

Work produced by the May 2014 London Gypsy and Traveller Forum for the Housing Committee Investigation

13th May 2014

This briefing paper is the result of a discussion carried out during the London Gypsy and Traveller Forum on the 13th of May 2014 regarding the investigation proposed by the London Assembly Housing Committee on Gypsy and Traveller issues. Forum attendees worked in groups to answer the following questions:

1. What questions should be asked in the investigation?
2. What sites should be visited?
3. Who should be invited to give evidence?

1. What questions should be asked in the investigation

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments are being carried out in response to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites but no new sites are being delivered to meet the identified needs across the London Boroughs. What are the reasons for this and how does it impact the Gypsy and Traveller community?
- Some London Boroughs have public site waiting lists and pitch allocation policies, but there is no standardised procedure across London. Waiting lists can provide useful evidence of accommodation needs if they are properly maintained. What is the current situation across the London Boroughs and how does it affect the Gypsy and Traveller community? Are there good practice examples in London and could they be implemented at a wider level?
- Will the needs of the Roma communities in London be considered in the investigation?
- What good practice examples are there of strategies and procedures to support transient travellers instead of just moving them on in the same day from unauthorised camps?
- What are the impacts of the welfare reform and benefit cap on Gypsy and Traveller families, especially children?
- How are wider public services reaching Gypsies and Travellers?
- Can Census data be used where there is no other evidence of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers?
- Is the Traveller Pitch Funding programme successful? Camden and Kensington and Chelsea returned the funding they had secured without proper justification. Are other Boroughs showing interest in using this funding to build the sites they need? Given the budget isn't ring-fenced, there is a risk the money will be allocated to general housing delivery instead.
- How is the Duty to Cooperate being met in London? What would make Boroughs work together more effectively on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs? Is a more strategic London wide policy necessary to ensure the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are being met?



What sites in London should be visited

- Castlehaven Rd, NW1 8PL, Camden
- Lonesome Way, Streatham – This site is in a terrible condition
- Spring Tide Close, Peckham, SE15 3TR – Recently refurbished but very overcrowded
- Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation
- Unauthorised camps
- Boroughs where sites have been closed and not replaced
- A variation of good and poor standard sites
- The Olympic relocation sites in Hackney and the Crossrail relocation site in Tower Hamlets

Who should be invited to give evidence

- Members of the community from all ages
- Kathleen Joyce, resident of the Peckham site and Southwark Travellers' Action Group trustee
- Johnny Power – Camden Traveller
- Sean Power – Camden Traveller
- Families living on unauthorised encampments
- Travellers from Boroughs without local support groups and organisations
- Representatives from councils with good site provision as well as from councils with poor site provision
- Large developers
- Representatives from around the UK
- Third sector agencies and representatives
- GLA representatives
- Health inequality representatives and other related policy areas
- Housed Travellers
- Housing providers such as housing associations