Appendix 1

Brighton & Hove City Council

Report of the Environment & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

March 7th 2012

Traveller Strategy Scrutiny Panel Report: Volume 1

Panel Members

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1. Chair's Foreword

Brighton & Hove has a long and proud history of inclusion and diversity. Gypsies and Travellers have been part of the UK for over 500 years, adding to the rich cultural heritage of our society. Gypsies and Travellers have much in common with the settled community as they seek an education for their children, the right to access adequate health care provision and the ability to enjoy their culture. However, stereotypes serve to stigmatise Gypsy and Traveller communities with the result that they find themselves on the fringes of society. Gypsies and Travellers score lowest on every socio-economic indicator including life expectancy and the educational attainment of children.

So, what can be done to improve the relations between Gypsies and Travellers and mainstream society? Certainly we all have a role to play. We must challenge embedded prejudices and negative projections of Gypsies and Travellers because only then will we be able to build a fairer and more equal society. Politicians and the media have a vital role to play in this regard as they have a duty to challenge prevalent negative attitudes. Specifically, politicians and the media help shape societal attitudes thus they have a responsibility not to fan the flames of discontent and deploy rhetoric which targets a group of people because of their perceived difference. Local Authorities should set the tone for a more positive debate in their communities because only mutual understanding can act as a foundation for trust and respect.

As a local government authority there are two paths which Brighton & Hove City Council could pursue. On the one hand, the council could create a strategy which is forward thinking, inclusive and pioneers ways of addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, being sensitive to their traditional lifestyle whilst accessing basic provisions such as education and health, and fostering good relationships with the local population. On the other hand, the council could ignore social tensions and accommodation issues. The latter is unsatisfactory to the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities. In particular the issue of unauthorised encampment is unwelcome and costly. At present Brighton & Hove has one transit site at Horsdean yet this site does not have enough pitches to meet the demand of families who wish to stay here. During the summer months this can mean that the site is often full and unauthorised encampments increase exponentially.

Other councils which have created effective Traveller strategies have addressed the accommodation issue head on. Indeed, solving the accommodation issue is crucial in terms of addressing access to education and healthcare, fostering good relations with local residents, and building a more sustainable city. Our recommendations recognise that the creation of a permanent site, to be managed by the council, is key to reducing tensions and could act as a foundation to facilitating mutual understanding. Evidence shows that solving the accommodation issue can significantly curb economic costs because once Gypsies and Travellers are in authorised sites significant returns can also be generated in rent, council tax and utility bills.

The recommendations presented here were informed by evidence gathered from 31 expert witnesses as well as written evidence. The Scrutiny Panel was impressed by the quality of the evidence given, including testimony from local MPs, local authorities, residents, council officers, services, and Gypsy and Traveller representatives. My fellow panellists, Councillors Leo Littman, Alan Robins, and Dee Simson played an excellent role in ensuring that the important questions were asked during the evidence gathering sessions and helped to formulate the recommendations here, on the basis of evidence from committed and expert witnesses. We received fantastic support from the Council's Scrutiny Team, particularly Karen Amsden and Tom Hook. As a political scientist, I found the scrutiny process to be vital in terms of delivering policies which are informed, robust, and truly responsive to the needs of the city and its residents.

The Scrutiny panel are pleased that the authors of the Traveller Strategy have recognised the impact of the panel's work and have committed themselves to amending parts of the Strategy and Action Plan. However, because the panel does still have concerns about particular issues, notably unauthorised encampments and education; and wanted to see a coherent joined-up strategy that was using the information it was collecting to improve services – the panel has made a further set of recommendations to strengthen how the Strategy is implemented, monitored and the next one is developed. This process could serve as a model for developing difficult and complex strategies in the future.

Aidan McGarry,
School of Applied Social Science,
University of Brighton, February 2012

2. Executive Summary and Recommendations

What are Travellers?

2.1 While there is no fixed definition for Travellers, the most appropriate definition is:

'…*persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin.*'[1]

2.2 In the draft Traveller Strategy for Brighton & Hove 2012 (which is subsequently referred to in this report as the Strategy), the term has been used to cover the following groups:

- Romany Gypsies, Irish, Welsh and Scottish Travellers who are recognised in law as ethnic groups and are identified as having a shared culture, language and beliefs
- Groups which are not currently recognised as an ethnic group, including New Travellers who are non-traditional Travellers (most of whom originate from the settled community), Bargees and Travelling Showpeople[2]

2.3 The panel also agreed to use the term 'Traveller' throughout their work, and so it is in this sense that 'Traveller' is employed throughout this report, unless a specific group of Travellers is referred to in the evidence. This seemed to us to be the simplest way to deal with the thorny issue of Traveller nomenclature, although not all witnesses agreed – for instance, Juliet McCaffery from the Sussex Traveller Action Group (STAG) expressed her concern that this wrongly implied *'…a single cohesive community.'*[3]

2.4 It is also important to note that the term 'Traveller' is a broad term. Some ethnic Travellers have now moved into settled accommodation for various reasons, it should be noted that you can move to and from 'Traveller status'. If you stop travelling for the statutorily defined reasons; ill health, children or old age, you do not lose your Traveller status. Although the main focus of the Strategy and of this report is on meeting the needs of nomadic Travellers and balancing these needs with those of settled communities, it should not be forgotten that many Travellers live within settled communities. According to the Strategy, Traveller groups estimate that:

'…two thirds of [Travellers are] living in bricks and mortar housing.'[4]

Travellers – nationally and in the region

[1] See the Caravan Site and Control of Development Act 1960 and in addition the Caravan Sites Act 1968 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/8-9/62 and http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/52/pdfs/ukpga_19680052_en.pdf

[2] For further information on which different groups constitute Travellers and whether they are legally recognised as specific ethnic groups see 2.1 of Consultation Paper 1

[3] Juliet McCaffery, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

[4] Draft Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012, Consultation Paper 2

2.5 According to the Strategy:

'There is no definitive data for the number of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.'[5]

2.6 In the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan count for January 2011, which is carried out twice a year on behalf of the Government, the total number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans was 18,383 caravans which represents a very marginal increase from 2010. The count indicated that 17% of Traveller caravans in England were on unauthorised land and 83% were on authorised land.[6]

2.7 The Strategy has extrapolated from the Caravan Count, to estimate the following predicted population figures for Travellers living in caravans:

- South East (SE): Around 9,000 Travellers in 2,995 households
- Sussex: Around 976 Travellers in 326 households
- Brighton & Hove: Around 146 Travellers in 46 households[7]

2.8 A 2009 study which assessed the progress of local authorities' progress in meeting the accommodation needs of Travellers in England concluded that:

'Progress has been made towards the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches since 2006. However, this progress is slow in the majority of local authorities. The rate of progress would need to double in order to meet the identified national pitch need, or quadruple if permanent planning permissions are to be achieved.'[8]

2.9 According to a Brighton & Hove City Council Cabinet report on the Gypsy Roma Traveller Action Plan for 2011/12:

'The South East has 43 transit pitches with more than half of these (23) in Brighton & Hove (this is more than Greater London which has only 20).'[9]

2.10 The panel heard that the Caravan Sites Bill which received its first reading on 1st December 2011 would place a duty on local authorities to:

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[5] Draft Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012, Consultation Paper 2
[6] Gypsy and Traveller caravan count January 2011
http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1932949.pdf
[7] Draft Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012: Consultation Paper 2
[8] Assessing Local Authorities' progress in meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller Communities in England
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/13assessing_local_housing_authorities_progress.pdf
[9] Cabinet report on the Gypsy Roma Traveller Action Plan for 2011/12:
http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=30802

'…provide or to facilitate the provision of adequate caravan site accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to their area.'[10]

Traveller communities in Brighton & Hove

2.11 Cllr Pete West, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, told the panel that:

'Brighton & Hove had a lower proportion of Traveller households in the City than the SE average but higher numbers are setting up unauthorised encampments than the rest of the region. This was a longstanding issue, in part because it was an attractive destination, in part because it provided a convenient base for those seeking work across Sussex.'[11]

2.12 This meant that:

'Travellers visiting Brighton were up to four times more likely to have set up unauthorised encampments here than in the rest of the region.'[12]

Why do Travellers face such poor outcomes?

2.13 The panel were struck by the evidence, both that gathered for the Strategy and that provided directly by witnesses, regarding the significant inequalities experienced by Travellers, in particular in relation to health and education.

Addressing the concerns of the settled community

2.14 Evidence to the panel showed that unauthorised encampments can have a significant impact on the settled community, an impact increased by a lack of clarity as to who was responsible for dealing with the problems which arose. Residents' anger and negative headlines about Travellers in the local media, stemmed primarily from the unauthorised encampments in the city.

Increasing community cohesion and inclusion

2.15 David Bailey, the Traveller and Diversity Manager for Fenland District Council (DC), believed that:

'Local authorities tend to address the problems that Roma face as security rather than human rights and social inclusion issues.'[13]

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[10] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2010-2012/0115/lbill_2010-20120115_en_2.htm

[11] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

[12] Cllr Pete West, Foreword to Consultation Paper 2

[13] Roma and Traveller inclusion in Europe, Green Questions and Answers, Green European Foundation, 2011

2.16 To this end Fenland DC have developed a cohesion strategy, in which Travellers are seen as an important component, because they feel community cohesion is:

'…crucial to promoting greater knowledge, respect and contact between various communities, and to establishing a greater sense of citizenship. Community cohesion is an indicator of quality of life and cohesive communities are able to exist together in a state of harmony, characterised by mutual understanding and respect.'[14]

The panel were pleased to see that 'Improving community cohesion' is one of the four Strategic outcomes for the new Strategy.

Improving outcomes for Travellers

2.17 The panel heard a significant amount of evidence about how the establishment of a permanent site in Brighton & Hove could improve outcomes for the Travellers who would live there. However there is also a need to improve outcomes for transient Travellers and address the needs of all Travellers prior to opening the permanent site.

Consequences of not achieving these outcomes

2.18 The panel felt that there could be a number of significant consequences for the city if the issues relating to Travellers were not sufficiently addressed, namely:

- Financial – including losing funding for a group in need and the costs of legal action in response to unauthorised encampments
- Increasing numbers of unauthorised encampments
- Worsening outcomes for Travellers
- Increasing tensions between settled community and Travellers

What the panel thought of the Strategy

2.19 The panel welcomed the draft Strategy because it:

- Represented a significant step forward in describing the needs of the Traveller community and determining which outcomes a Traveller Strategy for this city aimed to achieve
- Contained a comprehensive set of high-level goals about meeting the needs of Travellers and the settled community
- Had addressed both the needs of Travellers and the settled community in those goals

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http://www.gef.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/GEF_11_10_Roma_and_Traveler_Inclusion_web_final.pdf

[14] Fenland Community Cohesion Strategy 2010-2012
http://www.fenland.gov.uk/aksfenland/images/att1358.pdf

- Had been based on a two stage consultation process (although the panel would like see how information from consultation with Travellers was going to be incorporated into the final Strategy)

Recommendations and statements from the panel

This section contains the 22 recommendations from the panel and 10 statements from the panel regarding the Strategy, in the order in which they appear in the report.

Recommendation 1: The panel noted with considerable concern the lack of monitoring of the priorities and actions contained in the last Traveller Strategy for 2008-11. The panel welcomes the action plan which has been developed for this Strategy. The panel expects this plan to be effectively monitored and would like a monitoring report to be sent to the relevant Member Committee at the following intervals: 6 months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months. To enable effective monitoring the panel would expect each action in the Action Plan to be SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited).

Recommendation 2: In a number of areas, the Strategy posits the establishment of a permanent site as a solution to the issues associated with Travellers. This may be the case, but it is important to recognise that the permanent site will not be opened until winter 2013/14 at the earliest. Therefore a coherent vision is needed for what is to be done in the years before the permanent site is ready, particularly in terms of transit provision.

Recommendation 3: The panel feel that preventing, and responding to, unauthorised encampments should be a key focus of the Strategy, particularly until the permanent site is opened. The panel would like the Strategy to draw on good practice by other authorities in this area such as Fenland DC. The panel would also like the Strategy to include information on how the council will pro-actively liaise with any settled community affected by such encampments.

Recommendation 4: The panel believes the Strategy should be both a place where all the separate plans for dealing with Traveller issues are brought together and a process via which these plans are effectively integrated. While the draft Strategy fulfils the first of these requirements, the panel is not sure that it currently meets the second: more needs to be done to link the different parts of the Strategy into a coherent narrative.

Statement 1: The panel were pleased to see that their recommendation was accepted to change the vision for the Strategy back to 'Balancing the needs…'

Statement 2: The panel welcomes the intention to identify which types of Traveller are typically based in Brighton & Hove and to design services to meet the specific needs of these communities. We also welcome the promised needs assessments and cultural awareness training. The panel strongly supports evidence-based planning and are encouraged that the council is actively seeking to collect more data in key areas. We confidently anticipate that future iterations of the Strategy will be based on local up-to-date information.

Recommendation 5: The panel welcome the agreement to review the working of the Traveller Liaison Team, but seek assurance that the review will focus on support and enforcement elements, as well as having the key aim to improve the service for both Travellers and the settled community.

Recommendation 6: The panel heard evidence from a number of sources favouring several small sites rather than a large single permanent site. While we accept that there are valid arguments in favour of both solutions, we feel it is important that the multiple site option is fully explored, in terms of both current and future needs. Should the choice nonetheless be for a single site, the thinking behind this, and the pros and cons of single and multiple sites, should be explained in the Strategy.

Recommendation 7: The panel welcomes the commitment to consulting with both Travellers and the settled community on proposed site(s), their design and management. It would like to see the Strategy contain some detail on how the consultation will be 'effective' and a commitment that it will meet the standards of the Community Engagement Framework. We anticipate that the consultation process will include asking whether a single or multiple sites would be preferred – and be explained in the Strategy.

Statement 3: The panel welcomes the development of procedures for Tolerated Sites for implementation in summer 2012 and is looking forward to seeing progress in their implementation via the monitoring reports requested in Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 8: The panel believe that assessing the need for future site provision should not wait until 2016. The panel believe that there should be an ongoing collation of information on the regional situation from the Regional Forum, monitoring information and data on enabling site provision to plan future need. This Strategy presents a real opportunity to stop being reactive and to begin to plan capacity more pro-actively.

Statement 4: The panel welcomes the commitment that the council will provide, later in 2012, local information to advise Travellers who are seeking to buy their own land.

Statement 5: The panel welcomed the agreement that the needs of Travellers will be reflected in the 2012 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and that a specific needs assessment on the health and wellbeing of Travellers will be published in November 2012. We hope that this will provide sufficient information in order to properly plan and provide health and social care services for this community. The panel look forward to seeing this information being used to revise this Strategy in future years.

Recommendation 9: The panel welcomed the commitment to review the impact of the work of Health Visitors and looks forward to an update on its findings in the 6 month and 12 month progress report on the Strategy.

Recommendation 10: The panel welcomes the commitment from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide cultural awareness training in relation to Travellers for CCG staff and lead clinicians. However, we are concerned that this does not fully address the problems of front-line clinical staff (e.g. GPs and dentists) and other staff (e.g. GP surgery receptions) lacking awareness of Traveller issues, and sometimes a knowledge of their statutory duties to provide services. We therefore seek clarification as to how the training of CCG staff and lead clinicians will percolate down to other primary care workers.

Recommendation 11: The panel is pleased to see the statement that NHS Brighton & Hove is using and promoting the common framework for ethnic monitoring being developed by the City Inclusion Partnership. The panel is also pleased that the council is promoting the use of the common framework. However, the panel would like the Strategy to contain a statement on how the ethnic monitoring information will be used and an assurance that the council and NHS Brighton & Hove will integrate their information to plan and monitor services.

