

Agenda item:

CABINET**19 June 2007**Report Title: **Provision in Haringey for the Gypsy and Traveller Community**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable):

Report of: **Director of Urban Environment**Wards(s) affected; **ALL**Report for: **KEY DECISION****1. Purpose**

1.1 To consider and agree the recommendations of the CRE report "Common Ground" and the advice of the CRE in its feedback to Haringey, relating to services for Gypsies and Travellers and to agree the proposed strategic approach in Haringey.

2. Introduction by Executive Member

Haringey Council welcomed the opportunity to work with the Commission for Racial Equality on the important issue of Gypsies and Travellers. We are committed to improving the co-ordination of services to this group who are often living at the margins of society.

A key element of our response to the report will be to ensure services are overseen at a strategic level by an Assistant Director in the Urban Environment Directorate and that I will take responsibility for this area of work within the Cabinet."

3. Recommendations

3.1 In order to comply with the recommendations of the CRE report "Common Ground" and the advice of the CRE, in their individual feedback to Haringey:

3.1.1 That a Lead Councillor and Lead Officer at no less than second tier level be appointed to co-ordinate the Local Authorities work on sites and to ensure consistency and links to equality issues.

3.1.2 That the Borough's Gypsy and Traveller Service provision be more strategically sited under one second tier officer;

3.1.3 That the Gypsy and Traveller Joint Services Team meetings be chaired by an Officer at least second tier who shall determine the required attendance from statutory and voluntary sectors; and

3.1.4 That reports of the Joint Services Team be submitted at appropriate intervals to the Executive (i) on policy formulation, service delivery and a programme of familiarisation training and (ii) on consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community;

3.2. That two separate categories for Gypsies and Travellers be included in all ethnic monitoring arrangements, and that steps be taken to encourage them to provide such information.

3.3 That the GLA be requested to allocate in the London plan Review sites, in each borough for Gypsies and Travellers to meet the accommodation needs of the community residing in or resorting to the London area established by Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments under the Housing Act 2004, and supplemented by including information of households in these ethnic groups accommodated as Homeless and recorded in the Notify system;

3.4 That the UDP Inquiry inspector's recommendations in respect of Gypsies and Travellers, and the adoption of the UDP with those recommendations incorporated, be noted.

Report Authorised by: Director of Urban Environment



Contact Officers: Philip Cunliffe-Jones, Planning and Regeneration Lawyer
Tricia Garwood, Head of Housing Strategy & Performance
Cecilia Hitchen, Deputy Director, The Children & Young People's Service
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4. Executive Summary

4.1 The CRE inquiry report "Common Ground" was published on 15th May 2006. Nine local authorities, of which Haringey was one, were the subject of in depth case studies. The report made 86 recommendations of which 42 were for local authorities. The summary report contains the key recommendations and in the case of local authorities

selects 22 of the 42 recommendations. The full list of 42 recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 Legislative changes to the Housing Strategy under the Housing Act 2004 require every housing authority to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This duty and a statutory and definition of the terms Gypsies and Travellers for this purpose were brought into force on 2 January 2007. Practice Guidance on conducting Accommodation Needs Assessments is at draft stage. Final guidance is to be issued in the Spring of 2007. National Planning policy has changed giving the Regional Authority responsibility for identifying the number of pitches required for each borough (but not their location) and a strategic view of needs across the region.

4.3 A London wide Needs Assessment has been commissioned with the Greater London Authority as contracting agency. The report is at draft stage and the final report is expected in July or August 2007.

5. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

5.1 There has been a change in legislation and national policy and a CRE Inquiry report.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

6.1 Housing Act 2004. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments- Draft Practice Guidance (ODPM).

6.2 Home Office Guide to the effective use of enforcement powers – Part 1: Unauthorised encampments.

6.3 ODPM Circular 01/2006 – Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.

6.4 CRE Strategy Gypsies and Travellers 2004-2007.

6.5 CRE Scrutiny report Common Ground Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers 2006.

6.6 Statutory Instrument 3190 of 2006 – the Housing (assessment of Accommodation Needs)(Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006

7. Background

7.1 In October 2004 the CRE invited Haringey Council to be one of 9 Authorities to be visited as part of its remit to produce a national report on provision and policies for the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the UK. The scrutiny visit took place over a week in

April 2005 and included meetings with Housing staff, Travellers Support team, Travellers Education project, Planning and Development, Supporting People, Equality and Diversity unit, Legal services, the PCT Members and Communications.

7.2 Whilst not a part of the final CRE report, they suggested Haringey received separate written feedback on their perspective of how provision is managed in Haringey. A follow up meeting was arranged with the CRE in order to iron out differences of view and clarify action points. The Council has not taken a formal position on this feedback but welcomed the opportunity to learn from an external viewpoint and noted several key findings

7.3 As census information on Gypsies and Travellers is not reliable enough a more accurate determination of the Gypsy and Traveller population residing in or resorting to the Borough is needed. This should be built up from several databases, and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments to be carried out based on ODPM Guidance;

7.4 Haringey Council's good and innovative work with Gypsies and Travellers through the Traveller Education Team was not recognised in the CRE scrutiny report – in contrast to the work of the Travelling People's Team which was recognised and commended - but is an important resource for both Traveller children and for community relations

7.5 The location and reporting lines of the current teams should be more strategically sited in order to improve cross departmental work in the community;

7.6 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) need to take specific account of the needs of this community, when relevant. This was a reaction to there being no specific reference to them in EIAs up to the time of the visit; and

7.7 The Council noted concern over the lack of prioritisation for larger accommodation in Housing Corporation subsidies which affects provision for this and other Black and Ethnic Minority communities with larger families.

7.8 The CRE's national report "Common Ground. Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers" was published in May 2006. The report concluded that the approach taken by most local authorities to discharging their duties to Gypsies and Irish Travellers drives and perpetuates a vicious circle of failure to provide services, and poor race relations.

7.9 The CRE defines its goal as follows:" to replace the vicious circle of unmet need and public hostility that this enquiry identified with a sustainable approach to planning, providing and managing Gypsy sites in England and Wales" To this end the report makes a number of recommendations to achieve the following core objectives:

7.9.1 Effective implementation of the new national policy framework on assessing need, providing and managing sites planning and enforcement, to ensure sufficient, good, legal sites.

7.9.2 Positive engagement and good relations between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other members of the public;

7.9.3 Strong local leadership on equality and Gypsy sites from local councillors and leadership by Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

7.9.4 Quality services both mainstream and those developed for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all types of accommodation, through coordinated strategies linked to front line operations.

7.9.5 A strong evidence base for developing policies and services

7.9.6 A robust performance management framework for gypsy site services setting standards comparable to those in conventional social housing.

7.9.7 Targeted and proportionate policing on Gypsy sites earning the confidence of site residents and other members of the public; and

7.9.8 Achievement of these objectives through full and effective implementation of the statutory duty on public authorities, including local authorities and police services, to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

7.10 The report makes 86 recommendations for central Government, Local Authorities, the Police, Inspectorates and other agencies, this report will concern itself with the 22 recommendations for Local Authorities contained within the summary report. The recommendations are set out under seven headings as follows;

7.10.1 Leadership, strategy and practice

7.10.1.1 Develop a holistic corporate vision for all work on Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and anchor it within the community strategy, the local development framework and any other relevant strategy, including the race equality scheme.

7.10.1.2 Review all policies on accommodation for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, to ensure a long-term, coordinated and strategic approach that promotes race equality and good race relations. This should include policy on planning and providing sites, managing authorised and unauthorised encampments and conventional housing, and be supported by data collection and consultation with local communities. Strategy on accommodation should be linked to wider service areas, such as health and education, and to a communications strategy.

