For and on behalf of
GLEESON STRATEGIC LAND

STATEMENT TO THE MDDC LOCAL PLAN REVIEW EXAMINATION

Hearing 4: Development Management Policies
- Draft Policy DM7 (Traveller Sites)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement is prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of our client Gleeson Strategic Land and is submitted as supplementary evidence as part of the Mid Devon Local Plan Review Examination.

1.2 The issues covered by this Statement relate to Hearing 4: Development Management Policies but specifically in relation to Question 6: Is Draft Policy DM7 (Traveller Sites) reasonable and / or workable?
2.0 Q6: IS DRAFT POLICY DM7 (TRAVELLER SITES) REASONABLE AND / OR WORKABLE?

2.1 Draft Policy DM7 is essentially couched as a permissive policy setting out three criteria where planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches will be permitted. Notwithstanding this, the policy is considered to be unduly restrictive in that it rules out development proposals where need cannot be met on another suitable site in Mid Devon which has consent or is allocated for gypsy and traveller pitches. It must therefore be read within the context of provision within the wider Plan. We do not consider that the Council's approach to the delivery of gypsy and traveller pitches is reasonable, effective or workable.

2.2 The supporting text explains that the quantified need for pitches are to be included within allocated developments at Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension, North-West and East Cullompton, and Pedlerspool in Crediton and that proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation will not be permitted in other locations unless it is demonstrated that the existing consented or allocated sites will not be available to the prospective occupiers within a reasonable timescale. Clearly there is an inter-relationship between Draft Policy DM7 and the relevant allocation policies and therefore both are considered together below.

2.3 We consider that there is a lack of coherent policy for the delivery of gypsy and traveller pitches within Mid Devon and as a result the policies which purport to be positive are likely, perversely, to inhibit provision. A number of inconsistencies outlined below make the Plan unsound on the basis that Policy DM7 in conjunction with the site allocation policies (specifically Policy CRE5 relating to the allocation at Pedlerspool, Crediton) will be ineffective in delivering sites to meet the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The justification for this is set out below, supported with reference to the Council’s evidence base.

1) The lack of a coherent policy for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller Sites across the Plan / Inflexible application of policy

The Strategic Housing Topic Paper, 2017 sets out the quantum of need for pitches but despite a change in the definition of ‘traveller’ and the corresponding reduction in need, and a strong supply of windfall sites between 2006/7 and 2016/17 on an
annual basis, an unnecessarily level of supply is sought.

The Topic Paper states that the focus for delivery of traveller pitches is on a limited number of ‘strategic sites’ together with the identification of broad locations and application of Policy DM7 which purports to provide the framework for the positive consideration of windfall applications for pitches.

Policy S3 e) states that ‘A five-year supply of gypsy and traveller pitches will be allocated on deliverable sites …’ and that ‘A further supply of developable sites or broad locations for growth will be identified equivalent to a further 10 years of predicted growth. The Housing Authority will seek to provide a public site for gypsy and traveller pitches within Mid Devon, subject to the availability of funding’. (My emphasis).

It is clear that the Council’s only realistic mechanism for delivery of gypsy and traveller sites is through the requirement for pitch provision on allocated strategic sites. The Council nominally states that policy should be applied flexibly in order to secure delivery whether that is within an allocated site or off-site, but this flexibility is not evidenced in practice. There are difficulties with the accommodation of pitches on allocated sites particularly those which are not strategic in nature (such as CRE5) which lack the scope to appropriately accommodate pitches within the site layout and the difficulty and / or uncertainty of mortgage finance availability for properties on sites which also include pitches (see more detail on this issue at point 2) below). Without the applied flexibility of being able to deliver pitches off-site as an alternative there will be implications for delivery not only of the pitches themselves but also of the five-year housing land supply where whole sites are delayed whilst seeking to resolve the issues.

Despite the positive drafting of Policy S3 e), no developable sites or broad locations have been identified within the Plan which would assist in the identification of suitable sites for pitch provision and no public site has been identified.

To compound this, Policy DM7 is considered to be too restrictive such that planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches which would otherwise be approved under criteria a) – c) would not be granted where the need cannot be met on another suitable site which has consent or is allocated for gypsy or traveller pitches.
Consequently, DM7 will inhibit rather than facilitate windfall sites coming forward.