Statement 6: The panel welcomes the commitment to integrate the Domestic Violence (DV) Commissioning Strategy and the Traveller Strategy and for this to be referred to in the Traveller Strategy.

Recommendation 12: The panel would like to see a commitment in the Strategy to learning from successful education projects which have offered mentoring to Minority Ethnic groups, and to drawing in members of the Traveller community to offer help and advice with Traveller education issues.

Recommendation 13: The panel would like the Strategy to contain an action re: obtaining city based information on Traveller educational attainment, across all sectors of education from pre-school to Further Education. Once this data has been gathered it should be used as a baseline from which to identify the educational attainment of Traveller children. The panel would expect data and a statement on how this data

will be used to be contained in the progress updates reported to Committee.

Recommendation 14: The panel is keen to ensure that the Strategy contains more detailed information and outcomes on how to improve the educational experience and attainment for transient Travellers who visit the city.

Recommendation 15: The panel welcomes the commitment to include actions in the Strategy which build on successful 'out reach to in reach' work in encouraging take up of education and combining this with information from health outreach work. The panel would like to see the data gathered to be used to plan future services and measure progress achieved by these services.

Recommendation 16: The panel is concerned that the positive work which is being done to secure Traveller engagement from early years could go to waste if the Strategy does not include sufficient measures to retain Traveller children in education. This in turn will enable Travellers to improve their employment prospects. The Strategy should include new ways to engage with harder to reach Traveller groups such as teenagers, enabling access to adult and further education, and using ICT and other methods to engage with these groups.

Recommendation 17: The panel would like to see the Strategy contain a commitment from the council to lead a co-ordinated programme to improve awareness in schools about Traveller history and culture. This would include the council leading, and co-ordinating, the city's participation in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and including Travellers in People's Day.

Statement 7: The panel is pleased that there will be a commitment in the Strategy to the council participating in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month.

Statement 8: The panel is pleased that there will be an explicit commitment in the Strategy to 'Involve Travellers and their advocates in service design and delivery'.

Recommendation 18: The panel would like the Strategy to contain information on the Joint Sussex-wide protocol on unauthorised encampments which is being developed for use by the Police and local authorities and to place this under goal 16 of the Strategy 'Effective Management of Unauthorised Encampments'.

Recommendation 19: The panel appreciates that work is ongoing in relation to sensitive sites. However it believes that the Strategy should contain a clear plan for sensitive sites. This could identify levels of sensitivity and a commitment to mapping the impact of site protection measures on unauthorised encampments elsewhere in the city.

Statement 9: The panel welcomes the commitment to expanding the actions under Goal 15 'Effective Management of unauthorised encampments' in relation to crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance and is looking forward to finding out the progress in the regular reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

Statement 10: The panel is pleased that the Strategy will be amended to include detail on the new ways being developed to encourage the reporting of crimes and incidents.

Recommendation 20: The panel is pleased that the Action Plan is to be updated to show that the Protocol for Van Dwellers will be developed during 2012/2013. The panel would like the council to contact other local authorities who experience this issue, such as Bristol, to see what practices they have developed.

Recommendation 21: Given the important role Councillors play in relation to Travellers, the panel believe that Councillors should be offered the opportunity to attend Traveller Awareness Training run by the council on an annual basis.

Recommendation 22: The panel recommends that the council works with the local media to ensure balanced reporting of issues relating the Traveller community. This could include such things as:

- **Reporting positive Traveller stories**
- **Challenging the need for Traveller stories to be front-page, a practice which automatically sensationalises the issue**
- **Moderating, and if necessary deleting, comments placed on websites**

3. Background to the Scrutiny Panel

Why a new Traveller Strategy?

3.13 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion for Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) informed the panel that the Traveller Strategy was being reviewed due to:

- A change of government and the passing of the Localism Act
- A change of political administration in the Council
- A heightened awareness of Travellers locally and nationally[15]

3.14 A Gypsy Roma Traveller action plan for 2011/12 was approved by Cabinet on 14th July 2011.[16] This plan included a commitment to review the 2008 Traveller Strategy.

Timescales for the Strategy

3.15 At the beginning of the scrutiny process, the Scrutiny Team and the Housing Strategy team agreed a joint timetable (see Volume 2 of this report).

Why a scrutiny panel to shadow the development of this strategy?

3.16 The issue of Travellers has a very high profile in the city, and the decision to scrutinise the topic was triggered by a range of events including:

- Two requests from councillors to scrutinise this topic
- A petition signed by 2,039 people which was heard at Council on 21st July 2011
- A Notice Of Motion regarding Travellers

3.17 The first request to scrutinise the subject was submitted by Cllr Geoffrey Theobald (see Volume 2 of this report). His request was to review council policy in relation to Travellers for the following reasons:

- Unauthorised encampments causing tension between the settled and travelling communities
- Changes in national policy agenda including the abolition of South East Plan and the new planning and enforcement guidance as part of the Localism Bill
- Change of policy locally with regard to illegal encampment[17]

3.18 Therefore he believed the issue met the following criteria for a scrutiny:

- An issue of *'huge importance to the city'*[18]

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[15] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[16] Cabinet Meeting on 14.07.11 http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=3223&T=10
[17] Letter from Cllr Theobald dated 2nd June 2011
[18] Ibid

- Significant potential benefits in terms of improving community relations and reducing costs from dealing with this issue

3.19 Cllr Theobald concluded that:

'…an independent scrutiny review is the most appropriate avenue … to examine the complex issues this raises'[19] and enable partner agencies to participate, such as the Police.

3.20 The second request for scrutiny came from Cllr Liz Wakefield (see Volume 2) who requested that the following areas were investigated:

- Service provision for Traveller groups in the city
- Whether outreach work was being carried out by Education, Health and Housing Services to Travellers
- Whether council departments and agencies were working together and if service provision could be improved[20]

3.21 Cllr Wakefield described how this issue affected Brighton & Hove:

'There is a large GRT [Gypsy Roma Traveller] community and they have only one place to stay which is a transit yard at Horsdean. There are rarely positive messages ever published about the GRT groups in Brighton and Hove. Normal newsprint is very negative and stereotypical. We need to build bridges between the settled community and GRT groups.'[21]

3.22 A consultation exercise was undertaken in summer 2011 by the Scrutiny team to find out what the public, Members, officers and partners felt were key issues facing the city. The second most frequently submitted topic was issues that were related to Travellers.

3.23 When the report on a new Traveller Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 14th July 2011, the Leader of the Council stated that *'…the Cabinet welcomed the involvement of Overview & Scrutiny throughout the revision of the Traveller Strategy and actively seek their support during the process.'*[22]

3.24 The Cabinet agreed that the revision of the Strategy was timed to *'…sequence it with the upcoming Scrutiny Panel.'*[23]

3.25 As a result of these requests Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC) agreed on 5th September 2011 to establish a Scrutiny Panel to shadow the development of the

[19] Letter from Cllr Theobald dated 2nd June 2011
[20] Scrutiny request form, Cllr Wakefield dated July 2011
[21] Ibid
[22] Minutes of Cabinet meeting on 14.07.11 http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=120&MId=3223&Ver=4
[23] Gypsy Roma Traveller Action Plan 2011/12 report to Cabinet on 14.07.11 http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=3223&T=10

Traveller Strategy, whilst ensuring that it did not duplicate the work already being undertaken by the Cabinet review.[24]

[24] Draft minutes of ECSOSC on 05.09.11

4. The Role of the Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

4.1 The terms of reference (TOR) for the Panel were agreed as:

To add value to the development of the new Traveller Strategy for the city, in the following ways:

- To shadow the Cabinet review of the 2008 Traveller Strategy
- To provide an independent cross-party challenge to the work of this review
- To review current policies and strategies for the city which relate to Travellers with the aim of improving outcomes for the Traveller community. To consider this issue in relation to the strategic priorities for the council & city
- To review good practice in other regions and organisations
- Where needed, to consult stakeholders and partners
- Where needed, to undertake original research e.g. to use to make recommendations to Cabinet
- If needed, to engage with both the Traveller and settled communities and other stakeholders about this issue
- If needed, gathering evidence
- If needed, finding out best practice from other local authorities[25]

Role of this panel

4.2 Traditionally scrutiny panels have been set up to look at a topic of importance to the city, take evidence and make recommendations to the Executive on how to address the issues raised.

4.3 However, this panel represented the opportunity to be involved in the development of a new strategy for the city in the pre-decision stage. The progress of this panel has been characterised by a constructive dialogue and close working between the Scrutiny Team and the Housing Strategy department.

4.4 During the scrutiny process, this panel has carried out the following roles prior to producing this report:

- Invited officers from Housing to attend all the panel meetings to hear the evidence
- Provided minutes of panel meetings to Housing to give them the opportunity to incorporate the panel's evidence into the development of the Strategy
- Requested an action plan to accompany the draft Strategy to enable the panel to fully assess which actions were planned to achieve the stated outcomes and the timetable

[25] Scoping paper of the scrutiny panel

4.5 The Housing Strategy team also kindly shared their work with the panel including:

- Health research produced for the Strategy
- Responses sent to the Consultation Portal as part of the consultation process following the publication of Consultation Paper 1

4.6 In order to develop the Strategy, the council undertook a consultation exercise with local communities, stakeholder groups and other relevant bodies. Responses to this consultation have been used to inform the draft Strategy.

4.7 Given that this process of consultation was already in existence, it clearly made sense for the scrutiny panel to engage with it rather than making its recommendations separately. Drawing on the evidence gathered, the panel therefore agreed a series of recommendations to be submitted to the consultation. A list of these recommendations and detailed responses from Housing Strategy is included in Volume 2 of this report.

4.8 In some instances, panel recommendations were accepted in their entirety, in other instances partly accepted; and in a couple of instances rejected. Following this, the panel met again to re-consider these recommendations in the context of producing its full report. This report therefore incorporates the original consultation recommendations, the constructive responses from Housing Strategy and the final recommendations which are the result of the panel's subsequent deliberations.

How the panel evidenced this submission

4.9 The panel initially held two capacity building sessions where it heard evidence from 15 witnesses who either worked for Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) or key partners such as the Police.

4.10 The panel also met with the Traveller Liaison Team (TLT) and visited the Horsdean Transit site on 13th December 2011 to talk to Travellers living in Brighton & Hove.

4.11 Then three formal evidence gathering sessions, with 16 witnesses, were held in January 2012 which were recorded to assist in the evidence gathering process.

4.12 The full list of witnesses is set out below in the order of appearance.

Name	Title	Service
Jonathan Fortune	Head of the Traveller Liaison Team	BHCC
Nick Hibberd	Head of Housing and Social Inclusion	BHCC
Andy Staniford	Head of Housing Strategy	BHCC
Simon Court	Senior Lawyer	BHCC
Sarah Tighe-Ford	Equalities Co-ordinator	BHCC
Jackie Whitford	Co-ordinator	Traveller Education Team, East Sussex County Council (ESCC)
Kirsty Hewitt	Public Health Speciality Registrar	NHS Sussex
Phil Seddon	Equality and Diversity Manager	NHS Sussex
Steve Whitton	Superintendent	Sussex Police
Peter Castleton	Sergeant Strategic and Neighbourhood Policy Support	Sussex Police
John Peerless Mountford	Head of Trading Standards	BHCC
James Dougan	Head of Children & Families	BHCC
Celia Lamden	Neighbourhood SureStart Service Manager	BHCC
Rob Fraser	Head of Planning Strategy	BHCC
Sandra Rogers	Senior Planning Officer	BHCC
Caroline Lucas	MP for Brighton Pavilion	
Cllr Liz Wakefield	Cabinet Member for Housing	BHCC
Esther Quarm	Gypsy and Travellers Manager	West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
Trudy McGuigan	Traveller Liaison Manager	East Sussex County Council
Chris Whitwell	Director	Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT)
David Bailey	Traveller and Diversity Manager	Fenland District Council
Jean Thomas	Chair	Stanmer and Coldean Local Action Team (LAT)
Michael Murray		Brighton & Hove Environment Action Group (BHEAG)
Patricia Weller		Hangleton & Knoll Community Action Forum
Greg Yates	Founder	Clearwater Gypsies
Mike Weatherley	MP for Hove	
Cllr Pete West	Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability	BHCC

Linda Beanlands	Commissioner Community Safety	BHCC
Juliet McCaffery	Secretary	Sussex Traveller Action Group (STAG)
Lisa Williams	Community Development Worker	STAG
Michael Beard	The Editor	The Argus

5. How the Traveller Strategy was developed

5.1 The following documents were produced by the council's Housing Strategy Team in the development of the Strategy:

- Project Initiation Document (PID)
- Consultation Paper 1: Traveller Strategy 2012
- Consultation Questionnaires
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Consultation Paper 2: Draft Traveller Commissioning Strategy

Consultation process

5.2 A plan was developed which outlined how the Strategy would be shaped through engagement with the city's communities and stakeholders. The stakeholders were identified as:

- Wider community, residents in the city
- Voluntary and community sector
- Service users e.g. people using services relating to Travellers provided by the council and its contracted partners
- Partners – other service providers providing services relating to Travellers
- Politicians e.g. MPs and Councillors representing the city's residents
- Staff providing services relating to Travellers[26]

Responses to Consultation Paper 1

5.3 The Consultation Paper 1 was published on 5th October 2011. This document represented the first stage of consultation, and asked residents and Travellers for their views in the form of 23 questions covering the following areas:

- Access to services
- Community engagement & cohesion
- Partnership working
- Unauthorised encampments
- A new permanent site
- Transit site provision
- Short-term toleration
- Good neighbour compact
- Protecting sensitive sites[27]

5.4 The council stated that it would be seeking responses from groups including:

'…people in the Traveller communities, local people, businesses, support agencies and service providers.'[28]

[26] Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
[27] Consultation Paper 1: Traveller Strategy 2012
[28] Ibid

5.5 The consultation attracted 83 respondents:

- 73 responses (88%) from residents (including 2 [2.4%] who identified themselves as being from Traveller heritage)
- 1 response (1.2%) from a New Traveller
- 3 responses (3.6%) from Community & Voluntary Organisations (2 who provide support and advocacy to Travellers)
- 4 responses (4.8%) from service providers/commissioners
- 1 response (1.2%) from a community champion
- 1 response (1.2%) from a visitor to the city

5.6 The responses from this consultation were used to shape Consultation Paper 2.

Consultation Paper 2

5.7 Consultation Paper 2 was published on 13th December 2011, with a deadline to respond by 6th February 2012.

5.8 The responses to Consultation Paper 2, including a submission from this Scrutiny panel, are being used to inform the final Strategy which is timetabled to be adopted at the Council's Cabinet meeting on 15th March 2012.

Response to Consultation Paper 2

5.9 A total of 35 consultees responded to this consultation stage through the Brighton & Hove consultation portal by completing a questionnaire that asked for responses to Consultation Paper 2 (the Strategic Vision, the 4 Strategic Outcomes and the 19 Strategic Goals).

5.10 In addition to responses received via the portal, two consultees provided written responses to the draft Strategy overall rather than responding to the questionnaire, one consultee submitted a written document in a response to a meeting held with a representative from the Housing Strategy Team and 27 consultees representing 21 households engaged with consultation through Traveller focus groups and interviews.

