

Service Report 2009/10



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1. Introduction and overview of DCC Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service (GTLS)

1.1 Vision Statement

To create a sustainable environment throughout Devon in which the rights and responsibilities of both Gypsy and Travellers (G/Ts), and the settled community are respected.

1.2 Ownership

For the purpose of employing staff and the overall management of the GTLS, the Devon County Council's Office of the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Cabinet member with responsibility for the service.

The staffing within the service consists of:

One full time Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO)

One full time Assistant Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (AGTLO)

Overall management is provided by the Community Strategy Officer.

1.3 Why does the GTLS exist and what is its purpose?

The GTLS exists:

- To improve the relationship between settled and Gypsy and Traveller (G/T) communities across Devon, by working to develop a better understanding between the differing cultures in order to help break down the barriers that exist
- To manage the two authorised sites owned or leased by Devon County Council
- To manage the Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) across land owned by Devon County Council (DCC) including highway land.
- To work with other agencies across the County in implementing the UE joint protocol between DCC, district councils and other agencies such as health services, education agencies and the police.
- To reduce friction through consistent and fair application of a code of conduct, upon which toleration of UEs depends
- To respond to consultations on planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites
- Ensuring that there is consistent delivery of services to the G/T community

Its additional purpose is to be the focal point for all G/T related issues within DCC in an effective, efficient and economic manner.

To be a focal point for the G/T community for general G/T issues and specific casework.

To be the focal point to advise the settled community on G/T issues.

1.4 The GTLS Aims and Objectives

Aims

To manage and co ordinate work relating to G/Ts throughout Devon including:

- Permanent Sites
- Development and Implementation of G/T policies
- Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) on DCC land (including the highways)
- Support to District Councils on development of new sites
- Support for private site development (through the planning process)
- Maintaining social inclusion through the involvement of G/Ts in developing solutions to problems relating to the community
- Multi-agency and partnership working in relation to G/T issues
- National and Regional Forums

Objectives

- To minimise conflict between the settled/business and G/T communities by information and education
- To protect the rights and be clear about the responsibilities of people in both the G/T and settled communities to enhance quality of life
- Support the provision of legitimate, acceptable places for G/Ts to stay
- Reduce anti-social behaviour associated with encampments (both authorised and unauthorised)
- Support access to education, health and social care services
- Support access to housing support services for the community when requested
- Facilitate the G/T community accessing charitable welfare grants as and when needed
- To ensure consistent application of best practice, legislation and guidance by way of national conferences, forums and understanding national legislation
- To represent DCC by participation and involvement at national, regional and local levels in G/T matters
- To be an advocate for G/Ts as and when required
- Ensure the participation of G/T and the settled communities in decision making using appropriate consultation methods
- Seek out and maximise sources of external funding to support services to Gypsies and Travellers in Devon
- To be a source of information and expertise on G/T issues for all communities within Devon, external and internal colleagues with G/T responsibilities
- Liaison with the media in conjunction with DCC's Communications Team
- Seek out new innovative ways with partners and agencies to deliver quality services to address recommendations identified through previous reports locally and nationally
- A consistent approach to the negotiation, toleration and possible eviction of UEs across DCC land using the UE protocol adopted by agencies across the County.
- Reduction in the need for enforcement against UEs thus reducing costs to DCC

1.5 Permanent Sites – Sowton and Broadclyst

DCC has overall management for the two G/T local authority sites: Sowton and Broadclyst.

Sowton, which is owned by DCC consists of 11 pitches, offering permanent residential accommodation. Sowton has been in existence for over 30 years. It was originally bigger than it is now, but in the past part of the land was sold and a refurbishment programme was carried out at Sowton 8 years ago. Following this refurbishment the GTLS are committed to any improvement works that are identified through consultation with residents and allocation of budgets.

Sowton's management is provided through the GTLS and has officer attendance at least twice weekly, and as and when required. The main duties include liaison with residents; reading letters, support with utility bill issues, guidance and support with accessing agencies, support in times of conflict, reporting and implementation of repairs.