As a result, the policy will be ineffective, will jeopardise delivery and the maintenance of a robust five-year housing land supply for both pitches and general market housing which could be delayed through the uncertainties associated with pitch provision and delivery.

The requirement for gypsy and traveller pitches and the issues highlighted above are considered in more detail below.

2) Supply and Demand for Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

The Strategic Housing Policies Topic Paper, March 2017 sets out the need for traveller pitches but this is based on the GTAA which pre-dated the Government’s Planning Policy on Traveller Provision and which changed the calculation of ‘traveller’ needs.

The need for 35 permanent gypsy and traveller pitches and 11 plots for travelling show people was identified through the Devon-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. The GTAA shortly predated the publication of the Government’s revised Planning Policy for Traveller sites (PPTS) in August 2015 which made changes to planning policy, most significantly, it changed the definition of ‘traveller’ for planning purposes to exclude those who have permanently ceased travelling. On this basis, it would be possible to reduce the assessed need by 9% on the basis that 9% of responses to the GTAA survey indicated that they had ceased to travel permanently. This would reduce the need from 35 pitches to 32. Notwithstanding this, the original target of 35 pitches was retained and is therefore higher than the actual needs arising. (Paragraphs 3.26 – 3.29 of the Housing Topic Paper).

Further, the Topic Paper goes on to confirm that 25 pitches are to be allocated across 4 sites despite windfall sites providing an average of 5 pitches per year since 2006/7 i.e. a total of 51 pitches, and the conclusion that windfall sites will continue to come forward. (Paragraphs 3.30- 31). This historic buoyant windfall supply annually since 2006/7 means that the projected supply (whether taking into account the change in definition or not) has been fulfilled already even before the end of the Plan period.
The demand for sites is also questioned. There is no justification as to the spatial distribution of pitches across the District which appears to have been determined solely circumstantially through the location of the three strategic sites and the smaller non-strategic site CRE5 in Crediton.

This is borne out through reference to the minutes of the Gypsy and Traveller Forum. The minutes of 15th May 2018 (Appendix A) drew the Forum’s attention to planning application 17/00348/OUT, the CRE5 Pedlerspool site at Crediton (and the 5 pitches contained within the application). The Forum was encouraged to comment on the application in particular, on need, how the pitches are incorporated into the site and whether the location of pitches within the site as shown on the masterplan was suitable. (Section 6 of the minutes). Notwithstanding that no positive representations to the application were received or support for the inclusion of pitches within the application.

The Forum was also encouraged to put forward any land that they were aware of or owned which may be suitable for a new site and reference was made to the potential to approach Devon County Council about land that they own. (Section 6 of the minutes). Again, no sites have come forward subsequent to this meeting.

And further, the Forum was advised that a waiting list for pitches coming forward through the planning process has been set up and publicised to the Forum and via the Mid Devon website (Section 7 of the minutes). Despite this, there were no entries on the waiting list as of October 2018 (Minutes of the Gypsy and Traveller Forum held on 16th October 2018, Section 8 refers).

In stark contrast, reference is made within the paper ‘Housing Needs and Planning Policy for Gypsy and Travellers: The Approach of Devon Local Authorities’ prepared by Devon County Council, September 2018, to the Teignbridge Local Plan adopted in May 2014 whereby developers of the 2 major urban extensions proposed, are invited to make provision for Gypsy and Traveller pitches (on or off site). (Paragraph 6.1). My emphasis. At least 37 Gypsy and Travellers had registered on the waiting list register (Paragraph 6.2) and whilst under current policies there is a focus on the need for pitches to be delivered within sites allocated for development, planning officers are open to offers from developers to consider sites off allocations if appropriate.
Paragraph 6.4). Teignbridge continues to apply this flexibility as can be seen from the recent example of an application at Teigngrace 18/01759/FUL which was considered by Teignbridge District Council on 18th December 2018. This application was for the alternative off-site pitch provision otherwise required at the South West Exeter strategic site. The report presented to the 18th December 2018 Planning Committee meeting states:

‘3.11 The off-site provision is required as a consequence of funding/financial constraints not only on the developers but also potentially on mortgagees. This is a difficulty that Officers are looking to resolve more widely but timescale do not permit resolution at this stage.