Portal Responses

5.11 The responses received through the Portal to Consultation Paper 2 were broken down as follows:

- 27 residents
- 2 Community Champions
- 1 New Traveller
- 1 Visitor
- 1 Community & Voluntary Sector Organisation
- 2 Service Commissioners

- 1 Worker in the area

5.12 Written submissions were received from the following:
- 1 Community Champion
- 1 Community & Voluntary Sector Organisation

Focus Groups and Interviews

5.13 Fifteen focus groups and interviews were held with 27 Travellers, representing 21 Traveller households. Of those participating:
- 19 Traveller households identified as Irish
- 1 Traveller household identified as mixed Irish and English
- 1 Traveller household identified as New Traveller

5.14 Lastly, there was the written submission from this Scrutiny panel.

6. Scrutiny Panel Consultation Response

6.1 As noted above, on 6th February 2012, the scrutiny panel delivered its submission to Housing Strategy as part of the consultation process. The first part of the panel's submission - Volume 1:

- Welcomed the draft strategy,
- Outlined the three key concerns of the panel regarding the strategy
- Made 27 recommendations regarding the draft strategy
- Described nine areas on which the panel had received evidence but were not covered sufficiently in Consultation Paper 2 e.g. the needs of housed Travellers

6.2 Volume 2 contained the written evidence gathered by the panel, which comprised:

- The agreed minutes of the five evidence-gathering sessions
- Written evidence submitted by witnesses and other stakeholders

Key concerns of the Panel about Consultation Paper 2

6.3 This section outlines the three overall concerns of the panel in producing its response to the **Consultation Paper 2** of the draft Strategy. They are included in this final report because the panel feel that elements of these concerns still remain with regard to the final Strategy:

- **Concern A:** The panel appreciate that this Strategy is pitched at a very high level. However, without a detailed action plan to accompany the document it is not easy to determine what is going to be done by services to address the issues raised. Therefore the panel requested a detailed action plan to accompany the Strategy.
- **Concern B:** That so much of the Strategy appears to be predicated on the development of the permanent site. Given that this site is not timetabled to open until Winter 2013/14, it was felt that a key focus of this three year Strategy should be addressing transit provision in the city, both prior to the opening of the permanent site and if needed after the opening.
- **Concern C:** For the same reason, another key focus of the Strategy should be unauthorised encampments.

6.4 The remainder of this section will now outline these concerns in greater detail.

Concern A: The difficulty the panel faced in commenting on the draft Strategy without seeing a completed action plan

6.5 Upon first reading of the draft Strategy, the panel was concerned that the goals outlined in the document were pitched at such a high level that it would be difficult to determine whether, and how, they were being achieved. For example:

6.6 **'Goal 9: Raise standards by ensuring successful education provision for Traveller children living at the new permanent site.** *It will be important for the local schools to be ready to welcome the new arrivals and for the teachers to be confident they can make an interesting and relevant curriculum. We will provide support for the schools that will be part of this.'*[29]

6.7 Due to the very interesting and challenging evidence the panel received about education and Traveller children, it wanted to know in more detail how goals - such as goal 9 - were to be achieved. So the panel asked the Housing Strategy team to provide an action plan to accompany the draft strategy. The panel did appreciate that the Strategy authors are dealing with a very complex subject and working to very tight timescales.

6.8 The panel were given a draft action plan on 25th January 2012, which contained significant gaps, for example no detail on health related actions. The panel had the following concerns about this draft action plan:

- Is the action plan meaningful given the limited timescale in which it has been developed?
- Are the actions sufficiently owned by the relevant services or partner organisations to ensure they will be delivered?
- The actions described are often not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited) e.g. *for 9.1 by what end date do you want all Traveller school aged children enrolled in local provision?*[30]
- Timescales are only provided for a minority of actions
- There did not appear to be sufficient action points and goals relating to the management of the Horsdean Transit site and the overall issue of transit provision[31]

6.9 The panel received an updated version of the action plan on February 15th 2012. While this plan was near complete, the panel were still had concerns about the plan [outlined in paragraph 6.8]. They were also keen to ensure the effective monitoring of this action plan and the Strategy.

[29] Consultation Paper 2 Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012
[30] Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012, Action Plan (draft v1)
[31] Volume 1, Submission from Traveller Strategy Scrutiny Panel to Consultation Paper 2 Traveller Commissioning Strategy

Recommendation 1: The panel noted with considerable concern the lack of monitoring of the priorities and actions contained in the last Traveller Strategy for 2008-11. The panel welcomes the action plan which has been developed for this Strategy. The panel expects this plan to be effectively monitored and would like a monitoring report to be sent to the relevant Member Committee at the following intervals: 6 months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months. To enable effective monitoring the panel would expect each action in the Action Plan to be SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited).

6.10 The panel is pleased to hear that the completed action plan is to go through the Cabinet approval process and that key elements of the plan will appear in the final version of the Strategy. However the panel found it challenging to make a full response to the Strategy without seeing the final version of the action plan. Recommendations contained in this report may well be addressed in the final version of the Strategy and the action plan, but the panel will not be aware of this until the final Strategy is published.

Concern B: Transit provision in Brighton & Hove

6.11 The panel became concerned about the issue of transit provision in the city when they heard from the Head of the council's Traveller Liaison Team that Horsdean Transit site was:

'…full with a waiting list and daily enquiries are made about it. It was becoming increasing difficult to manage as there are 23 pitches which is too large for a transit site.'[32]

6.12 Under the rules of the site Travellers were allowed to stay for four weeks in summer and three months in winter. However:

'The team had to exercise discretion and take a pragmatic view about the licence conditions of the site. For example to take into account the high welfare needs of some families, such as one family with a very premature baby.'[33]

6.13 The Head of TLT felt that in practice Horsdean was not acting as a transit site, but as a stop-gap in the absence of a permanent site. This was confirmed by Cllr Pete West who told the panel that:

'…the transit site is operating as a de facto permanent site for at least some residents.'[34]

6.14 The importance of the permanent site was emphasised:

[32] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[33] Ibid
[34] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

'The majority of families on the transit site would move to the permanent site. This would reduce the number of unauthorised encampments as visitors would be able to go to the transit site. The city would then have fewer unauthorised encampments…'[35]

6.15 The action plan to accompany the strategy states that the target time for opening a permanent site in the city is Winter 2013/14. If the site was to open in March 2014, this could mean that **for more than two years of the three year cycle of this strategy**, **a permanent site will not be open in the city**. Therefore the management of the transit site and a realistic view of the role it can play in enabling the city to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments needs to be a key focus of the Strategy.

Currently, and until the permanent site is opened, the Horsdean site represents the only authorised provision for Travellers in the city. Therefore the panel feels that the Strategy needs to more fully reflect this issue of transit capacity.

Original scrutiny recommendation	The panel believes that the Strategy needs to address sufficiently a number of issues relating to the issue of transit provision in the city, for the next two years prior to the opening of the permanent site. These would include: 1. How to enable proper transit capacity in the city prior to the opening of permanent site? 2. Measures to deal with the Horsdean site becoming 'increasingly difficult to manage' **3.** Examining the length of stay permitted on the Horsdean site
Housing Strategy response	In response to this recommendation, a goal is being added to the strategy to 'Ensure effective management and use of the Horsdean Transit Site'. Critical to this goal is the recruitment of a new permanent manager for the transit site. Additional actions will focus on issues such as a new refuse contract, and a review of the length of stay of all occupiers.
Final scrutiny recommendation	**Recommendation 2: In a number of areas, the Strategy posits the establishment of a permanent site as a solution to the issues associated with Travellers. This may be the case, but it is important to recognise that the permanent site will not be opened until Winter 2013/14 at the earliest. Therefore a coherent vision is needed of what is to be done in the years before the permanent site is ready, particularly in terms of transit provision.**

[35] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

Concern C: Dealing with unauthorised encampments, especially before the permanent site is opened?

6.16 The panel were struck by the very strong evidence from the community and the obvious needs of the Travellers, that the issue of unauthorised encampments needs to be addressed as a priority before a permanent site is built. This evidence is described in greater detail in paragraphs 11.12 to 11.26.

6.17 Given the impact of unauthorised encampments on the city, Mike Weatherley MP felt that in the Strategy:

'…more should be done to address the needs of city residents.'[36]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel feel that preventing, and responding to, unauthorised encampments should also be a key focus of the Strategy.
Housing Strategy Response	The new Strategy seeks to be preventative in nature rather than reactive and seeks to minimise the number of unauthorised encampments through our goals in 'Outcome 1: Increase site availability'. In addition, we recognise that we must respond robustly in partnership with the Police to unauthorised encampments when they do occur and this has been reflected in our goals in 'Outcome 4: Improve community cohesion'.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 3: The panel feel that preventing, and responding to, unauthorised encampments should be a key focus of the Strategy, particularly until the permanent site is opened. The panel would like the Strategy to draw on good practice by other authorities in this area such as Fenland DC. The panel would also like the Strategy to include information on how the council will pro-actively liaise with any settled community affected by such encampments.**

Response from the Housing Strategy Team to the panel's submission

6.18 On the 15th February 2012 the panel received a positive and constructive response to its submission. A letter to the chair of the panel from Cllr West praised the panel's work:

'It is clear that, despite the pressured timetable, the Panel's review has been very thorough and rigorous and has gathered a substantial wealth

[36] Mike Weatherley, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

of evidence. Your recommendations have led to a number of improvements to the strategy and action plan which will ultimately benefit both Travellers and the settled community.'[37]

6.19 The full response of the Housing Strategy Team can be found in Volume 2 of the panel's report.

Panel's outstanding overall concerns about the Strategy

6.20 While the Panel were pleased to see that significant alterations and improvements were promised to both the Strategy and action plan, they still had the following concerns:

- The Strategy still reads as a list of actions rather than as a coherent strategy. The panel were concerned that this could result in issues falling between the cracks
- Not all of the actions in the action plan were 'SMART'. This will make monitoring them more difficult
- The panel were concerned that the goals and actions relating to the education of Travellers remained a weak area of the Strategy
- The response from Housing commits to the collection of data and raising of awareness, but the panel felt that there was not enough detail on how this information will be used to improve services and outcomes for both Travellers and the settled community

6.21 The panel would hope these issues are addressed in the regular monitoring of the action plan and that they inform the development of future Traveller Strategies for Brighton & Hove.

Recommendation 4: The panel believes the Strategy should be both a place where all the separate plans for dealing with Traveller issues are brought together and a process via which these plans are effectively integrated. While the draft Strategy fulfils the first of these requirements, the panel is not sure that it currently meets the second: more needs to be done to link the different parts of the Strategy into a coherent narrative.

Final report of the panel

6.22 This report represents the final findings and recommendations of the panel and is informed by the reply it received from Housing Strategy in response to the original panel submission.

Final Traveller Strategy 2012

6.23 The Traveller Strategy 2012 will be presented to Full Council on March 22nd 2012 *'to build wider cross-party ownership'*[38] of the Strategy. This

[37] Letter from Cllr Pete West to Aidan McGarry, 15.02.12
[38] Reply from Housing Strategy to the panel's submission (see Appendix 4 of volume 2)

report of the panel will also be presented to Full Council at the same meeting.

Scrutiny Recommendations

In order to achieve the vision of the Traveller Strategy, four strategic outcome areas have been identified which are:

'…aimed at supporting Travelling communities to improve the quality of lives and reduce the tensions between Travellers and the settled population.'[39]

Nineteen goals have been developed in order to achieve these outcomes. The evidence received from the panel and recommendations they would like to make are now described under each of those headings. To clarify how these recommendations have been developed, under each recommendation is listed the following:

- The original recommendation made by the panel in their submission to Consultation Paper 2
- Then the response from Housing Strategy about how they would be addressing this recommendation
- Where appropriate, a further final recommendation from the panel concerning this issue

Finally, the panel highlights areas of evidence which do not relate specifically to the goals of the Strategy. The Housing Strategy Team provided a response to each of these areas which are also included in this report.

[39] Traveller Strategy Consultation Paper 2, BHCC

7. Findings & Recommendations – General Comments

The Title of the Traveller Strategy

7.1 An initial concern of the panel related to the name of the Strategy. The subtitle of the Traveller Strategy: Consultation Paper 1 was:

'**Balancing** the needs of Traveller communities with the City's settled communities'.[40]

7.2 The panel noted with concern that this subtitle was changed on the report on the consultation responses and Consultation Paper 2 to:

'**Rebalancing** the needs of Traveller communities with the City's settled communities.'[41]

7.3 This subtitle was also identified as the vision for the Strategy, increasing the importance of the language used.

7.4 The panel's concern was that the meaning of the word rebalance is *'…to restore the correct balance to; balance again or differently'*[42] – this has a very different tone to that of balance which means to *'…offset or compare the value of (one thing) with another.'*[43]

7.5

Statement 1: The panel were pleased to see that their recommendation was accepted to change the vision for the Strategy back to 'Balancing the needs…'

Traveller Communities – Terminology and Needs

7.6 As already stated, the Strategy outlines the different communities that are covered by the term 'Travellers':

- Roma Gypsies
- Irish, Welsh and Scottish Travellers
- Travelling Showpeople
- Bargees
- New Travellers[44]

7.7 Simon Court, a Senior Lawyer for BHCC, emphasised the importance of using the correct definitions of Travellers in the strategy because:

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[40] Bold my emphasis, Consultation Report Stage 1: Consultation Paper, BHCC
[41] Bold my emphasis, Ibid and Consultation Paper 2, BHCC
[42] Oxford English Dictionary online http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rebalance?q=Rebalancing
[43] Oxford English Dictionary online http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/balance?q=balancing#balance__16
[44] Consultation Paper 2, BHCC

'…they related to the very different needs, interests, expectations and responsibilities. Being aware of this would reduce legal challenge.'[45]

7.8 Sarah Tighe-Ford, an Equalities Co-ordinator for BHCC confirmed that within the council:

'There was an awareness of the differences between the Traveller communities, and so they were not just provided with a blanket service.'[46]

7.9 The panel heard evidence about the varying needs of the different communities which come under the broad umbrella term of Travellers. Information provided to the panel also highlighted that sometimes contradictory data may be used to plan services for Travellers. For example, very different figures for the average life expectancy of male Travellers were presented to the panel.

7.10 Trudy McGuigan from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) believed that:

'There were changing issues in the Traveller communities and it was a mistake to lump all the three Traveller groups together as they all needed different approaches…[e.g.] the attainment of New Traveller children was quite good, which suggested the need to approach communities in different ways.'[47]

7.11 The panel also heard that tensions can exist between different groups of Travellers. For example in West Sussex:

'Most of our Travellers are English Travellers, whereas in Crawley the majority are Irish Travellers. Mixing the two groups had first led to an increase in unauthorised encampments and then a reduction.'[48]

7.12 West Sussex County Council (WSCC) had found that:

'The most tension arises between English and Irish Travellers.'[49]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel feels that the Strategy needs to clearly identify which Traveller communities are typically present in Brighton & Hove and identify solutions which address the particular needs of local Traveller communities.
Housing Strategy Response	In response to this recommendation the strategy wording will be amended to highlight the groups that predominantly visit or reside in the city.