Broadclyst consists of 5 permanent residential pitches; this site is slightly different in that the land is owned by The National Trust. Broadclyst has been in existence for over 30 years and was originally a larger site. Until recently the National Trust wanted to reclaim the land and were allowing the families to live out their lives on the understanding that once families move away the pitch was shut down. We are pleased to report that following a change in policy at the National Trust DCC is about to agree a lease for a 5-year period. This recent decision is welcomed after a long period of uncertainty about the future of the Broadclyst site and that of the families that live there.

Broadclyst's management is provided through the GTLS and has officer attendance at least once a week. As with Sowton, duties include liaison with residents, emptying coin meters and support to residents as required. It is hoped to install water meters and up to date electricity key meters in the coming year.

Residents on both sites pay rent and are responsible for paying council tax and utility costs.

There is a long waiting list for the Sowton site. No new residents will be permitted on the Broadclyst site.

1.6 Unauthorised Encampments (UEs)

There are a substantial number of G/T UEs across Devon. The UEs are each different in number, location, reason and how long they remain there. The main UEs we see in Devon are the longer term unauthorised but tolerated UEs (following the joint protocol for UEs across Devon). They are home to G/Ts that are not highly mobile but still travel for economic purposes around Devon and beyond.

We also see seasonal UEs, which consist of highly mobile G/Ts who migrate through Devon every year towards Cornwall. The busy part of the year for Travelling is from April through to October with the majority from June – August.

The main groupings of G/Ts in Devon are Romany Gypsy and New Traveller, with more highly mobile Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies through the seasonal travelling months.

2. GTLS 2009/10

2.1 General Overview and Highlights

During the last year we have managed to deliver a very high level of service. This follows an unsettled period with changes in staffing. Following a reorganisation of duties, efficiencies have been achieved resulting in a more effective service. For the first time we have managed to install a set of workable targets for the service for the coming year. This is a great step into being pro-active and not a reactive service as it once was.

Both permanent sites have seen an improvement in both morale and the improvement to facilities. Repair times have been in line with best practice, and thanks to the management of both sites coming in house we have managed to build trust and good working relationships within the community.

UEs across the County are being dealt with much more effectively and consistently this year. We make sure that services are provided (with a contribution from G/Ts), such as portaloos so that community tensions are reduced.

Continuing good multi-agency working this year has meant that there is a more holistic view of the migration of G/Ts each year and the needs that arise from the community not just for DCC but other agencies with a duty towards the community. Cross border working has meant that best practice is shared and services are continually improved.

We have been commended through the fire service inspectorate as best practice for a co-ordinated approach to home fire visits on UEs and permanent sites across Devon.

The responsibilities of District Councils to either allocate land for G/Ts or to provide social accommodation for G/Ts through the provision of official authorised sites has not progressed as quickly as hoped. We are however, seeing more partnership working between the Districts and the GTLS, and, drawing on our expertise in this area we will continue to support district councils in their duty to provide and allocate suitable locations for G/Ts.

The shortage of sites is demonstrated by the high numbers of long term residents on unauthorised sites such as those at Haldon Hill, in the Totnes area and South Brent.

The GTLS noted this year that more is being done by statutory agencies including the police and NHS towards the social inclusion of this group. This is very encouraging and the work will continue to be supported by the GTLS.

In conjunction with partners, we were successful in attracting £20,000 from the Home Office to develop projects which would combat hate crime against G/Ts. A multi-agency steering group is implementing 3 short term projects which will continue over the next year. These are:

- Delivery of awareness sessions in schools run by the Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council
- Production of an advice booklet primarily for parish councils about how to deal with planning applications and unauthorised encampments
- A project to support members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in developing skills to challenge adverse media stories and to promote positive images of their community

2.2 Sowton

Following a refurbishment programme in 2008, 2009/10 saw an improvement programme to address issues within the amenity blocks. Having consulted with residents as to their needs, baths were installed in the majority of amenity blocks at Sowton. The residents were very pleased.

The unusually cold winter weather resulted in some amenity blocks suffering frozen pipes. Due to the original specification of the amenity blocks in some cases this couldn't be prevented, but as a result we have minimised the risk by lagging all exposed pipes within the amenity blocks.

