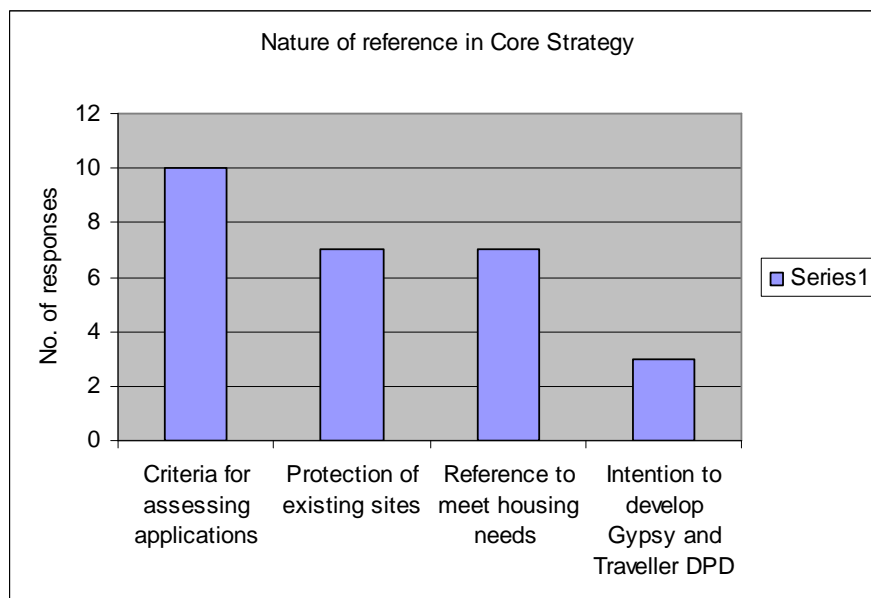


4. Findings

4.1. This section outlines the information that was gathered from respondents to the survey and through primary research looking at LPA LDF documents. The response rate to the survey is noteworthy, with a total of twenty-six (79%) out of 33 borough responses being received. The high response gives a useful picture of the current situation across the capital.

Local Development Frameworks

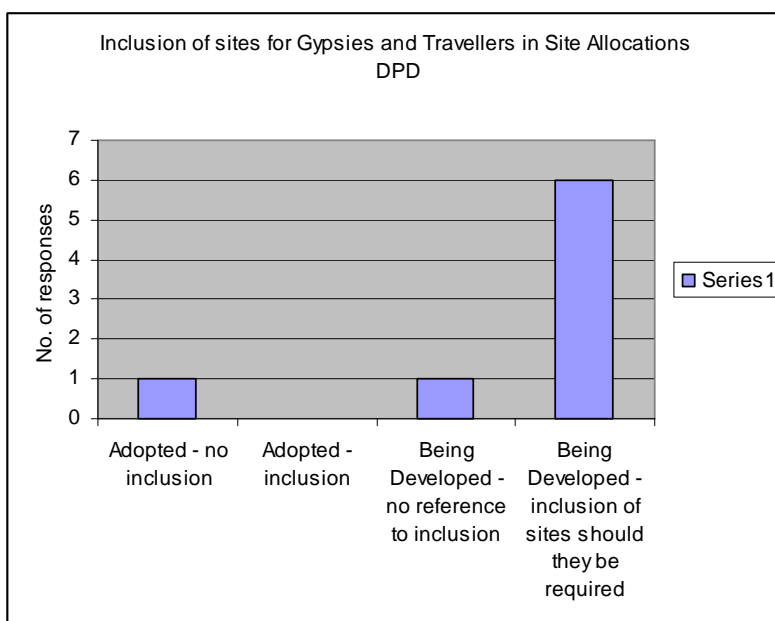
- 4.2. Across London, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are at various stages in the preparation of their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), with some still at pre-production and evidence based assembly stage of the Core Strategy, while others are in the final stages of adoption of the Core Strategy and are developing further Development Plan Documents (DPDs).
- 4.3. Havering is the only respondent to have had the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD formally adopted (in 2008). While the adopted Site Allocations DPD does not contain sites for GRT - possibly because it was adopted before the London GTANA was published - the Core Strategy includes a commitment to preparation of a separate Site Allocations DPD specifically for GRT sites.
- 4.4. The majority of respondents stated that there were either existing policies or statements regarding GRT needs, or there would be in the next preparation stage. Two respondents explicitly stated that they were waiting for the revision of the London Plan before embarking on including provision for GRT accommodation needs in either the Core Strategy or other DPDs.



