two Council-managed sites to include unauthorised and private sites. The post, which sits within the housing service, has a largely operational remit.

Our emphasis is on a community development approach through maximising and co-ordinating council action, and building potential partnerships with the County Council and other local organisations. Within the Council, the Strategic Officers Group (SOG) for Gypsies and Travellers, led by the Executive Director and comprising representatives from planning, housing, new communities, finance and environmental health services, ensures a consistent and joined up approach.

The Corporate Manager – Planning and Sustainable Communities has been designated as officer champion and the Housing Portfolio Holder the Councillor champion, in recognition of the importance of Gypsy and Traveller issues for the Council and its local communities.

The Council's partnership approach is underpinned by the work of the South Cambridgeshire Traveller Liaison Group (TLG), comprising representatives from the District and County Council, Ormiston Travellers Initiative, Traveller Education, Education Welfare and Gypsy and Traveller Health.

Whilst community cohesion is based on equality, participation and interaction, with respect to Gypsies and Travellers the focus remains largely on what divides people, rather than unites. Mutual misunderstandings and stereotypes abound, often fuelled by the media, with the only visible sign of interaction between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of the public being around location of sites, and conflicts over unauthorised encampments. Rarely do these sections of the community come together over the everyday business of living. Many Gypsies and Travellers are reluctant to engage with the local authority or the rest of the community, which remains entrenched in its hostility towards them⁶.

The Ormiston Travellers Initiative works across Cambridgeshire to address social exclusion and promote equality in the provision of, and access to, services for members of the travelling community. Their work includes:

- A range of activities aimed at supporting children and young people within Travelling communities and increasing their participation.

⁶ CRE, Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales.

- Work with the county's statutory and voluntary organisations to build their capacity and enable Travellers to access mainstream services.
- An advocacy team, which works with individuals ensuring that they are able to access the services they need.

The Council promotes a range of positive community engagement work, but this has tended to take the form of 'one-off' initiatives rather than part of a strategic approach.

The work includes:

- Supporting workshops in schools and the wider community by the Romany Theatre Company.
- Arranging visits to Traveller sites in the district for Cabinet members and senior managers.
- Providing Traveller cultural awareness training for Cabinet members and staff by Ormiston Children and Families Trust.
- Assisting the Ormiston Trust / Cambridgeshire Travellers Initiative with the release of a CD providing independent advice for Travellers on the planning process.
- Raising awareness of councillors of the CRE Safer Communities Initiatives briefing on Gypsies and Travellers

Meeting wider needs of Gypsies and Travellers

A recent review conducted in 2008 identified a need to develop strong links with Gypsy and Traveller communities and to engage them with Council policy in relation to planning, enforcement, development and housing. It is evident that tension may arise at times between our different duties to provide services, promote equality and uphold planning law, hence clear understanding and allocation of duties, with proactive co-ordination is vital, to enable a consistent, effective approach.

In response, changes to our approach to delivering services to Gypsy and Traveller communities have been made which seek to address these wider issues. A Gypsy and Traveller Team Leader, located within the Housing service has been appointed and is developing and delivering a wider range of services to Gypsies and Travellers in addition to site management. These services include:

- Being a key point of contact for Gypsy and Traveller enquiries.
- Providing advice and support to Gypsies and Travellers on all sites.
- Acting as a source of expertise for development of policies and services related to Gypsies and Travellers.
- Working with partner organisations to develop new initiatives and improve access to services.
- Supporting the Gypsy and Traveller Strategic Officers Group (SOG), Travellers Liaison Group and the Cambridgeshire Health sub-group.
- Managing two council run sites.
- Proactively investigating funding streams to improve existing or help deliver new sites.

However, given the wide remit of the role, delivery has tended to be reactive rather than part of an integrated or proactive approach. This strategy seeks to enable more efficient and effective use of the expertise and resources available, and assist the council to develop and deliver appropriate services to Gypsies and Travellers. Recent changes to our monitoring systems also mean that services can now identify Gypsies and Travellers access to services, and their outcomes.

The South Cambridgeshire Traveller Liaison Group, hosted by the district council, comprises representatives from key voluntary and statutory sector agencies in the district and the County Council and seeks to enable partnership working in the delivery of services to Gypsies and Travellers. A countywide forum, hosted by the County Council, is being reconvened and a health sub-group of Cambridgeshire Together, a county-wide partnership established to deliver the Local Area Agreement, is active.