Unfortunately during 2009 the County Council had to evict a resident and his family from the Sowton site due to anti-social behaviour, rent arrears and damage on site. Since this eviction the morale and well being of the other 10 families have improved greatly.

Supporting residents' links with other agencies has seen great rewards this year in terms of health for the carers at Sowton. Specific health days such as Romany Health Day, Romany Skills Day and a First Aid course were well attended by residents at Sowton.

The residents meetings that have been set up at the Sowton site have continued to be positive. This has been an excellent way of communicating with residents, it provides a safe environment for issues to be raised debated and actions agreed. It has also been an excellent tool for consultation around the refurbishment that we saw in 2008/09. We will continue to offer one-to-one meetings for those residents who do not wish to participate in the resident meetings.

2.3 Broadclyst

The County Council is about to secure a 5-year lease with the National Trust to allow the families at Broadclyst a safe and secure place to live. The GTLS provides all the management and maintenance for the site.

Broadclyst is a much smaller site than Sowton and does not need the same level of repair and maintenance.

As part of ongoing improvements, we have this year funded the preparation/ground works and contribution towards apparatus for a children's play area following a direct request from the children at Broadclyst. The nearest play area is not within a safe walking distance for them and they have indicated that it can be very isolating on site with no appropriate safe place for them to play. With support of Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality's (PDREC) G/T Development worker, the apparatus will soon be installed and the children will have a safe and suitable place to play. The remainder of funds have been raised through charities at PDREC.

As with Sowton, some of the amenity blocks had frozen pipes during the winter. Lagging has now been put in place as a preventative measure.

As part of on-going support to families the GTLS has also successfully enabled full time carers at Broadclyst to be in touch with the Carers' Link.

2.4 Unauthorised Encampments (UEs)

During the past year the GTLS has seen a much better co-ordinated approach to the way UEs are dealt with around the County, multi-agency working has improved greatly ensuring that families who need access to services whether education or health are linked with the relevant agency whilst that family is in the area.

There has been more input from District Councils over the past 12 months in relation to refuse collections from UEs, which reduces friction between communities. The GTLS provides mobile toilets where required (seeking a contribution from the G/T residents) in order to ensure hygiene and this also reduces conflict.

Private UEs (when G/Ts are parked on private land) are the responsibility of the land owner. When the GTLS receives calls in relation to this we make sure landowners are made aware of this and advice to contact their solicitor is given.

Some of the larger and long term UEs on DCC land are currently attracting the attention of planning enforcement officers at the District Councils. The GTLS is working closely with Districts to try and find solutions to the continuing serious shortage of authorised sites.

2.5 Other Specific Pieces of Work carried out by the GTLS

There are many other activities which the GTLS carry out mostly in an advisory capacity around G/T issues, but the following gives a flavour of what the GTLS is about and what we do to achieve our goals.

Gypsy Traveller Roma History Month

As part of the GTLS duties we have managed to participate and encourage development of the G/T agenda through local and national events. Part of this awareness is linked to the Gypsy Traveller Roma History Month, which takes place each June. This is an opportunity for community members to come together and celebrate the rich history of their culture through awareness and community events. Most events are community led. There is also a conference event organised regionally which the GTLS attends.

Devon saw some good events this past year and in order to encourage bigger and better events this year the GTLS has made contact with agencies with an interest and a duty to the community to come together to discuss ways of supporting and funding events across the Devon area in the coming year.

GTLS Leaflets

The GTLS designed and produced up to date information for both the G/T and settled communities when an UE occurs. Frequently asked questions and our policy approach to such encampments are clearly explained to try and avoid community tensions.

Supporting Housed G/Ts

Not only is it an objective to support any G/Ts wishing to access bricks and mortar housing, we also continue to support that transition once housing has been allocated. This has proven to be essential in the well being of G/Ts once in bricks and mortar accommodation and avoids the dropping out of housing further down the line. The value of this preventative support is hard to measure for the purpose of this report, but is key to successful integration into the settled community and avoids the need for services in the future.

