

Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service

Service Report 2010/11

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/T's), and the settled community are respected.

1.2 Ownership

For the purpose of employing staff and the overall management of the GTLS, the Policy, Partnership and External Affairs team within Services for Communities takes the lead in conjunction with the G/T Lead Councillor.

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 lead for the service within the Policy, Partnership and External Affairs Team.

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

The GTLS exists:

- To improve the relationship between settled and 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 highways land.
- To work with other agencies across the County implementing the UE joint protocol between DCC, district councils and other agencies such as Health, Education 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.
- To ensure that there is consistent delivery of services to the G/T community.

In addition, the service is the main point of contact for both the G/T community and the settled community for all G/T issues and specific case work - co-ordinating G/T related issues within and outside of DCC in an effective, efficient and economic manner.

1.4 The GTLS Aims and Objectives

Aims

To manage and co-ordinate work relating to G/T's throughout Devon including:

- ❖ Permanent Sites
- ❖ Development and Implementation of G/T policies
- ❖ Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) – 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/T's in developing solutions to problems relating to the community
- ❖ Multi-agency and partnership working in relation to G/T issues

Objectives

- ❖ Minimise conflict between the settled/business and G/T communities by means of information and education
- ❖ Protect the rights of those in the G/T and settled communities to enhance quality of life
- ❖ Support the provision of legitimate, acceptable places for G/T's 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 G/T community when requested
- ❖ Facilitate the G/T community accessing charitable welfare grants as and when needed
- ❖ Ensure consistent application of best practice, legislation and guidance
- ❖ Ensure DCC is represented through participation/involvement at national, regional and local levels in G/T matters
- ❖ Be an advocate for G/T's as and when needed
- ❖ Ensure the participation of G/T and the settled communities in decision making using existing and appropriate new mechanisms of consultation
- ❖ Seek out and maximise sources of external funding to achieve service goals
- ❖ Be a source of information and expertise on G/T issues for all communities across Devon
- ❖ Be a source of information and expertise on G/T issues for external and internal colleagues with G/T responsibilities
- ❖ Be a point of contact for the media in conjunction with DCC's Communications Team
- ❖ Maximise the effectiveness of all agencies with G/T responsibilities through implementation and continuing development of policies and best practice
- ❖ Seek out new innovative ways with partners and agencies to deliver quality services to address recommendations identified through previous reports locally and nationally
- ❖ Provide a consistent approach to the negotiation, toleration and possible eviction of UEs across DCC land with reference to the UE protocol adopted by agencies across the County

1.5 Permanent Sites – Sowton and Broadclyst

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

Sowton consists of 11 pitches, offering permanent residential accommodation. Sowton has been in existence for over 30 years. A refurbishment programme was undertaken 8 years ago.

Management of the Sowton site is provided through the GTLS. 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 of repairs 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 back and were allowing the families to live out their lives on the understanding that once families move off then the Broadclyst site would be shut down. We are pleased to report that following a change in policy at the National Trust DCC is set to sign a lease. This recent decision is welcomed after a long period of uncertainty about the future of the Broadclyst site and the families that live there.

Management of the Broadclyst site is provided through the GTLS and has officer attendance at least once a week. As with Sowton, duties include liaison with residents; emptying of coin meters and support to residents as required.

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 Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) across Devon. The UEs each vary in size, location and how long the G/T plan to remain there. The main UEs in Devon are the longer term unauthorised but tolerated encampments (as per the guidelines set out in the joint protocol for UEs across Devon). They are home to G/T's 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/T's that 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 to August.

The main groupings of G/T's in Devon are Romany Gypsy and New Traveller, with more highly mobile Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies through the seasonal travelling months.

2. GTLS 2010/11

2.1 Overview of Achievements

Over the last 12 months the service has built on the achievements recorded in 2009/10.