Managing sites effectively

It is essential that new and existing Gypsy and Traveller sites are designed and managed in such ways as to make them desirable, effective and sustainable, offering a decent and safe environment. Nationally, it has been identified that local authorities have little information about the quality of sites because, in contrast to social housing, they have no local performance indicators on site location, design, quality or management⁷. We are currently developing more robust systems for site management, including the admission of new residents, site repair and maintenance arrangements, and liaison with essential service providers. The aim is to ensure high standards of management and support, equal to those available to tenants in other forms of social accommodation.

Housing related support services

Most Gypsies and Travellers in Britain live in houses. Whilst little is known about them, or about the reasons for their choice, it is believed that many turn reluctantly to 'bricks and mortar' when they can no longer cope with the pressure of poor health, the hardship of insufficient site facilities, caravans that are not designed for disabilities or the frailties of age, the ordeal of repeated evictions or the demands of their children's education.⁸

These reasons were reflected in the Cambridge sub-region Traveller Needs Assessment, 2006 (CSTNA). While 26% of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed on sites had formerly lived in a house, only 12% said that they would do so again. While there were advantages of leaving the hardship of roadside life, this was accompanied by the loss of close-knit community ties and shared values, physical isolation and loneliness. As a result many Gypsies and Irish Travellers find it difficult to keep up their tenancies, leading to a cycle of eviction from housing to homelessness and unauthorised encampments, and back to eviction. A draft report, commissioned by Cambridgeshire Supporting People to project housing support needs⁹ suggests that 25% of all Gypsy and Traveller households on sites also require housing support, but was unable to

⁷ CRE, Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales.

⁸ CRE Gypsies and Travellers Strategy (2004-2007)

⁹ Projecting need for housing support in Cambridgeshire, 2009, Cambridgeshire County Council

identify specific support services apart from those provided in relation to education and health.

In order to enable a successful transition to housing our floating support workers offer help to Gypsies and Travellers, with the Gypsy and Traveller Team Leader acting as a resource to these workers to ensure appropriate responses.

Improving the Health of Gypsies and Travellers

Access to health care is a vital component of an inclusive approach to Gypsy and Traveller welfare, given current extremely poor health outcomes. Their mortality rate is between one and one and a half times that of the housed population; maternal mortality is higher than for any other ethnic group, with deaths often directly related to lack of stable sites and adequate maternal care, and Travellers also exhibit high infant mortality and child accident rates¹⁰. Circular 01/2006 stresses the importance of convenient access to local services such as medical clinics and schools and the need to consider this first in deciding locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The CSTNA found that life expectancy for English Gypsies in the sub-region appeared to be comparatively high, with the situation regarding Irish Travellers being less clear. The survey estimates that over 17% of English Gypsies in the study area are over 65, contrasting with 4% of Irish Travellers. The difference between the two populations is partly explained by English Gypsies being based in the area for many years while the Irish Travellers include a number of in-migrants who tend to be younger. The higher life expectancy in the Cambridgeshire area probably reflects better access to health services and living with other family members, particularly those living on council sites. However, a considerable number of Gypsies and Travellers in the 55 and over age group reported having poor health.

Cambridgeshire Traveller Health Team Initiative has recently been launched with the aim of addressing health inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities and improving their access to health and other services. This initiative is part of a strategy developed by Cambridgeshire Traveller Health sub-group, a sub-group of the Cambridgeshire Travellers Liaison Forum. While a three-year project, the initial 9 months comprises a pilot in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge city up to December 2009. The project, involving a multi-agency Traveller health team, is a partnership between the Cambridgeshire Community Services, Ormiston Children & Families Trust and Cambridgeshire Race Equality & Diversity Service (CREDS).

Improving the Education Outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers

Each local education authority in England and Wales has the responsibility to provide appropriate education for all children of school age that live in, or come into, the authority area.

The Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted)¹¹ has shown that Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group. This is not a new issue. The Swann

¹⁰ Parry et al, 2004

¹¹ Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils, Ofsted 1999

report¹² identified in 1985 the impact of racism on Gypsy and Traveller pupils and the need for more positive links between their parents and their children's schools. Research commissioned by The Department of Education and Employment (DfEE)¹³ identified that many Gypsy and Traveller parents wanted their children to complete secondary education and even higher education. Whilst there is a positive attitude towards education, however, there are reservations about schools based on fear of dilution of Gypsy and Traveller values as well as a fear that children will experience racism and social exclusion.

Locally, data provided by the Cambridgeshire Travellers Education Service (TES), as part of the CSTNA, confirms significantly lower attendance, attainment and progression to secondary school for Gypsy and Traveller children. TES is commended in the CSTNA for their good practice in working with the community. The report highlights the benefits of establishing mutual trust between the settled population and Gypsies and Travellers through education together, both for the individual children and for wider inter-community relations.

CREDS also works to raise the achievement of Gypsy and Traveller children. They offer support with maintaining school attendance, working positively with Gypsy and Travellers communities and tackling racism.

Addressing employment

Most Gypsies and Travellers prefer self-employment, such as farm and land work, vehicle trading and external building work. The CSTNA found that:

- The district's good road connections offer access to work opportunities
- Types of work had changed over the years, with a decline in traditional farm work, and increased competition from East European labour
- Gypsies and Travellers find it increasingly difficult to make a living from traditional occupations, contributing to severe economic disadvantage
- Difficulties in travelling, and being frequently moved, made it harder to get work. Some Gypsies now travel more to continental Europe, and Irish Travellers have entered the sub-region in search of work
- Family networks and informal reciprocal arrangements are important for encouraging and sustaining economic activity
- Seasonal social security benefits are important income sources, especially for those on council sites
- Difficulties with the theory part of the driving test (because of low literacy levels) is affecting younger Gypsies and Travellers

Promoting Community Safety

Appropriate council and police responses to reports by Gypsies and Travellers of racial harassment, or to complaints about and by Gypsies and Travellers of anti-social

¹² DfES Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, Education for All, (The Swann Report) 1985

¹³ Gypsy Travellers and Education: Changing Needs and Changing Perceptions: Kalwant Bhopal, University of Greenwich. British Journal of Education Studies vol. 52 No.1 (March 2004) pp 47-64

behaviour are vital, not only to protecting the safety of residents of all communities but to promoting community cohesion. There is some evidence of a tendency to conflate these two different behaviours, with complaints of racial harassment by Gypsies and Travellers being presumed to be based on their anti-social behaviour¹⁴. Or of a tendency to take a blanket approach to complaints, rather than dealing with individual incidents of anti-social behaviour on sites. The collective labelling of Gypsies and Irish Travellers creates barriers to engaging with the council, police and other members of the community.

In a recent MORI poll, more than one-third of the adults who took part admitted to being personally prejudiced against Gypsies and Travellers¹⁵. The CSTNA findings of *abundant evidence of low-grade discrimination* reflected this locally.

South Cambridgeshire Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategic Assessment 2008 analyses community safety issues and recommends relevant priorities, although Gypsies and Travellers are not included in its analysis of diverse communities or referred to in any way. It identifies very few racially or religiously aggravated crimes, compared to similar areas, and states evidence is limited as to the existence or otherwise of community tensions. An action is identified in the Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008 to update the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership's Community Safety Strategy 2008 – 2011 to include race equality related actions. This provides an opportunity to ensure equality for Gypsies and Travellers and to promote their engagement with police and the local authorities, who are not seen as natural allies.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council Leader is responsible for the council's overall approach to Gypsies and Travellers, supported by the Cabinet, which has responsibility for developing the strategy. The Strategic Officer Group on Gypsies and Travellers (SOG) has responsibility to develop our strategic approach under the leadership of the Executive Director, and the Corporate Manager – Planning, acts as the Champion for Gypsy and Traveller issues. Whilst responsibility for operational matters rests across all services, current delivery is focused within the planning service, related to site planning and enforcement, and the housing service, linked to site management and addressing wider community needs. This strategy provides an opportunity to review the structure supporting its delivery and to identify where strategic and operational responsibilities best lie.

¹⁴ CRE, Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales.

