

REPORT OF THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY STRATEGY SCRUTINY PANEL

JUNE 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 1

The Panel was tasked with considering a Travelling Community Strategy, including:

- (i) the current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community;
- (ii) the roles and responsibilities of each agency;
- (iii) the powers and duties that exist and who holds those powers;
- (iv) the provisions of the Localism Bill and potential impact should that Bill be enacted;
- (v) evidence from interested groups, including travellers and Leicestershire County Council's Multi-agency Travellers Unit; and
- (vi) the availability of sites – (part of the Local Development Framework).

SECTION 2

An interim report of the Panel, to submit proposed recommendations as a formal submission to the proposed policy response in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy relating to the Travelling Community, within the allotted timescale, submitted to the Scrutiny Management Board, at its meeting held on 8th December 2011.

SECTION 3

The Panel received information in respect of the Council policies, procedures and powers.

SECTION 4

The Panel received information from representatives of the Multi-Agency Traveller Unit (MATU), hosted by Leicestershire County Council, providing details of how MATU addressed issues relating to the unauthorised encampment of Travellers, including policies, procedures and the powers it held.

SECTION 5

The Panel received information from representatives of the Travelling Community in respect of their experiences as travellers, especially in Leicestershire, difficulties they had encountered and how they were resolved, together with positive experiences.

SECTION 6

The Panel received information from Mr Stephen Cutler, who had taught Traveller children for the last twenty years. He outlined his work, the problems he had encountered and how he had dealt with those problems.

SECTION 7

The Panel received information from Mr Darren Jones, a local representative of the Showmen's Guild. He provided an overview of the life of his family, experiences and difficulties Showmen encountered and how some of those difficulties had been overcome.

SECTION 8

The Panel received information from Mr Adrian McInness, a local developer.

SECTION 9

The Panel received information from Mr Esuf Sarafat a representatives from a Housing Association.

SECTION 10

The Panel received information from Mrs Josie Crest a Local Tenant Association Representative.

SECTION 11

During the period of the Panel, Leicester City Council began a public consultation in respect of proposed traveller sites, some of which were in close proximity of the City and Charnwood Borough boarder.

SECTION 12

A summary of recommendations is submitted.

SECTION 13

Background Papers

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

At its meeting held on 27th July 2011, the Scrutiny Management Board resolved to establish the Travelling Community Strategy Scrutiny Panel, Chaired by Councillor Jukes and that the Panel be monitored by the Policy Scrutiny Group. To ensure it had input into the Core Strategy, as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), the Policy Scrutiny Group, at its meeting held on 6th September 2011, agreed that the Panel should complete its report by December 2011. However, to ensure that the Panel had sufficient time to scrutinise the matter in depth, it was proposed that an interim report in respect of the Local Development Framework be submitted to the Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting to be held on 8th December 2011, to enable the views of the Panel in

respect of that matter to be submitted and the Panel consider further items within its terms of reference after that date.

1.2 Reason for Scrutiny

Following recent events and taking account of the proposals being considered by the Strategic Director of Corporate Services a Panel be established to consider a Travelling Community Strategy.

1.3 Terms of Reference

To consider a Travelling Community Strategy:

- (i) The current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community;
- (ii) The roles and responsibilities of each agency;
- (iii) The powers and duties that exist and who holds those powers;
- (iv) The provisions of the Localism Bill and potential impact should that Bill be enacted;
- (v) Evidence from interested groups, including travellers and Leicestershire County Council's Multi-agency Travellers Unit; and
- (vi) The availability of sites – (part of the Local Development Framework).

Much of what would have been included in a strategy has been superseded by the Council becoming a member of MATU, with the terms of reference being replaced by an understanding of roles and responsibilities and what is meant to be achieved.

