

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum - 13 October 2016

City Hall, Committee Room 4

Minutes

Attending: Tom Copley – London Assembly, Sue Mutter – LB Redbridge GRT Education, Iman Achara – Partners in Integration Network, Cllr Christopher Kennedy – Hackney Council, Dominick Mennie – LB Croydon Spatial Planning, Kathleen Ryan – Southwark Travellers Action Group, Abi Angus – Traveller Movement, John Wilson – Peabody, Mike Doherty – Travellers’ Times, Shanthi Gunsekera – GLA Diversity and Social Policy, Rose Palmer – RB Kensington and Chelsea, Brenda Downes – Lewisham Irish Centre, Lisa Buttigieg – Tower Hamlets, Tracie Giles – Newham/LGTU, Ilinca Diaconescu – LGTU, Debby Kennett – LGTU, Clemmie James – LGTU, Rachel Smalley – GLA Planning, Daisy Symes – Kingston University, Manpreet Kenda – RB Kensington and Chelsea Planning, Cynthia Egweh – LB Hounslow, Billy Smith – Newham, Michael Ridge – LB Haringey, Michelle Stewart – Octavo Croydon

Apologies: Lindsey Chatralia – LB Hounslow, David Landau – Redbridge Equalities and Communities Council, Nathalie Wilson – Surrey County Council, Jenni Berlin – Traveller Movement, Joanna Gregson – Traveller Movement, John Lett – GLA Planning

Chair: Tracie Giles

1. **Welcome and introductions**
2. **Minutes from last meeting – DK**

The minutes from the March 2016 Forum meeting were agreed.

3. **London Gypsy and Traveller Manifesto**

- **Our concerns and demands**

ID introduced the London Gypsy and Traveller Manifesto and presented the key concerns and demands on accommodation, health, education and employment. The slides can be found [here](#).

Following the March Forum meeting, LGTU produced a short film encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to vote in the Mayoral and London Assembly election, which can be watched [here](#).

- **Shanthi Gunsekera, Senior Policy Officer**
GLA Diversity and Social Policy - New Mayor, new opportunities for London’s Gypsies and Travellers? – Engaging with the Mayor and his team

SG - brief introduction of the GLA Diversity and Social Policy team which works closely with Matthew Ryder QC, the new Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement. They are in the very early days as Matthew Ryder just started at the GLA the week before. His portfolio will focus on tackling inequalities, bringing Londoners together and increasing civic engagement. He is very interested to have a strong evidence base. There is also interest from the Mayor of London to have an ambitious Equality Strategy. The community engagement element of this new post is very important and there will be a review

across the GLA on how they engage with different communities. They are keen to hear from the Gypsy and Traveller community on how best to do this.

Q&A

- Need to stress that you can't include communities if you don't house them appropriately. The new planning definition of Travellers is problematic and it's unclear how councils are putting this into practice. The definition is in breach of Equalities legislation and it is likely there will be a legal challenge. Being questioned on your culture so much has an impact on people's mental health and identity.
- Need to get across importance of consistent approach across the whole of London, rather than each borough doing things differently
- SG: there are aspects of Matthew Ryder's work where he can have a direct intervention and others where he will have to work with other, for example Jules Pipe the Deputy Mayor for Planning
- Children's education and wellbeing are affected by being in temporary accommodation and going through evictions
- We need a timeframe for action
- SG: While it is very early to commit to anything, the Forum is welcome to write to Sadiq Khan and Matthew Ryder
- What is the process for reviewing the Equality Strategy and can the Forum be involved from the formative stages rather than being consulted later on? SG to take back this question to her team.

4. We are Londoners too – where do Gypsies and Travellers fit in the Mayor's Homes for Londoners initiative?

- **Community reflections from the ground –site provision and regeneration across the boroughs**
- **Newham:** Parkway Crescent site – there are ongoing concerns about the management of the site and standard of repairs ; the Mayor of Newham has made discriminatory comments regarding Travellers; the accommodation needs assessment figure is now 0 due to the new planning definition. The whole area is going through regeneration and property prices are rising; the site is very low density and is becoming more attractive to non-Travellers who see it as affordable accommodation and are looking to rent pitches from the community. It was felt the long term security of The site is possibly in more danger than before the Olympics
- **Hackney:** New site allocated in LLDC Local Plan and owned by TfL but as far as we are aware no agreement on how to move forward with the delivery of the site. Need for joined up thinking between the different arms of the GLA
- **Redbridge:** The council owned site is now managed again by a community member and some parts of it have been refurbished. There is a historical link of current residents to the area and

the council is committed to the site. There has been a rise in unauthorised encampments. Will take the negotiated stopping idea to the council again.