- The Mobile Homes Act (amended) is legislation that will be implemented to cover G/T sites in early 2011/12. During this year the GTLS has been feeding into the national debate around this piece of legislation and the implications for the County Council managed sites at Sowton and Broadclyst.
- The signing of the Broadclyst lease has been slightly delayed this past year but is set to be finalised in the next financial year. When this is finalised the service is planning to carry out a number of improvement works in financial year 2011/12 which will see electricity meters and water meters installed individually for each of the five pitches. This year has seen preparation works.
- The cost of repairs to both authorised sites has seen a reduction in 2010/11 compared to previous years; through improved communication and investment in various maintenance works which has meant fewer repairs, especially on account of the winter weather.
- Continued investment in multi-agency working across the county has improved the approach taken towards G/Ts. The G/T community now experience a more holistic service, which has contributed towards improving outcomes for G/Ts. The biggest example of this is the positive health outcomes for the community that are cited in this report.
- The responsibilities of District Councils to either allocate land for G/Ts or to provide social style accommodation through the provision of official authorised sites has not progressed as quickly as hoped. We are however, seeing more partnership working across the Districts in Devon and the GTLS, and, drawing on the service's expertise in this area we will continue to support District Councils in their duty to assess, provide and allocate suitable sites in suitable locations for G/Ts.

The high level of UEs we see each year across Devon once again demonstrates the shortage of sites. The longer-term UEs in areas such as Haldon Hill, and the South Hams area continue to be home to many G/Ts looking for suitable formal sites. Working with Districts to increase the number of authorised pitches/sites in Devon is listed as a target for 2011/2012. Planning intentions across the country will hopefully contribute to achieving more sites.

- The Hate Crime project, which attracted £20,000 funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government last year, has seen huge successes this year. Education about G/Ts continues to be the key driver for reducing race hate crime towards G/Ts. Further information is included in section 2.4.

2.2 Site-Specific Achievements in 2010/11

2.2.1 Sowton

- Following the exceptional cold snap this past winter the GTLS is pleased to report that only one pitch saw frozen pipes as a result of lagging all exposed pipes last winter within all amenity blocks.
- The residents meetings during 2010/11 have not been as frequent, mainly due to there being no suitable venue during the winter months. We are however due to restart very early in the next financial year and look forward to reporting on the outcome of these meetings in the next year-end report.

We continue to offer one-to-one meetings for those residents who do not wish to participate in the residents meeting.

2.2.2 Broadclyst

- 2010 saw the completion of the playground at Broadclyst and the service is pleased to report that the children (and parents) are very thankful and happy to have a safe place to play. As reported last year the GTLS funded the ground works to be carried out and also contributed towards the play equipment. The GTLS would like to thank the Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council (PDREC) for advocating on the children's behalf to charities to raise the remaining funds and oversee the installation.
- The County Council will be securing a new 5-year lease in the next financial year. This will allow the families a safe and secure place to live and allow future planned essential maintenance works to be carried out in 2011/12.

Installation of individual water meters and updated key operated electricity meters will be the first improvements work Broadclyst has seen in many years.

- Broadclyst is a much smaller site than Sowton and does not need the same level of repair and maintenance; however, the preventative lagging work on all exposed pipes has seen a further reduction in repairs this year.

2.3 Unauthorised Encampments (UEs)

The GTLS has been successful in reducing the costs associated with dealing with UEs. This is a result of better communication with the community and better multi-agency working in relation to co-ordinating services such as waste collection. The following figures show the costs of dealing with UEs in 2010/11 compared to the previous financial year:

29 sites 2010/11	Total cost	£5438.00
27 sites 2009/10	Total cost	£9950.00

The GTLO and AGTLO have established good working relations with both the G/T community and other agencies which has meant that all parties have been more willing to work with the GTLS and to observe the Devon-wide protocol for managing UEs.

2.4 Multi Agency Work

The GTLS has been successful in engaging wider agencies in helping to deliver services to G/T's, through being involved in and supporting various pieces of work during the year. The main work this year to report on is:

Race/Hate Crime Project: In 2009/10, the GTLS were successful in attracting a £20,000 project grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government, specifically for projects to tackle race/hate against the G/T community.

A multi-agency steering group was set up (meets every 3-4 months) which includes workers from the GTLS, Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council (PDREC), Devon and Cornwall Police, Community Council of Devon and the Traveller Achievement Team.