Bi Annual Caravan Count

It is a District Council responsibility to carry out a twice yearly caravan count, and the GTLS has linked with some district councils to make sure the count goes smoothly and is as accurate as possible. Joint work has improved not only officer relationships, but also that between District staff and Gypsies and Travellers. We would like to work in this way with more Districts.

Parish Council meetings and other community events

The GTLS recognises the need to help bridge the gap in awareness of all G/T issues including the issues faced by the settled community. We actively participate in any community event that we are invited to. We also attend Parish Council meetings as requested to address and overcome specific issues within communities, from planning concerns to fears and prejudices. Multi-agency events, which promote knowledge of G/T issues to other communities, are also attended.

Regional Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) meetings

The GTLS chairs and participates in regional GTLO meetings, which happen twice yearly. This is to share best practice and grasp an understanding of what is happening in neighbouring authorities around accommodation provision, what the obstacles are and examples of how other areas are tackling them.

Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) – Race Strand

The GTLS sits on this group to feed back to the Police any issues around engagement or any issue of community tension so that this can be addressed. This is then fed back straight to the community. It has recently been effective in challenging public comments made by an MP.

Police

The GTLS are working towards a specific piece of work which has been identified through the Exeter Police group, in which a prompt card be produced so that Police Officers have a clear picture of what is needed and acceptable when attending a UE across the city. The hope is to roll this out across the Devon area to further provide a consistent approach to UEs (Listed in Targets 2010/11).

3. Examples of work within the GTLS

In order to illustrate the different roles undertaken by the GTLS, there follow three case studies. Each is from a differing area of work within the GTLS: Permanent, UE (highly mobile) and UE (longer term tolerated). All names have been changed to preserve the subjects' anonymity.

3.1 Case Study One

Rosie

Rosie is a pensioner who resides on a local authority site owned and managed by DCC. Rosie was recently faced with a very big challenge; her accommodation – a caravan, was literally falling apart and only held together by big strapping wrapped around the caravan. This was fine during the summer but there were big gaping holes around the door – which she couldn't shut properly or lock. She used the caravan every day and it was her only form of accommodation. She had no money to replace the caravan with only a state pension to live on and no savings; she was facing a very dire future. The size of caravan needed to accommodate full time living would cost over £2000.

Rosie has lived a Romany way of life her whole life. Being a resident on site for over 30 years, although settled she wanted to maintain the Romany culture and couldn't comprehend the thought of having to move into bricks and mortar housing, which she has never experienced.

The GTLS identified that something had to be done to support Rosie in trying to acquire a secure, watertight caravan in order that she can see out the rest of her life in harmony with her culture.

Initially other agencies such as Age Concern were contacted, but due to lack of knowledge about the Romany community couldn't offer any help or funding.

A joint approach was needed; with help from the Devon Racial Equality Council the GTLS sought funding from 7 small grants charities. An added complication was that half the charities contacted would only fund if other charities would, and there was also a race against time as some charities could only hold the funds for a set period of time. It was a long process including the need for the GTLS to attend a trustee meeting for one charity in order to release the grant.

Whilst this was in motion the GTLS was in constant contact with a second hand caravan dealer, a lot of good will and trust were established in order to hold the caravan identified until the monies had been secured.

Rosie is now settled in her new home and saw her first winter in comfort, despite the cold weather.

Joint working and the commitment from the GTLS made sure that Rosie didn't slip through the net. A powerful example of how the GTLS coordinated services with other statutory and 3rd sector organisations whilst valuing the Romany identity of our client. She still remains very thankful for the support received.

3.2 Case Study Two

Health and Welfare

During the summer of 2009 the GTLS saw quite a sizeable unauthorised encampment (UE) at a location in Exeter. This was a highly mobile UE. After an initial visit to the first group of G/Ts that arrived, there were women's health problems that needed immediate attention, including possible pregnancies and various vaccinations for approximately eight children.

Linking with the local GP surgery the main priorities were communicated, suitable appointments were made knowing that the GP surgery contacted has an excellent record of working with G/T communities. They were very helpful with assisting with temporary resident forms understanding the barriers including the high level of illiteracy amongst the group. The GP surgery also enlisted the help of their partner surgery in light of the location of the UE.

