

# **Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document**

## **Report of Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers on Issues and Options**

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**Gypsy and Traveller  
Local Development Document**

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## **Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document**

### **BACKGROUND**

New Government Guidance was issued to all local authorities in 2006 regarding the Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites. The national objectives of this guidance are:

- To create and support sustainable, respectful and inclusive communities where Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision; where there is mutual respect and consideration between all communities for the rights and responsibilities of each community and individual, and where there is respect between individuals and communities towards the environments in which they live and work
- To recognise, protect and facilitate the tradition travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, whilst respecting the interests of the settled communities
- To promote more private Gypsy and Traveller site provision in appropriate locations through the planning system, while recognising that there will always be those who cannot provide their own sites; and
- To help to avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless through eviction from unauthorised sites without an alternative to move to.

An accommodation needs survey was undertaken in 2006 to identify what provision is required within the administrative area of South Norfolk Council. The Issues and Options paper has been prepared in response to the needs outlined within the accommodation survey. This survey found that between 32 and 44 pitches need to be created over the next three to five years to meet current demand. As yet no sites have been identified but the Local Development Document is suggesting that they should be developed in the following geographical areas:

- One permanent site to accommodate 6-8 pitches in the Waveney Valley area
- Two permanent sites each accommodating 6-8 pitches in the area around the Norwich by-pass
- One permanent site to accommodate 6-8 pitches in the Wymondham to Norwich area
- Three roadside "transit" sites for temporary stopping along the A47, A140 and A143/A1066 routes, for up to 4 pitches per location

In April 2007 Resources for Change were appointed by South Norfolk District Council to consult with Gypsies and Travellers residing in the District about the Issues and Options contained within the Local Development Document. In addition 4 events were organised to enable members of the public to find out more about the Issues and Options regarding future site provision and to feedback their views. Each event culminated in an evening workshop that was attended by Parish/Town Councillors, local elected members, representatives from local schools and health providers.

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### **METHODOLOGY**

The consultation on the Issues and Options paper was undertaken by a Consultant from Resources for Change who has experience of working with Gypsies and Travellers. Her role was to contact as many Gypsies and Travellers living within the District and discuss with them the Issues and Options that had been developed in response to the needs outlined in the Accommodation survey.

The Consultant attempted to contact all the sites, both authorised and tolerated within the District. As the Fair Season had just commenced making contact proved to be difficult at times. On a number of sites the Consultant was introduced to the Gypsies and Travellers living there by a representative of the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service at Norfolk County Council. This proved to be invaluable and encouraged greater participation in the consultation process. A meeting was organised on the Roundwell Site, the only authorised Council owned site in South Norfolk District for residents living there.

One site declined to be involved, and three others proved to be impossible to make contact with. 18 people agreed to be interviewed (8 male and 10 female). On all sites the option was given for people to be interviewed individually or collectively if they felt this would be more beneficial. On some of the sites a spokesperson was identified who would carry out the interview on behalf of the family group. Contact was made with a small number of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar and one person agreed to be interviewed.

Of the 18 people who participated in the consultation 3 identified themselves as being 'new travellers'.

### **RESULTS OF CONSULTATION WITH GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

The findings have been prepared to enable an easy comparison to be made between the views highlighted by the Gypsy and Traveller Community and the wider participants who were consulted about the Issues and Options contained within the Local Development Document. A series of questions were prepared in the document and these are highlighted within this section of the report with the responses from the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in the interviews. Some background information from the LDD has been included in this report so that the responses from the Gypsies and Travellers can be put into context.

#### ***Scale and impact – policy context and assumptions:***

- The environmental impact of journeys by Gypsies and Travellers, and the impact of a proposed Gypsy and Traveller site on local social facilities, is likely to be too small to allow a meaningful comparison of options for providing sites; and

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- Consequently, in assessing the sustainability of the proposals in this LDD, and their conformity with other plans, we should chiefly examine the detailed environmental impact of each proposed site, and aim to avoid any site which would have an unacceptable effect on the environmental characteristics of its immediate surroundings, or where the site occupiers would be exposed to unacceptable levels of environmental pollution.
- Because environmentally sensitive locations will be avoided, there is no need for this LDD to make special provisions about relaxing restrictions on development in “protected” locations
- Meeting needs for permanent sites through this LDD is the best way to improve access for Gypsies and Travellers to health and education facilities, and to improve their health and education levels.
- The focus should mainly be on providing permanent sites, because that is the largest unmet need and the greatest cause of current problems.

### **Question 1: Do you agree with the assumptions we have made, in section 5 of the Issues and Options document?**

When these assumptions, and the background to making these assumptions was explained in detail to the participants 16 of them agreed with them.

Concerns were expressed that the number of pitches that are being proposed may not be enough to fill current need. Comments were made that the head counts may not be accurate, and therefore the number of pitches required may not be sufficient for actual need.

