

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

AGENDA

**Friday, 27 July 2007, at 2.00 pm
in the Wantsum Room, Sessions
House, County Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Andy Ballard**
Telephone: **(01622) 694297/694297**

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2007 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Government Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guidance (Pages 5 - 50)
5. Government Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Public Site Management Guidance (Pages 51 - 110)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

Thursday, 19 July 2007

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 23 February 2007.

PRESENT: Mr J B O Fullarton (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr A H T Bowles (Vice-Chairman), Mr M J Fittock, Mr S J G Koowaree and Mrs P A V Stockell.

OFFICERS: Mr B Forrester, Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit; Mr A Casson, Operations Manager, Gypsy and Traveller Unit; Mrs G Eley, Head of Specialist Teaching Service and Acting Head of MCAS, Mrs M Howard, Director of Specialist Services, Adult Services Directorate and Mr G Mills, Democratic Services Manager.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

31. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2006 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Mrs Eley referred to paragraph 30 of the Minutes – Data for Local Authority Minority Ethnic Pupil Performance and said that the information regarding this matter was not yet to hand and therefore she would report to the Board at its next meeting.

33. Presentation on KCC Site Management

(Item B1 –Presentation by Mr Jonathan Cheeseman and Mr David Woodward of the Gypsy and Traveller Unit)

(1) This presentation covered a range of matters relating to site management and community liaison and covered issues such as the statutory obligations and guidelines relating to the establishment of gypsy sites; the management of assets; community relations and residents' access to services. The presentation also covered the wide spectrum of responsibilities and diverse role of a Gypsy Site and Community Liaison manager and the work they undertake with the gypsy community.

(2) During the course of discussion, and in answer to a question, it was agreed that arrangements would be made for Members of the Advisory Board to visit the sites at Barnfield Park, New Ash Green and Heartenoak, Cranbrook. It was also agreed that a representative from the NHS would be invited to a future meeting to give the Board a briefing on the provision of health care and services to the Gypsy and Traveller Community.

(3) Following the presentation and subsequent discussion, the Board placed on record its thanks to Mr Cheeseman and Mr Woodward for their informative presentation, a copy of which would be circulated to Members of the Board. The Board also noted a representative from the NHS would be invited to attend a future meeting.

34. County-wide Officer Group on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs
(Item B2 – Report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Services)

(1) This report provided a summary of progress on the work of the Countywide Officer Group on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs.

(2) The establishment of a joint Kent and Medway Group to address the accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers was one of the 18 recommendations put forward by the Select Committee on Gypsies and Travellers. Whilst the prime objective of establishing this Group was to take forward the implementation of the Select Committee's recommendations, a number of Councils in Kent are deferring consideration of the Select Committee's report until the outcomes are known from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments covering their area. The next meeting of the Group will focus on the results of various work strands on the transit site issue, which is important for the future, and one of the specific areas that the Select Committee tasked the Group to look at. Mr Forrester said the Group had therefore made a very positive start and that had paved the way for the establishment of a countywide group made up of elected Members.

(3) Following discussion, it was agreed that there would be regular feedback on the work of the Officer Group every six months. The Board then agreed to :-

- (i) support the work of the County-wide Group and to endorse its Terms of Reference as detailed in Annex 1 to the report;
- (ii) support the relationships being developed with people from Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities; and
- (iii) that there should be a report to the Board every six months on the work of the Countywide Group.

35. Proposed KCC Response to Private Gypsy Site Planning Consultations
(Item B3 – Report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Services)

(1) This report put forward a proposed response to consultations or enquiries about KCC's position on individual private planning applications.

(2) Following discussion the Board supported the following approach:-

- (i) that the KCC Gypsy and Traveller Unit should respond to all private site consultations, and other applications or appeals, and clarify KCC's involvements with the applicant(s) or appellant(s), within the confines of Data Protection Legislation;
- (ii) KCC should make clear that it is not making any comment on the planning merits of any such application; and
- (iii) the position should be reviewed once the South East Plan comes into force, when KCC ceases to be the Strategic Planning Authority.

36. South East Regional Assembly Activity and Partial Review of South East Plan
(Item B4 – Report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Services)

(1) The South East Regional Assembly is currently carrying out what is called a “partial review” of the South East Plan. This “partial review” is specifically about accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and is due to be finished in time for the results to be included in the South East Plan, due to be published in the Autumn of 2008. The South East Regional Assembly will decide, on the basis of data and other discussions which are ongoing, what number of new pitches must be allocated in each local area, by the inclusion of this data in their Local Development Frameworks, over the following five years. It is the Local Development Frameworks which will specify the locations of the sites to meet the assessed future need.

(2) As it seemed most appropriate to produce planning advice to the Regional Assembly for the whole geographical area of Kent and Medway, Mr Forrester said KCC was offering to host and facilitate a joint group, including an elected Member from each planning authority, which would consider the findings and recommendations of all Kent and Medway Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments. The Joint Group would provide a forum to debate the important issue of distribution of future sites across the area, and to produce the required two options for the Regional Assembly. There is no prescribed strategic lead for this area of work, hence the ongoing debate on who should take responsibility for it. For some other aspects of the South East Plan, KCC has been specified as the strategic lead.

(3) During the course of discussions, Mr Bowles said he endorsed the approach outlined in the report as it very much supported the aims and ethos of two tier working between the local authorities of Kent.

(4) Following further discussion, the Board:-

- (i) endorsed the proposal to host and facilitate the Kent and Medway Member Steering Group, with KCC acting as a conduit to the Regional Assembly for the planning advice from the constituent planning authorities. The Board noted that the proposed Steering Group was unlikely to be able to begin its work until the East Kent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment had been completed and the data made available, which was likely to be late May or early June;
- (ii) endorsed the ongoing work being undertaken to identify the issues which the Steering Group would need to address.

37. Rents on KCC Managed Sites – 2007/08
(Item B5 – Report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Services)

(1) The rents of the eight sites that the Gypsy and Traveller Unit now manage have remained unchanged since 2001. That was because of tighter housing benefit rules which can, in some cases, result in individual claimants living on sites, but Housing Benefit only paying what is called the Local Reference Rent rather than the actual rental costs. The way the system operated could therefore mean that if KCC raised rents, it could finish up

with less income, because the "review" which resulted could lower the amount paid by housing benefit down to the Local Reference Rent.

(2) Mr Forrester said that before proposing an overall, longer term rent review, approval was being sought through the Board to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services should be requested to raise the two lowest rents as they no longer reflected the quality either of the sites concerned, (both of which have been improved since 2001) nor the service provided by Unit staff. The only comparable rents in the rest of Kent are for the Chilmington site in Ashford and Cinderhill Wood site in Tunbridge Wells, where the lower rents only apply to pitches which do not have full facilities. As there are some people who pay their own rent on these sites, and as the proposed rise in percentage terms is substantial, arrangements would be put in place to cushion the impact of the these rises.

(3) Following discussion during which Mr Forrester answered a number of questions raised by Members, it was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services should be requested to raise the two lowest rents as detailed in the report.

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 25 July 2007
Subject: GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE DESIGN GUIDANCE
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Report on a consultation document on Gypsy Site and Traveller Design Guidance for Local Authorities, produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

Background

1. This draft guidance*, the first of its kind since 1979, contains proposals for the suitable location of sites (and the types of locations, like contaminated land, to avoid), the size, layout and design of pitches on sites, and the facilities which sites should essentially or desirably (depending on what is being described) have on them.
2. The document is far more comprehensive than the 1979 document, and reflects a much more sophisticated approach to the design and quality of sites than existed under the old grant system from 1979-1994, under which a number of Kent sites were built or improved. This is a draft for consultation, which could have serious cost ramifications if accepted as currently written.

General Approach

3. The Draft Guidance has been drawn up by the Housing Corporation in association with Tribal Consulting, and draws on extensive discussions with Gypsy and Traveller site residents, and contributions from a number of local authorities.
4. The standards and quality expectations within the draft guidance are therefore reflective of the aspirations of members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, and there does not seem to be much consideration of the costs involved in implementing a site programme based on this guidance, if finalised in this form.
5. However, this draft guidance is the first place in which it is clearly stated that:

“sites situated near refuse sites, industrial processes or other hazards, will obviously have a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of the residents and pose particular safety risks for young children.”

6. And the guidance has benefited from:
- The experience of social housing design
 - Up to date guidance on sustainability and access to services, schools and employment
 - The influence of the model standards for residential caravan sites (even though they do not legally apply to this type of site) and of the Standards for Park Home Sites (which, again, do not apply to such sites, but are a good reference point for the standards needed for them).

Issues

7. There are a number of issues within and from the guidance, which deserve special attention:
- a) Size of pitches – the draft guidance makes reference to the fact that a public site “should allow the largest type of caravan to be manoeuvred onto the site”.
 - b) The largest caravan is 60 feet by 20 feet in size. Designing site pitches which would accommodate such a large caravan would increase the land take and the costs of sites considerably, and produce sites far larger than almost all the current sites that KCC manages, apart from Barnfield Park in Sevenoaks.
 - c) If the guidance is adopted in its current form, it will not only have an impact on new sites and refurbishments that may be planned in Kent (and elsewhere) but it will also impact on existing sites and expectations of residents on them. Those expectations of bigger and higher quality sites will produce a pressure especially from residents of smaller and less high quality sites.
 - d) As part of the Partial Review of the South East Plan, the South Eastern Regional Assembly is asking for details of the costs of the new sites which Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments across Kent (and the rest of the South East) are showing will be needed over the next 5 - 10 years. Those costs of new public sites will be directly influenced by the final version of this Site Design Guidance, but it will not be ready by the 15 October 2007 deadline for the submission of planning advice by Kent’s local planning authorities.
 - e) These are just a few of the points arising from the current draft guidance and what may follow if it becomes the final version.

Conclusions and Recommendations

8. In conclusion, this draft guidance is an important step forward in ensuring that future sites are built to a high standard and in suitable locations. In doing so, it is in keeping with the recommendation of the KCC Select Committee about the facilities to be provided on all sites.

Recommendation

9. Members are asked to consider and comment on this consultation and to note that a final response will be sent on behalf of the County Council by the Managing Director of Kent Adult Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Services, in time to reach the Communities and Local Government Department by 22 August 2007.

Bill Forrester
Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit
(01622) 221846

Background Papers: The CLG Draft Site Design Guidance

* A copy of the CLG Draft Site Design Guidance is attached for Members of the Board. Further copies are available electronically via the following link:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510554>

This page is intentionally left blank

Draft Guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies & Travellers

A Consultation Paper

*Draft Guidance on the design
of sites for Gypsies & Travellers*

Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright, 2007

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.

This publication, excluding logos, may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or for internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to it being reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the publication specified.

Any other use of the contents of this publication would require a copyright licence. Please apply for a Click-Use Licence for core material at www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/system/online/pLogin.asp, or by writing to the Office of Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich, NR3 1BQ. Fax: 01603 723000 or email: HMSOlicensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

If you require this publication in an alternative format please email alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government Publications
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 08701 226 236
Fax: 08701 226 237
Textphone: 08701 207 405
Email: communities@twoten.com
or online via the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk

Printed in the UK on material containing no less than 75% post-consumer waste.

May 2007

Product Code: 07HC04595

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	5
Introduction	
1.1 Consultation	5
1.2 Purpose of this guidance	5
1.3 Scope	7
1.4 How the guidance was developed	7
CHAPTER 2	9
Context	
2.1 Addressing the shortage of sites	9
2.2 The need for site design guidance	9
CHAPTER 3	11
Site location/selection – permanent sites	
3.1 Location	11
3.2 Relationship to surrounding land use	12
3.3 Scope to provide essential services	13
3.4 Health and safety considerations	13
CHAPTER 4	14
Site layout, access and orientation – permanent sites	
4.1 Introduction	14
4.2 Size of site	14
4.3 Site boundaries	14
4.4 Orientation of pitches	15
4.5 Health and Safety	15
4.6 Access for emergency vehicles	15
4.7 Security	16
4.8 Balance between soft and hard landscaping	17
4.9 Car parking	17
4.10 Density and spacing of caravans and trailers	17
4.11 Inclusion of space for work/animals	17
CHAPTER 5	19
Site services and facilities – permanent sites	
5.1 Introduction	19
5.2 Water supply	19
5.3 Electricity supply	19
5.4 Gas supply	19
5.5 Oil fired central heating	20
5.6 Drainage	20
5.7 Sewerage	20
5.8 Lighting	21
5.9 Waste disposal, scrap and storage	22
5.10 Play space	22
5.11 Post	22
5.12 Communal facilities	22

CHAPTER 6	23
Health, safety and accessibility – permanent sites	
6.1 Introduction	23
6.2 Risk assessment	23
6.3 Fire safety	23
6.4 Accessibility	24
CHAPTER 7	25
Individual pitches – permanent sites	
7.1 Layout and orientation of pitches	25
7.2 Hard standing	25
7.3 Size of pitch	26
7.4 Amenity buildings	26
CHAPTER 8	29
Transit sites	
8.1 Introduction	29
8.2 Site selection/location	29
8.3 Site layout, access and orientation	29
8.4 Site services and facilities	30
8.5 Health and safety	30
8.6 Individual pitches	31
CHAPTER 9	32
Emergency Stopping Places	
9.1 Introduction	32
9.2 Site selection/location	32
9.3 Site layout, access and orientation	32
9.4 Site services and facilities	33
9.5 Health and safety	33
CHAPTER 10	34
Consultation	
10.1 Introduction	34
10.2 When to consult?	34
10.3 Methods of consultation	35
10.4 Feeding back on the results of consultation	37
10.5 Consulting with the settled community	37
ANNEX A	39
Key References	
ANNEX B	40
The consultation criteria	

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Consultation

- 1.1.1 This consultation seeks views on good practice guidance for the design of Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 1.1.2 We welcome any comments that you may have on this guidance. It would be helpful if you have comments on specific parts of the guidance if you could identify the section or paragraph number to which your comments relate. It would also be helpful if comments were submitted electronically, as well as any hard copies that may be sent. This will help reduce the time needed to compile and consider the comments received.
- 1.1.3 Responses and comments, to be received by 22 August 2007, should be sent to:
- Trevor Diesch
Gypsy and Traveller Unit
Department for Communities and Local Government
Zone 1/F8
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
- e-mail: trevor.diesch@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Tel 0207 944 2501
- 1.1.4 We will consider the responses and make any changes necessary to the guidance as a result, and produce a document which summarises the responses and the changes made.
- 1.1.5 Please note that responses, including the names and addresses of respondents will be made available to anyone who asks for them unless confidentiality is specifically requested or disclosure would prejudice third parties.
- 1.1.6 The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. Further details are at Annex B.

1.2 Purpose of this guidance

- 1.2.1 The Government believes that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. Decent homes are a key element of any thriving, sustainable community. This is true for the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities alike.

1.2.2 There are currently around 300 socially rented Gypsy and Traveller sites in England. However, there is a national shortage of authorised sites, with around one in four Gypsy and Traveller households having nowhere to call home. The Government has established a new framework to increase site provision to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, reducing the number of unauthorised sites and promoting good relations with the settled community.

1.2.3 We need to ensure that these sites:

- Are sustainable, and easy to manage and maintain;
- Are of a decent standard, equitable to that which would be expected for social housing in the settled community;
- Support harmonious relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community.

This guidance will help ensure that potential developers achieve these aims for new sites, and assist those considering improvements to existing sites.

1.2.4 The guidance sets out good practice on design for any developer of Gypsy and Traveller sites, and uses case study examples to illustrate different approaches. In particular, it is intended to help:

- Local authorities who wish to develop a new site, or refurbish the whole or part of a site;
- Registered social landlords who wish to develop or refurbish a site;
- Private developers or architects working with site developers;
- People who will be living on a site and are participating in its design.

1.2.5 It will not be possible to meet the guidance in every respect on every site. Local authorities and registered social landlords will need to take decisions on design on a case by case basis, taking into account local circumstances and in consultation with prospective residents of sites.

1.2.6 This guidance will be particularly relevant to local authorities and registered social landlords wishing to bid for Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant from Communities and Local Government. Once the guidance is finalised, Communities and Local Government will consider whether the essential elements of this guidance are met, and the extent to which the remainder of the guidance is addressed, in assessing schemes for new sites. Bidders should also consider the extent to which it is possible to meet this guidance in schemes for the refurbishment of existing sites.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 The guidance is intended to cover all types of site. This includes sites for Gypsies, Irish Travellers, travelling showpeople and new age travellers. It covers a range of sites including:
- 1.3.2 **Permanent sites** – These sites provide residents with a permanent home. The bidding guidance for Communities and Local Government's Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant explains that for permanent sites ownership should remain with the local authority or registered social landlord and continue in use as a Gypsy and Traveller site for at least ten years, although consideration will be given to sites of a shorter term nature where there is a sound business case that demonstrates value for money.
- 1.3.3 **Transit sites** – Transit sites are permanent sites used to provide only temporary accommodation for their residents. Lengths of stay can vary but are usually set at between 28 days and three months. Practice on private transit sites tends to be more relaxed in respect of the amount of time people are permitted to stay. The requirements for transit sites reflect the fact that they are not intended for use as a permanent base for an individual household.
- 1.3.4 **Emergency stopping places** – Emergency stopping places are pieces of land in temporary use as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the site for a few days.

1.4 How the guidance was developed

- 1.4.1 This draft guidance was developed by drawing on a range of good practice sources. These included:
- Existing research on the design features that work effectively on Gypsy and Traveller sites;
 - Observations on design features and the views of residents drawn from visits to a range of sites;
 - Consultation with organisations representing the views of Gypsies and Travellers;
 - Interviews with site managers and developers from the social housing and private sectors;
 - Interviews with professionals and organisations working with Gypsies and Travellers, including traveller education services, health advocates, planners and the police.

1.4.2 In developing this guidance the aim has been to incorporate standards that are equitable to those required of publicly funded developments of housing for the settled community. The main source of guidance on this has been the Scheme Development Standards required of new social housing developments funded by the Housing Corporation. In translating the standards for social housing to Gypsy and Traveller sites we have had regard to:

- The different demographic profile of Gypsy and Travellers;
- The cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- The intended use and longevity of the site;
- The need to make best use of land and other resources available to develop sites;
- The need for site design to facilitate economic and effective management of the site;
- The draft Model Standards for Park Homes, and in particular the standards to apply to sites accommodating dwellings made from combustible materials.