A second group then joined this initial group presenting with ante natal needs and another family with issues around the care of a teenage son with learning disabilities. In the light of the service they received, other families on site felt able to approach the GTLS about how they as carers may receive support with their issues. Already having a very good working relationship with Devon Carers Link and Pals (NHS) the initial route agreed was to take an incontinency assessment so that other outcomes could be identified whilst the family travel across Devon and beyond. Unfortunately due to the nature of the site and other travelling commitments the families moved on before the assessment became available. The GTLS have already started looking for a way to make this procedure happen in a timelier manner via the Devon Carers Link should they or indeed similar families appear during the Travelling period in 2010 presenting with similar issues.

Other vital information around Swine Flu, Tetanus and other basic health knowledge was communicated through the GP surgery and the GTLS.

One male from the community also used the GP surgery, which for this Romany community, culturally is extremely rare.

Good multi-agency relationships made sure that the health needs of this G/T community were met on a basic level. Most of the community had no fixed abode and were thankful for the access to health care whilst in the area.

3.3 Case Study Three

Jen and Adam

New Travellers

Jen and Adam are 16 and 17 respectively. Both have come through the social care system, with little support or contact from their parents. They were both residing at an Unauthorised Encampment (UE) in the East of the County. During their time there, they had no access to water or transport and were very vulnerable. Due to the chaotic lifestyle they had grown up with, there were issues of breaches of the code of conduct which DCC implements on all UEs.

After careful consideration, Jen took the opportunity of supported living in bricks and mortar accommodation for a short time so that she could have the support needed to get her life back on track. She took the opportunity and for a while was happy with the support and safety that supported living gave her. After a while however it became apparent that because Adam also had a lot of needs he too was staying with Jen, which was against the rules of the supported housing. As a result both were facing the prospect of eviction: Jen from her accommodation and Adam through DCC because of his behavior at the UE.

The GTLS called a multi-agency meeting including the Children's Society, Connexions and East Devon Housing Department along with the supported housing worker where Jen was staying. The main hurdle was finding suitable accommodation in which both Jen and Adam could settle and have their own space whilst still being able to accommodate two dogs, which are essentially part of their family, but were also the main concern at the supported housing and indeed at the UE.

Private rented caravan accommodation at a nearby private G/T site was identified and successful coordination meant that Jan and Adam could access deposit money and secure housing benefit for the rent.

Understanding the wider picture and the repercussions of no support being offered to these young people, the GTLS made every effort to make sure that both young people didn't slip through the net. Although the UE that they were residing on wasn't suitable and didn't work for them they are now successfully holding down a private renting agreement. From time to time the GTLS will make a visit to ensure that on-going support is available to them if they need it.

Through joint working and the commitment for the care of these vulnerable young people a suitable way forward was established for them both.

If nothing had been done here both young people would without doubt be homeless and sleeping rough.

4. Statistics and Costs

This section shows the number of G/Ts and UEs the GTLS have come into contact with. Please note that the vast majority of UEs will have been visited on more than one occasion.

The costs section below demonstrates in monetary terms, that the policy approach taken towards G/Ts is highly cost effective by comparison with an enforcement and eviction policy.

4.1 Authorised Sites

District/Name of Site	Adults	Children
Exeter, Sowton	24	3
East Devon, Broadclyst	11	8
Total	35	11

4.2 Unauthorised Sites (UEs) (highly mobile and longer term tolerated) 2009/10

It should be noted that the longer term sites are visited throughout the year on a frequent basis, whilst the highly mobile groups are visited once or twice depending on the length of stay, the needs of the residents and the degree of conflict with the settled community.

District	Adults	Children	Total UEs for district
Exeter	16	10	1
East Devon	23	4	3
Mid Devon	15	9	3
North Devon	10	0	3
Torrige	18	24	2
West Devon	10	0	2
Teignbridge	54	17	3
South Hams	101	39	10
Total	247	103	27

4.3 Totals Table (G/Ts and UEs)

Adults: 282	Children: 114	Sites: 38
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4.4 Planning

The process of gaining private planning permission for a G/T family site can prove a very lengthy one involving appeals and substantial costs to applicants. The GTLS will liaise with the family, make a site visit (often more than once) and support the family by confirming Gypsy/Traveller status and any other supporting work that is necessary, such as support with literacy issues. The service also responds to consultation by the appropriate District Council.