1.4 Evidence, Stakeholders and Witnesses

In gathering its evidence, the Panel consulted with the following:

- Relevant officers from Charnwood Borough Council;
- Leicestershire County Council's Multi-agency Travellers Unit;
- A LCC Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer;
- Representatives of Travellers Community;
- A teacher of Gypsy children.
- A representative the Showmen's Guild;
- A Local Developer;
- A Registered Social Landlord;
- The Chair of a local Tenant Association.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

A detailed Equality Impact Assessment was not considered appropriate at this stage, since the recommendations within the report are not at a sufficiently detailed level to enable evaluation of their impact on individuals or groups of people.

1.6 Panel Membership

Panel Chair: Councillor R. Jukes
Panel Vice-chair: Councillor Sutherland
Councillors: Brown, Day, Duffy, Gaskell, Newton, Pacey, Ranson, M. Smith and Youell

1.7 UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS IN CHARNWOOD

Details of unauthorised encampments from January 2011 to May 2012 is attached at appendix one to the report (supplied by MATU).

1.8 SOCIAL INDICATORS

DCLG sources report that Gypsies and Travellers are being held back by some of the worst outcomes of any group, across a wide range of social indicators, including the following:

- In 2011 just 12% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared with 58.2% of all pupils
- There is an excess prevalence of miscarriages, stillbirths, neonatal deaths in Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Around 20% of traveller caravans are on unauthorised sites.
- Studies have reported that Gypsy and Traveller communities are subjected to hostility and discrimination and in many places, lead separate, parallel lives from the wider community.

The evidence gathered by the Panel and the conclusions and recommendations are set out in the chapters below. A summary of the Panel's recommendations is set out in Section 12.

2. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

2.1 Following the Local Development Framework Workshop held on 14th November 2011, which Members of the Panel attended, the Panel considered its formal submission to the proposed policy response in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy relating to the Travelling Community at its meeting held on 17th November 2011. To assist the Panel with the consideration of the item, the Head of Planning and Regeneration and a Planning Policy Officer attend the meeting.

2.2 The Panel considered both 'Meeting the Requirements' and 'Locating Sites' elements of the consultation, raising concerns in respect of there being no reference to the different cultures of Romany Gypsies, Travellers and Showmen and the fact that different cultures would not live together on one site and should land be allocated on the edge of or within a sustainable urban extension it would render adjoining land sterile, as people would choose not to buy land near those sites.

2.3 Officers considered that the number of small sites, containing two or three pitches, could be planned among a Sustainable urban environment in the Borough, together with the permanent sites required for Showmen. They would need to be planned sensitively and be well integrated within the schemes.

2.4 Recommendations

1. **that it be recommended to the Scrutiny Management Board** that the scrutiny response to the Core Strategy consultation in respect of gypsies, travellers and show people be as follows:

(a) that in respect of Meeting the Requirement, Policy Approach 3 be agreed, with the deletion of the word 'specific':

Rely on the evidence of need in the GTAA (2007) and/or the targets set out in the Regional Plan and plan for this on sites in the Borough (See text for pitch requirements). Provide criteria based policy to deal with pitches on windfall sites should they occur.

(b) that in respect of Locating Sites, Policy Approach 2 be agreed:

Identify sites for permanent settlement by gypsies and travellers, along with sites to meet the needs of transient gypsies, within the Sustainable Urban Extensions. Further permanent accommodation to be considered on a needs basis and assessed against criteria based policy.

When considering the Panel's recommendations in respect of the Core Strategy consultation, the Scrutiny Management Board amended the recommendation as follows: *Identify sites for permanent settlement by gypsies and travellers, along with sites to meet the needs of transient gypsies, **if appropriate** within the Sustainable Urban Extensions. Further permanent accommodation to be considered on a needs basis and assessed against criteria based policy.*

2. that within the final Panel report, it be recommended that details in respect of the current situation with gypsies and travellers be gleaned from completed equal opportunity questions, when liaising with Housing Officers.

Reasons

1. To submit a scrutiny response to the LDF consultation process.

2. To ensure equality information collated by Housing Officers be made available to planning officers, to assist them with ascertaining local requirements for gypsies and travellers.

