
Cambridgeshire Travellers Review

Research Report Number 1

Identification of Key Issues



Report Prepared by
Leanne Weber
January 1998
(Amended Oct 1998)

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Purpose and layout of this report

This report is based on interviews with members of the Travellers Review Steering Group, supplemented by written material and discussions with other key agency staff. It has been prepared as a working document, representing the initial perceptions and concerns of participants in the Travellers Review. Reliance on the views of key informants can never reflect the entire range of opinions and experience within any agency or section of the population. However, for ease of expression, points are often attributed to particular agencies or groups, rather than to the specific individuals who made them. The report is not intended as a statement of organisational policy, and should be read in conjunction with subsequent reports to be produced for the Review, which will examine some of the issues in greater depth.

The objectives of the consultation included :

- to identify key areas of concern from a range of perspectives, in order to prioritise issues for further study
- to assess the availability of statistical information on the use of services by Travellers, in order to identify gaps in current knowledge
- to stimulate an exchange of views and information between agencies having contact with or providing services to Travellers, and between these agencies and organisations which represent Travellers.

Key informants were asked :

- to outline the overall role of their service or organisation
- to describe their agency's involvement with the Traveller population, and identify key areas of interest or concern
- to describe their agency's methods of monitoring use of their services by Travellers
- to suggest what outcomes from the research would assist their organisation in their work with Travellers

Representatives from organisations representing Travellers were also asked what input they could provide to the research project.

The third section of this report records the comments made under these headings on an agency-by-agency basis (and therefore represents the views of individual contributors). The main sources of information used to compile each entry is listed in Appendix 1.

The second section discusses the key issues which emerged, and considers the implications for the research programme (and therefore includes the views of the author).

Appendix 2 lists some practical initiatives in Cambridgeshire which are directed towards Travellers, or those who work with them. A register of these projects, including more detailed descriptions, budgetary information and contact persons, is being compiled as part of the research programme.

Appendix 3 sets out the main issues which will be examined in the remainder of the research, and indicates how the resulting information might feed into practical initiatives or policy reviews which are already underway.

A note on defining the research problem

Travellers as a group are the subject of this research, and of the wider policy review. This raises the question of whether Travellers themselves, and their impact on other sections of the population, constitute the problem to be studied, or whether the problems and disadvantages faced by Travellers should be the main focus of attention. The rationale for this study recognises that these perspectives are both inextricably linked, and subject to a range of interpretations by those who represent Travellers, provide services for them and, at times, enforce the law against them.

An attempt is therefore made in the summary below to represent each of the key issues from a range of perspectives. There has not, as yet, been any systematic attempt to consult with members of the non-Travelling community (other than those working in official agencies). This perspectivist approach will be maintained throughout the research programme, not with the intention of suspending all judgement about difficult issues, but with the objective of working towards a more balanced understanding of them.

The question of who is a Traveller is not discussed here, but will be considered in the next report of the series. The community representatives whose views are referred to here are members of organisations representing Gypsies. Points made by other informants may also apply to other groups of Travelling people.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF KEY POINTS

A place to live

- Unauthorised camping is seen as an ongoing problem for District and City councils, especially on high profile sites where there is a strong public and political reaction. Legal procedures for moving groups on are ineffective, and groups may simply camp illegally elsewhere. The amount of litter left behind depends to some extent on the occupation of groups (exacerbated by high costs on private tips), with scrap dealing and tree lopping often producing large amounts of waste. Problems for Travellers on unauthorised encampments include lack of access to services, and repeated exposure to potential conflict with officials and surrounding communities.

- Preventing access to some traditional stopping places is thought to have led to more visible and larger encampments, and increased the potential for conflict. The number of unauthorised encampments in the county has been steady over recent years, but community tolerance of them seems to be decreasing. Housed residents may experience intimidation from illegally camped groups, or may feel threatened by the mere presence of Travellers. But encampments in certain locations have been tolerated and caused few problems.

- The costs to local authorities of providing accommodation are thought to be disproportionately high. Official counts show the number of caravans in the county to be decreasing, but Travellers who are currently in housing are not counted in these figures, and there are other indications of a growing local population. Central government no longer provides any resources, and there is often public opposition to the expenditure of local funds on Travellers. There is therefore pressure to operate existing sites at a profit. From a resident's perspective, this may mean that rents seem high and the conditions attached to occupancy appear more restrictive than for council house tenants.

- Some official Travellers' sites have a history of damage, and conflict both within the site and with the surrounding community. There is an official perception that residents at some of these sites lack community spirit and that children are beyond control. This is costly and problematic to local authorities, and may also reduce services to residents, as providers may be reluctant to enter sites. Two new site management options are now being considered, involving the establishment of a joint County/District agency, or the transfer of responsibility to a host agency. Gypsy representatives favour Housing Associations, resident management and right to buy arrangements, but management groups run by Gypsies are thought to invite favouritism.

- Many Travellers do not want to use official sites at all. Those who can afford it would prefer to make a home base on private land. Traveller representatives believe that many official sites are in inconvenient locations or on contaminated land, attract the 'wrong sort of resident', and that occupants have difficulty obtaining contents insurance. District officials believe that some

mobile families who refuse pitches on official sites wish to continue using traditional stopping places, with minimal or no restrictions from the authorities.

- Traveller representatives believe that a range of accommodation is needed, including the identification of emergency stopping places and greater willingness to grant planning approval for private sites. Local authorities feel they lack information about the type of accommodation required, now and in the future, have few resources to provide new public facilities, and face a range of practical and political difficulties in providing more alternative sites for Travellers.

- Planners find that Travellers tend to occupy land they have purchased and apply for retrospective planning approval when challenged. This may be looked on more sympathetically in some areas than others, but forces planners into a reactive mode of operation. Gypsy representatives say that families often have nowhere else to go, and are sceptical about being granted permission. A case is coming up before the European Court of Human Rights which challenges the independence of the Department of Environment Inspectorate which handles planning appeals.

- Districts need to establish better links with the Traveller community to encourage early discussion of planning applications. One Gypsy representative mentioned North Derbyshire as an example of good practice, as planners are included in the Gypsy Liaison Group. Options for incorporating better guidance into Local Plans, either through identifying suitable areas for private sites, developing clearer criteria for judging applications, or providing supplementary guidance, are also being considered. One Gypsy organisation said that authorities were afraid of a 'honey pot' effect if they adopted the first approach, but felt that criteria-based policies could always be used to refuse applications.

- There is a perception amongst some sections of the non-Traveller population that Gypsies receive special treatment within planning law. Access to the provisions for Gypsy sites is via the Caravan Sites Act definition, which hinges on a nomadic way of life. This creates some confusion about eligibility, since Travellers seeking to make a permanent home base may appear to planning authorities to have abandoned a nomadic way of life (although they will probably plan to travel in the summer months).

- The difficulties of maintaining a travelling lifestyle while remaining within the law, are seen by Gypsy representatives to be forcing many Travellers into housing. This is sometimes seen as a threat to Gypsy culture, and may present practical problems for individual Travellers (e.g. neighbour harassment and isolation). Traveller Education is funded to work with pupils for up to 2 years after their families move into housing, but other support networks may be lost, and the needs of this group may remain hidden.

- Travellers who choose to settle in houses may find that existing policies do not fit well with a travelling way of life. For example, applicants may have

difficulty establishing 'settled residence' in an area, and may be at risk of losing their place due to sustained absences (particularly those housed under temporary provisions). There is no systematic information at present about the number and experiences of housed Travellers in Cambridgeshire, or the impact on housing providers of any increased demand being experienced from caravan dwellers.

- The County Council has attempted to introduce some consistency in the management of sites and handling of unauthorised encampments, and encourage systematic liaison between agencies. It is felt that there is a need for more central guidance from government (which is low when compared with social housing), and a new spirit of inter-County co-operation on Travellers' issues. Districts feel it will be difficult to achieve total consistency because of variations in local geographical and social circumstances, but agree that national co-ordination and a suitable legislative framework is essential, for example in the provision of emergency stopping sites. Gypsy representatives also thought that national legislation would have to be re-introduced to clarify responsibilities and procedures for the provision of accommodation for Travellers.

Crime, disorder and policing

- Police believe that the criminal element within Traveller communities feature prominently in cross-border crime, such as post office robberies, distraction burglaries and organised vehicle theft. They have established a specialist unit within the Force Investigation Bureau to deal with these cases. There is presently a lack of comprehensive statistical information about the overall involvement of Travellers in crime, and of crime committed against Travellers, which would put these high-profile offences into a wider perspective.

- Some official sites have at times been locations for serious organised crime and disorder, and absorb a disproportionate amount of police resources. Site residents may be intimidated both by the criminal behaviour of this minority, and by the high intensity policing approaches which have sometimes been adopted. Large operations may be remembered for many years, and it is thought that police often misunderstand cultural practices. In turn, police may experience hostility from residents, creating an escalation towards heavier policing styles. The high visibility of some serious offending (such as vehicle arson, and dangerous driving) and the large-scale police response and negative media coverage which may follow, reinforces negative stereotypes of Travellers amongst the wider community.

- There is a desire to re-establish community policing at these problem locations. Attempts to improve relations on some sites have included more careful targeting of police operations, and dialogue between police, site residents and housed residents. Police are introducing cultural awareness training for beat officers, and considering how to attract officers from Traveller backgrounds. Co-operation from site residents might be further enhanced by a greater awareness by police of the social and economic disadvantage

experienced by many Travellers, and of their experiences and opinions of the police.

- The Probation Service is concerned that Travellers may be experiencing discrimination in court, particularly in relation to bail. However, site wardens have also reported management problems after defendants have been bailed to sites with which they have no official connection. It appears that adult Travellers sentenced to community penalties are unlikely to have been convicted of offences involving violence, alcohol or drugs. However, without detailed analysis it is not clear whether this reflects differences in sentencing practices (e.g. a greater likelihood of custodial sentences for Travellers charged with violent or drug-related crime) or differences between Travellers and non-Travellers in types of offending.
- Community Service supervisors claim to receive excellent co-operation from Travellers who report for their orders, including a readiness to notify changes of address. Some others do not report at all. Youth Justice staff supervising young Travellers also report generally positive experiences in supervising young people from relatively settled communities, but considerable practical difficulties associated with more mobile young people.
- There is a concern amongst police and others that children living on sites will be drawn into criminal activity by copying older role models, particularly where they are not attending school. Lack of parental control over some children and the reluctance of other parents to intervene is also noted. These problems are not dissimilar from those experienced on many Council estates, and may be one reason why many Travelling families are reluctant to go onto official sites.
- Very low levels of literacy have been noted amongst adult Travellers sentenced to community supervision. The Youth Justice team say they respect the wishes of Traveller parents who do not want education provided for children who are not attending school. This seems to be at odds with the policy of Traveller Education towards this age group. There appears to be potential for greater liaison between Traveller Education, Community Education and those supervising convicted offenders from a Travelling background, both in respect of vocational and school education for convicted offenders, and in the provision of diversionary and preventative programmes for young people at risk of offending.

Access to services and employment opportunities

- Attendance at primary school is increasing, but educational attainment is still well below average for Traveller children at all stages.