District	Number of planning applications supported
East Devon	3
Mid Devon	10
North Devon	1
West Devon	1
Teignbridge	9
South Hams	3
Total	27

4.5 Housing

The GTLS supports G/Ts who wish to access more formal accommodation through local housing authorities. Liaison with the applicant and the local district authority is required plus any other support necessary, such as support with literacy issues.

District	Number of Housing applications supported
East Devon	3
Torrige	4
West Devon	7
Teignbridge	9
South Hams	12
Totals	35

4.6 Multi-Agency Work

The GTLS have been successful in engaging wider agencies in helping to deliver services to G/Ts, through being involved in and supporting various pieces of work during the year. Below is a table showing the various projects into which we have had input for the year 2009/10 and the numbers of G/Ts who have benefited as a result.

Project or Event	Further Description of Service (if needed)	Number of G/Ts who benefited
First Aid on G/T sites		34
Pediatric First Aid		6
Romany Skills Day	This event was part of the Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month which the GTLS supported	20
Sparc Groups and Day Trips (Sparc is a group in the South Hams area which received funding for projects with G/Ts)	Supported by the GTLS this group was designed to encourage social inclusion within the Traveller Community	12
Romany Woman's Health	Supported by the GTLS	10
Introduction to Drugs and Alcohol	Supported by GTLS there were two courses both for the Romany community and the New Traveller community	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	8 week course on Welfare and Benefits system for Travellers	8
Healthy, Wealthy and Active	The GTLS involved in the planning and delivery of a dedicated day on a Traveller Site for information and advice around self-employment and courses available, with dept for Work and Pensions	14
Production of a UE pack	The GTLS involved in the planning and distribution of this pack, which included advice about the behaviour code and information about how to access local services.	All Sites the GTLS visit: Over 100 people benefited

The GTLS have been working hard specifically with the Police this year to improve their practice and bring more consistency when local units visit UEs. We have worked closely with Diversity teams and Neighbourhood teams to ensure that third party reporting of race hate incidents are logged and followed through. The Police use the GTLS to consult on specific UEs and Authorised sites, joint visits, problem solving and joint agency meetings to help combat any anti-social behaviour on sites. At a Devon and Cornwall Police force level the GTLS has an advisory role on policy so that Police intervention is appropriate, necessary and legal.

The prompt cards project listed previously in this report are just one way of challenging attitudes and the way the Police present themselves when an UE occurs. A marked improvement has been noted by the GTLS in this area and a target to build on this in the coming year is a priority.

The GTLS has also seen rewards in terms of working with the Fire Service. Home fire safety visits have been coordinated to target the longer UEs we see across Devon and recognition of best practice by the Fire Service's inspectorate. Plans are in place to also see this as a target for the coming year.

4.7 Other Agency Work

As well as direct work with other agencies, the GTLS has played a part in bridging the gap for delivery of services to G/Ts by liaising with a whole host of agencies. The table shows some of the agencies we liaise with in order to demonstrate the needs of this community.

Agencies and Stakeholders
Social Workers across Devon
Rethink
Carrgomm
Cool House
Women's Aid
Community Council of Devon
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Regional Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers
National GTLO's
Local Highways Service Groups across Devon
Devon Welfare Rights Unit
Exeter Drugs Project (EDP)
Mental Health Teams across Devon
NHS Dentists and GPs
Age Concern
Forestry Commission
Friends, Family and Travellers
Travellers Advice Team
Consumer Direct
Warm Zones
Community Service and Probation
Department of Work and Pensions
Refurnish
Turntable
Shelter
Social Inclusion Units
Adult Education
Young Carers
RSPCA
Cats Protection League

4.8 Summary budget 2009-10

The net service budget outturn for the year was £100,625. This was approximately £6000 underspent, due to an inability to plan for rent increases which were implemented late in the financial year.

The table below shows how the budget was spent.