1.4.3 The case study below shows that an old site can be successfully refurbished to meet the types of modern day design standards included within this guidance.

Star Hill, Hampshire

The Star Hill site in Hampshire is a long established county council run permanent site which was recently refurbished to bring it up to modern day standards.

Existing residents were extensively consulted about the refurbishment plans before commencement. Now, each of the 20 pitches can accommodate two trailers/caravans and has ample parking space. Every pitch has a brick built amenity block containing high standard facilities and incorporating good insulation and heating. Each one has a bath, shower, toilet, kitchen and airing cupboard. There is space and connections for washing machines and freezers.

Each pitch is demarcated by a 4ft wooden fence and has gated access. The fence height is increased to 6ft between amenity buildings to ensure privacy.

CHAPTER 2

Context

2.1 Addressing the shortage of sites

- 2.1.1 It is widely accepted that there is a national shortage of authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers. This has led to an increasing incidence of both unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments and has sometimes created tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community.
- 2.1.2 The Government has introduced a number of measures aimed at encouraging local authorities to assess the need for sites in their area and identify suitable sites for development.
- 2.1.3 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a new obligation on local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in their areas, and to develop a strategy to address these needs.
- 2.1.4 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006¹ explains that Regional Planning Bodies must determine how many pitches are needed and, through the Regional Spatial Strategy, how many are needed in each local authority area. Local planning authorities must identify sites in Development Plan Documents and if they fail to do so they can be directed by the Secretary of State.
- 2.1.5 Communities and Local Government provides Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant for the provision of new, and the refurbishment of existing sites. The grant is available to local authorities and registered social landlords. 100% funding is available for new sites, and 75% for refurbishment. Up to £56 million has been made available for the grant between 2006-8.

2.2 The need for site design guidance

- 2.2.1 The Select Committee for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions *Thirteenth Report*² (October 2004) concluded that 'The current guidelines relating to site design and standards urgently need updating in the light of modern space standards and services, health and safety provisions and requirements for catering for disability.' The Committee recommended that the guidance should cover residential sites, transit sites and stopping places.

¹ Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – Guide to responsibilities and powers, ODPM

² Paragraph 163

2.2.2 In October 2004, research showed that there were 320 local authority sites incorporating 5,000 pitches, and that many of the existing sites were of a poor standard. The estimate for maintenance and improvement of these sites to bring them up to standard and to maintain them was £16.7m over the next five years. Research has also showed that skimping on initial site design and construction often means more investment is needed later to rectify problems arising from this.³

2.2.3 The guidance issued by Government recognises the specific cultural and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, as well as the increasingly settled lifestyle of some Gypsy and Traveller households that facilitates, for example, access to education for families with children. This creates challenges for site design because of the need to incorporate features that not only facilitate continued periods of travelling but are also consistent with settled living. Many older sites were developed on an assumption that households would not live on them for long periods, and the facilities on those sites are increasingly out of keeping with accepted standards for family living.

³ Niner, P (July 2003) The provision and condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England, ODPM – summary of full report Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England

CHAPTER 3

Site location/selection – permanent sites

3.1 Location

3.1.1 Selecting the right location for a site is crucial to supporting good community relations and maximising its success. As with any other form of housing, poorly located sites, with no easy access to major roads or public transport services, will have a detrimental effect on the ability of residents to:

- Seek or retain employment;
- Attend school, further education or training;
- Obtain access to health services and shopping facilities

and will generally have a detrimental effect on social inclusion and community cohesion.

3.1.2 Sites situated near refuse sites, industrial processes or other hazards, will obviously have a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of the residents and pose particular safety risks for young children.

3.1.3 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites provides advice on site location and selection. It identifies factors which are important for the sustainability of a site, for instance:

- Means of access, availability of transport modes and distances from services;
- Promotion of integrated co-existence between the site and local community;
- Easy access to General Practitioner and other health services;
- Access to schools;
- Ground conditions and levels of land;
- Not locating sites in areas of high flooding risk.

3.1.4 **Essential:** The location of the site must provide a safe environment for the residents.

- 3.1.5 It should also provide visual and acoustic privacy, and have characteristics which are sympathetic to the local environment. When selecting locations for permanent sites, consideration needs to be given to the relatively high density of children and low income households likely to be on the site.
- 3.1.6 As a rule of thumb, no sites should be identified for Gypsy and Traveller use that would not be appropriate for ordinary residential dwellings. Where possible, sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential developments. To help achieve this local authorities and registered social landlords should consider the need and scope to provide a site for Gypsies and Travellers as part of all significant new build developments.

Evidence provided to Select Committee on the importance of site location:

“What is working [in Ireland] are small sites. And they are not placed under flyovers or pylons, or beside sewers, canals or tips; they are placed on proper positioned land, bang within the middle of a settled community, and they are working.”[204]

“We would make a strong plea for safeguards to be put in place to ensure that future site development is not located in polluted or hazardous locations, as...many sites are. Not only does this have a negative impact on Gypsies and Travellers health and access to services but it has a profound impact on how they feel they are perceived and treated by the wider community, likewise such locations reinforce the prejudiced perceptions that many in the settled community have of Gypsies and Travellers, such locations are therefore a major impediment to the social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.”[205]

3.2 Relationship to surrounding land use

- 3.2.1 **Essential:** Consideration must be given to the relationship of sites to the surrounding community.
- 3.2.2 The site must be sustainable, offering scope to manage an integrated co-existence with the local community. This will include consideration of noise and possible disturbance to Gypsy and Travellers living on the site, and possible noise and disturbance to the wider community, in particular from movement of Gypsy and Traveller vehicles.
- 3.2.3 Many Gypsies and Travellers express a preference for a rural location which is on the edge of or closely located to a large town or city consistent with traditional lifestyles and means of employment. However, characteristics that make a location unpopular for the settled community are likely to hold similar fears for Gypsies and Travellers. Sites adjacent to light industrial areas therefore tend not to be popular because of their isolation, distance from local facilities and because of safety fears (when walking home at night for instance).
- 3.2.4 Similarly, where joint commercial/residential use is envisaged for a site (as in the case of showpeople’s sites because of the need for residents to store and maintain fairground equipment), it is important that the compatibility of both of these uses with the surrounding land uses is given careful consideration.

- 3.2.5 The case study below is a good example of a site integrated into the heart of an urban community.

Wallman Place, London

The Wallman Place site is in Haringey, North London, and was refurbished in 1996 to provide a six pitch site for an extended family.

It is behind the civic centre, next door to a school, opposite a health centre, and close to a wide range of shops.

The site has a single access road through the middle, with three pitches on each side. There is space for a trailer, touring caravan and amenity building on each pitch. The brick built amenity blocks include central heating, bathroom and toilet facilities.

Whilst being close to all facilities the site also provides privacy for its residents and is well integrated into the surrounding community.

3.3 Scope to provide essential services

- 3.3.1 **Essential:** sites must provide access to water, electricity, drainage, and sanitation.
- 3.3.2 Electricity and sewerage for permanent sites should normally be through mains systems, however in some locations and where specific preferences have been expressed by the local community, alternative arrangements may be appropriate.

3.4 Health and safety considerations

- 3.4.1 **Essential:** Sites must not be located on contaminated land.
- 3.4.2 Brownfield sites may be suitable; however the same considerations should apply when appraising such sites as for conventional residential housing. For instance, sites adjacent to a rubbish tip, on landfill sites, close to electricity pylons or any heavy industry are unlikely to be suitable.
- 3.4.3 When considering sites adjacent to main roads, flyovers and railway lines, careful regard must be given to:
- The health and safety of children and others who will live on the site; and
 - The greater noise transference through the walls of caravans than through the walls of conventional housing, and the need for design measures (for instance noise barriers) to abate the impact on quality of life and health.
- 3.4.4 **Essential:** The proposed site must be relatively flat and suitable for purpose. Risk from flooding must be determined prior to development of a site, by reference to the Environment Agency's Flood Map and Planning Policy Statement 25 Development and Flood Risk.
- 3.4.5 Where a flood risk exists, advice from the Environment Agency should be sought on the likelihood of flooding, depths and velocities that might be expected and the availability of warning services. Where such risk exists, the site owner should display flood warning information and procedures for evacuation.

CHAPTER 4

Site layout, access and orientation – permanent sites

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 As with site location, proposals for the layout and orientation of the site should be developed with regard to:

- Convenience for residents;
- Safety for residents;
- Visual and acoustic privacy – both for people living on the site and those living nearby;
- Aesthetic compatibility with the local environment;
- Scope for social integration with the local community.

4.1.2 This is an area where consultation with the local community of Gypsies and Travellers and with members of the settled community living in close proximity to a site can be particularly valuable and ensure best and most convenient use of available space.

4.2 Size of site

4.2.1 Smaller sites of between 6-12 pitches are most popular with Gypsies and Travellers and are reported to be easier to manage. Sites should not normally exceed 20 pitches in capacity unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferred by the local Gypsy or Traveller community, or that this recommendation would severely limit the potential to meet local needs.

4.2.2 Where a larger site is unavoidable, then steps could be taken to create small ‘closes’ within the site for extended families thereby retaining the sense of community and creating defensible space.

4.3 Site boundaries

4.3.1 **Essential:** The site boundary must provide clear demarcation of the perimeter of the site, so as to prevent the scope for site “expansion” through unauthorised encampments. Boundaries must take into account adjoining land uses, and be designed with the safety and protection of children in mind.

- 4.3.2 Fencing and planting may be used to screen out unpleasant and intrusive uses, such as industrial use or main roads. More open boundaries may be used in residential areas so as to promote integration and inclusion with the surrounding community. Boundaries can also be used to provide shelter for more exposed sites.
- 4.3.3 A range of different boundaries may be used including fences, low walls, hedges and natural features. The aim should be to achieve a boundary that is sympathetic to, and in keeping with, the surrounding area.
- 4.3.4 **Essential:** There must be a clear gap of 3 metres⁴ within the inside of all site boundaries as a fire prevention measure, unless a risk assessment has determined that alternative arrangements can achieve an adequate level of safety.

4.4 Orientation of pitches

- 4.4.1 **Essential:** As with housing for the settled community, site layout and design must ensure a degree of privacy for individual households (for instance by ensuring that neighbours cannot directly overlook each other's living quarters), but without inhibiting the important sense of community.
- 4.4.2 Consultation has shown that many Gypsies and Travellers prefer a circular or horseshoe design rather than linear layout of pitches. Other reportedly successful layouts include a branch design.
- 4.4.3 **Essential:** Pitches should be designed to enable the easy manoeuvrability of trailers up to 20 metres onto them.

4.5 Health and Safety

- 4.5.1 **Essential:** When designing the layout of a site, careful consideration must be given to the health and safety of residents, and in particular children, given the likelihood of a high density of children on the site and relatively high levels of vehicle ownership amongst some groups of Gypsies and Travellers for towing caravans and employment purposes.
- 4.5.2 **Essential:** The need for appropriate traffic calming measures must be considered for all sites. Clear and effective signage should be introduced where a speed restriction or other traffic calming measure is to apply.
- 4.5.3 The need for separate vehicular/pedestrian access should be considered.

4.6 Access for emergency vehicles

- 4.6.1 **Essential:** All roads must allow easy access for emergency vehicles.

⁴ Draft Model Standards for Park Homes

- 4.6.2 **Essential:** To enable this, suitable roads must be provided, with no caravan or park home more than 50 metres from a road⁵. Roads must have no overhead cable less than 4.5 metres above the ground. Vehicular access and gateways must be at least 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum clearance of 3.7 metres⁶.
- 4.6.3 **Essential:** Roads must not be less than 3.7 metres wide, or if they form part of a one way traffic system, 3 metres wide⁷.
- 4.6.4 One way systems should be clearly sign posted.
- 4.6.5 To increase potential access points for emergency vehicles, more than one access route into the site is recommended. Where possible, site roads should be designed to allow two lorries to pass each other (minimum 5.5m⁸). Specific guidance should be sought from the local fire authority for each site.
- 4.6.6 **Essential:** To avoid future maintenance costs, and in anticipation of increased wear and tear due to frequent movement of heavy vehicles, it is recommended that all roads are constructed to adoptable standards. Details of the relevant standards can be obtained from the local highways authority.

4.7 Security

- 4.7.1 Consultation has shown that site layout can play an important role in avoiding a sense of enclosure and isolation amongst Gypsies and Travellers. The aim should be to 'design out' crime and social exclusion and 'design in' community safety and social inclusion through openness of design, allowing ease in passing through, whether walking or driving.
- 4.7.2 Site layout should maximise natural surveillance enabling residents to easily oversee all areas of the site. Scheme specific advice on security provision for the site should be obtained from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer for the area, and reference should be made to 'Secure by Design' standards⁹ to inform detailed planning of the site.
- 4.7.3 To avoid disputes and provide defensible space, it is important to provide clear delineation of public and private space, and boundaries that indicate where individual pitches begin and end.
- 4.7.4 It is recommended that community spaces without a clear usage are avoided as they may attract vandalism, fly tipping or unauthorised caravans.

⁵ Source: Building Regulation B5 (2000) – 'Access And Facilities for the Fire Service'

⁶ Draft Model standards for Park Homes

⁷ Draft Model Standards for Park Homes, also Manual for Streets – Department for Transport, March (2007), and Statutory Instrument 2000 no.2531, The Building Regulations (2000). London TSO. Part 2, paragraph B5: Access and facilities for the fire service

⁸ 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport (2007)

⁹ ODPM and Home Office (2004) Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention. London: Thomas

- 4.7.5 It is recommended that local needs and preferences are taken into account, as well as the requirements of the local highways authority, when designing the entrance to the site. Many Gypsies and Travellers are in favour of controlled access to sites, for example using a lockable gate. Their experience has been that such controls can prevent unauthorised parking and unauthorised caravans being pitched on the site. However, the presence of such gates can sometimes act as a psychological barrier to effective social inclusion.

4.8 Balance between soft and hard landscaping

- 4.8.1 Many Gypsies and Travellers express a strong preference for soft landscaping (for example grassed areas, shrubs and trees) as opposed to hard landscaping such as paved or concreted areas. However, when designing to include soft landscaping, consideration needs to be given to preventing this from being used for unauthorised parking or unauthorised pitching of caravans.

4.9 Car parking

- 4.9.1 **Essential:** Parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 x 4.8 metres¹⁰.
- 4.9.2 Resident parking should largely be provided for on individual pitches (see 7.3).

4.10 Density and spacing of caravans and trailers

- 4.10.1 **Essential:** To ensure fire safety, every trailer, caravan or park home must be not less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan or park home that is occupied separately.
- 4.10.2 Other structures are allowed in the separation zone if they are made of non-combustible materials (such as a brick built amenity unit), as long as they do not impede means of escape. For further guidance refer to the draft Model Standards for Park Homes.

4.11 Inclusion of space for work/animals

- 4.11.1 Gypsy and Traveller sites are essentially residential and those living there are entitled to a peaceful and enjoyable environment. Draft Communities and Local Government guidance on site management proposes that working from residential pitches should be discouraged and that residents should not normally be allowed to work elsewhere on site.
- 4.11.2 **Essential:** Where significant commercial or other work activity is envisaged for a site (for instance the storage and maintenance of fairground equipment), the site must be delineated so that residential areas are separated from areas for commercial or work use. This also applies to the inclusion of space for keeping animals.

¹⁰ 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport, (2007)

- 4.11.3 Details of specific guidance for the development of sites for showpeople can be found in Annex A.
- 4.11.4 Where there is demand for space for animals and where the site provider is satisfied that it may be reasonable and practicable to include this, a grazing area for horses and ponies may be provided, to reflect the cultural use of the horse as a traditional means of transport.
- 4.11.5 Site managers may also enquire whether owners of land on the periphery of the site have surplus land for this purpose that could be provided at a reasonable rent.

CHAPTER 5

Site services and facilities – permanent sites

5.1 Introduction

As for any other kind of accommodation, consideration must be given to the infrastructure needed to support Gypsy and Traveller sites so that they meet the needs of residents and support good relations with people living nearby.

5.2 Water supply

5.2.1 **Essential:** A mains water supply suitable for drinking must be provided for each pitch on the site, sufficient to meet the reasonable demands of residents. Water supplies must comply with current legislation, regulations and British Standards, and water meters must be for domestic usage.

5.2.2 **Essential:** Water pressure should be sufficient to enable use of fire hydrants.

5.2.3 It is recommended that an outside tap is provided on each pitch.

5.3 Electricity supply

5.3.1 **Essential:** Mains electricity must be provided to each pitch, sufficient to meet the reasonable requirements of the residents, and with separate meterage for each pitch. Electric meters must be for domestic use and enable economic use of electricity.

5.3.2 **Essential:** There must be underground cabling which is adequately earthed and complies with current electrical installation regulations. Electrical installations must be inspected annually. All electrical work must be carried out by competent and appropriately qualified personnel.

5.4 Gas supply

5.4.1 **Essential:** Gas installations, supplies and storage must meet statutory requirements, relevant standards and codes of practice. Storage facilities compliant with health and safety regulations for Liquid Propane Gas cylinders must be provided¹¹. Since the guidance on storage is complex, developers and managers of sites are advised to see advice from their local environmental health services.

¹¹ LP Gas Association: Code of Practice 7: Storage of Full & Empty LPG Cylinders and Cartridges.

- 5.4.2 **Essential:** Any mains gas installation must be inspected and certified as safe on an annual basis.
- 5.4.3 It is recommended that mains gas supply is considered for amenity buildings on pitches and, if supplied, must be compliant with current gas installation regulations¹².

5.5 Oil fired central heating

- 5.5.1 Installations for oil fired central heating should meet Part L of the Building Regulations 2007.

5.6 Drainage

- 5.6.1 **Essential:** Surface water drainage and storm water drainage must be installed. All drainage provision must be in accordance with current legislation, regulations and British Standards¹³.
- 5.6.2 This should be given early consideration in both site selection and scheme design.

5.7 Sewerage

- 5.7.1 **Essential:** Where it is not possible or economic to connect to a public sewer, provision must be made for discharge to a properly constructed sealed septic tank. All sanitation provision must be in accordance with current legislation, regulations and British Standards¹⁴.
- 5.7.2 It is recommended that mains sewage disposal is included for each pitch, where it is economic to do so.
- 5.7.3 The case study below illustrates the important influence that essential services have on quality of life.