In addition it was felt quite strongly by one site that a timescale has not been identified for when sites will be provided, and for some of the Gypsies and Travellers living locally, they feel it is absolutely critical something happens quickly.

The terminology used in the document e.g. the use of the word ‘pitches’ suggested to some of the New Travellers currently residing in the District that their needs may not be met through the Issues and Options being proposed.

Many participants felt that the development of small sites was the best way forward. Some had direct experience of living on large sites and had not been happy with them. One family did not want to be involved in the consultation process until they realised that the proposals included the provision of small sites, as they had left a large site in another District because it had become dominated by a particular ethnic group. It was also suggested that integration was more likely to take place where smaller sites have been developed as they appear less threatening to settled community.

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**Question Two: If you disagree with our assumptions, please explain what you think we should change:**

One participant did not feel that the Options outlined in this document were the best way forward. It was felt that if a permanent site was developed where people could live for a long time it would become dominated by one family and then power battles begin. This participant would like to see 'common land' used on a rotational basis, so that you could stay there for so long and then move on to another piece of land, this way you could continue to move around the District.

### ***Conformity with other plans and policies:***

A small number (5) of the participants were shown the list of documents contained within Appendix 3. These participants either had direct experience of Planning Appeals and Judicial Reviews or had been an advocate on behalf of their community for a long time.

**Question 3: Do you agree that we have considered all the relevant documents?**

All five agreed that the list was long enough, and comprehensive enough for all the relevant documents to have been considered.

### **Summary of Key Relevant Plans – Appendix 4**

**As the summary was lengthy it was not included in the questions posed to the Gypsy and Traveller Community**

### ***Overall Vision and Objectives:***

Vision Statement: South Norfolk will be a place where in furthering the interests of community cohesion the Council seeks to integrate the needs and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers and the settled communities.

Objectives:

- To provide more stability to enable Gypsies, Travellers and the settled communities to work towards greater community cohesion.
- To ensure an adequate and appropriate supply of sites and tenures to meet identified needs
- To ensure the adequate provision of authorised sites, and to minimize unauthorised encampments and the need for enforcement action.
- Through careful choice of permanent and temporary sites, to provide better health and education opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers than at present.
- To provide a clear framework for making decisions on planning applications and taking enforcement action on unauthorised sites, in the interests of fair, consistent and effective planning.

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### **Question 7: Do you agree with our suggested vision and objectives for this LDD?**

15 respondents agreed with the vision and objectives. One of these respondents agreed and disagreed because he felt that by being considerate to everyone a permanent site will always get objections, this could be overcome by creating sites where people can stay for 6 months on a public common and then move on.

One respondent highlighted the need to keep the Gypsy and Traveller community involved and included in this process and make sure all the services and facilities are made available to them.

One respondent highlighted that in order to achieve community cohesion NIMBYism needed to be tackled, because it is about everyone integrating not just the Gypsies and Travellers.

### **Question 8: If you disagree, what alternatives would you suggest?**

3 respondents disagreed but highlighted that they would agree if you make adequate and appropriate provision to meet the needs of New Travellers. They highlighted that they would like to be given the means to become self sufficient by providing ecologically based pitches, that enables them to do traditional crafts, and let them develop ecological sites with renewable energy.

#### ***Permanent sites – broad options for site location:***

A number of options were presented to participants in the consultation:

**OPTION A** – anywhere in South Norfolk District, except environmentally-sensitive areas

**OPTION B** – only in ‘search areas’, but excluding environmentally-sensitive sites (search areas have been defined as: providing sites within “corridors” along the main routes: the A47 and the A11 in the north-west of the District, and the A1066/A143 along the Norfolk side of the Waveney Valley)

**OPTION C** – “do nothing”. In our view, it is important that the Gypsy and Traveller LDD should assess a “do nothing” option, with a continuation of current problems and risks. This may seem contradictory, given our decision to produce a Gypsy and Traveller LDD, and in view of recent Government Guidance. However, we consider that it will provide useful baseline information, given the general lack of information and forecasting tools.

### **Question 9: Having regard to the evidence base and the Council’s duties, which broad option do you prefer?**

**OPTION A** – 9 respondents proposed that sites should be considered anywhere in South Norfolk area apart from environmentally sensitive areas

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**OPTION B** – 5 respondents proposed that sites should be provided in the search areas

### **Question 10: Do you wish to suggest any other options?**

One respondent suggested that every Parish could accommodate small sites and that an approach should be made to all Parishes highlighting current problems.

It was emphasised that the number of pitches proposed is not sufficient. It was also highlighted that at present Gypsies and Travellers are forced to live in the 'search areas' and this isn't necessarily where they would choose to reside if they could make choices.

It was felt that there are too many Gypsies and Travellers to be accommodated just in the 'search area'. Concern was also expressed that the number of pitches proposed isn't enough to accommodate everyone.

