

## MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Equality Impact Assessment

#### **Title of Policy/Service/Contract:**

Equalities Assessment for the provision of permanent Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites (as required) in Mid Sussex

The delivery of sites will be facilitated through the Local Development Framework, specifically the Traveller Sites Allocations Development Plan Document.

**Division:** Planning Policy and Economic Development

**Lead Officer:** Nathan Spilsted

**Date Assessment completed:** May 2014

#### **1. SCOPING**

##### **1.1 What are the aims of the policy, service/service change or contract?**

To provide sufficient suitable permanent sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Mid Sussex. This will be facilitated through the Local Development Framework, specifically the policy provisions of the Traveller Sites Allocations Development Plan Document.

The Traveller Sites Allocation DPD will be prepared over a number of stages. This Equalities Assessment looks at the early stages in the preparation of the DPD including public consultation.

The results of this Assessment are used to inform a Community Involvement Plan. This details how and when engagement with stakeholders is undertaken. It is proposed to update the Equalities Assessment as the DPD progresses through its work programme towards Public Examination and Adoption.

The aims are:

- To identify the permanent needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Mid Sussex
- To provide the policy framework to meet this need through the allocation of new sites and/ or the intensification/ redevelopment, expansion and/ or safeguarding of existing sites;
- To ensure fair and equal treatment for Gypsies and Travellers and facilitate better integration and co-existence of the Traveller community with the settled community; and
- To reduce unauthorised Traveller encampments and unplanned and inappropriate sites being established by planning appeals.

## **1.2 Who does the service/policy/contract affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?**

As future users of the sites, the actions required to meet the permanent needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will affect these groups. There is also potential to affect anyone who lives or works near to a proposed site allocation.

The main 'customers' of the Traveller Sites Allocations DPD are:

- The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community;
- Site/ landowners;
- Members of the public;
- District, Town and Parish Councillors;
- Organisations and individuals that provide services and or represent the Gypsy and Traveller community; and
- Internal customers (to MSDC) are service areas that are involved with the Gypsy and Traveller community – for instance Housing, Planning and Planning Investigations and Enforcement.

## **1.3 What equality information is available, including any evidence from engagement and analysis of use of services?**

### Evidence

- Mid Sussex District Council is committed to developing sustainable communities that are safe, healthy and inclusive and provide the amount and type of housing that meets the needs of all sectors of the community, including Gypsies and Travellers. This commitment is reflected within the Mid Sussex Sustainable Communities Strategy and the emerging Mid Sussex District Plan.
- The Housing Strategy for Mid Sussex 2009-2014 (including the Refreshed Housing Strategy 2012-2014) and Gypsy and Traveller Strategy 2009-2012 recognise that Gypsies and Travellers are amongst the most disadvantaged minority groups; seek to promote inclusive communities; and include objectives and action points supporting the provision of new sites to meet identified needs.
- The Mid Sussex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment published 2013 and updated 2014 identifies a need for 34 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the period to 2031.
- Because of an outstanding need for additional Traveller pitches in Mid Sussex, the Council has historically found itself in the position of granting several (temporary) planning permissions for Traveller sites, some following planning appeal.
- There is historic and on-going evidence of unauthorised encampments within the district.
- The emerging Mid Sussex District Plan will include a policy that will set a target for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites and for determining planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites should they come forward.
- Evidence has been gathered from past public consultation exercises on the District Plan and the Statement of Community Involvement. This demonstrates that Gypsies and Travellers have not previously engaged with the planning process.

**1.4 What does this information tell us about the equality issues associated with the service and implications for the protected groups?**

Traditionally, unless directly engaged, Gypsy and Traveller groups are seldom heard during consultation on planning documents. Given the importance of the allocations document for the Traveller community, particular effort must be made to engage with this group in an appropriate manner in forming the document.

The provision of an adequate supply of suitable and sustainably located permanent sites would help to facilitate fair and equal treatment for Gypsies and Travellers with subsequent benefits including promoting better access to health and education and better integration and co-existence of the Traveller community with the settled community and would assist in reducing unauthorised Traveller encampments.

**1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service? No**

If No go to section 2.

If yes, please refer to the guidance notes, particularly Appendix One of the MSDC Guidance "Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement", and complete the next three questions.

**Identify the contractors/partnerships used to deliver the service.**

**What is their contribution to equality in service delivery and the promotion of equality?**

**How are equality issues addressed through contractual arrangements and service level agreements?**

## 2. Assessment of Impact; Analysis and Action Planning

Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and good relations identified above need to be translated into SMART actions and recorded here. These actions need to be delivered and monitored through the service planning process.