¹² Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances Approved Code of Practice and guidance L56 HSE Books (1998)

¹³ Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) and 'Manual for the Streets' – Department of Transport (2007) Chapter 11

¹⁴ Part H of the 'Building Regulations' (2000), and 'Sewers for Adoption – Water UK' (2006) Sewers for Adoption 6th Edition Swindon WRc plc

Abbey Close site, Hackney

The story of the Abbey Close site in Hackney, East London illustrates the importance of good services to the lives of Travelling communities.

In 1995 there were sixteen Irish Traveller families living on three tolerated sites in the Borough with no running water or toilets. When the area was due for regeneration, the families made representations and the council found a piece of land to be used as a temporary site until funding could be found to upgrade it and a second piece of land to adequately accommodate all the families. Sixteen families moved onto the temporary site. There was only a cold water standpipe provided for the families to share, and a portaloos for each family. The site was overcrowded, with no proper demarcation between pitches and poor drainage.

By 1999 the Travellers had secured strong support from the local community and the local councillor, who was also the Deputy Mayor. Despite this a shortage of funding delayed significant improvements. Some families moved off as they could no longer tolerate the lack of facilities, and others were given pitches on a nearby official site when they came vacant. The remaining families continued to campaign for better conditions with support from local community organisations and some improvements were made, for instance the provision of electricity, hardstanding and additional standpipes.

In 2002 funding was secured to refurbish the site and families were relocated during building works. The refurbished site provides each family with a clearly demarcated pitch with a private detached or semi-detached brick-built utility block, including a modern fitted kitchen and bathroom. The utility buildings, site boundaries and pitch boundaries are entirely in keeping with the architecture and features on surrounding estates and blend in well. The families were involved in all aspects of the site design and kept fully informed throughout, thereby able to ensure that design mistakes were kept to a minimum. In order to accommodate all the families left on the temporary site the pitches are small for growing young families, but the location and community support is ideal.

In September 2003 the remaining six families returned to the site, a 'Welcome Home' banner at the local school, and an opening ceremony that was attended by neighbours from the adjacent estates.

5.8 Lighting

- 5.8.1 **Essential:** Sufficient lighting must be provided on the site to enable safe access and movement through the site at night for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- 5.8.2 The street lighting arrangements should be planned to minimise the risk of damage through vandalism and avoid problems of light pollution to the homes on the site through light shining directly into caravans, amenity buildings or park homes.

5.9 Waste disposal, scrap and storage

- 5.9.1 **Essential:** Standard domestic waste disposal arrangements must be provided for each pitch in accordance with local authority requirements for the disposal of domestic waste¹⁵.
- 5.9.2 Experience on some sites suggests that communal refuse areas can encourage fly-tipping and the accumulation of non-domestic waste. If a communal refuse area is deemed necessary (in addition to individual refuse collection for each pitch), this should be designed and located so as to be convenient, accessible, robust and inconspicuous.
- 5.9.3 It is recommended that access is provided for local authority refuse collection from individual pitches as well as any central points.

5.10 Play space

- 5.10.1 It is recommended that the inclusion of recreation areas for children of all ages is considered where suitable provision is not available within walking distance on a safe route or using easily accessible public transport, and for larger sites.
- 5.10.2 **Essential:** Where recreation areas are provided, these must be designed and located with the safety of children in mind (taking account of the proximity of busy roads) and where they allow for natural supervision.

5.11 Post

- 5.11.1 **Essential:** Site and pitch addresses must be created which are of a similar nature to those for the settled community – for instance by not highlighting that the accommodation is site based.
- 5.11.2 **Essential:** Arrangements must be made so that post can be delivered separately for each pitch.

5.12 Communal facilities

- 5.12.1 Where a site is isolated from local facilities and/or is relatively large, provision of a communal building is recommended. This can be used by the site manager, visiting professionals (such as health visitors, youth workers or play workers) and by residents.
- 5.12.2 Any such building should include:
- Community room;
 - Toilets (male and female);
 - Kitchenette.

¹⁵ 'Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management' (PPS10) and Schedule 1, Part H of the Building Regulations (2000).

CHAPTER 6

Health, safety and accessibility – permanent sites

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Everyone should be able to live in a home that is safe, whether that home is a house, a flat or a caravan. Health and safety considerations and requirements for sites are included throughout this guidance. Additional guidance is provided below.

6.2 Risk assessment

- 6.2.1 **Essential:** Site owners must undertake a risk assessment of the site during the initial design stage, including the homes on the site.

6.3 Fire safety

- 6.3.1 **Essential:** Pitches must be no more than 30 metres from a fire point. Fire points must be housed in a weather proof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked 'Fire Point'. A clearly written and conspicuous notice must be provided and maintained at each 'Fire Point' to indicate the action to be taken in the case of fire, including details of the muster point. The draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.2 **Essential:** Water standpipes, hydrants, or fire extinguishers must be provided on each site as determined by the risk assessment and as informed by consultation with the local fire officer. All equipment must conform to relevant British/European standards. The Draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.3 **Essential:** A means of raising the alarm in the case of fire must be provided at each fire point. This must be appropriate to the size and layout of the site and informed by consultation with the local fire officer. The draft Model Standards for Park Homes provide more detailed guidance.
- 6.3.4 **Essential:** All alarm and fire fighting equipment must be installed, tested and maintained in working order by a competent person. All equipment susceptible to frost must be suitably protected.

6.4 Accessibility

- 6.4.1 **Essential:** All private or communal buildings on the site must be provided to mobility standards as specified within Part M of the Building Regulations 2000. Developers must also have regard to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
- 6.4.2 When considering the extent to which pitches, parking spaces and amenity units should be suitable for wheelchair users, reference should be made to local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments. Where provided, these should be consistent with the standards for housing for wheelchair users as set out in the Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards and other related guidance¹⁶.

¹⁶ 'Meeting Part M and Designing Lifetime Homes' The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1999), Wheelchair Housing Design Guide, Construction Research Communications Limited (1997), 'Inclusive Mobility', Department for Transport, (2005)

CHAPTER 7

Individual pitches – permanent sites

7.1 Layout and orientation of pitches

- 7.1.1 The layout of pitches will be dependent on the layout of the overall site. There will be different views about whether to have grassed areas and amenities at the front, back or side of the pitch. Discussion with the local Gypsy and Traveller community will be useful, however developers need to consider future as well as current or prospective residents.
- 7.1.2 **Essential:** Pitches must be oriented to enable the easy manoeuvrability of trailers of up to 20 metres in length onto and off the pitches.
- 7.1.3 Each pitch should have a distribution of electricity hook-up points to allow for different positioning and orientation of caravans and trailers.
- 7.1.4 Complete hook-up to drains and sewage systems for each pitch is recommended.

7.2 Hard standing

- 7.2.1 **Essential:** Each pitch must include a hard standing constructed of a suitable hard wearing material which extends over the whole area to be occupied by a trailer, caravan or other vehicle. These standings must be constructed in accordance with the industry code of practice¹⁷ and project a sufficient distance outwards to enable occupants to enter and leave safely. The base must be sufficient to bear the load placed on it by the home or vehicle and its contents, and the anticipated level of vehicle movement.
- 7.2.2 Soft landscaping is recommended for each pitch where possible.
- 7.2.3 Local authorities and other developers should consider the environmental impact of the site and the measures that might be taken to improve sustainability. For example, the inclusion of separate identifiable containers for the collection of recyclable waste and provision of water butts is recommended.

¹⁷ The 'Gold Shield' which specifies compliance with BS 3632:2005 Residential park homes

7.3 Size of pitch

- 7.3.1 In common with some other ethnic minority communities, some Gypsies and Travellers often have larger than average families, for instance where members of an extended family live together. For this reason there is likely to be much greater demand amongst these communities for large family units, and small pitches may become quickly overcrowded. Larger than average family sizes, alongside the need for vehicles for towing caravans and for employment also creates particular requirements for parking.
- 7.3.2 **Essential:** Pitches must be capable of accommodating an amenity unit, large trailer, touring caravan, drying space for clothes, lockable shed (for bikes, wheelchair storage etc) and parking space for two vehicles.
- 7.3.3 A number of smaller pitches (accommodating at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle) may be provided where there is evidence from a local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment of a sustainable need for pitches of this size.
- 7.3.4 **Essential:** Individual parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 × 4.8 metres¹⁸.
- 7.3.5 Where space permits the inclusion of a playspace on each pitch is recommended.
- 7.3.6 **Essential:** Drainage falls should comply with Part H of the Building Regulations 2000. Ideally the pitch should be level apart from drainage falls.

7.4 Amenity buildings

- 7.4.1 **Essential:** There must be an amenity building on each pitch. This must include, as a minimum: hot and cold water supply; electricity supply; a separate toilet; a bath/shower room; a kitchen and dining area. The access to the toilet should be through a lobbied area.
- 7.4.2 **Essential:** The amenity building must include: secure storage space for harmful substances/medicines; enclosed storage for food, brooms, washing, cleaning items etc; and space for connection of cooker, fridge/freezer and washing machine.
- 7.4.3 The inclusion of a day/living room in the amenity unit is recommended. The day/living room could be combined with the kitchen area to provide a kitchen/dining/lounge area. It is desirable that the day/living room should not be part of essential circulation space, nor contain essential storage.
- 7.4.4 **Essential:** The design and construction of amenity buildings must meet the requirements of the current Building Regulations, Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards, the Institution of Electrical Engineers regulations¹⁹, and the Local Water Authority. Materials used must comply with the relevant British Standard Specifications and Codes of Practice and must provide for durable and

¹⁸ 'Manual for Streets' Department for Transport, (2007)

¹⁹ IEE Wiring Regulations (16th Edition) available at www.iee.org

low maintenance buildings. Its construction should be sympathetic to local architecture, attractive and of a domestic nature.

- 7.4.5 It is recommended that amenity buildings incorporate cost effective energy efficiency measures. The building layout and construction should be designed to maximise energy conservation and the use of passive solar gain. All mechanical and electrical systems should be as energy efficient as possible. Consideration should be given to the insulation of plumbing systems, the use of low energy light fittings and appropriate heating and ventilation systems. Any opportunities for using energy from renewable sources should be considered. It is desirable to produce an assessment of materials and construction techniques proposed for the site against standards set out in ‘The Green Guide to Housing Specification’²⁰.
- 7.4.6 **Essential:** Throughout the amenity building there must be adequate and sensibly situated electrical outlets, switching and controls.
- 7.4.7 **Essential:** Throughout the amenity building there must be heating which provides temperatures suitable for room use, which is economical and capable of individual control for each room.
- 7.4.8 **Essential:** The width of main entrances, doorways and passageways must comply with building regulations to ensure mobility standards.
- 7.4.9 **Essential:** Fixtures and fittings in the amenity building must be of a domestic nature, but robust.
- 7.4.10 In line for standards for social housing other recommended features²¹ include:
- Glazing lines in living/dining areas that are no higher than 810mm above floor level;
 - Hot water taps to baths with a thermostatically controlled supply;
 - Adequate screening and wall tiling provided where showers are provided over baths;
 - A worktop-cooker-sink-worktop sequence that is not broken by doors, passages or tall units;
 - A 1.2 metre run between the cooker and sink;
 - A 500 millimetre minimum clear work top each side of the cooker, and wall units set back minimum 100 millimetres;
 - A space for additional equipment such as a microwave;
 - Walls in bathrooms and WCs must be designed to take support aids.

²⁰ *The Green Guide to Housing Specification* available from the Building Research Establishment at www.bre.co.uk

²¹ Design and Quality Standards, Housing Corporation

Severalls Lane Site, Colchester

Work on the proposed new site at Severalls Lane, Colchester began in 1999 with planning consent given in November 2006. The aim was to provide a site to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers living in or regularly travelling to the Colchester area. The Gypsy and Traveller community was involved in the design from the very start. They worked with the surveyors on the drawings and visited sites of different designs to highlight what did and didn't work on these existing sites. The site plans were finalised with the agreement of the Gypsy and Traveller community – both those working closely with the surveyors and other people living on existing sites.

The site is within easy access of a major trunk road, whilst still offering both privacy and good access to local services. The access road will be a bituminous macadam road surface. The internal oval road block will be paved and have strategically placed speed restricting ramps. The road layout allows for manoeuvring static units on and off all pitches. There will be a site manager's office with good storage space and a secure refuse/recycling area.

The new design provides a 12 pitch site around an oval shaped road, with a central fenced play area, creating a safe environment for children to play where they can be seen from all 12 pitches. Close boarded fencing will be provided between each pitch to give privacy and avoid loose debris, such as leaves, being blown across the site and into pitches. The delineation of individual pitches was regarded as a 'must', and Gypsies and Travellers were keen to avoid a 'no mans' land' which could encourage fly tipping.

Pitch sizes allow for the accommodation of up to three caravans, or one large static trailer plus a touring caravan to allow for travelling during the year. There will be different surfaces within the pitches. Apart from the necessary concrete hard standing there will be tarmac areas and a red brick paved patio and footpath around the amenity blocks. Each pitch will have a small garden area to the rear of the pitch where there will be a footpath access and hard standing for a shed or kennel and a position to stand a rotary line for washing. The Gypsies and Travellers requested this to allow for a place to hang the washing that would not impact on the look of the site from the access road.

Each pitch will have a semi-detached single story amenity building. These will be larger than those on the majority of existing sites, with a kitchen and separate lounge/dining area, plus a bathroom and storage space. The living area will look out to the front of the site to allow for views across it. To avoid the 'institutional' look of the amenity buildings on the existing site, a variety of building materials will be used. Some will be brick built, others will be half-brick, half-weather boarding. The material for the roof will be either plain tiled or slate. There will be hardwood domestic front doors to each amenity building. There will be a post box at the front of the pitch to allow for individual delivery of mail without a need to access the pitch.

CHAPTER 8

Transit sites

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Although transit sites may be occupied all year round, they are not intended to be used as permanent accommodation by individual households. The guidance below therefore reflects that expectation. However developers should note that, in the past and due to the shortage of permanent sites, some transit sites have become permanent sites by default.
- 8.1.2 Views are mixed on the extent to which transit pitches can be successfully provided on permanent sites. Where this has been successful the transit pitches are usually provided adjacent to the main site, or at one end of it.

8.2 Site selection/location

- 8.2.1 The guidance for permanent sites largely also applies to transit sites except that the requirement for proximity to community facilities is only essential in respect of the need for access to schools. In all other respects the requirements are recommended rather than essential.
- 8.2.2 The presence of children on the site, and potential health and safety risks for them and other residents should receive equal consideration for transit sites.

8.3 Site layout, access and orientation

- 8.3.1 **Number of pitches** – The number of pitches on transit sites should not normally exceed 15.
- 8.3.2 **Site boundaries** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.3 **Orientation of pitches** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except that the need to avoid pitches that overlook each other is recommended rather than essential.
- 8.3.4 **Health and safety** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.5 **Access for emergency vehicles** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.6 **Security** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except that the need for delineation of individual pitches is recommended rather than essential.

- 8.3.7 **Balance between soft and hard landscaping** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.3.8 **Parking** – It is essential to provide at least one vehicle space per pitch which should be a minimum size of 2.4m x 4.8 metres. It is recommended that these should be included on individual pitches.
- 8.3.9 **Density and spacing between vehicles** – The guidance for permanent sites applies, except where the local Fire Officer has agreed alternative arrangements that provide the same degree of fire safety.
- 8.3.10 **Inclusion of work/animal space** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.

8.4 Site services and facilities

- 8.4.1 **Accommodation for a Resident Manager** – Transit sites are reported to present particular management challenges and it is recommended that provision is made for a resident manager. As the resident manager will be living on the transit site on a semi-permanent basis, the pitch and facilities for the manager should comply with the guidance for permanent sites, including the provision of an amenity building.
- 8.4.2 **Water supply** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.3 **Electricity supply** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.4 **Gas supply** – The gas installations guidance for permanent sites applies. However, consideration of mains gas supplies is not applicable to transit sites.
- 8.4.5 **Drainage** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.6 **Sewerage** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.7 **Lighting** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.8 **Waste disposal** – Waste disposal for individual pitches is recommended rather than essential for transit sites. It is **essential** to provide communal refuse disposal which is convenient (but away from dwellings) fenced off, robust and inconspicuous.
- 8.4.9 **Sluice** – A sluice should be provided on each site.
- 8.4.10 **Play space** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.4.11 **Post** – Arrangements for postal delivery are recommended rather than essential.

8.5 Health and safety

- 8.5.1 **Risk Assessment** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.

- 8.5.2 **Fire Safety** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.5.3 **Accessibility** – The guidance for permanent sites is recommended rather than essential.

8.6 Individual pitches

- 8.6.1 **Hard standing** – The guidance for permanent sites applies.
- 8.6.2 **Size of pitch** – It is **essential** that each pitch is of a size sufficient to accommodate a touring caravan, one parking space and private amenities.
- 8.6.3 **Private amenities** – It is **essential** to provide private amenities on each pitch including a toilet, wash basin and shower with hot and cold water supply. Consideration should be given to the need for hook-up to the main sewerage system for toilets.
- 8.6.4 **Amenity buildings** – There is no requirement to provide amenity buildings on a transit site, however provision of a communal laundry and drying space is recommended on sites which have a resident manager, and where these facilities can be properly managed.
- 8.6.5 **Clearwater Site, Chichester**

The Clearwater site, near Chichester, is an example of a privately owned and run site which incorporates both permanent and transit pitches. It is a very attractive, green site on the edge of a village in a rural location, and with good access to the road network. The owner has planned the site specifically to enable future growth in both the number and size of households, without members of the extended family having to be overcrowded, displaced to another site or left homeless.

The owner recently received planning permission to add six transit pitches to the existing permanent site. It will not operate as an openly available transit site but will be available to family and other visitors of existing residents. Each transit pitch will have its own amenity building with toilet, shower and kitchen. Pitches will have space for two caravans, and planting is used to mark the boundary between each.

There are four permanent pitches on the site, with space for a further four to accommodate future needs. The pitches are spacious, and each incorporates an amenity building which is 10' wide by 20' long, with kitchen/laundry and bathroom.

There is a children's play area on the site. Residents are able to graze animals on the adjoining field.