A further comment was made that the respondent agreed with Option B but if you fail to find potential sites in the 'search areas' then you should widen the search, don't restrict yourself too much by just looking in these areas – if other opportunities arise then look positively at these.

One respondent felt that possible sites could be found near Brook's Slaughterhouse in Little Milton and around the Easton area. Another respondent suggested that a small site could be provided on the land at the rear of the Roundwell Site and also at the rear of the A140 Park and Ride.

A suggestion was also made that common land should be used for short-term sites on a rotational basis and that this could be enforced with an 'iron fist' policy.

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### Within these broad options, how should we choose sites?

Suggested checklist for detailed site choice

<b>Essential</b>	
<p><b>Factors to avoid – “minus marks”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid environmentally-sensitive areas (natural and cultural)</li> <li>• Avoid areas of flood risk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive factors – “plus marks”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable access by local road network from major route (A11, A47, A143/A1066)</li> <li>• Appropriate highway access point, having regard to limited traffic generation</li> </ul>
<b>Important</b>	
<p><b>Factors to avoid – “minus marks”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sites where pollution, including noise would have an adverse effect on the wellbeing of site occupiers, and could not be mitigated at reasonable cost</li> <li>• Outside identified “search areas”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive factors – “plus marks”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available drainage/water supply/utilities</li> <li>• Meeting the on-site needs of potential occupiers, for example play and work areas</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable</b>	
<p><b>Factors to avoid – “minus marks”</b></p> <p>Note – adverse effects could be mitigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sites where activities of site occupiers could risk pollution, including of adjoining land and occupiers</li> <li>• Avoid significant intrusion in landscape</li> <li>• Avoid significant effect on visual and/or residential amenities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive factors – “plus marks”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close proximity/access to social and community facilities (shopping, health services and schools)</li> <li>• Within reasonable walking distance of a bus route</li> <li>• Good natural screening by vegetation or landform, of area required for number of pitches (i.e. not part of larger open area)</li> </ul>

### Question 11: Do you agree with our suggested checklist for choosing sites?

17 respondents broadly agreed with the checklist

### Question 12: If you disagree, do you feel that we have omitted any important factors, or do you feel they should be given different weight?

A number of comments were also made about the checklist:

What’s going to happen in the meantime, how are you going to develop sites that use greener technologies such as compost toilets, solar/wind energy?

It was felt that close proximity/access to social and community facilities should be given a higher weighting

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“Something needs to be done about planning criteria as that is what is stopping privately owned sites developing”.

“We would like to work in partnership with the Council over site locations to ensure that the needs of New Travellers are met”.

One respondent disagreed with the checklist because they don't agree with permanent sites unless families can buy them – let travellers use 'setaside' for 1 year, and ensure problem families are removed. “Once you have a 6-8 pitch site it will become a site for a family and there will be no incentive to be a good community spirited Traveller. On permanent sites you end up with a 'king' – you need to help the vulnerable Gypsies and Travellers - a permanent site will make them more vulnerable”.

### **Question 13: What criteria should we use to identify potential locations for Transit Sites?**

Develop transit sites outside a village or settlement  
Look at where Gypsies and Travellers currently stop  
Develop sites near to local amenities/seasonal work and take account of favoured stopping areas – we feel a series of transit sites could work as well as a permanent site  
Develop them in the traditional stopping places  
You should identify travelling avenues where Gypsies and Travellers have pulled up illegally, research the history of where they historically stopped – enforcement records will show this  
Develop a transit site wherever you can have a full time gatekeeper and fenced yards  
Costessey Park and Ride would be an ideal location for a transit site  
Develop a play area and hard standing – also need amenities such as shower and toilet blocks, wheelie bins and skips  
Ensure the site is safe for children  
Identify a Gypsy or Traveller who is prepared to live on site and manage it

### **Question 14: Do you have any views on how Transit Sites should be managed?**

One respondent expressed concern about Gypsies and Travellers having to be hidden away and 'managed'.  
A number of respondents felt that transit sites need to have a manager there all the time. It was also highlighted that these sites should be clean, well kept and have showers and toilets. In addition residents must leave the site as they had found it. It was also highlighted that there needs to be adequate provision for the disposal of rubbish, everyone interviewed identified this as a key issue. One respondent felt that it shouldn't be managed by Gypsies and Travellers themselves, but by someone impartial like the Council  
Another respondent felt that the site should be owned and managed by Gypsies and Travellers as there would be a greater respect of the site.

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A suggestion was made that the sites should be self governed by the people on them.

One respondent suggested that 'tip' passes should be provided so that people could dispose of their rubbish easily and effectively.

It was suggested that the provision should be similar to lorry parks.

One respondent suggested that there should be a 'pay and display' system similar to those found in car parks.

A suggestion indicated that there needed to be defined boundaries of legal responsibility and that the sites would need a barrier installed and the rents should be kept as low as possible to ensure that people used them.