A brief was put forward to the group and an agreed way forward was established on how to make best use of the money for the G/T communities across Devon; bearing in mind the size of the grant. The main agency commissioned to deliver the work on behalf of the steering group is the PDREC.

The service is pleased to report progress made during 2010/11 as follows:

- **G/T awareness sessions in schools/colleges/children's centres:** The main aim of the sessions was: to raise awareness about G/T communities in Devon; to consider what issues may exist for these communities; and to explore and challenge prejudice and misconceptions about G/Ts. The content and the structure of the sessions have reaped huge rewards in terms of reaching and educating people about G/Ts, especially in years 7 and 8 where the students are very willing to have discussions and to be open about their views.

Prejudice is actively and positively challenged, and the sessions have helped to change hearts and minds as participants were given accurate information to dispel the myths. During the last 12 months the following sessions have been delivered;

- 8 sessions in Primary schools
- 10 sessions in Secondary School/Colleges
- 5 sessions in Children's centres
- 3 sessions in Teacher training

- **Media project:** This part of the project was set up to tackle the negative and misrepresented stories and stereotypes we see in the local and national media. The main aim was to try and challenge this through the media watchdogs to combat the often inflammatory language used and instead deliver some positive stories; to give a different perspective of G/T life.

Throughout the planning stage it was agreed to focus this work on training members of the G/T community so that they could act as champions to carry this work forward after the race/hate project finishes. The progress so far:

- 7 G/Ts attended media training workshops
- 8 incidents of participation by Romany families and individuals being proactive in putting forward positive stories to news outlets including BBC spotlight, ITV westcountry, BBC Radio Devon and Exeter FM radio.

- Helping the G/T community to make roads into the local media organisations has meant that over the past 8 months, 4 meetings have been held where the local media has been held to account through panels and scrutiny.
- Negative media articles have been challenged and as a result of this a media guide leaflet has been produced by a working group made up of G/Ts specifically for other G/Ts which gives advice and the channels to go through to challenge negative press. It has also been praised by a national news outlet specifically for G/Ts and is available to download.
- **Planning guidance for Parish Councils.** A booklet has been produced to help town and parish councils work their way through planning applications for G/Ts sites in a way which gives proper hearing to the applicants and to the settled community. A group of members from the G/T community and from the Devon Association of Local Councils came together to help shape the booklet. The sessions were successful and an attractive and thought provoking publication was the result.

More projects are on the horizon for the next financial year and the Service has also managed to secure a little more funding to make sure the project can at least survive 6 months into the next financial year. Everyone has been surprised about how far a little money can go to help combat racism, hate and prejudice that G/Ts may experience.

Below is a table showing the various other projects that the Service has also had input into this year and the numbers of G/T's who have benefited as a result.

Project or Event	Further Description of Service (if needed)	Number of G/T's who benefited
Sparc (Community charity) Groups and Day Trips	Supported by the GTLS, this group was designed to encourage social inclusion within the Traveller community	30 Adults
Carers Pamper Day for Romany Women	This event was part of the Gypsy Roma Traveler History Month which the GTLS helped to organise and facilitate	
Production of a UE pack	The GTLS was involved in the design and distribution of this pack	All Sites the GTLS visit: Over 100 people benefited
Fire Visit	Haldon and Sowton sites	54 Adults, 11 Children
Consultation event with Haldon residents	Helped facilitate and collect consultation responses for input into the bid for funding.	30 Adults

2.5 Other Areas of Work

The GTLS have this past year been working especially hard in other areas helping to bridge the gap between services. To follow is a breakdown of the types of work we have been supporting.

- **Health and Wellbeing:** This year the GTLS has been working hard to try and address the inequalities that the G/T community face when trying to access health related services. Specific 'benefits' training has meant that the GTLS has been able to support the community in a way that would not previously have been possible. As a result the GTLS has noticed that other health-related issues are being brought to the surface by individuals within the community – something which would previously have been a cultural taboo. The GTLS see this as a huge step in the right direction in terms of reducing health inequalities for G/T's.