CHAPTER 9

Emergency Stopping Places

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Emergency stopping places accommodate intermittent needs for site accommodation. They are not occupied all year around but may be made available at times of increased demand, such as fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers.
- 9.1.2 The guidance below sets out the essential and desired features of emergency stopping places.

9.2 Site selection/location

- 9.2.1 **Essential** – Emergency stopping places should provide safe and convenient access to road networks and be located so as to cause minimum disruption to surrounding communities.
- 9.2.2 **Essential** – When considering the suitability of different sites, the potential presence of young children and any risks that may arise due to adjoining land uses must be considered.

9.3 Site layout, access and orientation

- 9.3.1 **Essential** – Markings or barriers must be used to encourage residents to park safely, allow access for emergency vehicles, and enable maximum use of the site in accordance with its intended capacity and fire safety standards. Particular regard must be given to the need to ensure a safe distance between trailers/caravans and other structures made of combustible materials. The advice of the Local Fire Officer must be sought during the planning of emergency stopping places.
- 9.3.2 **Essential** – The road to and from the site must be of sufficient quality and size to enable access onto and off the site by heavy vehicles such as trailers.
- 9.3.3 **Essential** – There must be a clear barrier around the emergency stopping place to discourage unauthorised expansion of the site.
- 9.3.4 Gated access to the site is recommended.

9.4 Site services and facilities

- 9.4.1 **Essential** – A cold water supply must be provided for the use of site residents.
- 9.4.2 **Essential** – Portaloos must be provided for the use of residents, with separate provision for men and women. There must be at least one portaloos for every four households on the site.
- 9.4.3 Provision of portashowers is recommended.
- 9.4.4 **Essential** – A sewerage disposal point must be provided.
- 9.4.5 **Essential** – Refuse disposal facilities must be provided.

9.5 Health and safety

- 9.5.1 **Essential** – As well as seeking advice from the local Fire Officer, a risk assessment must be carried out during planning for the site.

CHAPTER 10

Consultation

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This guidance is not intended to replace local consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other key agencies. Local consultation should include:

- Gypsies and Travellers from the communities whose needs will be met on the site, including if possible, the families who will move onto the site at first let;
- The settled community;
- Planners – from the very first stages of site identification;
- The Fire Officer;
- The Police Architect – or other source of advice on security;
- Site managers and maintenance officers who can advise on the design features that can promote good management and keep costs to a minimum;

10.1.2 The same principles apply to consultation on Gypsy and Traveller sites as with other refurbishment projects and new developments. Very few architects and developers will have first hand experience of living on a site as part of a Gypsy or Traveller community, and consultation with Gypsies and Travellers will be crucial to ensuring the site works successfully.

10.1.3 The needs and preferences of those who will live on the site should be given full consideration and should be met as far as is possible within available resources. People who have lived on sites for most or all of their lives are in the best position to advise on what works well and what doesn't for a particular community. However, the needs of those people who will move onto the site at first let, will need to be balanced with the needs of those who may live on the site at a later stage.

10.2 When to consult?

10.2.1 Gypsies and Travellers should be consulted throughout all stages of the design process, including site identification. Local communities can be aware of factors which, despite site shortages, could prevent take up of site places in particular areas.

Evidence provided to Select Committee

“Gypsy and Traveller families often wish to have small compact and well-managed sites located in areas where they have historically resided and have a network of local family support. Local authorities have in the past tended to provide accommodation in inappropriate areas and the sites have therefore not always been used to their full potential. As with the settled community, Gypsy families prefer clean well-managed sites where there is no fear of retribution from problem families and they can enjoy a peaceful coexistence. [...]. Caution should be used when seeking locations for sites to ensure that they are based on need in a particular area and not the availability of inappropriate land for alternative uses. Traditionally, Gypsy sites have been located on land which is inappropriate for alternative uses and this, in itself, has caused problems both for the Gypsy community and for Site Managers.”[210]

- 10.2.2 There is no reason why Gypsies and Travellers cannot be included in all design meetings with architects, so that expensive design mistakes are not made and so that professional perceptions of what will work well can be challenged if necessary at an early stage.
- 10.2.3 Where sites are intended for mixed communities it will be necessary for the views of each of the different communities to be gathered.

10.3 Methods of consultation

- 10.3.1 Where there is no established record of joint working between the Gypsy and Traveller community and the organisation wishing to consult, steps will need to be taken to build up trust. Introductions can usually be secured through organisations that already have a good working relationship with members of the communities. This is often the case for the Traveller Education Service and health advocates, but may not necessarily be the case for existing site managers/liaison officers, some of whom may have an enforcement role that has brought them into conflict with the communities in the past.
- 10.3.2 Participation will be greatly improved by holding the consultation in familiar and informal surroundings that are easy to get to, comfortable and warm. The office of a local organisation working with Gypsies and Travellers, or a local community building might be appropriate for instance.
- 10.3.3 There are low levels of literacy in some sections of the community. It is important therefore that consultation does not rely on written methods such as leaflets, surveys or feedback forms. Face to face consultation which enables Gypsies and Travellers to influence rather than just respond to the consultation agenda is important.
- 10.3.4 In some cases it may be appropriate to use a small number of people from the communities to represent their interests, however there is a danger with this type of approach that the perspective of some parts of the community will be missed – for instance children, women or men, or older people.

- 10.3.5 The timing of the consultation will be important. For instance women are more likely to be able to take part in consultation that takes place on sites during the day (and outside school pick up hours) whereas men may be more likely to be able to make evening meetings.
- 10.3.6 One to one interviews are one method of consulting, but they can be time-consuming and do not provide an opportunity to attempt to resolve differing opinions. Focus groups can be a good way to encourage discussions around matters where there are differing perspectives and where there is a need to achieve a consensus position. If some tensions between different members of the community are anticipated then small meetings or group discussions will work better than large meetings.
- 10.3.7 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments may gather views on site design and ask about satisfaction with existing sites. This information should be drawn upon where available.

South Liberty Lane site, Bristol

Bristol County Council used 'Planning for Real'²² methods to consult with Gypsies and Travellers on the design for a new permanent site. This method of consultation involves making a three dimensional model of the area to be developed/improved. This encourages consultees to consider the area as a whole and how the different elements of their environment impact upon one another. They started by getting Gypsy and Traveller children to make models of the site, and made this into a fun event. The parents then became curious and got involved too. Consultation was carried out on a range of existing sites and at Stowe Fair.

The result of this consultation has been a 'state of the art' 12 pitch site. Many of the features were directly influenced by the consultation, including:

- Semi-detached utility buildings that incorporate a day room, kitchen, bathroom/toilet and separate toilet;
- Boiler and central heating in utility buildings;
- A variety of power points on each pitch to enable flexible positioning of trailers and caravans and avoid trailing wires;
- The use of built-up flower beds to prevent trailers being positioned too close to each other;
- Low walls and gates separating each pitch and creating 'defensible' space;
- Parking on individual pitches;
- Communal playspace for children.

22 More information on this consultation method can be found at www.nif.org.uk

10.4 Feeding back on the results of consultation

- 10.4.1 It will not always be possible to meet the needs and preferences of everyone and, if the reasons for this are explained clearly, this will normally be understood by participants. As a common courtesy the results of any consultation should always be fed back to the individuals and/or communities concerned. Where it has not been possible to meet the expressed preferences of the community the reasons for this should be clearly explained.

10.5 Consulting with the settled community

- 10.5.1 As for other kinds of development, it is important that members of the local community, whether Gypsies and Travellers or settled residents, are able to feed in views on plans for new sites.
- 10.5.2 Misinformation and limited contact between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community can feed distrust and misconceptions, and these must be challenged and addressed proactively. Opposition from the settled community can delay, and in some cases prevent, the issue of planning permission for new sites. Councils and other developers need to plan for the possibility of such opposition at an early stage in the development and provide accurate information to help overturn negative stereotypes and allay concerns.
- 10.5.3 It will be important to demonstrate the need for new site provision in any consultation with the settled community, and the steps that the council or private developer will take to address concerns and deal with problems should they arise.

Transit Site Development, Southampton

Southampton City Council has recently granted cabinet approval to allow a planning application to be made for a six pitch transit site on the outskirts of the city.

Local residents were sent a letter and information sheet setting out the proposed nature of the development and inviting them to attend public meetings. A phone hot line, email address and postal address were set up to receive comments.

The proposal was processed through both a full cabinet meeting and cabinet consultation meeting – all of which were open to the public. Local community representatives and individuals spoke at each meeting, as did a member of the Romani Rights Association.

Cabinet decided to defer the final decision for three weeks until after a public information day had been held.

The information day consisted of two drop-in events which were held in different locations both close to the proposed site and a public meeting in the larger of these two venues.

All events were held on the same day, a Saturday between 9 am and 4pm, and were attended by out of area speakers, including the Head of Kent Gypsy and Traveller Unit and the South East Regional Advisor on Gypsies and Travellers, as well local police and council officers from planning, community safety, inclusion, education and other teams.

A series of question and answer sheets were prepared for an Information Day that was attended by 450 local people. These covered: site selection and costs (which included evidence of need for the site); design and environmental matters; security, crime and community safety and having Gypsies and Travellers as neighbours. As well as providing information about the proposed development the sheets also tackled common prejudices head on. Objections from the local settled community focused on fears of increased anti-social behaviour and 'hawking', impact on local traffic conditions, potential overspill onto surrounding land; safety issues linked to the adjoining railway line, and potential negative impacts for local small businesses.

The consultation process demonstrated that the council was prepared to listen to the views of local people and devote resources to addressing concerns raised. As a result of the consultation, the council has set up a management group that includes representatives from local businesses and residents as well as agencies such as the police and schools, which will respond to any issues as they arise. It has also increased security proposals for the site, including the installation of closed circuit television and escalating charges for pitches on the site to discourage overstaying.

ANNEX A

Key References

Niner, P (July 2003) The provision and condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England, ODPM – summary of full report Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller sites in England

ODPM (Feb 2006) Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – Guide to responsibilities and powers

ODPM Circular 01/2006 (Feb 2006) Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites ODPM

Commission for Racial Equality. Common Ground – Equality, good practice and race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers

Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions (Oct 2004) Thirteenth Report

East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Gypsy and Traveller study – draft final report 2005

Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards (April 2003)

ODPM, Revising the Model Standards for Park Homes, consultation paper on revising standards and guidance (Dec 2005)

Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A planning focus. Model Standard Package'. Available from the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, Guild House, 41 Clarence Street, Staines, Middlesex TW18 4SPY. Tel: 0784 461805

ANNEX B

The consultation criteria

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of policy.**
- 2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**
- 3. Ensure your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
- 4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
- 5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
- 6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact

Albert Joyce

Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU;

or by e-mail to

albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the response to the consultation itself should be sent to the contact shown within the main body of the consultation.

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 25 July 2007
Subject: GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PUBLIC SITE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Report on a consultation document on Gypsy and Traveller Site Management Guidance for Local Authorities, produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

Background

1. The Department for Communities and Local Government is consulting, until 22 August, on Draft Guidance on the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites.
2. The document *, the first such guidance from Government since 1981, contains 17 sections across its 53 pages, and includes proposed guidance on the factors that influence good site management, the approach to be adopted, and the roles of the site owner, managing organisation and site manager.
3. The Draft Guidance contains sections on a whole range of management issues, from waiting-lists and plot allocation and site licence agreements through repairs and maintenance to conduct on site, departures from site and enforcement/eviction policy.
4. It has drawn on the experience of a whole range of public site managers across England, including Kent's experience.

Key points

5. The Draft Guidance begins with the views of site residents about what makes a successful site, as gathered by Pat Niner of Birmingham University in 2002, for a major Government Publication.
6. These views are very similar to the views that residents of social housing would have, and include such issues as the site being in good repair, clean and tidy and quiet and peaceful. The included the freedom to carry on their lifestyle alongside children being in school and access to health and other services.

7. The document goes on to say that these factors interrelate and **“can be achieved where the right structure, people and skills are all in place”**.
8. The draft guidance highlights the importance of good relationships – between landlords and residents, between senior managers and site managers, and between site residents and neighbouring residents and businesses to the site.
9. The role of the site manager is covered in great detail, including the systems for site inspection, health and safety and site maintenance and repair.
10. Detailed advice is given on waiting-lists for sites and allocations policies and procedures, designed to ensure both thoroughness of consideration of applications and fairness in making decisions about who should get a pitch on a site.
11. There is also guidance on protection from eviction, which reflects the legislative progress towards the same security of tenure as people have in social housing, but the fact that security of tenure on public Gypsy and Traveller sites still falls far short of that equality.
12. The remainder of the guidance provides practical help on issues like finance and benefits, repairs and maintenance and involvement of site residents in site management.

Links with current Kent Policy and practice

13. Quite a bit of the draft guidance reflects current KCC practice.
14. Some of the recommendations (for example the one about involvement of site residents in site management matters), reflect recommendations of the KCC Select Committee which reported in May 2006.
15. The section on protection from eviction is particularly helpful, and consideration is being given to the amendment of the KCC standard site licence, to ensure that all the reasons for eviction are contained within the licence. That would mean that any licensee would know the reasons which could lead to termination of the licence, but also have security of tenure because the listed reasons for termination would be complete and comprehensive, and summary eviction would not be possible either for no reason or a reason other than one of the ones listed.
16. The management of sites, both by KCC and by other Kent and Medway Councils is becoming more consistent as time goes on. The site managers of all Kent and Medway publicly-run Gypsy and Traveller sites now meet quite regularly to discuss and exchange practice. The material in the draft guidance now out for consultation will be discussed by the site managers' group on 20 July and their comments reported orally to the Advisory Board meeting.

SE Region Site Managers Group

17. One of the difficulties in the past has been lack of consistency in practice in site management. KCC has been actively involved with GOSE and other County councils in the South East in setting up a forum for site managers to discuss good practice in site management.
18. The Group met for the first time on Friday 6 July, at the GOSE offices in Guildford and about 30 attendees, including those managing sites from Oxford and Hampshire in the West to Kent and the Sussexes in the East, discussed site management issues, and the best way of tackling them, for the first time in such a forum.
19. The discussion included both the site design and the site management guidance, currently out for consultation.

Weaknesses of the Draft Guidance

20. The Draft Guidance contains a great deal of good policy and good practice on a whole range of aspects of site management. It very much describes what should be done to maintain good management.
21. What is missing, however, is how management can effectively be restored on a site where management has failed or broken down, and how order can be returned to such a site, through the more advanced techniques of site management. This is the key to ensuring that the existing sites are retained, and fully occupied, they provide good quality accommodation for those who need it, and the full income is received for rents.
22. It may be that a separate document should contain such more advanced site management guidance.
23. Another weakness lies in the legislation rather than the guidance. While this draft guidance is very welcome, it is just guidance. Although local authorities will be more at risk of having their decisions challenged for unreasonableness, or under human rights law, if they fail to follow the eventual final management guidance, there is nothing mandatory about authorities following this guidance.

Conclusions and recommendations

24. This draft guidance is very welcome, and long overdue. Although there are various aspects of it which might be improved, it is broadly in keeping with Kent best practice. It provides a basis for reference of all site management across England, as well as an excellent guide for those authorities and site managers who are new to site management.

25. Members are asked to consider and comment on the consultation document and note that the views of this Board will be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services for him to consider as part of the County Council's response to this consultation.

Bill Forrester
Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit
(01622) 221846

Background Papers: The Draft Site Management Guidance from CLG

* A copy of the CLG Draft Site Management Guidance is attached for Members of the Board. Further copies are available electronically via the following link:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510557>

*Draft Guidance on the
Management of Gypsy and
Traveller Sites*

A Consultation Paper

*Draft Guidance on the
Management of Gypsy and
Traveller Sites*

A Consultation Paper

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2007

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.

This publication, excluding logos, may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or for internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to it being reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown Copyright and the title of the publication specified.

*Any other use of the contents of this publication would require a copyright licence. Please apply for a Click-Use Licence for core material at www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/system/online/pLogin.asp or by writing to the Office of Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ.
Fax: 01603 723000 or email: HMSOlicensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.*

If you require this publication in an alternative format please email alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government Publications
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 0870 1226 236
Fax: 0870 1226 237
Textphone: 0870 1207 405
Email: communities@twoten.com
or online via the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk

Printed in the UK on material containing no less than 75% post-consumer waste.

May 2007

Product Code 07HC04602

Contents

Section 1. Introduction	5
Section 2. What makes a successful site?	8
Section 3. Initial approach to site management	9
Section 4. Corporate organisation	11
Section 5. The landlord/resident relationship	12
Section 6. The site manager	14
Section 7. Applications and allocation of pitches	19
Section 8. Dealing with new arrivals	22
Section 9. Licence or agreement	26
Section 10. Fees – how to pay and what is covered	30
Section 11. Roles and responsibilities	33
Section 12. Site repairs and maintenance	35
Section 13. Other site management issues	39
Section 14. Consultation and resident involvement	46
Section 15. Conduct on site	49
Section 16. Departures	51
Section 17. Enforcement/eviction policy	52
Annex A. The consultation criteria	53

Section 1. Introduction

Consultation

- 1.1 This consultation seeks views on good practice guidance for the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 1.2 We welcome any comments that you may have on this guidance. It would be helpful if you have comments on specific parts of the guidance if you could identify the section or paragraph number to which your comments relate. It would also be helpful if comments were submitted electronically, as well as any hard copies that may be sent. This will help reduce the time needed to compile and consider the comments received.
- 1.3 Responses and comments, **to be received by 22 August 2007**, should be sent to:

Trevor Diesch
Gypsy and Traveller Unit
Department for Communities and Local Government
Zone 1/F8
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
e-mail: trevor.diesch@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Tel 0207 944 2501
- 1.4 We will consider the responses and make any changes necessary to the guidance as a result, and produce a document which summarises the responses and the changes made.
- 1.5 Please note that responses, including the names and addresses of respondents will be made available to anyone who asks for them unless confidentiality is specifically requested or disclosure would prejudice third parties.
- 1.6 The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. Further details are at Annex A.

Purpose of guidance

- 1.7 There are currently around 300 socially rented Gypsy and Traveller sites in England, which will either be managed by the local authority or registered social landlord that owns them, or by another organisation on their behalf. The Government has established a new framework to increase site provision to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, reducing the number of unauthorised sites and promoting good relations with the settled community. However, site provision needs to be backed by good quality site management. The Government believes that it is important to encourage good practice and a consistent approach to managing accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. This guidance aims to achieve this for both existing and future sites.

