

Travellers and Gypsies Strategy Consultation



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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This Strategy is the first to be produced for Gypsies and Travellers in Norfolk. It was born out of a research project that was used to support the profile of needs, supply and gaps in services relating to housing support that was required for the chapter on Travellers in the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2004.

The aim of the Strategy has been to highlight that Norfolk includes Gypsies and Travellers within its community and looks at the way all agencies and organisations interlink to provide services that are available not only to settled communities, but also to Gypsies and Travellers. An Action Plan is included in order to highlight areas in which agencies and officers would like to work to improve services wherever possible and to work with Travellers and the settled community in order that issues concerning Travellers are improved upon

The main issues highlighted in this strategy are:

- How organisations work in Norfolk with regard to Gypsies and Travellers
- Accommodation provision
- Support provision.

The main areas of concern that are highlighted are:

- The lack of knowledge with regard to monitoring and whether this should be used as

an indication for further site provision

- If numbers of Travellers do not equate to a need for more sites, then should the research that highlighted the fact that Travellers experience a lack of site provision be used as a basis to provide more sites
- The knowledge that Gypsies and Travellers are often polarised from settled communities
- The lack of understanding with regard to the culture and lifestyles of Gypsies and Travellers
- Access to services such as housing, planning and doctors' surgeries.

The Action Plan outlines the commitment by all the key partners in the form of targets over a three-year period. Key targets include:

- Improvements to the monitoring of Gypsies and Travellers by ensuring that the Norfolk Protocol checklist is effectively used and monitored, together with ensuring that the twice yearly caravan counts are publicised within local authorities and agencies working

with Gypsies and Travellers

- Creating a positive and proactive PR approach with regard to Gypsies and Travellers in order that the local perception and understanding of Gypsies and Travellers may be improved

• A three year commitment to identify and increase the numbers of roadside and small rural sites should a need be identified and planning and local issues overcome. This will also be encouraged when local authorities are preparing local development frameworks that will replace local plans

- Improving support and provision of information in order that Gypsies and Travellers are able to access services more efficiently.

We are looking for your comments with regard to the draft Strategy. We have a budget deadline of March 2004 in which this Strategy can be published. In order to meet the budget deadline the consultation process will end on 13th February 2004.

If you would prefer to receive this strategy in an e-mail version, please give Mandy Browne a ring on 01508 533852.

Please Contact: Miss Imogen Isem

Please e-mail: iisem@s-norfolk.gov.uk Please Dial Direct on: 01508 533753

A better future for older people in Norfolk?

Norfolk County Council is currently planning to develop a strategy for the provision of services to older people over the next five years. Under the concept "a better future for older people in Norfolk" the plan is to take a fresh look at services and have a strategy ready for consultation by early next year.

The Older People's Forum, Age Concern and other organisations are involved in helping to pull the strategy together with the following key themes:

- Services help older people retain their independence and live in their own homes.
- Services for people who can no longer live at home such as housing with care schemes and quality residential and nursing support.
- The way that Social Services link with other services such as housing and transport services and life long learning.
- Those services provided in partnership with housing agencies, health teams, voluntary committees and the private sector.

Part of the process involved a seminar on 20 October 2003 when Professor Gerald Wistow from the Nuffield Institute addressed 100 key players in the development of the strategy.

He outlined the importance of promoting health and well-being in later life and gave examples of how older people can be enabled to live well and break what he called the "vicious circle" of our own thinking about a negative ageing process and responding to crisis.

He stressed that all agencies and older people themselves had a role in any effective strategy of services for older people and that the many vested interests must be overcome. He said it is about "enabling people to live well – not patching them up when they fail to live well".

The draft strategy will be presented by the Older People's Strategy Group to the County Council Cabinet in December before the consultation period early in the New Year when all stakeholders will be invited to comment.