### **Contributions from developers' Section 106 Agreements**

It has been argued that the Gypsy and Traveller communities should not be excluded from the benefits of affordable housing achieved through "planning gain" on large housing developments.

This could take the form of a sum, to be used to fund service provision (water, drainage, access) on allocated sites or possibly site management.

### **Question 15: Do you agree that housing developers should be asked to contribute to provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites?**

17 respondents indicated that they agreed with this and felt that they should be able to benefit from these agreements in the same way that the settled community do.

One respondent didn't agree because they don't agree in principle with the development of permanent sites, but they do feel that Gypsies and Travellers should benefit from Section 106 funding.

### **Question 16: How could this be achieved?**

It was suggested that this funding could help to pay for services on the site. In addition local developers should also be encouraged to provide employment for Gypsies and Travellers. They could also be asked to pay towards the development of facilities on privately owned sites as well.

### ***Implementation:***

What kind of tenure should sites offer:

- Purchase and development by Gypsies and Travellers themselves (possibly with use of Council's Planning Powers to acquire land)
- Rented Pitches
- Shared Ownership

### **Question 17: We particularly wish to explore issues of tenure and affordability during this consultation, and we welcome your views:**

It was evident from the responses that Gypsies and Travellers are keen to have the same range of options that people from the settled community have.

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Many respondents are keen to develop their own sites, whilst others want to rent pitches. There was concern that up until now it has been very difficult for some Gypsies and Travellers to acquire planning permission for land that they own. It was suggested that Gypsies and Travellers who are able to buy land should be encouraged to do this and develop their own sites as this takes some of the burden away from the Council. Some respondents felt that the problems may be alleviated if pieces of available land were identified by the Council. It was evident that some respondents feel very frustrated that they cannot live on land they own without Planning Permission. One respondent also highlighted that when you have nowhere else to live you have no option but to move on to the land you own. It was also highlighted that in order to make an application for Planning Permission you need to have an address for the paperwork to be sent to.

One respondent suggested that on sites where pitches can be rented there should be a strict policy of children attending school. In addition one respondent indicated that they didn't agree with shared ownership.

Three respondents felt that more efforts should be made by the Council to consider and encourage 'eco' build in the development of sites.

### **What would be a reasonable rent to charge?**

When asked this question, many of the respondents felt that the rent should be set in relation to the facilities and amenities that would be available on the site. It was highlighted that if Gypsies and Travellers felt more secure they could work and earn money, and in some cases it would enable them to be eligible for benefit.

A wide ranging scale of charges was suggested from £10 through to £50 per week. One respondent, who currently lives in social housing, suggested that the rent should be equivalent to the rents charged for houses.

### ***The needs of Gypsies and Travellers living in Bricks and Mortar:***

One person agreed to be interviewed and indicated that when sites are developed the family would prefer not to return to living on a site. However, the respondent did indicate that they may be interested in trying to find a piece of land to develop a small site for their immediate family.

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### **Monitoring**

The following are potential indicators of the success of the Local Development Document which we intend to monitor

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Progress with implementing sites allocated in LDD	Planning Permissions, surveys of occupation levels, "head counts" every 6 months
Incidents of unauthorised encampments	Enforcement records
Planning applications/appeals on non-allocated sites	Planning Register
Occupancy levels on authorised sites	Surveys of pitches occupied
Community Cohesion	
Levels of Gypsy and Traveller health and education	Information from Gypsy and Traveller communities, NHS, Country Education

### **Question 18: Do you agree with our proposed list of indicators to be monitored?**

8 respondents agreed with the list of indicators. Some of the respondents weren't sure how to answer this question

### **Question 19: If you disagree, please tell us how you would change the indicators, or change how they are monitored. We would particularly like to hear how you think we could monitor community cohesion:**

2 respondents disagreed with some of the indicators, largely because they are concerned about the head counts and how accurate they actually are. One respondent indicated that these indicators could only be applied to Gypsies and Travellers who are settled, and that they seemed OK in theory but was concerned as to whether the Council could put it into practice.

### **Community Cohesion:**

During the consultation process discussion took place with all respondents about their ideas for building better relationships between the settled community and the Gypsies and Travellers.

Many respondents felt that school was a good starting place, particularly when children are young. This enables them to build relationships without considering that someone may be a Gypsy or Traveller. It was also suggested that the Council should work closely with Gypsies and Travellers to identify potential land and if you can't grant planning permission then help them find an alternative. It was felt that this would stop relationships with the settled community becoming more difficult. At present it is felt that the planning system doesn't allow for Gypsies and Travellers to be accepted.

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Many respondents feel that community cohesion cannot be forced, people have to want to live alongside each other, and it takes time for them to accept Gypsies and Travellers. It is evident from the experiences at Roundwell that when a site becomes established the settled community stop worrying about having Gypsies and Travellers as neighbours, particularly when the site is well managed.