2.5 Subsequently the Panel received further information from witnesses and following further consideration of the positioning of sites identified benefits and risks as follows:

- The benefits of developing sites on a SUE would be that they were developed in an integrated way, with housing, school and community facilities within a developing community, and would be high quality permanent sites.
- A criteria based policy would provide the basis for assessing the suitability of windfall sites elsewhere, including transient sites where integration with local communities presented different challenges.
- In respect of identifying sites through later Site Allocations documents, there were three risks:
 - (i) The willingness of developers to make suitable land available within the SUEs. Should they be reluctant to make provision within their master planning scheme it would be necessary to consider alternative approaches, however, the scale of the extension sites should result in site identification being achievable.
 - (ii) To ensure sites met new planning policy requirements, introduced in March 2012, the sites must be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and promote peaceful and integrated co-existence. Inappropriate sites would not meet these requirements.
 - (iii) The Core Strategy Inspector finding that such sites would not be the most sustainable way to provide for the needs of Gypsy/Travellers in Charnwood, which would result in alternative provision in the Borough having to be sought.

3. COUNCIL SERVICES

3.1 At the invitation of the Group, the following officers attended the meeting and provided details of how Council Services addressed issues relating to unauthorised encampments of Travellers, including policies, procedures and who held which powers. The following officers attended the meeting:

S. Jackson – Strategic Director of Corporate Services

A. Russell – Communities and Partnerships

J. Robinson – Head of Neighbourhood Services

David Hayes – Project Manager, Cleansing

H. Robinson – Senior Planning Enforcement Officer

3.2 When officers attended the Panel meeting on 15th December 2011, the overall responsibility for co-ordinating a response to an unauthorised traveller site/encampment on Council land in the Borough, had transferred from Corporate Services to Neighbourhood Services. Officers were in the process of finalising internal policies and procedures, including a flow chart, with contact details and processes. Service Standards for unauthorised encampments and other duties was tabled at the meeting, for the information of the Panel. That transfer had now been completed.

3.3 Officers had liaised with the Multi-agency Travellers Unit (MATU) with a view to submitting a report to Cabinet in January 2012, recommending that Charnwood Borough Council join that partnership. All other Leicestershire Authorities were already Members. Until that report had been considered, MATU had supported Charnwood on an ad hoc basis, when required. Those recommendations had been considered by Cabinet and Charnwood Borough Council was now a member of MATU. It was also recommended within the report to Cabinet that membership of MATU be reviewed on an annual basis.

3.4 The current process to deal with a report received from a member of the public of an unauthorised encampment was detailed to the Panel, together with recognition of the problems caused to local residents by such an encampment.

3.5 Following the transfer of responsibilities for Gypsies and Travellers to Neighbourhood Services, officers were looking to develop their work further. Part of that on going process was the development of a site on the Council's web site. A link to the site can be found below:

http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/gypsy_and_traveller_sites

3.6 The Panel concluded that the submitted information provided a sound base for the Panel to undertake further scrutiny, with invited witnesses.

4. THE MULTI-AGENCY TRAVELLER UNIT

4.1 At the invitation of the Panel, representatives from the Multi Agency Traveller Unit (MATU), hosted by Leicestershire County Council, attended the meeting to provide details of how MATU addressed issues relating to the unauthorised encampment of Travellers, including policies, procedures and the powers it held. The following officers attended the meeting:

Mat Bagley – MATU Co-ordinator
Sergeant Simon Ward – Police Officer
Sharon Holland – A Travellers Liaison Officer

Further information in respect of MATU can be found on its website:

http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/gypsies_and_travellers-2/property_travellers_advice.htm

4.2 MATU officers receive intelligence from travellers, as the majority of travellers wished to live a peaceful existence in Leicestershire and provided information in respect of unlawful activities, for example distraction burglaries.

4.3 The MATU team was seen as good practice and liaised with other authorities and agencies, including the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Association of Gypsy Traveller Officers across England.