3.12 The delivery of pitches at this site is therefore of direct relevance to the delivery of the pitches allocated at South West Exeter.

3.14 It is officers’ view that these figures only serve to illustrate the vulnerability of our 5-year supply position to very small fluctuations in delivery and permissions etc. and therefore where there are appropriate proposals to deliver additional pitches to meet the wider need of the community, these should be considered positively – in line with our general duty to consider proposals positively as expressed through the NPPF’ [my emphasis].

Teignbridge DC concluded, accepted that due to the reluctance of lenders to provide mortgage finance to properties on sites incorporating pitches and the vulnerability of the five-year housing land supply to very small fluctuations in delivery, that it was appropriate to approve the alternative off-site provision. This would appear to be a proactive and effective way forward in achieving the delivery of suitable sites for required pitch provision and is highlighted as best practice in the DCC Report, ‘Housing Needs and Planning Policy for Gypsy and Traveller: The approach of Devon local authorities’, September 2018. It is an approach which should be embraced through the Local Plan process and could easily be replicated through Mid Devon policy.

To support this, the DCC 2018 Report identifies as best practice the identification of land owned by either Devon County or Mid Devon District Councils which is suitable for the development of either permanent or temporary sites for Gypsy and Traveller
communities (Paragraph 8.1). The Mid Devon Local Plan review does not do this nor does it identify other developable sites or a broad location for the search of suitable sites, as advised through the Government statement ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’ (referenced at paragraph 2.31 of the Local Plan Review, which would support Policy DM7.

Therefore, both the level of need and the demand for sites within Mid Devon has to be challenged – the need appears to have been inflated through a change in Government Policy and there appears to be a lack of demand, certainly for sites which are ‘conveniently identified on large site allocations’ but not necessarily attractive to the gypsy and traveller community.

It can only be concluded that either the level of pitches required through allocated sites is not necessary and/or appropriate and instead, Policy DM7 should be redrafted to effectively support rather than restrict windfall provision which would facilitate additional flexibility for the provision of pitches otherwise required on large sites and allow the traveller community to identify sites which they themselves consider to be suitable.

3) Appropriateness of Pitch Location

As things stand, the provision for pitches is only facilitated within the four large site allocations where pitches must be provided on-site regardless of whether there is demand from the traveller community on the site / in that locality or not. There is an apparent mismatch in the needs and aspirations of the traveller community and the requirement for on-site allocation through these four large allocated sites listed.

This point is also evidenced through the DCC report: ‘Housing needs and planning policy for Gypsy and Travellers: An approach of Devon local authorities’ at paragraph 5.5 which summarises the feedback from engagement with the traveller community as to where they would like to be housed: semi-rural locations with good transport links (rather than on large traditional housing estates which will be delivered through the large site allocations). More specifically, despite the Pedlerspool site, CRE5 being brought to the attention of the Gypsy and Traveller Forum (Appendix B), no comments to the application were received in relation to the pitches proposed in accordance with the requirements of Policy CRE5.
One of the main issues raised to the Proposed Modifications Consultation is summarised at paragraph 6.7 of the Housing Topic Paper including concern about the reliance on large sites to delivery Gypsy and Traveller Pitches. This concern was raised both by the development industry and the National Gypsy and Traveller Community’s Liaison Group - that reliance on large urban extensions to meet all the need for sites is considered unrealistic. Notwithstanding this, the Council continues to propose to meet identified needs focused on requirements within major allocations and no further modification was made (Paragraph 6.7, last bullet point).

As outlined above, greater flexibility within the policy to seek off-site pitch provision should that become necessary, would secure not only the delivery of the pitches in locations where the traveller community desire / need to be and in a manner to suit their cultural requirements but remove unnecessary constraints on delivery of the wider site (including both market and affordable housing) thus contributing towards a more robust five-year housing land supply.