A number of respondents highlighted that the settled community cannot see them as individuals. They feel that they are being made to be responsible for the behaviour of the whole community. In addition it was suggested that if the settled community got to know them they will see that many of them are decent folk.

One respondent indicated that the situation may ease when sufficient sites are developed as it is the illegal encampments that upset the settled community. It was also suggested that more should be done to help with rubbish collection as this is what makes everyone so negative.

In terms of monitoring community cohesion it was suggested that:

- You could monitor the amount of negative articles in the press, if they are reducing then it is likely that the relationships are improving
- Look at the minutes of Town and Parish Councils to see if residents are attending those meetings to complain about Gypsies and Travellers
- Talk to Health Visitors to see if women with young children are attending playgroups and baby clinics
- Make visits to communities to gauge the feelings
- Measure the number of complaints that the Council receive about Gypsies and Travellers

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Most respondents commented that they felt like they had finally been listened to by the Council. Concerns were expressed about how long it would take to develop the sites and what would happen to the Gypsies and Travellers currently residing in the District on tolerated sites.

A number of respondents indicated that they would like the Council to talk to them about the potential design of the sites. They feel that there should be places developed on the site where people can work, so that this is kept away from the living accommodation. It was also suggested that there should be somewhere where large vehicles can be parked, so they are not moving up and down the site and posing a danger to young children.

One respondent commented that "ownership is a very important thing for Gypsy people, it is important that we get education and skills and training, we need help to develop our own business opportunities".

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A question was posed by the New Travellers who were interviewed about whether the LDD would meet their needs.

Finally, the following comment was made:

**“if all Council’s provide sites we can retain our traditional travelling ways”**

### **FACILITATED WORKSHOPS**

#### ***INTRODUCTION:***

In addition to the consultation that was undertaken with Gypsies and Travellers four events were organised which enabled members of the settled community to find out more about the issues and options which have been highlighted in the Local Development Document. At each of the events an edited version of the document was displayed and members of the public had an opportunity to talk to Officers from South Norfolk District Council and Consultants from Resources for Change about the issues and options. They were then invited to either leave feedback or take a full document away so that they could complete the questionnaire contained within it.

In the evening members of local Parish and Town Councils, elected members from South Norfolk District Council, representatives from local schools and health providers were invited to a workshop that was facilitated by consultants from Partners in Change. The workshops enabled participants to explore the benefits and challenges of planning for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller’s sites.

#### ***FINDINGS FROM THE WORKSHOPS:***

The first workshop was held on May 16<sup>th</sup> at **Broome Village Hall**. 17 people attended the workshop including representatives from local Town and Parish Councils, elected members from South Norfolk District Council, three officers from South Norfolk District Council and one officer from Norfolk County Council. During the evening participants worked in four small groups to ensure that everyone was able to get their views aired.

It was evident from discussions with local residents and members of local Town and Parish Councils during the daytime that relationships between the settled community and some local Gypsies and Travellers had become very strained. During the daytime some residents spoke about how fearful they had become of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and about some of the problems they were experiencing locally from illegal encampments.

# Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

## STAGE 1

### What are the challenges and opportunities in providing sites for Gypsies and Travellers?

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crime</li><li>• NIMBYism</li><li>• Overcoming stereotypes</li><li>• Will the travellers play ball</li><li>• Can the law be applied effectively to Gypsies and Travellers?</li><li>• Council tax collection</li><li>• Working with local settled community</li><li>• Proper waste disposal</li><li>• Problems and definition of fairness regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Affordable housing</li><li>○ 'non-traveller' mobile home site</li><li>○ Special treatment for Gypsies and Travellers</li><li>○ Queue jumping</li></ul></li><li>• Will SNDC be seen as a soft touch and attract even more Gypsies and Travellers to the District</li><li>• Impact on G.P.'s</li><li>• Will it end unauthorised encampments?</li><li>• Impact on smaller primary schools</li><li>• Public opinion/resistance</li><li>• Location/understanding of Planning Law</li><li>• Accountability of Traveller and settled communities</li><li>• Availability of support services e.g. education/health</li><li>• Integration with settled community</li><li>• Public fear/apprehension/intimidation</li><li>• Unfair bias to travelling community</li><li>• Both community understanding</li><li>• Look after own sites</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education for children</li><li>• Opportunity to buy land where they can legally stay within a planned framework, away from the settled community</li><li>• Prevents confrontation (if everyone is in agreement)</li><li>• Ability to then remove unauthorised sites (not convinced that South Norfolk has the ability to enforce the 'contract')</li><li>• To integrate Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities – with mutual understanding on both sides</li><li>• Gypsies and Travellers can access services and facilities in a consistent way</li><li>• If it is a small scale site provision (6-8 pitches) – it is an opportunity to minimise impact (if it is larger scale = emphasises the disadvantages)</li><li>• Opportunity to regulate the activity is an advantage = ability to have a 'fine grain' approach</li><li>• Equality issue – perception of fairness to Gypsy and Traveller and settled communities</li><li>• If sites are monitored/managed, they can be kept up to 'standards' – requires compliance from residents</li></ul>

### Will providing sites actually work?

- Racially focussed – who is a Gypsy and Traveller – anyone can claim Gypsy and Traveller Status
- Exponentially increasing Gypsy and Traveller numbers. In January 07 140 Gypsy and Travellers in the District. This is a high figure, can we cope with this number?
- 'Honeypot' effect from provision of a site – South Norfolk will become overwhelmed, how will we address an overspill?

