



Subject:	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) Report “Out of Sight, Out of Mind on Traveller Accommodation in Northern Ireland”: Recommendations for Local Authorities
Date:	8 May 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide Members with an overview of the main findings and specific recommendations for local authorities proposed by the NIHRC in the ‘Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Travellers’ Accommodation in Northern Ireland’ Report, March 2018.Outline a process through which Council can meet the proposed recommendations The NIHRC initiated an investigation on Traveller’s accommodation following a scoping

1.2	exercise concluded in June 2016. The Out of Sight, Out of Mind report was launched in March 2018 at City Hall. The report sets out a series of recommendations for Public Bodies and Local Authorities. There are four specific recommendations for Local Authorities to implement within the next twelve months.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Committee are asked : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To note the key recommendation and the implications for Council. (ii) To consider and agree the proposed steps to meet the recommendations put forward by the NIHRC.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Key finding of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Commission found there were inadequacies in some laws, public authorities' policies and public authorities' practises, in the context of Traveller accommodation in NI. It confirmed that such inadequacies can dissuade and suppress a Traveller's culture, including the ability to exercise a nomadic lifestyle. (ii) The Commission found thirteen systemic Issues in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Domestic Legal Framework. ▪ Domestic Practise. ▪ Racial Discrimination. ▪ Race legislation. ▪ Resource availability ▪ Resource and Policy Accountability. ▪ Provision of Traveller-specific accommodation. ▪ Monitoring needs for Travellers accommodation ▪ Inadequacy of Traveller sites ▪ Participation ▪ Information on Travellers' accommodation ▪ Data collection ▪ Complaints mechanisms <p>Recommendations for Local Authorities</p>

<p>3.2</p>	<p>The report made four specific recommendations that should be implemented within twelve months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 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 regulated. In particular, the NI Housing Executive should work with: the local Councils to ensure Travellers have regular refuse collection; with the electricity supplier to ensure Travellers have prompt and consistent access to electricity; and with the Royal Mail to ensure Travellers have adequate access to adequate postal services. (ii) 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. (iii) Local Councils should take proactive reasonable steps to ensure Travellers' sites are licensed when required. Local Councils should regularly monitor the licensing of Travellers' sites and be aware when sites require a license, whether they are licensed 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 license, developed by the Department of Infrastructure. (iv) 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>3.3</p>	<p>BCC has collaborated extensively with NIHRC and contributed significantly during the research and feedback phases of the report process.</p>
	<p>Next Steps- Responding to the Recommendations</p>
<p>3.4</p>	<p>Officers will continue to facilitate meaningful engagement with the Traveller Community and its representatives guaranteeing that Travellers are informed of the implications of the report, that their voices are heard and that they are actively involved in all processes which implement the NIHRC's recommendations.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>In response to the specific recommendations:</p>

- (i) Council currently works closely with relevant providers ensuring that service provision reaches the Traveller Community. We facilitate the **Improving Outcomes of Travellers in Belfast Interagency Group** consisting of statutory and voluntary sector organisations. It is proposed that a specific sub-group focussing on Traveller accommodation and related services will be formed and report to the Interagency Group.

Protocols have been established to deal with emergency situations regarding waste management and infestations. These protocols will be reviewed and communicated extensively.

Council's existing service provision for Travellers, that is, case work, advocacy, support, sign posting and play development, will be maintained and we will work closely with the community to identify and explore further services to meet articulated needs.

- (ii) & (iii) None of the existing Traveller sites in Belfast have a current License. It is proposed that the Traveller Liaison Officer (TLO) will facilitate the development of a working group consisting of all relevant officers with internal expertise (and external if required e.g.NIHE). The group will include officers from Legal services, Planning, Environmental Health, Community Services, Health and Safety and Community Safety. This group will take proactive steps to scope the need for licences for all relevant sites (3) and develop an action plan to secure same.

To ensure consistency with other Council areas, the TLO will liaise with other Local Authorities by sharing information on regular basis.

- (iii) Council is an active member of the LSPTI. Two BCC elected members have been nominated and two officers are selected on to the Executive Committee (Traveller Liaison Officer and Principal Environmental Health Officer).

Financial & Resource Implications

3.6 Officer time- representation on external bodies, attendance at internal meetings and any follow up work relevant to the actions of the internal officers group.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.7	There are no Equality Implications to this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Travellers' Accommodation in Northern Ireland, Executive Summary