Retention into secondary education is considered to be a major problem. Attendance may be enforced by court action where positive encouragement has failed. Many Traveller parents wish to see their children complete their secondary education, but factors such as fear of bullying, cultural expectations, lack of transport, disapproval of sex education and fear of contact with drugs may act as disincentives.

- Non-attendance at school has a range of knock-on effects. Police see this as a major contributor to crime amongst young Travellers. The Traveller Education Team is also concerned at the systematic exclusion of many young Travellers from vocational programmes and other opportunities, which depend on being registered on a school roll.
- Traditional ways of making a living are now disappearing, although demand is increasing again in some areas. One Gypsy representative suggested that 90% of Gypsies are now unemployed (compared with 90% once self-employed) and advocated vocational training such as sign-writing. Another claimed welfare benefits had made life more secure for poorer Gypsies, who may previously have earned their living as agricultural labourers. Traveller Education pointed out that rules on Traveller sites often preclude traditional occupations, reducing opportunities for young people to be employed in family businesses. The New Start and New Deal programmes have the potential to support some young Travellers in their vocational choices and training.
- Youth work with young Travellers is already well established in Peterborough and Witchford, and is being developed in St Neots and Wisbech. A youth club in Cottenham has experienced some problems and has been forced to close. Young Travellers are being trained as youth workers at Peterborough, and finding the appropriate style of leadership within the youth clubs has been an issue.
- In some parts of the county, social workers have experienced conflict in their contacts with Travellers, and staff are reluctant to go onto some sites. This may be exacerbated by the contentious nature of the work, for example relating to child protection. Social workers say that the poor condition of some sites may raise child protection issues, and believe that referring agencies often adopt different standards for Travellers, and don't refer cases when they should. On the other hand, Traveller parents may think that incorrect judgements in the other direction can be made by health or welfare staff who are unused to working with Travellers.
- Travellers probably lack information about how to access welfare services, and raising awareness of support available for the elderly and disabled was suggested as a possible strategy for increasing positive contacts between Travellers and Social Services. The need to promote a better understanding of these services amongst Travelling communities was also mentioned by Gypsy representatives and health professionals.
- Health professionals believe there is a low uptake of community health services by Travellers, but greater readiness to use hospitals, particularly for childbirth and serious illness. Some GPs are reluctant to register Travellers because of expected difficulties in reaching practice targets, and there are no specialist health visitors, as there are in some other parts of the country. Gypsy representatives suggested that a better understanding of health needs on official sites and improved access for those on unauthorised encampments is needed.

- It was widely thought that better inter-agency co-operation is needed so that experience of working with Travellers can be shared with other agencies which have had less direct contact. Travellers' liaison groups are at present the main vehicle, and agencies such as Social Services and Probation are becoming increasingly involved. This is thought to have had benefits in terms of information-sharing, but has not yet translated into effective inter-agency co-operation on practical issues such as mandatory needs enquiries on Traveller families prior to evictions. One Gypsy organisation favours the county-wide co-ordination of services to Travellers by a single, specialist agency. This widening of responsibility to include the co-ordination of other services has been raised in the current review of site management options.
- There are no comprehensive mechanisms for consulting Travellers on service planning and delivery, and many agency representatives remarked on the difficulty of involving Travellers within existing structures. Several professionals advocated holistic, community development approaches, which concentrated instead on developing models which were based on existing practices and networks within the community.
- There is a perception that Travellers wish to stay completely separate from the rest of the community. To the extent that this is true, this may be fuelled by hostility from some sections of the majority population. Community representatives claimed that most Gypsies wish to achieve both equality and integration, while feeling secure that their culture and way of life will be respected and preserved. One informant suggested that mobilising the supportive elements within the non-Traveller community may be the key to improving community relations.

Availability of statistical information

- Most agencies have no ethnic monitoring of the use of services by Gypsy/Travellers and there is therefore little management information to use for planning and policy making. Gypsy representatives recognise the need to identify Gypsies as a distinct ethnic group, in order to counter the disadvantages they face. But many sections of the Gypsy community may be suspicious of official information collections, because of past experiences and the possibility of mis-use.
- Those specialist agencies which do collect detailed information about their Traveller clients, such as Traveller Education, are mindful of these concerns and collect only what information is necessary to discharge their responsibilities. Better information about the educational attainment of Traveller children is now being incorporated into information provided to schools in the county, and more systematic monitoring by OFSTED of the quality of support provided for Traveller pupils within individual schools is also thought to be needed.
- Some District/City authorities collect detailed information on the management of official sites and unauthorised encampments, which goes

beyond the basic requirement for twice-yearly caravan counts. Others probably collect much less. There is no central management information system held at county level.

- Other service agencies which do not deal exclusively with the Traveller population, may be reluctant to identify specific groups such as Travellers in their records. There seems to be a belief amongst some practitioners directly involved in the delivery of health and welfare services that the recording of ethnic identity is discriminatory per se, regardless of the purpose for which the information is collected.

Even where there is no objection in principle, staff may find it difficult in practice to make enquiries about ethnic origin.

- The Probation Service is the only non-specialist agency which is attempting to collect statistics about Traveller clients, based entirely on self-identification. They have experienced considerable difficulties because of the conflation of ethnic and national categories, so that Travellers may choose to identify as English or Irish, for example, rather than as Gypsy/Travellers. The expectation of discriminatory treatment may also prevent convicted persons awaiting sentencing from identifying themselves as Travellers.

- The Police are not required at present to include Travellers in their ethnic monitoring, which is based on 'visible minorities'. Most of their information about serious crime amongst the Travelling community is intelligence-based. More systematic identification of Travellers as both suspects and victims of crime might provide a more balanced picture, but would also present some practical difficulties, for example in terms of categorisation.

Priorities for research

- Policy makers have expressed a need for better information about accommodation requirements. This should include the preferences and experiences of Travellers living in houses, on official sites and on both authorised and unauthorised private sites. The ability to produce quantitative information about future demand will depend on the accuracy of any demographic information obtained, and whether it is thought that movement patterns can be predicted with any confidence.

- Socio-economic information about the Travelling population has also been requested. This information could be used to increase general awareness amongst agency staff and the wider public about the disadvantages faced by many Travellers, could be compared with the risk factors identified by the Audit Commission which are thought to be linked with youth offending, and might be useful for future funding bids.

- Informants from a wide range of service areas asked that the research make some progress towards breaking down prejudice and myths about Travellers, which they perceived to be widespread, and to be more negative than for other minority groups.

- Ideas are also wanted for improving community relations and site management in areas where crime and disorder problems have been experienced. This should include the views of Travellers living on or near official sites about criminal activities attributed to Travellers in their area, their own experiences of victimisation, and their views on local policing.
- Priorities within education and training include establishing the educational, recreational and vocational needs of young Travellers, and identifying suitable programmes and employment opportunities. As well as a general community development orientation, some attention might be given to young people at risk of offending and those who have already been convicted of criminal offences.
- Both health and welfare professionals have identified increasing the awareness of services for the elderly and disabled as a high priority. The research might help to identify needs and establish current levels of knowledge. Access to basic health services is an ongoing concern for Gypsy representatives, and several agencies have also expressed an interest in exploring how health information might best be promulgated amongst Travellers.
- Representatives from agencies which participated in the multi-agency video on services for Travellers in Cambridgeshire, expressed an interest in knowing more about how it was distributed, and how it was received by members of the Travelling community.
- The research cannot cover each service area in detail, but could consider ideas for the improved co-ordination of services to Travellers. This could include identifying innovative approaches adopted by other local authorities in the country, and by actively involving local agencies wherever possible in the remainder of the research programme.
- Similarly, the act of consulting with Travellers during this project, is itself a first step towards developing policies which promote inclusiveness and self determination. In all of the service areas identified above, an effort will be made to identify models and structures which have the potential to promote the ongoing involvement of Travellers.

KEY ISSUES FOR EACH ORGANISATION

Cambridge City Council

General organisational issues

- The Cambridge City Council has an interest in the Travellers research project in relation to their provision of housing, their ownership of recreational and other property in the city, and their responsibility for environmental health and community safety.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- There are two large private sites within the Cambridge City boundaries (Fen Road, Chesterton), which provide accommodation primarily for show people.
- The Blackwell site off the Kings Hedges Road and adjacent to the A14 is managed by the South Cambridgeshire District Council, but is intended to serve the accommodation needs of Travellers in the city.
- Illegal parking within the city boundaries is the main concern. This does not occur very often, but creates difficulties because of the tight city boundaries and the strong reaction from the public to highly visible encampments in the heart of the city. The official view is that quick action is needed in these circumstances, but this is difficult with the present legislative framework.
- Travellers' needs must also be considered, and environmental health officers try to liaise with the South Cambridgeshire District Council to find alternative sites for illegally camped groups. One group was found a plot in Willingham, but court action was still required to induce them to move there.
- Last summer several high profile problems occurred, with one group moving from one piece of land to another (Arbury Court and Lammas Land). This created considerable fear amongst nearby residents, for example due to threats and thefts of milk money, and also posed sanitation and dog control problems. This family was not interested in applying for a plot at Willingham. The reason for their encampment could not be determined, but they were thought to have had relatives housed in Cambridge.
- Encampments on City Council land are the responsibility of the service which controls the land. This is often Leisure Services. Private landowners are responsible for encampments on their land. In both cases, Environmental Health will assess whether the encampment presents a public health nuisance, and will encourage private owners to deal with the situation responsibly. Property Services section may act in court proceedings for private owners, but this is only recommended as a last resort.
- Criminal damage might trigger an eviction action by police, but Environmental Health only act on public health grounds.
- One potential emergency stopping place has been identified within the city boundaries.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Public complaints (e.g. about noise and neighbours) are logged, but would not necessarily distinguish issues relating to Travellers. Staff could be asked to recall incidents they have been involved with.
- There have been very few eviction actions.
- At the request of the Steering Group, some steps have been taken to estimate the number of Travellers in council-owned housing. The Travellers

Research Officer has agreed to incorporate this work into the research project.

Desired outcomes from research

- Determine whether some Travellers are seeking a more settled lifestyle, and identify their accommodation needs.
- Establish good practice guidelines for the county, with the aim of providing a sufficient number and range of sites so that unauthorised camping is not necessary.

Community Education

General organisational issues

- Following major budgetary cuts and a review of service delivery in 1996, community education activities are focused on several priority areas, including families, and young people aged 13 to 17.
- In general, responsibility for the delivery of local programmes is devolved to designated community and village colleges, with a central team providing support and policy guidance. There are different emphases on adult vocational and non-vocational programmes, pre-school groups, youth work and other community education services in the 29 different patches.
- The central team has more direct responsibility for services in Wisbech, Huntingdon and Peterborough Central, where programmes are provided through further education colleges and Independent Centres. Detached workers may also be deployed in priority areas throughout the county, through links with the Safer Villages Initiative.
- Prior to 1996, Youth Action Schemes funded by the DFEE were operated in Kings Hedges, Cambridge; Oxmoor, Huntingdon; and the Welland Estate, Peterborough. These were aimed at disadvantaged young people at risk of offending or being taken into care. The programme was highlighted and funded via recommendations of the County Youth Issues Select Panel in 1996. Wisbech and St Neots have since been added as a focus for youth work.
- The LEA has recently obtained £250,000 for a New Start initiative, aimed at young people who are dropping out of the system. A co-ordinator has been appointed, and the project will commence with research into innovative ways to engage young people, and link them into services provided by the Careers Service. The programme will be managed through the ELH Quality Assurance Division.
- The New Deal programme announced by the Labour Government as part of their welfare-to-work policy will also impact on young people within the county. People aged 18-24 who have been claiming the Jobseekers Allowance for 6 months or more, will be offered a 'gateway' basic education programme and assistance in taking up one of several training or employment options.

