

SUBMISSION FROM NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

North Lanarkshire Council at present does not have an operational Gypsy Traveller Site. Our site in Plains, near Airdrie has not been in service since 2006 due to no uptake of pitches and severe vandalism to the site. There are currently no Gypsy Traveller Private Sites within the authority and there are no current plans to develop either a temporary or transit site in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire Council has in place, a Gypsy Travellers Working Group whose role it is to look at the current and future needs of Gypsy Travellers in North Lanarkshire. This Working Group is drawn from both internal council service as well as external agencies. As part of North Lanarkshire Council Local Housing Strategy, a Housing Needs Assessment for Gypsy Travellers has been carried out. This involved the completion of a detailed Questionnaire by Gypsy Travellers, which looked at the uptake and accessing of services in North Lanarkshire as well as future aspirations of Gypsy Travellers in North Lanarkshire. The questionnaire included sections on housing and site development, education, health, police and planning. Gypsy Travellers both in houses and on unauthorised encampments were consulted on this matter.

In the years 2007 to 2011 there has been on average 14 unauthorised encampments each year. North Lanarkshire Council has in place guidelines and procedures for dealing with unauthorised encampments, details of these encampments are recorded and included in the National Count which is conducted each year. There is a section on the council website which gives helpful information on Gypsy Travellers and their way of life.

Through Equalities training, staff are made aware of issues concerning Gypsy Travellers, the profile of Gypsy Travellers is maintained through the council's Corporate Equality Group which can advise on procedures and any changes to legislation.

North Lanarkshire Council has a Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer based within Housing and Social Work Service. The remit of the post holder is to give guidance and support to Gypsy Travellers, advice on Council services and liaise with external agencies on issues relating to Gypsy Travellers.

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