4.5. The nature of the policies or statements included in the different Core Strategies varies considerably. Out of the fifteen respondents who stated that they had a policy/statement in an existing document, ten established criteria for assessing applications, while seven protected existing sites. Half of the respondents reference

the responsibility to meeting the housing needs of GRT. However, not all of these make specific reference to the 2008 GTANA. Additionally, one borough, whose existing policy included criteria and protection of existing site, stated the intention to include provision for GRT pitches in a future draft of the Core Strategy, as, at the time of writing, the results of the GTANA had not been available.

- 4.6. The wording of criteria for assessing applications is variable, and needs careful consideration. For example, one DPD states: "Further sites, for temporary or permanent use, will only be permitted... which cannot be met in any *other way*". LPAs should follow guidance set out in Circular 01/2006 with regards to the wording of criteria.



- 4.7. Eight respondents referred to Site Allocations DPDs. Of these, a clear majority had not had the DPD adopted, but were in the process of developing it, and intended to include sites for GRT should a need be identified. Only one LPA has an adopted Site Allocations DPD, however, this does not include reference to sites for GRT. This was adopted in 2008 before account could be made of the GTANA, and the borough now intends to produce a specific Gypsy and Traveller DPD.
- 4.8. Three boroughs stated the intention to develop a Gypsy and Traveller strategy which would include site provision. These will be useful in bringing together different council departments, including planning, to work together to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 4.9. The majority of boroughs have regards to GRT accommodation needs in their LDF/Core Strategy or state they will do in the near future. This demonstrates that generally boroughs have acknowledged the findings of the GTANA and are acting in response through integrating policies into the LDF/Core Strategy. However, there is some evidence to show that some boroughs are waiting for the regional and local planning policy process to run its course before actively seeking sites. This is unacceptable where there is an evidence of an urgent need as evidenced in the GTANA and unauthorised sites.

Stable Way Authorised Site, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

“It’s frightening living under a flyover... people sometimes throw drink cans at residents from passing cars”

Located underneath a main road flyover, Stable Way (formerly the Westway site), in RBKC is one of the longest established Traveller sites in London, being set up more than 35 years ago. Although based in RBKC, the 26 pitch site is managed by Hammersmith and Fulham Homes. Management of Stable Way is something that residents feel could be greatly improved.

The environmental conditions are poor. Flooding caused through cracked or blocked drainage is a constant threat; fumes and noise from overhead traffic are ever present; large bulky waste litters the site; and there is an ongoing battle with vermin.

There is an on-site residents group who meet monthly with service providers to address site issues and identify future provision. This is chaired by the residents and facilitated by the RBKC development worker (funded by Supporting People).

Stable Way residents were consulted as part of the original accommodation needs assessment, and are actively involved in developing a new bid to HCA for an additional 4 pitches to be built, to be submitted in June 2009. While most Stable Way supports this site extension there are some residents who would prefer a smaller, well managed new site. Despite the resident’s involvement in this site extension, they have not been consulted at all as part of the Local Development Framework.

When asked about how future Traveller accommodation should look and feel there was some clear suggestions. “Traveller sites should be managed by Travellers themselves”, there should be a play area for the kids, pitches should have their own kitchen/bathroom facilities, and there should be trees on the site and green areas for people to sit outside.

Local Area Agreements

- 4.10. Three of the local authorities who responded make reference to LAAs:
- Sutton state that National Indicator 155 *Number of Affordable Homes Delivered* has been selected as an indicator in the LAA and will be used to monitor the number of affordable GRT pitches provided.
 - Lewisham state that there is no mention to GRT in the LAA, while noting that there is no specific national indicator for GRT.

Sub-regional working and additional Research into Accommodation needs

- 4.11. There is evidence of sub-regional working amongst both the West and North London boroughs.
- Haringey state that they “have recently commissioned a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) with other North London Boroughs and have highlighted gypsies and travellers amongst other key groups, to be assessed in terms of housing need”. Haringey state that the findings are intended to inform how they address the accommodation needs of GRT in the Core Strategy.
 - Hillingdon, working with other West London boroughs, is planning to commission further research to identify needs of GRT households wishing to move from bricks and mortar housing.

The West London Sub-Region makes the case that the issue of psychological aversion is more complicated than was captured within the initial GTANA. The sub-region is undertaking additional research into this area, which will be available in autumn 2009.

