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North Yorkshire and York Gypsy, Traveller & Showpeople Strategy March 2010

1. Introduction

Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople remain excluded and socially disadvantaged in every way such as; physical health, mental health, life expectancy, educational achievement, literacy, employment and levels of discrimination experienced.

Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople have been resident in the UK for at least the last 500 years and are part of society. Organisations working with Travellers and Gypsies say that they come across positive intentions and individual pieces of good work. However, discrimination and stigma is entrenched at all levels of society. It will thus take time for effective change to take root in any local authority.

This is a viewpoint which was strongly endorsed by Trevor Phillips, Head of the Equality and Human rights Commission, when he said:

“The situation for Gypsies and Travellers is incomparably worse than it is for any other ethnic group... and we let people get away with it.” (2004)

Research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople and poor health and education. A significant number of Travellers have no permanent base and move constantly, often against their will.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

Aim: The purpose of this Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Strategy is to improve, increase and provide commitment to the provision of support and Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople sites throughout the York and North Yorkshire sub region.

In order to achieve this we will undertake to break down barriers and provide understanding between local housing, planning, health, education and other agencies and partners across York and North Yorkshire and members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Community in order to provide an easier streamlined process for providing the services and facilities that are required by these groups.

The strategy is intended to support the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities as well as sub regional staff and other agencies/partners and assist in the reduction of the number of unauthorised sites and instances of enforcement action.

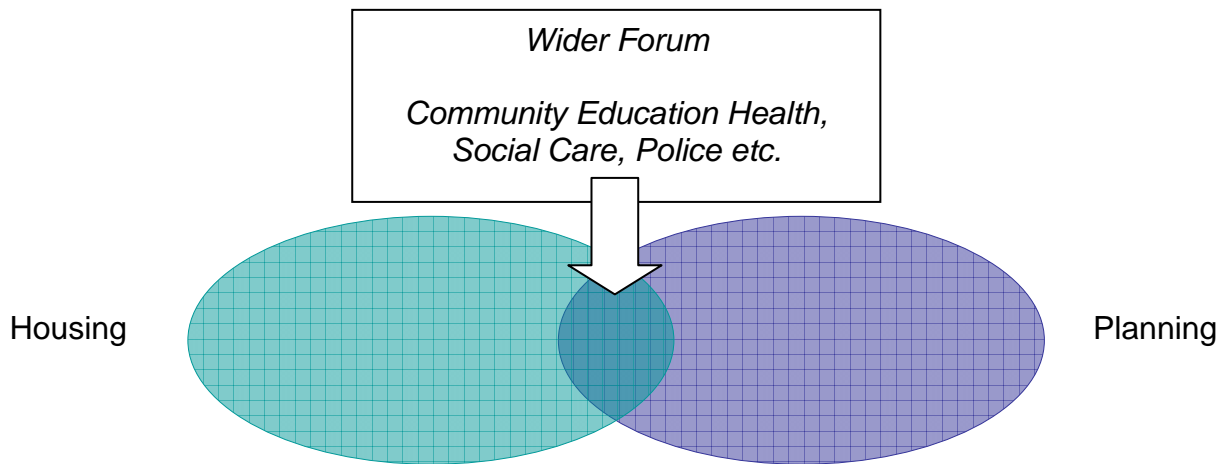
Key Themes of the strategy.

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In order to make the process clear, the aims and objectives have been placed across key themes reflecting the broad issues that face Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.

These are:

- ❖ Housing and planning – including those who are homeless, living in housing or on permanent sites and transit sites whilst travelling
- ❖ Health and Social Care – inequalities – access to services
- ❖ Education and further education and training
- ❖ Universal services - including Police, Fire & Rescue services, Voluntary & Community sector services and Council services such as refuse, street lighting, pathways etc
- ❖ Communication and consultation – the rights of Travellers and Engagement with Travellers to seek their views