Cambridgeshire has not been identified as having a major youth unemployment problem overall by comparison with other counties.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- There is an interest in working with young Travellers of secondary school age through the Oasis Centre in Wisbech, and talks have begun between Community Education, Education Welfare, Traveller Education and the Queens secondary school. The emphasis would be on providing alternative education programmes where necessary, building self esteem and personal aspirations, integrating young people back in to school, and supporting the transition into employment and vocational training.
- Work with Travellers in Peterborough is already established, primarily through youth clubs operating from a mobile on the Welland Estate. Two young Travellers are training as youth workers.
- Travellers are also being considered as a priority group for the Youth Action scheme in St Neots.
- The Witchford Village College has been particularly active in educational support and youth work with young Travellers. The Cottenham Community College is also looking to re-establish its youth club, which formerly attracted many young Travellers.
- Travellers have been prioritised in relation to the New Start initiative, and existing sources of information about their needs will be reviewed during the research phase.
- Assistance with self-employment through New Start or New Deal schemes might be an attractive option for some young Travellers.
- Lack of transport is a problem for many programmes in Cambridgeshire, so any initiative for young Travellers should try to reach them where they live.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Community Education has a good picture of individual users of youth services across the county, but are now building discrete groupings into their management statistics. As with the census, Travellers are not mentioned as a separate grouping.

Desired outcomes from research

- Information to feed into New Start initiative to encourage recognition of young Travellers as a priority group.

Crime Reduction

General organisational issues

- The County Crime Reduction Co-ordinator is jointly funded by the Police Authority (70%) and County Council (30%). The role is to co-ordinate the activities of local government and the police, in recognition that police do not control all the resources and services necessary to fulfil their statutory

responsibility for crime reduction. Community safety is becoming an increasing priority within the County Council.

- The Crime Reduction Partnership Strategy involves physical crime prevention measures (to reduce opportunities), community initiatives (to promote the 'capable guardian' role), and the provision of services which address the causes of offending (such as youth recreation and social housing).
- The strategy is delivered through a structure which includes Police Crime Reduction Units at force-wide and divisional levels, County and District Crime Reduction Groups, several County-wide Steering Groups, Police Local Consultation Groups and local Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Crime reduction priorities for 1997/98 have been identified at County and District levels. Development of a 'Traveller Strategy' has been identified as a County-wide priority by the Police Authority Crime Reduction Panel.
- Travellers have not as yet been identified as a priority for the Rural Crime Task Group, but the group has indicated its interest in the findings of the Travellers Review research project.
- Similarly, District Crime Reduction Group priorities for 1997/98 do not explicitly refer to Travellers.
- Local residents' concerns about crime and disorder associated with Traveller sites have featured in the development of some Safer Villages plans (e.g. for Cottenham), and led to the formation of a special liaison group by residents on Heron Park estate in Peterborough. Crime attributed to Travellers is also an issue for some Neighbourhood Watch groups.
- Although the overall levels of offending may be low, small increases at local levels can greatly increase fear of crime, especially if the nature of the crime is highly visible. This may apply especially in communities which are largely middle class, such as Willingham.
- Although other 'criminal communities' exist in the County, for example on the Welland Estate in Peterborough, there is no parallel for the level of violence against the police from Travellers at Peterborough and Willingham.
- At present the whole group is often perceived as totally alienated and violent, and a reactive approach has been adopted to the problem. There is a need to think about the reasons for these offences, which are committed by a hard core of Travellers, and to divert young people from following the role model of older Travellers involved in crime.
- It is likely that many Traveller youths fit the deprivation profile identified by the Audit Commission, and which is associated with a high risk of offending. Key factors include school truancy and exclusions, peer group pressure,

unstable living conditions, inadequate parenting, lack of training and employment, and substance abuse.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- As for the police.

Desired outcomes from research

- Assess whether the Audit Commission risk factors apply to the Travelling community.
- Determine whether young people want to integrate with the non-Traveller community.
- Investigate the link between declining economic opportunities and offending.
- Develop strategies to address the causes of offending.

Education (Pupil Support)**General organisational issues**

- The Pupil Support Learning Service consists of 10 services, of which Traveller Education is one. Others include Education Welfare (which enforces school attendance), and services which respond to special educational needs, behavioural problems, health and drug issues and other support needs. Pupil Support is also responsible for home-school transport.
- This structure facilitates inter-agency work, but may have the consequence of associating the Traveller Education Service with special educational needs, due to mis-perceptions about the range and purpose of Learning Support Services. Pupil Support makes a great effort to avoid such mis-perceptions.
- The LEA operates within a Race Equality Policy which identifies equal access to mainstream services as a basic aim, but recognises the need for specific provision in some circumstances.
- All parents are required by law to ensure their school-aged children attend school, or to provide for their education through alternative means. The special position of families forced to travel due to the nature of their employment is recognised by subsection 6 of s199 of the Education Act 199. However non-attendance at school is generally less tolerated now than previously, and Home School Liaison Officers work with Traveller families to encourage attendance.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Any specific educational provision for Travellers is generally expected to be temporary, and efforts are focused on supporting pupils in mainstream. The Traveller Education Service has no responsibility for maintaining distance learning programmes, but encourages schools to meet these needs, for Traveller and Fairground children.

- Traveller Education also work with schools to promote awareness of Travelling cultures, and provide training for teachers and other education professionals.
- Disruption to school-based education is a key issue, as some Traveller pupils are not in one location long enough to have their needs properly identified. School records may now be held by parents through a national 'green card' system. Formal statements of educational need can also be passed across county borders, but need not necessarily be adopted by the receiving county.
- Attendance at primary school is relatively high (69% in 1996/97). Educational attainment at primary level is continuing to improve, but is still below average at Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Even high achieving pupils may not go on to secondary school, and attendance is much lower at 31%. This is recognised as a national problem, and a conference on this issue was held earlier in the year in Oxford. Additional home visits are provided in Cambridgeshire to encourage secondary enrolment, and some areas have a high transfer of children from primary to secondary level.
- The main barriers to attendance at secondary school are thought to be bullying, cultural expectations, lack of transport, parental disapproval of sex education and contact with drugs, and alternative provision of education by parents.
- Official rules on sites often preclude families from continuing traditional trades, which may reduce vocational opportunities for young Travellers. Drug use is thought to be an emerging problem with the secondary age group.
- The Queens School in Wisbech trailed a system of segregating Traveller pupils in a mobile classroom. The quality of education offered is considered to have been inferior, and breached the DFEE advice that separate provision was discriminatory. (The school is not entitled to free support from Traveller Education teachers because of its grant maintained status.) However Traveller parents reportedly approved of the separation.
- Despite these difficulties, and the fact that attainment is still below average, the educational performance of secondary pupils has improved, with increasing numbers of Traveller pupils completing GCSE and other qualifications.
- Provision of transport for Travellers can be a problem because places of residence may not be sufficiently distant from the school to qualify for free transport, although routes to school may be poor. This also applies to many other rural pupils. Several attempts have been made to provide transport for Traveller pupils outside these guidelines, as an incentive for secondary school attendance, but this has not produced sustainable results, and has proved too expensive to maintain.

- There have been 8 recent prosecutions of Traveller parents in Peterborough for non-attendance of their children at school, and the enforcement programme will be extended as resources permit. Prosecutions are expensive and are used as a last resort, where support and encouragement has failed.
- Travellers in the 14 to 16 year old age group seem to be missing out on opportunities for alternative educational provision. Many may be denied access because entry criteria depend on students being on a school roll.
- Only a handful of Travellers are thought to be participating in further education in the county, primarily through NVQ courses. This over-16 age group is also likely to be experiencing reduced access to these opportunities.
- Traveller Education was able to identify 29 Travellers in some form of Adult Education during 1996/97.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Traveller Education collect detailed records on Traveller children up to the age of 16, including records of school attendance and pre-school involvement, and basic information about their carers. The information has recently been transferred to a computerised database.
- Compared with this attendance information, there is much less information available, either locally or nationally, about the educational attainment of Traveller children. Ethnic monitoring information on Travellers was included in Key Stage 1 analyses for the first time this year as a pilot. The results were released to schools in November.
- An OFSTED report on the education of Travelling children was published in 1996. But the quality of support for Traveller pupils, and their levels of achievement, is rarely assessed in inspections of individual schools.

Desired outcomes from research

- More detailed information from both parents and children, on why some families send their children to school, while others don't, and why some children attend, while others within the same family don't.
- Understanding of whether factors such as peer pressure on large sites influences attendance.
- Understanding of whether transport is really a significant factor in attendance, or whether a demand for transport may sometimes conceal other issues.
- Investigation of the possibility of increasing the access of young Travellers to vocational initiatives.

Environmental Services (Peterborough)

General organisational issues

- Currently, responsibility for unauthorised encampments and site management are with the Head of Environmental Health Services.
- Under the new Unitary Authority from April 1998, Traveller services will come under the Directorate of Housing. Traveller services will come within the Private Sector Housing Service. The allocation of council housing, to Travellers and others, will be handled by Strategic Housing Services. The Directorate of Environmental Services will have no further responsibility for Travellers.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Peterborough has had a particularly bad problem with unauthorised encampments during September and October, and has taken several court actions under s24 of the Judges Rules relating to trespass. These orders only apply to a particular piece of land, so groups may simply move to another location.
- For example, one group moved onto a green field in Werrington next to a school within a new housing development after an order was issued to move them from another location. The children have been pushing over wheelie bins and the adults knocking on doors at all hours, looking for work or asking for water, which has created a fear of burglaries. There has also been a noise nuisance from generators, but there have been no major problems with rubbish. The group will not accept pitches at Norwood Lane and it is not known why they have come to Peterborough.
- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act should really be used but in view of the Wealdon decision the Council is reluctant to use these powers. Several of the women in the groups are pregnant.
- Members agreed on 22nd October to adopt the county guidelines for unauthorised encampments and instructed officers to do further reports on tolerated sites, response/action following breaches of guidelines, refuse management, reinstatement/security of land, procedures for the removal and storage of property and resources associated with the above. This report will go to the Service Review Group in approximately 3 to 6 months time.
- There appears to have been a loss of community spirit on the official Traveller sites, and residents can be extremely demanding. Very young children (7-12) appear to be outside parental control.
- There have been particular problems with a private development on Heron Park Estate, which adjoins the Oxney Road Caravan Site. The properties have been bought as investments by people living abroad, mainly in Hong Kong and Singapore, but many are empty due to property damage and community safety problems in the area.
- As well as the two county-owned sites, there are four private sites in Peterborough. One is in Werrington, and has recently had a large fluctuation

in the number of vans. The Council has very little to do with these, and they appear to be well run.