[45] Simon Court, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[46] Sarah Tighe-Ford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[47] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[48] Esther Quarm, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[49] Sam Tearle, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

	Goals in Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 around improving cultural awareness and involving Travellers in service development and delivery will allow those services to tailor their approach to the individual communities. The two needs assessments proposed that will look at future pitch need and Traveller health needs will help us build a better picture of local Traveller needs to improve the targeting of our services and action plan.
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 2: The panel welcomes the intention to identify which types of Traveller are typically based in Brighton & Hove and to design services to meet the specific needs of these communities. We also welcome the promised needs assessments and cultural awareness training. The panel strongly supports evidence-based planning and are encouraged that the council is actively seeking to collect more data in key areas. We confidently anticipate that future iterations of the Strategy will be based on local up-to-date information.***

The council and key services to Travellers

7.13 An Equalities Co-ordinator for BHCC explained that:

'The key framework for service improvement and identifying needs was the Equalities Act 2010. This placed a duty on the council to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.'[50]

7.14 The roles played by the council in relation to Travellers, include:

- As a large employer in the city, it will have staff who are Travellers
- A landlord
- Managing open spaces
- Provider of support services to schools in the city
- Provider of other services specifically to Travellers
- Partnership work to provide services, e.g. with the Police
- Providing support to the settled community
- Managing the Horsdean Transit site
- Enforcement in relation to illegal sites

7.15 This section now describes the evidence received in relation to the key services provided for Travellers in Brighton & Hove.

[50] Sarah Tighe-Ford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

Traveller Liaison Team

7.16 According to the Head of the TLT, Jonathan Fortune, this team is:

'…a small unit who acted as the first point of contact regarding Travellers in the city.'[51]

7.17 Their key responsibilities included

- Identifying health and welfare needs
- Assessing the effect of Travellers on the settled communities
- Signposting services to Travellers
- Managing unauthorised encampments
- Managing the Horsdean Transit site[52]

7.18 Trudy McGuigan, the Traveller Liaison Manager for ESCC told the panel that:

'In her experience working with Travellers was the most contentious, challenging, problematic and difficult issue that faced all local authorities'.[53]

7.19 The panel were impressed by the TLT's understanding of, and responsiveness to, the needs of Travellers when they visited the Horsdean Transit Site.

7.20 An issue which was raised in the evidence given to the panel was whether this team should be providing both the support and enforcement role in relation to Travellers in Brighton & Hove. The Head of the TLT believed that:

'Although this dual role could be uncomfortable for staff, Travellers preferred to deal with people who have a good understanding of Traveller issues.'[54]

7.21 This was reinforced by Cllr Liz Wakefield, the Cabinet Member for Housing who felt that the TLT:

'…find this role very difficult but it is accepted and known by Travellers. It is an almost impossible task to carry out both these roles, including checking on Travellers health and welfare while carrying out enforcement action.'[55]

7.22 According to the council's Head of Housing and Social Inclusion:

[51] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[52] Ibid
[53] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[54] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[55] Cllr Liz Wakefield, Evidence to the Panel 04.01.12

'Housing Management …[also] carried out both enforcement and support to a particular client group which could be challenging. In an ideal world there would be some split…to enable staff to focus on offering increased support to Travellers …this needed to be seen in the context of reduced funding for public services.'[56]

7.23 However, the panel were told that in East Sussex:

'…they are very careful to keep the support role completely separate, to stop Travellers losing trust with the workers that support them. A relationship of trust and care is vital.'[57]

7.24 The Traveller team in ESCC is comprised of:

'… one permanent and one half time post to deal with enforcement and management issues and then three support workers (including a man to recognise male Travellers' concerns about talking to female workers) who deal with the high health education and social care needs of this group. The development and delivery of packages of care to Travellers was crucial.'[58]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	If the council does look at the future delivery of services to Travellers, the panel feel it should consider whether splitting the roles of enforcement and support would improve services. It should also take into account the importance of ensuring that there are both male and female TLT workers, to meet the cultural needs of Travellers.
Housing Strategy Response	In response to this recommendation the strategy we will review the Traveller Liaison Team over the next year
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 5: The panel welcome the agreement to review the working of the Traveller Liaison Team, but seek assurance that the review will focus on support and enforcement elements, as well as having the key aim to improve the service for both Travellers and the settled community.**

Traveller Education Service

7.25 The Traveller Education Service (TES) is provided by a team in East Sussex County Council under a consortium arrangement. Once notified of a new Traveller family, the team visits within 48 hours to encourage them to access education services. The service use a *'carrot and stick'*[59] approach and *'…did whatever they could to allay the fears of Travellers.'*[60]

[56] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[57] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[58] Ibid
[59] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[60] Ibid

7.26 This team also works closely with the receiving school:

'…to make sure they would be receptive to the Traveller children, as the Travellers knew that the settled community would be likely to be hostile.'[61]

7.27 Other services provided by TES include:

- Making DVDs, for example to show Travellers the value of education and for the settled community to illustrate the richness of Traveller culture
- Producing an annual report which showed that TES had placed 66 children in local schools and tried to keep them in same school even when the family moved
- Multi-agency play bus[62]

7.28 According to Jackie Whitford, Co-ordinator of the TES:

'Ensuring safe and secure accommodation was key to enabling access to education.'[63]

Children's services

7.29 According to James Dougan, Head of Children and Families for BHCC, this service:

'…had a number of dedicated resources for the Traveller Community. However there was a lack of teenagers, both males and female, using our services. A permanent site could help this situation, then one could set up a joint team with housing to deliver a youth service to that site.'[64]

7.30 Celia Lamden, Neighbourhood SureStart Service Manager, told the panel that:

'Traveller families did not have homogenous needs and were similar to other hard to reach groups. Their aims were to engage with this community and ensure continuity of service.'[65] And:

'…there is fast tracking for Traveller children into nursery, this is done by the Health Visitor referring them to the Traveller Education Team. The links between the health and education services were vital.'[66]

[61] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[62] Ibid
[63] Ibid
[64] James Dougan, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[65] Celia Lamden, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[66] Ibid

Voluntary sector

7.31 Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) is a national charity, based in Brighton, which seeks to end racism and discrimination against Travellers. They suggested that:

'…voluntary sector organisations could play a crucial role in acting as a bridge between the Traveller communities and statutory providers. Even if [they]…had good intentions, there was a lot of distrust about the Police, health providers and local authorities. FFT could act as a conduit to the Traveller communities.'[67]

Other relevant services

Police

7.32 The Police explained to the panel that their powers in this area stemmed from the Criminal Justice Act 1994.

'Under S62A the landowner can request the police to remove an unauthorised encampment. This was a straight forward power which enabled the police to move on Travellers. S61, was an exceptional power under which the Police can move on Travellers in particular circumstances. While the legislation was straight forward, the police needed to balance these powers with human rights and race relations.'[68]

7.33 When considering the use of powers under S61, the two key factors the Police take into account are:

1. Is it a sensitive site? E.g. of special interest?
2. Is the unauthorised encampment having a significant impact on the community e.g. their ability to use amenities?[69]

7.34 These decisions were only taken at Superintendent level or above to *'…ensure a consistent policy.'*[70]

Trading Standards

7.35 The Trading Standards service explained to the panel that their purpose is to:

'…ensure a safe trading environment in the city.'[71]

[67] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[68] Steve Whitton, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[69] Ibid
[70] Ibid
[71] John Peerless Mountford, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

7.36 The service had found that some Travellers had been involved in rogue trading '*…which was when individuals flouted the law, e.g. using harassment to sell products.'*[72]

7.37 Trading Standards had also been working with FFT and Travellers to break down the *'guardedness'*[73] from Travellers about dealing with the service, address issues such as Travellers with no fixed abode and enforcing contracts. The establishment of a permanent site may provide the Travellers living there with what would count as a permanent address.

[72] John Peerless Mountford, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[73] Ibid

8. Findings & Recommendations – Strategic Outcome 1. Improve site availability

Goal 1: Develop a new permanent Traveller site

8.1 The panel heard from the Head of TLT that there was a range of reasons why a permanent site was needed in Brighton & Hove:

- Insufficient national provision following the scrapping of the statutory duty on councils to provide permanent Traveller sites
- Fewer places for Travellers to camp due to better site protection
- Local residents becoming more sensitive to this issue and putting greater pressure on their politicians[74]

Transit provision in Brighton & Hove

8.2 The panel heard that Horsdean, which is the city's single transit site for Travellers, provided reasonable facilities, a nice location and good access to services. However problems were developing with the site, which included:

- A high demand for the pitches
- It is full with a long waiting list
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to manage as the 23 pitches are *'too large for a transit site'*[75]

8.3 The city does not have a permanent site for Travellers, so consultation on the first stage of the Strategy asked:

'Are there any reasons why the City should not provide a permanent site as planned?'[76]

8.4 Of the respondents who stated a view - 59% supported the provision of a permanent site and 41% objected.[77]

Objections to a permanent site

8.5 An example of the objections raised to a permanent site came from a resident who believed that:

'More sites will simply encourage more Travellers. It is unlikely that the City could ever provide sufficient supply of sites to meet demand. Financial resources are therefore best diverted in to an alternative strategy whereby the authorities act much more quickly, using their full powers to immediately evict illegal encampments.'[78]

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[74] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[75] Ibid
[76] Consultation Paper 1: Traveller Strategy 2012
[77] Consultation Report Stage 1: Consultation Paper, BHCC
[78] A response submitted to Consultation Paper 1 via the Consultation Portal

8.6 Simon Kirby, the MP for Brighton Kemptown, was asked the following question which was posed to all the MPs in the city - *Local authorities no longer have to provide a permanent site for Travellers, and so any council which does so may end up with a disproportionate number of Travellers in their area. Do you think that this should deter Brighton & Hove from building a permanent site?*

8.7 He responded that:

'Brighton & Hove seems to have more than its disproportionate share of travellers in any case. The issue is not just about permanent sites but the whole approach to dealing with this matter. Brighton & Hove City Council is considered as a 'soft touch' in this regard and it needs to address that perception as well as whether there should be a permanent site.'[79]

Benefits of a permanent site

8.8 However, the panel also heard a significant amount of evidence about the benefits of establishing a permanent site to:

- Reduce the number of unauthorised encampments, as the majority of families on the transit site would move there. This would enable the transit site to be used as intended.
- Improve relations between the Travellers, the police and the settled community
- Provide Travellers a permanent address, for the purposes of working, registering with doctors etc.
- Enable Travellers better access to services[80]

8.9 According to Greg Yates the Founder of Clearwater Gypsies:

'A permanent site would immediately improve the health and life of Travellers.'[81]

8.10 The choice of where to locate the site was not included in the remit for the Traveller Strategy or this scrutiny panel.

Developing permanent Traveller provision in Brighton & Hove

8.11 The council's Planning Service told the panel that a needs assessment had begun in 2007 and concluded in 2010 with a public examination. This report had concluded that 16 permanent pitches were needed. A site in Wilson Avenue had been identified and funding of £1.7m had been awarded:

[79] Simon Kirby, Written evidence to the Panel, submitted January 2012
[80] Various evidence given to the panel, November 2011 to January 2012
[81] Greg Yates, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

'This site had good connectors, good access and was an adequate size. However, contamination surveys showed that the contamination was too serious to develop a residential site…The search was happening for a new site but they needed to be able to transfer the funding.'[82]

A single permanent site?

8.12 Concern was expressed by a number of witnesses about the council's plan to develop a single permanent site. Esther Quarm from WSCC felt that:

'From new, a site of 16 pitches would be difficult to manage as the Travellers would not necessarily be from the same family. This was because they would be assessed on the basis of need. **It would be easier to manage smaller sites.** *However, one site with 16 pitches would be better than no permanent site.'*[83]

8.13 She suggested that:

'…it would be beneficial to look at what other councils had done and ask them what had gone well and what could have been done better.'[84]

8.14 This was reinforced by Tracy McGuigan, the Traveller Liaison Manager from ESCC who felt that:

'…there were no easy answers and needed to find a solution which recognised the idiosyncrasies of your own area.'[85]

8.15 She also advised that:

'Traveller site management is very staff intensive…There would need to be a proper investment in staff who would manage a newly established Traveller site.'[86]

8.16 Jackie Whitford, from TES, asked:

'…whether the council had thought of having a few permanent sites with smaller numbers of pitches e.g. 2 sites with 8 pitches each? This may be more acceptable to the settled community and the sites might be easier to manage.'[87]

[82] Rob Fraser, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[83] Bold my emphasis, Esther Quarm, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[84] Ibid
[85] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[86] Ibid
[87] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believes that the council should carry out a thorough evaluation of the needs of Travellers before embarking on developing a permanent site. This would address issues, raised in the evidence to the panel, such as: • Was a single permanent site needed? Or would a number of smaller permanent sites be preferable and easier to manage? • Given the evidence received by the panel about the benefits of smaller multiple sites, the strategy should state clearly why the option of only one site is being chosen e.g. funding implications • What facilities would be needed for the site(s)? • What would be the management resource implications of site decisions? For example, how many staff would be needed to manage a newly established single or multiple site(s)?
Housing Strategy Response	• A number of smaller sites would result in a number of issues relating to the deliverability and risks associated with multiple sites – notably finance, planning and community cohesion • Considerably higher capital costs to build, and on going management costs to run. Each site requires the provision of infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity, access roads etc) before any pitches are provided. • Whilst this funding implication must be a consideration, it is not the only reason for preferring a single site. Additional sites bring additional planning risks given the shortage of available sites and the controversial nature of some of the sites already considered by the site search given that they lie within the SDNP. • The government guidance for site design suggests each pitch consists of a hard standing with space for a main and touring caravan, plus a car, and an amenity unit with a bathroom, kitchen and dayroom. There should be shared play space. All residents will pay rent, bills and council tax like any other tenant in social housing. • Each site would have additional costs from the provision of management and security etc
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 6: The panel heard evidence from a number of sources favouring several small sites rather than a large single permanent site. While we accept that there are valid arguments in favour of both solutions, we feel it is important that the multiple site option is fully explored, in terms of both current and future needs. Should the choice**

	nonetheless be for a single site, the thinking behind this, and the pros and cons of single and multiple sites, should be explained in the Strategy.

Consulting the settled community

8.17 Jonathan Fortune, the Head of TLT felt that:

'There were a significant level of fear and myths about this issue and the settled community needed information on what the site would mean. It could cause conflict if the engagement focused on choosing between potential sites. It was more constructive to engage with the settled community at an earlier stage.'[88]

Consulting Travellers

8.18 Juliet McCaffery from STAG told the panel that:

'…it was important that planning was undertaken after consideration of the needs and wishes of the local Travelling community, rather than just consideration of the convenient sites available.'[89]

8.19 The panel heard that in Fenland DC:

'Travellers had been involved in giving advice over what was, and what was not, an appropriate place for a site, and its layout. This had the additional benefit of preventing a lot of potential frictions in the community by sites in inappropriate locations not being built.'[90]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believes that there needs to be effective consultation and communication with both Travellers and the settled community on proposed site(s), their design and management.
Housing Strategy Response	The timetable for the Permanent Traveller Site project includes a period of consultation on the preferred site after March Cabinet. This will take in both travellers and the settled community and will cover design and management issues.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 7: The panel welcomes the commitment to consulting with both Travellers and the settled community on proposed site(s), their design and management. It would like to see the Strategy contain some detail on how the consultation will be 'effective' and a commitment that it will meet the standards of the Community Engagement Framework. We**

[88] Jonathan Fortune, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[89] Juliet McCaffery, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[90] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

	anticipate that the consultation process will include asking whether a single or multiple sites would be preferred – and be explained in the Strategy.

Goal 2: Develop procedures for Tolerated sites

8.20 The panel heard conflicting evidence about the benefits of tolerated sites. Mike Weatherley MP believed that there should be *'…zero tolerance of unauthorised encampments.'*[91]

8.21 On the other hand, Cllr Pete West argued that the impact of unauthorised encampments could be lessened *'…by the temporary use of tolerated sites…'*[92].He gave an example of where:

'the council had 'tolerated' an unauthorised encampment at '19 Acres' which significantly reduced the number of unauthorised encampments in Q2 [of 2011].'[93]

8.22 Cllr West felt that:

'... a permanent site will not meet all demand for pitches: it may always be necessary to temporarily tolerate some unauthorised encampments for short periods of time in non-sensitive locations when Horsdean is full.'[94]

8.23 Simon Court, a Senior Lawyer, told the panel that:

'The council had been praised for its sensible approach for its toleration.'[95]

8.24 The panel feels that a priority of the Strategy and action plan should be to work out how to minimise the number and impact of unauthorised encampments, particularly when these encampments are in sensitive locations such as city parks. Developing procedures for tolerated sites in less sensitive locations could be an important part of this process.

