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Gypsy and  
Traveller Liaison  
Service

*Annual Report*

2014/15

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If you need more information or a different format phone 0845 155 1015, email [travellers@devon.gov.uk](mailto:travellers@devon.gov.uk), text 80011 (start your message with the word Devon), textphone 0845 155 1020 or, write to Devon County Council, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD.

## Executive Summary

The County Council's Gypsy Traveller Liaison Service (GTLS) provides a responsive and cost effective service which seeks to address the unmet needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Devon. The GTLS continues to meet the demands placed upon it and set goals for the future within local, regional and national policies.

From April 2014 to March 2015 the service built on established good practice and saw greater communication between all stakeholders through multi-agency working. Over the past twelve months, the service has seen more agencies feeling able to work directly with the Gypsy Traveller Community and engage in a two way process of identification of needs and solutions.

The service has managed 35 unauthorised encampments (UEs) including homelessness UEs in the twelve month period and provided a range of advice and guidance to others on dealing with encampments on their land. This is a small increase of 4 from the year 13/14.

The total number of people using these 35 unauthorised encampments was 259 including children.

This year saw the opening of a new 15 pitch site at Haldon Ridge. The GTLS gave liaison support and advice working with Teign Housing, Teignbridge District Council and the residents to ensure a relatively smooth transition from the unauthorised encampment we managed at Haldon onto the new authorised site next door. The need to identify further land or other solutions to address the lack of pitches and sites remains, particularly in the south and east of the county where we see our highest figures for UEs. The first milestone needs to focus on permanent pitches to address the shortage now. Looking into the future transit/temporary stopping places would alleviate the number of short term unauthorised encampments.

We hope this report provides an insight into the complex issues involved and how these are addressed. As a service, we are always open to suggestions, comments and requests for training or guidance.

The handbook, code of conduct, monitoring forms alongside national policies has added an extra dimension to clarify roles and responsibilities. The easy read code of conduct has been successful and as a result we have seen sites more tidy and complaints fall. A fair and consistent approach to UEs continues to prove effective.

To view the handbook and code of conduct:

**[www.devon.gov.uk/gypsies\\_and\\_travellers\\_in\\_devon](http://www.devon.gov.uk/gypsies_and_travellers_in_devon)**

## Introduction to Gypsy and Traveller Groups

Romany Gypsies include English, Welsh and Scottish Gypsies and European Roma. Gypsies have the longest known history of the Traveller groups and are a recognised ethnicity/race. Gypsies' ethnic roots lie in Northern India, where nomadic groups first started moving towards Europe around 1,000 years ago.

Irish Heritage Travellers have a long and detailed history, starting in Ireland as long ago as the 15th century. At a similar time, Gypsies were unlikely to settle in Ireland, due to the already established communities of Tinkers (metal workers) who would be in competition for the work and stopping places. They are predominantly of strong Catholic faith, and prefer to send their children to Catholic schools.

Showmen are a cultural minority with a long, rich history of providing travelling entertainment and fairground rides at local Markets and festivals.

Circus Families have a long heritage as travelling entertainers. The service they provide is generally wanted, accepted and enjoyed by the majority of the population.

New Travellers arose mainly in the 20th century, adopting a 'low impact lifestyle' for environmental, social and/or economic reasons. Many of the adults have grown up in mainstream society, and are well versed in education and other service entitlements. All families and communes tend to be different with little commonality on accommodation, mobility, work or faith trends

According to the most recent Census data by the Office for National Statistics, Ethnic Gypsies and Travellers nationally make up 0.1 per cent of the population. Devon has less than the national average, however we know that many do not disclose their ethnicity and therefore figures are an under-representation. Figures do not capture data on New Age Travellers who have a significant presence in Devon and the South West:

**Census Data 1**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Gypsy/ Irish Traveller</b>	<b>% Gypsy Irish Traveller</b>
<b>East Devon</b>	132457	90	0.07%
<b>Exeter</b>	117773	93	0.08%
<b>Mid Devon</b>	77750	88	0.11%
<b>North Devon</b>	93667	45	0.05%
<b>South Hams</b>	83140	45	0.05%
<b>Teignbridge</b>	124220	118	0.09%
<b>Torridge</b>	63839	54	0.08%
<b>West Devon</b>	53553	21	0.04%
<b>Devon</b>	746399	554	0.07%

[Data by the Office for National Statistics](#)

## Brief Overview of Service staffing

Staffing within the service consists of:

- One part time Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO),
- One full time Assistant Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (AGTLO).