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of different ethnic groups including white minorities, but also established white communities				
<p>Ensure a sufficient provision of suitable, sustainably located sites is made to meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect the needs identified within the Mid Sussex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment;</li> <li>• Ensures that sites are located to meet needs (noting requirement for sustainable development and constraints to the delivery of such sites due to issues of availability and/or suitability);</li> <li>• Can accommodate best practice in terms of site design;</li> <li>• Can be delivered within an acceptable timeframe.</li> </ul> <p>Potential barriers may exist for those for whom English is a second language.</p>	<p>Current Mid Sussex Local Plan policy on safeguarding and determining applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites.</p> <p>Liaison with representative Gypsy and Traveller organisations.</p> <p>The Council assist with translation where possible. Documents aim to be written in plain English. Where 'jargon' is used, it is explained in the clearest possible terms</p>	<p>Implementation of District Plan policies regarding Gypsies and Travellers (adoption scheduled early 2016)</p> <p>Adoption and implementation of Traveller Sites Allocations DPD (adoption scheduled spring/ early summer 2015). This includes the identification of potential sites through a sites study and the selection of the Council's 'Preferred Options'. The Preferred Options will be publically consulted upon.</p> <p>Targeted promotion of consultation exercises including site visits with Gypsies and Travellers where possible.</p>	<b>NS</b>	<p>The supply of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be monitored against requirements.</p> <p>Number of temporary and unauthorised sites will be monitored.</p>
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
No issues identified.			-	
The needs of disabled people				
<p>Ensure that sites, when developed, are accessible – this will be the subject of future site specific impact assessments.</p> <p>Enable disabled people to participate in the consultation.</p>	<p>Documentation and means of response to public consultation are made available on-line and at all the district's libraries and help-points.</p> <p>Supporting material is made available on the website which is equipped with 'browse aloud' for those with visual impairments.</p>	<p>Targeted promotion of consultation exercises including site visits with Gypsies and Travellers where possible.</p>	<b>NS</b>	<p>The supply of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be monitored against requirements.</p>

	Consideration given to font size and design layout.  Officers are available to explain matters in person, over the telephone and via e-mail.			
<b>The needs of people with a religion or belief</b>				
It is not considered that there are any specific requirements for these groups.				
<b>The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people</b>				
It is not considered that there are any specific requirements for these groups.				
<b>Issues from marriage and civil partnership</b>				
It is not considered that there are any specific requirements for these groups.				
<b>The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people</b>				
It is not considered that there are any specific requirements for these groups.				
<b>The needs of transgender communities</b>				
It is not considered that there are any specific requirements for these groups.				
<b>The needs of people who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area</b>				
The provision of publicly owned sites, with pitches let at reasonable rents, should ensure that those on low incomes are catered for.  Literacy skills amongst the Gypsy and Traveller community may be a barrier to them engaging with the consultation.	Documentation and means of response to public consultation are made available on-line and at all the district's libraries and help-points.	Implementation of District Plan policies regarding Gypsies and Travellers (adoption scheduled early 2016)  Adoption and implementation of Traveller Sites Allocations DPD (adoption scheduled spring/ early summer 2015). This includes the identification of potential sites through a sites study and the selection of the Council's 'Preferred Options'. The Preferred Options will be publically consulted upon.  Targeted promotion of consultation exercises including site visits with Gypsies and Travellers where possible.	<b>NS</b>	The supply of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be monitored against requirements.

The needs of people who live in a rural area				
Sites have been assessed to take into account access to facilities, and this is reflected in the Mid Sussex Traveller Site Study and the Sustainability Appraisal undertaken for the Preferred Options.				

### 3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Key findings	Future Actions
<p>Unless directly engaged, Gypsy and Traveller groups are seldom heard during consultation on planning documents.</p> <p>Consultation on the Gypsies and Travellers Allocations DPD will need to ensure that engagement methods are accessible to Gypsies and Travellers, and those with a physical disability</p> <p>The provision of an adequate supply of suitable and sustainably located permanent sites would help to facilitate fair and equal treatment for Travellers and better integration and co-existence of the Traveller community with the settled community and would assist in reducing unauthorised Traveller encampments.</p>	<p>Targeted promotion of consultation exercise, liaison with representative organisations and monitoring of consultation.</p> <p>Adoption and implementation of the District Plan and Traveller Sites Allocations DPD.</p> <p>The supply of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be monitored against requirements.</p> <p>Number of temporary and unauthorised sites will be monitored.</p>

### 4. Signing off this assessment and action plan

Signature .....N Spilsted.....  
 Person undertaking the assessment

Date .....30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.....



Signature .....  
 Head of Service

Date .....30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.....

Please send your completed impact assessment to Neal Barton for publication on the website.