4) The inappropriate requirement for pitch provision on a non-strategic site:

The allocated sites at which gypsy and traveller pitches are to be provided are limited to 4 sites: Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (TIV1), North-West and East Cullompton (CU1 and CU7), and Pedlerspool in Crediton. 3 of these are strategic sites which range between 1350 and 2,600 dwellings including variously additional major commercial development and the required infrastructure. In contrast, Pedlerspool at Crediton (CRE5) is NOT a strategic site, being proposed for the allocation of just 200 dwellings yet despite this, it is also required to provide a similar number of pitches as the strategic sites. As a comparator, the proposed allocation at Blundells School which is also proposed for 200 dwellings has no corresponding requirement. There is no explanation as to the disparity of requirements between sites nor any justification as to why pitches are required on the Pedlerspool site which is not a strategic site and is significantly smaller than the 3 strategic sites listed. This has generated difficulties in terms of appropriately accommodating the required pitches within the site (as advised by the Devon and Cornwall Police Architectural Liaison Officer during pre-application discussions) which does not by definition have the scope or opportunities to do so that the strategic sites have. It has placed a disproportionate burden on the viability of the site and generated
viability issues as a result that have been considered in-depth and accepted through the Development Management process (application 17/00348/OUT) and a corresponding reduction in the affordable housing provision has been agreed by the Council accordingly, a perverse outcome bearing in mind the traveller pitches are also to be considered within the affordable housing provision.

The application of policy in this way is therefore ineffective in the delivery of both Gypsy and Traveller pitches and affordable housing.

5) **Inflexible application of policy**

Despite acknowledgement in the Council’s own evidence base (Housing Topic Paper, paragraph 3.35 and highlighted at the Gypsy and Traveller Forum) that ‘*in order to safeguard delivery, the lpa would consider applying the policy flexibly through off-site provision where appropriate and delivery can be assured, or where viability problems with on-site delivery can be demonstrated*’. This does not however, translate into reality where officers have consistently refused to consider off-site provision despite the acknowledged difficulties of both accommodating gypsy and traveller pitches on site satisfactorily and proven viability issues. Were that flexibility to be forthcoming, it would facilitate the identification of alternative off-site provision (in a similar way to the approach adopted by Teignbridge DC as outlined above) which would, in turn avoid on-site deliverability issues (the difficulties of appropriate juxtaposition within site layouts; the reluctance of lenders to provide mortgages for properties on sites with pitch provision; viability issues including a reduction in value as a result of proximity to pitches; and the perverse implication of a reduction in affordable housing where pitches themselves contribute to affordable housing provision).

This scenario points to the need for flexibility highlighted in the evidence base, to be specifically built in to Policy DM7 as well as being written into the site allocation policies.

6) **Lack of Standalone Sites or Broad Locations Identified**

- Despite acknowledgement of the Government statement ‘Planning policy for traveller sites’ within the Plan at Policy S3 e), that a five-year supply of deliverable
sites and a further supply of developable sites or broad locations should be identified, equivalent to a further ten years of predicted growth, no such provision for either standalone sites or broad locations of search has been made within the Plan. The difficulty of finding / identifying new gypsy and traveller sites was acknowledged at the Gypsy and Traveller Forum held on 15th May 2018 (Appendix A) and confirmation that no progress has been made in identifying new sites. It can only be concluded that identifying new standalone sites or even broad locations has been put on the ‘too difficult pile’ with reliance being placed solely on accommodating the requirement within larger housing sites, for example at Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension, North West Cullompton, East Cullompton and Pedlerspool in Crediton. Any other provision would be reliant on windfall sites coming forward. However, the scope for this is severely restricted through the application of Policy DM7 which will only consider proposals favourably where ‘the need cannot be met on another suitable site in Mid Devon which has consent or is allocated for gypsy and traveller pitches’. We also understand that no progress has been made to secure a public site for gypsy and traveller pitches due to a lack of funding – This is confirmed in the minutes of the 16th October 2018 Gypsy and Traveller Forum, section (Appendix B).