- **Haringey:** ORS are currently doing an accommodation needs assessment. Drop in sessions for housed Travellers 31st October-1st November; organisations invited to outreach session. There have been a few unauthorised encampments over the summer, one moved to Hackney. ORS interviewed them.
 - **Greenwich/Tower Hamlets:** Unauthorised encampments on Peabody owned land, but these were not recorded by ORS. GLA spending 2m on unauthorised encampments this year. Private landlords don't have a responsibility to record unauthorised encampments.
 - **TG:** enormous amount of unauthorised encampments especially on the outskirts of London; feels like 30 years ago
 - **Lewisham:** usually 1-2 unauthorised encampments/year, but last year there were 20 and the groups were large. The police don't want to serve Section 61 because it's expensive. People are homeless, in temporary and emergency accommodation. The needs assessment is for 6 new pitches. There is now a consultation on 2 pieces of land to provide up to 5 pitches.
 - **DK:** the Mayor needs to have a strategic role regarding unauthorised encampments. LGTU & Leeds GATE wrote jointly to Sadiq Khan . Negotiated stopping was also mentioned in the Housing Committee recommendations to the Mayor. Other important issues are the delivery of new site allocations and the protection of existing sites.
 - **Southwark:** Old Kent Road Opportunity Area includes 3 Traveller sites, and of them will be badly affected. The council won't give people any clarity on what is going to happen. Ilderton Road site is on an embankment which is falling apart and people will have to be moved in the next few months, but the council can't find any land. People don't want to be in temporary accommodation and they don't know if they will have the right to return to the site.
- **Taking things forward - report from LGTU Planning seminar: policy recommendations and next steps**
Presentation can be found [here](#).
 - **Tom Copley, London Assembly Member and deputy chair of the Housing Committee – How can the Assembly support Gypsies and Travellers on accommodation issues?**

TC agreed to take forward a number of actions:

- send Housing Committee letter from investigation to new Mayor and ask for a response
- write to Mayor of Newham regarding the accommodation needs assessment
- raise issue of other accommodation needs assessments with a 0 need (Old Oak and Park Royal, Greenwich)
- raise negotiated stopping model with James Murray
- raise issue regarding LLDC and TfL. Welcomed submissions to Housing Committee investigation on TfL land and affordable housing.
- write to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment/ Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- seek commitment from Mayor to protect existing sites, in line with commitments for other tenants in regeneration areas
- arrange to book the London Living Room for a Gypsy and Traveller event

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum

9 February 2017

London City Hall, Committee Room 5

MINUTES

Attending: Billy Smith-Newham; Brenda Downes -Lewisham Irish; Brian Hanley- Mind Yourself; Cllr Christopher Kennedy - LB Hackney; Clemmie James- LGTU; Cynthia Egweh-Hounslow; Debby Kennett - LGTU; Emily Humphreys - GLA Health; Farah Elahi - Runnymede Trust; Harriet Balance- Southwark Travellers Action Group; Ilinca Diaconescu – LGTU; Jamie Morris - City and Hackney CCG; Jenni Berlin - Traveller Movement; John Wilson – Peabody; Kye Lockwood - Social Action for Health; Laura Tyrell - Thrive London; Marian Mahoney – Tower Hamlets; Martin Kovats -LB Southwark; Matt Creamer- GLA; Nicola Lang - LB Sutton Public Health; Peter Fletcher – GLA; Rachel Smalley -GLA planning; Rose Palmer-RBKC; Samir Jeraj- Race Equality Foundation; Sue Mutter; Tracie Giles – LGTU; Will Marks –UCL; Paul Mowat – RBKC; Richard Reddie - GLA Community relations; Marta Rossi – UCL; Heidi Bancroft – GLA; Lisa Smith- LGTU; Kathleen McInerney – Greenwich

Chair: Tracie Giles

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Minutes from last meeting – DK

The minutes from the October 2016 meeting were agreed.