Management has been provided from within the Strategy, Policy and Organisational Change Team (Services for Communities). The GTLO's work alongside the corporate equality officer and the hate crime prevention officer forming the 'Equality and Outreach Team'.

The Portfolio Holder for Gypsies and Travellers is Councillor Roger Croad.

We regularly consult with Devon County Council legal department to ensure safe and lawful decisions are made.

We also work closely with the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Achievement Service at Babcock LDP (Education Support).

Staffing this year has stayed the same. The GTLS have been successful in reducing operating costs for running the service.

The GTLS works not only with Gypsies and Travellers but acts as a reference point and contact for all initial enquiries within Devon and neighbouring regions. Information requests come from a wide range of sources. Often the first point of contact is the My Devon contact centre. Enquirers include:- the settled community, parish councillors, district councillors, county councillors, researchers, planning departments, housing and health agencies, students, the media, or personnel in other districts and regions. Information about the service and communities is provided on the Devon County Council website.

The GTLS monitors enquiries to gauge the main issues and responds to each issue on a case by case basis: identifying, understanding and balancing needs. Where necessary, we will make changes to policy or practice to ensure we achieve a fair and effective outcome in all that we do.

The GTLS regularly keeps up to date and shares information via its membership of NAGTO (National Association of Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers).

## Roles and Responsibilities

The County Council considers its responsibilities under three broad areas:

- The duty to promote equality and human rights, and specifically to promote an environment in which the rights and responsibilities of both Gypsies and Travellers and the housed community are respected.
- Providing the Gypsy and Traveller community with a liaison link to assist in access to welfare and other support services.
- Being a substantial landowner.

### Equality Duties and Human Rights

Although there is no legal right to stop on someone else's land without their consent, there is nothing unlawful in following a nomadic lifestyle. In fact, we have a Human Right to 'private and family life' which means a right to a live how we choose (i.e. to live a nomadic or settled life), provided it does not interfere with other rights or laws.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to treat someone less favourably because of a range of protected characteristics, including race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are defined as a racial group in law. A Public Sector Equality Duty places a duty on the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons of different groups.

Further information is available from [www.devon.gov.uk/equalitylegislation](http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalitylegislation).

### Welfare and Liaison

Through the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service (GTLS), the County Council seeks to provide both Gypsies/Travellers and the wider community with a point of contact for advice and help for all related issues.

In terms of access to services, Gypsies and Travellers have the same entitlements to access services as any other member of society. When travelling or living on an Unauthorised Encampment (UE'S), access to services especially health, education and social care can be more challenging.

The GTLS has a key role in facilitating access and, when needed, will be an escort on site for doctors and others or take individuals to medical appointments, but will not act on behalf of another service or individual. As with anyone, where safeguarding concerns are identified, the relevant services will be contacted.

Sometimes homeless rough sleepers, who do not regard themselves as Gypsy or Traveller by definition or choice, are present on UE's. This year the process for dealing with the homeless will be the same process as when dealing with Gypsy/Travellers and in future years.

## **As a substantial Landowner**

Devon County Council is a significant landowner in the county and owns or leases buildings from which council services are delivered or administered – for example, libraries, recycling centres, offices, day centres, waste disposal sites, vehicle parking and highway depots and the Stover/great western canal country parks. In addition, the County Council has areas of land such as county farms, highways, highway verges and lay-bys.

In relation to all its land and property interests the County Council has responsibilities to service users, staff and visitors, as would any other landowner. However, in the case of trespass and the creation of an UE, the County Council cannot trigger possession proceedings in the same way that private or commercial landowners can. In addition to land use issues, the County Council is required to conduct assessments of any public health issues and the welfare, education, human rights and needs of the occupiers. A Court may refuse our request for possession (eviction) if there are over-riding welfare needs.

In most but not all cases, the presence of an UE can generate a range of concerns from the neighbouring members of the housed community. It is another role of the GTLS, to seek to create positive relationships where possible, and, in any event to seek to reduce friction and mitigate the impact of the UE. The GLTS will liaise with the Police and the local Racial Equality Council where community tensions escalate.

## **Meeting housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers**

The responsibility for planning and housing rests with District/City and Borough Councils as per the Planning Policy for Travellers Sites 2012. This updates the Housing Act 2004.