- Public order problems are not unique to Travellers. For example, the Saxon Road area of Peterborough houses many ethnic minority families, and is experiencing a lot of unrest.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Department of Environment caravan counts, records of complaints about illegal encampments, and records of enforcement action are kept. Site wardens will also have statistics on individual sites.

- The collation of a standard range of information from Districts as part of the research project would be generally welcomed.

Desired outcomes from research

- An understanding of the reasons for the loss of community spirit on official sites (e.g. is it due to enforcement of rules, policing styles, officialdom?)

- Understanding of the reasons for destruction on Heron Park Estate.

- Understanding of the reasons for lack of parental supervision of young children.

- A quantitative indicator of the needs which arise from the travelling lifestyle, so that services can be needs-led.

Environmental Services (Rural)

General organisational issues

- District Councils vary enormously in their arrangements for the management of official Traveller sites and unauthorised encampments. For example, in East Cambridgeshire, a single Traveller Liaison Officer is responsible for both enforcement action and liaison. In South Cambridgeshire the functions are separated and illegal encampments are dealt with by Environmental Health.

- Prior to the repeal of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, Districts managed Traveller sites on behalf of the county within general guidelines, for example concerning budgetary control. District Councils no longer have a statutory duty to manage sites, and there have been attempts to formalise existing arrangements by adopting county-wide policies and a standard Agency Agreement.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- It may not be possible to achieve a consistent county-wide approach, partly because of the different geographical and social circumstances in different parts of the county. Even within East Cambridgeshire, the attitude towards Travellers is more positive in the northern fens than in the southern parts which are dominated by horse studs.

- To obtain political acceptance, emergency stopping places need to be part of a cross-country network, which will require considerable co-operation to establish. Travellers want to stop in the places they already use. This may generate opposition because of existing over-development or perceived over-provision.
- Extra legal powers will be needed to control the use of these sites, otherwise they will be no different in practice from illegal encampments. There is a minority of Travellers who do not want permanent sites, and are also unlikely to accept any restrictions in relation to designated stopping places. Legal processes must be in place before sites are identified and established.
- District Councils are highly accountable to local public opinion and would find it difficult to adopt some of the procedures specified in the county policy on illegal encampments, for example issuing a written statement of the length of time for which the encampment will be tolerated.
- Different official sites have considerably different characteristics, and present different management problems. Some operate like housing estates and are very stable, while others have a highly changeable population and have problems with vandalism. East Cambridgeshire also owns a Travellers site, which greatly simplifies the management issues.
- Districts which provided well for Travellers under 1968 Caravan Sites Act are now in the situation that their District attracts Travellers, but there are no resources from central government to provide the necessary services. There is therefore considerable pressure to run sites at a profit.
- At present, the costs associated with the provision of accommodation for Travellers is out of proportion to their numbers in the population. Public hostility about spending money on Travellers is one of main barriers to providing effective services, as there is a lack of understanding about nomadic culture and traditions, and Travellers are perceived to be disadvantaged by choice.
- There would be political resistance to the provision of further permanent accommodation in East Cambridgeshire, and the recognition of the private accommodation needs of Travellers in Local Plans is the most promising approach. Review of the local planning system suggests criteria-based consideration of applications, rather than identification of sites for future development. This will therefore result in the 'pepperpot' approach.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- All Districts must provide twice-yearly counts of the number of caravans on official sites, and both authorised and unauthorised private sites to the Department of Environment.
- Apart from this, Districts are likely to vary in the amount and type of information held. The East Cambridgeshire Traveller Liaison Officer collects information on all unauthorised encampments, the reasons for encampments

and needs of occupants, the number of families in houses etc. (A systematic survey of all Districts will be conducted as part of the Travellers' Research Project, to identify what information is available.)

Desired outcomes from research

- A better insight into Travellers' perspectives on a range of management issues, such as why rubbish is left on sites, why some families will not go on sites, and why there is conflict between some groups.
- An understanding of wider attitudes towards Travellers.
- The development of a co-ordinating framework for the provision of services to Travellers.
- A guide to future demand for sites (e.g. from young people currently living on official sites).

Gypsy Council For Education , Culture, Welfare And Civil Rights General organisational issues

- The East Anglian Gypsy Council is a regional organisation based in Peterborough, and is the main organisation for Cambridgeshire. It is affiliated to The Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights, which is a national organisation, and to the International Romani Union. The International Association of Gypsies in Professional Occupations (IAGPO) is also starting to become more active.

Key concerns

- Traditional ways of making a living are largely gone, making a travelling way of life difficult to maintain. About 90% of Gypsies were self-employed a generation ago, whereas now 90% are unemployed. Few Gypsies work for a regular employer.
- Horse breeding and farrowing are increasing in demand again, and there is still a market in barrel top wagons. Gypsies have experienced problems with guilds. Local efforts have been made to encourage young Travellers into sign writing courses at technical colleges.
- Youth clubs are held in a mobile on the Welland Estate, which is supposed to serve the two Traveller sites and the local estate. The initiative was originally operated by the Gypsy Council through a GVO from the County and was held two nights a week. Community Education have played an increasing role, and most Traveller children now attend on one night only.
- Families on the Oxney Road site have been active in promoting the youth initiative, and two young residents are training as youth workers. They have obtained £200 from the Prince's Trust to buy equipment and organise summer day-trips.
- The 1968 Caravans Act pushed Travellers into a sedentary life, and subsequent legislation forced many into houses. Most Travellers would

prefer to live on a private site rather than stay on official sites. Some relatively sedentary Travellers will travel during summer months in a touring caravan.

- The management of official sites by Gypsy management groups does not work because of favouritism, and allocation policies which inevitably exclude poorer families. Housing Associations, resident management and right to buy arrangements are preferred.
- The North Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group is an example of good practice, as it includes planners. An over-arching agency responsible for co-ordinating services to Travellers within the county is the favoured model for service delivery.
- National caravan site legislation will ultimately have to be re-instated, as a range of accommodation is needed.
- Travellers used always to speak Romani amongst themselves, but now many only know a few words and phrases, due to increased mixing with the non-Traveller population and the need to be able to communicate better in English.
- There is not so much open hostility towards police on the Oxney Road site now that dialogue is taking place between residents of Heron Park, site residents, and police. But there is still some resentment that police patrol with cars every night, for example to do vehicle checks.
- Until relatively recently, there was a regular Cambridgeshire Constabulary Gypsy Check in the area, in which the names, addresses and birthplace of children would be recorded.
- Major police raids cause very long term problems which are remembered for many years, and cause particular distress to old people and children. People feel that their privacy is not respected when the separate ownership of trailers (possibly on the same plot) is not respected. It is offensive for police to search young girls, or see women in their night clothes. Older people often do not use banks. The keeping of relatively large sums of money is misunderstood by police, and there have been occasions when money has been erroneously confiscated, often causing considerable hardship.
- The Gypsy Council accepts the need for Gypsies to be identified as a unique group, and for specific policies to be developed in relation to them. This is the only way in which equality and integration can be achieved, while preserving the Gypsy culture and way of life.

Possible assistance to project

- Gypsy Council members are prepared to introduce the researcher to Traveller families who agree to be interviewed in surveys, and to promote the project amongst the Travelling community.

- The Council does not know of any members of Gypsy communities in eastern or southern Cambridgeshire who could act as key contacts for the study.

Desired outcomes from research

- Non-Travellers to gain a better understanding of Travellers. (Travellers understand the dominant community much more than vice versa.)
- Reduced racism in schools, and fewer exclusions of Traveller children.
- A true picture of the range of accommodation needs for Travellers.
- Identification of health needs at sites.
- Better awareness amongst Travellers of services available for disabled and elderly people.
- Closer co-operation between all parties involved in Travellers' affairs in the County, possibly through the establishment of a Traveller Agency.

Health (NW Anglia)

General organisational issues

- The NW Anglia Health Authority covers Peterborough, Fenland and west Norfolk.
- The Authority has an Ethnicity and Consumer Consultation Manager who identifies and monitors the primary and community health care needs of all minority ethnic communities.
- Ongoing liaison is effected through a series of user groups and regular 'ethnicity and health' meetings. A community consultation conference, Three Years On, is being held in Peterborough in October, which includes a speaker on health issues for Travellers.
- Health promotion is provided by a specialist service Health Matters, based in King's Lynn.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- There is a low uptake of community health services overall by Travellers, and many Travellers are opposed to immunisation. Research in the Wisbech area suggested that relationships with doctors and health visitors were strongly influenced by the perceived attitudes and cultural awareness of the practitioners.
- Travellers are generally thought to be prepared to use hospital services, particularly for childbirth and terminal illness. Documentation from Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge states that women will often travel long distances to have babies delivered at the Rosie Maternity.

- A Conference exclusively on Traveller health issues was held in Wisbech in March 1995. The main issues relating to access to health services were thought to be : reluctance of some GPs to register Travellers as patients, the need for health information for those with low literacy levels, lack of cultural awareness amongst health professionals, and the need for hand-held records.
- Lottery funding has been obtained through a Haddenham GP to establish the Anglian Travellers' Health Information Project, which will develop a health information video.
- Several information pamphlets have been produced (for example on meningitis), aimed at people with low literacy levels.
- Material on Traveller culture is being prepared for use in cultural awareness training for health professionals from 1998. It has proved difficult to identify anyone from the Traveller community to participate on community panels to answer questions at the training sessions.
- A hand-held medical records system will be piloted with GPs in the near future.
- The possibility of a mobile information and health promotion service for Travellers is being considered.
- Qualitative research on the promotion of self-care is being explored by the Health Authority at present. It is hoped that consultations will be held with some groups of Travellers to investigate reasons for low uptake of services, and to explore how health-related information is passed on within communities.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Travellers are not identified as an ethnic group in computerised hospital records held by the Health Authority. Addresses are only stored by postcode, which may uniquely identify some official Traveller sites.
- It would be necessary to write individually to GPs in the region (about 50) to identify the numbers of Travellers believed to be registered.
- The same situation applies to child health records, and it would probably be necessary to contact individual health visits to obtain estimates of the number of Traveller children on their caseloads.

Desired outcomes from research

- Identify who is registered with a GP, and reasons for not being registered.
- Determine basic needs for hospital-based services.
- Describe family structures and provision made for care of older people.

- Determine whether Social Services provision for older people is being accessed effectively.

Health Promotion (Cambridge and Huntingdon)

General organisational issues

- The Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority covers Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire. Health Promotion operates as a directorate within the Health Authority. The Directorate is presently moving away from a direct service provider role to that of a strategic commissioning body.
- To date ethnic issues are largely unrecognised in the region due to perceived low numbers of ethnic minority residents. There is no specialist ethnicity advisor in the Authority, although one person has a defined responsibility for ethnic issues.
- The Our Healthier Nation framework has moved the focus of health promotion away from just individual responsibility towards the broader determinants of health and the reduction of inequality. The Health Authority and Health Promotion Directorate have identified the reduction of inequalities in health as a priority. The Directorate supports a holistic view of community health, and works in alliances with local health services other agencies which provide community services.
- Cultural awareness programmes (not including Travellers) have previously been run jointly with Community Education. However this structure has been lost with the devolution of community education responsibilities to individual colleges, following the loss of Home Office funding. It is unclear whether this role is being carried forward.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Direct contact with Travellers was once achieved primarily through adult literacy training, but this situation changed with the dismantling of the Basic Skills Service. Currently, the main links with Travellers are through Traveller Education and the youth services components of

Community Education.

