

Report on	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Report –“Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Traveller’s Accommodation in Northern Ireland”
Date of Meeting	8 th May 2018
Reporting Officer	Mark Kelso

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If ‘Yes’, confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members on NI Human Rights Commission report and its recommendations relevant to Council.
1.2	To request a Member nominee for the NI Local Government Traveller Partnership.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Report “ Out of sight, Out of Mind: Traveller’s Accommodation in Northern Ireland ”, published in March 2018 by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), followed a yearlong investigation in Northern Ireland commencing in Sept 2016.
2.2	<p>The investigation followed a scoping exercise in June 2016 that identified issues, which required further examination including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shortage of adequate stopping sites for Roma/Gypsies and Irish Travellers • A lack of social housing forcing households to move into the private rental sector • A requirement for the NI Housing Executive to obtain Site Licences from Local Councils for Traveller sites • A disparity between official figures on the Traveller population in NI • The existence of the Unauthorised Encampments (NI) Order 2005 • The general inadequacy of travellers accommodation, and • The lack of authoritative human rights analysis of Travellers accommodation in NI
2.3	The investigation considered Travellers accommodation across NI and also adopted a case study approach in four local Council areas, including Dungannon and Coalisland in the Mid Ulster Council area. The other three areas included as Case studies were Belfast, Craigavon and Armagh, Derry/Londonderry and Strabane.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Executive summary of the report is attached at Appendix 1. The full report is available at www.nihrc.org . The NIHRC has written to Council enclosing a full copy of the report and a 12-month implementation plan. A copy of the correspondence received is attached at Appendix 2.
3.2	The correspondence sets out a 12-month implementation plan agreed by The Commission. The plan includes an engagement meeting and a number of roundtables to facilitate effective

	ongoing communication and engagement from stakeholders. An initial written response is requested by 15 th May 2018.
3.3	The Commission has committed to producing a 6 month progress update within their Annual Statement 2018 for 5 identified urgent actions and a standalone 12 month progress report for the additional recommendations.
3.4	<p>In the report, the NIHRC makes a number of recommendations to Councils and other organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Executive Office; • Department for Communities; • Department for Infrastructure; • NI Housing Executive; • Housing associations
3.5	The recommendations relevant to Council, (none of which are within the 5 urgent actions identified) have been extracted from the report and are provided at Appendix 3. They are to be actioned within 12 months of the publication of the report i.e. by March 2019.
3.6	<p>Council Focused Recommendations are listed below under their relevant subject heading from the report.</p> <p><u>All Public authorities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility <p>All public authorities should consider their obligations towards Travellers in the context of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the NI Act 1998, Section 75. All public authorities should ensure that all relevant staff members are educated on the existence, relevance and effective implementation of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the NI Act 1998, Section 75, as the legislation relates to Travellers and their accommodation.</p> 2. Participation <p>The Executive Office and all relevant public authorities should ensure Traveller support groups are adequately resourced for the work they carry out.</p> 3. Effective Remedy <p>All public authorities should take proactive reasonable steps to support Travellers through the complaints process. This includes ensuring Travellers are aware of the existence of such mechanisms, what their purposes are, how to make a complaint, and the different stages of the process.</p> <p><u>Local Councils:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of Services, Facilities and Infrastructure <p>The NI Housing Executive, in conjunction with all relevant providers, should take steps to ensure that all required services are adequately available in practice within all Travellers' accommodation and that the provision of these services is sufficiently</p>

3.7	<p>regulated. In particular, the NI Housing Executive should work with: the local Councils to ensure Travellers have regular refuse collections; with the electricity supplier to ensure Travellers have prompt and consistent access to electricity; and with Royal Mail to ensure Travellers have adequate access to adequate postal services.</p> <p>2. Location/Planning</p> <p>Local Councils should take reasonable steps to prevent undue delays in the planning application process relating to Travellers' accommodation. They should also ensure that all planning decision-making processes are fair, impartial and transparent.</p> <p>3. Site Licences</p> <p>Local Councils should take proactive reasonable steps to ensure Travellers' sites are licenced when required. Local Councils should regularly monitor the licencing of Travellers' sites and be aware when sites require a licence, whether they are licenced and when the licence will expire. Local Councils should ensure all licences meet the minimum standard of provision and safety as required by the model licence, developed by the Department for Infrastructure.</p> <p>4. Participation</p> <p>All local Councils should be active members of the NI Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues and should give consideration to developing or strengthening Traveller Forums to consider issues relating to Travellers, including accommodation.</p> <p>Referring to recommendation 4 above for Local Councils, Members are requested to provide a nominee for the NI Local Government Partnership on traveller issues.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: None</p> <p>Human: None</p> <p>Risk Management: None</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: As identified</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>Members to note content and provide a nominee for the NI Local Government Traveller Partnership and officer participation at the roundtable events .</p>

6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Report –“Out of sight, Out of Mind: Traveller’s Accommodation in Northern Ireland” (Executive Summary).
6.2	Correspondence from NIHRC to Mid Ulster District Council received 20 March 2018.
6.3	Extract of Council focused recommendations from NIHRC report.