7) Lack of Delivery or Management Mechanism

6.1 Any pitches arising on an allocated site are to be considered as part of the affordable housing provision for that site. However, there is no cohesive mechanism for the future management of the pitches once provided. Unlike the established mechanisms for the provision of affordable housing by a Registered Provider, there is no such established means for the future management of the pitches arising. MDDC have confirmed through the development management process for the CRE Pedlerspool application 17/00348/OUT that it would not be interested in accepting management of any resulting pitches. Discussions with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer at Devon County Council also threw no light on future management of these affordable pitches and early discussions pursued with a number of specialist housing associations confirmed that none of the providers approached were interested in taking on the pitches due to a variety of reasons but included a lack of grant funding and disproportionate management costs.

6.2 This situation where MDDC appear to have no idea as to how any resulting pitches
will be managed in the long term as affordable housing compounds the lack of coherent planning policy.
3.0  MODIFICATIONS TO POLICY SOUGHT

3.1  It is considered that Draft Policy DM7 (Traveller Sites) is neither reasonable nor workable whether as a standalone policy or in conjunction with the site allocation policies.

3.2  The following further Modifications are therefore sought in order to make Policy for the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches effective and therefore sound:

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<th>Policy DM7</th>
<th><strong>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation</strong> Traveller sites</th>
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<tr>
<td>Planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches, including pitches or plots for travelling showpeople, will be permitted where:</td>
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<td>a) The need cannot be met on another suitable site in Mid Devon which has consent or is allocated for gypsy and traveller pitches;</td>
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<td>b) Local services can be accessed without the use of a car;</td>
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<td>a) it is demonstrated that pitches within existing consented or allocated sites will not be delivered to the prospective occupiers in a reasonable timescale whether that be through difficulties in incorporating pitches within site constraints, delivery of associated housing or site viability;</td>
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<td>ae) Suitable onsite facilities will be provided including space for children’s play;</td>
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<td>bd) The proposal will have suitable environmental quality for residents including non-isolating boundary treatments; and</td>
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<td>ce) Occupation will be limited to those who meet the Government’s published definition of gypsies and travellers, including travelling show-people.</td>
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**KEY:**
- **Red**  Proposed Modifications deleting original text
- **Blue**  Proposed Modifications – additional text inserted
- **Green**  Suggested Further Modifications required to make the policy effective and sound
Policy CRE5 Pedlerspool, Exhibition Road

A site of 21 hectares at Pedlerspool, Crediton, is allocated for residential development subject to the following:

a) 200 257 dwellings with 28% affordable housing subject to viability, including at least up to five pitches for gypsies and travellers to be provided either on or off-site;

....

KEY:

Green: Suggested Further Modifications required to make the policy effective and sound
APPENDIX A - GYPSY AND TRAVELLER FORUM 15TH MAY 2018 - MINUTES
1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   17 people attended the first forum meeting, including council officers, elected members, representatives from the Police Diverse Communities Team, a representative from EMTAS, DCC Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer, Teignbridge forum coordinator and members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Everyone in the room introduced themselves.

2. **Talk about the Teignbridge Gypsy and Traveller Forum**
   The co-chair of the Teignbridge Gypsy and Traveller’s Forum talked about the how this Forum had been successful in bringing together members from different parts of the Travelling community over the last 10 years. It is important that respect is given for people from all of the different travelling communities and the Forum is an opportunity to learn about each other’s culture. It is important that the Forum is chaired by a member from the Travelling community and that this should be the same for the Mid Devon Forum. The setting up of a Forum in Mid Devon can help provide a voice and support for the Travelling community where there is a lack of other support organisations. Travellers were encouraged to use the Forum to bring up burning issues and to use the Forum as a way for their voice to be heard.

   The Forum heard about some of the history of Romani Gypsies and dates in the summer that are of historical significance, including 16th May (Romani Resistance Day), June (Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month) and 2nd August (Roma Genocide Remembrance Day) event being held in Dorchester.

   The new definition was also spoken about and the impacts of this, it was mentioned that a group had been set up recently to tackle this and that a member would be willing to talk to the Forum.

   The co-chair was thanked for her very informative talk.

3. **Terms of Reference**
   The need for the scope of the Forum to be set out was discussed and copies of the Draft Terms of Reference were available. Forum members were encouraged to look at this document and provide any comments. The draft is to be agreed at the next meeting.