4.4 The Panel acknowledged the work of the Multi Agency Traveller Unit and requested that the Overview Scrutiny Group, while considering the Cabinet report in respect of the Multi Agency Traveller Unit at its meeting held on 16th January 2012, be advised that following consideration of evidence received from representatives of the Multi Agency Traveller Unit, the Panel fully supported the recommendations within that report, for the Council to become a member of the Countywide MATU Agreement and approval be given for the MATU team to act on behalf of Charnwood Borough Council to manage unauthorised encampments and other traveller related issues in line with the Code of Practice for Travellers adopted by all Local Authorities in Leicestershire.

4.5 MATU was not aware of any successful adoption of local byelaws and could make use of existing powers to deal with unauthorised encampments. The use of byelaws would need to consider the effects on other road users such as caravans and HGVs and how they would be enforced. The Borough Council's Street Management service could enforce existing on-street parking restrictions and restrictions within the Council's own car parks.

5. TRAVELLING COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

At the invitation of the Panel, a representative from the Multi Agency Traveller Unit (MATU), together with representatives from the Gypsy Community attended the meeting. The following people attended the meeting:

Ms Pauline Burton	Travellers Sites & Liaison Officer and Manager of Gypsy & Travellers Equality at MATU
Mrs Phyllis Roberts	A member of the Gypsy Community and Gypsy & Traveller Equality
Mrs Mary Ann Walker	A member of the Gypsy Community and Gypsy & Traveller Equality

5.1 Mrs Roberts and Mrs Walker outlined their lifestyles, the problems they encountered and how they dealt with those problems. Mrs Walker had lived with her family on an unauthorised site for three years, tolerated by Leicester City Council. She had no electricity, other than a limited supply from a generator, or facilities other than an outside tap and a portaloo. All her seven children attended school regularly and remaining on one site had allowed regular access to doctors and hospital appointments. Mrs Roberts would not wish to change her lifestyle as a Romany Gypsy, however, she would like to live on a permanent family site.

5.2 Mrs Roberts had lived with her extended family on the roadside for twenty years. Her views were similar to those of Mrs Walker and believed her family's presence was tolerated because they caused no trouble.

5.3 Many gypsy families would prefer to live together a small family units, rather than on a larger site, as they were able to maintain and control the site. However, it was recognised that there was still a need for transit sites for those who wished to live a nomadic life.

5.4 Traveller sites were often situated away from permanent houses, which were not what travellers wanted, as they needed access to shops and schools and their children liked to visit the cinema.

5.5 Concern was expressed that the criteria being adopted by Charnwood Borough Council's Local Development Framework, in respect of the positioning of new traveller sites did not match the requirements of the travellers.

5.6 The Chair concluded that Kinship sites appeared to be a positive way forward. Residents would then see the sites were being well maintained and that could reduce fears in the future.

5.7 Reference was given to the Government Funding given to Leicestershire County Council to fight Hate Crime. Some of that funding had been used to establish 'Gypsy and Traveller Equality (GATE). Members of that group would be happy to speak to groups within the Borough, for example the Youth Forum, to assist with understanding the travellers culture and their way of life

6. TEACHER OF TRAVELLER CHILDREN

6.1 At the invitation of the Panel, Mr Stephen Cutler, who had taught traveller children for a number of years attended the meeting. He outlined his work, the problems he encountered and how he had dealt with those problems.

6.2 Mr Cutler believed that all children had the right to an education, although historically, it had proved difficult for traveller children to access secondary education.

6.3 The use of e-learning and distance learning was successful if parents were literate and worked with their children. Such learning had been successful with some showmen and traveller children. However, there were often issues to be addressed in terms of access to an electricity supply and the opportunity to download work to a laptop. It was difficult for teachers to prepare a learning pack for children, when they left a school at short notice.

6.4 There was evidence that classes kept in contact with traveller children when they moved on. For example, when a family went hop picking in Shropshire, their journey was tracked at the school.

6.5 Some families stopped travelling while their children were educated. One family stayed in the area for twelve years and only moved on after their children had completed their education. Other families travelled only during school holidays.