- 1.8 Where sites are properly managed they can be self-financing and sustainable, which will assist the Gypsy and Traveller communities to co-exist peacefully with the settled population. Gypsies and Travellers are a highly socially excluded group, with health and education outcomes significantly worse than that of the settled population. The evidence suggests that where they are able to settle on well managed and maintained sites, they are better able to access health and education services and this leads to a better quality of life.
- 1.9 Conversely, where caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers are not properly managed the likely result is deterioration in the physical fabric, and an increased vulnerability to anti-social behaviour, as experienced in the settled community. Site residents, as well as suffering from health and safety risks, may suffer intimidation from new residents moving onto the site, which they are powerless to resist. This in turn can make service agencies, utilities and other contractors reluctant to enter and work on the site.
- 1.10 Money invested in new site provision is potentially wasted unless the site is properly managed and maintained. When a local authority or registered social landlord undertakes to develop a site, it must also accept responsibility for managing it, in the same way that it would do with other forms of accommodation. This does not mean that it has to manage the site itself – this can be contracted out, although in doing so the site owner must remain accountable for the quality of management and put in place appropriate monitoring to ensure that standards are maintained.
- 1.11 The Government has made capital funding available to local authorities and registered social landlords, to help them meet accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers in their areas. Quality of management arrangements is an important factor in evaluating schemes that are put forward for Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant, in order to maximise the benefit from this investment. This guidance will help those with this responsibility to ensure that their management arrangements are appropriate and consistent with good practice, taking into account the experience of those managing sites, and the Gypsies and Travellers that live on them. The aim should be to offer the same high standards of management and support as are available to tenants in other forms of social accommodation, while recognising and respecting the cultural and lifestyle differences of these particular groups.
- 1.12 This guidance is intended for use by a local authority or registered social landlord developing a site for the first time, or for those already managing sites, although many elements of it will also apply to management of private sites. The aim is to encourage a positive, realistic and practical approach to the issues that can arise in the management of sites, especially where they are old and have suffered from under investment or neglect over the years, or where the behaviour of some residents is impacting on others, and may not have been addressed firmly and fairly. It is intended to provide an index of good practice which, if followed, can both prevent the continuation or recurrence of problems.

The Race Equality Duty

- 1.13 English Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic minority groups under Race Relations legislation. This legislation applies to all organisations. However, it puts additional duties on public authorities to ensure that all ethnic groups receive parity of treatment regarding the service being provided.
- 1.14 The Race Relations Act 1976 gives listed public authorities, including local authorities, a three part statutory duty (known as the ‘general duty’) to “pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination; and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between persons of different racial groups”. The Act was amended in 2001 to introduce ‘specific duties’ for certain listed public authorities, including local authorities, to make sure they had the systems and processes that would allow them to meet the general duty.
- 1.15 Local authorities must meet the general duty and specific duties in respect of all legally recognised ethnic groups. As legally recognised ethnic groups, English Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are included in the scope of the duty to promote race equality and good race relations. This means it is unlawful for any individual or organisation accommodating individuals to treat these groups less favourably than other racial groups, or to discriminate against them directly. The Race Relations Act 1976 covers all locally and nationally provided services, including housing and management of housing – and this includes Gypsy and Traveller sites (section 20 of the Race Relations Act refers).
- 1.16 Although registered social landlords are not listed public authorities, the Housing Corporation is, and in its capacity as regulator places specific obligations on them in relation to race equality.

Section 2. What makes a successful site?

2.1 In the course of research undertaken on behalf of Government on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in England¹, some residents were invited to say what factors they thought constituted a successful local authority site. These factors included:

- Good repair;
- Clean and tidy;
- Quiet and peaceful;
- Residents like it there;
- Freedom to carry on lifestyle;
- People at ease and not frightened;
- Children in school;
- Health and other services available;
- Social cohesion;
- Well maintained for the use of residents;
- Not causing the local authority major expense or trouble.

2.2 Although these factors were quoted in the context of public Gypsy and Traveller sites, they are the kind of requirements which most people would naturally aspire to in their own neighbourhood, irrespective of whether they own or rent a house, a flat, or a mobile home; and live in a city street, a housing estate, a country village – or on a caravan site.

2.3 All these factors interrelate and can be achieved where the right structure, people and skills are all in place.

2.4 Effective site management is vital to achieving these outcomes. It is a key element in establishing a new site – and the most important in sustaining it as a successful one. It is in the interest of both the local authority and the Gypsy and Traveller and settled communities to ensure that both new and existing sites are well run, good places to live and with a good spirit of community.

¹ The Provision and Condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England October 2002

Section 3. Initial approach to site management

- 3.1 When taking over or managing a site for the first time, it is an essential first step for the site manager to quickly become acquainted with details of the site:
- Know the layout and dimensions of the site surroundings in some detail, with plans of the total land managed and/or owned, and plans of the original site layout – and whether it is the same now;
 - A recent aerial photograph of the site would be helpful, for instance in identifying fire spacings, and plot limits;
 - Find out where all water and electric supplies are turned on and off, and where these and the drains and telephone cables run;
 - Make sure that a range of people have keys which give access to crucial parts of the site, such as any building where the main electric switch is located, or access to switch drainage equipment;
 - Find out about the people who live on the site or sites – how long have they lived there? Are they related? Are any of them especially vulnerable (dependent on machines powered by electricity for their health, for example)?
- 3.2 The second step is to identify all the stakeholders in the site management process. This may include:
- The local authority or registered social landlord, its staff and any governing body;
 - The residents on the site;
 - Those who live nearby the site, or have businesses near it;
 - Public and private service providers who provide services to the site (education, health, waste collection, utility companies like electricity and water suppliers).
- 3.3 The third step is to seek to agree, with those stakeholders:
- The outcomes being sought (e.g. a well-managed site, with contented residents living peacefully with their neighbours, full access to services, and a means of resolving any conflicts, and ensuring good communication and understanding between all parties);
 - The objectives to be pursued to achieve those outcomes;
 - A licence or agreement that protects the interests of the landlord and manager, and the residents, and, ideally, is agreed by all.
- 3.4 The fourth step is to recruit or appoint the staff needed for the site management required.

Check list

- Get to know the site and residents (3.1)
- Identify and meet all other stakeholders (3.2)
- Agree site management outcomes and objectives with stakeholders as far as possible (3.3)
- Recruit the right staff to manage the site (3.4)

Section 4. Corporate organisation

4.1 Studies have shown considerable variations in the way that local authorities are organised for dealing with Gypsy and Traveller accommodation matters. Some socially rented sites are owned and managed by the same authority, some owned by the county council but managed by the district council – or vice versa – others contracted out to a non-local authority body, or to Gypsies and Travellers themselves. Other sites are owned by registered social landlords or run by them on a local authority’s behalf. These are often the product of history or reflect local administrative arrangements – but there are key ways to manage the site portfolio irrespective of these and this guidance can be adopted in any of these circumstances.

Where does strategic responsibility lie?

4.2 The management of a local authority or registered social landlord’s portfolio of Gypsy and Traveller sites, in its broadest sense, remains the responsibility of that organisation even when the day to day management is contracted out. It must ensure adequate monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure effective management practices are adequately maintained. The ultimate responsibility for effective management rests with the owner of the site.

4.3 Historically most sites have been developed by county councils under previous legislation. The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers, and develop strategies for meeting them. This means that, over time, we might expect to see local housing authorities increasingly taking responsibility for site provision and management either directly, or in partnership with county councils. Where operational responsibility rests with county councils there should be clear lines of accountability to the responsible local housing authority.

4.4 Many local housing authorities have transferred their housing stock to registered social landlords, and they are also the main providers of new social housing. It is therefore appropriate to seek to encourage more registered social landlords to become involved in developing and managing Gypsy and Traveller sites.

4.5 In many local authorities Gypsy and Traveller liaison officers are responsible both for site management and enforcement against unauthorised camping, and are often based in legal services, environmental health or even consumer protection services. To reap the benefits of managing sites alongside other forms of social housing it may be necessary to split these two roles. It is in any case important that issues around both accommodation and planning enforcement are addressed for Gypsies and Travellers in the same way as they are for any other part of the community.

Check list

- Effective arrangements in place to monitor site management performance (4.2)
- Consider aligning site management and housing responsibilities (4.4)

Section 5. The landlord/resident relationship

- 5.1 Effective site management is key to the success of any Gypsy or Traveller site. Without it the viability of a site would be at risk, as would the public money invested in it. Its popularity as a decent place to live would be placed under threat, and residents may choose to move off the site, creating more unauthorised camping.
- 5.2 It also plays a vital role in promoting social harmony and addressing the fears and anxieties of the settled community. A successful site is one that can allow communities to co-exist together without friction and serve to overcome misunderstandings and misconceptions about Gypsies and Travellers and their way of life.
- 5.3 To achieve this it is essential that there is a strong emphasis on building and maintaining a relationship between the site's management and its residents based on mutual trust and respect, with simple, sensible and fair rules and clearly stated roles and responsibilities that everyone understands and which are applied consistently. Residents should all be treated in the same way, with rules enforced equally.
- 5.4 Without this clarity there is a risk of uncertainty, misinterpretation and disagreement which will threaten a site's sustainability.
- 5.5 A flexible site management plan should be drawn up with particular attention paid to the involvement of residents in the management and maintenance of the site. This can only be properly sustained by a regime which has consultation and dialogue embedded within it as a matter of course. This guidance is designed to help this process.

The management regime

- 5.6 Site management arrangements for socially rented Gypsy and Traveller sites vary between one organisation and another. Some have an in-house management arrangement and others contract this function out. Some differentiate between a site manager, as a senior office-based post in a local authority office; and a caretaker or warden, responsible for everyday management of one or more sites, sometimes residing on a site or with a permanent office based on it, or based off-site but with regular patterns of attendance.
- 5.7 Whatever the arrangement there should be a named individual who lives on or regularly visits the site, acts as the landlord's direct, or at least initial, point of contact with the residents, and has a general responsibility for the day to day operation of the site. In the context of this guidance that first and local point of contact is referred to as the "site manager".
- 5.8 The very nature, location and infrastructure of a site may mean that management is a more intensive activity, and involve much more contact between residents and managers, than for some other forms of social housing.

5.9 The site manager will also need strong support from the organisation that owns the site. It is important to ensure that the chain of site management is as short as possible and that each link:

- Is clear about its roles and responsibilities;
- Has appropriate powers and delegation to undertake them;
- Is able to access a named officer in the management chain of appropriate seniority where decisions are needed above delegated levels of responsibility;
- Is committed to managing sites effectively and safeguarding the funding invested;
- Is able to understand the distinct culture, traditions and needs of the residents of the site;
- Committed to ensuring that residents are fully aware of the respective responsibilities of the organisation owning and running the site, and those living on it.

Check list

- Establish and maintain simple, sensible and fair site rules (5.3)
- Ensure short and effective chain of site management with senior management buy-in and support (5.9)

Section 6. The site manager

Role of the site manager

- 6.1 In overall terms the role of a site manager is to ensure the site is providing a decent environment in which to live, under a management regime which is efficient and responsive to the requirements of the local authority or registered social landlord and to the needs of its residents. The continued viability of the site lies primarily in the hands of the person appointed to this role.
- 6.2 The core management role consists of those duties outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Core management duties

Site Inspection

- Examine site personally at least twice a week;
- Ensure residents are aware of site rules and regulations and are complying with them;
- Produce weekly monitoring report(s) identifying general maintenance and other actions necessary to ensure proper operation of site;
- Talk with residents about the site, be available; encourage participation in on-site residents' association;
- Act on resident feedback and report progress to them.

Health and Safety

- Produce weekly health and safety report after site inspection;
- Arrange for immediate repair/rectification of problems where possible;
- Tell residents where immediate action is not possible and introduce effective warning and protective measures;
- Record all actions taken;
- Review fire and bomb disposal safety procedures regularly;
- Ensure residents are aware of safety procedures, particularly of any changes to arrangements;
- Conduct annual risk assessment, record outcome and remedial actions taken;
- Conduct annual health and safety testing of equipment and facilities and record outcome.

Site Maintenance and Repair

- Produce weekly maintenance and repair report following site inspection and keep detailed records;

- Undertake minor repairs etc where possible, both promptly (see Figure 9) and to a satisfactory standard;
- Agree with senior management where use of contractors will be necessary;
- Ensure contractors carry out work properly and to expected standard;
- Inform residents of impending works, timescales and subsequent progress and keep detailed records of consultation meetings etc.

Finance

- Collect rent, water charges etc;
- Liaison with housing benefit office;
- Maintain accurate records of all financial transactions, issue receipts;
- Make arrangements for safe handling of cash e.g. deposits.

Arrivals and Departures

- Ensure new arrivals, departures and evictions are reported to those responsible for maintaining site waiting lists;
- Welcome new residents and provide introductory material;
- Issue licence or agreement and explain its terms and site rules;
- Receive deposit payment and keep securely;
- Keep proper records for audit purposes.

Departures

- Ensure rent and any other outstanding charges have been paid;
- Ensure pitch and associated facilities are left clean and in good order.

Record Keeping

A fundamental aspect of all these activities is the need for the site manager to complete and maintain updated records, for ease of auditing and health and safety checks, and to ensure the local authority's legal position can be properly defended in case of any dispute.

- 6.3 The role of the site manager and the services they are expected to provide should be made clear through a detailed job description. In certain cases, and to enable the professional running of the site, it may be that some residents require additional help from the site manager to help them engage effectively with social, welfare and benefit systems. This will ensure for example, prompt payment of housing benefit or associated allowances, and prevent some residents from falling into financial arrears or being unable to sustain their occupation of the pitch. In some cases this kind of support is provided through tenancy support or other welfare officers. Where necessary, the site manager's role may need to go beyond the immediate core management tasks to include those set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Some additional management roles

- Advising tenant of benefit entitlement and avoiding overpayments;
- Financial management and debt counselling;
- Liaising with health, education, the police and other statutory bodies;
- Helping residents in filling in forms;
- Liaising with outside agencies.

On or off site manager?

- 6.4 Whether or not the site manager resides on site is an operational decision for the organisation concerned. Whatever the arrangement this should be kept under review in the light of the relative success of the site, its operational performance and the degree of cohesion both within the site and with the neighbouring community.
- 6.5 An on-site manager would offer opportunities for a close rapport to be developed with residents, as an easily accessible and familiar individual, and ensure that any problems or issues can be quickly identified.
- 6.6 There are obvious resource implications for full time on-site management arrangements and a balance needs to be struck between this and a management presence on a regular basis. It is unlikely that an on-site manager would be justifiable in the case of a small site. However a large and busy site of 15 pitches or more could well justify this on financial and management grounds.
- 6.7 Although residents might prefer an on-site manager in some circumstances there is also a risk that in the longer term the continual presence of an “authority figure” on site could sour relationships where this is considered unnecessary. In many cases residents are known to prefer non-resident managers.
- 6.8 To be fully effective off-site managers should ensure that they are in attendance on site at regular times of the day or week, that residents are aware of their times of attendance, and have a well advertised and reliable telephone number on which they or colleagues can be contacted at any time in case their services are needed, particularly in an emergency e.g. outbreak of fire. It would be sensible to publicise the telephone contact number for normal working hours for routine enquiries to be made and an out of hours emergency repairs or situations telephone number which could be contacted via a public or private mobile telephone.

What personal skills should a site manager have?

- 6.9 While previous experience of working with Gypsy or Traveller communities is not essential, experience of working with the general public in a supervisory/managerial capacity would be a distinct advantage, particularly if this has been in the housing field. It is also very important that the site manager understands the way that Gypsy and

Traveller culture affects requirements for the site and its management. This will also be important in helping to gain the confidence of the residents.

- 6.10 The success of a well run site depends to a great extent on the competence of the site manager and their relationship with and support provided by senior line managers. As the direct representative of the landlord the person must:
- Have sound and balanced judgement, particularly under pressure;
 - Be literate and numerate;
 - Have well developed inter-personal skills, both to maintain the trust of the employer that their interests and responsibilities are properly safeguarded – but also to gain the trust and confidence of the Gypsy and Traveller community that the site will be managed fairly;
 - Be committed to the role.

Site manager qualifications

- 6.11 Possession of the Business and Technical Education Council advanced award on site management would be advantageous. Employers should ensure that site managers receive effective and up to date training in the necessary skills to effectively undertake the role in accordance with the job description.

Advertising site manager positions

- 6.12 As for all public sector appointments vacancies for site manager appointments should be widely advertised, with a transparent and vettable process in accordance with the local authority's procedures for other appointments. It should be open to all communities to apply and be considered on merit and suitability for the position irrespective of ethnic or cultural background.

Wider organisational training needs

- 6.13 It is recognised by practitioners that as a result of their nature, location and infrastructure, managing a site can be more demanding than for some other forms of social housing, and can involve much more contact between residents and managers. Relevant training should be provided for housing and accommodation providers, ideally with input from the communities, in order to increase understanding of the needs, travelling cultures and lifestyle of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 6.14 A formal liaison group, consisting of representatives from the county council (where appropriate), local authority or registered social landlord, the local Gypsy and Traveller community, together with health, education, the police and other agencies working with these communities, can help to gain a deeper mutual understanding, keep policies and procedures under review and develop best practice.

Monitoring management performance

- 6.15 Whether site management is conducted in-house or contracted out, the organisation should have robust arrangements in place to monitor the standard of the site management services provided in the same way as for other forms of social housing.
- 6.16 Where the management of a site is contracted out there should be a mechanism and appropriate resources in place to rectify site management problems where the contractor is not fulfilling the contract specification.
- 6.17 In line with the general duty on public authorities, management should be in accordance with the race equality duty. If the management of a site has been contracted out the authority should ensure the contract takes account of the race equality duty it has effectively adopted in acting on the local authority's behalf. The local authority should have arrangements in place to measure the effective performance of the contractor with regard to race relations legislation.
- 6.18 Where the contractor has responsibility for setting fee levels it should operate in line with section 10 of this guidance.
- 6.19 Management arrangements should include an effective complaints procedure. Where residents wish to complain about the service provided by a contract manager they should first approach the contractor directly and seek rectification of the matter. Where the resident is not satisfied with the outcome, complaints should be directed to the landlord in accordance with effective complaints procedures outlined in paragraphs 14.11–14 of this guidance.