¹⁵ Stonewall, 2003, Profiles of Prejudice: The Nature of Prejudice in England, London: Stonewall / Citizenship 21 Project

Chapter 6: Moving Forward

Meeting our priorities

Priority 1: Providing strategic direction and co-ordination

Our Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2008-2012 includes a commitment to make sure that our organisation is geared up to delivering equality and diversity. We need to have specific people who lead and deliver change. We need everyone to be involved.

This means:

- There is active commitment to discussing and tackling equality issues across the organisation
- Discussion and action at all management levels, from service teams through Executive Management Team meetings, Senior Management Team and our Equality and Diversity Steering Group and Cabinet.
- A network of equality and diversity champions, who actively promote, advise on, investigate and keep themselves up to date with equality issues
- A corporate equality champion sits on our Senior Management Team and an Equality and Diversity Officer provides the focus and direction for our efforts
- There is a Councillor Champion for equality and diversity
- Having clear lines of responsibility and accountability, including at Councillor level

Key action areas:

- Strategic Officers Group (SOG) maintaining a strategic overview of issues and policy development and to coordinate the delivery mechanisms for the strategy
- Executive Management Team to have corporate responsibility for strategic approach, ensuring consistency across departments and promotion of equality
- Enhance the role of SOG in raising awareness of roles and responsibilities in relation to and, co-ordination of, Gypsy and Traveller related issues across the Council
- Include the duty to promote equality for Gypsies and Travellers in all partnerships and procurement arrangements
- Development of channels for communicating and addressing operational issues
- Improved regional intelligence regarding the movement of travellers, and scope to review services and resources
- Inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller issues in equality impact assessments
- Inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in all Council consultation exercises

Priority 2: Establishing two-way engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities

Our Community Engagement Strategy, which commits to including all sections of the population, provides an opportunity to build in the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.

It is intended that consultation mechanisms developed for this strategy, alongside those used for the GTDPD and the formation of the Council's equalities consultative forum will build trust with Gypsy and Traveller communities and enable the development of representative structures that will become an integral part of the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Key action areas:

- Explore innovative ways to enable us to communicate with a diverse range of Gypsies and Travellers
- Engage a range of Gypsies and Travellers in discussing, agreeing and reviewing this strategy and action plan and share our results and action plans with the people we consulted
- Develop a strategy for regular consultation with Gypsies and Travellers on matters of planning, policy development and service
- Evidence impact of feedback from Gypsies and Travellers on Council planning, policy and provision
- Maintain up to date information on relevant voluntary groups and partnerships

Priority 3: Promoting community cohesion

This strategy aims to contribute towards Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community living alongside each other peacefully as part of strong, cohesive communities.

Key action areas:

- Include Gypsies and Travellers in mainstream community cohesion work
- Enable dialogue and positive interaction between Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities
- Develop roles for, and the capacity of, Gypsies and Travellers as peer advocates / assessors / consultants
- Promote a positive impression of Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Proactively challenge stereotypes in the media and in public perceptions
- Tackle hate crime effectively
- Exploring new and positive ways of resolving conflict effectively

Priority 4: Raising awareness of Gypsy and Travellers culture and the duty to promote equality

We will develop more positive relationships with Gypsies and Travellers by showing clear leadership on Gypsy and Traveller matters, setting the tone for a more positive debate amongst all communities and developing the capacity of councillors and officers to promote equality of opportunity of Gypsies and Travellers.

This priority will include promotion of a positive impression of Gypsy and Traveller communities through effective community engagement, council publications and website and awareness raising events.

Key action areas:

- Delivery of race equality and diversity training to Councillors and officers
- Participation in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month
- Championing equality issues at all levels of the organisation
- Developing links with new & emerging communities.
- Developing active myth busting and awareness raising
- The Equality and Diversity Steering Group publishing and disseminating good practice
- Communicate effectively with the media
- Championing equality and diversity on our website
- Visibly celebrate key equality and diversity events with our stakeholders and community

Priority 5: Improving partnership working

The South Cambridgeshire Traveller Liaison Group, hosted by the district council, comprises representatives from key voluntary and statutory sector agencies in the district and the county Council and seeks to enable partnership working in the delivery of services to Gypsies and Travellers.

