NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING CABINET MEMBER

NORTH AND NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the findings of the recently completed Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

1.2 To highlight future challenges in providing suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in North Lincolnshire.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1. The Housing Act 2004 introduced a specific requirement for Local Authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their area in the same way they assess the accommodation needs of the settled community.

2.2. In 2007 Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit were commissioned by North Lincolnshire Council to undertake a cross boundary Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) with the neighbouring authority of North East Lincolnshire Council.

2.3. The GTAA research report recommends that councils in the study area address the need for increased residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

2.4. Planning Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites requires Regional Spatial Strategies to identify the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches required for each local planning authority from the information found from the GTAA’s and a view of needs across the region.

2.5. In recent years the lack of site provision and the continuation of household formation and increased migration has meant that Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to stop and live far outweighs the number of authorised pitches available.

2.6. Gypsies and Travellers have found gaining planning permission a major problem in providing a site for themselves and their families. Gypsies and Travellers who can afford to buy a site often breach
planning laws by developing the land for residential use before
gaining planning permission. As a result they often find themselves
evicted or subject to enforcement action, often resorting to the use of
further unauthorised land or accommodation.

2.7. North Lincolnshire currently has three authorised sites for Gypsies
and Travellers containing 27 residential pitches and 20 transit pitches.
There is also one Local Authority owned Showman site in North
Lincolnshire containing ten pitches and a further three sites which are
privately owned/owner-occupied.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1. The key findings of the report are summarised below. The full report
and executive summary will be made available on the Council’s
website.

3.2. Nationally there is no sign that growth in the Gypsy and Traveller
population is looking to slow significantly. Although the supply of
Gypsy and Traveller accommodation has slowed since 1994 the size
of the Gypsy and Traveller community does not appear to have
decreased. Instead they have changed the ways in which they live
with increases in unauthorised developments and encampments,
overcrowding on sites and within accommodation.

3.3. The assessment found there is a net need for a total of 57 residential
Gypsy and Traveller pitches/plots across the study area of North and
North East Lincolnshire between 2007 and 2016 with an additional ten
transit pitches across the study area within the same period. Alongside this there is currently an additional need for two Showman’s
pitches within North Lincolnshire between 2007 and 2012, which has
come from the GTAA.

3.4. Interviews were carried out with several members of the Gypsy and
Traveller community in the study area. This included interviews with
15 households living in bricks and mortar housing across the study
area and six interviews with people on unauthorised encampments.

3.5. There was a clear preference for small private sites which are owned
by the Gypsies and Travellers or their families with Local
Authority/RSL owned houses being the least favoured option.

3.6. The vast majority of respondents felt they were local to the area within
which they were residing with ‘family connections’ being the main
reason given for living where they were at the time of the interview.

3.7. From the interviews there were six individuals from existing
households which were likely to want their own accommodation by
2012.
3.8. The assessment makes 34 detailed recommendations covering community engagement, health, education, site design, amenities, site safety, community cohesion, partnership working and the policy context.

3.9. The key recommendations for North Lincolnshire are
- An additional pitch need of 34 residential pitches between 2007 and 2012 and a further 10 residential pitches between 2012 and 2016.
- An additional need for 10 transit pitches across North and North East Lincolnshire between 2007 and 2016.
- An additional need for two Showman’s pitches within North Lincolnshire between 2007 and 2012.
- Consider the future needs of young people within Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Consider those Gypsy and Travellers who may wish to return to their traditional way of life from the settled community.
- To ensure that all relevant policies are sensitive to the different cultural and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The GTAA will inform the Local Development Framework with regard to Gypsy and Traveller site provision within the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document.

4.2 The GTAA will inform other service areas within North Lincolnshire Council regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites, their ways of life, accommodation preferences, education, health and other factors affecting the lives of Gypsies and Travellers.

4.3 The council will consult widely on its Issues and options for the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document to ensure that sites for Gypsies and Travellers are allocated. This will also give the public an opportunity to comment on the sites and put forward any further sites they may feel would be suitable. Further effort will be put in to consult with hard to reach groups including Gypsies and Travellers and Young People.

4.4 The GTAA quantifies Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in terms of increased pitch provision. The report also suggests the priorities for action to address the needs found through the GTAA.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1. Staffing
A steering group has been set up from existing staff to lead on the delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
5.2. Financial
The costs for the production of the GTAA are accounted for within the current budget. The Department of Communities and Local Government have made funding available for new site provision and for the refurbishment of existing sites. This will need to be further explored in order to fully meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

5.3 Statutory
Councils are expected to monitor all housing needs in their area, this includes Gypsy and Traveller needs, and intervene where necessary to improve conditions or supply.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised racial groups whose needs have generally been neglected. This is reflected in the national and local indicators. The GTAA and the recommendations to come from the GTAA suggest seeking to address their accommodation needs.

6.2 There is a danger that relations between the Gypsy and Traveller communities and the settled communities could deteriorate if consultation and community engagement regarding pitch/site provision is not carried out with consideration for both the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Gypsy and Traveller families from the study area were consulted during the research for their views on current provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The results of this are presented in the GTAA. Town and Parish Councils were also consulted as part of the GTAA production. Their responses are summarised within the GTAA.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The findings of the assessment are accepted and that further reports are brought as a result of the research and are used to inform the development of North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework and Joint Housing Strategy.

8.2 The Steering group, which was set up to manage the GTAA, should continue with additional members to be led by a service director, which cuts across service areas in order to better co-ordinate the response and approach on Gypsy and Traveller issues.

HEAD OF STRATEGIC REGENERATION, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

North and North East Lincolnshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2007.

ODPM circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.