SUBMISSION FROM THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

1 Details about your sites, including size, facilities, age, location, management arrangements, rent costs and provisions made for residents’ temporary absences (e.g. to travel for the summer)

1.1 There are four Council-owned Gypsy / Traveller sites in Highland. A summary of the profile of the sites is given in the table below. Site occupancy and demand figures are a snapshot at 2 July 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Age of site</th>
<th>No of Pitches</th>
<th>Current occupancy</th>
<th>Current “waiting list”</th>
<th>Weekly Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longman Park, Inverness</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£85.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spean Park, Lochaber</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>£60.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentallen Park, Lochaber</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>£60.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newtonmore</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>£62.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Each site has a non-resident site manager. All of the sites contain a hard standing and separate amenity block for each stance. Each amenity block has facilities for cooking and washing, with a separate metered supply of electricity.

1.3 Pitches are allocated by means of an application and assessment process. Occupants have a residential contract which as far as possible reflects the tenancy rights and responsibilities contained in the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. Within the tenancy agreement there is provision for residents to be absent from the site for up to 13 weeks a year, but retain their pitch.

2 Details of any proposed sites

2.1 The Council is currently investigating the options for developing Temporary Stopping Places for Gypsy-Travellers. Potential sites have been identified within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, which is currently at the consultative stage.

3 How you determine where and what size sites should be

3.1 Historically site provision was based on the Scottish Office Advisory Committee on Gypsy / Travellers pitch targets. National pitch targets no longer apply and Councils are responsible for assessing the need for Gypsy / Traveller site provision.

3.2 Any future provision will be based on the Council’s needs assessment work, which is described under question 6 (below).
4 If you have no sites, what the reasons are

4.1 As noted above, the Council does have site provision.

5 Details of any existing/planned temporary or halting sites in your authority area

5.1 Please see answer to question 2, (above)

6 How often and by what process you review the need for more pitches/sites

6.1 The Highland Council carried out a Gypsy / Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment in 2010, using data from current site occupancy, turnover, and demand, as well as the pattern of unauthorised encampments. The needs assessment can be viewed at:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/5A4D4C86-60B4-4466-9D5F-DB0635B87B3D/0/GTAccommodationNeedsAssessmentMarch2010.pdf

7 How you identify, record and address any complaints about sites, e.g. size or facilities

7.1 This would generally be through informal feedback from site residents, and residents’ views have been taken into account in identifying priorities for investment and site improvements.

7.2 The Council undertook a more formal independent survey of residents’ views this year. We expect to receive a final report from the consultants shortly, and will use this to inform future plans.

7.2 It may also be useful to note that services relating to Gypsy / Traveller sites will in future be regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator and are included in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

8 In building and maintaining sites, how you consider the impact of the site location on, for instance, access to health and education services and/or public transport links

8.1 Existing sites do not necessarily have easy access to this type of service. Close partnership working with health and education services is often required to ensure access to services, and in some cases this is best achieved through specialist provision on-site.

9 How you monitor private sites and how disputes between their owners and tenants are managed

9.1 We have no formal arrangements for private site provision. There are no private sites specifically for Gypsy / Travellers in Highland.
10  How unauthorised sites are managed and by what criteria they are so classified

10.1 The Council has a policy on the management of unauthorised encampments. This can be viewed at:


11  What policies and staff awareness raising/training on Gypsy/Travellers you have

11.1 We have site management policies as well as the policy on unauthorised encampment referred to above.

11.2 The Council recognises Gypsy/Travellers as a separate ethnic group in relation to our general equalities policies.

11.3 We undertook Elected Member briefing sessions on Gypsy/Traveller issues in 2010. Issues affecting Gypsy/Travellers are covered as part of the Council’s rolling programme of Equality and Diversity Training for staff.

12  Information about your Gypsy/Traveller liaison officers, including whether the post has a shared remit and whether site managers undertake the role

12.1 Staff involved in the management of the Council’s Gypsy/Traveller sites also undertake wider liaison in relation to unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller encampments. We also have named contact officers in other Council Services to ensure effective internal communication.

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The Highland Council
6 July 2012