- 4.12. Three boroughs stated that they are undertaking research additional to the London wide GTANA which will be used to inform accommodation need/criteria for applications/site allocations. It is not clear exactly how this information will relate to the findings of the GTANA.
- Bexley stated that they were undertaking an independent GTANA study (carried out by Dialogue consultants) than the one carried out by Fordham Research. The justification given for doing so was that Bexley has a low population of GRT (the council site has 10 pitches and there are also 10 private pitches), and felt that the overall approach of the Fordham Research was too broad and to take into account local circumstance.
 - Croydon are currently conducting a local survey of overcrowded households on the council's existing Travellers site, of transit Travellers on unauthorised sites and of Traveller in housing, regarding their accommodation preferences.
 - Hackney is undertaking research for site allocations through its Housing Pipeline to compliment the GTANA study.

- 4.13. The methodology and justification of additional research and sub-regional working needs to be clarified given the potential for such work to detract from the findings of the GTANA and from site provision.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 4.14. Overall, sixteen respondents stated that they include reference to GRT in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), either explicitly or on the list of

consultees. Four boroughs (Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Haringey and Southwark) state that they made specific reference to GRT. For example, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's SCI states:

"There are sections of the community that the Council particularly wishes to ensure are involved, either because of particular needs or because they have traditionally been under-represented in planning matters. We will make efforts to ensure that these groups are involved, in line with the commitment in the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policy Framework to involve these groups on all regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects"

Another SCI includes the following statement:

"This SCI seeks to specifically target the 'hard to reach groups' of the Borough. Targeted methods to be utilised include the use of personal visits to groups who have not previously expressed an interest in the planning process, including gypsies/ travellers"

- 4.15. Several boroughs do not make explicit mention of GRT, but include them in a database of groups to be consulted. This means that these groups will be notified automatically of any consultation on the borough's LDF/Core Strategy and other consultations. Five boroughs stated that the SCI made no mention of GRT.
- 4.16. It is worth noting that reference in an SCI does not necessarily mean that GRT are consulted and, on the other hand that no reference does not necessarily mean that GRT are not consulted. One borough stated that they had reference to GRT in the SCI, but had not had any response from these groups in consultation. On the other hand, one borough who stated that they do not make any reference to GRT groups in the SCI has undertaken several measures to involve GRT groups in consultations and other measures towards social inclusion. Nevertheless, inclusion in the SCI provides an important mechanism for setting out how and when GRT will be consulted. By making a clear statement in the SCI as to how and when GRT are consulted, and using what methods, greater transparency and trust can be generated between GRT and Local Planning Authorities. Local Authorities may also consider developing a Gypsy and Traveller communication strategy.

"Kent's draft Gypsy and Traveller communication strategy recognises the importance of being as factual as possible and to explain council processes continually. Bill Forrester, Head of the council's Gypsy and Traveller unit, says that, 'However difficult it is to maintain contact with Gypsy and Traveller communities, councils still need to make the effort. It is easy to fall out but it is better to keep lines of communication open. If people recognise over time your goodwill then they will forgive you if something goes wrong.'"

Planning Advisory Service, 2006: p8

Consultation with Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and measures towards increasing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller social inclusion

- 4.17. Nearly half of respondents either stated that there were no measures or gave no response to the questions regarding measures for consultation beyond being included in the SCI, or measures to increase social inclusion (nine and twelve

respectively). Amongst those that did undertake active consultation with GRT, and show measures to increase social inclusion, there are a range of different approaches. These include providing information, employing dedicated staff with responsibilities specifically for GRT issues, establishing Interagency forums and residents associations and inclusion in identifying sites and in designing sites.

- 4.18. Two local authorities – Barnet and Sutton - state that, through outreach work and active consultation, they have gathered representations from GRT groups and individuals in consultations on the LDF.

Horn Link Way Unauthorised Site, Greenwich

“During the last 10 years Travellers’ life has changed for the worse. We want somewhere to stay without harassment, somewhere that is our own and where we can keep our culture”



Located on brownfield land, next to a sand and gravel quarry, the site in Greenwich is home to the one Traveller family. Having moved onto the land more than 9 years ago, the family occupies 10 mobile homes for 11 adults and 15 children. Basic services are at a premium with no connection to the mains gas, water, electricity or sewerage. Indeed the electricity currently supplied is as a result of a goodwill gesture from a local businessman, who, knowing the family, agreed to supply them from his own generators.

