

# Gypsy and Traveller Responsiveness

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny  
November 2018

# Council responsibilities

Plan for future accommodation needs for Gypsy and Travellers

Enforcement of planning and licensing breaches

Health and welfare

Community safety

Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations and foster good relations

# Gypsy and Travellers in Central Bedfordshire

## Sites:

38 permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites

9 Travelling Showpeople sites

2 Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites

The majority are well run and integrate well with the local community with very few issues reported

Some sites are more complex, pose more challenges and need more input

# Billington - challenges

Breaches of planning permissions

Absence of licensing

Sub-letting of caravans

Unsafe infrastructure (sewage, clean water and electricity)

Anti social behavior, and crime including previous reports of modern day slavery

Local community concerns and impact

# Billington – what we've done

Stakeholder groups for residents and Parish Council – established and working well

Significantly improved information and intelligence about plots, owners and interested parties

Reduced fly-tipping

Abatement notices on some unsafe caravans

Provided alternative accommodation for some tenants

Regular visits and engagement with residents

Begun enforcement work:

- PCNs issued

- Personal Circumstance Questionnaires

- Drafting Enforcement Notices

# Unauthorised Encampments (UAEs)- what we've done

Dedicated, full time Unauthorised Encampment Officer

Prevention work (e.g. barriers, ditches etc.) at 15 sites

Injunction – 11 individuals prohibited from setting up UAEs in our area and parcels of land protected from UAEs

Lobby Government with MPs to strengthen legislation

Reduced UAEs

Jan- Sept. 2017- 95 UAEs (54 on CBC land)

Jan -Sept. 2018- 70 UAE's (25 on CBC land)

26% reduction in encampments to date (46% reduction on CBC land)

# Opportunities

- Use our learning from Billington to inform our approach to working with other sites.
- Continued development of our UAE response by using Temporary Stopping Sites
- Develop a more cohesive approach to our Gypsy and Traveller work using existing and new resources

# Temporary Stopping Sites (TSS)

Site for travellers to stay for a short period (normally 28 days)

Managed sites - toilets, water, waste collection

Located in non-residential areas

Good access and egress

Access to core services

Occupants pay rent and deposit

Travellers sign a Licence to Occupy which is supported by police  
S.62 powers



# Gypsy and Traveller Unit

Creation of a single dedicated team with two new permanent posts to increase capacity for engagement and enforcement

Unit activities to include:

- manage both enforcement (UAEs and regulatory breaches) and engagement approaches ensuring a consistent and agreed approach by the Council.
- Provide a central hub for broader issues and act as the central point of contact on G&T matters for the Council, public and G&T community.
- Manage Temporary Stopping Sites, improving access by the G&T community to Council services by working across the Council and partner organisations.
- support the development of collaborative working between the Council and the G&T community.
- develop networks with specialist G&T organisations (nationally & locally) to inform and develop best practice in Central Bedfordshire.
- develop specialist legal networks to ensure enforcement is successful

# Next steps

- Executive approval
- Recruitment and transition
- Temporary Stopping Site feasibility