

Response to Traveller Scrutiny Panel Recommendations on the Traveller Commissioning Strategy 2012

	Final Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Response to Recommendation	Action taken / to be taken in response
1	<p>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).</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The action plan has undergone extensive revision since it was last seen by the Panel.</p> <p>Whilst there are still a few actions that are not as SMART as we prefer, these are in development and will be firmed up shortly. This will be evident in the progress reports to Committee.</p>	<p>Updates will be produced and reported to the relevant Committee at 6mths, 12mths then annual.</p>
2	<p>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.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>We believe that changes between the draft and final strategy have addressed this however we are adding additional text to make this explicit.</p>	<p>New paragraph has been added to the strategy at 3.3:</p> <p><i>To help meet this need, our strategy seeks to be preventative in nature rather than reactive by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensuring effective management and use of the Horsdean Transit Site</i> • <i>Developing procedures for Tolerated sites</i> • <i>Effective management of unauthorised encampments</i> • <i>Ensure sensitive sites are protected</i> • <i>Developing a protocol for addressing Van Dwellers</i>
3	<p>Recommendation 3: The panel feel that</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>Extra information has been added to</p>

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	<p>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 an encampment.</p>	<p>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'</p> <p>In addition, we recognise that we must respond robustly in partnership with the Police and neighbouring authorities to unauthorised encampments when they do occur and this has been reflected in our goals in 'Outcome 4: Improve community cohesion'</p>	<p>strategy on sharing good practice and in particular citing the Fenland evidence to the Scrutiny Panel as a case study.</p> <p>Additional action added to Action Plan at 16.6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pro-actively liaise with any settled community affected by an encampment</i> <p>Additional text added to strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is very important to us that we communicate effectively with any settled community affected by an unauthorised encampment. We do this in a number of ways and are looking to improve this in response to the strategy and resident needs:</i> • <i>We engage with staff working within the Stronger Communities Partnership that are supporting active community engagement to provide information about Traveller lifestyles, and the likely impact of an encampment on the locality</i> • <i>We build positive relationships between the Traveller Liaison Team and chairs of Local Action Teams by notifying them the moment there is an encampment in their community and ensuring they receive regular updates</i> • <i>We have a webpage that is regularly updated with information about unauthorised encampments within the city. This webpage can be found at:</i>

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			<p>http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/travellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Traveller Advice Line will be integrated into our customer contact centre to improve our telephone response to resident and Traveller enquiries • We will look at good practice from other parts of the country to see what other improvements can be made to the way we work and communicate with residents
4	<p>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.</p>	<p>We believe this issue has been addressed between the draft strategy and final strategy.</p> <p>The draft strategy focussed on highlighting needs and then considering our vision and goals whereas the final strategy starts with the vision and how improving site stability is the platform for addressing education, health and community cohesion. This approach is then threaded through the strategy.</p>	<p>No additional action required.</p>
5	<p>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.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>A new action has been added to the action plan at 16.10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Council's Traveller Liaison Team (focus on support, enforcement, service improvement) during 2012/13

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6	<p>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.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>Additional text added to strategy:</p> <p><i>The project has considered whether it would be better to have smaller sites in the city however, this was discounted based on a number of reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A number of smaller sites would make it harder to meet the level of need by increasing risks such as cost, planning and community cohesion issues</i> • <i>Each site requires the provision of infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity, access roads etc) in addition to the pitches which will increase the projects costs</i> • <i>Aside from extra costs, additional sites bring additional planning risks given the shortage of available land and the controversial nature of some of the sites already considered by the site search given that they lie within the National Park</i> • <i>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.</i> • <i>Each site would have additional costs</i>

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			<p><i>from the provision of services such as management, security, waste collection etc</i></p> <p><i>If future needs analysis shows a need for additional sites, and we are successful in acquiring funding for those additional sites, then they are likely to be smaller as the present site search process has exhausted the options for large sites.</i></p>
7	<p>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 assume that the consultation process will include asking whether a single or multiple sites would be preferred – and be explained in the Strategy.</p>	<p>Noted however this will be managed separately through the permanent site project.</p> <p>The Cabinet report seeking approval of the preferred site at Horsdean has a recommendation that the consultation that is undertaken is guided by a consultation strategy to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability. This will pick up the points in the recommendation.</p>	No additional action required.
8	<p>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.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The reference to 2016 is that the needs assessment plus accompanying planning provision (should it be required) must be done by 2016. To achieve this timescale, work will be ongoing from 2012 and reported in the progress reports.</p>	No additional action required.