7.10.1.3 Designate a councillor at cabinet (or equivalent) level, and an officer at no less than assistant director level, to coordinate the authority's work on sites (authorised and unauthorised), to make sure it is consistent across departments, and is linked to its work on equality.

7.10.1.4 Develop a robust performance management system for all aspects of services for Gypsy sites, within a wider accommodation framework, including providing and managing sites, and managing unauthorised encampments. Include these functions in internal reviews of services.

7.10.2 The duty to promote race equality and good race relations

7.10.2.1 Add two separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all ethnic monitoring arrangements, and take steps to encourage them to provide information about their ethnicity.

7.10.2.2 Make sure the duty to promote race equality and good race relations, and issues relating to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, are written into all partnerships with

the police, and providers of education and health services, and into all relevant procurement arrangements, including those with external trainers, site managers and bailiffs.

7.10.3 Public sites

7.10.3.1 Conduct a reliable and full assessment of the need for residential and transit sites (as required by the Housing Act 2004), by making sure that questionnaires take account of Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' cultural traditions, and that staff responsible for the assessment have been trained to understand the needs of these groups, both on sites (including private and public sites, and unauthorised encampments) and in housing.

7.10.3.2 Review the quality of sites, and arrangements for managing them (including allocation policies, repairs services and the costs of utilities), to ensure that they are providing essential services, and at standards comparable to those in conventional social housing.

7.10.3.3 Consult everyone concerned at the earliest stage of developing a site, and make sure all stages of consultation on unauthorised encampments, and proposed public and private sites, allow Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as other members of the public, to take full part, are effectively chaired, and contribute to better relations between different groups.

7.10.3.4 Develop formal policies on pitch allocations for all new sites, similar to those for conventional housing, and draw up a reasonable timetable for extending the policies to existing sites.

7.10.4 Planning

7.10.4.1 Refer to Gypsies and Irish Travellers in the statement of community involvement (which explains how all groups will be consulted on planning policy), and take practical steps to get them meaningfully involved, where possible building on existing relationships.

7.10.4.2 Give specific advice to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, at an early stage, on the most suitable land for residential use, and on how to prepare applications, and help them to find the information they need to support their application.

7.10.4.3 Develop an internal policy on how to handle racist representations, and make sure officers know how to use it, so that only material considerations relating to the application are presented to members of the planning committee.

7.10.4.4 Monitor all planning applications and instances of enforcement action at every stage, by type and racial group, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as two separate categories, in order to assess the effects of policies and practices on different racial groups.

7.10.4.5 Consider using the overview and scrutiny committee, or any other suitable formal mechanism, to assess the effects on race equality and race relations of any major decision to enforce planning requirements on Gypsy sites.

7.10.5 Unauthorised encampments

7.10.5.1 Review and monitor policies for dealing with unauthorised encampments, to make sure they promote access to services for occupants, and good race relations between them and other groups; in doing this authorities should focus in particular on providing basic facilities, assessing welfare needs and communicating effectively with the public.

7.10.5.2 Make sure the duty to promote race equality and good race relations is built into any contracts for managing or evicting from, unauthorised encampments; and that contractors are given clear guidance on how this might affect their policy and practice, and monitored on their compliance with the guidance.

7.10.6 Housing

7.10.6.1 Conduct research to identify the numbers and needs of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in conventional housing, and explicitly include these groups in relevant housing policy (including housing, homelessness and supporting people strategies), with links to site-related services.

7.10.6.2 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 preventive strategies.

7.10.7 Promoting good race relations and integrated communities

7.10.7.1 Encourage dialogue and positive interaction between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other groups, through effective engagement with leaders and members of all communities.

7.10.7.2 Actively promote better public understanding of Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and the consequences of unmet need for sites; and take steps to counter stereotypes in the media and in public perceptions.

7.10.7.3 Encourage and support mainstream voluntary organisations to build bridges between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other members of the public.