REX HUMPHREY Chief Executive, Age Concern Norfolk

News in Brief

Gary Standley of BBC Radio Norfolk joins VHG Board of Trustees

Gary Standley worked as a Social Worker for many years in the Midlands before moving into working in local radio. Gary's role is managing community action for BBC Radio Norfolk (with the occasional lunchtime slot on air!) and he has joined VHG's board in order to enable us to take a more

strategic view of working with the media which we hope will be of great benefit to member organisations.

To contact Gary please email gary.standley@bbc.co.uk



John Durrant joins Solo Housing (East Anglia) Ltd

John Durrant the new chief executive of Solo Housing (East Anglia) Ltd. John has made the move from the Novas-

Overtures Group where he was working with Bristol Cyrenians, Lee Hestia in Northern Ireland, Avalon in the South East and a new organisation for travellers and Gypsies. John has a long history in homelessness and supported housing having worked for St. Martin of Tours and London Cyrenians Housing.

John has now settled in this region with his wife, Cath, and their three-year old son, Matthew. I know all VHG members will join us in welcoming John and wishing him the very best in

his new post. To contact John Durrant please email info@solo-housing.org.



Key role for county councils in new planning system

Keith Hill today announced proposals to guarantee a central role for county councils in the new regional planning system. He is seeking an amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill in the House of Lords.

The amendment would require Regional Planning Bodies to ask for advice on preparing, reviewing and monitoring the implementation of regional spatial strategies from county councils and other authorities with strategic planning expertise. Those authorities would be under a corresponding obligation to provide advice.

Keith Hill said: "The active involvement of county councils is vital to delivering our agenda of stronger regional planning frameworks that translate significant policies for development and change into action on the ground. We have stressed in guidance how important a role we see county councils and other authorities with strategic planning expertise playing under the new arrangements. I am pleased that we have been able to agree how we can give that intention legislative effect.

"We will make clear that advice should be asked for and given on preparing, reviewing and monitoring the implementation of regional spatial strategies. Within this framework, we need to allow freedom for regional planning bodies, county councils and the other authorities to do what is right in the circumstances.

"The legislation will also need to ensure that the regional planning system works efficiently and effectively, without risk of obstruction and delay, and that all these parties play a part in making it a success. It is right though that we make clear that the asking for and giving of advice is a principle

and not an optional extra. We will amend our draft guidance to set out more fully how we expect these respective roles to fit together.

"I look forward, on the basis of this proposed amendment, to working with the Local Government Association to make the new arrangements for regional planning a success. We need a successful planning framework for our regions and sub-regions; making sure all the key players work together is vital if we are to achieve this aim."

Sir Jeremy Beecham said:

"The LGA has argued strongly for a significant role for county councils in the revised planning system and we are pleased that the Government has today announced that it intends to amend the Bill to provide for a statutory role for counties. This will remove one of our most pressing concerns with the Bill and ensures that all local authorities can now play their part in creating a more effective planning system. The LGA will actively work with the Government to ensure all authorities play a positive role in making these proposals work in practice."

Nick Skellett, Chairman of the County Councils Network said:

"We know that there is a great deal of support for the role of county councils in the planning system and we are therefore pleased that the Minister is intending to confirm this on the face of the Bill.



Cannabis Re-classification and the law

From the 29th January 2004 cannabis will be reclassified from a Class B to a Class C drug as defined by Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It is important to emphasise that cannabis remains illegal. Under current legislation, cannabis possession would not then ordinarily be an arrestable offence. However, the law is being amended from this date so that cannabis possession will continue to be specified as an arrestable offence.