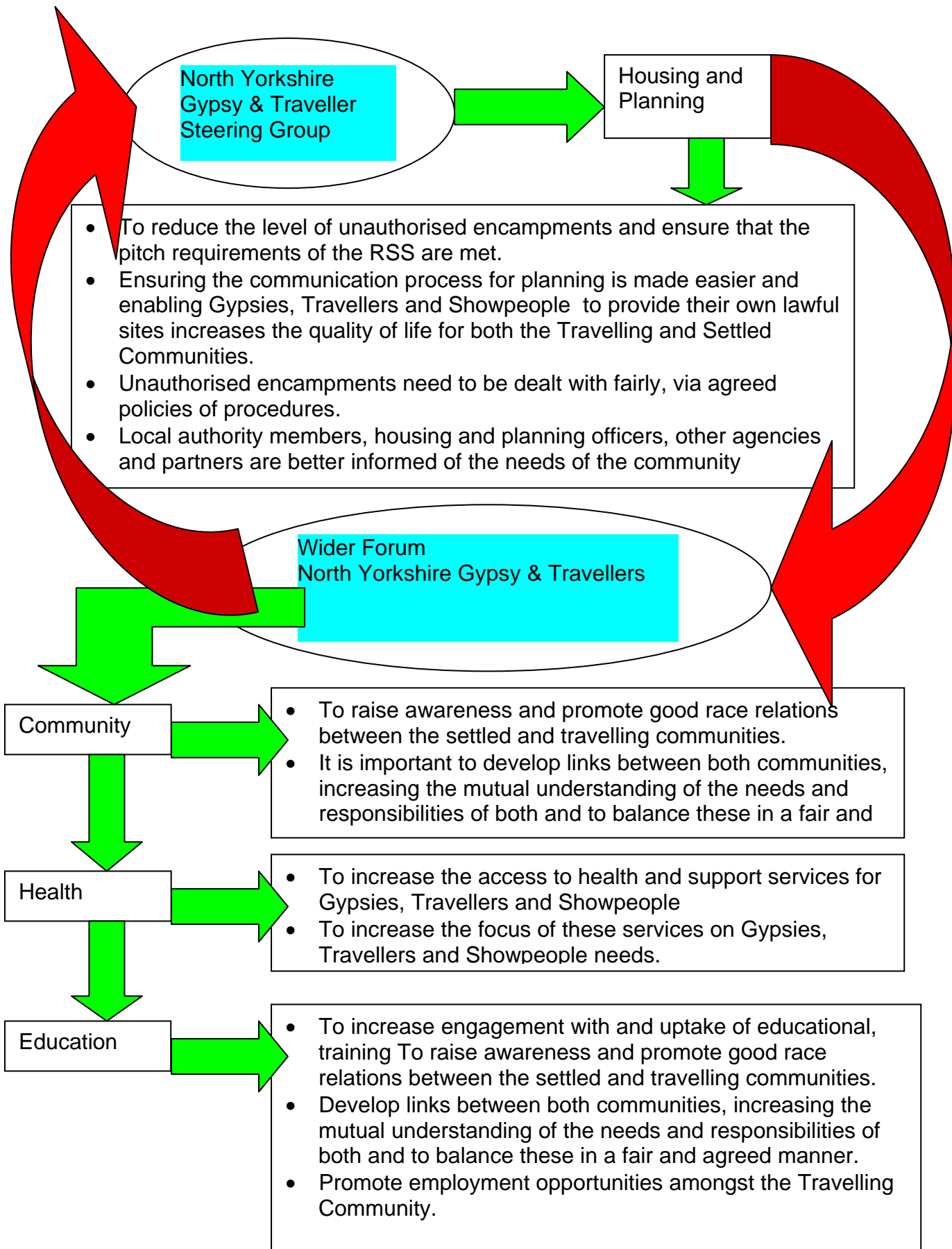
These are set out in the Action Plan. These themes reflect the fact that the needs of the Travelling Community go beyond the issue of site provision. Site provision however remains the essential foundation on which to build and move forward with the establishment of the Wider Forum in the other areas.