7.11 The CRE originally intended to publish its report to coincide with the publication of revised National Guidance. However, the ODPM and the Home Office published Guidance ahead of the report in early February which makes clear the Government objective to increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission over the next 3 – 5 years. ODPM Circular 01/2006, paragraphs 19, 22 and 23, require the GLA and other regional spatial authorities to identify the number of pitches required for each local Planning authority area and maintain an up to date understanding of the likely strategic accommodation

requirements of their areas. Pitch numbers can be identified by a sub-regional area if a joint Development Plan Document is produced by agreement between the local planning authorities involved (paragraph 26)

7.12 The North London Housing Sub-Region is participating in the London Wide project to commission a consultant to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) at borough, sub regional and regional levels (The North London sub region comprises Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington and Westminster). The project partners are: the GLA acting as contracting agency, ALG, the London boroughs represented by the Sub Regional Housing Co coordinators , advisors from DCLG Gypsy and Traveller unit, and representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The draft final report is due to be completed in early May 2007 with the final report in June 2007.

7.14 So far as the Haringey UDP is concerned, the Inspector's report into Haringey's Revised UDP makes two recommendations in respect of Gypsies and Travellers. First he proposes that the Council should adopt a criteria based land use policy, and second he recommends the deletion of Site Specific Policy 40 which proposed that part of the former Friern Barnet Sewage Works site be set aside as a Travellers site, subject to relocation needs. The Inspector considered this policy to be premature in advance of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment. The UDP was adopted in July 2006.

8. Haringey Situation and Service Provision

8.1 Travelling Peoples Team and Travellers Education Team

8.1.1 The CRE commended Haringey Council's Travelling Peoples Team and the initiatives taken in outreach and youth work. The CRE express the firm view, however, that the service lacks strategic direction and is fragmented in different departments. The convenor of the Joint Service Meetings to which the PCT and Police are invited has been at Team Manager level. The Travellers Education Team carries out good and innovative work with schools, in partnership with Housing, Health and Social Care, as well as YOT and Connexions. The Traveller Team use a broader definition than that of the CRE and include work with Roma and New Age Travellers within their remit. Whilst continuing the specialist work within departments there is a need to develop a more strategic approach across all services working with travellers which will raise the profile of all of their work and enable them to be part of a wider cross department and interagency network

8.1.2 The responsibility for site provision will remain in Environmental services. A designated arrangement to meet the needs of this community must be included in all planning for land use in the borough and in the sub region.

8.2 Housing Services

8.2.1 The statutory requirement under the 2004 Housing Act to undertake an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met through the London wide needs assessment being undertaken at sub regional level. The results from this will be known later in 2007.

8.2.2 Housing has completed a Housing Diversity & Equalities Framework that sets out how inequalities impact upon particular communities not having their housing needs met, and the work we intend to undertake to improve upon this. The Action Plan is committed to ascertaining more information on the housing needs of gypsies and travellers. From existing knowledge and research, we recognise the need for larger units of housing which apply to the travellers' community as well as other ethnic minority communities.

8.2.3 Our 2006 Housing Needs survey surveyed only households living in permanent fixed accommodation. It is possible that traveller households may be residing in such accommodation, but experience elsewhere suggests reluctance on the part of such households to confirm their ethnicity as that of a gypsy or traveller for fear of discrimination.

8.2.4 The new Housing Prevention & Options service has close links with the Travellers Liaison Team in social services. The link is useful for establishing any issues that arise with Travellers that require the involvement of P&O staff esp. in relation to homelessness. Research undertaken by the Travellers Team in developing the Supporting People strategy suggested 60% of their time was taken up providing housing related support especially in relation benefits and rent arrears to prevent evictions.