3. Pressing opportunity to make a difference on the Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy

ID introduced the main topic for discussion, the Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy and summarised how health inequalities are measured, what they mean for the Gypsy and Traveller community and what the root causes are. The slides can be found here.

Questions and comments

- Evidence has been around for decades, now it’s the time for positive action
- Debate on whether mainstream services are more appropriate than targeted services; aspiration to have services accessible to all, but also can’t approach all communities in the same way. For example the mainstream approach to push breastfeeding does not work in the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Critical role for community and voluntary sector to provide services and bridge gap. Good examples from Black mental health organisations. There is a vision

to support community groups and connect them to NHS. But also pressures on community and voluntary sector to deliver and very little infrastructure for Gypsies and Travellers

- Impact of NHS cuts
- Services and interventions from local authorities have stopped in recent years e.g. action on rogue landlords, environmental health services cut
- People who already live in the worst conditions will continue to suffer
- Experiences in the community of lack of support for people with disabilities, mental health, occupational therapy; prejudice from health care professionals. Used to have health visitors but they are now gone. Many younger people in the community rely on mothers and grandmothers for information and support.
- NHS doesn't monitor Gypsies and Travellers
- Important to link up with other services, but still have big gaps between the chronic problems people suffer day to day and high level discussions; huge gap in inclusion and provision despite bad statistics; need leadership from Mayor of London
- Maybe Mayor can link up with Public Health Directors and MOPAC

4. Health Inequalities Strategy – Emily Humphreys, Director of Health Team GLA

- Consultation on the Health Inequalities Strategy expected in June, but no certainty at the moment
- Very useful to hear what people have to say
- Mayor's responsibility just to produce strategy, but no powers of NHS, Public Health, social care
- He can influence the system; send signals about priorities; invite boroughs and NHS to discuss how to coordinate across London on a number of critical issues
- However he has direct power over other strategies e.g. Housing, Environment, London Plan. Can set rules not just about health but other determinants: air quality, housing etc
- Very limited resources at the moment, need to focus on a few things that will make the biggest difference to meet his manifesto commitments (e.g HIV, child obesity)
- Set of broad priorities: mental health, supporting children to have better start in life

5. Thrive London – Laura Tyrrell

- Aim to improve mental health and wellbeing of all Londoners
- Bring public services together to discuss current challenges
- Address stigma and discrimination
- Key principles: prevention, pragmatism, participation

6. Small group discussions

Housing and health

Housing and accommodation impacts the mental health and wellbeing of Gypsies and Travellers specifically and disproportionately in comparison to wider society. There is a suggestion to train and educate local council workers in the cultural and health-specific needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and other minority groups. Training and local consultation are key in gaining community trust and allowing communities to come forward.

JSNAs - need to be encouraged by the Mayor for each borough given their focus on specific health needs at a local level. Currently lack these in most boroughs and many current definitions mean Gypsies and Travellers are hidden within local planning and policy considerations. Can be related to the training and education of health professionals and social workers - encourage shared practice with officers and community groups and across boroughs and communities.

Accommodation - precarious and insecure pitches + intensifying development going up around Gypsies and Travellers sites, leading to mental health concerns. With the aversion to bricks and mortar, councils/GLA must realise the need to provide healthcare and accommodation in culturally specific ways. Other accommodation issues include overcrowding, insecure tenure, mental health - clear interlinkages between health and housing for Gypsies and Travellers.

Work and health

It was suggested that the Mayor should encourage traditional entrepreneurial activities. As for mainstream work sector those who do try to get a mainstream job usually experience discrimination and are forced to hide their identity, with negative impacts on their mental health.

Negative prejudice begins in schools, discouraging children's attendance and acquisition of skills. The situation is particularly complex for women, who tend to face pressures of taking care of the family and the outer discrimination experienced when trying to undertake a mainstream job. In general, the lack of employment opportunities deeply impact on the mental health and wellbeing of G&Ts, that formerly used to conduct a very active life made of travel and informal work.