A countywide forum, hosted by the county council, is being reconvened and a Health sub-group of Cambridgeshire Together, a county-wide partnership established to deliver the Local Area Agreement is active.

We need to work through these and other partnerships with statutory and non-statutory agencies, including the Ormiston Trust and other representative groups, to deliver improved access to services and better health, education and employment outcomes for our Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Key action areas:

- Engage a range of partner agencies across the district and region in discussing, agreeing and reviewing this strategy and action plan
- Establish mechanisms for sharing information across the Council and with partner agencies in the district and county
- Establish links with sub regional and regional local authorities to share information and good practice
- Encourage partner agencies to include separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in ethnic monitoring arrangements
- Develop a review framework with partner agencies to identify gaps in services and development of initiatives to respond to these
- Developing collaborative and partnership events and activities with various groups in South Cambridgeshire

Priority 6: Improving access to, and experience of, services

There are a number of areas that need to be considered to ensure that access to services by Gypsies and Travellers is improved and that there is no difference between their experience and that of the settled community in the level and quality and access to services.

A. Improved analysis of service take-up and planning

Key action areas:

- Inclusion of separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all ethnic monitoring arrangements and taking steps to encourage completion of consistent monitoring data
- Regular monitoring and analysis of take-up of services by Gypsies and Travellers
- Consult with a diverse range of Gypsies and Travellers, and settled communities, as part of the development and adoption of the GTDPD and planning of major developments
- Formally record, investigate and monitor all reported incidents of racial harassment made by Gypsies and Irish Travellers in conventional housing, take steps to encourage reporting and develop targeted responses

B. Improving access to and level of services provided to Gypsies and Travellers

Key action areas:

- Research funding opportunities for additional community-based outreach support services for the Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Complete a review of Gypsy and Traveller support services
- Development of a new Customer Service Strategy that ensures equality of access to our services for Gypsies and Travellers
- Improve site management and resident engagement with the services and facilities provided

C. Mainstreaming Gypsy and Traveller needs into council-wide planning processes

Key action areas:

- Establish and implement local objectives targets and performance indicators for Gypsy and Traveller services as part of our performance management and service planning processes
- Develop a policy on how to handle racist representations
- Identify the numbers and needs of Gypsies and Travellers in conventional housing, and inclusion of these groups in relevant housing policy (including housing, homelessness and supporting people strategies)

D. Identification of any perverse policies on Gypsies and Travellers

Key action areas:

- Monitor all planning applications and enforcement action at every stage, by type and racial group, including Gypsies and Travellers, as separate categories, in order to assess the effects of policies and practices on different racial groups
- Review the Gypsy and Traveller Code of practice 2004
- Conduct a partial equality impact assessment on the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy to identify whether its implementation adversely affects Gypsies and Travellers
- Monitor and review of the Community Engagement Strategy 2009
- Include equalities implications on reports, policies and other documentation.

E. Plan to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers whilst dealing with unauthorised encampments fairly and efficiently

Key action areas:

- Consult on and adopt site options and policies for the GTDPD
- Adoption of good practice guidance for site design.
- Develop formal policies on pitch allocations for all new sites, and develop a strategy for extending this to existing sites
- Establish systems to monitor incidence, duration and scale of unauthorised encampments
- Review and monitor policies for dealing with unauthorised encampments, to ensure they promote access to services for occupants, and good race relations
- Review the Guide to Planning Enforcement 2005

Delivering the strategy

An implementation action plan will be developed to demonstrate how the priorities will be delivered. Each action will have a designated lead agency, group or officer who will be accountable for its delivery within an agreed timeframe. The implementation action plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to help establish progress in meeting the objectives of the strategy. Arrangements for monitoring of the strategy and the implementation action plan will be introduced as set out in Chapter 7.

Consultation on the Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy

This draft strategy is a working document that will be used to engage South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller communities and service providers, in order to agree a final strategy and action plan. To this end a range of methods will be used to engage all stakeholders. This consultation process will maximise opportunities to improve understanding of Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles, promote engagement with Gypsies and Travellers and enhance community cohesion.

As the council wishes to promote sustainable, inclusive communities when

consulting on documents, **the Council will not tolerate any offensive, racist, discriminatory and other irrelevant statements or representations.** This aside, Gypsies and Travellers will not receive any preferential treatment and are subject to the same rules and restrictions as the 'settled' community.