The GTLS has had a strong focus on this area of work over the last 12 months following the publication of the NHS Gypsy and Traveller Health Needs Assessment and the Rural Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The following table shows the areas that have seen the most activity this year:

Description	Number of G/T's benefited (if known)	Comments
Benefits Forms	52	Mostly Community Care Grant Forms and Disability Living Allowance Forms
Warm Front Applications	4	
Remass for adaptations applications	12	
PALS and Care Direct	-	Regular contact for various issues relating to the elderly in the community and G/T's with disabilities
Mental Health	-	This year we have seen a big increase in the number of G/T's using the GTLS as a point of contact. Both G/T's and concerned family members use the GTLS when mental health issues arise on 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: 22 Applications – Dibs Charity 15 Applications – Northcott 2 Applications – Violet Clegg 1 Application – Exeter Municipal 1 Application - Heinz and Ann Krolch 1 Application – Friends of the Elderly 1 Application – Tail Waggers Club
Swine Flu	All G/T's	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

- **Gypsy Traveller Roma History Month:** The GTLS has several core purposes – one of which is to improve the relationship between settled and 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. This 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.

As stated in the report last year the GTLS saw the need for a more co-ordinated multi-agency approach to how we could best support the community and so we held a series of meetings to discuss how best to do this. The GTLS supported two events this year:

- Community day held in Totnes - this combined awareness raising with a celebration of the Romany history. The G/T community and the settled community alike enjoyed the day. It included the pitching of a bender tent on the town square with members of the Romany community talking to members of the settled community about their culture. There was a training session delivered by the PDREC in the local café and in the evening local musicians performed music inspired from the vast history of G/T life. It was a very successful and enjoyable day. The day was planned and run by the community themselves, with support from the GTLS.
- A women's pamper day – this enabled Romany women who care for someone either full or part time to come together and exchange stories of old in relaxing surroundings. Things such as facials, foot massages and Indian head massages were just a few of the things on offer. Everyone who attended had an enjoyable day. This day was run in conjunction with the Carers Link and PDREC.
- **Supporting Housed G/Ts:** Not only is it an objective to support any G/Ts wishing to access bricks and mortar housing, the service also continues to support that transition once housing has been allocated. This has proven to be essential in improving the wellbeing of G/Ts once in brick and mortar accommodation and reduces the number of G/Ts 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 reduces the need for other services in the future.
- **Bi Annual Caravan Count:** the GTLS work with some District Councils (who are responsible for carrying out a twice yearly caravan count) 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 G/Ts. We would like to work in this way with more Districts.
- **Parish council 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. The GTLOs actively participate in any community event that they are invited to. The GTLOs also attend Parish Council meetings as requested to address and overcome specific issues within communities. Multi-agency events, which raise awareness of G/T issues to other communities, are also attended.

- **Regional G/T Liaison Officer Groups:** 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:** 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 to the community directly (or indirectly through our partners).
- **Training for the Police:** Building on the momentum of the partnership working with the Police this year, the GTLS will continue to support the Police in offering training to Police officers as and when needed.
- **Census:** This year, for the first time, the option to identify as Gypsy/Traveller was included in the census. The GTLS worked closely with census officers to make sure all sites known to the GTLS were canvassed. This was a big piece of work for the GTLS and an important step in terms of Gypsy/Travellers being able to identify.
- **Funding for Gypsy/Traveller sites:** This year the GTLS has been supporting one of the District Councils in their bid for a grant to formalise an unauthorised encampment. Consultations with residents and meetings were organised and facilitated by the GTLS in conjunction with Teignbridge District Council.

As well as direct work with other agencies, the GTLS has played a part in bridging the gap for delivery of services to G/T's by liaising with a whole host of agencies.