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	This Strategy presents a real opportunity to stop being reactive and to begin to plan capacity more pro-actively.		
9	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.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Currently, there is dedicated support from Health visitors and early years workers to traveller families in the city.</p> <p>As part of reviewing the citywide model of health visitors (in line with the Department of Health national plan) we have a local implementation group with representation from key provider leads, public health and commissioners.</p> <p>Through this group, we will consider how we take forward the recommendations suggested including monitoring the impact of outcomes on traveller families.</p> <p>The group will also be informed by the Traveller needs assessment that will be carried out by Brighton & Hove City Council and NHS Sussex</p>	<p>Additional strategy text added at 10.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In addition, there will be a citywide review of Health Visitors which will consider the impact the service has on the Travelling community.</i> <p>Additional action added at 6.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Citywide review of Health Visitors to include the impact on the Travelling community</i>
10	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	Noted.	This will be pursued via the Clinical Training Committee, NHS Brighton & Hove.

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	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.		
11	Recommendation 11: 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.	Noted.	This will be pursued via the Clinical Training Committee, NHS Brighton & Hove.
12	Recommendation 12: 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.	Agreed.	New paragraphs added to strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.2 To address this gap the Council and NHS Sussex (Brighton & Hove) will conduct specific needs assessment on the health and wellbeing of Travellers. The assessment will be used to develop an action plan to improve access to healthcare services for members of the Traveller community. • 10.3 Developing NHS ethnic monitoring locally will help provide us with information on the services used and needed by Travellers to ensure we can plan provision more effectively.

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13	Recommendation 13: 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.	Agreed.	Additional text added to strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We also recognise the value in learning and adopting successful good practice from elsewhere and will seek to draw in members of the Travelling community wherever possible to support training and outreach.</i>
14	Recommendation 14: 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.	<p>We already gather SATS and GCSE data on the Traveller children who are here to take part in national exams.</p> <p>Last year 4 pupils participated in SATS and 2 (resident Travellers) took GCSEs. These are included in an annual report.</p> <p>However, with an average stay of 20 days in any one place (and bearing in mind it can take several days to admit a child into school) a city wide baseline and attainment progress reports on a highly mobile very short stay population is currently not practical. All our mobile children have a rapid assessment on entry and weekly personalised education plans.</p>	<p>From 2012 we will gather and report on the EYFS profile scores of visiting children.</p> <p>These recommendations will be relevant when the permanent site is completed.</p>
15	Recommendation 15: 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 come to the city.	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As mentioned average stay is 20 days and we are rarely informed of departures.</p> <p>Feedback from a variety of service</p>	No additional action required.

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		providers, including visiting Travellers is used to inform and plan	
16	Recommendation 16: 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.	Agreed.	The data gathered will be used to plan future services and measure progress achieved by these services
17	Recommendation 17: 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 hard 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.	Agreed. Again the current short term nature makes measures difficult but this will become relevant once we have the permanent site.	We are contributing to Brighton & Hove "Vulnerable Learners Protocol" to engage KS5 pupils.
18	Recommendation 18: The panel would like to see the Strategy contain a commitment from the council to lead a co-	Agreed. Already a goal of the strategy:	No additional action required.

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	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Goal 13: Improve further the awareness in schools about Traveller History and Culture</i> <p>Action Plan already includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>13.2 Promote national initiatives such as Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and encourage schools to participate</i> • <i>14.3 Promotion of GRT History Month</i> 	
19	Recommendation 19: 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'.	Agreed.	<p>Work on developing Protocol referenced in the Strategy.</p> <p>In addition, an action is included at 16.5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide a consistent response to all unauthorised encampments by developing a joint Sussex Wide Unauthorised Encampment Protocol (Police & Local Authorities) and joint leaflets</i>
20	Recommendation 20: 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.	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Unfortunately there was not time to carry out this work alongside the development of the strategy; however our progress on this work will be noted in our progress reports.</p> <p>It needs to be accepted that in some cases it will be very difficult to fully secure open green spaces.</p>	<p>Our plan will not only need to determine how sensitive sites are defined, but the impact of measures on one site needs to be assessed in terms of the impact on other sites to ensure 'displacement' does not occur.</p> <p>In addition resources will need to be identified to secure sites otherwise there is a danger of raising expectations will not be matched by the ability to take the appropriate action.</p>

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21	Recommendation 21: 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.	Agreed.	This will be done as part of the development of the Protocol.
22	Recommendation 22: 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.	Agreed.	We will run this for the next two years and then review. We will always run this course for the two years after an election. This has been added to the action plan at 14.4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Run regular Councillor Traveller awareness sessions</i>
23	Recommendation 23: 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Agreed.	An action has been added in 'Outcome 4: Community Cohesion' at 14.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a greater understanding amongst the media of Traveller issues.</i> <p>Work to implement this action will consider the points raised by the Panel.</p>