A connection of Economic and Health Strategies by the Mayor was advocated, and some possible actions to contrast the situation were proposed: -training skills for young G&T (with more flexibility regarding the age of participants) -microcredit projects -financial advisors -more rights to have a land for G&Ts (to use it for non-mainstream activities) -anonymisation of job applications and addresses (that nowadays are reason of discrimination)

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum

17 October 2017

City Hall, Committee Room 2

Attending: Rose Palmer – RB Kensington and Chelsea; Cllr Christopher Kennedy – LB Hackney; Jennifer Maughan – Hackney; Margaret Maughan – Hackney; Marian Mahoney – Tower Hamlets; Ellie Cooke – Kingston council; Kate Griffiths – Thrive London; Manon Dolet – LGT volunteer; Harriet Balance – Southwark Travellers Action Group; Rachel Smalley – GLA; Debra Levison – GLA; Azzees Minott – London Assembly research support; Pat O'Donnell – Kensington and Chelsea; Debby Kennett – LGT; Ilinca Diaconescu – LGT; Tracie Giles – LGT; Clemmie James – LGT; Yva Alexandrova – LGT

Chair: Tracie Giles

1. **Introductions**

2. Clemmie introduced the **terms of reference for the Forum**
3. **Minutes from last meeting** – minutes presented by Debby Kennett and approved

4. **London Gypsies and Travellers' accommodation needs – what will the Mayor do in the Housing Strategy and the London Plan?**

- Ilinca Diaconescu introduced the context of the meeting, the campaign led by Gypsies and Travellers in relation to the previous London Plan and showed a short film of the Mayor's Question Time from August 2017 in which Sadiq Khan explains the proposals to address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- **Contribution from Debra Levison – Housing team**

Debra gave a presentation on the draft London Housing Strategy policy on Gypsy and Traveller communities: councils will be expected to plan for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers; Mayor's Affordable Homes Fund will be used for new and existing sites; so far in the first round of bidding there haven't been any applications for caravan sites. The GLA will seek to be more active in brokering relationships with councils. The strategy is currently under consultation until 7th December and everyone is encouraged to take part.
- **Contribution from Rachel Smalley – London Plan team**

Rachel explained what the London Plan is and introduced the policy direction in what regards Gypsy and Traveller needs. There will be a proposed new definition of Travellers, which is more inclusive acknowledges that people have stopped travelling due to lack of sites, stopping places and opportunities and recognises the needs of those in housing. The consultation will start on 29th November and run for three months.

4. Community contributions/Discussion

- the effects of the government's planning definition and barriers to site provision

Tracie Giles described the impacts the government's definition of Travellers has had on the community: increase in unauthorised encampments with repercussions for families and children; increasing lack of maintenance and management of council sites and increasing threats from regeneration projects; insecurity for Gypsies and Travellers living on their own private sites as more difficult to get planning permission.

Other comments:

- councils don't know the needs of Gypsies and Travellers; essential to ensure that needs of children and grandchildren are recognised as the London Plan is so long term
- need to look at sites that are overcrowded, Gypsies and Travellers living in housing and their health problems; there need to be regular reviews to record living conditions and standards
- the Kensington and Chelsea needs assessment was well conducted even if it used the government definition it found a need of 10 pitches; the council wants to apply for funding but there are issues related to land ownership, as the council can only get temporary leases from TfL for their caravan site; the process of applying for funding was very difficult and resource intensive under the previous Mayor and should be made more accessible for councils.
- If sites are not permanent such as the example above, there is reluctance to invest any money in repairs and maintenance; land is also increasingly expensive; Travellers are asked to move outside of London but then it's down to outside London councils to plan for their needs which is very unlikely
- Camden council had applied for funding under the previous Mayor but had to give the allocation back because they couldn't find any land. A member of the local Traveller community spent a lot of effort and time looking to identify land but each option was rejected by the council
- Very concerned about the quality of new pitches; the Crossrail and Olympic relocation sites in Tower Hamlets and Newham were built very quickly and already there are major issues with the plumbing, damp, the poor quality of the build. LGT has done two independent audits of the site in Newham which led the council to apply for funding from the Mayor's pitch fund to repair and refurbish the site in 2015 but the work hasn't been up to standard.
- What power does the Mayor have over TfL land? How can his powers help unblock some of the barriers? Are there other opportunities for sites on TfL land? For example in Hackney there is land designated for a Traveller site but while this is not being pushed forward, people are facing a huge housing crisis and many are moved out of the borough
- Which funding stream is open for continuous bidding? Standard and negotiated. Does it need to be through a registered provider?