8.25 This is particularly important as unauthorised encampments could continue for the next two years until the permanent site is built, and potentially beyond then.

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believes that developing procedures for tolerated sites is an important component of the Strategy. They were concerned about the lack of detail about this action in the plan, and would like to

[91] Mike Weatherley, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[92] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[93] Ibid
[94] Ibid
[95] Simon Court, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

	see a full set of actions and SMART targets for this area.
Housing Strategy Response	The draft Action Plan has been updated since it was initially submitted to the Scrutiny Panel. These procedures are planned for development over spring and implementation in summer 2012.
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 3: The panel welcomes the development of procedures for tolerated sites for implementation in summer 2012 and is looking forward to seeing progress in their implementation in the monitoring reports requested in Recommendation 1.***

Good Neighbour Compacts

8.26 This issue was one of the questions raised in the consultation process. Of the consultees who expressed an opinion, 61% were in agreement with the principals of a Good Neighbour Compact and 39% were not.

8.27 It was then stated in Consultation Paper 2 that:

'…we hope to link short-term toleration to the development of a Good Neighbour Compact, an agreement made with those on the tolerated site outlining things such as the need to keep the area tidy, a limit on vehicles and measures to address anti-social behaviour concerns.'[96]

8.28 Evidence given to the panel did highlight the number of disparate views on this issue. For example Michael Murray, of the Brighton & Hove Environmental Action Group (BHEAG), told the panel that he:

'…was personally opposed to [a compact]…because it implied a form of contract between the council and those behaving unlawfully and it cannot be enforced.'[97]

8.29 A representative of the Hangleton & Knoll Community Action Forum felt that a compact *'…could possibly work on an authorised site.'*[98]

8.30 Whilst Cllr Liz Wakefield, Cabinet Member for Housing, felt that the provision of a permanent site would mean that:

'The Traveller community can be asked what they think are reasonable parameters of their behaviour on both transit and permanent site. The Traveller community are likely to say that they want to behave in the same way as those living in council housing. Travellers living on the permanent site will be council tenants and expected to behave as other tenants.'[99]

[96] Consultation Paper 2
[97] Michael Murray, Evidence to the Panel, 25.02.12
[98] Patricia Weller, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[99] Cllr Liz Wakefield, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

8.31 The panel heard that in West Sussex:

'…there was no compact which Travellers were expected to agree to. Travellers would sign a pitch agreement as determined under the Mobile Home Act and then be expected to abide by those rules, which mirrored the expectations on social tenants.'[100]

8.32 Panel members were interested in the idea of Good Neighbour Compacts – they have a potential utility in certain situations. However, the panel simply had too little information on this issue to make informed recommendations. Perhaps this is an area that might be further explored as the Strategy is rolled out.

Goal 3: Consider the demand for future site provision

8.33 Evidence to the panel highlighted the need for local authorities, such as BHCC, to start planning the future provision needs for the city now. Greg Yates, the Founder of Clearwater Gypsies, who had set up his own sites and offered planning advice to Travellers and local authorities about designing and building sites, emphasised the importance of planning for future needs:

'This must include future provision, so look at what you need now, and there will be about a 4% increase a year, so build this in. Build enough pitches for now and think about the future needs too. All councils need to do this - there must be adequate provision. There was plenty of land available. Councils could put a S106 agreement in place with developers; there is MoD land and National Trust land. There must be the will to build a site.'[101]

8.34 The panel were concerned that the key target time for this goal provided in the action plan was 2016.

8.35 The potential impact of placing too many permanent and transit pitches at the Horsdean site was discussed by Juliet McCaffery from STAG who felt that:

'…expansion of the Horsdean site would create a 'ghetto' and stretch local resources such as the schools. A number of smaller sites might be a better option, and one favoured by English Gypsies.'[102]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believe that the future capacity of the site(s) should be considered when developing the permanent site(s).
Housing Strategy	The existing site search has been based on existing

[100] Esther Quarm, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[101] Greg Yates, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[102] Juliet McCaffery, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

Response	identified needs. Looking for a considerably larger site would reduce the pool of sites that can be considered, and might well render the site search impossible. In addition, actions to achieve Goal 3 'Consider the need for future site provision' will ensure we understand and plan for future provision. (Note Goal 3 will become Goal 4 once the Horsdean site management goal has been included)
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 8: The panel believe that assessing the need for future site provision should not wait until 2016. The panel believe that there should be an ongoing collation of information on the regional situation from the Regional Forum, monitoring information and data on enabling site provision to plan future need. This Strategy presents a real opportunity to stop being reactive and to begin to plan capacity more pro-actively.**

Goal 4: To provide advice to Travellers seeking to buy their own land for developing a site

8.36 The panel heard that in East Sussex there were 25 privately owned Traveller sites along with five sites provided by the council, which had:

'…no negative impact, receive no press coverage and are largely not known about.'[103]

8.37 A resident with Traveller heritage suggested that it would be useful to have:

'…Traveller-run services to help provide further sites in liaison with the Traveller Liaison Team.'[104]

8.38 The panel heard from Clearwater Gypsies who had produced a guide *'Planning Made Plain – A guide for Gypsies and Travellers to navigate the planning system'*.[105] It was based on their experiences of the planning system in West Sussex and the purpose was:

'To help Gypsies and Travellers…to first understand the planning system and then to use it, so that time and money is not wasted on

[103] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[104] A response submitted to the questions in Consultation Paper 1using the Consultation Portal
[105] Planning Made Plain, The Clearwater Gypsies, http://www.clearwatergypsies.com/downloads/planning_made_plain.pdf

unrealistic proposals and the chance of getting permission is increased… [and] relations with local authorities and the settled community are improved.'[106]

8.40 Mike Weatherley, MP for Hove told the Panel that:

'A permanent Traveller site should not be funded by taxpayers. Instead, the Travelling community should purchase their own small scale sites if they wish to maintain a travelling lifestyle.'[107]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel recommend that the Strategy draws on information produced by organisations which have developed information and advice to Travellers seeking to buy their own land
Housing Strategy Response	The Clearwater Gypsies and others produce excellent guides on planning for Travellers. We will look at the potential for providing local information to supplement this once the Government produces its revised planning policy for Traveller sites later in 2012
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 4: The panel welcomes the commitment that the council will provide later in 2012, local information to advise Travellers who are seeking to buy their own land***

[106] Planning Made Plain, The Clearwater Gypsies, http://www.clearwatergypsies.com/downloads/planning_made_plain.pdf
[107] Mike Weatherley, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

9. Findings & Recommendations – Strategic Outcome 2. Improve health, safety & wellbeing

Goal 5: Improve access to health and other support services for Gypsies and Travellers in the city

9.1 The panel heard from Kirsty Hewitt, a Public Health Speciality Registrar who contributed health information to the Strategy, that Travellers experienced *'significant health inequalities'*[108], of which the most striking were:

- Anxiety
- Respiratory conditions
- Maternal health, including miscarriages and still births
- Neo-natal death[109]

9.2 Other health issues included:

- High levels of smoking
- Obesity
- Poor diet
- Depression *'…which was related to the stigma of being a Traveller'*[110]

9.3 Kirsty Hewitt believed that:

'The living conditions of Travellers were a major determinant of their health. For example, unauthorised sites usually have no facilities for sanitation, rubbish disposal, clean drinking water or electricity.'[111]

9.4 In addition:

'Travellers experienced high levels of stress from being moved on from unauthorised sites; and settled Travellers from feeling trapped in permanent housing.'[112]

9.5 There was thought to be a low uptake of preventative health services amongst Travellers e.g. cancer screening and immunisation.

'Travellers may have lower rate of use of screening for reasons such as cultural factors, and logistical barriers such as screening call and recall systems relying on GP registration, communication by post and advertising the service in written format.'[113]

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[108] Kirsty Hewitt, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[109] Ibid
[110] Ibid
[111] Ibid
[112] Ibid
[113] Ibid

9.6 In addition Travellers also risked getting lost between different health services in different areas, for example due to lost appointments.[114]

9.7 It was felt that the key issue regarding health services to Travellers was the lack of a permanent site, because:

'Without an address Travellers found it difficult to access a GP and build up a long term relationship with them.'[115]

9.8 The panel heard that in Fenland DC:

'All site residents on all six local authority sites are registered with GPs, as are most if not all of those on private sites. Additionally, the District Nurse visits encampments and addresses any health needs…In Fenland the life expectancy of Travellers has gone up and is now roughly on parity to that of the settled community in the district.'[116]

9.9 **While the panel accepted that the establishment of a permanent site was an important component of improving access to health care, the panel would like the health-related goals to include sufficient recognition of the health needs of transient Travellers.**

9.10 The panel were pleased that the Strategy outlined the Traveller's specialist health services in Brighton & Hove (see p32 of the draft Traveller Strategy). However they were concerned that this section of the Strategy began by stating that:

'All mainstream health services should be accessible to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.'[117]

9.11 **The panel would have like to see more information in the Strategy on how it was felt that this aim could be achieved.**

9.12 While the panel welcomed the health information in the Strategy, they felt that it would be useful to be able to draw upon more up to date and locally specific information about the health needs in Brighton & Hove.

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel received evidence from areas of the country where a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has been undertaken to look at the health and wellbeing needs of Travellers and was found to significantly improve the commissioning of relevant services. The panel would like to recommend that the Director of Public Health (DPH) considers including Travellers in the Brighton & Hove JSNA.
Housing Strategy	The needs of Travellers will be reflected in the 2012

[114] Kirsty Hewitt, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[115] Phil Seddon, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[116] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[117] Traveller Strategy Consultation Paper 2

Response	JSNA summary document. A specific needs assessment on the health and wellbeing of Travellers will be initiated in the spring, and will be published by November 2012 (draft date).
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 5: The panel welcomes the information that the needs of Travellers will be reflected in the 2012 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and that a specific needs assessment on the health and wellbeing of Travellers will be published in November 2012. We hope that this will provide sufficient information in order to properly plan and provide health and social care services for this community. The panel look forward to seeing this information being used to revise this Strategy in forthcoming years.***

Outreach work

9.13 The panel was pleased to hear about the good practice already undertaken in Brighton & Hove to encourage Travellers to access health services. The panel particularly welcomed the multi-agency approach being used in the city, such as the example provided by Ms Hewitt of a:

'…weekly drop-in for female Travellers which combined exercise and health education.'[118]

9.14 The Department of Health (DoH) has stressed the importance of outreach working for immunisation. Celia Lamden highlighted some of outreach work they had done with Travellers:

'The benefits…included carrying out health promotion and education sessions on issues such as stopping smoking, parenting and family learning…Other issues they have sought to tackle include men's health advice and offering immunisation'[119]

9.15 However Phil Seddon, Equality and Diversity Manager at NHS Sussex, felt that:

'A balance had to be struck, when offering on site services to Travellers one should consider if they marginalise these users or encourage them to access mainstream services.'[120]

[118] Kirsty Hewitt, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[119] Celia Lamden, Evidence to the Panel,13.12.11
[120] Phil Seddon, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

9.16 Jackie Whitford responded that:

*'Such services were put in place to make contact and build up a relationship, rather that provide a long term service –**outreach for in reach**.'*[121]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like the impact of this work, described as 'outreach to in reach', to be monitored to measure the improvements they are achieving. This information should be used to plan, and encourage, the further development of such initiatives and services.
Housing Strategy Response	NHS Brighton and Hove will review with the provider the impact of the Health Visitors' outreach work to ensure its effectiveness and identify future areas of focus for planning and commissioning services – including Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioning. The monitoring requirements of services commissioned from public health budgets will be reviewed as part of the transition of public health to the Local Authority by April 2013 (subject to legislation)
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 9: The panel welcomes the commitment to review the impact of the work of Health Visitors and looks forward to an update on its findings in the 6 month and 12 month progress report on the Strategy.**

Goal 6: To improve cultural awareness in health services

9.17 The Equality and Diversity Manager at NHS Sussex, Phil Seddon, told the panel that:

'There were concerns about the cultural competency of staff and their awareness of Gypsy and Traveller issues. For example to ensure that Traveller women are treated by female staff…It is our duty to make our services as accessible as possible.'[122]

9.18 According to Kirsty Hewitt:

'Gypsy and Traveller men are particularly reluctant to access health services or to talk about their health and having a male Health Trainer has been suggested to improve this.'[123]

[121] Bold, my emphasis, Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[122] Phil Seddon, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[123] Kirsty Hewitt, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

9.19 The panel feels that having a Male Health Trainer could be a good idea as the examples they heard of health outreach work applied primarily to women.

9.20 According to an Equalities Co-ordinator for BHCC:

'One should not underestimate the level of prejudice that Travellers may have experienced, even from statutory service providers. The cumulative aspect of the prejudice they may have experienced either from the waiting room or from providers is why Travellers may come en masse and prepared to meet harassment. This can create a cycle. There needs to be two-way work to raise awareness on both sides and means to bring together health workers and Travellers.'[124]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would welcome cultural awareness training for health workers, especially in primary care, which could build on the successful awareness training held for council staff and due to be rolled out to Councillors.
Housing Strategy Response	The CCG will provide training for staff and lead clinicians around cultural awareness in relation to Gypsies and Traveller community as well as investigate how this might be made available to primary care teams more generally.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 10: The panel welcomes the commitment from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide cultural awareness training in relation to Travellers for CCG staff and lead clinicians. However, we are concerned that this does not fully address the problems of front-line clinical staff (e.g. GPs and dentists) and other primary healthcare staff (e.g. GP surgery receptionists) lacking awareness of Traveller issues, and sometimes a knowledge of their statutory duties to provide services. We therefore seek clarification as to how the training of CCG staff and lead clinicians will percolate down to other primary care workers.**

Goal 7: To improve ethnic monitoring in health and other services to include Gypsies and Travellers

9.21 The panel felt that there was a need for better information about Travellers in the city, as most of the data informing the Strategy was national data which could also be somewhat dated. This is due to the scarcity of such information about Travellers in this locality. Evidence to

[124] Sarah Tighe-Ford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

the panel highlighted significant variations in Traveller communities across Sussex.