Local Authorities with Housing responsibilities (in Devon these are District and Unitary Councils) are required to, by March 2013 (updating annually):

- Use a robust evidence base to identify a five year supply of specific and deliverable sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Identify broad locations for six to ten years.
- Grant Temporary Planning Permission to site requests, in the absence of a five year supply.

Devon County Council has a 'duty to co-operate' under Section 102 of the Localism Act 2011 and therefore a duty to assist other authorities in sourcing suitable sites/pitches.

At present there is only three public sites; Sowton, Broadclyst and now Haldon (through Teign Housing) offering a total of 31 pitches which equates to 31 housing units. As with the settled community, this makes no provision for the next generation. As a result of this the GTLS manages a number of UE's throughout Devon whilst waiting for provision to become available. At times this includes large groups that are in transit who do not stay for long, along side smaller groups who tend to stay in the Devon wide area for longer. We continue to work hard with all involved to limit site sizes where we can. We tend to see New Age Traveller communities on longer term small

encampments and Irish Traveller Communities on temporary (transit) encampments – sometimes up to 30 or so caravans as family groups converge on the limited land available.

To bring change to this situation, The County Council is happy to facilitate or, be involved in Devon-wide or regional forums for site planning. We will work in partnership with District areas to develop a strategy for identifying Temporary Stops, Transit and Permanent sites from our own land, to fulfil our duty to co-operate and foster good relations by reducing the number of UEs.

Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers is vital for seeking effective solutions. This may include working with areas of temporary acceptance within districts that are owned by other providers. The GLTS can facilitate consultation with individuals on UEs, but, there should be a Gypsy/Traveller Forum for each District. Currently only Teignbridge District have a working Forum.

The County Council is willing to work in partnership with other landowners to help identify suitable sites and individual pitches, particularly when involved in planned housing developments where pitch allocation can be part of those plans. Partners include:

- Local authorities, including neighbouring authorities.
- Highways Agency.
- Private landowners and businesses, particularly those near main transport routes with hard-standing areas.
- Ministry of Defence.
- Farmers.
- Church/religious organisations.
- British Residual Land Board.

The GLTS would particularly welcome to hear from people willing to act as landlords of Gypsy and Traveller tenants, or seek new tenants so that those on UEs can be properly accommodated.

The GTLS will also comment on planning strategies and has participated in local development framework meetings throughout Devon. We are able to impart ideas and solutions used in other areas throughout the United Kingdom because of our networks.

## Key Duties of the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Service

Below is a list of the key duties the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Service has undertaken during the last twelve months:

- Managing two authorised sites owned/leased by Devon County Council, comprising 11 fixed pitches within Exeter City Council area and 5 fixed pitches within East Devon District Council area.
- Responding to and managing Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) across land owned by Devon County Council (DCC) including highways land.
- Providing an assessment and liaison service for land owned by The Highways Agency.
- Maintaining the Devon Tree Framework to ensure tree safety at our sites and considering other health and safety issues for both fixed sites and unauthorised encampments.
- Working in partnership with homelessness agencies to advise those who are homeless and camped on our land of any works being undertaken and when possession of the land will take place.
- Working with other agencies across the County including District/City and Borough Councils, Health, Education and the Police to support the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and respond to any issues.
- Maintaining our own protocol to reflect any changes in government legislation as well as providing an easy read guide of our processes and expectations.
- Reducing friction within communities through consistent and fair application of a code of conduct, upon which toleration of UEs depends.
- Responding to consultations on planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- Attending and working proactively in any district forums, research projects and consultations.
- Providing data to health services on issues and current practice and, if necessary, advocate for change via partnership working.
- Maintain health promotion links to improve health outcomes within the community on both authorised and unauthorised sites.
- Improving the relationship between settled and Gypsy and Traveller 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 work with communities in a flexible manner to provide efficient service provision and clear communication to all stakeholders

- Supporting both the settled and Traveller community in accessing services.
- Being the first point of contact for anyone with questions, concerns or needing contact with the community.

## Make up of Gypsy Traveller communities in Devon 2014/15

### **Permanent Sites – Sowton and Broadclyst**

Management of these sites is provided through the GTLS. Duties include, maintaining tenancies, 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.

Following the submission of a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the GTLS have been successful in attracting grant money for a refurbishment programme at Sowton. £185,814.00 was allocated by the HCA; DCC contributed £88,605 bringing the total amount of funding for the project to £274,419.

The main focus of the refurbishment was the upgrading of the amenity blocks, the installation of water and drainage to be made available to each mobile home plus other associated works.