   The terms of reference can be found here: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/345130/forum-terms-of-reference-draft-20218.pdf
4. Talk on Hate Crime
The Police Diverse Communities Team gave a talk about the work that it does, including the “Zero Tolerance to Hate Campaign” to eliminate prejudice, promote respect, educate two-way, report incidents and raise awareness. There is a presentation about this on the Devon and Cornwall Police website: https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/advice/threat-assault-abuse/hate-crime/resources/

The Police are keen that more incidents of hate crime are reported so that this can help the Police provide more resources to tackle this crime, including through third party reporting if people aren’t comfortable reporting directly to the police. But, there was concern expressed that the Police do not listen to or represent the Travelling community well. It was pointed out that the Diverse Communities Team is new and that police officer’s training involves a placement in the community for some officers, who present their experience to the wider trainee team. The Travelling community were encouraged to use the diverse communities team to mediate between themselves and other Police officer if/when issues arise.

There was reference to a conference that will be held in London on 20th June about ‘Reporting Racism GRT’ a new tool to tackle hate crime against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

There was reference to unauthorised encampments that have caused bad publicity for the wider Travelling Community and unrest. It was heard that Leeds City Council has negotiated stopping places, which has helped to reduce the cost of responding to unauthorised encampments. It was suggested that there should be a partnership arrangement between local authorities in Devon to arrange negotiated stopping places.

5. Traveller Education
The Forum heard that there is only one person employed by Devon County Council to help assist with education issues arising for members of the Travelling community in Devon. Previously there have been 6 people for this. The role includes a range of work, including visiting children on encampments, helping to get children into schools and arranging travel packs for children on the road, and supporting children experiencing bullying or not achieving, support is given to both travelling children and schools with travelling children. Training opportunities have been made available to schools but there has been limited interest.

Children must spend a minimum of 100 days in a school each year. It is the duty of their schools to provide education material for those children while they are travelling and to follow up their learning on their return.
It is recognised there is a need for schools to be supportive of children from the Travelling community. It is rare for children to progress from primary into secondary education and common for children to be afraid to tell other children at school that they are from the Travelling community. It was heard that young people’s thoughts about the Travelling community changes as they become older and are influenced by others people’s views.

The Forum discussed how supportive schools is the key to achievement in school for members of the travelling community.

6. 17/00348/MOUT

The Forum was told about a current planning application for 256 new homes at Crediton which includes 5 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. An indicative site layout masterplan was circulated for all to see, with the location of the pitches on the site indicated. It was explained that this is an ‘outline’ planning application on land identified by the Council in a local plan. Detailed planning proposals about the siting of new homes, pitches and other matters would follow later.

The Forum was encouraged to comment on the application if they wished to do so, in particular on need, how the pitches are incorporated into the site and whether the location of pitches within the site as shown on the masterplan was suitable. The Forum members were advised that further planning applications for this site and other sites could be brought to the Forum for discussion, on detailed design and other finer details, like site allocation and management. The Forum discussed the need to use Government guidance when designing sites, as good practice.

The Forum was told that the Council wants to set up a public site for Gypsies, but no suitable site has been found for this and funding is also needed. The Council is not permitted to buy sites on land that has been allocated for new pitches in the Local Plan. The Police representatives indicated there is a need to avoid high density development, which can cause social issues. The Police have an Architectural Liaison Officer.

The difficulty in finding/identifying new sites was discussed. Although the forum has an ambition to help advise on the development of new sites in the district, in particular a public site, which has been supported by planning policy for a number of years. The Forum members were encouraged to put forward any land they were aware of/owned that may be suitable for a new site. There is also potential to approach Devon County Council about land they own.

If and how racist and discriminatory comments on planning applications were reported was questioned, this will be looked in to and reported back to the Forum.

7. Waiting list for pitches
The Forum heard there is a need to make sure that pitches coming forward through the planning process are made available to those households in the Travelling community that have the greatest housing need. Forms were made available at the Forum meeting for households to register their housing need. This form is also available on the Council’s website: https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/gypsies-and-travellers/register-your-need-for-a-pitch/

It was pointed out that that the housing needs can differ between Travelling households (such as the size of pitch). The forum was encouraged to use the waiting list form and to share it with others with a housing need, to help better inform Mid Devon of the current need in the area.