Check list

- Site manager provided with detailed statement of duties (6.2)
- Decide whether site manager should live on or off site (6.4–6.7)
- Make residents fully aware of site manager's availability and emergency contact details (6.8)
- Consider setting up a formal liaison group (6.14 & 14.2)
- Ensure site management performance is properly monitored (6.15–6.19)

Section 7. Applications and allocation of pitches

- 7.1 It is recommended that local authorities and registered social landlords have and publish a scheme which sets out the policies and procedures for allocating pitches. While landlords are free to devise allocation schemes which make the best use of available resources in the light of local circumstances, the priority for the allocation of a suitable pitch should be given to applicants who are in greatest need and all those on the waiting list should receive due consideration on the basis of an assessment of their needs.
- 7.2 The policy for allocating pitches should be clear, fair and transparent and common across all Gypsy and Traveller sites owned by the landlord. The waiting list should be regularly reviewed and kept up to date.
- 7.3 Agreeing common waiting lists across whole county council or other authority areas (including unitary councils within the same geographical area) could make the whole system much more user-friendly, and enable Gypsies and Travellers to apply for vacancies over a much wider area than they can now. In addition, landlords might consider some system parallel to choice-based lettings which have been very successful within other forms of social accommodation, and have encouraged more applications for waiting lists, and more customer satisfaction. The policy of any landlord should be made available for inspection on request. The landlord may also wish to set qualification criteria for admission to the waiting list and may ask for evidence in support of the application, for example in relation to previous accommodation and household circumstances.
- 7.4 The landlord must retain control of the administration of the site and the allocations policy for it. The accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be addressed in the same way as allocating other forms of social accommodation for the wider community, and control of the allocations policy is essential to that process.
- 7.5 Although sites are often occupied by extended family groups and this can help to ensure good community relations on the site, family connections should not override other allocation criteria designed to give priority to those in greatest need. That said, the landlord in consultation with the site manager will want to take account of factors which may affect the suitability of a site as a social unit.

Applications

- 7.6 The application form should be simple to understand and in plain language and is best completed either by the applicant or by the site manager during an introductory interview at which the key rules applying to the site can be explained. These should also be stated clearly in the licence or agreement, a copy of which should be retained by a successful applicant when admitted to the site.
- 7.7 The site manager should hold a supply of the application forms on site in case an approach is made at the site, and should be prepared to help the applicant complete the form where necessary and ensure it reaches those administering the waiting list centrally. Other authorities (for example, district councils in a district where the county council manage sites) could also help people fill out application forms for site waiting-lists.

- 7.8 Where sites have a full or part time manager on site, decisions on whether or not to admit a new applicant should not be taken by the manager in isolation but with proper liaison with senior colleagues in the management chain, in the light of the admissions and allocation policy the authority has in place.
- 7.9 Each application should be acknowledged and assessed as soon as possible after receipt and applicants who meet the qualification criteria should be placed on the waiting list. Any applicant who does not meet the criteria should be notified with the reason why they do not qualify.
- 7.10 It is recommended that the application is submitted by the head of the household personally with members of the household named on the form. Where the applicant is placed on a waiting list the applicant must ensure the information provided is up to date and report any change in circumstances which would affect their eligibility for a pitch. The submission of false information could result in the application being cancelled.
- 7.11 Applicants should be required to provide proof of identity, and references from any previous sites. References should be sufficient to satisfy the new landlord that the applicant and household had left any previous site accommodation in good order and settled all rent and other charges which were outstanding.
- 7.12 Where this information is not available the authority should ask the applicant to nominate a contact from whom a reference may be obtained. Even if a vacant pitch is available the authority should not permit occupation of a pitch until a satisfactory reference has been obtained.
- 7.13 The landlord should reserve the right to withdraw any offer or raise an action to terminate a licence or agreement which may have been granted on the basis of incorrect information.

Allocations

- 7.14 It is recommended that the allocation of pitches should be made on broadly similar lines to housing accommodation under the allocation schemes for residential accommodation. Priority should be given to those households which are in greater need of accommodation, including those specified in figure 3 below.

Figure 3 – Examples of accommodation need

- People who have a need for accommodation on medical or welfare grounds, including those who are mentally ill, or with a physical or learning disability, and need a pitch to receive care;
- People who have a particular need for a stable base, including older people and families with children;
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded conditions or who have nowhere to live and are seeking permanent authorised site accommodation for the first time.

- 7.15 As with other forms of social accommodation, Gypsies and Travellers seeking site accommodation should, if possible, be allowed a choice over the type of pitch offered and may elect to remain on the waiting list until a suitable pitch becomes available. In circumstances involving an unauthorised encampment, the household concerned should be found authorised site accommodation as soon as possible for the short term with more suitable authorised accommodation as soon as possible thereafter.
- 7.16 The landlord should liaise with relevant agencies as appropriate to ascertain whether any special aids or adaptations are necessary on the allocation of a pitch.
- 7.17 Allocation schemes should include a system of prioritisation (which might be a points or banding scheme) and pitches should be allocated in accordance with that system of prioritisation. It should relate as closely as possible to the scheme for the allocation of other forms of social accommodation to ensure parity across all sectors of the community. However any system of prioritisation should permit the landlord to retain:
- limited discretion in allocating pitches and should not be automatically bound to the household with the highest priority; and
 - discretion to offer other pitches than those applied for (e.g. where these may also meet the needs of the applicant, or where the household would otherwise have no choice but to reside on an unauthorised encampment).
- 7.18 Site records should include an assessment of predicted turnover. Existing residents should be asked to advise the site manager of plans to travel, particularly where they have no plans to return to the site and a pitch is therefore likely to become vacant.
- 7.19 When someone applies for a pitch on a site, they should be asked to agree that inquiries can be made about them, and asked to supply references. If, as a result of an assessment of their application, the landlord has good reason to be concerned about the risk of conflict with existing residents, they should take this issue up with the applicant, and carry out a risk assessment. However, they should be careful to be objective. There need to be good reasons to refuse an application, based on the merits of the application, without undue influence from those already on a site. Special attention needs to be paid to applications from people who are not part of a family which is well-represented on a site. All applications need to be considered carefully, and not rejected as a result of assumptions and stereotyping by those making the decision.
- 7.20 Decisions to refuse admission (to a waiting-list, or a site) should only be taken as a last resort and as a joint decision with senior management of the landlord. Applicants should be told of the procedures for appealing against a decision not to admit entry, or to favour another applicant for admission to a vacant pitch. In all circumstances, and in particular where the applicant household has no other authorised accommodation, every effort should be made to meet the immediate accommodation need of the applicant.

Check list

- Publish clear, fair and transparent criteria for pitch allocation (7.1–7.5)
- Provide a clear and simple site residency application form (7.6)
- Obtain proof of identity of applicants, and references (7.11)
- Apply allocation policy fairly and based on need (7.14–7.19)

Section 8. Dealing with new arrivals

- 8.1 The site manager should arrange to meet the new residents at a mutually convenient time on the site and ensure they are properly welcomed and provided with a copy of the licence or agreement, a plan showing the plot they are taking a licence for (which shows the plot boundaries, and either the nearby plots or the whole site) and a leaflet explaining the terms of the licence or agreement in plain and simple language.
- 8.2 Sufficient time should be set aside to explain the details and ensure all other rules, facilities, rights and responsibilities on site are clarified and fully understood. Questions should be dealt with patiently.
- 8.3 The new residents should only be let onto the new pitch when the licence or agreement has been signed by both parties and any deposit paid. Any deposit charged should not normally be in excess of four weeks' rent.
- 8.4 Information should be provided concerning the services to which residents of the site will be entitled in return for their rental payments, other services (like waste collection, water, electricity) provided by others, the rights and responsibilities of both parties and what needs to happen before termination of the licence or agreement. Contact addresses should also be provided for useful organisations including, as a minimum, out of hours contact details for the site manager and for emergency services in case of a problem on site.
- 8.5 New residents should be absolutely clear about what they can expect, and what is expected of them, and have the terms of the licence or agreement explained to them verbally before they set up their accommodation on the pitch.
- 8.6 After signing the licence or agreement, payment of any deposit and other formalities have been completed, the new residents should be shown:
 - The pitch;
 - Where they can place their caravans, trailers and other possessions on the pitch (including ensuring a 6 metre gap between any caravans of one household, and those of the next door household);
 - The accommodation units;
 - Essential service provision e.g. hooking up to electricity/water supply, and where any emergency telephone is on the site.

It will be helpful for them to be introduced to, and meet other families on the site if they don't know them already.

- 8.7 New arrivals should also be provided with a more detailed information pack, in writing, and ideally also on CD, DVD or audiocassette, setting out the range and standards of services provided, what can be expected from the site management and what is expected of the residents. These should be produced in clear and simple language. Ideally, this could include the issues listed in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Information to be provided for newly arrived residents

Welcome to the site

- Landlord's and manager's commitment to good service in site provision;
- Equality and diversity statement;
- Day to day management arrangements, including rent collection, housing benefit arrangements, council tax liability, water, electric, waste collection and recycling arrangements, collection day etc;
- Moving onto the new site – what to do e.g. signing up for health and education services, redirection of mail;
- Who to contact in an emergency and how to do it.

Licence or agreement

- Explaining the agreement;
- Changing the agreement;
- Your rights and responsibilities;
- What if I break the agreement?;
- Examples of breaking the agreement;
- Pitch to be used as principal home;
- No sub lettings or lodgers;
- Absence from site.

Rent – how to pay and what it covers – in more detail

- How rent is set and what it covers;
- What rent does not cover;
- How to pay;
- Advice if you have difficulties in paying the rent;
- Standard arrears procedure;
- Electricity etc payment arrangements (including direct payment as a customer, or purchasing cards or keys – and where to do it).

Repairs and maintenance

- Landlord repair responsibilities;
- Resident repair responsibilities;
- Emergency repairs;
- Non-emergency repairs procedures;
- How to report a hazard, and what action to take to help people be safe;
- Service standards including response times;
- Health and safety issues.

Other services provided

- Maintenance of communal areas, litter clearance, dealing with disruption of essential service provision to site as a whole (dealing with regulatory bodies, NHS, Post Office etc).

Responsibilities of the resident

- What is expected of residents;
- Getting on with your neighbours;
- Avoid making excessive noise;
- Avoid nuisance or anti-social behaviour;
- Duty to arrange and pay for repairs needed because of damage or neglect caused by resident, household members or visitors;
- Keeping to the licence or agreement and the general law which affects all neighbours;
- Keep pitch clean and tidy;
- Paying water charges and council tax;
- Taking care and ensuring control of pets, restrictions on various types of animals, any arrangements for such animals near the site.

Resident involvement

- Consultation arrangements;
- Getting involved/resident involvement.

Complaints

- How complaints are dealt with;
- Complaints standards.

Changes to your household

- What happens if the person who signed the licence or agreement dies?;
- Support for families where relatives have died;
- Need for alterations or adaptations in case of disability etc – and how to make contact with Occupational Therapy and other services.

Moving Out

- Planning to move on;
- Departure checklist, paying the rent, damage checks;
- Provision of references.

Check list

- New residents welcomed and provided with full site information (8.1–8.7)
- New licence or agreement signed before admission (8.3)

Section 9. Licence or agreement

- 9.1 The licence or agreement is a legal contract between the resident and the local authority or registered social landlord and as such should be drafted in accordance with the powers of the relevant legislation.
- 9.2 The resident should be provided with a written explanation of the terms of the licence or agreement and have the terms clearly explained verbally before signing.
- 9.3 The tone and language of the licence or agreement should reflect that for any tenancy agreement relating to other housing managed by the landlord. It should be expressed in a clear and concise manner with a minimum of unnecessary legal language and leave as little chance as possible of doubt or dispute. It should make clear the respective responsibilities of both the resident and the local authority or registered social landlord, and the circumstances which could constitute a breach of the agreement.
- 9.4 It would be good practice to provide an audiotape or video version of the licence agreement/site rules for such circumstances.
- 9.5 Ideally a specimen licence or agreement could be provided when a household is placed on the waiting list. This would ensure that the applicant is already aware of the terms when a pitch subsequently becomes available, will save time, prevent acceptance being made in haste or under pressure, and help avoid adding to the stress of moving onto a new site. But it should be emphasised that this is a specimen copy only and be clearly indicated as such.
- 9.6 The new residents should be reminded that they are responsible for keeping to the conditions as soon as the licence starts, and, very importantly, are responsible for the behaviour of members of their household and visitors to their pitch.
- 9.7 The licence or agreement should set out clearly the precise circumstances in which its terms can be varied or amended.

Some examples of breaking the licence or agreement

- 9.8 The most common circumstances in which a breach of the licence or agreement may occur could be set out in the explanatory guidance, as examples only and not an exhaustive list, and could include the issues listed in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 – Breaking the agreement

Resident and household

- Abusive, threatening or violent behaviour by the resident, or members of their household or visitors towards employees of the site owner or their contractors;
- Falling into rent arrears;
- Refusing access to employees of the local authority to undertake their duties;
- Not using the pitch as a permanent home (during the period of the licence);
- Leaving the pitch vacant beyond the period permitted in the licence agreement;
- Sub-letting the pitch to another resident;
- Fly tipping;
- Noise nuisance;
- Undertaking activities on site which are not permitted by the agreement e.g. employment;
- Causing damage to the pitch, amenity block, other facilities and communal areas;
- Conducting or permitting anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Landlord

Failure to:

- Maintain and supervise site to provide a safe environment;
- Provide domestic electricity and water supply;
- Undertake repairs in line with local authority's specified standards.

What happens if the licence or agreement is broken?

9.9 Where a licence or agreement has been breached, depending on the severity of the breach, the first aim should normally be to remedy the breach. Appropriate steps might be:

- Collect evidence demonstrating the breach;
- Verbal negotiation;
- Written communication with timescale in which to remedy the breach;
- Second written communication with notification of subsequent actions which could ultimately lead to termination of the licence or agreement.

Gypsy and Traveller residents on local authority sites – protection from eviction

- 9.10 Gypsies and Travellers occupy local authority sites under a licence. The Caravan Sites Act 1968 provides that a local authority can gain possession of a pitch on a site by providing a minimum of 28 days notice of termination and then obtaining a court order.
- 9.11 In 2004, the European Court of Human Rights decided the case of *Connors v. the United Kingdom*, in which the claimant had been evicted from a local authority Gypsy site on which he had resided for many years. The local authority served a notice to quit, apparently on the basis that the family had been causing a nuisance, and were accordingly in breach of their licence conditions. When they failed to leave, the local authority commenced possession proceedings. The local authority subsequently dropped the allegations of breach of licence and asserted a right to summary possession on the basis that, since permission to occupy the land had been withdrawn, in circumstances where the licence was terminable by the local authority on notice, the family were trespassers. The court granted a possession order on that basis, but was unable to scrutinise the allegations of nuisance or, use discretion as to whether it was reasonable for a possession order to be made.
- 9.12 The European Court of Human Rights decided that that lack of adequate procedural safeguard was a clear breach of the occupant's rights under article 8 of the Convention, which provides a right to respect for that person's home, private life and family life.
- 9.13 The Housing Act 2004 has provided some additional protection. Although it does not provide residents of these sites with any grounds for resisting a possession order against them, it allows judges to suspend the enforcement of a possession order against Gypsies and Travellers on local authority sites.
- 9.14 The Government is committed to improving the security of tenure for Gypsies and Travellers on local authority sites and will be consulting on proposals for legislative change to address the issues raised in the *Connors* case shortly.
- 9.15 In the meantime, in order to comply with the *Connors* judgment, we would recommend local authorities avoid asserting a right to summary possession and we would encourage them to provide additional protection to licensees on Gypsy and Traveller sites. We set out below examples of ways in which this might be achieved:
- Include express terms in licence agreements giving licensees additional protection from eviction. We are aware that some local authority licences have been redrafted so that the authority can only seek possession on certain grounds, for example those which they may rely on against secure tenants. Alternatively they could include some of the protections and privileges given to residents on private sites under Schedule 1 of the Mobile Homes Act 1983;
 - Set up an internal appeals procedure whereby the decision of a local authority to terminate a licence could be challenged by licensees threatened with eviction. The appeal could be considered by a panel which could decide factual disputes between the site manager and licensee and consider whether it was reasonable for the licence to be terminated.

- 9.16 Broadly, we suggest local authorities should follow procedures and safeguards aligned to those expected in other social housing to tackle breaches of tenancy agreements. Failure to do so may result in an evicted licensee taking action against the authority, citing the Connors judgement. Local authorities are, therefore, urged to work with their legal advisers to review their Gypsy and Traveller licence agreements and procedures.

Short term absence from site

- 9.17 The present levels of site provision and often long waiting lists mean that residents who are permanently established on sites are reluctant to pursue their travelling culture, as a guaranteed pitch may not be available on return.
- 9.18 Nevertheless, periods of absence from a pitch eg for seasonal work or holidays, should be permitted within the licence or agreement subject to criteria for extended absences. Residents should be encouraged to advise the site manager of periods away from their pitches. During periods of absence, fees should continue to be paid by residents for allocated pitches and should not be available for reallocation. Where residents breach any term of the licence or agreement relating to short term absence from the site, this could result in its termination, with pitches being reallocated in accordance with the site waiting list.
- 9.19 The maximum period is at the landlord's discretion but a period of less than 8 weeks is likely to be unduly restrictive. Where an absence is permitted, it should be agreed in advance.

Changes to the household/succession

- 9.20 The 1968 Act does not make any provision for succession where a licensee dies. In these circumstances the landlord may consider transferring the licence, for example to:
- The surviving spouse or partner providing the pitch was that surviving spouse or partner's primary residence at the time of the licensee's death; or
 - A member of the licensee's family over the age of eighteen years, providing the pitch was that person's primary residence at the time of the licensee's death and for a year prior to that.
- 9.21 Similarly, where a licensee is absent from the pitch for an extended period or legally separated from the immediate occupant of the pitch, consideration should be given to transferring the licence to the spouse granted custody of any children.

Check list

- New residents provided with clear explanation of licence terms (9.1–9.4);
- Local authority to consider including terms in licence agreements providing additional protection from eviction and/or setting up appeals procedures (9.9–9.15);
- Residents reminded to give notification of short term absences (9.16–9.18).