There was inevitably a period of disruption on site whilst works were being carried out; however, the 'build time' was kept to the minimum disruption. All amenity blocks were stripped and upgraded including new bathroom suites, kitchen cupboards and sinks; all were redecorated. The installation of uPVC doors has meant that the amenity blocks are secure for residents.

The refurbishment will reduce maintenance costs in the future, improve quality of life for the residents on site and be part of a greener site overall.

In last years report it was stated that a future goal of the GTLS was to secure arrangements for the long term future at Sowton; this year we have sought out interest in a housing association taking responsibility and management of the site. These talks are ongoing and will be reported on in next years report.

Other services on site this year include stop smoking advice, healthy initiatives, personal goal setting, basic literacy and computer training.

Site	District	Number of Adults	Number of Children
Sowton	Exeter	16	4
Broadclyst	East Devon	8	5
Total		24	9

## **Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) on Devon County Council owned land.**

This year there have been 18 short term Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) across Devon. The UEs each vary in size, location and how long the Gypsies and Travellers plan to remain there. The vast majority of these have been within the South Hams and East area.

There are 13 longer term unauthorised but tolerated encampments. These are home to Gypsies and Travellers that are not highly mobile but still travel for economic purpose around Devon and beyond. Some of these encampments may be on Highways Agency land and we work with the Travellers and this agency when this occurs.

The responsibility of District Councils to either allocate land for Gypsies and Travellers or to provide social style accommodation is progressing although this has not progressed as quickly as hoped.

Teignbridge District Council was successful in building a 15 pitch Traveller's site with grant funding received via the Homes and Community Agency. The site is designed predominantly for New Travellers. The GTLS have assisted with the transition at Haldon, actively involved in the liaison between residents requesting a pitch from the UE next door to the proposed site and Teign Housing who is responsible for the allocation of pitches and management of the new site. The GTLS also played a big part in linking Teignbridge District Council housing services to those who were unable to secure a pitch on the new site. Once the site opened, the GTLS closed the UE next door to the new site. Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council and Teign Housing were all successful in driving this project forward. It is a good example that change can happen if it approached with a 'can do' attitude. Partnership working was at the heart of this successful project. Joint and coordinated press releases went some way to dispel myths when negative headlines appeared in the local media. The residents are happily settled at Haldon which holds a waiting list.

Any district/city or borough councils can apply for grant funding for similar projects through the HCA. New pitches that are provided this way could also be eligible for the new homes bonus for affordable housing.

We have responded quickly to any requests and support needed. The level of UEs we saw this year demonstrates the shortage of permanent and transit sites. The longer-term UEs continue to be home to many G/Ts looking for suitable formal sites. We will continue to work with Districts to increase the number of authorised pitches/sites in Devon during 2015/16.

The GTLS continues to be 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, and provision of temporary sanitation options. Please see appendix 1 for a financial summary.

The tables that follow highlights the number of UE's by district. Short term UE's are mainly for groups that are travelling through and do not wish to stay long term. These figures could

suggest where there is most need for short term solutions such as a tolerated area, or, transit pitches.

Long term UEs are mainly for groups that travel for economic purpose but tend to use the site as a base from which to travel from. Other Long term sites could be the result of Gypsy/Travellers who cease to travel for health, old age or educational needs. These figures suggest where there is most need for long term solutions such as residential sites either provided by the local authority, housing association/registered social landlord, privately or a combination of all three.

We have again experienced occupations by homeless people in tents this year. There is now detail in terms of numbers alongside the UEs. Although small in number it is an increase and therefore the reason why its included.

These figures do not include encampments on District Council Land, such as car parks, or do they include information about those on other land for example, land owned by the Forestry Commission or Dartmoor National Parks. These encampments can be the same group looking for somewhere to park up short term, or subject to eviction from other district council land.