Please note that offensive, racist, discriminatory and other statements that are not relevant will not be formally considered. Offensive statements lower a person's reputation personally or within their trade, profession or business. Racist statements are those that discriminate against individuals on racial grounds including their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins. As Gypsies and Travellers are a racial group, comments that include such statements will not be accepted and will be rejected.

Where racist comments are made verbally, Councillors and staff will tell the speaker that they are unacceptable. If a writer or speaker persists in making racist representations, councillors and staff will advise the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer, who may investigate whether the Council needs to take any action to fulfil its Race Relations duties. In general terms, a racist representation is one, which includes words, phrases or comments, which are likely:

- To be offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group.
- To be racially abusive, insulting or threatening.
- To apply pressure to discriminate on racial grounds.
- To stir up racial hatred or contempt.

Equality impact assessment

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 we are required to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to promote equality in policy making, service delivery, regulation, enforcement and employment to meet the legal obligations. The Equality Act (2006) states that all public authorities must impact assess new policies as they are developed, as well as existing functions. EqIAs are also a specific duty as highlighted in not only race, but also disability and gender equality schemes, which place a general duty on public authorities to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations

A partial EqIA, which is the first stage of the process, will be undertaken alongside the development of this strategy and its findings will be considered prior to formal adoption of the strategy.

Chapter 7: Monitoring and review of the strategy

Regular monitoring will help establish progress, highlight areas that have worked well and areas that have worked less well, and enable a refinement of priorities, activities and actions. The strategy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to help ensure compliance with Government guidance and legislation and incorporate emerging good practice.

Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity

There will be at least quarterly reports to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity on progress against the delivery of the strategy and its action plan. An annual review of the strategy will also be considered by the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity to ensure that the objectives are still relevant and are being met.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group

South Cambridgeshire District Council has an established Equality and Diversity Steering Group whose aim is to support the development and implementation of policies and practices to enable us to meet its statutory obligations and achieve its commitment to equality and diversity given in the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will meet every six weeks or according to need.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will report to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity and to the Executive Management Team (EMT) at least quarterly on progress with work plans and identifying areas for action and improvement.

The Travellers Strategic Officer Group (SOG)

The SOG will have primary responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Gypsy and Travellers Strategy, which forms a key work-stream within the Comprehensive Equality Policy. It is expected that some actions may evolve over the lifetime of the Strategy and any such changes will be considered and recommended to the Equality and Diversity Group and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity and incorporated into an updated implementation action plan.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

To be added

APPENDIX 1

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION TRAVELLER NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSTNA)

The Cambridge sub-region Traveller Needs Assessment, 2006 (CSTNA), which includes the GTAA, built on the Cambridgeshire Travellers Review (1998), Crime Audits (2004) and ongoing work by the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) Traveller Team and the Ormiston Children and Families Trust Travellers Initiative. Commissioned by a multi-agency consortium, the CSTNA assessed service and accommodation needs based on interviews with 313 Gypsies and Travellers, official six-monthly caravan counts and local schools rolls.

Key findings include:

- There are an estimated 6,500–7,000 Gypsies and Travellers in the sub-region; about 5,000–5,500 are in Cambridgeshire and 1,300 are in South Cambridgeshire.
- The regional population comprises 72% English Gypsies, largely 'born and bred' locally, and 23% Irish Travellers, who have migrated recently. In South Cambridgeshire, 90% of the households live in caravans.
- There is a high incidence of serious health problems (especially children's' special educational and care needs) and educational disadvantage.
- Total caravan numbers in the sub-region have almost doubled between 1980 and 2004 from around 600 to around 1600. This reflects both natural population increase and significant in-migration.
- South Cambridgeshire and Fenland have seen the largest increase (each doubling since 1997), with South Cambridgeshire recording more caravans (over 400 in recent years) than any other district in England.

The increase in caravans in South Cambridgeshire is linked to Travellers' preferences, the granting of planning permissions and the impact of the Criminal Justice Act 1994, which criminalised unauthorised encampment. The number of caravans in the district fell immediately after the Act and the subsequent increase reflects a general tendency for Gypsies and Travellers to group together in response to the pressures they face.