A policing priority of Norfolk Constabulary is to focus on disrupting the supply of Class A drugs to our communities. Therefore the presumption should be against using this power of arrest for simple possession

offences but there will be circumstances when it is appropriate to arrest for possession of cannabis. This is very much left to the discretion of officers, who will be expected to take into account the prevailing circumstances in deciding whether to arrest or not. It will police policy to work to the ACPO guidance. A copy of which is available from

<http://www.drugs.gov.uk/NationalStrategy/CannabisReclassification/ACPO>



Constructing Communities Conference

The Constructing Communities Conference which was organised by VHG for voluntary and statutory agencies in the Eastern Counties was a great success. With plenary sessions from Terrie Alafat, Director of the Homelessness Directorate and Shaks Ghosh of Crisis including the needs of people who need support in finding and retaining information was high on the agenda. Regional speakers ensured that the content of the conference remained focussed on the needs of organisations from this area and Mick Sanders, Chair of the Regional Housing Forum, Hilary Mansfield of the East of England Regional Assembly and Carolyn Howell of Shelter Norfolk ensured that a regional policy agenda was key to the context in which national policy developments are delivered. The conference evaluated well although VHG still has areas for improvement and we will ensure that these areas are development in the planning for the 2004 conference.

Please note the following dates for your diary: **18th & 19th November 2004 at the Peterborough Cresset – VHGs Conference 2004.**

*Left: Shaks Ghosh of Crisis talks to delegates
Below: Mick Saunders & John Cowdell enjoy a break.*



VHG Vacancies

VHG provides training, information, events, networking and research to member organisations - providers of support, advice and/or accommodation in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. VHG is a registered charity working closely with regional partners including councils, health and Probation Service. For more information go to www.vhg-east.org.

VHG is a small team based in our offices in central Norwich. We are recruiting for:

Office Assistant

Salary - £10,000 (35 hours per week)

Full time with 25 days paid holiday + bank holidays

The Office Assistant will support the entire team in:

- Reception work and General office duties
– Photocopying/ filing/ typing
- Mail room duties
- Taking training bookings and similar duties

We need an enthusiastic worker competent in English & Maths, Microsoft Office and the Internet. The successful candidate will be a people person with customer care skills and a real willingness to support the VHG team.

Deadline for applications – 19th February 2004

Interview date – 25th February 2004

Information Assistant

Salary - £12,500 (35 hours per week)

Full time with 25 days paid holiday + bank holidays

The Information Assistant will support the Researcher and the Chief Executive in

- Maintaining contacts database in Microsoft Outlook
- Data entry for 2 research projects
- Identifying and sourcing both hard and web based resources
- Responding to internal and external requests for information
- Developing VHGs resource room and related filing systems

We need a candidate who is experienced in maintaining and setting up office systems and highly organised with good customer care skills.

Deadline for applications – 12th March 2004

Interview date – 18th March 2004

Meeting Support Assistant

Salary - £13,500 (Pro rata – 25 hours/week)

Part time with 25 days paid leave pro rata

The Meeting Support Assistant will be confident and experienced in

- Minute taking, secretariat skills and diary management
- Liaison with venues, speakers and members of meeting groups
- Microsoft Office and Internet

Our Meeting Support Assistant will be highly professional in appearance and manner working closely with the Chief Executive to ensure meetings VHG attends and manages are well supported and effective through being well administered. The successful candidate will have a full clean driving licence.

Deadline for applications – 12th March 2004

Interview date – 18th March 2004

For an application pack contact Anne Stolworthy phone 01603 617299 email anne@vhg-east.org. Please leave contact details and say which post you are interested in.

VHG is committed to Equal Opportunities

VHG is an Investor in People.



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Training Dates

4th February 2004 SUPPORT PLANNING

Althea Howarth

This course is £120 for members and £150 for non-members

17th February 2004 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ali Hall

10th March 2004 FLOATING SUPPORT

Christopher Wood

24th March 2004 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Peter Gianfrancesco - Norwich MIND

31st March 2004 SUCCESSFUL KEYWORKING

Clare Pastorius

21st April 2004 LONE WORKER PERSONAL SAFETY

Clare Pastorius

All the above courses will be held at the King of Hearts in central Norwich between 10am - 4pm with lunch provided.

Rates: £75 members, £125 non-members (unless stated).

**FURTHER INFO
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
REGARDING OUR TRAINING PLEASE
PHONE THE TRAINING
ADMINISTRATOR ON 01603
617299. OR BOOK ONLINE
www.vhg-east.org**

EMAIL THE TEAM -

Emma Daniel, Chief Executive
emma@vhg-east.org

Anne Stolworthy, Administration & Finance
anne@vhg-east.org

A day in the life of...