#### Short Term UE's 1 (Between 1 week and 2 months)

District	Adults	Children	No of UE's
Exeter	18	18	4
East Devon	39	37	6
Mid Devon	0	0	0
North Devon	1	0	1
West Devon	8	5	1
South Hams	5	4	4
Teignbridge	10	15	2
Torridge	0	0	0
Total	81	79	18

### Long Term UE's (Tolerated on a longer term – more than 2 months)

District	Adults	Children	No of UE's
Exeter	0	0	0
East Devon	5	0	1
Mid Devon	0	0	0
North Devon	22	2	3
West Devon	0	0	0
South Hams	26	9	8
Teignbridge	30	15	1
Torridge	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>

### Homeless UEs

Homeless	Adults	No of UEs
Mid Devon	4	2
Teignbridge	4	2

### Totals 2014/15

Type of encampment	Adults	Children	No of UEs
Short term UEs	75	16	13
Long term UEs	81	79	18
Homeless UEs	8	0	4
Fixed Sites (2)	24	9	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>35</b>

As these tables highlight, services and agencies need to address both short and long term accommodation issues for these communities. These figures do not include unauthorised encampments on other local authority land nor does it include private land. The GTLS plays an important part in assisting other landowners when dealing with UEs; this year we assisted with 8 UEs that were not on Devon County Council land.

As a service, we have been networking and liaising to offer solutions and identify gaps in provision and to improve outcomes for the Gypsy Traveller community. Agencies procedures do not always understand the difference between fixed, transit and unauthorised encampments. We have been able to achieve the results listed in the table below by education and negotiating for positive change.

## Multi Agency Work

The GTLS has been successful in engaging agencies in helping to deliver services to Gypsies and Travellers, through being involved in and supporting various pieces of work during the year that benefitted communities across Devon. Main projects this year were:

- Assisting Teign Housing and the Haldon Travellers with applications for the new site. Attendance at the Teignbridge Gypsy Traveller Forum, Haldon Users Group and the management steering group that oversaw the implementation of the new site.
- Accommodating a student Police Officer on site visits across the county as part of their learning.
- We have worked with Parish and District Councils to provide support, information, education, advice and possible solutions. One such example was responding to the accommodation needs assessments carried out this year. District/City and Borough councils as housing authorities collaborated to conduct accommodation needs assessments for the G/T communities in Devon. The process produced pitch numbers required to accommodate G/Ts. These pitch numbers are then used to inform local development plans in each district area. West Devon put their local plan out for consultation to which the GTLS responded. Other areas will consult next year on their local plans; the broad themes and approaches will be reported in next years report.
- We provide a reference point and contact for Devon Adult and Children's services to enable through care and service provision.
- Smoke free support is offered across all sites

- Worked closely with the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) on the Sowton bid for grant money to refurbish the amenity blocks. Liaison with residents and contractor to ensure a relatively smooth build time on site.
- We work with the Forestry Commission to address any issues when works are undertaken or encroachments are on their land.
- We have worked closely with the District Housing Departments to ensure new tenancies taken up by G/Ts moving into housing are supported and workable. We have provided a contact point for information and support to assist individuals applying for housing solutions. We also work with private sites to offer housing options.
- We link with the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Advisory Service (EMTAS) provided by Babcock LDP to ensure all children of school age on our land in Devon can be supported in education.
- We regularly liaise with GP practices, dentists, mental health teams, children and adult services across Devon to facilitate access and treatment options.
- We liaise with Regional and National Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers to exchange good practice and be aware of any potential sites or vacancies available to our communities. Further to ensure standardised practice.
- We ensure that private planning applicants are aware of South West Planning Aid and the services this group can provide. District Planning departments regularly contact us to either start a dialogue, arrange site visits, or, report on developments.
- As well as direct work with other agencies, the GTLS has played a part in bridging the gap for delivery of services to Gypsies and Travellers by liaising with a whole host of agencies (to numerous to list here); this helps address the short fall in access to services that this community face.
- In partnership with PDREC and EMTAS the GTLS helped deliver safeguarding training to a total of 44 people working in the field; level 3 safeguarding trainers, social workers, managers and family workers. The evaluation confirmed that the 4 sessions met expectations; furthermore an action plan was drawn up to improve work in this area in future by some of the attendees.
- Our ongoing link with PDREC and health promotions teams have enabled health checks for those in the G/T community aged 40 or over. These checks not only provide early warnings but offer information on lifestyle changes; giving options for a healthier life.

- The GTLS sat on a panel of the South and West Devon district councils land development assessment which fed into local plans. The identification of land for the use of G/T site provision was the main focus of the panel. Land was put forward and assessed by the panel.

## Planning

The process of gaining private planning permission for a Gypsy/Traveller family site can prove costly and lengthy. 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.

This year however there has been less need for support as planning departments within some districts have made services more accessible and consumer friendly. We will continue to support families who are required to prove their Gypsy/Traveller status. The district area with most activity this year has been Mid Devon.