Expenditure	
Staff salaries including travel, training and on costs	£77,641
Site maintenance and repairs*	£38,000
Electricity and water on sites	£12,000
Miscellaneous including DCC in house recharges	£6,604
Total	£134,245
Income	
Rents	£33,620
Net Expenditure	£100,625

*Expenditure on repairs due to vandalism was high this year. The offender was evicted so this should reduce such costs in 2010-11 which will free up funds for further site improvements

4.9 Breakdown of comparative costs

This section shows the potential costs of the County Council taking action to evict Gypsy and Traveller groups from our land on a routine basis. Whilst such action would not be necessary in all cases, as groups often move on before court action is taken, it does show that taking a policy position of tolerating sites is cost effective. The other consideration is that, once evicted from one site, many groups would simply move onto another council owned site, resulting in multiple actions being taken against the same people. This is without taking into account the human costs of such an approach.

Potential costs of a single eviction case:

Fees for legal and court costs:	£ 770.00
Liaison with sites to collect initial information for the legal team	£ 100.00
Transportation of 1x caravan to secure site:	£ 400.00*
*Some families have more than one caravan, so this is an underestimate	
Total cost of eviction per family:	£1,270.00
(Average for 2 Adults and children with 1 caravan)	
Total families for 2009/10	124
Total cost for eviction only policy:	£157,480.00
Total cost if management of the 2 authorised sites were contracted out:	£35,000.00
Total	£192,480.00
Actual current costs relating to UEs and management of authorised sites:	
2 x Staff Annual Salary – including on costs, travel and training:	£77,500.00
Costs for portaloos provision for UEs	£6,655.00
Total:	£84,155.00
Total savings using the current system for in house management and a tolerated sites policy:	£108,325.00

5. Health and Wellbeing

This year the GTLS has been working to try and address the inequalities that the G/T community face when trying to access health related services. For most, these are services that the community were unaware of. Specific benefits training has meant that the GTLS have been able to support the community at a level not previously seen. As a result the GTLS have noted that other health related issues are starting to appear, health and welfare issues previously a cultural taboo in the community being brought to the surface. The GTLS see this as a huge step in the right direction for equality in health services for G/Ts. The GTLS has also contributed to the publication of a NHS Gypsy and Traveller Health Needs Assessment and a Rural Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The table below shows the areas that have seen the most activity this year.

5.1 Health and Wellbeing Table

Description	Number of G/Ts benefited (if known)	Comments
Benefits Forms	52	Including Community Care Grant Forms and Disability Living Allowance Forms
Warm Front Applications	4	For insulation and help with heating
Remass for adaptations applications	12	To assist disabled people with mobility problems
PALS and Care Direct	-	Regular contact for various issues relating to the elderly in the community and G/Ts with disabilities
Mental Health	-	This year we have seen a big increase in the number of G/Ts using the GTLS as a point of contact. Both G/Ts and concerned family members use the GTLS when mental health issues arise on UEs (mostly longer tolerated UEs)
Charity Applications	42	Parts of the G/T community are extremely vulnerable, applications for things such as bedding and wood burners for heat are the main concern in the winter months. Breakdown of Charities are as follows: 22 Applications – Dibs Charity 15 Applications – Northcott 2 Applications – Violet Clegg 1 Application – Exeter Municipal 1 Application - Heinz and Ann Krolch Application – Friends of the Elderly 1 Application – Tail Waggers Club
Swine Flu	All G/Ts	It became apparent that when the national leaflet drop occurred, provision for the G/T community had not been considered. The GTLS delivered leaflets to all sites
Multi-agency meeting for 2 vulnerable young people	2	Case Study 3, page 12

6. Targets

The GTLS will continue to strive towards better ways of working in order that the main focus is always the community as a whole. The targets listed are separated into three tables: for authorised sites, for unauthorised encampments and showing all other targets.

6.1 Authorised Sites

Following recent publication issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) addressing site management, the GTLS will be taking recommendations and implementing them at Sowton and Broadclyst.