9.22 An Equalities Co-ordinator told the panel:

'There were difficulties in both the definitions and monitoring of Travellers…Until last year [Travellers were]…not included in the Census and so they struggled to identify this group among staff and residents in the city. This invisibility made it difficult to identify these groups' access to service provision. The new Census would act as a baseline. The Community Inclusion Partnership was working on a common framework e.g. for monitoring which would include Travellers. This would be used to carry out Equalities Impact Assessments and work out how to increase access to mainstream services and improve outcomes for Travellers.'[125]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel welcomes the development of the common framework for ethnic monitoring being developed by the City Inclusion Partnership. The panel would like the Strategy to encourage a wide range of organisations in the city to use this framework, to encourage a common method of data collection and reporting which will be used to improve services and outcomes for Travellers.
Housing Strategy Response	Health: NHS Brighton and Hove has been using and promoting the monitoring framework. The Trust will ensure that all service providers are aware of the framework and use it to monitor service uptake and experience in order to identify key issues for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Council: The council is promoting the common framework for ethnicity monitoring across all services though its Equalities Steering Group
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 11: The panel is pleased to see the statement that NHS Brighton & Hove is using and promoting the common framework for ethnic monitoring being developed by the City Inclusion Partnership. The panel is also pleased that the council is promoting the use of the common framework. However, the panel would like the Strategy to contain a statement on how the ethnic monitoring information will be used and an assurance that the council and NHS Brighton & Hove will integrate their information to plan and monitor services.**

[125] Sarah Tighe-Ford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

Goal 8: Tackle domestic and sexual violence

9.23 Evidence given by David Bailey, from Fenland DC, highlighted the work of a national and local charity, which is run by Travellers called 'One Voice 4 Travellers'. It aims to:

'…work on issues to reduce violence to and from the Gypsy and Traveller Community'[126]

9.24 As part of their remit, the charity has set up a number of member groups. The issue of domestic violence (DV) is included in the descriptions of their groups which work with the following categories of people: women, young people and young mums.[127]

9.25 The website identifies that the charity's:

'…work with women has been developed through the women themselves identifying the need for a confidential, impartial and listening organisation that could give information on sensitive subjects that were not always easy to talk about in the Gypsy and Traveller community - for example Domestic Violence or health issues.'[128]

9.26 The panel heard from Linda Beanlands, Commissioner Community Safety for BHCC, that the problem of delivering DV services was:

9.27 '…exacerbated by the difficulty of delivering services to Traveller communities, distrust of the police and social services within communities and because there is poor data recording with regard to Traveller communities. Mainstream DV services, such as refuges, may not be culturally appropriate for Travellers.'[129]

9.28 To address the issues relating to DV:

'… a citywide DV strategy is being created …The intention is to integrate the DV and Traveller commissioning strategies to ensure that the needs of Gypsy and Traveller women are met. Specific measures are likely to include: consulting with Traveller women; gathering local data; training Traveller Liaison staff in DV issues; working with DV refuges and advocacy services to improve their understanding of Traveller needs; extending current 'perpetrator programmes' to include Traveller men; targeting DV campaigns at Traveller communities; and working to empower Traveller girls.'[130]

9.29 Linda Beanlands also agreed:

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[126] One Voice 4 Travellers website www.gypsy-traveller.org/onevoice4travellers/what-we-do
[127] Ibid
[128] Ibid
[129] Linda Beanlands, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[130] Linda Beanlands, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

'…that the needs of Travellers living in the settled community should be addressed via the strategy.'[131]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would welcome the integration of the Domestic Violence (DV) Commissioning Strategy and the Traveller Strategy and for this to be referred to in the Traveller Strategy.
Housing Strategy Response	Domestic Violence section of strategy already references: • Brighton & Hove Domestic Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2011 • Domestic Violence Commissioning Action Plan • Sexual Violence Action Plan A DV Commissioning Plan for 2012/13 is being developed and will be in place by 1st April 2012: the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, commissioning and action plans will be developed during 2012.
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 6: The panel welcomes the commitment to integrate the Domestic Violence (DV) Commissioning Strategy and the Traveller Strategy and for this to be referred to in the Traveller Strategy.***

[131] Ibid

10. Findings & Recommendations – Strategic Outcome 3. Improve education outcomes

10.1 The panel would like to have seen the educational inequalities experienced by Travellers be more comprehensively addressed in the Strategy. It hopes that future versions of the Strategy will be able to tackle this issue more fully, for example to cover the full spectrum of provision from Early Years to Further Education. It would also like the Strategy to learn from successful education projects which have offered mentoring and support to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. This could include drawing in members of the Traveller communities to offer help and advice with Travellers' educational issues.

Recommendation 12: The panel would like to see a commitment in the Strategy to learning from successful education projects which have offered mentoring to Minority Ethnic groups, and to drawing in members of the Traveller community to offer help and advice with Traveller education issues.

Goal 9: Raise standards by ensuring successful education provision for Traveller children at the new permanent site

10.2 Improving educational outcomes is vital because, as the Co-ordinator of the Traveller Education Team (TES) for East Sussex[132] told the panel: *'Traveller children were the lowest achieving group'*. [133]

10.3 The panel were concerned that, while the Strategy contains national information about educational attainment, it was not able to draw on city-wide information, except for on enrolment and attendance. It was felt that the Strategy would also benefit from greater contextual clarity.[134]

10.4 The panel felt that given the importance of improving the educational outcomes for Traveller children, the goals numbered 9 – 11 and the actions to support them, would benefit from more detail and data. Local information could also form an important basis for informing the setting of targets and measuring outcomes in the action plan.

[132] East Sussex Traveller Education Service, also provides this service to Brighton & Hove
[133] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[134] For example - in the tables on p39 of the Strategy only the total numbers of Traveller children were provided. For example, to explain what % of the Traveller child population the figures represented. This would enable readers to understand for example, why there were significantly smaller numbers of Traveller children enrolled in Secondary Schools (8) than in Primary (55).

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like the Strategy to contain an action re: obtaining city based information on Traveller educational attainment, across all sectors of education from pre-school to Further Education. This data could be used as a baseline from which to measure whether identify the educational attainment of Traveller children. If such information is not currently available, then obtaining this data should be included in the action plan.
Housing Strategy Response	Each year the East Sussex Traveller Education Team (TET) provides a report with the end of Key stage attainment data. This measures attainment year on year. Progress is more difficult to evidence for mobile pupils as they are rarely in education from one KS to the next. With mobile Travellers we focus on speedy access and support for participation. Once we have a permanent site we can implement the recommendation for those pupils based in Brighton & Hove and have added this to the action plan for when the site opens.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 13: The panel would like the Strategy to contain an action re: obtaining city based information on Traveller educational attainment, across all sectors of education from pre-school to Further Education. Once this data has been gathered it should be used as a baseline from which to identify the educational attainment of Traveller children. The panel would expect data and a statement on how this data will be used to be contained in the progress updates reported to Committee.**

Goal 10: To raise the engagement with learning opportunities for all traveller families visiting Brighton and Hove

10.5 Jackie Whitford, from TES, told the panel that

'Education was vital because if there was no literacy in the family it impacted directly on the children's wellbeing.'[135]

10.6 The benefits of engaging in education were demonstrated to the panel on a visit to Horsdean Transit site. They met a Traveller mother who described the positive experience of her child who had received his first ever Christmas cards and had gained a part in the Christmas play, due to his regular attendance at the local school.

[135] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel were keen to ensure that the Strategy contained more detailed information and outcomes on how to improve the educational experience and attainment for transient Travellers who come to the city.
Housing Strategy Response	Examples from 'Best Practice' documents (many of which spotlight the work of TET) will be added. Findings from the Consultation exercise undertaken with Traveller families will be included where relevant.
Final Scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 14: The panel is keen to ensure that the Strategy contains more detailed information and outcome measures on how to improve the educational experience and attainment for transient Travellers who come to the city.**

Goal 11: Secure engagement of families from the early years

10.7 The panel heard that:

*'While **80%** of the general population of kids hit level 6 when assessed (which is a pre-literacy stage), **only 14%** of Traveller children hit this benchmark – which placed them at a huge disadvantage. It was important to reach Traveller children earlier and earlier, because if one could reach them pre-school – one could close the gap.'*[136]

10.8 David Bailey told the panel about a play scheme that was established on a Traveller site in Fenland DC:

'Travellers' children attended it, but then housed travellers' children started to attend with their mothers. The housed Travellers brought other friends with them from the settled community…Myths were dispelled and barriers broken down and there was further impact when these children attended the local primary school.'[137]

10.9 The panel heard from Celia Lamden, Neighbourhood SureStart Service Manager, that outreach services currently provided in the city for Travellers, such as the specialist midwife and health visitors setting up regular sessions for under 5's were:

'…acting as a stepping stone to encourage them to access future services'.[138]

[136] Bold my emphasis, Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[137] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[138] Celia Lamden, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

10.10 Travellers attending these sessions are more likely to visit the Children's Centre, then subsequently use nurseries and then primary schools.

10.11 Another benefit was highlighted by James Dougan the Head of Children and Families in BHCC, who said there was a link between encouraging early years take up and parents returning to education:

'Offering structured play opportunities can then encourage the parents to take up adult education opportunities.'[139]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like to see the Strategy include SMART actions which build on successful 'out reach to in reach work' in encouraging take up of education. These could include: • measuring whether educational attainment has been improved as a result of these services • using such information to inform the planning of future services, encourage further provision of beneficial services and prioritise the most effective • recognising mutual benefits this outreach work has to education and health • recognising the positive effect that such services can have on community cohesion
Housing Strategy Response	SMART actions will be added where possible – using data to inform planning and adapting provision. It is more challenging to attribute progress to the service as evidence shows that the pupils are often mobile and rarely in education from one KS to the next. The present team combines health and education elements - particular for Early Years and this can be added.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 15: The panel welcomes the commitment to include actions in the Strategy which build on successful 'out reach to in reach' work in encouraging take up of education and combining this with information from health outreach work. The panel would like to see the data gathered to be used to plan future services and measure progress achieved by these services.**

[139] James Dougan, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

10.12 The panel were keen for the Strategy to look at the engagement of the full age range of Traveller children, as they heard that in the city:

'More younger Traveller children are in school, but this level drops when it comes to teenagers.'[140]

10.13 The panel heard evidence that ICT could be used to encourage young Travellers to both stay in touch with people and develop skills. According to James Dougan:

'The new IT hub at Whitehawk is being used to encourage young Traveller women to stay in contact with people.'[141]

10.14 David Bailey from Fenland DC said that a charity called 'One Voice 4 Travellers':[142]

'…asks young people what they wanted to do and listened to the answers. Youth clubs had been developed which had built bonds with other young people and made friends outside of the Traveller community.'[143]

10.15 In Fenland there had been successes in using ICT to broaden employment experiences:

'Young boys had been interest in computer skills courses as they wanted to be self-employed and trade on EBay.'[144]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like the Strategy to include information from good practice organisations about innovative measures such as: new ways to engage with hard to reach Traveller groups, such as teenagers, enabling access to adult and further education, and using IT and other methods to engage with these groups.
Housing Strategy Response	This will be added. The latest good practice is contained in the National Strategies documentation "Closing the Gap - Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Roma and Traveller children" and "Early Years Building Futures, Developing Trust" which our practice of outreach for inreach contributed to. See also "Save the Children Trust - Good Practice in the Early Years" where our practice is again mentioned.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 16: The panel is concerned that the positive work which is being done to secure Traveller engagement from early years**

[140] Celia Lamden, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[141] James Dougan, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[142] http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/onevoice4travellers/
[143] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[144] Ibid

	could go to waste if the Strategy does not include sufficient measures to retain Traveller children in education. This in turn will enable Travellers to improve their employment prospects. The Strategy should include new ways to engage with harder to reach Traveller groups such as teenagers, enabling access to adult and further education, and using ICT and other methods to engage with these groups.

Goal 12: Improve further the awareness in schools about Traveller History and Culture

10.16 A respondent to the Strategy consultation, who identified themselves as being of Traveller heritage, offered the following suggestions for increasing awareness in schools of Traveller culture:

'…for further funding of educational events in schools and colleges'[145]

10.17 The Traveller Education Team in ESCC made a range of DVDs to:

'…show Travellers the value of education and for the settled community to illustrate the richness of the Traveller community.'[146]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like to see the Strategy encourage education services and providers to improve awareness in schools about Traveller history and culture. For example, the council and education providers to participate in the Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month.
Housing Strategy Response	Already in the Action Plan at 12.2 'Promote national initiatives such as Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and encourage schools to participate' and in place via work of Traveller Education and other Traveller organisations within the City (Note 12.2 will become 13.2 once the Horsdean site management goal has been included)
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 17: The panel would like to see the Strategy contain a commitment from the council to lead a co-ordinated programme to improve awareness in schools about Traveller history and culture. This would include the council leading, and co-ordinating, the city's participation in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and including Travellers in People's Day.**

[145] A response submitted to the questions in Consultation Paper 1 using the Consultation Portal
[146] Jackie Whitford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

11. Findings and Recommendations – Strategic Outcome 4. Improve community cohesion

Goal 13: Increasing awareness of different cultures

11.1 A respondent to the Strategy consultation who identified themselves as being of Traveller heritage, suggested how to increase community awareness of Traveller culture:

'For the council to actively promote the inclusion of Travellers in our community: by celebrating Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month which takes place in June; by producing a newsletter with the active involvement of the Travelling community, to include information about Travellers' history, lifestyle, needs and concerns, to be sent to every home in the city; for further funding of educational events in schools and colleges; for the council to actively campaign against the government's current attacks on housing which further prejudice the Travelling community; and, to create a service/forum for Travellers themselves to approach the council - rather than the other way round - to raise ideas and concerns in the way they wish to.'[147]

11.2 The Director of FFT told the panel that:

'Councillors were leaders of the community and many people come to talk to them about issues relating to Travellers, so would urge all members to receive positive training, and increase their awareness of cultural issues, about the Traveller community.'[148]

11.3 The council recently ran for the first time in a few years, a Traveller Awareness training course for Councillors. It was also felt that Councillors would benefit from being provided with more information about Traveller issues, including relevant contact details in the council and key partners such as the Police.

11.4 David Bailey informed the panel that:

'Fenland DC also carried out cultural awareness training with council staff, partner agencies and the community sector to raise awareness. Travellers had welcomed their culture being valued and had helped run events, for example, displays at fairs.'[149]

11.5 The panel welcomed the programme of Traveller Awareness training that was being run for council staff. It would hope that such training

[147] A response submitted to the questions in Consultation Paper 1 using the Consultation Portal
[148] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[149] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

could help council officers who were planning services for extra hard to reach groups in the Traveller community, such as teenage girls.

11.6 Cllr Liz Wakefield told the panel that she:

'…was very concerned about the negative press that was given to Travellers and felt that events such as Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month could be used to dispel the myths held by the settled community. It would be very positive to encourage the settled community to take part in this project.'