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- Question the assumption that permanent sites will mean children attending schools – how can they do this when they will still be travelling?
- Will Gypsies and Travellers actually occupy the sites – even if surveys say they will?
- Whole approach over optimistic. Question of trust on both sides.
- Will education standards improve? Concern was expressed that there are no local statistics available to show that this has happened elsewhere
- How to satisfy the settled community – they will need ‘convincing’

### **STAGE TWO**

#### **How can we overcome the challenges and realise the opportunities?**

Some confusion was highlighted about the wording in the Local Development Document. Some readers may believe that Gypsies and Travellers can only stay on the sites for three years. It should make clearer that permanent means that people can stay on these sites permanently and temporary means it is a transit site.

If the plan is implemented will existing unauthorised sites be removed? The objective is to have legal authorised sites

Providing an adequate number of sites will make it easier to take enforcement action.

If neighbouring districts take a greater enforcement approach, will that result in greater problems in South Norfolk?

#### **Where are we going next?**

Looking at some of the existing sites that aren't causing problems

#### **Finding the right location**

- It needs to be acceptable to the settled and the Gypsy and Traveller communities
- There should be a distance of 0.75 – 1.0 miles from the settled residential areas
- Good dedicated suitable access

<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>SOLUTIONS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Opinion</li> <li>• Understanding both parties stay within the law</li> <li>• T.S.P. agreement to keep site tidy</li> <li>• Education – understanding way of life</li> </ul>	<p>Parity: both settled and traveller communities are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay Council Tax/Road Tax/Income Tax</li> <li>• Abide by planning regulations</li> <li>• Have access to affordable</li> </ul>

## **Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Media</li><li>• Travellers and settled community – some pay taxes, some don't</li><li>• Injustice of landowner having his land occupied</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• housing</li><li>• Refrain from running businesses from home</li><li>• Trade fairly</li><li>• Have their children educated</li><li>• Keep animals responsibly</li></ul>
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Comments were made that Gypsies and Travellers will not be accepted if there is a perception that they are being given unfair advantages.

### ***STAGE THREE***

#### **How can the top issues be addressed?**

##### **Public Opinion:**

- Government should enforce zero tolerance for unauthorised sites
- Understanding each others way of life – may be a way of achieving greater tolerance

##### **Finding the right location:**

- Somewhere acceptable to both communities
- Distance 0.75 – 1.0 miles away from a residential area
- Good suitable, dedicated access from the site to road rather than through the community

##### **Parity:**

- Location to nearby schools – think about impact on schools
- Preparatory work which could be started before the development of a site
- Gypsies and Travellers required to pay taxes, abide by planning regulations, access to affordable housing
- Children educated – level playing field

#### **A number of questions were raised during the evening:**

How do we satisfy/convince the settled community that this was a well researched document?

Will settling make a difference?

Question of trust on both sides?

Can we trust Gypsies and Travellers to play ball?

Will it translate to compliance with provisions we make?

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

### Further Issues:

Waveney Council dividing line between local authorities  
What cohesion is there between the two local authorities?  
Is it reasonable to put them along A143?  
Is Suffolk going through issues and options at the moment? – all Local Authorities will be going through this process  
The Regional Planning Authority is looking at needs and is also coming up with a figure which each Local Authority has to provide  
Will you compulsory purchase land if none comes forward? – we will have to ask elected members if necessary, these powers are rarely used.  
Proximity is a big issue and needs to be made clearer  
Choices of checklist  
Avoiding locations near small schools

### STAGE FOUR

#### Summing Up:

Reconciling public opinion: fear, apprehension, intimidation The travelling community and how they feel Resolving Conflict in existing communities – for them to continue to be happy where they are Opportunity for them to buy land within a planned framework away from settled communities	Parity within the two communities    Ability to remove unauthorised sites once we have permanent sites (not sure if we have the ability to do this – will law act equally and effectively)
Availability of support services/accessing services in a consistent way	Ability to control numbers authorised/unauthorised Way of life makes it difficult to access services

The second workshop was held on **21<sup>st</sup> May at Easton Village Hall**. 5 representatives were present from local Parish Councils and 3 officers from South Norfolk District Council and one officer from Norfolk County Council attended the workshop.