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Objectives:

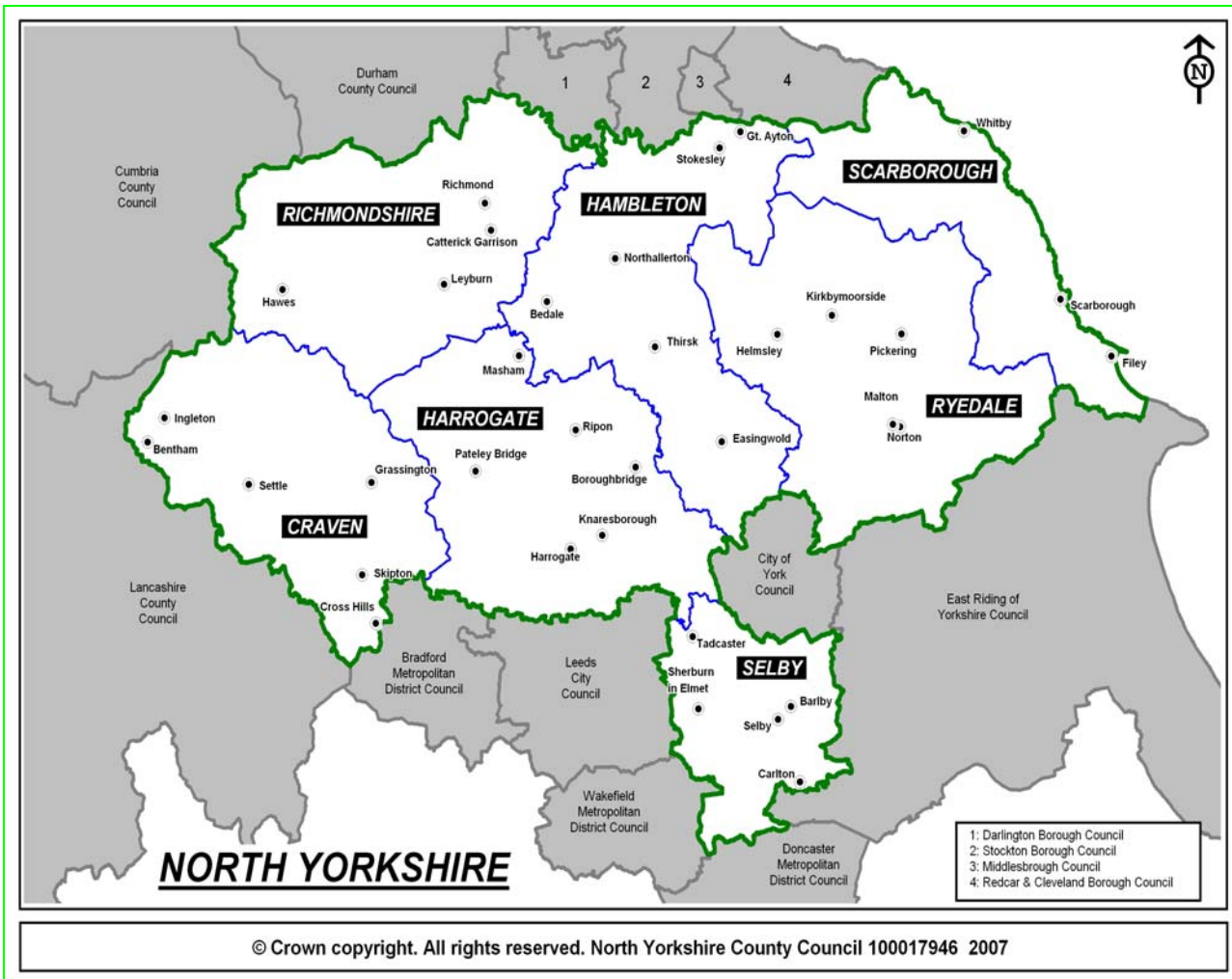
Objectives within the Themes:

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3. What Area is covered by this Strategy?

This strategy covers the North Yorkshire subregion including City of York unitary authority and the district/ borough authorities of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough and Selby and North Yorkshire County Council.



4. How will we do this?

Key Issues and interventions

The partnership recognises that there is a need to better understand the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across North Yorkshire and to obtain up-to-date knowledge of travelling patterns and Traveller networks. This will help us identify the sites and services that Travellers use throughout York and North Yorkshire with a view to provide better facilities and services in the future.

Research from the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and Sheffield Hallam identified a sub-regional need for an additional 57 pitches. Further research

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commissioned by the sub region in 2007/8 identified a need for 113 additional pitches across North and North Yorkshire. These shortfalls will need to be addressed through emerging LDFs and except in the case of Hambleton which, due to the advancement of its LDF, will need to take on board these findings when determining any future planning applications.