- Health visitors and some GPs also provide important contacts. The health visitor service has been subject to severe funding cuts, and there is currently no specialist health visitor for Travellers.
- Addenbrookes Hospital has developed cultural awareness training and materials for their staff, in consultation with the National Romani Rights Association.
- There is some published research which indicates that Travelling families have levels of morbidity and mortality even greater than those of the lowest social classes of the settled population. This is thought to be largely attributable to inadequate sites and lack of access to traditional health care

systems. There is evidence that increasing numbers of Travellers are becoming open to discussion about health issues with the non-Traveller community.

- There is also some evidence to suggest that Travellers may prefer to receive health information from lay community workers, rather than health professionals, a preference which is also evident in disadvantaged groups within the non-Traveller population.
- There is a future role for a community development approach to health promotion, which develops services from the perspective of the particular group and draws on peer group support. The mobilisation of traditional word-of-mouth communication networks, and the reliance on experienced mothers within the community are potentially beneficial strategies for Travelling communities.
- An application for funding to implement this type of approach was made to the Department of Health Ethnic Health Unit several years ago, in association with a multi-agency group which included Gypsy/Traveller representatives. The programme was not funded. The development of effective health promotion strategies with Travellers remains a key issue.
- The multi-agency video produced for Travellers in Cambridgeshire included some information on community health services. However, the effectiveness of this approach is unclear.
- The Cambridgeshire Family Health Services Authority (FHSA) issued a policy paper on Travellers in 1991, which argued that Travellers appear to enjoy a reasonable standard of health and well-being overall, possibly attributable to 'freedom from the stresses of normal living'.

However, dental health was thought to be very poor. The statement raised many of the issues discussed at the Wisbech conference (see previous section), with problems posed by lack of literacy a recurring theme. It also noted a relative lack of interest in preventative health care, and unmet needs for respite care.

- The FHSA has negotiated with the Department of Health to allow Travellers to be discounted from practice lists when calculating target payments, in order to reduce the financial disincentives which may discourage some practices from registering Travellers. Travellers can be registered as temporary or permanent residents depending on their intended length of stay, at the discretion of the GP. GPs are not obliged to register Travellers. The FHSA was integrated into the Health Authority following the 1996 NHS re-organisations.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- There is no ethnic monitoring information on Travellers available from computerised data on hospital-based services. Some information, for example on immunisations and accidents, might be retrievable via postcodes.

- Records for children's services are held separately. Again, they do not identify Traveller children directly. There are approximately 30 health visitors overall, who would have to be contacted individually for information on their current caseloads.

- GPs in the Health Authority area were contacted about their interest in obtaining a copy of the county multi-agency video for Travellers.

Nineteen practices (out of about 60) responded positively, which gives a crude indication of the number of practices which are aware of having patients from Traveller backgrounds.

Desired outcomes from research

- Improved understanding about the kind of health information and service Travellers need.

- Recommendations about effective, acceptable health promotion interventions.

- Improved information about the general Traveller population (for example to support funding bids).

Highways

General organisational issues

- County Highways Division has responsibility for the general upkeep of highways and verges.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Although Travellers are not within their official remit, members of the public often contact the Highways Division to notify them about unauthorised encampments.

- The Division follows County guidelines about these encampments, and will notify the relevant Traveller Liaison Officer. Highways officers occasionally visit encampments, but have never taken any enforcement action themselves.

- There has been some discussion about whether Highways or Environmental Health services are responsible for cleaning up sites.

- The amount of mess left on a site depends to some extent on the activity being carried out. Scrap dealing tends to create rubbish, but groups keeping horses often leave sites in good condition. One location near the railway line at Connington has had an unauthorised encampment for some time which has caused no problems, and generated no public complaints.

- The Division has identified 12 to 15 sites in the county which are believed to be suitable as emergency stopping places (without facilities). Some of these are locations already used as unauthorised stopping places, for example the Connington location mentioned above.

- There are occasional problems with the theft of road signs, particularly when the scrap value of aluminium is high. The police tend to attribute these incidents to Travellers.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Records about unauthorised encampments becoming known to Highways officers are only kept in an ad hoc way. The identification of potential emergency stopping places included some information on the current, unauthorised usage of these locations.

- No written records are kept of telephone complaints, but letters from Parish Councils are placed on the relevant Parish file. These generally come from East Cambridgeshire and part of South Cambridgeshire north of the A14.

Desired outcomes from research

- Encourage better care of sites by all groups of Travellers, so that there might be less opposition from the public.

Housing

General organisational issues

- At the instigation of the previous government, most social housing is now developed through housing associations. Most council tenants who have secure tenancies are offered 'right to buy' arrangements.

- East Cambridgeshire has transferred the management of its social housing to Hereward Housing Association. The remaining local authorities in the county retain direct control over their housing stock.

- Local authorities develop annual Housing Strategy Statements which are linked to capital bids made to the Department of Environment. Background information used to develop these strategies has been obtained using various modelling techniques (East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City) and through large-scale household surveys (Peterborough, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire). Fenland have just completed a questionnaire survey of all parishes and has collected detailed information. These approaches have all tended to identify high levels of unmet need.

- Unless otherwise stated, the remaining observations relate to Fenland District Council.

- Housing allocation operates via a points system which is based on need indicators such as current accommodation, family size, health, and financial hardship.

- Under 1996 legislation, priority is given to homeless families who score highly on these indicators, provided that they can demonstrate a local connection and that they are not 'intentionally homeless'. Homeless families can now only be offered temporary accommodation for a two year period.

- Families may be considered 'intentionally homeless', for example, if they have failed to pay rent to a previous landlord, in which case they will not be offered accommodation at all. If they are deemed to have created their own housing circumstances, for example by refusing a reasonable offer of housing, their application may be deferred for a 12 month period.
- Care is taken not to over-use these categories, and families will be referred to agencies providing advocacy and support.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Travellers are not identified as a particular category amongst housing applicants, but may score highly on the points system if they are living in a caravan, experiencing overcrowded conditions, or lack amenities.
- The travelling way of life might present some practical difficulties in relation to housing policy. For example, families may be at risk of being classified as 'intentionally homeless' if they vacate properties over the summer, then re-apply on their return. Moving in with relatives, thereby creating overcrowding, might be interpreted as 'creating one's own housing circumstances'. And establishing a history of 'settled residence' in the area could also be difficult.
- A family which possessed a caravan but had nowhere to put it will probably come within the statutory definition of homelessness. The council would then have a duty to find a place for them to park or offer them housing. If an offer of housing were refused, the family would probably not be considered 'intentionally homeless', but the council would have discharged its legal duty.
- The reverse situation has also been known to arise, where a Traveller family has a pitch but no caravan to put on it. If a caravan is in poor condition, the family may qualify for a renovation grant or social fund loan. Alternatively, housing benefit may be used to cover the interest on a loan to buy a new caravan, but not to repay the capital. Arrangements have occasionally been made elsewhere to cover the combined cost of renting a caravan and a plot, but this would not apply at official sites in Fenland because of rental structures.
- There is little known about the characteristics of Traveller families applying for housing (for example, whether this is more likely from families with young children, or older people, or single parent families etc.) Cambridge City Council has identified several Traveller families housed in the city, either following a family breakdown or because of special medical needs.
- Managerial responsibility for official Travellers' sites comes within the housing departments of South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils, but is located within Environmental Health in other local authorities. Under the new unitary structure at Peterborough, site management will come within the housing function, but not under the directorate which manages social housing.

- The East Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy includes a section on the provision of accommodation for Travellers, and reports an increasing dialogue between the Traveller Liaison Officer, Hereward Housing Association and the Traveller community about Travellers' accommodation needs.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- There are no figures on the number of Traveller families living in council owned properties in the Fenland. The numbers listing a caravan as their previous address could be determined from case files, but this would be labour-intensive as the records are not computerised.
- The availability of statistical information about Travellers housed throughout the county, will be determined as part of a survey of District and City Councils.

Desired outcomes from research (adapted from comments by other Steering Group members)

- The Steering Group has identified 'initiatives supporting Traveller families wishing to have a more settled lifestyle' as an issue to be covered by the Traveller Review.
- Qualitative information on why certain families are moving into housing, and their experiences once settled, would be useful for this purpose.
- Statistical estimates of the number of Traveller families currently living in houses is an important element in describing the extent and distribution of the Traveller population in the county.
- Information on young people's preferences for houses or caravans might assist in planning for future accommodation needs.

National Romani Rights Association

General organisational issues

- The National Romani Rights Association is based in the Wisbech area but gives advice and assistance to Gypsies from all over England and Wales, particularly with planning applications for private caravan sites, and appeals against refusals to grant permission.

Key concerns

- Families are generally forced to occupy the land before obtaining permission as they have nowhere else to go. If they park on the side of the road they will be moved on and must apply retrospectively. Most prefer to occupy their land, even without permission, as they feel they are more secure.
- Travellers camping on land they do not own are liable to criminal charges if they don't move when required to do so by officials. They are liable to even higher fines when occupying their own land without permission, but at least cannot be removed as readily.
- Section 24 of the Judges Rules is sometimes used for evictions from unauthorised encampments, as no account need be taken of health and

welfare issues. Families considered to be homeless will generally be offered a council house as their only option.

- The planning guidelines allow a lot of discretion in the interpretation, and Travellers feel that grounds for refusal can always be found. National policies are needed, as local authorities are afraid of the 'honey pot' effect.
- Alternatively, occupants can obtain a 'certificate of lawful use' if they have occupied the land for 10 years (formerly 4) without the issue of any enforcement notice or warning. Evidence is difficult to establish, and councils use aerial photography to oppose these claims, but a few cases have been won this way.
- A case is coming up before the European Court of Human Rights arguing that there is insufficient independence in the planning appeal process, since the Inspectorate of the Department of Environment is not independent of government.
- Most applications are for individual family plots as it is too expensive to set up a site for multiple occupancy. Applicants for caravan sites may be granted permanent or temporary licences, with or without conditions. The licence system does not apply to other types of planning applications.
- Most Gypsies want to have a home base which will still allow them to travel for festivals and work. The rules on official sites generally do not allow this, whereas this is not usually a problem in council houses.
- People living on Travellers' sites also find it much more difficult to obtain contents insurance, than people living in houses.
- There is a perception that official sites are often on unsuitable pieces of land, which may be contaminated or inconveniently located, and that they often attract the wrong sort of resident.
- A range of accommodation is needed, including more official sites (both permanent and temporary), as people need a range of acceptable choices. One problem is that many sites are not used for the people intended, but are occupied, for example by New Age Travellers.
- Economically, life was harder before as there was no welfare provision and many Travellers were in insecure work (e.g. agricultural labour mainly by English Gypsies in the Fenland, and 'calling' by Irish Travellers in the south of the county). Mechanised farming in the Fenland has reduced employment opportunities, and forced many people into welfare dependency and a sedentary lifestyle.
- There are of course many families with very successful businesses, such as tarmacing. Cross-border transportation businesses have led some families to

move to the Continent, because of excellent temporary stopping facilities in Germany.