## Outcomes from 2013/14

Last years report listed issues and potential outcomes we were hoping to achieve. In future all specific work will be listed in the 'Future – next 12 months' section. Below is the update in relation to the issues listed in 13/14.

### Attend and work on South Hams/West Devon land identification forum.

This was completed and work will continue over the next 12 months to progress the creation of new sites.

### Continued health drive on both authorised and unauthorised sites + to ensure health promotion links is a key duty of the GTLS.

This has been successful and is now part of the key duties the service carries out.

### To support cross border working on the provision of Gypsy Traveller sites

Haldon is a good example. More outreach to local authorities will happen as part of the local plan process next year.

### Monitor and assess the impact of Welfare Reform on our communities

We were anticipating universal credit to be rolled out this year. This will now be ongoing into 15/16.

### Establish practices for homelessness issues

Homelessness is now approached in the same way as G/Ts are in terms of the code of conduct and liaising with services for the welfare of service users. Eviction as per our policy dictates that it will be used only in a certain set of circumstances. Please refer to the Handbook for further details

### To continue to work with Parish Councils and District Councils and County Councillors for community cohesion and inclusion

This is now a key duty of the service

### To pursue a bid through the HCA to fund a refurbishment programme

This has been successfully completed

### To work with communities in a flexible manner to enable appropriate responses to changing needs

Now a key duty of the service

## The Future – next 12 months

- The HCA have a funding programme within affordable housing to facilitate the building of new sites. Each District should be identifying a five year land supply for this purpose and making their interest known in order to bid for this money. We will continue to support districts in this process by looking at our own land holdings and assessing land that is deemed surplus to requirements so that it can be considered for G/T use.
- Responding to local plan consultations focusing on providing sites for G/Ts
- We will continue to seek new ways of working with others and build on links already made with other agencies throughout next year. In the climate of reduced funding across the board, it's important we try to achieve the best possible outcomes for the service and its users.
- DCC and other agencies face more expenditure cuts whilst the needs of Gypsy Travellers remain. Large groups of Travellers cause a lot of concern amongst the settled community and incur moving on costs via the court process, this can lead to tensions and a non profitable state for all. Often large groups turn up on high profile sites due to no choice once they turn up in an area; this causes the inflammatory headlines we see in the local media. Other areas are looking at negotiated stopping places, which would consist of a piece of land which would accommodate a medium/large group should they turn up in an area. This would allow the service to help link with different agencies and avoid costly court action. This is an interim solution. If areas of land were identified as described above, whoever was using the land would still be subject the county council's code of conduct which covers all DCC land holdings. There is a planning limitation of 28 days maximum which would abate people's fears of unauthorised encampments. This will be progressed throughout the coming year.
- Progressing talks with other housing providers for the future of the two authorised sites
- Deliver training to the highways teams across Devon around safeguarding and the assessments of UEs.
- Liaise with Police colleagues to support work around issues associated with modern slavery which can affect G/T communities
- Monitor and assess the impact of welfare reform and the Care Act on G/T communities and report any relevant findings

**As well as focusing on the above specific issues, we continue to focus overall on the County Council's better together agenda:**

**<https://new.devon.gov.uk/bettertogether/>**

## Appendix 1

### Expenditure 2014/15

#### A. Summary

Expenditure:	£'s
Staffing costs including travel expenses	56,647
Maintenance and repairs	20,104
Rent (Broadclyst Lease)	5,460
Electricity and water on sites	11,562
Other expenses	4,075
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,848</b>
Income: (portaloo's, skips)	4,243
Rents	45,015
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>48,590</b>

## 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.

Fees for legal and court costs per eviction	770.00
Liaison with sites to collect relevant information for the legal team	100.00
Transportation of 1 x caravan to secure site	*450.00
*Some families have more than one caravan, so this estimate is conservative	
Total cost of eviction per family: (Average for 2 Adults and children with 1 caravan)	1,320.00
Total families for 2013/14 156 Adults / 2 at 1 caravan per unit)	78 units
Total cost for eviction only policy (78 x 1320)	<b>102,960.00</b>
Estimated cost if management of the two authorised sites were contracted out	45,750.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,710.00</b>
Actual current costs relating to management of authorised sites: 2 x Staff Annual Salary – including on costs, travel and	56,647.00

training	
Costs for portaloo for provision (minus income for portaloos)	7,530.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,177.00</b>
<b>Total savings using the current system for in house management and a tolerated sites policy</b>	<b>84,533.00</b>