During the daytime it was evident that the relationships between the settled community locally and the Gypsy and Traveller community were very different to those outlined in Broome. Whilst fewer residents took the opportunity to come along in the day time, those who did spoke of positive relationships with the Gypsies and Travellers who live on the two privately owned sites locally. In addition, others who had travelled over from Costessey spoke positively about the Roundwell site.

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

### **STAGE ONE**

#### **What are the benefits and challenges of planning for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller's sites?**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Hidden Agenda – benefit for who	NIMBY
Less unauthorised encampments	All tarred with the same brush – good and bad in all – public perception needs to change
Police powers increased	Not everybody shares the same view
Smaller sites	Fear of the sites growing – families coming to join the sites
Education – access for children	Naivety of officers on what the Gypsies and Travellers actually need
Health benefits for Travellers	Enough of the 'right type' of sites – permanent vs. transient/temporary
Could benefit both settled and travelling community	Further opportunities for the settled community and others to fly tip/perpetuate crime in an area where there are sites – will the Travellers get the blame?
Increased sense of belonging – could reduce anti social behaviour and tensions in the community	Negative media coverage
New Travellers want the temporary places, so what happens if they pull up and the site is full?	
More tolerance of each others way of life (education via the schools etc)	
Could improve what was as the site before	

### **STAGE TWO**

It became evident during the first workshop that the relationships locally were very different from those outlined at the previous workshop. We felt it would be useful to explore with the group why the relationship was different and what had made it work, as this may provide a useful insight for other Parish and Town Councils.

#### **What works in the relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community?**

- One site is small, and one is remote (3/4 mile), screened
- Scope for expansion – fears in the community
- Physically constrained – confined
- Tidy and well kept
- One family
- Demonstrations of good faith from the community
- Have had positive experience to date
- 'search' areas – based on existing patters of need/desire – 'market research'
- Encampments near park and ride – access and opportunities
- Best locations will go to housing developers

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

- Include provision for Gypsy and Travellers sites within new housing sites
- Local vicar accepted by both communities, uses her role well
- Harlesdon – entrenched positions
- Parish Council positive response
- Type of people on Council and locally
- Parish Council's willing to work with other Parish Councils in areas where more fearful
- Gypsy and Travellers site – opportunity for land owners
- Good experience before planning permission
- Planning carrots! Pay a premium? Temporary permission = affordable housing
- Gypsies and Travellers need an address to apply for Planning Permission
- Gypsies and Travellers unlikely to apply for Planning Permission on someone else's land
- Better clarity for Gypsies and Travellers buying land with Planning Permission

The third workshop was held in the **Corn Hall at Diss on 22<sup>nd</sup> May**. 9 representatives from the local Parish and Town Councils, South Norfolk District Council and representatives from local schools attended the meeting. In addition 4 officers from South Norfolk District Council and one officer from Norfolk County Council also contributed to the workshop.

During the day time it was evident from comments made by the public that there had been some mixed experiences locally. In the past there had been some tensions with some Gypsies and Travellers, but these did seem to have improved in recent times.

### **STAGE ONE**

#### **The benefits and challenges of planning for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller's sites:**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
No excuses for 'squatting'	Perception
Regulation/control	P.R.
Change perception	NIMBY/NOTE
Education of settled and Traveller community	Education/Care
Location	Location
Confidence in process	Policing
Isolate the small minority of trouble makers	Maintaining confidence
Mainstreaming	Management of pitches
Control/administration	Meeting needs may create further demand
Easier for groups to meet	To monitor numbers and react when site increases
Benefits of a stable workforce	To avoid exploitation of labour

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

<p>Getting children into education Named official could be appointed as a contact Trust may be fostered through certain policies being agreed on and implemented by both the settled and travelling communities leading to familiarity and acceptance Mediation through representative</p>	<p>Resentment of special concessions for children of Travellers To reach an agreement for an established site – will the Travellers accept such a site? To establish accurate figures on the number of Travellers there are and will be in the future – especially from overseas Contact possible between travelling families</p>
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### STAGE TWO

#### What works and what doesn't in the relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community?

What works	What doesn't
<p>Gypsies and Travellers do pay Council Tax Integrating Regulated framework Settled sites Concessions on both sides</p>	<p>Gypsies and Travellers avoid responsibilities e.g. Council Tax, Income Tax etc Mess Unhygenic Scrap Dealing Travellers Co-ordinators only representing Gypsies and Travellers</p>

- Give and take on both parties i.e. settled needs as much as others
- Council tax assumptions/perception – need to exemplify that they would do
- Need for proper residential address with a normal name to help them get jobs, bank accounts etc
- Penalties/enforcing the tidiness of sites
- 'Squatter Travellers' give others a bad name e.g. site tidiness
- How do transit sites perform like normal i.e. pay taxes etc.?