Section 10. Fees – how to pay and what is covered

- 10.1 Residents should be given a clear statement of the fees and other charges which need to be paid at the commencement of the licence or agreement together with a list of the services which are provided in return.
- 10.2 In addition to the use of a pitch and associated amenity buildings, fees should include the services listed in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 – Services provided in return for fees

- Effective standard of maintenance of site infrastructure, repairs regime, proper protection of residents and visitors from health and safety risks and swift remedy where such risks are identified;
- Proper and effective safety arrangements, including spacing of caravans and provision of equipment to prevent fire outbreaks, fire spread or other safety risks;
- Regular maintenance and cleaning of communal areas, including site roads and car parks;
- Regular site inspections and reporting of anti-social behaviour;
- Bulk rubbish removal.

- 10.3 The cost of fees for socially rented site provision can sometimes represent poor value for money in comparison to other forms of social housing and can be prohibitively expensive particularly where the resident also has to meet the cost of renting a trailer. Excessive fee levels do not help encourage full use of a site and can threaten the relationship with residents, particularly where they have no alternative site to live on.
- 10.4 There is no reason why residents of socially rented Gypsy and Traveller sites should receive less value for money for their fees than that enjoyed by tenants paying rent for other forms of social housing. Levels charged should balance a realistic return for the local authority or registered social landlord with a reasonable charge to the residents for the services provided. They should compare fairly with fees charged for other sites in neighbouring areas.
- 10.5 In fixing licence fee levels, account should be taken of fairness for what is offered, particularly in the light of the average rent applied by the landlord for other social housing it provides, affordability and the cost of managing and maintaining the site. The landlord should set out to the residents how the fees are compiled and what services are provided in return.
- 10.6 Landlords are encouraged to be open and transparent with residents about site income and expenditure. Lessons from other types of housing provision suggest that when residents can see the costs of tackling such problems as vandalism and fly-tipping, and it is made clear that the cost of dealing with this may be at the expense of routine and planned maintenance, they are more likely to take an interest in the management of the site.

- 10.7 As an incentive to residents, consideration should be given to applying surpluses to the site where achieved. Site managers are encouraged to discuss with residents how savings which are made could be applied directly to the site.
- 10.8 The facilities available within a site should be the same for each household, and at the same fee, the only exception to this being the provision of double pitches to allow for the needs of larger households. In these cases a higher level of fee could be appropriate.
- 10.9 Where management of a site has been contracted to an outside agency and the agency has responsibility for setting fee levels the contractor should ensure that the contract specifies that future increases are not above those applied by the landlord to other sites which it owns.

Payment of licence or pitch fee

- 10.10 It is the responsibility of the resident to “offer up” the rent, not for the landlord to collect it. Having said that, residents may be offered a range of methods for payment, depending on the facilities and systems of the site provider, including:
- Collection on site;
 - Payment cards – used to make payments at a post office;
 - Post Office giro slips;
 - Cheque;
 - Housing benefit;
 - Standing order;
 - Debit or credit cards;
 - Internet using a debit card.

Payment on site

- 10.11 Problems can be encountered where fees are collected on site but not on a regular and properly understood basis. Where fees are collected on site the site manager should ensure that residents are aware of when and where it is to be collected. Residents should always be provided with a receipt or other proof of payment. Some residents prefer to have a rent book, and this can help them to manage payments and, especially, arrears. The site manager should ensure that accurate accounts are maintained in accordance with audit specifications.
- 10.12 Payment arrangements must be clearly understood to avoid any confusion or excuse for non payment or arrears. If residents are absent at the time of collection a follow up visit should be arranged within a short time and payment not allowed to drift. Residents should be clearly aware of the standard procedures applied in the event that arrears do occur.

- 10.13 Residents should be aware of what steps to take if they are or will be encountering difficulties in paying fees, and advised to tell the site manager as soon as possible. Advice should be provided sympathetically, under the same regime as is applied in the case of other forms of social housing.
- 10.14 A fees arrears procedure should be available and clearly explained to new residents in their arrival pack and to long term residents when a problem first comes to the site manager's attention. Ideally the landlord should have trained and knowledgeable employees available to discuss the arrears, on site and out of office hours if necessary, and with assurances that any information given will be kept in confidence by those handling the case. Every effort should be taken to try and make an agreement by which outstanding arrears can be paid, before any form of court action is considered. Residents should also be helped to access debt counselling, Citizens' Advice and other help, if they wish it.
- 10.15 Residents should also be made aware in advance of proposed fee reviews and the date when increases are to come into effect. Notification should be in writing and the resident informed at least 28 days before the increase in pitch fee.

Housing and other benefit

- 10.16 Responsibility for applying for housing benefit, income support etc rests with the residents concerned. However the site manager should ensure that residents are aware of whom to contact in the locality to deal with these issues and offer assistance where required. It is vitally important that the resident understands that, if they use housing benefit for purposes other than the rent, that the rent is still due, and they must pay it, or face the procedures applied for arrears.
- 10.17 Where housing benefit is involved, the site manager will need to establish with the resident whether this is to be paid directly to the individual and then collected as fees under normal collection arrangements, or paid directly by the housing benefit office. Ideally, for the landlord, it should be paid direct. Residents should be reminded to tell their housing benefit office if planning to travel away from home, as failure to do so could lead to loss of benefit or double payment if claimed elsewhere resulting in overpayments for which repayment demands will follow.
- 10.18 Where the site manager is aware of changes in a resident's circumstances, or where a new household is to be admitted, the site manager may find it expedient to remind the head of the household that the housing benefit office should be told and, in case of doubt, ensure that this has been done. The site manager must inform the benefit office of such changes in circumstances.

Check list

- Residents provided with clear statement of licence or pitch fees charged and services provided (10.1–10.2)
- Fair licence or pitch fee levels set (10.3–10.5)
- Residents notified of ways to pay licence or pitch fee (10.10–10.15)
- Housing benefit arrangements clarified with resident (10.16–10.18)

Section 11. Roles and responsibilities

The site manager

- 11.1 The site manager should ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of the local authority or registered social landlord, manager and residents are spelt out not only verbally but in a written statement which makes it clear what is provided within the scope of the rent paid and what is not. Clear explanations of why a particular service is not provided would be helpful and enable residents to take responsibility for issues themselves.
- 11.2 The site manager is expected to undertake their role in such a way as to provide site residents with a safe and secure environment, provide well maintained facilities and a responsive and helpful climate to meet the needs of the residents quickly and effectively with full value for the rent paid, and support good relations with the settled community.
- 11.3 The management arrangements should achieve a sensible balance, on the one hand allowing the residents to assume maximum responsibility for their own pitch, while offering a clearly recognised and understood service to underpin the management and sustainability of the site as a whole. For instance, a dispute between an individual household and an external service provider would not be the responsibility of the site management, whereas disruption of a regular service provided to the site as a whole would be something for the site manager to address. But it is a key part of site management to work closely with other providers and organisations so that issues are successfully resolved, incidents arising on the site are defused, and do not convey the impression to others that the site is an especially risky place to visit, or hostile to people who do not live there.
- 11.4 Where, for example, provision of electricity supply, telephone service, or postal deliveries to the site is not functioning properly or within published standards it would be for the site manager to help residents to take up the issue with the provider, or to take it up on behalf of a number of residents, taking the issue to the appropriate regulatory body if necessary. The following are examples of some of the things that can arise:
- There is an electricity fault “beyond the site meter”, which the supplier has to investigate and address;
 - There is a power cut affecting either just the site, or the surrounding area;
 - Mail deliveries have been interrupted by a real or perceived health and safety risk, for example dogs not kept under proper control;
 - A service provider has had an altercation with a member of the Gypsy or Traveller community elsewhere, or an incident affecting them personally at their home, which has led them to stop providing a service to unrelated site residents.
- 11.5 In all circumstances the site manager should do their best to gather the facts, tell residents of the action which has been taken on their behalf and keep them informed of progress.

- 11.6 It should be clear from what is being said here that communications are absolutely vital and key to successful management. It can be typical of a site where the management is in difficulties that the physical means of communication, as well as the actual communication, has broken down. So post may no longer be delivered, telephones may not be available, and people may feel unwelcome as visitors to the site. In such circumstances, any methods of restoring communication successfully should be considered.
- 11.7 The landlord must make clear who is responsible, and set up arrangements for maintaining communal areas on the site and delivering services such as clearance of litter, communal lighting, site roadways and paths, boundary fences etc. These issues need to be addressed to the same standards as for the settled community. Site residents should be informed about cleaning, maintenance and repair service standards for these facilities (see Section 12 below).

Site residents

- 11.8 The information pack for new residents should make it clear that residents are responsible for:
- Abiding by the terms of the licence or agreement and site rules;
 - Paying the rent on time and reporting immediately if they are having problems paying it;
 - Keeping the pitch, amenity block and any other facilities provided clean, tidy and in a good condition;
 - Reporting any repairs that the landlord is responsible for so they can be remedied before deteriorating further;
 - Good conduct of household members and their visitors, whether in relation to the pitch, amenity block, or other facilities on site;
 - Living in harmony with neighbours;
 - Avoiding nuisance and anti social behaviour, and reporting instances of it on site to the management and other relevant agencies, so that appropriate action can be taken;
 - Avoiding any other breaches of the licence or agreement (see Section 9 above).

Check list

- Written statement provided to residents stating landlord responsibilities and what is provided for licence fee or rent (11.1)
- Written statement provided to residents stating their own responsibilities (11.8)

Section 12. Site repairs and maintenance

- 12.1 As with other forms of social accommodation it is important that Gypsy and Traveller sites are maintained in good repair, clean and tidy, and safe and pleasant to live in. The Gypsy and Traveller communities on socially rented sites are entitled to expect these basic standards as a matter of course. It should also help to ensure the continued viability of the site.
- 12.2 Sufficient investment of time and resources devoted to meeting these aims and proper two way consultation with the residents are key elements not only in protecting and enhancing the viability and performance of the site, but in helping encourage a sense of pride and belonging. This will encourage residents to play their part in keeping their own pitches in a neat and tidy condition, and reporting any defects which need to be rectified.
- 12.3 Local and senior managers should ensure a budget containing a fair allocation of resources for site repairs and maintenance is available not only for a planned programme but also for ad hoc repairs, and for priority improvements e.g. where a resident needs changes to access or other facilities to help address a change of personal circumstances such as special health needs, or physical or mental disability. When assessing priority repairs, proper account should be taken of responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 12.4 It is important to make sure that sufficient funding is set aside both for repair costs, and for ensuring that these are carried out with appropriate swiftness. Residents making their own repairs on sites can quite often lead not only to extra costs in putting them right, but also allegations of vandalism and counter-allegations of delay in carrying out repairs. Early attention, especially to urgent repairs (see Figure 9) can mean a double-saving. Funding for site management and staffing should not prevent money being available for running repairs. All costs should be closely monitored, both for value for money, and closely against all site income. Systems should enable this to be done easily by site managers.
- 12.5 Difficulties can sometimes be encountered in obtaining the service of contractors to work on site repairs and maintenance. Local authorities and registered social landlords should consider using approved contractors used to maintain their housing stock (or other buildings where it is not a housing provider) for a similar role for its Gypsy and Traveller sites. The landlord should consider applying for available grant for refurbishment to bring sites up to a high standard.
- 12.6 Day to day responsibility for site maintenance lies initially with the site manager, together with responsibility for reporting more significant maintenance needs to the designated budget manager. The budget manager should ensure the availability of appropriate funding for emergency and programmed works. Residents should be told how to report repairs and the timetable for completion.
- 12.7 A clear long term maintenance and improvement plan should be available for each site, drawn up in consultation with residents, and which should pay particular attention to the needs of disabled and older people, and children and young people on site.

Emergency repairs

12.8 Residents should be clear about:

- What constitutes emergency repairs and what constitutes routine repairs (see Figure 7 below);
- How to report need for emergency repairs out of normal office hours;
- Charges which may be incurred if out of hours service is called unnecessarily.

12.9 Standards for repairs and maintenance should be made explicit in the licence or agreement and should mirror the standards for the landlord's other forms of social housing. These can be set out in a general statement of service standards made available to existing residents and forming part of the information pack provided to new residents on arrival (see paragraph 8.7). This should include repair response times, levels of pre- and post-repair inspection and satisfaction surveys.

Figure 7 – Repair response times

Emergency repairs to be addressed within 1 day

Drainage

- Blocked or leaking foul drain or soil stack;
- Blocked toilet (amenity block);
- Missing or dangerous manhole covers;
- Flooding making roads on site impassable.

Water

- Total loss of water supply;
- Leaking water or heating pipes, tank or cistern which cannot be controlled;
- Toilet not flushing (amenity block).

Power

- Total loss of electric power;
- Unsafe or overheating sockets or electrical fittings.

Heating

- Total or partial loss of room or water heating (November – April).

Structures

- Amenity block major roof leak (if weather conditions permit safe working).

Non-emergency repairs and response times**Drainage**

- Blocked sink, bath or basin – 3 days.

Water

- Partial loss of water supply – 3 days.

Power

- Partial loss of electrical power – 3 days.

Heating

- Total or partial loss of room or water heating (May – October) – 3 days.

Structures

- Amenity block minor roof leak (if weather conditions permit safe working) – 7 days.

Site condition and maintenance

- 12.10 The site manager is normally responsible for implementation of a clear planned programme of maintenance and repair work, and a pre- and post-maintenance and repair work inspection regime.
- 12.11 The site manager should also be responsible for ensuring that maintenance of all supplied equipment on site is carried out correctly e.g. external water supplies, site barriers, equipment for the disposal of sewage or surface water. Particular care must be taken when dealing with all items of emergency equipment.
- 12.12 A regular inspection of site condition and maintenance should be conducted, at least weekly, concentrating in particular on the condition of gullies, gutters, drainage, lighting, gates and health and safety issues. A report of the inspection should be sent to the manager responsible for the maintenance and works budget with recommendations.
- 12.13 Inspections should take account of the concerns of the site residents, obtained by prior notification of an impending inspection and a request that residents report any shortcomings which they have identified but not reported since the last inspection took place. Care should also be taken to ensure that other areas of the site are in good repair, including the general infrastructure of the site and pitches and associated facilities relating to pitches which are unoccupied, to ensure they are fit for re-letting as soon as demand arises.
- 12.14 Residents' concerns regarding health and safety hazards or nuisance arising from external sources should be investigated as part of the routine site inspection and logged in the report e.g. emissions or noise from neighbouring land, and hazards in respect of close proximity to contaminated land.

- 12.15 Every effort should be taken to ensure the residents are not at risk, and the issue is addressed, including liaison with environmental officers, health practitioners and those responsible for the source of concern. Residents should be clearly informed of the steps taken, the outcome of investigations and the ramifications of the inspection for those deemed responsible for the problem.

Check list

- Budget available for ad hoc repairs as well as planned maintenance (12.3)
- Residents made aware of procedures for reporting need for repairs (12.8–12.9)
- Licence or agreement includes details of standards for repairs and maintenance including response times (12.8–12.9)
- Clear planned programme of maintenance and repair work available for each site, after consultation with residents (12.7 & 12.10–12.11)
- Regular inspection of site condition and maintenance conducted and report compiled, in consultation with site residents (12.12–12.15)

Section 13. Other site management issues

Grounds maintenance

- 13.1 Where sites have extensively landscaped grass areas these can, if properly maintained and managed, provide tidy and pleasant surroundings by which to foster good relationships and a sense of identity and belonging amongst the residents. In order to reduce fire risks, the grass should be kept trimmed.
- 13.2 However such areas are often difficult to manage and if not properly maintained may become areas for waste and litter to be deposited. It is recommended that, if possible, communal areas should normally be kept to a minimum to reduce need for maintenance and waste clearance and to reduce conflict over illegal parking and areas of waste deposits. Responsibility for cleaning and maintaining these areas should be fully planned, documented and made available to the residents together with details of the steps to be taken where these communal areas are abused. Strong action is always recommended against fly-tipping.
- 13.3 Play areas should be well maintained and regularly inspected to ensure a safe environment, and children encouraged to play their part in reporting hazards and shortcomings both in respect of equipment and surroundings. Play apparatus which has been damaged should be taken out of operation immediately and the hazards clearly identified to prevent further use prior to repair. If undertaken by the site manager, appropriate training and health and safety assessment should be carried out before work begins.

Cleaning on site

- 13.4 Roads and pathways on site should be swept regularly and at the same frequency as other areas covered by the local authority's statutory responsibilities. It is important to include the site roads within contracts for road-sweeping that apply elsewhere. Residents should be actively encouraged to keep their pitches and adjacent areas in a neat and tidy state and free of waste.
- 13.5 The site should be regularly inspected for evidence of fly-tipping and waste disposal and the local environmental health service told where this appears to be happening on a regular basis. It is vital for the site manager to play a key role in helping to deal with this. In instances involving larger scale waste tipping, or involving toxic materials the Environment Agency should be told immediately. Arrangements should be taken to remove offending materials quickly, after consultation with the appropriate environmental body, to avoid danger to the residents and their children, and to discourage further actions of this sort.
- 13.6 There have been instances of fly-tipping reported on or around sites, sometimes the result of actions by individuals residing on or connected to the site, sometimes by members of the settled community. Irrespective of who is responsible, those residents who are not involved should not be subject to the results of the unlawful actions of others. Residents should be strongly encouraged to play their part in maintaining the

quality of the site on which they live by reporting any instances they observe to the site manager to ensure a rapid response and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Waste/recycling containers

- 13.7 Effective arrangements must be in place to prevent accumulations of waste which would give rise to health hazards, fire risk or nuisance. In addition to ensuring continuity of normal domestic refuse collection services, the site manager should work with the local authority to encourage availability of appropriate containers for domestic waste recycling.

Liaison with essential service providers including routine practice visits

- 13.8 It is essential that the site manager maintains regular liaison with the emergency services and encourages the residents to directly report their own concerns, particularly where the site manager is not regularly on-site or easily available. Any emergency occurring on site will normally be dealt with by the emergency services directly and it is therefore essential that they are familiar with the site and how to gain access.
- 13.9 As the majority of vehicles used by the fire and ambulance services will not fit under an entry barrier, arrangements should be made, by liaising with those services locally as to the best means of access in an emergency. If keys are requested by the emergency services, they should be supplied, together with any other access arrangements and instructions as necessary. Regular inspection by the fire authority regarding hydrant access and any fire precautions taken on site is to be encouraged.
- 13.10 The site manager must maintain regular monitoring and testing of fire equipment, alarm-raising equipment, fire reporting and evacuation procedures to comply with any model standards issued under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. All site residents should be told of these procedures on arrival and on a regular basis subsequently.
- 13.11 Residents have a responsibility for fire prevention within the confines of their own caravans, including the installation of appropriate smoke alarms and other fire prevention equipment. However the site manager can assist this process by liaising with the fire service to visit the site occasionally to offer fire prevention advice and perhaps training to the residents. Some fire services encourage awareness by children and teenagers by inviting them to fire stations.