- Although there is more financial security now, it is much more difficult to live within the law, and there is less tolerance of unauthorised encampments. It is very difficult to access services while being constantly moved on.

Possible assistance to project

- Can supply figures on outcomes of planning applications for cases known to their association.
- Can approach families trying to get planning permission to ask them to participate in the survey.

Desired outcomes from research

- Better understanding of the situation of people trying to get planning approval.
- Better access to medical care for people without authorised stopping places.

Ormiston Children And Families Trust

General organisational issues

- The Ormiston Trust is a voluntary organisation which works throughout East Anglia from fourteen projects. Activity within Cambridgeshire includes five family support projects : two in the City of Cambridge (Stretton Avenue and Barnwell), two in the Fens at March and Wisbech, and one at Orton in Peterborough. The H.A.R.P. project in Huntingdon supports the relatives of prisoners.
- Funding for projects comes from central and local government, fund-raising and the Ormiston Trust. Some families are referred to projects by statutory agencies.
- Projects provide support programmes that include outreach to disadvantaged groups which complements the work of other agencies.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- An attempt was made in 1994-95 to involve the local Traveller community in pre-school activities, when the Wisbech Children and Families Project organised for a Playbus to visit the Newbridge Lane Travellers' site. The pilot programme was disrupted by renovations on the site, and was not followed through to its maximum potential.
- The Ormiston Trust again considered their involvement in work with Travellers in 1996, and a survey was commissioned in early 1997 in which 16 Traveller mothers of pre-school children were interviewed. It was felt that this information was needed in order to increase access to the services offered by the Wisbech Project, and to facilitate the involvement of other agencies.

- The survey revealed a high level of commitment to primary school education amongst this group, and some interest in pre-school provision, although it was apparent that some extra support would be needed to promote participation in existing groups, or to facilitate the creation of new ones.
- All of the families contacted were registered with a local GP and appeared ready to use medical services, but there was opposition from some mothers to certain immunisations.
- There appeared to be scope for encouraging the involvement of some of these women in adult education, especially first aid.
- More than half the women said they had experienced hostility or harassment because they were Travellers, and some of those who said they hadn't, appeared to avoid opportunities for potentially hostile interactions. It was thought likely that the expectation, or actual experience, of hostility would act as a disincentive in many cases for accessing services such as pre-school and secondary education.
- There were some indications that caravan-dwelling families might sometimes be forced by circumstances to take up offers of social housing, and may experience difficulties and lack of support once they moved in. It was also apparent, that families might move back and forth from housing to caravan dwelling, and that moves into housing were not necessarily seen as permanent arrangements.
- Following the research, the Wisbech Children and Families Project established a new drop-in group, which they hoped would attract some Travellers due to its location at the Murrow School (which has an established record of positive work with Traveller pupils and their families). However no Traveller women have joined the group so far.
- Both during and shortly after the research, the Project has received several queries from Travellers seeking advice and advocacy in gaining access to a variety of services.
- Both the research and this subsequent experience, suggest that a combined effort from a range of local agencies is needed, in order to share the experience of those who have worked successfully with Traveller families, and facilitate the take-up of desired services.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- The report of the consultation described above is the only information available from the Ormiston Trust about their work with the Traveller community.

Desired outcomes from research

- Increased commitment to multi-agency work with Travellers, and improved understanding of how this might be achieved.

- Greater involvement of Travellers in decisions which affect them, and a raised awareness amongst policy makers of approaches based on self-determination.

Planning

General organisational issues

- Local level planning is the responsibility of District and City Councils, who develop Local Plans within the broad framework of the County's Structure Plan.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- More relaxed planning regulations apply to Gypsies than to other members of the public. The legal definition of Gypsies in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, relating to persons of a nomadic way of life, is still the operative legal definition, despite the repeal of the 1968 legislation.

This definition raises dilemmas for planners since many Gypsies applying for permission no longer maintain a nomadic lifestyle.

- The majority of planning enforcement work concerns non-Travellers, for example using land for a commercial purpose for which planning approval has not been granted. However, cases involving Travellers are often more sensitive, and there may be less public sympathy.
- There is a high level of public prejudice against Travellers, and some resentment that they receive special privileges as a group which the rest of the community is not entitled to.
- Travellers rarely approach planning authorities prior to purchasing or occupying land. This applies to other landowners as well, and local authorities make continual efforts to encourage people to seek advice early.
- District planning authorities have virtually all their contact with Travellers through enforcement procedures, usually after caravans have been placed on land without prior planning approval.
- It may be that Travellers are particularly unfamiliar with planning procedures, and find the authorities distant and bureaucratic. There is a need to make procedures more 'user friendly' for everyone. However, adopting a 'frontier approach' by acting independently of the planning regulations also contributes to confrontational situations.
- Local authorities would like to liaise better with Traveller families, but no representatives have come forward to establish positive links.

As a result, local authorities are forced to act as administrators, rather than pro-active planners, in relation to private Traveller sites.

- Department of Environment Circular 1/94 asks local planning authorities to look sympathetically at the issuing of caravan licences for

Travellers. In Fenland, permissions are rarely refused, and are increasingly granted retrospectively, especially since Travellers have started to win appeals to the Department of Environment. There is some concern that this will encourage further flouting of the regulations.

- Lack of safe access from the highway, for example, is the type of factor which may result in failure to grant planning approval.
- There has been more conflict in other parts of the county, with legal disputes being taken as far as the European Court of Human Rights.
- Planning officers are often the first to receive complaints about temporary encampments, for example during religious festivals. Planning enforcement officers will often make informal contact with the people occupying the land, but are not usually involved in evictions from unauthorised encampments.
- The Chief Officers Planning Group has been asked by the Travellers Review Steering Group to prepare a report on local authority planning policies in relation to Travellers. However, the policies are of limited relevance under the present circumstances, because planners are being forced into largely reactive practices.
- Three options are currently being considered for accommodating private sites for Travellers within planning policies. They are : identification of suitable sites for future development, setting out explicit planning criteria, and issuing supplementary planning guidance.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- A count of Gypsy caravans on official, authorised private, and unauthorised sites is done twice a year in each local authority area for the Department of Environment. (But this has a less central role for planning since the repeal of the Caravan Sites Act.)
- Statistics on planning applications for mobile homes and caravans are not kept separately for Travellers. An assessment of the availability of this information will be included in the survey of District and City councils being conducted by the Travellers Research Officer.
- The same applies for enforcement figures.

Desired outcomes from research

- Increased knowledge of different living circumstances, and understanding of whether settled families should be considered as Gypsies for planning purposes.
- Better understanding of why Travellers tend not to seek early planning approval e.g. is it lack of knowledge / low literacy / expectation of rejection?

- Better liaison between Travellers and planners.
- Better public understanding, and breaking down of myths about Travellers.

Police (Criminal Intelligence/ Operations)

General organisational issues

- PACE has resulted in more intelligence-led policing. The National Criminal Intelligence System monitors offences and offenders of national significance, with Regional Crime squads as operational arms. Cross border crime is dealt with by individual Force Intelligence Bureaux (FIB), at present supported by special squads constituted for particular operations. Consideration is being given to establishing a permanent Serious Crime Investigation Unit.
- Operational policing is organised into three Divisions headed by a Divisional Commander, Operations and Crime managers. Each Division has several Sectors headed by an Inspector. Police stations are generally located in market towns, with one station per Sector (except in Cambridge and Peterborough where population density is highest). Community Beat Officers are assigned to each city ward or rural parish (sometimes covering more than one parish).

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Police believe that the criminal element within the Traveller communities feature prominently in cross-border crime, such as post office robberies, ram raids, benefit fraud, caravan theft, theft of high value scrap materials, distraction burglaries, motor vehicle theft and arson.
- Car thefts and post office robberies increase markedly once summer time has ended. It is estimated that the criminal element of the Traveller communities are responsible for a significant percentage of these offences in the county.
- A specialist team within FIB has been set up to deal with 'criminal Travellers'. One of its principle aims is to gather intelligence about, and target the active criminals within, the Traveller community. Officers may visit illegal encampments to assess the situation, but are rarely involved in evictions, which are a Divisional/Sector concern.
- Offences committed by criminal Travellers are often marked by the presence of violence and firearms, or other weapons. Police operations to arrest suspects frequently involve high speed car chases and the threatened or actual use of violence and weapons. The police helicopter is deployed to assist ground-based officers.
- Some sites have serious local crime and disorder problems which have sometimes been exacerbated by ineffective site management. These problems are now being addressed by better communication between site wardens and police at local Travellers liaison group meetings.

- For the reasons described above, official Traveller sites are the primary focus of attention, frequently requiring a disproportionately high level of police resources.

- Particular concern exists about the negative role models to which children are exposed leading to their being drawn into criminal activity.

This situation is exacerbated by non- attendance at school, which may result in boredom leading to the commission of offences.

- For example, crime and disorder problems involving young people have been occurring at the Heron Park estate adjacent to the Oxney Road Traveller site in Peterborough. Meetings have been held between police, site residents and Heron Park residents to try to address these problems.

- Crime and disorder is not unique in emanating from the Travelling community. Young people from other communities also cause concern by the level of their involvement in crime and disorder.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- There is no 'hard data' available to establish the level of involvement of Travellers in various types of crime, but the modus operandi of known offenders and other intelligence information indicates that levels of involvement are high in the categories of crime described above.

- Very little is known about offending against Travellers, and levels of reporting to police are likely to be low.

Desired outcomes from research

- Better enforcement of all laws in relation to Travellers (e.g. criminal, school attendance, tenancy agreements, trespass) and improved co-operation between enforcement agencies.

- Better understanding of local crime and disorder issues (including serious crime only where it impacts on the local community.)

- Information on why Travellers are attracted to the county, and whether they are seeking a permanent place of abode.

- Information about why Traveller children are not attending school, and comparison of school attendance with other ethnic minorities.

- Better understanding about why Travellers wish to remain separate from the rest of the community.

- Information about why Travellers are not entering the police force.

Police (Community Relations)

General organisational issues

- An Ethnic Minority Relations Support post was created following the restructuring into Divisions, in order to provide a focus for race relations. The Detective Inspector in charge also oversees child protection and vulnerable persons issues.
- Racially-motivated crime is handled by Divisions, with Family Units responsible for monitoring.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- The ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive Community and Race Relations strategy which will include Travellers, and be integrated into a broader service delivery strategy.
- Traveller perspectives will be incorporated into cultural awareness training for Community Beat Officers (and others) by January 1998.
- Police also have a role in influencing wider community opinions about Travellers and public expectations of police action, bearing in mind the real fear created by the threatening behaviour of some Travellers.
- Current problems with organised crime and disorder, committed by the criminal element of the Traveller community hamper attempts to resume 'normal policing' amongst Traveller communities, such as visits by Community Beat Officers and the take-up of police services by Travellers.
- Guidelines for police operations on Traveller sites, which specify intelligence-led targeting of particular individuals / addresses, have been agreed in principle by the Force Executive Group. The guidelines include notification of other agencies.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Identification of Travellers is not required under s95 of Criminal Justice Act, as they are not a 'visible ethnic minority'. However, it is under consideration as part of the proposed Community and Race Relations strategy.