11.7 Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion, suggested that once a permanent site had been developed:

'It would be useful to hold meetings between the settled and Traveller communities to help them overcome stereotyped views. The introduction of Good Neighbour Compacts or protocols should be publicised, as well as that Travellers on permanent sites were paying Council Tax. This would help overcome the perception that Travellers were a group which got things for free, which in turn would reduce anger and discrimination. Increased understanding would reduce prejudice and increase consensus amongst politicians.'[150]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like to see the Strategy recommend that the council participates in the celebration of Gypsy Roma Traveller History month and encourages the creation of cross community projects to foster mutual understanding.
Housing Strategy Response	Agreed, an action is being developed around this
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 7: The panel is pleased that there will be a commitment in the Strategy to the council participating in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month.***

Goal 14: Involving Travellers in service design and delivery

11.8 According to Fenland DC:

'A lack of understanding about what services were available meant that Travellers were excluded. FDC had created a Welcome Pack to help Travellers access services …[which included] pictorial examples for those who had literacy difficulties. CDs had also been produced which talked about responsibilities as well as rights, and DVDs involving key community figures such as the Police. These were produced after asking the Travellers community what they wanted and consequently they endorsed them.'[151]

[150] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel 13.12.11
[151] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

11.9 The panel heard the example from Clearwater Gypsies who based on their own experience of developing sites offered advice to local authorities, and could act as:

'…a gatekeeper who could unlock the door so you can speak to local gypsies – or nationally. This worked for both sides.'[152]

11.10 In the experience of the Sussex Traveller Action Group (STAG):

'Involving Travellers in forums etc making decisions about their services can be very effective, but in STAG's experience, there needs to be a high proportion of Travellers to professionals for the forum to work effectively – Travellers may be reluctant to speak if they are in the minority.'[153]

11.11 Chris Whitwell from FFT suggested that BHCC apply for funding to encourage Travellers to engage:

'This could include councillors coming to Traveller sites and giving talks and offering Travellers the opportunity to shadow them. Such a scheme would pay good dividends and be used as an exemplar of good practice.'[154]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like to see the Strategy recommend that service providers work closely with advocacy groups to enable Travellers to be involved in the design and delivery of relevant services. This mechanism could also be used to involve the settled community. The proposed Neighbourhood Councils could be used to enable this process.
Housing Strategy Response	Agreed, strategy assumed this would be the case however the goal will be amended to make this explicit 'Involve Travellers and their advocates in service design and delivery'
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 8: The panel is pleased that there will be an explicit commitment in the Strategy to 'Involve Travellers and their advocates in service design and delivery'.***

Goal 15: Effective management of unauthorised encampments

11.12 Statistics about Travellers in the city showed interesting patterns:

- Only **1 in 6** Travellers were on an unauthorised site in nationally, in the South East and also East & West Sussex, compared to **4 in 6** in Brighton & Hove

[152] Greg Yates, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[153] Juliet McCaffery, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[154] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

- 94% of Travellers lived in bricks or mortar housing or on a permanent site, with less than 6% being on unauthorised encampments[155]

Impact of unauthorised encampments on the settled community

11.13 Caroline Lucas MP told the panel that she:

> *'…recognised that the settled community could be made understandably angry by the actions of a minority of Travellers. An example was the serious damage done to Withdean Park and Wild Park, including fly tipping and verbally aggressive behaviour. It was right to report such actions to the police. However anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fly tipping was not the monopoly of Travellers, and one should clamp down on all ASB.'*[156]

11.14 Cllr Pete West talked on the need to *'…listen to resident concerns about unauthorised encampments.'*[157]

11.15 Michael Murray, a representative of the Brighton & Hove Environmental Action Group (BHEAG), gave an example of an encampment at Black Rock which they felt had:

> *'…led to a huge loss of revenue and huge environmental impacts. There was great concern and objection to the sanitation and health implications.'*[158]

Moving on unauthorised encampments

11.16 Chris Whitwell from FFT recognised the key concerns of the settled community:

> *'It depends whether an unauthorised encampment is on an unsuitable site such as a playing field. The longer it takes to deal with such an encampment, the greater the resentment of the settled community.'*[159]

11.17 Simon Kirby, MP for Kemptown, in his written evidence stated:

> *'I believe the police should move much more quickly to move on unauthorised encampments. These are particularly grating on the settled community because unauthorised encampments often impact on sports field, football pitches, local parks and recreation grounds. I introduced a 10 Minute Rule Bill to clarify the law on the police's*

[155] Andy Staniford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[156] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[157] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[158] Michael Murray, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[159] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

powers and I believe the police should be compelled to act in regard to unauthorised sites.'[160]

11.18 He felt that any sense of 'toleration' of such encampments

'…not only raises tensions between the settled community and Travellers but leads to a strong sense of frustration from the settled community.'[161]

11.19 Mike Weatherley, MP for Hove, told the panel that he felt that:

'BHCC has not been robust enough in its actions against unauthorised encampments – there should have been prompter action. There should be zero tolerance of unauthorised encampments.'[162]

11.20 He also believed that:

'The police should have greater powers to move Travellers on from unauthorised encampments…[he] has written to the Secretary of State for Justice suggesting this.'[163]

11.21 A representative of the Hangleton & Knoll Community Action Forum thought that:

'…residents needed to be supported more than they were.'[164]

11.22 The Chair of the Stanmer and Coldean Local Action Team (LAT) said that residents *'had felt intimidated'*[165] by Traveller and van dweller encampments.

11.23 According to FFT:

'Councillors could play a role in explaining to constituents that Travellers on unauthorised encampments are there because they do not have a place to put up their home.'[166]

Travellers and unauthorised encampments

11.24 Greg Yates from Clearwater Gypsies explained that

'The first words a Traveller hears is 'you can't stop here! 'you've got to go!' A Traveller feels you do not know if my child needs to go to school

[160] Simon Kirby, Written evidence submitted to the Panel in January 2012
[161] Ibid
[162] Mike Weatherley, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[163] Ibid
[164] Patricia Weller, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[165] Jean Thomas, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[166] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

or my wife is about to have a baby. The Traveller is not told of a place where they can go. The lack of provision for Travellers was abysmal…When Travellers arrived there was no welcome and no services.'[167]

Moving on unauthorised encampments

11.25 However, there was a need to consider the potential impact of moving on unauthorised encampments. The Head of Housing Strategy observed that:

'Earlier in the year, Travellers in the city were being moved on quicker and their groups fragmenting into a larger number of smaller encampments causing more disruption. Travellers may not want to be split into smaller groups. This in turn was impacting on the settled community.'[168]

11.26 According to Steve Whitton from Sussex Police:

'A strong relationship had been built up between the council and the police and good practice developed about visiting sites. However, both could do more work on understanding who had powers and when they should be used.'[169]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like the Strategy to contain detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Police and the procedures/actions each will carry out in the eventuality of an unauthorised encampment. This would enable the Strategy to act as a document which can be used by groups such as Councillors and residents when working out how to respond to unauthorised encampments.
Housing Strategy Response	A joint Sussex wide protocol for use by local authorities and the Police is being developed.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 18: The panel would like the Strategy to contain information on the Joint Sussex-wide protocol on unauthorised encampments which is being developed for use by the Police and local authorities and to place this under goal 16 of the Strategy 'Effective Management of Unauthorised Encampments'.**

11.27 The Panel heard from David Bailey that:

[167] Greg Yates, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[168] Andy Staniford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[169] Steve Whitton, Evidence to the Panel 13.12.11

'Several years ago Fenland [BC] would have taken legal action. Now it was resolved by saying you may stay for an agreed time if you act in a reasonable way. Mr Bailey had a dialogue with the Travellers…There was a very good partnership with the police. There was a protocol on unauthorised encampments and a named officer would open discussions. There had been no need to resort to legal action (S62) in the last few years.'[170]

The benefit of having permanent site when dealing with unauthorised encampments

11.28 The Police emphasised the need for:

'…both a permanent site and a transit site. Under s61 the Police had to consider whether there was a better place in the city for Travellers on an unauthorised encampment to be moved onto. If there was not an alternative, then the Police should not be using these powers. So better site provision would make it easier to ensure that Travellers could be moved onto better places.'[171]

Goal 16: Ensure sensitive sites are protected

11.29 According to the responses to Consultation Paper 1 of the Strategy, 73% of respondents who expressed a view, supported the protection of sensitive sites.[172]

11.30 Concern was expressed by a resident that:

'…even the most simple of preventative measures are not carried out. Properly maintained bunding on Devils Dyke Road would have stopped the travellers camping there.'[173]

11.31 Cllr Pete West told the panel that:

'…bunding [to protect sensitive sites] was not a long term answer, but it would be considered as one possible response in appropriate situations. Whilst bunding would never effectively deter determined campers, it was important that the council was seen to be responding to legitimate public concerns.'[174]

11.32 According to a consultation response from a service provider representing Natural England with regard to identifying sensitive sites:

[170] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[171] Steve Whitton, Evidence to the Panel,13.12.11
[172] Consultation Report Stage 1: Consultation Paper, BHCC
[173] Response to the consultation process
[174] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

'The factors…should include: 1) Site designated for nature conservation… 2) Landscape designations needs to be considered, in the case of Brighton and Hove this is the South Downs National Park and the setting of this landscape… 3) Natural England's remit also covers the access and enjoyment of nature for people. In protecting open spaces that people enjoy we would include Public Rights of Way (PROW) and other access routes, as suggested above high usage parks, and any developing areas of multifunctional green infrastructure that may be being developed in the City's Green infrastructure strategy.'[175]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believes that a Strategy should contain a clear protocol for identifying sensitive sites. This could include issues such as different ways of protecting sensitive sites and considering the impacts of site protection measures on unauthorised encampments elsewhere in the city.
Housing Strategy Response	Further work to develop this approach will be carried out during 2012/13. In the meantime, we will continue to secure sensitive sites as need arises.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 19: The panel appreciates that work is ongoing in relation to sensitive sites. However they believe that the Strategy should contain a clear plan for sensitive sites. This could identify levels of sensitivity and a commitment to mapping the impact of site protection measures on unauthorised encampments elsewhere in the city.**

Goal 17: Tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance

11.33 A number of residents who gave evidence to the panel highlighted their concerns about Travellers who engaged in anti-social behaviour. According to BHEAG, such behaviour associated with unauthorised encampments included:

'…criminal damage…threatening behaviour and criminal flytipping.'[176]

Operation Monza

11.34 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion told the panel that:

'A special initiative, Operation Monza, had been run with the Sussex Police. This meant a daily presence at every encampment, through the Traveller Liaison Team. The local community and Travellers got used to the police presence, which helped with community cohesion and

[175] A response submitted to the questions in Consultation Paper 1,using the Consultation Portal
[176] Michael Murray, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

lessened tension. There was now a better understanding of which police powers could be used e.g. those to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The good practice was now being shared across the region.'[177]

11.35 The Police confirmed that:

'Operation Monza was an operational decision to extend neighbourhood policing to Travellers, in particular unauthorised encampments…The Police were open to carrying out similar operations in the future.'[178]

11.36 If neighbourhood compacts were to be introduced, the Police felt that:

'The issue was to determine what standards would be expected of any community, and could not reasonably demand more.'[179]

11.37 They also believed that if a site contained a disruptive family which other Travellers were intimidated by, then:

'…those Travellers should not be expected to police that situation.'[180]

11.38 Steve Whitton explained to the panel that:

'The police had to remember their separate roles:
1. *Enforcement – where Police played a supporting role*
2. *Dealing with crime and disorder – where the Police needed to treat all groups consistently'*[181]

11.39 The panel heard that:

'The Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Group (established by the police) had received very positive feedback about Operation Monza. It had resulted in Travellers reporting crimes against them to the police, therefore had been helping both the Travelling and settled communities.' [182]

11.40 Trading Standards informed the panel about their work which involved**:**

'…educating the public to be cautious about services offered on their doorstep and supporting people to engage with Travellers'[183]

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[177] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[178] Steve Whitton, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[179] Ibid
[180] Peter Castleton, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[181] Steve Whitton, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11
[182] Ibid
[183] John Peerless Mountford, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

11.41 Caroline Lucas told the panel that she:

> *'…recognised that the settled community could be made understandably angry by the actions of a minority of Travellers. An example was the serious damage done to Withdean Park and Wild Park. …However, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fly tipping was not the monopoly of Travellers, and one should clamp down on all ASB.'*[184]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel believes that a Strategy should contain a clear statement about crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance. This statement would cover such behaviour both by, and against, all groups of Travellers. An aim would be for the statement to be used as a working document for those who need it, and could include: • How to report crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance • How this behaviour would be dealt with • How to build on the work of Operation Monza • How to improve council and police communication with Travellers and the settled community, when there is an encampment
Housing Strategy Response	Since the draft action plan was submitted to the Panel, the actions under Goal 15 'Effective management of unauthorised encampments' have been expanded to include the following: • A joint leaflet is being developed for Travellers and settled residents alike based on the existing Code of Conduct which outlines the behaviour expected from all sections of our communities and will include key contact details • Discussions are in progress about having a member of the Council's Traveller Liaison Team join the Police Team during Operation Monza to carry out joint site visits (Note Goal 15 will become Goal 16 once the Horsdean site management goal has been included)
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 9: The panel welcomes the commitment to expanding the actions under Goal 15 'Effective Management of unauthorised encampments' in relation to crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance and is looking forward to finding out the progress in the regular reports to the Scrutiny Committee.***

Goal 18: Tackling racism, sexism and homophobia

11.42 Caroline Lucas MP told the panel:

[184] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

'I have been shocked by the level of hatred and discrimination towards this group. This is partly a lack of understanding and prejudice.'[185]

11.43 Cllr Liz Wakefield felt that:

'…the way Travellers were treated by the press and settled community was based on misunderstanding and racism. Travellers were seen as a group of outsiders who did not belong.'[186]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	The panel would like to see further information in the Strategy about the 'new ways' to encourage the reporting of incidents to the council's casework team.
Housing Strategy Response	Agreed, strategy amended. Developing new ways to encourage the reporting of crimes and incidents will be taken forward by community safety services and included within a work programme to develop community based reporting centres throughout the city for hate crimes.
Final scrutiny Statement	***Statement 10: The panel is pleased that the Strategy will be amended to include detail on the new ways being developed to encourage the reporting of crimes and incidents.***

Goal 19: Develop a protocol for addressing Van Dwellers who are often mistaken for Travellers

11.44 According to Simon Court, a Senior Lawyer for BHCC:

'Due to economic realities, there were increasing numbers of people living in vehicles'[187]

11.45 In his experience, there were two categories of van dwellers in Brighton & Hove:

- On street parkers e.g. homeless students
- Older van dwellers who may have substance misuse and mental health issues[188]

11.46 Cllr Wakefield, the Cabinet Member for Housing believed that:

'Van dwellers do complicate this issue. Travellers are composed of distinct cultural groups, including 3rd generation New Age Travellers. However, van dwellers are living in their vans through economic

[185] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[186] Liz Wakefield, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[187] Simon Court, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[188] Simon Court, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

necessity. There is a minority of cities, such as Bristol, which have van dwellers. If people see a van, they can assume that this is a Traveller. While van dwellers may be in housing need, they are usually dealt with as a transport issue.'[189]

11.47 This was confirmed in evidence given by a representative of the Hangleton and Knoll Community Action Forum who believed *'you can not distinguish'*[190] between van dwellers and Travellers.

11.48 According to the Head of Housing Strategy, the issue of van dwellers was raised frequently in the consultation on the Strategy. It was clear that:

'Residents placed a high priority on dealing with van dwellers, therefore the Strategy would state that a separate protocol would be developed for this group next year.'[191]

Original scrutiny Recommendation	Given the level of concern about van dwellers, and that residents are getting confused between this group and Travellers: the strategy should contain more clarifying information on the difference between them and say when the protocol will be published.
Response	The Action Plan is being updated to show that the protocol will be developed during 2012/13.
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 20: The panel is pleased that the Action Plan is to be updated to show that the Protocol for Van Dwellers will be developed during 2012/2013. The panel would like the council to contact other local authorities who experience this issue, such as Bristol, to see what practices they have developed.**

[189] Cllr Liz Wakefield, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[190] Patricia Weller, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.11
[191] Andy Staniford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11

12. Additional Recommendations

12.1 Due to the breadth of evidence received by the Panel, it was felt that a number of areas were not sufficiently addressed in the draft Strategy and would benefit from being included in the final Strategy. A list of these areas was provided as part of the panel's submission to Consultation Paper 2. Where the panel felt it was needed, a recommendation has been added to address this issue.