8.2.5 In Sept 2006, a new Lettings Policy was agreed for the Housing service. At the same time, a re-registration exercise of housing applicants also took place. This saw the introduction of new registration forms. The ethnic minority categories for that form do not specifically include gypsies and / or travellers as a distinct ethnic category, although there is space for housing applicants to add their own ethnic category.

8.2.6 The community has a long track record of poorer health, lesser educational achievement and lack of access to services. There has been a trend for some in the travelling community to become semi permanent in recent years, and provision through the Supporting Peoples programmes has helped with the transition from one life style to another. Hence strategic planning will enable the Council to better accommodate changing needs in the community and also ensure resources are joined together and are working to the same goals.

8.2.7 The Housing Strategy 2008-2012 will need to address the needs of this community as part of equalities issues

9. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

9.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on this report and comments that the statutory definition of Gypsies and Travellers for the purposes of Housing Needs Assessment is broader than the definition for land use planning purposes and includes members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

9.2 The CRE Scrutiny report covers Gypsies and Travellers who are currently recognised as racial groups for the purposes of the Race Relations Act. It does not cover New Age Travellers or Occupational Travellers (Travelling show people, circus and waterway communities) as these wider social groups are not necessarily racial groups within the CRE statutory remit. Nor does the CRE report specifically cover Roma. The CRE are developing separate strategies covering European policy and Refugee and Asylum policy since the accession states following EU enlargement have Roma and other Traveller populations with the right of freedom of movement to the UK.

9.3 The Planning Circular advises that the need identified by the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments should inform the amount of land required by the planning system, including gypsies and travellers who do not fall within the Planning definition. In land use terms it is the need for planned caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers which is now being addressed on a regional basis.

10. Comments of the Director of Finance

10.1 The new arrangements proposed for the strategic management of the Gypsies and Travellers service will need to be managed within the overall existing approved resources.

10.2 In addition there may be a financial impact, both capital and revenue, if new sites are identified in Haringey. There will be a need to refurbish the site and install the amenities. (Cost will depend on the quality of the site). Also there will be an ongoing maintenance cost. However, this may be offset by charging a rent. Any additional capital and/or revenue requirements would need to be considered as part of the Council's resource allocation process at the appropriate time

11. Comments of the Director of Adult Culture and Community Services

11.1 A range of social services are provided to people from the Gypsy and Traveller Communities. The Social Care Person Database includes the sub-categories of Gypsy, Irish Traveller and Traveller. Services to this group are delivered in line with the Council's eligibility criteria Fair Access to Care Services. The boroughs Libraries, Leisure Centres and Parks are open and available to all residents, including the Travelling Community, and our pricing policy provides discounted access for those on low income.

11.2 Haringey Libraries, in partnership with the Haringey Travelling Peoples Team and CARA [Housing Association] have successfully provided support to Irish Travellers to enable them to pass the driving theory test. This involves Library staff working with small groups of Travellers, offering 1-1 support and using specialist IT facilities.

12. Comments of the Director of Children and Young People's Service

12.1 I am pleased that the CRE inspection recognised the very good work of the Travellers Team and the Travellers Education Team. The co ordination of the work of the teams in relation to the needs of the gypsy and traveller community will have to take account of the extended remit of the education team and the need for that team to continue to deliver services to other communities such as the Roma community. Any implications for service delivery will have to be contained within existing budgets

13. Comments of the Director of Urban Environment.

13.1 The Borough's UDP, which has been through a Public Local Inquiry and considered by an independent planning Inspector, accords with the new ODPM Circular 01/2006 on 'Planning for Gypsy and Caravan Sites'.

13.2 The Inspector recommended that a new criteria-based policy be drafted which can be used to assess the appropriateness of any proposed new traveller's sites. This would help guide development control to determine any planning applications and also be used by the Council as the basis of its search for potential new sites following an assessment of need. This approach will give greater certainty to potential applicants. The Inspector also recommended the deletion of Site Specific Policy 40, which proposed part of the former Friern Barnet Sewage Works be set aside as a travellers' site, subject to need.