6.6 At a previous meeting Members of the Panel had been advised of the assistance MATU officers could give to traveller families wishing to enroll their children in local schools, by liaising with the Education Authority and in respect of access to Schools with Academy Status. Officers had liaised with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Children Service, at Leicestershire County Council and had been advised that although in its infancy, there had been no difficulties to date with traveller children gaining entrance to Academy Schools. In fact there were positive examples of specific support being given to traveller children at both Rawlins Community College and Humphrey Perkins Community School, with alternative and flexible studies for vulnerable children. At Bosworth College in Desford, a flexible programme had been established to provide vocational training, together with work experience to give teenage children the opportunity to gain literacy and numeracy skills alongside work experience.

6.7 Mr Cutler gave a number of examples of travellers being mistreated in the area, together with examples of travellers receiving positive support, detailed in the minutes of the meeting.

6.8 As common ground had been developed in the Borough, there were no longer such grounds for travellers to use.

6.9 It would be advantageous to identify as many potential traveller sites as possible, as not all travellers could be expected to live together, any more than any other group or culture could be told to live in a specific area.

6.10 Mr Cutler stated that travelling communities would not stand still, and had the same rights to progress and be treated equally as all other members of society. It would never be possible to appease everybody, wherever there were proposed sites there would be controversy. Looking longer term, proposed new

sites would cause the same concerns as when planners proposed new housing estates on open land.

7. SHOWMEN'S GUILD REPRESENTATIVE

7.1 At the invitation of the Panel, Mr Darren Jones, a member of the Showmen's Guild, attended the meeting. Mr Jones outlined his family heritage, lifestyle and his education.

7.2 Members of the Showmen's Guild had established a programme to visit local schools to explain their way of life.

7.3 As a longstanding member of the Loughborough Town Centre Partnership and now a Director of the Loughborough Business Improvement District, Mr Jones wished to support his local area and with his wife was currently preparing a schools programme to explain the history of Showmen and Fair Grounds, showing that although they had different lifestyles, they were able to live in harmony with local residents.

7.4 Traditionally Showmen were welcomed at the same fairs each year and then returned to a permanent base at the end of each season, to store and maintain their equipment. As a large area of land was required, such sites were away from urban areas, with restrictions being adhered to.

7.5 It should be noted that the permanent base sites for Showmen had very different requirements to gypsy sites.

8. LOCAL DEVELOPER REPRESENTATIVE

8.1 At the invitation of the Panel, Mr Adrian McInnes, a local developer, attended the meeting. Mr McInnes had worked for a local developer for 32 years, much of that time in development and planning and in recent years promoting Sustainable Urban Developments.

8.2 As a developer, he had concerns in respect of including traveller sites within new developments and would prefer not to do so. New developments would include private and affordable housing, but he believed that it would be difficult to integrate traveller sites.

8.3 Perspective buyers of new housing would have a negative view of traveller sites and there would be a detrimental effect on house prices.

8.4 Developers invested millions of pounds on buying land and in providing social and physical infrastructure. Mr McInnes detailed fundamental problems that traveller sites would have on the delivery of schemes and he believed they would have a huge impact on potential customers.

8.5 The requirement for traveller sites would incur additional development costs, for example the provision of toilet blocks and drainage. These costs would have to be considered alongside other planning obligations, such as affordable housing, roads and community facilities and their viability assessed.

8.6 Should such sites be required in the LDF, developers would have to accommodate them, although it would be difficult to locate on a development site, away from the houses for sale.

8.7 Sites for Showmen were difficult to locate as they required larger sites with room to store, erect and maintain equipment.

8.8 Local developers had submitted objections in respect of proposed traveller sites to the draft Core Strategy.

9. HOUSING ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

9.1 At the invitation of the Panel, Mr Esuf Sarafat, the local Housing Officer for the Raglan housing Association, attended the meeting.

9.2 It was Mr Sarafat's role to address issues that arose on the estate. The most recent travellers in the area had caused the most concern of all recent travellers to the area.