The table below shows some of the agencies and stakeholders the service liaises with in order to advocate for the community:

Agencies and Stakeholders
Social Workers across Devon
Rethink
Carrgomm (Housing support)
Cool House
Women's Aid
Community Council of Devon
The National Parks Authority
Regional Gypsy Traveler Liaison Officers (GTLO's)
National GTLO's
Local Highways Service Groups across Devon
Devon Welfare Rights
Exeter Drugs Project (EDP)
Mental Health Teams across Devon
NHS Dentist
Age Concern
Forestry Commission
Friends, Family and Travelers
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
Hope Project
South West Planning Aid
ITAS (Independent Travellers Advice Service)
Counsel and Care

3. Examples of work within the GTLS

The following case studies help to illustrate the different roles undertaken by the GTLS. All names, where relevant, have been changed to preserve the persons' anonymity.

3.1 Case Study One

During the year of 2009/10 the G/T community experienced nine deaths all presenting with the same elements. These were: white, male, single and middle aged all with either an alcohol or drug addiction and/or issues. As a result of this the GTLS worked with the NHS community worker to help organise and deliver drug and alcohol sessions to the G/T community.

The sessions were broken down and tailored specifically for the Romany community and the New Traveller community. It was delivered in a two day training session based on drug and alcohol abuse. The sessions had in attendance 10 G/Ts from Devon and as a result of this three G/Ts went on to become volunteers.

The knowledge that comes from being a volunteer has been fed back into the community as peer education. This process has been invaluable to the communities and the service is pleased to report that one of these volunteers is now employed on a full time basis as a drug and alcohol worker.

Since the training we have not seen the same number of deaths presenting with the same elements.

3.2 Case Study Two

The work of the GTLS includes supporting G/Ts to achieve the best possible outcomes for their situation. This case study relates to an individual on a longer term UE in Devon.

Alan had been in a great deal of pain due to physical health. The GTLS organised for him to have a physical and mental assessment to help him make choices about his future. As a result of this interaction Alan registered with the local housing department and joined the register. He also had some much needed assistance in terms of his physical and mental wellbeing due to the specific targeted help through the health service.

Alan made the choices that were right for him and the service is pleased to report that he has accepted housing through Devon home choice scheme and is receiving on-going support from his healthcare professionals.

The GTLS was instrumental in facilitating the above. The on-going support given to Alan during this time was important in order to help keep Alan supported and focused.

3.3 Case Study Three

Our commitment to supporting residents on our authorised sites over the past 12 months has seen huge rewards in terms of healthcare provision - at the Sowton site in particular.

The local GP surgery is the Pinhoe surgery (which has been very proactive with G/Ts in this area and even further afield). Over the past year the GTLS has helped to bridge the gap in provision and try to address routine screening that the residents have not been a part of.

Prevention and screening was the big push this year and the service is pleased to report that as a result of our intervention:

- 8 residents had eye tests. All needed glasses and one resident was referred to the eye unit.
- Breast screening uptake increased dramatically on site as did other women's and men's screening (men's screening previously not seen before due to the cultural taboo within the community).
- Most residents on site are now signed up to vaccinations, surgery pilots e.g. bowel cancer and diabetes screening.
- The GTLS with funding from the NHS has managed to support the younger residents at Sowton in promoting healthy options through six taster sessions for residents at the Westbank centre, Exeter. Other activities offered were young carers days and swimming.

Good progress has been made this year by the GTLS in addressing some of the obvious gaps in healthcare. This work will carry forward into next year in order to maintain and improve uptake.

4. Statistics

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.

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 Encampments (UEs) (highly mobile and longer term tolerated)

District	Adults	Children	Total UEs for district
Exeter	10	7	1
East Devon	60	20	5
Mid Devon	14	0	3
North Devon	15	9	7
Torrige	2	4	1
West Devon	9	3	2
Teignbridge	25	8	1
South Hams	68	19	9
Total	203	70	29

4.3 Totals Table (authorised sites and unauthorised encampments)

Adults:	Children:	Sites:
238	81	31

4.4 Planning

The process of gaining private planning permission for a G/T family site can prove a costly one and a very lengthy one, the GTLS will liaise with the family, make a site visit (often more than one) and support the family by confirming G/T status and any other supporting work that is necessary, such as support with literacy issues.