The table below shows this broken down by individual districts:

	Existing Pitch Supply	Current Need	Vacant	Current Shortfall
Craven	10	17	0	7
Hambleton	34	61	13	14
Harrogate	40	54	0	14
Richmond	20	23	0	3
Ryedale	13	22	0	9
Scarborough	0	3	0	3
Selby	24	50	0	26
York	54	90	0	36
Total	195	321	13	113

Following on from this initial research the sub region has developed a North Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan which will be the tool for ensuring delivery of critical milestones which include the following.

- identify suitable land for the development of new site provision a review local planning policies through the LDF process
- maximize funding opportunities through CLG bidding rounds and regional funding pots.
- consider ways to support Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople in the planning application process
- the refurbishment or redevelopment of existing sites
- the development of design/amenity benchmark standards for any refurbished or new accommodation
- ensure that new provision conforms to the emerging site design and layout guidance
- make existing site provision fit for purpose
- develop transit or temporary stop-over provision
- tackle inequality in access to services
- raise awareness and tackle prejudice and discrimination

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- Development of consistent policies and procedures across the sub-region for Gypsy and Traveller households presenting as homeless, etc and consistent approaches to evictions and dealing with unauthorised encampments

By putting in place the North Yorkshire Gypsy and Travellers Strategy, through joint working, members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople community and officers from local housing, the community, health and education, will be able to deliver and meet the needs of the Travelling Community:

Showpeople:

This summarises the key findings of the Showpeoples Research commissioned by the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnership Board in 2009.

The research was commissioned to:

- Build upon the initial findings of the accommodation assessment and the 62 interviews carried out with Showmen;
- Review the travelling patterns of Showmen within North Yorkshire;
- Consider the particular pitch requirements of Showmen by local authority district;
- Review the facilities required, including pitch size;
- Enable further consultation with the Showmen's Guild on accommodation requirements.

Fieldwork interviews were held with both Northern England and Yorkshire section Showmens Guild members in July and August at fairs at Harrogate and Hartlepool. Additional questionnaires were distributed and returned directly to Arc4 or to the Gypsy & Traveller Officer Lewis Stokes. An additional meeting was held at the Showmens Guild (Yorkshire section) offices in Drighlington which was well attended by committee members and other Showmen.

Results

Results confirmed changing work patterns coupled with a desire to provide a more permanent home base. Unlike other Travellers, Showmen travel predominantly for economic reasons, preferring to retain a permanent home base where family members can live all year round, work, attend school and be part of their local community. All the Showmen that were interviewed and/or completed questionnaires had a working and living connection with the sub-region.

- At least 34 individual fairs are held in North Yorkshire accounting for over 40% of the year
- 96.1% of Showmen travel for economic purposes only
- In terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy, fairs and amusement park activities yielded £19,764,000 across the North East (£4,943,000) and Yorkshire and Humberside (£14,821,000) during 2007. (ONS Regional Annual Business Inquiry data 2007)

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- 38.5% of Showmen are living in overcrowded accommodation in adjacent local authority areas due to the lack of provision in North Yorks.
- 69.5% of Showmen would purchase and develop their own land at their own cost if they could get planning permission
- 70.5% of Showmens travelling problems were caused by lack of stopping places/sites
- Only one interviewee had any security of tenure on their site
- Ideal yard size for an extended family being 0.5 – 1.0 acre
- GTAA survey findings reveal that of those Showmen who have applied for planning permission, 77.3% have been unsuccessful, compared to 22.7% who have had a more positive experience of the process.

Pitch Provision requirements

- A shortage of 54 plots identified.

Potential Distribution of New Permanent sites

New Permanent Site Locations	% Preferences	No. Plots
York	23.3	13
Hambleton	19.4	11
Selby	18.4	10
Harrogate	17.5	9
Richmondshire	9.7	5
Craven	6.8	4
Ryedale	3.9	2
Scarborough	1.0	0
Total	100.0	54

- The parameters identified provide a guide as to the potential capacity of sites identified to meet need, as well as clearly setting a ceiling in terms of maximum site size (to accommodate no more than 12 households on one site).
- New yards should have the capacity to provide temporary pulling places as well as permanent plots, and be accessible to major road networks and local facilities.
- New permanent provision should deliver sustainable yards capable of accommodating household growth and should be optimally an acre in size, this may differ through the site identification.
- The research confirms that the findings are valid for the next ten years.