Council leadership & political support

12.2 East Sussex County Council had developed a cross-party Strategy, in conjunction with key partners:

'The full sign up from all these groups has set the agenda and given us the authority to manage these sites.'[192]

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Council leadership and political support
Housing Strategy Response	A new section added to the strategy '1.4 A partnership approach' talks about the need for strong local leadership and a political consensus (citing the Traveller Scrutiny Panel as a successful example). In addition, the strategy is being presented to Full Council for approval to help build wider cross-party ownership.
Final scrutiny recommendation	**Recommendation 21: Given the important role Councillors play in relation to Travellers, the panel believe that Councillors should be offered the opportunity to attend Traveller Awareness Training run by the council on an annual basis.**

Employment

12.3 According to Trading Standards a permanent site may count as a permanent address for trading purposes:

'The key concern is that if you are moving around to seek work, what happens if a customer has a problem three months later. This is an issue of national concern for Trading Standards.'[193]

[192] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[193] John Peerless Mountford, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

12.4 The panel heard about the work that had been done in Fenland DC to encourage Travellers to provide them with vocational training which had enable Travellers to become self employed. In addition:

'Three people had gone on to get degrees and more people were going into mainstream further or higher education …In general, when people are provided with accommodation and feel part of a community, they move on from traditional trades to other things.'[194]

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Employment and Travellers
Housing Strategy response	This action is contained in Goal 14: Involve Travellers and their advocates in service design and delivery (Goal 15 of final strategy) which talks about the importance and benefits of employing Travellers to provide services. This section is being expanded to look at the potential for the public sector to take a more active role in partnership with CVS groups with a potential to link into European funding and the B&H City Employment & Skills Plan

Planning & Localism Act – conflict evidence about the impact of the Act

12.5 Simon Kirby MP told the panel that

'Through the Localism Act, the Government is introducing stronger powers for councils to tackle the abuse of retrospective planning permission. These strengthened powers are helping councils tackle any form of unauthorised development. The new authorised travellers' sites will provide help to reduce the number of authorised sites, which create tensions between Travellers and the settled community.'[195]

12.6 According to Simon Court, Senior Lawyer, the Localism Act

'…would represent a significant change regarding planning, as decisions were being switched to local people who would be concerned about Travellers being located near them.'[196]

12.7 Whereas the Planning Service did *'…not feel it will have a significant impact on this issue.'*[197]

[194] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12
[195] Simon Kirby, Written evidence to the Panel
[196] Simon Court, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[197] Rob Fraser, Evidence to the Panel, 13.12.11

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Planning – in light of the conflicting evidence about the Localism Act
Housing Strategy response	Current national planning policy position highlighted at 6.2 in draft strategy 'National policy'. This will move to 8.2 in final strategy. Until new government guidance published in spring 2012 we are unable to provide more information at present.

Regional working

12.8 Cllr Pete West told the panel that:

'This issue can only be properly addressed via a strong regional partnership, and the council is actively engaged with East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.'[198]

12.9 Nick Hibberd said that BHCC had a *'good relationship with neighbouring authorities'*[199] and were:

'…meeting jointly with Sussex Police. A goal was to improve communications across the neighbouring authorities and develop protocols on sharing information and working jointly e.g. fly tipping'[200]

12.10 He also had chaired a Forum to bring together East and West Sussex County Councils and BHCC and felt that:

'All the councils worked closely together and shared work, such as Devil's Dyke which the boundaries cross. They do not just co-operate to deal with unauthorised encampments, but also undertake strategic work such as ensuring a mix of Traveller sites in the area.'[201]

12.11 This was supported by ESCC who felt that:

'…this would be a really good way of sharing information and working together'.[202]

12.12 The panel were pleased to hear about the benefits of regional working that was currently being done and would like to see this issue included in the Strategy.

[198] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[199] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[200] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[201] Esther Quarm, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[202] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	The importance of regional working and means of achieving this
Housing Strategy response	A new section added to the strategy '1.4 A partnership approach' talks about importance of a regional approach. Also, added new Sussex Joint Local Authority Traveller Forum. This new group has been set up to help share good practice and co-ordinate a regional response to Traveller issues. The group is made up of representatives of Sussex Police, Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and a number of local authorities. The group is aiming to develop a fair and consistent approach to unauthorised encampments that will apply across the whole of Sussex.

Financial impact of Traveller issues

12.13 According to David Bailey from Fenland DC, dealing with unauthorised encampments without recourse to legal action had meant that:

'Huge financial savings had been made: in the last few years no money had been spent moving people on.'[203]

12.14 Caroline Lucas MP explained that increased funding for authorised provision:

'…made financial sense as £18m p.a. was spent nationally on dealing with unauthorised encampments. Some of those resources would be better spend on improving Traveller education and bettering relations between both the Traveller and settled communities.'[204]

12.15 According to the draft Strategy it is difficult to quantify the costs of providing services related to Travellers, however:

'…the dedicated Traveller services the Council provides in managing the Horsdean Transit site, tackling unauthorised encampments and providing outreach education services is around £600,000 per year…Just over half of our costs go on unauthorised encampments…'[205]

[203] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.11
[204] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[205] Consultation Paper 2, BHCC

12.16 Therefore the panel would welcome the Strategy to include more information on the possible financial benefits of achieving its goals, for example aiming to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments.

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Financial impact of Traveller issues
Housing Strategy response	Section included 'Funding our Strategy' at 8.3 in draft strategy which will move to 1.3 of final strategy

Site Management

12.17 The panel were concerned about the evidence they received which suggested that the Horsdean Transit site was becoming increasingly difficult to manage. This issue was discussed in greater detail at paragraphs 6.11 to 6.15 of this report.

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Site management
Housing Strategy response	New Goal added to strategy between original Goals 1 & 2: 'Ensure effective management and use of the Horsdean Transit Site'

Media coverage of Traveller issues

12.18 The issue of Travellers has gained a higher profile in the city, largely due to unauthorised encampments in sensitive areas. The panel were keen to engage with the local media in this process, because of the prominent role it can play in shaping the views of the settled community about the issues relating to Travellers.

12.19 The panel recognise the need for the local media to cover stories of interest to its readers and reflect what is happening in the area. However, the way in which Traveller issues tended to be reported, for example in the Argus, was raised by a significant number of those giving evidence to the panel. One example was Trudy McGuigan from ESCC who felt that:

'The impact of the media coverage was to increase prejudice…as well as covert and overt discrimination.'[206]

12.20 A resident, responding to the draft strategy on the consultation portal, remarked that:

[206] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

'…it would help a lot to put a stop to local newspapers bias towards negative stories about Travellers and ask them to give more of a balanced view with positive stories as well.'[207]

12.21 It is to their credit that the Argus chose to engage with the panel and enter into a dialogue over the nature and rationale of their reporting. The Editor of the Argus, Michael Beard, when asked by the panel if the paper's recent extensive coverage of Traveller issues exacerbated tensions in the city, replied that:

'…the Argus was reacting to reader interest in Traveller issues which had grown significantly in recent months. Indeed, the Argus received far more stories and requests for stories about Travellers than it actually printed…'[208]

12.22 There was some discussion as to the level of coverage that appeared in the local media during the summer of 2011. Whilst there is strong evidence that it was at a level considerably higher than in previous years it is a matter of debate as to whether this can put down to the local media merely responding to public interest or whether local media took more of a leadership role maintaining the profile of the issue, and unnecessarily creating tensions.

12.23 Michael Beard told the panel:

'…that he would have been happy to present the city council's views on aspects of Traveller issues, but had never been asked to do so by the council's leaders.'[209]

12.24 In response, Cllr Pete West assured the panel that**:**

'…the council's administration had in fact approached the Argus with regard to its negative coverage of Traveller issues.'[210]

12.25 Michael Beard perceived that:

'…there was a feeling the public did not understand the policy of the new administration and that the change had led to a feeling that the city was more welcoming to Travellers.'[211]

12.26 During the evidence gathering process it has become clear that there are substantially differing views between parties as to reporting of these issues. It would seem sensible for the council and the Argus to enter into constructive dialogue to clarify council policy and practice in

[207] A response submitted to the questions in Consultation Paper 1
[208] Michael Beard, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[209] Ibid
[210] Cllr Pete West, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[211] Michael Beard, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12

this area and look at a range of stories that could be developed on different aspects of Traveller lifestyle.

12.27 When asked if the Argus's coverage might encourage racism, Michael Beard told the panel that:

'…this was a concern, and he was minded to bar reader comments on Traveller-related articles on the Argus website, given the nature of some of the responses. However, this had to be weighed against the media's duty to report news.'[212]

12.28 The panel, whilst not wanting to limit legitimate debate, feel that some moderation of the comments part of websites is needed due to the nature of some of comments left, this is not limited to the Argus, but any open internet forum.

12.29 David Bailey from Fenland DC highlighted the importance of making the settled community aware of the positive work being done in relation to unauthorised encampments.

'Central to this is working with the local media, for example the Cambridge Times. In the past, stories about encampments would have been on page 1, but now the Editor will ring up to find out about any reported encampment and how long they are stay. This often ends up on page 8 as a notification. This ongoing dialogue has worked well.'[213]

12.30 Whilst the media has an important role to report issues of interest in the city and help to hold decision-makers to account for their policies it is right and proper that the media too are challenged as to their ways of working. Issues worthy of debate include do Traveller stories need to be 'front page' or on 'A' boards in the street and is the story balanced? The Argus throughout their evidence have indicated a willingness to engage with the council on this issue.

Area which Panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Media coverage of Traveller issues
Housing Strategy response	A new section added to the strategy '1.4: A partnership approach' talks about the role of local media and its impact on building stronger communities. Action added in 'Outcome 4: Community Cohesion' to 'Develop a greater understanding amongst the media of Traveller issues'
Final scrutiny Recommendation	**Recommendation 22: The panel recommends that the council works with the local media to**

[212] Michael Beard, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[213] David Bailey, Evidence to the Panel, 25.01.12

	ensure balanced reporting of issues relating the traveller community. This could include such things as: • **Reporting positive Traveller stories** • **Challenging the need for Traveller stories to be front-page, a practice which automatically sensationalises the issue** • **Moderating, and if necessary deleting, comments placed on websites**

Managing the seasonal increase

12.31 Addressing this issue was one of the reasons for developing this strategy. Caroline Lucas drew the panel's attention to:

'A report by the Local Government Association (LGA) Gypsy and Traveller Task Group in 2006 http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/21813 [which] recommended working with private landlords to develop temporary provision and the increased use of tolerated sites to deal with peak times.'[214]

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Managing the seasonal increase
Housing Strategy Response	The new strategy seeks to be preventative in nature rather than reactive and seeks to minimise the number of unauthorised encampments through our goals in 'Outcome 1: Increase site availability'. Goal 2 in particular focuses on developing a Toleration Policy for peak times In addition, we recognise that we must respond robustly in partnership with the Police to unauthorised encampments when they do occur and this has been reflected in our goals in 'Outcome 4: Improve community cohesion' (Note Goal 2 will become Goal 3 once the Horsdean site management goal has been included)

Settled, or housed, Travellers

12.32 Lisa Williams from STAG reaffirmed the importance of recognising that Travellers in settled accommodation because:

[214] Caroline Lucas, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

'…it refers to someone which has a specific ethnic identity whether or not they lead a nomadic lifestyle.'[215]

12.33 The Head of Housing and Social Inclusion for BHCC told the panel that

'Historically the number of Traveller tenants has not been known. However the service has just carried out a tenant satisfaction survey …Ethnicity questions were included which gave the opportunity for tenants to identify themselves as Travellers. This will provide sample information and similar questions have been included in a recent staff survey.'[216]

12.34 An Equalities Co-ordinator for BHCC was not convinced that the settled Traveller community could be used as a bridge to liaise with the settled and Traveller communities:

'The settled Traveller community could be difficult to identify and was not sure if there were big connections between these groups.'[217]

12.35 Kirsty Hewitt, Public Health Speciality Registrar for NHS Sussex, told the panel that:

'The environmental hardships, socio-economic difficulties and cultural exclusion also applied to settled Travellers.'[218]

12.36 Cllr Liz Wakefield, Cabinet Member for Housing, felt that:

'Local authorities … needed to be aware if the Travellers living on their housing estates. This is because housed Travellers have real issues because they have not chosen this way of life, including mental health issues.' **219**

12.37 According to Chris Whitwell of FFT:

'A lot of housed Travellers would like to live on a site, due to the freedom and proximity to their extended family that it can offer. The health issues of housed Travellers are as acute, may be even more so, than for those living on sites.'[220]

12.38 In the experience of Tracy McGuigan from East Sussex CC:

'…Travellers tend to go into housing when they get older, and then some go back onto site in even later years.'[221]

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[215] Lisa Williams, Evidence to the Panel, 31.01.12
[216] Nick Hibberd, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[217] Sarah Tighe-Ford, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[218] Kirsty Hewitt, Evidence to the Panel, 23.11.11
[219] Liz Wakefield, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[220] Chris Whitwell, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12
[221] Trudy McGuigan, Evidence to the Panel, 04.01.12

Area which panel felt was not sufficiently covered in the strategy	Needs of housed Travellers
Housing Strategy response	Agreed – this is a gap. Once we receive the Census 2011 results at the end of 2012 we hope to be able to develop a greater understanding our housed Traveller population. This limitation was outlined in 'Estimating the Traveller population at 1.2 in draft strategy which will move to 2.2 in final strategy and additional references have now been included.

13. Conclusion

13.1 The large majority of the evidence heard from the panel emphasised the benefits that would arise from establishing a permanent site in Brighton & Hove. The panel heard that Traveller communities faced significant inequalities and problems in accessing services that would be of benefit to them. The panel were also struck by the impact that unauthorised encampments could have on the settled community and the importance of improving the way their needs are responded to.

13.2 The panel felt that the proposed Traveller Strategy 2012 represented a significant step forward in addressing the issues raised in relation to Travellers, while balancing both the needs of the settled community and Travellers. They were very encouraged by the positive and constructive response from the author's of the Strategy, to the panel's submission to Consultation Paper 2.

13.3 The panel have made a comprehensive set of recommendations to address their outstanding concerns about the Strategy. Firstly, the panel were worried whether the Strategy took full account of the needs to deal with pressing issues such as transit provision and dealing with unauthorised encampments prior to the opening of the permanent site. Secondly, the panel would like to have seen more information in the Strategy and action plan about how the council planned to use the information it would be gathering about Travellers and how this data would be used to strengthen future versions of the Strategy. Thirdly, the panel would like to see the Strategy adopt a more comprehensive approach which more clearly linked how different aspects of the strategy could significantly impact upon each other. For example, the panel heard that the protection of sensitive sites could lead to greater numbers of unauthorised encampments in the city.

13.4 What the panel would like to see in future Traveller strategies:

- A greater input from Travellers
- The use of data which has been gathered, e.g. through the JSNA, to inform future goals and service delivery
- An action plan which contains SMART actions which is effectively and regularly monitored
- Increasing emphasis on community cohesion in the future

13.5 To achieve this, the panel have asked for the action plan and Strategy to be monitored on a regular basis (at 6 months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months).

14. The way forward

14.1 The Panel recommend that the progress achieved in relation to the Traveller Strategy Action Plan and Strategy is reported to the relevant Member Committee at the following intervals:

- 6 months
- 12 months
- 24 months
- 36 months

14.2 At the same intervals the progress on implementing recommendations of this panel, which are not also contained in the Traveller Strategy or Action Plan, should be reported back to the relevant Member Committee.

15. Glossary

BHCC	**Brighton & Hove City Council**
BHEAG	**Brighton & Hove Environmental Action Group**
CCG	**Clinical Commissioning Group**
CLG	**Department for Communities & Local Government**
DoH	**Department of Health**
DV	**Domestic Violence**
DPH	**Director of Public Health**
ESCC	**East Sussex County Council**
ESCOSC	**Environment & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
FFT	**Friends, Families and Travellers**
GRT	**Gypsy, Roma and Travellers**
ICT	**Information and Communication Technology**
JSNA	**Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**
LAT	**Local Action Team**
TLT	**Traveller Liaison Team in BHCC**
SMART	**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited**
STAG	**Sussex Traveller Action Group**
TES	**Traveller Education Service**
WSCC	**West Sussex County Council**