13.3 The Council accepted the Inspector's recommendations, which were addressed in the UDP Modifications, considered by Executive on 21st March 2006. The modifications to the Gypsy and Travellers policy were incorporated in the adopted UDP.

14. Equalities Implications

14.1 Gypsies and Irish Travellers have been recognised in case law as distinct and separate ethnic groups and therefore entitled to the same protection afforded to other ethnic minorities under the Race relations Act 1976 and as amended in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

14.2 These communities are historically vulnerable to exclusion unless specific steps are taken to address their needs and include them into the mainstream. This means ensuring that in everything we do as Council, we take account of the needs and the issues facing them, and generally ensuring that in regard to the Gypsies and Irish Travellers communities, we discharge our equalities public duties including the duty to promote good relations between these two communities and the wider Haringey community.

14.3 Haringey has taken a decisive step in this respect, with the recognition and inclusion of these communities in the Equality Public Duties Scheme adopted by the Council in December 2006. That document makes specific references to Gypsies and Traveller communities commits the Council to much of what has been set out in this report. Our equalities monitoring framework has been reviewed and the draft being prepared for Member consideration now includes separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers respectively. This should enable the Council to track the impact of our policies on those communities and make corrections where adverse impacts are identified. Similarly, as this report recommends, our equalities impact assessment framework will be reviewed with the aim of including Gypsies and Irish Travellers so that potential adverse impacts on them can be identified and corrected before draft proposals are taken forward for formal decisions.

14.4 The Gypsy and Traveller community had a higher profile in the borough several years ago, which has fallen as more disadvantaged groups have come in since then. The CRE's scrutiny visit has given the opportunity for a new look at this community in terms of provision and consultation. The main findings listed in the report require implementation. Haringey Council has taken a wider view on provision for the Gypsy and Traveller community than the original CRE scrutiny review and so has covered all the issues in an EIA (Attached as Appendix B).

Once the decision of the CEMB and Executive has been made consultation with the community on its implementation can be made, bearing in mind the fragmented nature of groups within that community means that will not be a one off exercise.

15. Appendices (attached)

Appendix A – Full list of CRE recommendations

Recommendations

Governmental organisations

The government should:

- Develop a realistic but ambitious timetable for local authorities to identify land for sites, and where necessary establish them, and make sure it is met. Local planning authorities should also be required to include reports on the progress they have made in identifying sites in their annual monitoring reports on their local development frameworks.
- Require regional housing boards and regional planning bodies (and any merged bodies) to make the promotion of race equality and good race relations integral to their work on allocating land for Gypsy sites. This should include their work with individual local authorities on developing housing strategies, and finding land for sites, and their consideration of funding bids for Gypsy sites.
- Develop key performance indicators for public sites, which set standards or quality and management that are comparable to those for conventional accommodation.
- Produce up-to-date guidance for local authorities on designing and managing sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
- Consider developing a national framework for encouraging and supporting local authorities and mainstream voluntary organisations to take the initiative in promoting social integration and civic participation, including strategies for preventing and resolving conflict.
- Fund the development of a toolkit for resolving conflict, for use by local authorities in relation to sites, pilot the toolkit and distribute it to local authorities.
- Require local authorities to monitor and provide data on planning applications, outcomes and enforcement, and on housing and homelessness, by racial group, using two separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
- Require police forces to collect information on Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as two separate ethnic categories.
- Issue guidance for local authorities on developing homelessness strategies that consider Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' needs for accommodation, advice and support.
- Ensure that, in areas of work that affect Gypsies and Irish Travellers, including work to tackle social deprivation and to promote community cohesion, issues concerning Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised and resourced in the same way as for other groups.

Government offices for the regions should:

- Ensure, on behalf of the secretary of state, that regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks take proper account of the need to provide accommodation, and that local authorities provide or facilitate suitable sites, and work with upper tier authorities to coordinate provision across regions.