9.3 Mr Sarafat had worked closely with PC Tam Singh-Bains to address the recent issues with travellers in the area.

9.4 After the travellers had left the area, the Housing Association, as landlord, had been responsible for clearing the area, including an area previously identified as a meadow to plant wild flowers for Britain in Bloom 2012 and had been badly damaged.

9.5 To prevent other travellers from re entering the site the Raglan Housing Association, as part of its Regional Improvement Plan was looking to block the single vehicular access to the area.

10. TENANTS' ASSOCIATION

10.1 At the invitation of the Panel, Mrs Josie Crest, Chair of the Three Closes Tenants' Association, attended the meeting.

10.2 The association represented 161 homes, housing residents from babies to 92 years of age.

10.3 During the last year there had been a number of occasions when travellers had established sites on the open ground between the Raglan Housing and the private housing, the most recent encampment had been the worst

experience for the residents, with numerous examples of anti-social behaviour, including the following:

- Openly defecating in the area, including in the borders of residents Gardens and their patios;
- Emptying portaloos near the local school and throwing dirty water onto the playing field;
- Constant noise from generators in vehicles parked very close to houses;
- Damaging flower beds;
- Playing loud music;
- Using threatening behaviour;
- Allow a pack of dogs to run loose, frightening local residents;
- Blocked the footpath local children used to get to school;
- Women fighting.

10.4 Members of the community had tried to communicate with the travellers, offering them access to running water from an outside tap.

11. PROPOSED SITE CONSULTATION

11.1 During the period the Panel was receiving information from witnesses, Leicester City Council began a public consultation in respect of proposed traveller sites, some of which were in close proximity of the City and Charnwood Borough boarder. The consultation began on 17th February 2012 and would conclude on 13th July 2012. A link to the consultation documents can be found below:

<http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/ConsDetails.aspx?consID=423>

12. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Following its deliberations, the Panel makes the following recommendations:

TRAVELLING COMMUNITY STRATEGY SCRUTINY PANEL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

	Terms of Reference	Recommendation	Reason
1.	(vi) – the availability of sites	That within the Core Strategy, the siting of permanent, transient and Showmen sites be approached separately.	The sites have different requirements and should be approached separately.

2.	(vi) – the availability of sites	That the Core Strategy contain provision for permanent sites to be delivered on the basis of small kinship sites positioned within Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs).	<p>To meet Government policy of peaceful integration of sites and to reflect the evidence given to the Panel from traveller witnesses.</p> <p>The Panel considered this to be the preferred option, and had submitted an interim report to that effect to the Scrutiny Management Board. While acknowledging the risks, some of those risks would be mitigated on a large development, including work with promoters of the SUEs and local communities.</p>
3.	(vi) – the availability of sites	That should recommendation 2. above be unachievable, the allocation of permanent sites be included within the later Site Allocations document.	<p>This would be a more difficult option, as the sites could be located anywhere in the Borough, causing further uncertainty and additional work.</p> <p>Other Councils had already found this option difficult. There were also concerns that current housing values in the area of a proposed site would fall.</p>
4.	(vi) – the availability of sites	That as part of any programme for the provision of permanent sites, further consideration be given to using gypsy/traveller owned land for small kinship sites.	The Panel wished to draw attention to the fact that gypsy/travellers owned pieces of land in their own right, which could be used to accommodate small kinship sites.