Relations with the police

- 13.12 Gypsy and Traveller site residents are entitled to police services in the same way as anyone else in the community. The site manager should work to promote good relations between the residents and the police, and to help develop the confidence of both Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community that any issues affecting site residents will be dealt with effectively and fairly.

Relationships with social care providers

- 13.13 The site manager should maintain regular contact with social care providers to support the welfare of residents on site. The site manager must report specific concerns to the appropriate agencies, schedule meetings and visits to the site and tell residents this is being done. Liaison should also be maintained with the local health practices (general practitioner and health visitor) to assist residents with registering and keeping good relationships with permanent medical services within the locality. Where there are additional special needs (e.g. through old age or disability), local health and social care services should be informed. The manager should ideally tell general practitioners of fluctuations in resident numbers and planned departures to ensure health practices are able to plan their resources effectively.
- 13.14 Similarly, liaison with the Travellers Education Service (or equivalent, or local education authority) and other agencies where appropriate should be encouraged and maintained, particularly where arrivals and departures involving families with children are expected to occur.
- 13.15 Current information about welfare benefits and local services should be available on site.

Waste collection

13.16 The site manager should ensure that:

- Local authority refuse collections call as regularly at the site as at other residential premises nearby;
- Barriers are opened for this purpose;
- Waste is collected wherever access permits, and from individual pitches, not simply from one single pick up point.

Poor waste collection, or waste management by site residents, can lead to a build-up of refuse close to where people live, may develop into a significant health hazard, lead to a collective downward spiral of confidence of the residents on the site and could ultimately threaten its viability.

Postal delivery

- 13.17 Residents of authorised permanent residential sites are entitled to receive delivery of mail to their individual address in the same way as anyone else. However postal workers have the right to refuse to deliver directly to premises where their personal safety is threatened (e.g. by dogs not kept under proper control).
- 13.18 Where postal workers refuse to deliver to a pitch for this type of reason, responsibility rests with the resident to put matters right in direct consultation with the provider. However where there is a breakdown or disruption in normal service to a site as a whole, the site manager should take this up with the postal service to ensure the safety of postal staff is protected, and the obligations of the provider are met.

Electricity supply

- 13.19 The resident is responsible for the cost of electricity consumed by the household on the pitch, and should have the available payment methods made clear when first arriving at the site. Where the site manager collects payments on behalf of residents, arrangements should be made to ensure that regular weekly collections are made and that arrears are not allowed to build up for more than two weeks. In such cases, residents should be reminded of arrears and prompt payment sought. For arrears beyond that period the local authority should follow the guidelines issued by the power companies concerning their disconnection policies.
- 13.20 Where “pre-payment” cards or key access energy systems are in use, the site manager should ensure that these are readily available. It would be helpful to have at least one alternative nearby outlet (e.g. post office, shop, or council office) where these can be bought, wherever possible in a location which does not involve a need to use transport.
- 13.21 The site manager is responsible for liaison with the electricity provider to ensure a proper supply is available on site and to make contact with the provider to secure restoration of power where disruption occurs. Individual disputes between a resident household and the supplier, where they are direct customers, are not the responsibility of the site manager although residents should be made aware of where and how to take forward a complaint.

Site security

- 13.22 The site manager is responsible for reporting and, where possible, managing any unauthorised occupation on the site.
- 13.23 Some local authorities or registered social landlords regard an effective gate or safety barrier as essential to prevent unauthorised entry of caravans, although this should be of a type which still allows residents normal access to the site in cars and other standard vehicles. The specific arrangements applying to the operation of the gate or barrier depend on local requirements and custom and practice. Residents should be consulted and be clearly aware of what these arrangements are.
- 13.24 Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the emergency services can gain entrance to the site at all times. The site manager should also have arrangements in place to ensure that service providers can get access to the site (e.g. for rubbish collection).
- 13.25 The boundaries of the site and of individual pitches should be clearly indicated by fencing, landscaping etc which should be adequate to prevent unauthorised entry. Plot and site boundaries should be shown on a plan attached to the licence or agreement. Regular inspections of these facilities should be conducted to ensure they remain in good condition.
- 13.26 Closed circuit television facilities with external monitoring can help protect both residents and staff, as well as safeguard the infrastructure from vandalism from whatever source. As with all other repairs and improvements, residents should be made aware of and consulted on plans to introduce closed circuit television before any installation

takes place. Residents should be encouraged to participate in consultation and give their views. It should be made clear to residents that where closed circuit television is provided it is for their benefit as well as for the security of the site. Residents' views should be sought and taken into account in respect of how closed circuit television can best be sited to give proper protection without unduly invading their privacy.

Visitors

- 13.27 Site residents are entitled to receive visitors but visits should not be permitted to turn into permanent occupancy. To guard against this any additional caravans belonging to visitors should not be permitted on other vacant residential pitches, and visitors should be allowed to remain for a specified period only subject to written agreement signed by all parties.
- 13.28 Residents should be encouraged to seek the approval of the site manager in advance of the arrival of visitors with caravans, providing details of the number of caravans involved and their plans for locating them if there is no room on site.
- 13.29 A clear and unequivocal maximum stay period should be stated where extra caravan accommodation is involved on site. Ideally a request and permission form for this purpose should name the individuals visiting, date of arrival and intended departure, and be signed by the resident. Permission to extend the period of stay should be strictly at the discretion of the site management although it should be noted that planning restrictions may limit the length of time any extra caravans can remain on site.

Scrap and storage

- 13.30 The traditional occupations of some members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities can lead to the appearance of scrap on site. Storage of scrap and other waste items should be discouraged. Information regarding disposal facilities can be obtained from the Environment Agency.
- 13.31 In the event that scrap does appear on site, the site manager should attempt to establish ownership and require the resident to arrange for commercial removal from the site at the first opportunity. Attempts to leave scrap or other waste on site may constitute an offence and could be regarded as a breach of licence conditions.

Working on site

- 13.32 Gypsy and Traveller sites are essentially residential and those living there are entitled to a peaceful and enjoyable environment. As a general rule working from residential pitches should be discouraged, although residents may be permitted to engage in small scale domestic work within the confines of their pitch provided they have first secured express written permission from the site management, and the activity does not interfere with neighbouring residents both on and off site.

- 13.33 It is recommended that residents should not normally be allowed to work elsewhere on site. Rules governing work should equate with those for other forms of social housing where work is not encouraged or allowed within a residential setting. Examples of activities that should not be approved include:
- A car repair business and vehicle breaking;
 - Scrap metal work or related activities, including storage;
 - A taxi service from the premises;
 - A business that involves many people visiting the site.
- 13.34 However permission for some level of activity may be considered where the landlord is satisfied that there are no planning, environmental, or health and safety considerations, and that work practices do not intrude on other residents' own living environment.

Animals

- 13.35 Again, as for other forms of social housing, keeping domestic pets (dogs, cats, small birds etc) should be permitted, subject to number and health and safety considerations. In the case of dogs, ownership must be properly identified and conditional upon the animals being properly controlled within the pitch. Any animals in excess of those agreed within the licence or agreement should be agreed with the site manager beforehand.
- 13.36 The ownership of dangerous dogs, within the definition of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, should be refused within the confines of the residential site.

Grazing land

- 13.37 Where there is demand for such facilities and where the landlord is satisfied that it may be reasonable and practicable to do so, a grazing area for horses and ponies may be provided, adjoining the site or nearby, to reflect the cultural use of the horse as a traditional means of transport. Consideration should be given to arrangements for the management of this facility, including the imposition of a charge, which might pay for any grazing or stables provided, at a reasonable rate.
- 13.38 Site managers may also enquire whether owners of suitable land (without ragwort or other hazards) on the periphery of the site may be amenable to providing surplus land for this purpose at a reasonable rent, and to make details known to the residents of the site. Residents would be responsible for making their own arrangements with the owner of the land and entering into a separate agreement.

Check list

- Arrangements in place for maintenance of communal areas and residents made aware of these (13.2)
- Play areas well maintained and inspected regularly for health and safety risks (13.3)
- Residents encouraged to keep pitches and adjacent areas tidy (13.4)
- Site inspected regularly for fly-tipping and waste disposal hazards (13.5–13.6)
- Regular liaison maintained with emergency services (13.8–13.12)
- Fire equipment, evacuation procedures etc regularly monitored and tested and residents informed (13.10)
- Regular contact maintained with social care providers (13.13–13.15)
- Waste collection and postal services maintained on site, and disruption investigated (13.16–13.18)
- Site gate or safety barrier in good working use, and emergency services and residents aware of access arrangements (13.23–13.24)
- Residents aware of rules relating to visitors to the site (13.27–13.29)

Section 14. Consultation and resident involvement

- 14.1 It is essential that the views of Gypsy and Traveller residents are taken into account over the services provided, and that these arrangements are responsive to their needs. Resident consultation should be actively encouraged with well publicised consultation arrangements organised in the same way as for other forms of social housing, which may include resident groups and a committee to represent the views of site residents.
- 14.2 These could be in the form of local forums with residents on site, designed to:
- Discuss the services provided;
 - Permit joint site inspections to identify problems and the need for improvements;
 - Draw attention to any perceived problems, including instances of damage caused by anti social behaviour;
 - Agree ways in which these issues can be addressed; and
 - Enable residents to work with the site owner to help shape services and set the standards which will be most effective in a site environment.
- 14.3 The site manager should propose and agree details of the procedure and frequency of resident groups and meetings and ensure newly arrived residents are aware of these.
- 14.4 Ideally, the landlord could provide service standards on which consultation is based, committing to consultation on, for example, those items specified in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 – Consultation standards

We will consult you on:

- Matters of site management;
- Changes in terms of licences or agreements;
- How to get the best from the site;
- Proposed repairs and improvements to the site;
- Any matter significantly affecting your everyday life on the site;
- Ways in which the site can be improved;
- Access to services and changes in payment methods;
- Carrying out regular surveys to find out your views on the service delivered and give you the opportunity to comment.

- 14.5 Proper consultation helps develop a sense of partnership and trust between the site manager and the residents, and will help avoid conflicts otherwise arising from a lack of communication. Consultation should be real and proactive, and undertaken regularly rather than immediately prior to the date in which proposed changes would take effect. It should be conducted not only with the head of the household but with all its members wherever possible, separately where residents prefer. Care should be taken to encourage and involve younger people and children to give their views and to play an active part in the running of the site and the services it provides.
- 14.6 It is recommended that site managers encourage all residents to participate in a residents' association and a site liaison committee which could also include, for example, representatives of the police, social services, education and health providers, and parish council. This should include a commitment to monitor and review the outcome of consultation and feed the results back to the residents.
- 14.7 Residents could be encouraged to participate in a neighbourhood watch scheme both to protect their own safety and that of their families, help protect the security of the site on which they live and enhance the community spirit both within and beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 14.8 The site manager could also encourage residents to become more involved both within and beyond their community by publicising the work of voluntary, statutory and community organisations within the area. This can range from inviting organisations, youth groups etc to provide details of forthcoming inter-community events, to arranging visits of representatives of these groups to visit the site to explain directly to residents what their organisation's work entails and the benefits which participation could bring.
- 14.9 Involving residents in suggesting improvements and in site maintenance issues is a positive approach to successfully managing a site. In the case of plans to repair or otherwise develop site facilities, residents should be consulted at an early stage not only about changes which would be most effective for the site from the resident's perspective, but should be informed of the timing of the work. This will ensure that residents may continue to enjoy their normal everyday life and routines, with unavoidable disruption kept to a minimum.
- 14.10 As in any consultation exercise, care should be taken to ensure that the genuine views of all site residents are sought. Representations made by individuals who may be unrepresentative of the majority on the site should be approached within that context, and efforts made to ensure the feelings of all are encompassed in any participation arrangements.

Complaints procedures

- 14.11 The site manager should ensure that a clear and accessible complaints procedure is available on site, including recording complaints made. Where an issue raised by a resident cannot be addressed by the site manager to the satisfaction of all concerned, residents should have access to complaints procedures in the same way as for other forms of social housing.

- 14.12 Details of the complaints procedures should be freely available to all site residents. Complaints forms should be easily available from the site manager or landlord's offices, with help given to the resident in completing the form where necessary. Arrangements should be in place to enable residents to complain directly to a nominated and senior officer in confidence where this involves a complaint related directly to the actions of the site manager.
- 14.13 Feedback on progress of the complaint should be available during the investigation process. All residents are entitled to a written response from a senior representative of the landlord responsible for the complaint.
- 14.14 Published standards should state that the complaints procedures will provide:
- Acknowledgement of the complaint within a stated time;
 - The name of the investigating officer;
 - An assurance that the complaint will be dealt with confidentially;
 - That the complainant is informed of progress;
 - A full explanation of the outcome is provided and the steps to be taken where appropriate.

Check list

- Consultation procedures in place and participation encouraged (14.1–14.4)
- Residents consulted at an early stage about proposals to repair and develop site facilities (14.9)
- Clear and accessible complaints procedure in place and explained to residents (14.11–14.12)

Section 15. Conduct on site

- 15.1 It is important that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities residing on local authority and registered social landlord's sites are given the same protection against anti-social behaviour as the settled community. Through well managed and regulated sites, it is possible to provide the safety on site which residents deserve and expect.
- 15.2 Landlords will have a range of anti-social behaviour policies in place in respect of other forms of social housing and these should apply equally to those residing on Gypsy and Traveller sites they manage, or which are managed on their behalf.
- 15.3 The site manager has important responsibilities in this context to:
- The local authority or registered social landlord;
 - Site residents;
 - Residents outside the Gypsy and Traveller community living in the vicinity of the site
- to ensure that the landlord's policy on prevention of anti-social behaviour on sites is effectively implemented, both for instances arising from within and outside the site.
- 15.4 The licence or agreement signed by all parties on arrival should contain full details of the landlord's policy on what forms of behaviour and activity are not permitted on site, and action to be taken where reported. It should be clear in the document that activities of this sort may constitute a breach of the licence or agreement and ultimately result in its termination.
- 15.5 Residents should be told on arrival, and regularly reminded, of the conduct expected of residents, the way in which misdemeanours should be reported and the penalties for acting in contravention of what is required. This should mirror similar statements in respect of other forms of social housing and offer the same range of investigative procedures and remedial actions.
- 15.6 The site manager must uphold the rules relating to behaviour on site, and in the licence or agreement. In turn the manager should ensure that the residents are protected and reassured on site, through close liaison with police and emergency services.
- 15.7 The landlord should be prepared to support, guide and advise residents regarding all issues of anti-social behaviour, working with them to find ways to resolve particular problems which may arise. Residents should be provided with arrangements by which to report instances of anti-social behaviour to the landlord in confidence, whether in respect of activities on site or within the near parameters of it.
- 15.8 The site manager should liaise with senior management where instances of illegal activity or anti-social behaviour take place on or around the site (whether by residents or the neighbouring community). This includes vandalism, fly-tipping, waste disposal and damage to the site's facilities and amenities.

- 15.9 The site manager should record incidents and notify senior management with a view to their reporting any such occurrences to the police, the local Anti-Social Behaviour co-ordinator, or fire authorities as appropriate.

Check list

- Licence or agreement clearly states what forms of behaviour and activity are not permitted on site (15.4)
- Residents regularly reminded of conduct expected and ways in which to report anti social behaviour in confidence (15.5–15.7)
- Arrangements in place to record incidents of illegal activities and anti social behaviour and liaise with appropriate authority (15.8–15.9)

Section 16. Departures

- 16.1 The site manager should be advised of the departure of a family not less than 28 days before the planned date or subject to other conditions contained in the licence or agreement.
- 16.2 Before the family depart the site, the site manager should ensure that all outstanding payments have been settled, and no damage to facilities has occurred or waste has been left behind which would incur a charge on the resident's deposit, where in place.
- 16.3 Rules and regulations for the site should make clear the resident's responsibilities in case of departure (see Figure 9 below).

Figure 9 – Resident's responsibilities when departing site

On deciding to vacate the site, residents should ensure:

- At least 28 days' prior notice has been given;
- The pitch and all other facilities covered by the rent are in a clean and reasonable condition and clear of rubbish;
- Rent and additional service charges are paid through the required period of notice, even if departing earlier;
- Outstanding amounts in respect of utility bills (water, electricity etc) are fully paid;
- The appropriate local benefits offices know of the change of address.

- 16.3 The rules and regulations should also include a statement to the effect that in the event of departing the site with rent arrears or other charges to be paid, the landlord will seek to take action to locate the family and take court action or use a debt collector to obtain sums outstanding.
- 16.4 The site manager should be prepared to provide on request a reference to another landlord.

Check list

- Ensure residents are aware of departure arrangements and responsibilities (16.1–16.3)
- All outstanding payments and charges settled before departure (16.2)

Section 17. Enforcement/eviction policy

- 17.1 Although eviction must always be regarded as a last resort, the site manager must ensure that the ability for law abiding residents to live peacefully and be protected from anti-social behaviour on site is followed through effectively.
- 17.2 In the event that a court order for possession is made, the site manager should ensure that the eviction is conducted with discretion, to avoid distress as far as possible, particularly for younger members of the household and any children involved.
- 17.3 Ideally those involved should be given advance notice of the date this is to happen and the manager should ensure that all appropriate agencies are aware in advance and in attendance when eviction takes place (see Office of the Deputy Prime Minister/Home Office “Guidance on Managing Unauthorised Encampments”).

Check list

- Any eviction is conducted sensitively and in liaison with appropriate agencies (17.2–17.3)

Annex A. The consultation criteria

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of policy.**
- 2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**
- 3. Ensure your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
- 4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
- 5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
- 6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact

Albert Joyce
Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU;

or by e-mail to albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the response to the consultation itself should be sent to the contact shown within the main body of the consultation.

This page is intentionally left blank