Local authorities should:

Leadership, strategy and practice

- Develop a holistic corporate vision for all work on Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and anchor it within the community strategy, the local development framework and any other relevant strategy, including the race equality scheme.

- Review all policies on accommodation for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, to ensure a long-term, coordinated and strategic approach that promotes race equality and good race relations. This should include policy on planning and providing sites, managing authorised and unauthorised encampments and conventional housing, and be supported by data collection and consultation with local communities. Strategy on accommodation should be linked to wider service areas, such as health and education, and to a communications strategy.
- Designate a councillor at cabinet (or equivalent) level, and an officer at no less than assistant director level, to coordinate the authority's work on sites (authorised and unauthorised), to make sure it is consistent across departments, and is linked to its work on equality.
- Develop a robust performance management system for all aspects of services for Gypsy sites, within a wider accommodation framework, including providing and managing sites, and managing unauthorised encampments. Include these functions in internal reviews of services.

The duty to promote race equality and good race relations

- Add two separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all ethnic monitoring arrangements, and take steps to encourage them to provide information about their ethnicity.
- Make sure the duty to promote race equality and good race relations, and issues relating to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, are written into all partnerships with the police, and providers of education and health services, and into all relevant procurement arrangements, including those with external trainers, site managers and bailiffs.

Public sites

- Conduct a reliable and full assessment of the need for residential and transit sites (as required by the Housing Act 2004), by making sure that questionnaires take account of Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' cultural traditions, and that staff responsible for the assessment have been trained to understand the needs of these groups, both on sites (including private and public sites, and unauthorised encampments) and in housing.
- Review the quality of sites, and arrangements for managing them (including allocation policies, repairs services and the costs of utilities), to ensure that they are providing essential services, and at standards comparable to those in conventional social housing.
- Consult everyone concerned at the earliest stage of developing a site, and make sure all stages of consultation on unauthorised encampments, and proposed public and private sites, allow Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as other members of the public, to take full part, are effectively chaired, and contribute to better relations between different groups.
- Develop formal policies on pitch allocations for all new sites, similar to those for conventional housing, and draw up a reasonable timetable for extending the policies to existing sites.

Planning

- Refer to Gypsies and Irish Travellers in the statement of community involvement (which explains how all groups will be consulted on planning policy), and take practical steps to get them meaningfully involved, where possible building on existing relationships.
- Give specific advice to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, at an early stage, on the most suitable land for residential use, and on how to prepare applications, and help them to find the information they need to support their application.
- Develop an internal policy on how to handle racist representations, and make sure officers know how to use it, so that only material considerations relating to the application are presented to members of the planning committee.

- Monitor all planning applications and instances of enforcement action at every stage, by type and racial group, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as two separate categories, in order to assess the effects of policies and practices on different racial groups.
- Consider using the overview and scrutiny committee, or any other suitable formal mechanism, to assess the effects on race equality and race relations of any major decision to enforce planning requirements on Gypsy sites.

Unauthorised encampments

- Review and monitor policies for dealing with unauthorised encampments, to make sure they promote access to services for occupants, and good race relations between them and other groups; in doing this authorities should focus in particular on providing basic facilities, assessing welfare needs and communicating effectively with the public.
- Make sure the duty to promote race equality and good race relations is built into any contracts for managing, or evicting from, unauthorised encampments; and that contractors are given clear guidance on how this might affect their policy and practice, and monitored on their compliance with the guidance.

Housing

- Conduct research to identify the numbers and needs of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in conventional housing, and explicitly include these groups in relevant housing policy (including housing, homelessness and supporting people strategies), with links to site-related services.
- 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 preventive strategies.

Promoting good race relations and integrated communities

- Encourage dialogue and positive interaction between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other groups, through effective engagement with leaders and members of all communities.
- Actively promote better public understanding of Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and the consequences of unmet need for sites; and take steps to counter stereotypes in the media and in public perceptions.
- Encourage and support mainstream voluntary organisations to build bridges between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other members of the public.