Desired outcomes from research

- Better understanding of community relations issues.
- Information about Travellers' experiences of victimisation and attitudes towards police.
- Information to raise awareness of Traveller culture and provide a balance to common stereotypes.
- Better understanding of the policing role by the Traveller community.

Probation Service

General organisational issues

- The Probation Service completes all pre-sentence reports and supervises all Community Service and Probation orders for adults. Unlike some other

Counties, young offenders are dealt with separately by the Youth Justice section of Social Services, although the Probation Service deals with children placed on Family Assistance Orders following civil proceedings.

- Community Service supervision is carried out by staff with practical backgrounds in industry, whereas other Probation orders are supervised by professionally trained staff.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- There is a concern that Travellers are experiencing discrimination at the bail stage, and probably during sentencing, in a way which is more apparent than for other ethnic minorities.

- The use of aliases is often interpreted as a sign of criminal intent, although this seems to be a common practice amongst many Travellers in non-criminal contexts.

- Community attitudes towards Travellers are thought to be more negative than for other ethnic minority groups, and Travellers are widely perceived as a problem. This may influence the treatment of Travellers in court.

- Practice guidelines for working with Travellers and Gypsies are being developed for Probation Service staff through the Equal Opportunities Committee in order to promote non-discriminatory supervision and reporting.

- The guidelines recommend that stereotypes (such as negative attitudes towards authority), and lack of a permanent address, should not be issues in assessing suitability for community penalties, and that ethnicity should not be referred to in reports unless directly relevant.

- A Day Conference on Traveller Issues for Probation Service staff will be held in January 1998.

- There are plans to conduct a Practice Review at a later date, to identify sources of discrimination against Travellers at various stages of the criminal justice system.

- Traveller clients on Probation Orders are thought to come primarily from Huntingdon, Fenland and Peterborough, whereas Community Service supervisors in Cambridge/Ely and Fenland are the most likely to have Travellers on their caseloads. There are thought to be many housed Travellers in Wisbech.

- Travellers have only recently begun to be recommended for Community Service orders. According to Community Service supervisors, Travellers who report at the start of their orders invariably work well, complete their order successfully and will notify any change of address. A second group tends not to report at all (which does not appear to be identified in computerised records). These two seemingly clear-cut

groups, are not distinguishable on the basis of the clients' mobility.

- Community Service supervisors report that, in their experience, Traveller clients are far more likely than others to have literacy problems, and are never known to have committed offences involving violence, alcohol or drugs. They tend not to be amenable to doing tasks for other Travellers.

- Community Service supervisors also perceive a greater community reaction against Travellers than any other minority group. Some charities, such as the Salvation Army, have refused to accept Travellers on work parties. Supervisors believe that Traveller clients do not face such hostility from other clients. They may show initial suspicion and prefer to work alone, but tend to mix in later as group dynamics change.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- Travellers are included as an ethnic identity on the Race and Ethnic Monitoring form which is completed by convicted persons at the pre-sentence report stage. As this information is not required by the Home Office it has been added as an additional category underneath other national groupings.

- The completion rate of this item is now around 90%, but it is possible that many Travellers may choose to identify as English or Irish, for example, rather than as Travellers. If they prefer other descriptions such as 'Romany' or 'Gypsy', this may be recorded as 'Other'.

- Low literacy may also affect completion of the form, and staff assisting clients may inadvertently lead them to adopt other classifications (e.g. based on accents).

- The form is completed at the pre-sentence report stage, which is a particularly sensitive time for offenders. There may therefore be a considerable incentive not to reveal an ethnic minority identity. A suggestion that probation officers should update this field if clients identify themselves as Travellers at later stages of supervision is being included in the practice guidelines.

- There are different views on the reliance on self-identification. One informant believed that prejudice against Travellers could best be countered by more proactive efforts by Probation Service staff to identify clients with Traveller backgrounds.

- Regular quarterly reports do not currently include information on Travellers. The Equal Opportunities Committee is requesting more comprehensive ethnic monitoring information, such as completion rates, for Travellers and other groups.

- Computerised caseload records indicate a small number of clients who identify themselves as Travellers (16 out of 1565 completing orders in

96/97) and a 100% rate of successful completion. This does not accord with the observations of Community Service supervisors reported above, suggesting that Traveller clients are not being reliably identified in records.

Desired outcomes from research

- Improved links with Magistrates and Judges and provision of accurate information about Travellers.
- Better understanding amongst Probation staff about who is a Traveller, and how best to work effectively with them to reduce re-offending.
- Better understanding within criminal justice system about use of aliases for non-criminal purposes.
- Some indication of the distribution of the multi-agency video, and how it was received by Travellers.
- An agreed multi-agency strategy, with a clearer idea of the role of the Probation Service in the issues covered by the Review.

Social Services

General organisational issues

- First contact with the department is usually through duty social workers following enquiries at local offices or by referral from other agencies. Separate duty systems will soon be operated for adults and children in all areas.
- Large numbers of requests for assessments are made, and not all requests can be met within available resources. Statutory work with children has a very high priority. Non-statutory support may be provided to children or families assessed as 'vulnerable' or 'in need'. Eligibility criteria for children accessing services are in preparation.
- Adults may be assisted with a range of issues including homelessness, financial problems and support with disabilities.
- Efforts are now being made to move towards a more preventive approach, for example through the development of an inter-agency Children's Services Plan.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- There has been limited contact with Travellers in Huntingdonshire, but a little more in Fenland through the work of the Ormiston Trust. A mobile lifestyle probably restricts the ability of many families to come within departmental systems.
- In the Cambridge Rural Area, managers report that the level of involvement with Travellers depends greatly on which families are resident in the area at any one time.

- Some Travellers have welcomed assistance from the department, most notably some older residents in St Neots and Chesterton, and a mobile family in Histon with severely disabled children. However, the expected amount of contact from more sedentary groups has not happened. Area teams in Rural Cambridgeshire have had some requests for help with accommodation, assistance with form-filling and provision of respite care. Most contacts have been from Traveller women.
- There is a suggestion that some Travellers may prefer to use non-statutory services, such as private GPs, which decreases the likelihood of referrals to Social Services.
- In the Cambridge Rural area, there is a perception that referring agencies, such as hospitals, adopt different child protection standards for Travellers, and tend not to make referrals when they should. Child protection concerns often centre on poor living conditions.
- In some parts of the county, Traveller Liaison Officers have referred clients directly to Social Services.
- Travellers probably lack positive information about how to make use of Social Services. The Purchasing Manager for Fenland/Huntingdonshire felt that the inter-agency video depicting services in the county was probably not enough to dispel the fears of many Travellers about approaching the department.
- Some social workers in the Cambridge Rural area have experienced difficulties in communication with Traveller clients : for example, where failure to meet high expectations has led clients to form the view that they have been discriminated against.
- Social workers may also lack knowledge about Travellers, and harbour fears about aggression from them. These fears are exacerbated by negative coverage in the local press and hostility from some local residents and councillors.
- On the other hand, there have been some incidents in the Cambridge Rural Area where social workers have been bitten by dogs at Travellers' encampments, or when investigations into criminal allegations have been resisted, creating concerns about staff safety.
- Cambridge Rural Area teams are becoming aware of eviction issues, and are getting more involved in District Traveller Liaison Groups.

However requests to conduct assessments in these cases still take a low priority.

- Social Services representatives are also beginning to attend Traveller Liaison Groups in Fenland and Huntingdonshire, but Travellers have not been prioritised for services. This is partly because of the high priority placed on

statutory work, and partly because of uncertainty from some staff about the validity of approaches based on cultural difference.

- In Fenland and Huntingdonshire, it is felt that promoting non-threatening services, such as support for people with disabilities, may have the potential to increase positive contacts with Travellers.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- There is no direct ethnic monitoring of Traveller clients, and this practice would probably not be supported by all departmental staff.

- Residents of major Travellers' sites can be identified through searching of address information recorded on the SSID system. Preliminary searches have identified more than 100 clients from these sites who had some contact with the department in the 12 months prior to 30 September this year, and have also revealed some contacts with Travellers living on the roadside. A more comprehensive analysis of this information is being carried out.

Desired outcomes from research

- Identify disability needs within the Traveller population.

- Improve understanding amongst practitioners of the wider context and disadvantages faced by Travellers, through training and awareness raising.

- Encourage involvement in Traveller issues of supportive elements within non-Traveller communities.

- Develop more effective information for Travellers about role of department and services available.

Traveller Liaison

General organisational issues

- The County Traveller Liaison function is located within the management of County farms. One official Travellers' site (Sea Dyke) was formally a County farm.

- The County owns 14 official Travellers' sites which are managed by District Councils through individual agency agreements. Line management arrangements vary, but are often through Environmental Health.

- There is no longer any subsidy from central government, so that rental income is the main source of finance.

- Site management and unauthorised encampments may be handled by the same District officers or by different departments.

- There is a Service Advisory Group which includes managers of service delivery areas and elected members.

Key concerns

Official sites:

- Cambridgeshire may have created a 'honey pot' effect because of the number of permanent sites established when 100% grants were available from the Department of the Environment. Except for Cambridge City, the County had designated status under the old legislation, but adjacent Counties never took that approach.
- There is a need to improve liaison between Counties and to develop new thinking and management styles which better co-ordinate the range of services provided for Travellers.
- Local political influences do not always reflect the practicalities of managing official sites, and there are concerns about consistency of service to Travellers across the County.
- Furthermore, the legal framework in relation to site management is unclear, and there is a relative lack of guidance from central government when compared with the support provided for social housing. The consequent difficulties in dealing with crime and disorder issues around sites has a negative impact on public perceptions, both of Travellers and the authorities.
- General toleration of Travellers has decreased in recent years, and fear has increased, possibly in conjunction with an increase in illegal economic activity by some Travellers. Improved education, training and job opportunities are essential in order to break the crime cycle amongst young Travellers.
- Three options for the management of official Traveller sites are now being considered. These are to continue management by District Councils, to create a joint agency, or to transfer management to a host agency, such as a housing association.
- Inter-agency co-ordination of services for Travellers is currently pursued through Travellers Liaison Groups for each District. Standard terms of reference are now being agreed for all groups.

Unauthorised encampments:

- Unauthorised encampments are an indicator of pressure for accommodation. A County policy on unauthorised encampments has been promulgated, modelled on the approach adopted in Essex.
- The level of unauthorised encampments is not particularly high compared with other Counties. However the public is becoming less tolerant, making the identification of a network of emergency stopping places a high priority.
- The reduced public tolerance might be partly due to the closure of traditional stopping places, such as green lanes and old roads, which has resulted in

repeated use of other locations, and the use of more high profile locations such as car parks and commons. Loss of employment opportunities may also have concentrated encampments in areas where work is still available.