It was agreed by Board that the findings/issues are delivered by the G&T Steering Group.

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5. What will be included?

Site Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase pitches and land sources; • Decrease unauthorised sites; • Streamline the take up of such sites.
Bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the requirements for the Strategic Housing Board budget • HCA – G&T site grant
Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate innovation in site provision: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self Build 2. Shared Ownership 3. Partnership Working with an RSL
Community and Equality	<p>To better understand the needs of this community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training events for Members and Staff; ▪ Provide public information events; ▪ Include G&T community in sub regional Community Engagement Strategy and in the Tenant Participation Strategy
NY Wider Forum	<p>We have established a North Yorkshire Wider Forum and work is progressing to establish an Executive Group who will cover Health and Welfare in the Community and incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the PCT ▪ Fire and Rescue ▪ Education ▪ Social Issues <p>The North Yorkshire G&T Steering Group will feed into this Wider Forum and will also receive feedback from them on the above issues.</p> <p>This process will improve access for</p>

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	the travelling community to services and better understand their needs so that they can participate more effectively.
NY Steering Group Action Plan	<p>We will ensure the Action Plan is enforced and that it is robust to be able to accommodate future changes and improvements.</p> <p>In addition the policies and procedures will take into account the needs of both staff and the travelling community.</p>

It is a priority of the North Yorkshire authorities to produce a sub-regional strategy to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This will comprise a suite of smaller documents. Work has already commenced on some aspects of this and a Gypsy and Traveller Communication Strategy has been completed. Importantly, this includes the development of literature to assist Gypsies and Travellers better understand and navigate the Local Development Framework and District Council planning processes, thereby hopefully reducing the costs and tensions caused through Enforcement Action.

A. North Yorkshire Communication Strategy:

Improving existing sub regional networks and access to Council officers

North Yorkshire are in the process of establishing an exclusive web page for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople which is due to go live in May . This can be used by the Travelling Community, sub regional staff and other stakeholders and partners.

B. Research:

- **Caravan Count – these continue to take place in January and July annually.**
- **Community consultation has taken place with Yorkshire Planning Aid sub regionally; and**
- **Research has taken place with Sheffield Hallam University and Arc 4**

C. Training: Increasing awareness of Gypsy and Traveller issues

- **A training event was held in October 2009 for Housing and Planning Staff,**
- **Members training is due in 2010**
- **Training event for officers who undertake the count is due late spring 2010**

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- **We have drawn up LEAFLETS for members of the Travelling Community ,**
- **LOBBYING CARDS have been circulated to all Members within North Yorkshire.**

D. Choices and Innovation:

Developing innovative and proactive ways of engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller community through more effective partnership working with all stakeholders and ensuring direct consultation data (tenant participation strategy) from the travelling community and research data informs policies and procedures

E. Council Services

Provide better Signposting to Housing, Support and other Council Services for the Gypsy and Traveller Community and, where appropriate, a summary explanation of their role (see Appendix D)

F. Legislation, Policy and Strategy:

Increase awareness of legislation, and strengthen links to other strategies and policies that impact on Gypsies and Travellers
(See Appendix E for a summary of the work undertaken to date)

6. Delivery of the Strategy

Delivery of the strategy will be the responsibility of the North Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group.

Sign up from local authorities and close working with stakeholders will be critical to its success.

7. Review of the Strategy

It is recommended that the strategy is reviewed on an annual basis.

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Appendix A – Contact Details for North Yorkshire and City of York Council Officers` can be found in the Gypsy and Traveller Communication Strategy on North Yorkshire Website @ [northyorkshire.gov.uk/\(insert web address\)](http://northyorkshire.gov.uk/(insert web address)).

General queries

Lewis Stokes
Gypsy & Traveller Officer
Hambleton District Council
Tel: 01609 767295 (direct line)
Mobile: 07545 422354
Lewis.stokes@hambleton.gov.uk

Appendix B: Other Agencies

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Below are the details of contacts at agencies outside the Council who may be contacted to get advice on specific issues.