5. What will really make a difference? – Small group discussion

Think about two questions for the GLA to report back to the Forum to keep track of the progress made in allocating funding for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Suggestions for monitoring the Affordable Homes Fund

- **What progress has been made on named sites where land is identified for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation?**
- **How many funding applications have been received for refurbishment or new sites?**
- **How many councils has the GLA been in discussion with? Which ones?**
- **Which housing associations and developers has the GLA been in contact with?**
- **For successful bids, please provide an indicative timeline of the delivery, expected capacity (number of pitches) and delivery partners**
- **For unsuccessful bids please provide a justification/assessment of the application. Is there a mitigation strategy? Can the application be improved?**
- **How can LGT and other community organisations support upcoming funding applications?**

Suggestions for London Plan monitoring

- **Which boroughs have not done a needs assessment and why?**
- **Has an audit been carried out of the existing sites in each borough? Is the quality up to standard? Is the site suitable and sustainable?**
- **How many local plans have been checked? How many conform to the London Plan?**

General clarification questions

- **What powers/influence does the Mayor have over Transport for London land?**
- **Why are councils not applying for funding?**
- **How will councils be encouraged to build more sites?**
- **Who ensures boroughs know about funding?**
- **What are the consequences to councils if they don't follow through?**
- **How can the TfL Small Sites scheme include provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites?**
- **How will councils be supported with provision of transit and permanent sites?**

6. Mapping the Pathway to Equality

Ilinca gave a brief presentation of the mapping project which runs in collaboration with Mapping for Change. There are three parts: collating and visualising data on population, housing and employment through existing data sources (e.g. Census, London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, local needs assessments etc); a community-led online map providing information on services, facilities and assets but also experiences of using these which is now under development; an online community-led map of the history and heritage of Gypsies and Travellers in London which will start next spring subject to funding.

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum Minutes

24th April 2018

City Hall, Committee Room 3

Attending:

Brenda Downes -Lewisham Irish Centre; Debby Kennett -LGT; Grantley Bispham - LB Tower Hamlets; Ilinca Diaconescu -LGT; John Wilson – Peabody; Mena Mongan- LGT; Rachel Smalley – GLA; Rose Palmer- RB Kensington and Chelsea; Tracie Giles- LGT; Sophie Bimson -Crown Prosecution Service; Ellen Storrar – GLA; Andrew Bailes - Boaters community; Charlotte Morphet - Waltham Forest; Ian Redding – Southwark Travellers Action Group; Yvonne Evans - Sutton Housing; Betsy Mobey -LGT; Louisa Nightingale -LGT; Tyler Hatwell – LGT; James Salkeld – RB Greenwich; Angela Mahoney – Tower Hamlets; Marian Mahoney – Tower Hamlets; Kathleen McInerney – Greenwich; Winnie Maughan – Hackney; Mary Maughan – Hackney; Varinder Hayre – Crown Prosecution Service; Antonia Marjanov – LB Newham; Tope Moses – GLA

Chair: Tracie Giles

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes from London Gypsy and Traveller Forum meeting on 9th February agreed
3. Getting site audits right
 - Tracie and Ilinca gave a presentation of the draft London Plan policy requiring Boroughs to do audits of existing sites, highlighting issues that should be taken into consideration when assessing overcrowding, the need for repairs and refurbishment and capacity for additional pitches. The slides can be found on the LGT website at <http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/london-travellers-forum/>
 - Contributions from Gypsy and Traveller community members
 - Site in Tower Hamlets: issues with boilers, drains, snagging, quality of build; need a refurbishment plan; the site manager is on site up to 5 days/week to inspect works and repairs
 - One of the sites in Hackney: issues with access for vehicles and ambulance; pitch and chalet should be adapted for disabled access but there is no space; land at the back of the site could be used to expand the site
 - Site in Newham: issues with access, safety, drainage
 - There are issues for private sites as well, for example in West Sussex: people get fined for doubling up; no phone line, problems with electricity; pollution is a huge problem as many sites are located next to sewage or motorways
 - There should be transit sites in most areas with rules and regulations; on Clay's Lane there were transit pitches with water, electricity and flexibility for other families to come in which worked well; providing transit sites or temporary stopping is a way of protecting the nomadic way of life of Gypsies and Travellers