- The nature of encampments has also changed in ways which may influence public opinion. Travelling groups have become larger, making them appear more threatening, and increasing the difficulties of moving them on. The level of rubbish left behind has also increased, possibly due to changes in occupation (towards activities such as tree lopping, scrap and tarmac), and exacerbated by the high cost of disposing of rubbish at privatised tips.

- The Wealdon judgement, which places a requirement on local agencies to assess the needs of Travellers before moving them on, has also increased the time taken to resolve problems with unauthorised encampments. Quicker responses are needed from Education and Social Services, so that encampments do not become established. At the same time, efficient and speedy recourse to moving Travellers on will only lead to shifting the 'problem' elsewhere.

- Some possible emergency stopping sites have been identified on Highways land, but legal problems may preclude them being used as official stopping places. One or two sites may be found on County farm land, and District/City Authorities have also been asked to identify suitable locations.

Other accommodation:

- Although Department of Environment counts show that the number of caravans in the County is decreasing, there are other indications that the Traveller population is rising. There are also indications that Travellers tend to have large families, which suggests that demand for accommodation may increase in the future.

- It seems that many Travellers are going into housing, but there is little systematic information available. The move from a caravan to a house is likely to raise practical and cultural issues. However, no specialist support is provided for housed Travellers, as it is for other ethnic minority groups.

- Cambridgeshire also has a relatively high number of private sites. The level of latent demand for sites is difficult to determine.

- This has implications for District planners, in taking a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of private sites.

- Travellers are likely to have problems obtaining planning permission for putting caravans and mobiles on land within 'envelopes' around towns. If they go further out, there will be difficulties obtaining the land.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- There is no central collection of management information, and records are kept by Local Authorities.

Desired outcomes from research

- Improved knowledge about movement patterns and diversity of accommodation needs for local, regional and transient Travellers.
- Demographic information, and indications of the needs of young Travellers, to enable prediction of future demand for accommodation.
- More information about the number and needs of housed Travellers.
- Identification of opportunities for legitimate economic activity for Travellers.
- Review best practice in site provision (official, private and emergency) and site management.

Youth Justice**General organisational issues**

- The Youth Justice team is located within Social Services, and provides a service for 10 to 18 year olds which dovetails with the Probation Service.
- The parameters of work are tightly controlled, with statutory responsibilities including acting as appropriate adults at PACE interviews, dealing with bail and remand issues in youth courts, preparing pre-sentence reports for young offenders, supervising young people sentenced to supervision orders, and supporting children remanded into prison custody or sentenced to custodial sentences.

The service has no direct role in prevention programmes. Social Services provides a block grant to the YMCA Youthwise programme and similar services which operate schemes for young people at risk of offending or being taken into care.

Contact with Travellers / key concerns

- Young Travellers tend to be prosecuted primarily for car theft and shop lifting.
- The Cambridge team has had some contact with young Travellers at PACE interviews, particularly where parents are not literate, or don't attend.
- Some young people from more settled families around Ely have been supervised on orders. They have generally been co-operative and have presented no issues out of the ordinary.
- Education tends to be handled differently in pre-sentence reports for young Travellers. Special tutoring is often provided for excluded pupils under supervision by the Youth Justice team. However, this is often not wanted by

young Travellers or their parents, as young people are expected to move into family businesses.

- Work with more mobile young people has sometimes been very difficult to manage. They may arrive in the area with the 'baggage' of a string of appearances in many different local authority areas, and are less likely than others to get bail.
- It may not always be clear whether these young people are culturally or ethnically Travellers, and a chaotic lifestyle seems to be the distinguishing feature.
- Practical difficulties in keeping track of this highly mobile group has been the major issue, but this generally becomes the responsibility of other agencies.

Availability of ethnic monitoring data

- As for Social Services.

Desired outcomes from research

- None in particular.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1****Main sources of information for report**

AGENCY	KEY INFORMANT(S)	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Cambridge City Council	Roger Coey Selwyn Anderson	
Community Education	Steve White	1996 Youth Issues Select Panel
Crime Reduction	Jules Malfroy	Safer Cambridgeshire Crime Reduction Partnership Strategy Audit Commission, Misspent Youth : Young People and Crime
Education (Pupil Support)	Brian Gale Margaret Wood	Team for Traveller Education Annual Report 1996-97 Weber,L. Fenland Traveller Consultation, Ormiston Trust
Environmental Services (P'boro)	Keith Barratt Chris Wilkinson	
Environmental Services (Rural)	Steve Clements	
Gypsy Council	Pete Mercer Louise Day John Day	
Health (NW Anglia)	Geeta Pankhania	NW Anglia Health Commission Travellers Health Seminar, 1995 Weber,L. Fenland Traveller Consultation, Ormiston Trust
Health Promotion (Camb&Hunt)	Christina Wells	Proposal to NHS Ethnic Hlth UnitFHSA policy paper, 1991 Addenbrookes Hospital cultural awareness notes
Highways	Stuart Admans	
Housing	Sue Jackson (information taken from Ormiston Fenland report) Jill Tufnell	Weber,L. Fenland Traveller Consultation, Ormiston Trust East Cambs Housing Strategy
Nat Assoc for Romani Rights	Eli Frankham Terry Christie	

Ormiston Trust	Wendy Munro	Weber,L. Fenland Traveller Consultation, Ormiston Trust
Planning	Tim Furnell	
Police (Community Relations)	Steve Pearl	ACPO, Policing and Racial Equality
Police (Operations/Crime Intell)	David Winser Mike Keough	Minutes of Chief Officers Inter-Agency Meeting, 8th Oct 1996
Probation Service	Margaret Lowe and members of Equal Opportunities Committee Beth Coulthardt Rod Steele&Baden Gooch (CS)	Cambs Probation Service Race and Ethnic Monitoring Form Anti-Racism Working with Travellers and Gypsies : Interim Practice Guidelines
Social Services	Sheila Forrest (Hunt & Fen) Robert Marsh (Rural) plus Joint Fieldcare Management Team	Weber,L. Fenland Traveller Consultation, Ormiston Trust
Traveller Liaison	Michelle Cook Jon Megginson	Guidelines for dealing with unauthorised encampments in Cambridgeshire Policy statement on Travellers site provision
Youth Justice	Terry Medway	

APPENDIX 2 Initiatives for Travellers in Cambridgeshire

Agency	Description of programme	Status
NW Anglia Health Auth	Mobile health awareness service for Travellers	Investigating
NW Anglia Health Auth	Promotion of self-care for Travellers	Investigating
NW Anglia Health Auth /AGTHIP	Hand held medical records for Travellers	Developing
ATHIP/NW Anglia HA	Cultural awareness training and information pack	Developing
ATHIP	Provision of health information video and other materials	Developing
Camb&Hunt Health Auth	Development of community (lay) health worker network	Not funded
Traveller Education	Cultural awareness training for education professionals	Established
P'boro Women's Centre/Race Equality Council	Provision of play group on Oxney Road Travellers site	Investigating
Education, Policy and Planning	Centre of Excellence for Under-8s in Wisbech, with Traveller children as possible target group	Investigating
Murrow Primary School	After-School Club well attended by Traveller pupils	Established
Murrow Primary School	Production of CD-ROM depicting local Traveller history	Developing
Wisbech Children and Families Project	Drop-in session aimed at Travellers and other parents	Established
Witchford VC/Comm Ed	Youth club well attended by young Travellers	Established
Cottenham VC/Comm Ed	Youth club previously well attended by young Travellers	Closed indefinitely
Community Education / Gypsy Council	Youth clubs aimed at young people from Oxney Road Travellers site and Welland Estate. Two young Travellers training as youth workers.	Established
Oxney Road residents	Summer outings for children on Oxney Road Travellers site financed by Princes Trust Award.	Established
Gypsy Council	Promotion of vocational training for young Travellers.	Investigating
Community	Detached youth work being targeted to	Developing

Education	young Travellers at Wisbech and St Neots. (Already established in Peterborough)	
Multi-Agency Partnership	New Start initiative aimed at bringing disaffected young people back into learning. Travellers identified as target group.	Developing
Isle College, Wisbech	Adult literacy at Murrow Primary well attended by Travellers.	Established
Parnwell Primary /Traveller Education	Family Education classes being organised at request of some Traveller (and non-Traveller) parents.	Developing
Probation Service	Research study on pre-sentence reports and bail.	Investigating
Police Service	Cultural awareness training for police officers.	Developing

APPENDIX 3 Proposed outline for research programme

Information requested	Source / Method	Sub-Proj	Link to practical action
Accommodation needs (qualitative) - Travellers currently on official sites - Travellers currently in houses- Travellers on private sites (auth/unauth) - Travellers currently on unauth encampment - Young Travellers' future accomm needs	Review of published literature Consult at sites selected for location studies Beyond scope of present study - seek alternative Beyond scope of present study - ACERT study? Beyond scope of present study - seek alternative Try to cover in location studies / liaise <i>New Start</i>	SP4 SP5 ? ? ? SP5	This information could feed into the consideration of site management options, identification of emergency stopping places, and review of planning policies which are being conducted as part of the Travellers Review. Links with housing authorities need to
Accommodation needs (quantitative)	Count of Gypsy Caravans District Data Collection	SP3	As above
Description of socio-economic circumstances	Census information, agency data (local) Published sources (national)	SP3	To be used within individual agencies and to support any funding bids which result from the Travellers Review.
Information to counter myths and prejudices	Review of published sources on history, culture, and socio-political context.	SP2	To be used within individual agencies, possibly in conjunction with cultural awareness programmes.
Ideas for improving community relations, site management and policing	Review best practice literature Survey of County Gypsy Liaison Officers In-depth studies of selected locations	SP4 SP4 SP5	To be considered at Chief Officers level.
Ideas for meeting educational, vocational and employment needs and diverting young people at risk of offending.	Review best practice literature Possibly consult at sites selected for location studies / liaise with New Start researcher	SP4 SP5 ?	Link to New Start, and possibly New Deal initiatives. Establish links with Youth Justice, Probation and providers of

			diversionary programmes for young offenders.
Identify disability needs and current level of knowledge about services. Determine levels of access to basic health care.	Consult at sites selected for location studies (Other locations/accommodation types beyond the scope of this study, but should be included in any additional surveys with other groups.)	SP5	Feed back to agencies, possibly for discussion and action through Traveller Liaison Groups.
Explore preferences for health information	Possibly consult at sites selected for location studies/liaise with AGTHIP and Health Authorities	SP5 ?	Feed back to agencies, possibly for discussion and action through Traveller Liaison Groups.
Distribution and effectiveness of multi-agency video	Distribution can be investigated in District Data Collection (county-wide) and Location Studies (selected sites) Effectiveness might be explored in focus groups if time allows.	SP3 SP5 ?	Feed back to agencies, possibly for discussion and action through Traveller Liaison Groups.
Ideas for improved co-ordination of services and increased Traveller involvement	Literature review and survey of County Gypsy Liaison Officers Consult at sites selected for location studies	SP4 SP5	Feed into (expanded) review of site management options