Police forces should:

- Include Gypsies and Irish Travellers in mainstream neighbourhood policing strategies, to promote race equality and good race relations.
- Target individual Gypsies and Irish Travellers suspected of anti-social behaviour and crime on public, private and unauthorised sites, and not whole communities, and work with people from these groups and local authorities to develop preventive measures.
- Treat Gypsies and Irish Travellers, both when they are victims and suspects, as members of the local community, and in ways that strengthen their trust and confidence in the force.
- Provide training for all relevant officers on Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' service needs, so that officers are able to do their jobs more effectively, and promote good relations between all groups in the community they serve.
- Review formal and informal procedures for policing unauthorised encampments, to identify and eliminate potentially discriminatory practices, and ensure that the procedures promote race equality and good race relations.

Parish and community councils should:

- Make sure councillors represent all groups in their local community, and are aware of the statutory duty to promote race equality and good race relations, and its practical implications in relation to Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

Inspectorates

The Audit Commission should:

- Include consideration of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all relevant aspects of its audit and inspection work, including comprehensive performance assessments, paying particular attention to questions of leadership, training, provision and management of services, and local authorities' relative expenditure on providing and managing legal sites and on enforcement.

The planning inspectorate should:

- Take into account, when making decisions on Gypsy site planning appeals, whether there has been a material breach of the RRA by the local authority in exercising its planning functions (including both the discrimination provisions of the law and the duty to promote race equality and good race relations).

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary should:

- Include Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all relevant inspections of police performance.

Other organisations

The Local Government Association and the Welsh Local Government Association should:

- Consider the supplementary guidance local authorities may need on providing sites (and on enforcement), with special attention to their effects on community relations.
- Identify and develop strategies to meet training needs in local authorities arising from the new national policy framework on providing sites, and from the statutory duty to promote race equality and good race relations, including training about Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

The Association of Chief Police Officers should:

- Identify and publicise good practice in dealing with crimes against Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and crime and anti-social behaviour on all sites, and in managing unauthorised encampments in a way that promotes race equality and good race relations, drawing on any good practice developed with other ethnic minority groups.

The Royal Town Planning Institute should:

- Make race equality and planning for Gypsy sites a specific part of the continuing professional development programme for all planning officers.
- Supplement its guidance on 'racist representations' with specific advice on handling applications for Gypsy sites.

The Improvement and Development Agency should:

- Develop, within existing modules of its leadership academy programme for councillors, a specific strand on political leadership, achieving crossparty consensus, and engaging with local communities in the context of Gypsy sites.
- Develop job-specific training for local government officers on Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' interests and needs, including an understanding of how the duty to promote race equality and good race relations applies to these groups.

The Improvement and Development Agency (or Audit Commission) should:

- Develop a library of local performance indicators on the provision and management of sites, for use as benchmarks of good practice by local authorities.

The National Association of Local Councils and One Voice Wales should:

- Raise awareness among parish and community councils of their statutory responsibilities for promoting race equality and good race relations in relation to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and support and advise them.

The voluntary sector Independent funding bodies should:

- Consider the importance of including Gypsies and Irish Travellers in initiatives to promote equality and social integration when allocating funds to voluntary and community organisations.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations should:

- Include Gypsies and Irish Travellers in relevant work programmes and training, and encourage mainstream voluntary organisations to involve members of these groups in their work.

Voluntary organisations working with Gypsies and Irish Travellers should:

- Encourage Gypsies and Irish Travellers to register to vote, and to exercise their voting rights.

Gypsy and Irish Traveller representatives should:

- Engage with mainstream voluntary organisations to explore ways of increasing social interaction and participation.
- Consider further ways of entering into constructive dialogue with local authorities, to make sure Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' needs are understood and met, and to demonstrate their commitment to participation.