Organisation	Environment Agency
Name	Mr P Stevenson/Ms S Goode
What do they do?	Assist in defining Flood Zone bands, where certain types of development (including allocating land for new G+T sites) would be inappropriate.
Why do we contact them?	As above.
When do we contact them?	As statutory consultees throughout the plan making process.
Contact details	peter.stevenson@environment-agency.gov.uk suzie.goode@environment-agency.gov.uk Coverdale House, Aviator Court Amy Johnson Way Clifton Moor YO30 4GZ

Organisation	Friends, Families & Travellers
Name	Mr S Staines
What do they do?	Influence scope of Planning Policy/allocation of sites.
Why do we contact them?	As above.
When do we contact them?	As formal consultees on all emerging Development Plan Documents.
Contact details	steve@Gypsy-Traveller.org PO Box 223 Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 9BA

Organisation	North Yorkshire Police
Team	Neighbourhood Policing Teams
What do they do?	Provide support when visiting potentially difficult situations on unauthorised encampments or encampments where acts of crime or disorder have been reported.
Why do we contact them?	To ask for physical support and use of their powers where appropriate.
When do we contact them?	When an encampment has been risk assessed as presenting a risk to safety.
Contact details	0845 60 60 247

Organisation	York Travellers Trust
Name	Christine Shepherd

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What do they do?	Voluntary sector organisation providing informal support and advocacy for Gypsy and Traveller households. Influence scope of Planning Policy/allocation of sites.
Why do we contact them?	As above.
When do we contact them?	As formal consultees on all emerging Development Plan Documents.
Contact details	24 Falsgrave Crescent Clifton, York YO30 7AZ. Travellerstrustyork@yahoo.co.uk

Organisation	Yorkshire Planning Aid
What do they do?	They provide free advice and support to the Travelling Community by providing assistance with planning applications and the Local Authorities consultation and research with the Travelling Community.
Why do we contact them?	The
When do we contact them?	
Contact details	Mike Dando 32 The Calls Leeds LS2 7EW 0113 204 2460

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Appendix C- Key Messages

General Legislative Duties

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 legislates to:

- significantly increase the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission,
- allocate sites in emerging Local Development Frameworks,
- reduce the number of unauthorised encampments or developments,
- highlight the importance of assessing site needs at regional/sub-regional level.

The Planning Act places emphasis on early consultation between local authorities and the communities they serve. In the case of Gypsies and Travellers, such early engagement should help in the identification of suitably located sites and a reduction in unauthorised encampments and developments.

Circular 01/2006 - Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites - states that local authority planning departments must "...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."

The role of Local Development Frameworks in addressing the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community

Under the Planning Act, all councils have a duty to allocate sufficient land for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The need for new pitches is established via a local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, and the council's Local Development Framework (LDF) will identify specific sites to match the pitch numbers required.

The LDF will set out local policy and criteria against which planning applications for new development are assessed. This includes applications for a new Gypsy or Traveller site, or for alterations to an existing site.

Gypsy and Traveller communities are hard to reach groups, and there is duty placed on local authorities to make the planning system open and accessible, as for all of North Yorkshire and York's diverse communities.

Development Control and Enforcement Issues

The function/role of development control in using LDF policy to assess planning applications for new or proposed Gypsy and Traveller sites or further developments on existing sites

The enforcement powers in relation to move on given to local authorities to act where Gypsies and Travellers occupy a site they own but do not have planning permission to be there, or where Gypsies and Travellers have

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consent from the owner to occupy the land but the development does not have planning permission

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Appendix D- Summary of Housing and Support and other Council Services

When City of York Council and Ryedale District Council own Traveller sites, these are managed by Housing Services. When North Yorkshire County Council own Traveller sites, these are managed under contract or licence by other people.

Other Council Services

There are many more council departments across the sub region that may work with the services mentioned in this section. These include:

- Street Environment Service
- Traveller Education Support Service
- Supporting People – commissioning of housing support.
- Housing Benefits – assessment of any rent entitlement.
- Children and Families (Social Services)
- Schools or other educational establishments
- Adult & Community Services (North Yorkshire)
- Social Services (City of York)
- Learning Disabilities Team
- Libraries
- Arts Team
- Health and Safety Team
- Neighbourhood Services (repairs)
- Environmental Health and Protection
- Animal Welfare Services
- Legal Services
- Highways
- Network Management
- Parking Services
- Building Control
- Neighbourhood Pride Unit
- Drainage and Pest Control
- Trading Standards

There are other external organisations or businesses that we may have contact with from time to time such as local businesses, trades people or contractors, when issues arise on Travellers' sites, or the Post Office regarding postal delivery to the sites.