Target	Outcome	Date Completed
Implement the change from site licence to tenancies	Better conditions for the G/T community and clearer boundaries for DCC around Anti-social behaviour	When DCLG give direction
Make clear to residents the policy about rent arrears – speak to finance team, consultation and notice period to implement	A fair but firm approach if needed in future	May 2010
Site Introduction Packs for new residents	Better information for residents in a tangible form for reference	June 2010
Make proof of identity required at application form stage	Better security for DCC	May 2010
Set up a multi-agency partnership for both sites, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Education • Environmental Health • Voluntary Groups with an interest on site • Social Services 	A more holistic view to issues on site, a better informed approach to solutions	October 2010
Request a detailed map of Sowton, dimensions, all water and electrical hook ups and drain layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working knowledge for better reports of repairs to consult contractors with • Layout map for reference by the GTLS 	November 2010
Make clear responsibilities for communal areas, specifically littering issues	A more pleasant place for the residents to live	May 2010
Number of dogs to be made clear	Clear boundary for residents	May 2010

All incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour reported to the Police	A socially inclusive place to live without some residents living in fear	ASAP
Implement pipe repairs across both sites	Wellbeing of residents in winter	Already started

6.2 Unauthorised Encampments and Developments

Target	Outcome	Date Completed
Overhaul the forms the GTLS use at UEs and investigate the possibility with IT to install on hand held device	Reduce time spent re-writing information at the office	June 2010
Produce checklist for Summer 2010 UEs	To enable the GTLS to alert all agencies and services with an interest in this field which in turn, will produce better outcomes for G/Ts	May 2010
Work with Devon and Cornwall Police to roll out the prompt cards across Devon wide force for consistent approach to UEs	Better communication and relationships built with G/T community and D+C Police	May/June 2010
Work with Devon and Somerset Fire Service to deliver home safety fire visits	Reduce the risk of fire at UEs	Autumn 2010

6.3 Other Targets

Target	Outcome	Date Completed
Work with Community Council of Devon to produce a leaflet for Parish Councils (PCs) around UEs and Planning for G/T sites. Possible presentation work	PCs are better informed if and when they have G/Ts in their locality	2010
Electronically record information collected into a database	Statistics can be easily drawn to reduce time when compiling reports	Winter 2010/11
Work with the Police to provide myth busting sessions for	Honest information delivered	2010

the settled community at events throughout the year across Devon		
Work with the Police at training events for front line Police Officers and Area managers	A better understanding of the communities served	2010
To help identify stakeholders at a County level and facilitate a conference about accommodation across Devon for local authorities	A clearer picture of the need across the County	September 2010
GTLS to attend relevant conferences nationally to keep DCC updated on relevant legislation and best practice	DCC better informed about G/T issues	2010

7. Conclusion

2009/10 has been a successful year, with the service consistently improving its practice and being more proactive in its work. This in turn has seen a direct improvement to the services delivered to the G/T community.

There are still improvements, which can be made following new best practice from the Department of Communities and Local Government. The majority focus on authorised sites, such as the setting up of multi-agency meetings to combat issues on and off site.

With the continuing shortage of land on which permanent authorised sites could be created, the difficulties of UEs – their management, safety issues and insecurity, as well as the community tensions that arise – will not disappear. In fact the situation is likely to worsen in the short term, particularly as potential stopping places are barred through physical barriers preventing access.

It is imperative that more land is made available, and the County Council is working with District Councils to try and ensure that they meet their responsibilities.

The costs to the public purse relating to the large number of UEs are increasing, and the provision of official sites would be more cost effective, as well as giving security to the G/T communities, and (eventually) reducing community tensions. Nevertheless, an efficient GTLS, supported by a protocol covering UEs is much more cost effective than the situation in some areas, where recourse to legal and court action is more common.

The Future

Some shire counties have established a county wide, integrated G/T service with buy in from District Councils and other agencies. Working as a single, jointly funded unit, the staff can provide a comprehensive service across the county, dealing with all permanent and unauthorised sites on public land throughout their area. This includes a dedicated police officer and health visitor.

If support could be obtained from the District Councils, this may be an option for Devon. During the next few months we will explore the possibility and, if supported in principle, will see whether there is a business case to be made for such a development.