Name: Michael Newey

Age: 40 **Marital Status:** Married with two children – Sarah aged 9 and Tom aged 6

What is your job?

Chief Executive of Broadland Housing Association
I joined the association in May 2003 having previously been an Executive Director of Anglia Housing Group.

Broadland is a provider of affordable housing and provides almost 4,000 homes across Norfolk and Suffolk. We are currently building over 300 new homes in this area.

Describe a typical day in your job

One of the great things about my job is that there is no typical day.

Breakfast is taken on the run at about 6.30 and is my best attempt at being healthy. It normally includes carrot juice and some natural yoghurt. I am out of the house about 7 am and have a 40-minute drive to work – a chance to review the day ahead and hear the news on Radio 5.

Normally, the first hour or so is my only chance to deal with the constant stream of emails and journals – the latter normally get bundled up for weekend reading in the end. Social housing seems to have more than its fair share of "relevant" trade journals.

I try to spend at least 30 minutes with my PA before we allow other meetings to encroach. This is our chance to talk about what is going on and for me to take soundings on some of the issues floating around the Association.

Frequently this is followed by a meeting with one of the senior managers to review projects or to discuss any strategic developments on the horizon. Social housing is highly regulated and the ground rules are frequently changing. In many ways we are frequently "influenced" by government policy and we need to constantly adapt ourselves. We also need to develop new ideas in order to help the government and local authorities achieve their aspirations for sustainable communities. Innovation is in high demand.

Late morning sees me engaging in an "external" meeting – often with local authorities, contractors or developers.. Relationships need to be nurtured and developed if they are going to be really effective.

The afternoon is a good time for thematic meetings drawing staff from across the Association. Sometimes we discuss operational performance or perhaps review our progress in carrying out the best value reviews of each of our operational services. I like to meet with as many members of the whole team as possible either informally or formally to ensure that we maintain a strong corporate direction. I also have regular meetings with my Chairman so we can make sure that we are delivering according our corporate strategy and plans.

Towards the end of the day my PA and I try to meet together again to catch up and for me to deal with any essential post. A typical day will see over 35 emails turn up – it takes two people to deal with them properly.

As the office empties I again find some quiet time to deal with paperwork on my own. If there is no evening Board or committee meeting to attend, I try to be in the car by 6.45 so I can get home to see the children before bedtime.

What's the most demanding part of your job?

Keeping on top of the new ideas coming from our regulator and the government.

What do you think is the future of the sector?

Not so many years ago investment on a large scale in social housing was a pipe-dream, as was the thought of seeing so many houses brought up to a modern, decent standard. The fact is that we are turning the dream into a reality for thousands

Michael Newey BSc FRICS
Broadland Housing Association

of families. But we don't want it to stop there. My objective is to see all social housing providing a minimum quality standard to those who live in it.

Important though investment in the housing fabric is, we shouldn't see it as an end in itself. We have to stand back and make sure that it contributes to the building of safe, strong communities: communities that are sustainable in the long term. In some areas, that will require looking at the investment in the context of a wider regeneration effort to tackle deprivation and under-investment. Elsewhere the pressures to be addressed will come from economic growth while in others it might be dealing with the consequences of a failure in the housing market. One simple prescription can't cure this range of problems, which is why we must continue to work hard to develop an integrated approach that can respond flexibly to the needs and circumstances of individual areas and communities. I see this approach as the way to open up real opportunities for the continuation of the successful delivery of social housing.

What do you feel is your greatest achievement, either professionally or personally?

A difficult question to answer. I am often most satisfied when I have worked out a way to ensure that a scheme that looks impossible actually goes ahead. Ultimately, that will result in a family getting a home when they might currently be living in bed and breakfast accommodation. Few of these schemes would be my greatest achievement, but perhaps the sum of them would be.



VHG

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