8. **Next Meeting**

The Forum agreed to have the next meeting in the evening and that it should be alternated between daytime and evening to give different people an opportunity to attend.

Next meeting to be held in October outside of the travelling season, avoiding key events held in October. Date to be agreed and circulated.

The Forum agreed that the Moorhayes Centre was a good venue that was easy to find with convenient parking.

The Forum briefly discussed topics for the next meeting, these included education and wellbeing.

The forum closed at 2pm.
1. Welcome and Introductions

Unfortunately attendance was lower than the first forum meeting with less members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. The forum discussed how attendance could be boosted for the next meeting in April, ideas included:

- A flyer drop with details of the next meeting during the January count
- To have the meeting during the daytime
- Setting up a facebook page specifically for the forum to advertise the event and link with other know groups through social media to advertise the forum, including FFT.

Other suggestions are welcome; please get in touch if you have any other ideas: GT@middevon.gov.uk

For this forum meeting we had to change the venue from Moorhayes Community Centre to Phoenix House as Moorhayes had no availability in the evenings. If holding the forum at Phoenix House in the future is a problem, please let me know.

2. Agree minutes of previous meeting and Terms of Reference

The minutes and terms of reference were agreed. The terms of reference can be revised at any point and is a working document.

3. A Positive Image for Travellers, update on work with a National Advisory Panel. To include showing a short film ‘Voices from Home’ – Lynne Garnett

The forum heard about the work Lynne has been doing with the National Advisory Panel, including working with housing associations that provide Gypsy and Traveller pitches and promoting positive images of the community.

The forum also heard about and watched the short film ‘Voices From Home’ it was produced in conjunction with Rooftop Housing Group and includes a poem by Damian Le Bas. The film was made by Polly Garnett and is intended to be used as a tool for Local Authorities and others to send a positive message about the community. The images in the film were collected by housing officers. The film is available to watch here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc5kg7hUpI4

4. Hate Crime Reporting, an update on the GATE Herts Tool – Hannah Cameron (MDDC)

GATE Herts is a community led organisation based in Hertfordshire. GATE stands for Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment. They seek to educate Travelling communities and the wider population to live side by side in a diverse community. GATE Herts has set up an independent tool for reporting hate crime, as they understand that many community members are reluctant to report directly to the police for a number of reasons. Reporting can be done
by a third party and anonymously. The data doesn't identify individuals but helps to highlight to government and police the extent of incidents against community members, so that hopefully they can counter the problem. GATE Herts can also provide support to victims of racism.

The forum heard that 607 incidents had been reported, most of which were online hate crimes or through social media. Only 20% of the incidents reported were also reported to the police. The most common reason for not reporting to the police was that the incidents were too frequent to report.

You can report hate crime incidents using the GATE Herts tool here: http://reportracismgrt.com/

You can also report directly to the Police through the True Vision website: http://www.reportit.org.uk/your_police_force

The forum heard from the police that they are trying to make children more aware of their actions and hate crimes through working in schools.

The police are also trying to increase reporting and are open to suggestions of how to improve reporting.

The forum also discussed the definition of hate crime and protected characteristics and how these need to be updated to include all of the travelling community, as currently New Travellers are not afforded any protection.

5. Presentation on a recent report on Gypsy and Traveller Planning Policy and the Approaches of Local Authorities in Devon – Richard Merrifield (DCC, Public Health)

The forum heard from Richard Merrifield on a recently completed report (the full report was sent out with the agenda and can be found here: http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/library/prof/planning/). The report discusses the approaches of Devon Local Authorities and it is hoped that the report will act as a toolkit for Authorities to share best practice and discuss problems faced by the delivery of local plan sites.

The forum discussed the lack of transit sites in Devon. The forum also discussed a need to think about its next steps and what it wants to achieve, including the provision of permanent pitches and stopping places. The forum heard that in Somerset there is a principle called ‘meanwhile use’ where land identified for development that hasn’t started can be used for temporary stopping.

Further work on unauthorised encampments and negotiated stopping places across Devon is being done by Devon County Council. An update on this will be provided at the next forum meeting. Suggestions for existing hardstanding sites/areas of land in MDDC that have historically been used for stopping or
would be potentially suitable are welcomed. Please contact GT@middevon.gov.uk if you have any suggestions.