5.	(vi) – the availability of sites	<p>That the Core Strategy or subsequent planning documents, include options for identifying Council owned land to establish transient sites. Should that be possible options be considered to manage those sites, either by the Council or through third parties and for the provision of services for those sites.</p> <p>The Panel wished to draw Cabinet’s attention to the successful approach taken in Derbyshire to manage such sites.</p>	<p>Transient sites could be more difficult to integrate with developments than permanent sites and the use of Council owned land provided an alternative approach.</p> <p>The Derbyshire model had been reported to the Panel as good practice.</p>
6.	(vi) – the availability of sites	<p>That planning policies be sympathetic to the needs of Showmen.</p>	<p>The needs of Showmen were different, in that they required sites to store and maintain equipment. A site at Hoton had been established and appeared to cause no concern to local residents.</p>
7.	(vi) – the availability of sites	<p>That details in respect of the current situation with gypsies and travellers be gleaned from completed equal opportunity questions when liaising with Housing Officers.</p>	<p>To ensure equality information collated by Housing Officers be made available to planning officers, to assist them with ascertaining local requirements for gypsies and travellers.</p>

8.	<p>(i) to consider the current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community.</p> <p>(ii) the roles and responsibility of each agency.</p> <p>(iii) the powers and duties that exist and who holds those powers.</p>	<p>That further work be undertaken with MATU towards developing a 'One Stop Shop', providing help and advice in respect of all aspects of traveller life be available to the public, travellers, officers and councillors, including Parish Councils, to access help and support in respect of all gypsy/traveller issues.</p> <p>Officers be proactive in areas where unauthorised encampments had been sited and other known traveller routes, to publicise the availability of this support.</p>	<p>To ensure that the help and advice that was available was widely publicised to all areas of the settled and traveller community.</p>
9.	<p>(i) to consider the current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community.</p> <p>(ii) the roles and responsibility of each agency.</p> <p>(iii) the powers and duties that exist and who holds those powers.</p>	<p>That the response times and outcomes to unauthorised encampments, be considered as part of any review when the Council considers renewing its membership of the Multi-Agency Traveller Unit (MATU).</p>	<p>To ensure the agreement is working successfully, with appropriate response times, before extending the initial one year contract with MATU.</p> <p>MATU would only be deemed to be successful if matters of concern to any group, which are referred to them, are seen to be dealt with expeditiously and fairly.</p>

10.	(i) Consider the current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community.	That awareness training and good practice in respect of travelling communities be offered to the Youth Council, the Voluntary Sector, possibly via Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood and Council staff and Councillors.	To help to breakdown barriers between the settled and travelling communities and possibly share the information offered by representatives of the Showmen's Guild and the Gypsy and Traveller Equality (GATE) project.
11.	(iii) The powers and duties that exist and who holds those powers.	That MATU be requested to investigate amendments to byelaws to prevent unauthorised encampments on the roadside and verges.	To introduce regulations to assist with and prevent unauthorised encampments at the roadside.

PANEL OBSERVATIONS NOT REQUIRING ACTION

RECOMMENDATION that the observations of the scrutiny panel as detailed in the report and listed below in paragraphs A and B be noted.

A.	(ii) The roles and responsibilities of each agency.	The Panel acknowledges and supports the work being undertaken by Leicestershire County Council in respect of the education of traveller children.	To recognise the work being undertaken in local schools to educate and support traveller children outside the established curriculum.
B.	(ii) The roles and responsibilities of each agency.	The Panel welcomes the Council's membership of the MATU agreement.	The Panel acknowledges the work of the MATU team to act on behalf of the Council to manage unauthorised encampments and other traveller related issues, in line with the Code of Practice for Travellers adopted by all Local Authorities in Leicestershire.

C.	(i) Consider the current policies and mechanisms for managing issues related to the Travelling Community	In coming to its conclusions, the Panel tried to balance the aspirations of the travelling fraternity with the needs of the indigenous people of Charnwood.	For this to work well it will require both groups to be considerate of each other in the way they conduct themselves.
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Reason

To acknowledge the matters identified by the Panel which do not require any further action.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report:

NOTES OF MEETINGS:

- 12th October 2011
- 17th November 2011
- 12th December 2011
- 12th January 2012
- 30th January 2012
- 5th March 2012
- 22nd March 2012
- 16th April 2012
- 28th May 2012

SCOPE DOCUMENT

Progress Report by the Ministerial Working Group on Tackling Inequalities Experienced by Gypsies and Travellers – Department of Communities and local Government 2012