The final workshop was held at Wymondham Central Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 16 people attended the meeting and they represented local Town and Parish Councils, elected members from South Norfolk District Council, representatives from local schools and health providers. In addition two officers from South Norfolk District Council and one officer from Norfolk County Council participated in the workshop.

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

### STAGE ONE

#### The benefits and challenges of planning for the provision of Gypsy and Travellers Sites:

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Security for Travellers, better quality of life (not being hounded)	Managing changing numbers
Acceptance by the local community	Overcoming changes to traditional way of life and 'identifiable' for tax etc
Understanding the Traveller community (pattern of movement, needs etc)	Site locations and bringing sites forward (i.e. none have come forward yet!)
Better employment opportunities (building trust of the community and reputation)	Compliance by the Traveller community and enforcement by Authorities
Better access to medical facilities and education	Funding
Better sanitation and public health	Travellers able to get permission where the settled community can't – challenge of 'exploitation'
More cost effective in the long run (costs of enforcement, emergency provision etc vs providing better sites)	Discrimination
Reduction in unauthorised sites	Planning Legislation
Tax collection	Integrating travelling community – lack of health records etc
Hope	Access to mains services – water, electricity, sewerage
Access to benefits	Lack of understanding

### STAGE TWO

#### What works and what doesn't in the relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community?

<b>What works</b>	<b>What doesn't</b>
Finding the right location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- balance between access to facilities but not impacting too much on neighbours</li> </ul>	Unofficial Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- poor facilities/amenities</li> <li>- poorly maintained</li> </ul>
Keeping the sites tidy	Previous bad experiences
Contact between settled and traveller communities (building relationships)	Media image/preconceptions
Integrating into the local school – learning from diversity	Unbalanced media coverage
Complying with the same rules/regulations as the settled community – particularly complying with planning conditions	Costs of tidying up once Travellers have left
	Non-compliance and lack of enforcement
	Perception of one law for Travellers and different rules for the settled community

## Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document

<p>Good site management e.g. Gloria at The Roundwell          Paying the same taxes etc          Adequate resources – funding          Health and Education          Training and Education</p>	<p>Suspicion of increased crime – whether its proven or not          Ignorance – travellers and settled community          Bad behaviour          Cultural differences</p>
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### **Additional Issues:**

Will there be extra resources available to provide health and education?  
 There needs to be greater joined up thinking in relation to health and education (no previous records available will cause administrative problems)  
 Why can't two of the tolerated sites around the A140 be converted into authorised sites?  
 Site locations must be open – no secret sites

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The four facilitated workshops were structured differently to respond to the issues that had been raised during the daytime by members of the public who attended the consultation events. It is evident from the outcomes of the workshops that the relationships between the settled community and Gypsies and Travellers differ greatly across the District. In Easton and Costessey there have been some very positive experiences of integration between the two communities. This has largely been attributed to the work of the local vicar in Easton who has used her role to act as a facilitator between the two communities. In Costessey residents and members speak very highly of the effective management of the Roundwell site and see this as an excellent example of how the provision of larger sites can work well.

Many of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed during the consultation process indicated that 'community cohesion' could be achieved if more permanent sites were provided, in the right locations. They felt this would take away a lot of the current conflict that emerges because of illegal encampments and provide an opportunity for both communities to begin to develop trust of each other.

In the remaining three workshops concerns were expressed about whether the Gypsy and Traveller community would move on to the sites once they were provided. It is evident from the conversations I had with the participants in the consultation that they are keen to find a solution to current problems and want small, permanent family sites to be created. The Roundwell Site in Costessey is full to capacity and has a waiting list, which highlights a need for further site provision.

In addition there is evidence that a number of families have successfully developed authorised sites within the District, and others are desperately searching for land where they could develop authorised sites.

## **Gypsy and Traveller Local Development Document**

Further concerns were expressed during the workshops about whether Gypsy and Traveller children would attend school. It was evident from discussions during the consultation process that many families who are living on permanent sites are currently sending their children to local playgroups and schools. It may be helpful if the local Traveller Education Service could compile some data regarding school attendance and achievement levels, as many of the participants at the workshop in Broome wanted to see more local evidence of how site provision could improve the health and education of Gypsies and Travellers.

Representatives from Easton Parish Council have offered to talk to representatives from other Parish's within the District who are fearful of sites being developed in their area, to share experiences about how difficulties can be overcome and good relationships developed. A comment was made during the workshop at Easton highlighting that if problems occur, "we go down to the site and have a cup of tea and resolve the issues".

To conclude there is evidence from the workshops that a considerable amount of work needs to be done to change the perceptions that the settled community have about Gypsies and Travellers. This work could start immediately and may reduce the opposition to future site provision in some parts of the District. Gypsies and Travellers currently residing in the District are keen to know the timetable for site development and more importantly what is going to happen to them in the meantime. Many have expressed a desire to be kept involved with this process and this presents opportunities to work more closely with them to ensure that future site provision meets their needs.