District	Number of planning applications supported
East Devon	5
Mid Devon	5
North Devon	1
West Devon	1
Teignbridge	2
South Hams	0
Total	14

4.5 Housing

The GTLS supports G/T's who wish to access more formal accommodation through local housing authorities. Liaison with the applicant and the local Housing Authority is required plus any other support necessary, such as support with literacy issues.

District	Number of Housing applications supported
East Devon	2
Torrige	1
West Devon	2
Teignbridge	3
South Hams	3
Mid Devon	1
Totals	12

5. GTLS areas of work for 2011/12

Target	Outcome	Date Completed
Implement Mobile Homes Act on both authorised sites	Better benefits for residents	2011/12
Revision of the Devon Consortium-wide Gypsy and Traveller protocol for Unauthorised Encampments	A revised document with renewed sign up from District colleagues	2011/12
Continued Health drive on both authorised and unauthorised sites	Better health outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers	2011/12
Planning response to central governments consultation for Gypsy Traveller planning	A Devon County Council (DCC) response to the national consultation	2011/12
Attend conferences on the planning consultation	To be better informed about planning procedures for Gypsy Traveller planning across Devon	2011/12
Broadclyst Lease	Formal agreement with the National trust	2011/12
Broadclyst improvement works	Better water connections and electricity meters	2011/12
Consultation with residents on the express terms of the site licence agreement (authorised sites)	Clear and concise site licence agreement conditions	2011/12

6. Conclusion

2010/11 has been another successful year for the GTLS. Where the service was once reactive, it is taking strides to become a forward thinking proactive service with areas of work being identified and resources allocated to deal with emerging gaps and opportunities. This has resulted in a bigger drive towards health equalities for residents on both authorised and unauthorised sites. We have seen an improvement in outcomes for people who could not or would not otherwise have accessed services because of barriers such as literacy and fear. We hope to build on this over the coming year.

Implementation of The Mobile Homes Act will see different working conditions on the authorised sites at Sowton and Broadclyst with better protection for residents. This is welcomed and a definite step in the right direction for G/Ts in terms of aligning their rights alongside the settled community.

There is still a distinct lack of authorised site provision across the county which means that the issues associated with managing unauthorised encampments are not going to disappear overnight.

However, the allocation and planning for Traveller sites has been a talking point this year and we wait to see what impact this may have on the development and allocation of sites in 2011/2012. We will continue to work with District colleagues to try and ensure that they meet their responsibilities.

The costs to the public purse relating to the large numbers of unauthorised encampments 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 unauthorised encampments is much more cost effective than the situation in some parts of the country, where recourse to legal and court action is more common.

Appendix 1

A. Summary Budget 2010/11

Expenditure:	
Staff salaries including travel, training and on costs	£75,814
Site maintenance and repairs	£17,980
Electricity and water on sites	£4,933
Miscellaneous including DCC in-house recharges	£17,809
Total	£116,536
Income:	
Rents	£34,160
Net Expenditure	£82,376

B. Breakdown of comparative costs

This section is highlighted to show what the potential costs would be if the County Council decided to take action to evict Gypsy and Traveller groups 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 the continued approach taken by the County Council is much more cost effective.

The other consideration is that, once evicted from one site, many groups simply move onto another council owned site, resulting in multiple actions being taken against the same G/T. 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 relevant information for the legal team	£ 100.00
Transportation of 1 x caravan to secure site	£ 400.00*
*Some families have more than one caravan, so this estimate is conservative	
Total cost of eviction per family	£ 1,270.00
(Average for 2 Adults and children with 1 caravan)	
Total families for 2010/11 (238 Adults / 2)	102
Total cost for eviction only policy (102 x 1270)	£ 129,540.00
Estimated cost if management of the 2 authorised sites were contracted out	£ 40,000.00
Total	£ 169,540.00
Actual current costs relating to UEs and management of authorised sites	
2 x Staff Annual Salary – including on costs, travel and training	£75,814.00
Costs for portaloo provision for UEs	£3,850.00
Total	£79,664.00
Total savings using the current system for in house management and a tolerated sites policy	£89,876.00