6. Education Update – Charlotte Small (Babcock, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service)

There have been further cut backs to the service. Academy schools have to pay for the service separately and this often isn’t a priority, concerns over the impact to children in academies.

The forum heard about work being done with the police and welfare officers to provide education and training.

The forum also heard that fairground families have had a poor summer in terms of trade and some are looking for ways to diversify to maintain/increase income. This may mean additional educational support is needed if children are travelling more.

7. MDDC Update – Tristan Peat (MDDC)

The forum had an update on the progress of Mid Devon Local Plan, it is likely that the examinations will take place in early 2019 and it is hoped the plan will be adopted in 2019.

The plan has policies for the delivery of the following:
- 35 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers – meet need on larger housing sites
- 11 plots for Travelling Showpeople
- Seek to provide a public site for Gypsy and Traveller pitches subject to funding

The forum heard that on the 5th of December there is a Royal Town Planning Institute conference on social inclusion, there are a number of talks relating to Gypsies and Travellers, including a talk by Tristan Peat, Hannah Cameron and Celia Hadow on the creation of a forum. Tristan will report back at the next forum meeting. The presentations will be made available on the Mid Devon website on the forum page.

The forum also heard that an unauthorised encampment policy is being written for Mid Devon Council by the property services department.

Cllr Richard Chesterton questioned whether there has been any consultation on the document. Since the forum it has been agreed that the document should be consulted on. There is now an opportunity for members of the forum to provide comments on the documents (attached to this email).

The covering letter to go with the consultation reads as follows:
The Council’s Property Services team is inviting comments on the ‘procedure’ from stakeholders, including persons, groups or organisations who we believe will have an interest in the ‘procedure’.

The Council’s procedure will clarify how illegal encampments will be managed in Mid Devon. It has been written in relation to current legal requirements and planning legislation. It also has regard to the welfare of people and groups making illegal encampments.

Comments are invited on the following documents that are attached to this email:

- Procedure for managing illegal encampments Nov 18
- Illegal Encampments – Five Stage Procedure Nov 18
- Illegal Encampments – flowchart Nov 2018

Comments should be sent by email to propertyservices@middevon.gov.uk, or by post to Mr A Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets, Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP.

Comments must be received by the Council by 12:00 midday Friday 7th December 2018.

I would also be grateful if you could forward this email to other relevant stakeholders or relevant person(s) within your organisation who may also be interested in this consultation.

8. Waiting list for pitches – Hannah Cameron (MDDC)

No applications have been received to date. Please encourage anyone you know with a need to fill out this form or contact Hannah on GT@middevon.gov.uk or 01884 234218.

The forum discussed updating the website with a direct contact number to make this process easier.

If anyone has any other suggestions to improve the waiting list, please let Hannah know.

9. Support Networks – Hannah Cameron (MDDC)

The following resources are available:

TravellerSpace, Cornwall - 07939 210 014 / 07534 983 046; tspace@travellerspace-cornwall.org
TravellerSpace can offer support to people wanting to set up groups and apply for funding. They have provided me with some documents on setting up a constituted group, I am happy to forward these on to anyone that would like them, please contact Hannah on GT@middevon.gov.uk.

Read Easy – offers 1 to 1 tuition to adults who struggle with reading. www.readeasy.org.uk 01386 700883 there are groups in Exeter, Torbay, Barnstaple, Axminster, Honiton, Wellington and Taunton.

10. *Open Forum and Discussion*

The forum discussed how best to publicise the next meeting and are open to suggestions.

The forum discussed linking our waiting list page with Friends Families and Travellers to encourage people in our area with a need to fill out the form.

The forum requested information on how many hits the Gypsy and Traveller page is having on the website. Hannah to report back at the next meeting.

11. *Agree topics, chairperson(s), day and timing for the next meeting in the spring*

Chairperson(s) to be selected once the forum has better attendance from the community. Hannah to continue to be chair for the time being.

The next meeting is to be during the day on **Tuesday the 2nd of April 2019** between 12pm and 2pm at Phoenix House.