- Overcrowding example: son pulled caravan behind the site on a piece of greenery which is not being used; the council gave a court order for him to move out, but they wouldn't house him because he has a caravan so isn't a homelessness priority; he has been going around hostel accommodation for months
- Need to look at the bigger picture: threats hanging over Traveller sites, housing crisis, no space; sites becoming very desirable; in Newham there is no management of the site, it's near the Olympic Park and very expensive residential development is going up
- Other comments
 - From the perspective of site managers drainage is a very big problem, especially for smaller sites that have been expanded over the years, but the infrastructure hasn't been adapted
 - Contractors need to abide by equality laws. Some charge twice as much for doing work on Traveller sites. Councils should challenge contractors
 - There should be more imaginative ways for Gypsies and Travellers to live in their communities – for example chalets or bungalows for older people. There needs to be consideration for the different needs people have on sites and in housing throughout their lives.
- Discussion - gathering ideas for good practice

How should audits be done?

- In partnership with the council and site residents. It would be useful to map out across London who is managing sites, who are the liaison officers and equality officers in local authorities. Planning officers should also be involved.
- There should be a residents' group/management committee set up by Gypsies and Travellers on their sites
- The consultation should include the wider Traveller community – all family members, not just those living on sites; need to bring in children and young peoples' voices and concerns
- Audits should understand the uniqueness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture
- An independent assessment to look at matters more objectively
- Different perspectives of the same issues: collate views but avoid conflict; ensure all views are represented; need for skilled researchers to capture the views of everyone
- Need to foster a trusting relationship between the residents and the council

How often should site audits be done?

- there could be different categories of audit e.g. every 6-12 months to assess repair and refurbishment needs; every 3-4 years to assess the need for new pitches (overcrowding); every 5 years in line with the Local Plan process to assess the capacity for additional pitches

What else should site audits include?

- A risk assessment including fire safety, electricity, gas
- Health and wellbeing
- Facilities and services in the wider neighbourhood

How to address issues arising from the audit

- management presence from Council and housing officers – e.g. every 6-8 weeks spend half a day and get to know the residents
 - permission for additional trailers to address health and safety issues
 - joint working between different departments in the council
 - use skills from residents (e.g. building)
 - site rents – more transparency on how they are invested back into the site
4. Update on the Mayor's Affordable Homes Fund
- The Affordable Homes Fund consists of over £3bn agreed 2 years ago to build homes until 2021. Half has been allocated so far to build 50,000 new homes
 - There have not been any applications for Traveller sites
 - The government has recently given an additional £1.7bn

Comments

- This has been an ongoing issue for many years. What communications are there between the GLA and councils to encourage them to apply?
 - Kensington and Chelsea had applied but local difficulties prevented them from using the funding. It costs a lot to prepare for the application. What rules are there in place now?
 - The GLA have tried to simplify the process for applying for the funding. Housing and Land directorate officers liaise constantly with councils and housing associations
 - What are the discussions with housing associations? They won't apply to build Traveller sites unless councils say they have a need. Housing associations can cross borough boundaries
5. Government consultation on reviewing powers for dealing with unauthorised encampments
- Ilinca gave a brief overview of the consultation and introduced a briefing paper from Community Law Practice which explained the grounds for a legal challenge. The materials can be found on the LGT website at <http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/london-travellers-forum/>
6. Local elections
- Mena explained about the importance of Local Elections and encouraged community members to vote on 3rd May

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum Minutes

17th July 2011

City Hall, Committee Room 2

Attending:

Debby Kennett -LGT; Geraldine Lindsay-LGT; Ilinca Diaconescu – LGT; Lindsey Chatralia -Hounslow Traveller Education; Mena Mongan – LGT; Sherrie Smith- Herts GATE; Tracie Giles -LGT; Anna Hoare -LGT; Claire Rice - GATE Herts; Ellen Storrar-GLA Housing; Betsy Mobey -LGT; Jack Weaver -National Housing Federation; Nancy Prentice- Prison Radio Association; Michaela Des Forges-Homeless Link; Jaqueline Maughan- Hackney Traveller community; Lee Craddock- ORS; Barbara Perry – Kingston Council; Amanda Smith – GATE Herts; Siobhan Delaney – Kingston Council; Charlotte Maughan – Hackney Traveller community; Brenda Downes – Lewisham Irish Community Centre; Sherece Walker – Hackney Council; Angie Emmerson – Hackney Council

1. **Welcome and introductions**
2. **Minutes from last meeting** were agreed
3. **Gypsies and Travellers in temporary accommodation** - presentation from LGT Accommodation Advice Team

Geraldine gave a presentation on the challenges facing Gypsies and Travellers in temporary accommodation and the impacts of insecurity, isolation, unsuitability, prejudice on their health and wellbeing, culture, identity, family and community relationships. The slides can be downloaded at <http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/london-travellers-forum/>

4. **Community members' experiences and concerns**

Community members talked about their experiences of going through the local authority homelessness route, ending up in temporary and emergency accommodation for a long time. Many are young people who grew up on sites but become homeless because of the lack of site provision, and not being allowed to stay on their parents' pitches while bidding for a council property. Those who presented their experiences had been placed in hostels facing overcrowding, mould, mice, lack of safety and security, lack of accessibility – unsuitable conditions during pregnancy and for living with small children or mental health issues. Some of the common issues they faced were isolation from family and support networks, being moved out of their borough and discrimination from council officers.

5. **Discussion**

- Prejudice and discrimination need to be reported. Council officers offered to raise the concerns with the local authority. Councils have an equality duty and need to be held to account
- Councils should consider the impacts for Gypsies and Travellers of being placed in a type of accommodation they are not used to and isolated from their families; they should seek to place Travellers in housing near the community
- Hillingdon council has been sued by Travellers because of the disadvantage and discrimination their allocations policy caused in applying for permanent accommodation.

- A few years ago, it was possible to be 'homeless at home', for example a young couple could remain on the site with their parents while waiting for a council property; this could be a solution and address the impacts on the family.
- In Kingston there is a homelessness prevention scheme; people get a special homelessness band if they have an agreement with someone e.g. parents to keep them in their accommodation. They never go into temporary accommodation, however there is a risk if relationships break down.
- In terms of temporary accommodation, the Mayor is working with boroughs to get together and buy accommodation for people who need it; they are also looking at better use of vacant sites for temporary housing for 5-10 years.
- There have been so many Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments done but nothing has changed. Many Gypsies and Travellers are in a worse situation than 20 years ago, especially as young families are growing up and there's nowhere to go
- In Lewisham there isn't a Traveller site and almost everyone from the Traveller community is in temporary accommodation. Previous generations had secure council housing. There is now an opportunity to get a site built, but all Travellers are displaced and it's very difficult to get together to campaign for this
- Data should be collected when Gypsies and Travellers go into temporary accommodation about what needs they actually have and used as evidence for more site provision
- The Mayor should issue a code of conduct for local authorities regarding how they treat Gypsies and Travellers
- The London Assembly Housing Committee has published a report 'Hidden Homelessness' with recommendations to the Mayor, including for better data collection on equality groups. The Mayor's response to this report will be shared

6. Addressing hate crime through Report Racism Gypsy Roma Traveller - presentation from Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment Hertfordshire

Claire gave a presentation of the Report Racism Gypsy Roma Traveller project – a website where community members can report hate crime incidents. The reporting has increased over the year since the website was launched, however there are still many factors that prevent people from reporting. All complaints made through the website are pursued and shared with the relevant authorities. Some of the most common incidents are social media abuse, media incitement in local papers, discrimination in using services and private businesses, bullying at school and work.

The website is <http://reportracismgrt.com/> There is a dedicated phone line for those who prefer to ring 0800 81 01 800

7. Update on the London Plan

All comments from the consultation were expected to be published in the summer, with the inspectors' initial questions issued in the autumn. Examination hearings would take place starting from January 2019