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Appendix E- Links to Legislation and other Strategies and Policies

Legislation

1968
Caravan Sites Act

1994
Criminal Justice Bill

1996, & 2004
Housing Act

2002
Homelessness Act

2004
Planning & Compulsory
Purchase Act

2007
GTAA

2010
NY G&T Strategy

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Work is currently being undertaken in relation to Gypsies and Travellers in order to assess the need and provision of sites in the sub-region. Below are some of the documents that are complete and available. If you would like further details on any of these, please contact the people below.

Report	<p>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment</p> <p>The sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment was commissioned during 2007 following regional based research, carried out by Sheffield Hallam University. Information on housing needs is required by Local Authorities to incorporate into Housing and Homeless Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation contributes towards targets for affordable homes.</p>
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	<p>The current shortfall of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the sub-region is 113. Without sufficient pitches to meet demand Gypsies and Travellers are either homeless and living on unauthorised encampments or developments, or on the roadside with little access to essential services. There is a legal requirement through Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework to meet the demand for new sites identified in the Assessment.</p>
Who to contact for more information on the Assessment.	<p>Sharon Brown, Strategy & Enabling Manager Housing Services, 01904 554198, sharon.brown@york.gov.uk</p>

Strategy	Supporting People Strategy
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	Commissioning body for all housing support – including Travellers service
Who to contact for more information on this Strategy (City of York)	currently via Temporary Accommodation Team Becky Ward, Service Manager Homelessness 01904 554040 becky.ward@york.gov.uk
Who to contact for more information on this Strategy (NYCC)	Gill Warner, Supporting People Strategy & Policy Manager, North Yorkshire County Council, 01609 536903 gill.warner@northyorks.gov.uk

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Document	Sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Strategy
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	Produced by the North Yorkshire and York Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group and focuses on housing, community, health and education related matters to address the pitch shortfall and other sub-regional issues.
Who to contact for more information on this document	Lewis Stokes, Gypsy and Traveller Officer, North Yorkshire County Council, 01609 767295 lewis.stokes@hambleton.gov.uk

Document	Sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	Produced by the North Yorkshire and York Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group and focuses on housing and planning related matters to address the pitch shortfall and other sub-regional issues.
Who to contact for more information on this document	Lewis Stokes, Gypsy and Traveller Officer, North Yorkshire County Council, 01609 767295 lewis.stokes@hambleton.gov.uk

Protocol	City of York - The Joint Tactical Guide to Unauthorised Travellers Sites.
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	An agreed protocol, dated 2005, devised between City of York Council Street Environment Service and North Yorkshire Police clarifying Police response to unauthorised encampments.
Who to contact for more information on this Strategy	Inspector Lunt, North Yorkshire Police, 0845 60 60 247 Jackie Armitage, Environment & enforcement Manager 01904 553101. Jackie.armitage@york.gov.uk

Protocol	North Yorkshire Homelessness Strategy
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	This strategy sets out the way partners throughout North Yorkshire will work together to prevent homelessness and to improve services for the homeless across the whole county over the next 5 years.
Who to contact for more information on this Strategy	Available from housing officers listed for each authority in Appendix A.

Protocol	York Homelessness Strategy
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	This strategy sets out the way City of York will work to prevent homelessness and to improve services for the homeless over the next 5 years.
Who to contact for more information on this Strategy	Strategy and Enabling Manager 01904 554198

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Protocol	North Yorkshire Policies and Procedures
Relevance to Gypsies and Travellers	These policies and procedures set out the way North Yorkshire and the sub regions will work to improve services, facilities and choice the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Community over the next 5 years.
Who to contact for more information on Policies and Procedures	Lewis Stokes, Gypsy and Traveller Officer, North Yorkshire County Council, 01609 767295 lewis.stokes@hambleton.gov.uk