The Council operates two sites within the District – at Blackwell, Milton and New Farm, Whaddon. At Blackwell there is widespread dissatisfaction, largely due to its location adjacent to the A14. The Whaddon site is located in a village with 'a poor level of facilities'.

The district has a particularly high ratio of private authorised to council accommodation, reflecting council site closures and the grant of permission to several large sites, but this does not address the needs of those Gypsies/Travellers who lack the resources to buy their own land.

Gypsies and Travellers in housing (none of those interviewed were in South Cambridgeshire) reported poor health, high levels of racism from neighbours, feelings of isolation and drug abuse on estates.

Travel patterns were complex. Most English Gypsies were 'born and bred' within the region, often having regional connections over several generations. Most of those

surveyed were based within the region, moving between known sites, but also travelled elsewhere. Some respondents travelled in Europe as well as the UK.

There is a pressing need for sites of all kinds (public and private, long-stay and transit) - surveys found no specific geographical location preferred by respondents, just 'more sites anywhere'.

The number of additional pitches assessed as required in each district is shown in table 1.

Table 1 District Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs for Permanent Pitches, 2005-2010

District	
Fenland	160-205
South Cambs	110-130
East Cambs	25-45
Kings Lynn & W. Norfolk	45-60
Forest Heath	15-20
Huntingdonshire	15-25
Peterborough	10-15
St Edmundsbury	10-20
Cambridge (City)	15
Total	405-535

The planning framework requires a regional approach to meeting this need in line with a strategic view of needs across the region.

APPENDIX 2

FURTHER INFORMATION

A: Linked Strategies / documents

- SCDC Code of Practice for Travellers and Gypsies in South Cambridgeshire, 2004
- SCDC Community Engagement Strategy, 2009
- SCDC Comprehensive Equalities Policy, 2009 – 2012, *Draft 9*
- SCDC Corporate Plan 2008/2009
- SCDC Guide to Planning Enforcement, 2005
- SCDC Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Protocol
- SCDC Homelessness Strategy (2008-2013)
- SCDC Housing Strategy 2007-2010
- SCDC Policy on Traveller issues, 2004
- SCDC Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011 *Draft*
- SCDC Sustainable Community Strategy 2008
- South Cambridgeshire Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategic Assessment 2008
- Cambridgeshire County Council, Projecting need for housing support in Cambridgeshire, 2009, *Draft*

B: Acronyms

CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CSTNA	Cambridge sub-region Traveller Needs Assessment, 2006
DPD	Development Plan Document
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
GTDPD	Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government)
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SCDC	South Cambridgeshire District Council
SCDLP	South Cambridgeshire District Local Plan

C: Glossary

Cambridge Sub-Region

Comprises Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the Market Towns.

Cambridge sub-region Traveller Needs Assessment, 2006 (CSTNA)

Area covered by the survey included: Cambridge City, East Cambs, Fenland, Forest Heath (Suffolk), Huntingdonshire, St. Edmundsbury (Suffolk) and South Cambs, with the addition of Peterborough (unitary district) and King's Lynn & West Norfolk (Norfolk).

Caravan Count

The count, undertaken twice a year by local authorities, provides a snapshot of the number of families and caravans on public, private, authorised and unauthorised sites in England.

Community Strategy

Strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area and contributing to the achievement of District wide sustainable development.

Development Plan Document

Statutory document having been through Independent examination, which forms part of the LDF.

Gypsy and Traveller Pitch

A typical family pitch can normally accommodate 1 mobile caravan, 1 static caravan and 1 brick building amenity block.

Gypsy and Traveller Site

A specific area containing a varying number of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

Irish Travellers

Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland, and were legally recognised as an ethnic group in England in 2000.

ODPM Circular 01/2006

Updated Government guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for Gypsies and Travellers and how local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers can work together to achieve that aim.

Race Relations Act (RRA)

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003.

Regional Spatial Strategy

Planning guidance for the region (formally Regional Planning Guidance).

Romany Gypsy

Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origins back to migration, probably from India, taking place at intervals since before 1500. Gypsies were recognised by the English courts as an ethnic group in 1989.

Transit Site A temporary stopping place for Gypsies and Travellers passing through the District.

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