The site suffers from several environmental problems which have negative impacts on the well-being of residents. In summer months dust and sand from the nearby quarry, rats and other vermin are rife. Traffic speeding to and from the quarry creates noise and is a constant threat to the safety of children.

The family have not been involved in decision-making processes around planning and accommodation issues affecting them. Despite having contact with the local authority, through the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Service and meetings with counsellors and a local MP, they have not been consulted about the Local Development Framework.

When asked about how Traveller accommodation should be taken forward the response was clear. This family want somewhere that is owned by themselves or has security of tenure, that has access to essential services and facilities (gas, electricity, water, toilets and showers), that has access to safe children’s facilities and that has space to maintain their cultural identity – including the keeping of horses.

“We don’t want to lose our tradition. We were born free under the eyes of God and want to remain free”

- **Providing information**

- 4.19. Sutton and Redbridge both state that they carry out work in providing information to GRT and the wider community. Sutton provides information to help raise awareness amongst the wider community. These have included public exhibitions, along with an educational DVD, and response to negative press by local councillors. Redbridge provides publications to raise awareness and provide information for GRT and the wider community about GRT, including a “myth busting factsheet”.
- 4.20. In 2005, Merton held a conference on GRT. Representatives from the planning policy team attended, including the community engagement officer, and provided advice on the LDF and encouraged the involvement of Gypsies and Travellers in advance of a forthcoming LDF consultation event. Members of GRT communities also attended the conference, which covered issues relating to education, community development & health, consultation, community safety and accommodation need. Workshops included “Local Authority Consultation with the Traveller Community”, and “Implementing Accommodation Needs Assessment”.

“Somewhere to live”

This DVD was produced by the North West Regional Assembly to highlight some of the accommodation issues faced by GRT communities, and will be considered as part of the partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The film won the Royal Town Planning Institute Planning Award 2008 for Equality and Diversity. It is available to download at: www.nwrpb.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/environment/?page_id=417

- **Traveller Inter Agency Forums (TIAF)**

- 4.21. Traveller Inter Agency Forums (TIAFs) provide a positive role in developing a partnership approach to improving services to GRT. There tends to be a range of differing models in use in terms of stakeholders’ objectives and level of participation. With regards to outcomes, the TIAF approach at the very least enables networking and information sharing and more ambitiously has the potential to effect change in service provision and community involvement at a strategic level.
- 4.22. The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain has a history in supporting, developing and sustaining TIAF. See http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/about_us/forums for more information and links to good practice guidelines.
- 4.23. It is important that these forums are attended by relevant council services, including Planning, and that they have political support. They can be an important way of building trust between GRT groups and the Local Authority.
- 4.24. Several boroughs have established a TIAF. These include:
- Barnet, with staff attending from the Housing and Planning Strategy Service, Education, Health, Supporting People, Barnet Policies and Partnerships and Police. The forum is chaired by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy.
 - Brent Travellers Interagency Forum, which has in the past given presentations about the LDF. The forum has not met since March 2008 though is looking to re-form in spring 2009.
 - Hillingdon, which includes representatives from the housing, education, and police services. This forum also runs a monthly outreach ‘drop-in’ session

for Gypsies and Travellers at the Bell Farm Christian Centre, and is attended by council services. The forum is mostly practitioner led.

- Kensington and Chelsea have four officer and member groups each with various and sometimes overlapping responsibilities for GRT communities. The Borough is currently in the process of establishing a TIAF, rationalising some of the duplication and providing a co-ordinated response to meeting the needs of the Gypsy, Roma and Travelling communities. The launch of this forum is planned for June 4th
- Sutton, which is currently chaired by a ward councillor and facilitated by housing and resources team. The forum has regular attendance from the Local Authority and Gypsies and Travellers, and receives political support. The forum is now consulted on the boroughs' LDF including the Site Allocations DPD, which has a specific policy regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites, and a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy paper.

Sutton Local Authority – Statement of Intent

Experience outside London has shown that to make progress and provide new sites and pitches there needs to be a firm commitment politically, across all parties, from members and from senior officers. Without this level of support little progress will be made.

Within our own authority we are fortunate to have a firm commitment from lead councillors and cross party support. We need to have strategies and procedures in place. This includes taking steps to raise the awareness and address any prejudices within our own organization before moving on and into the public domain. As a community Gypsies and Travellers have so much history and culture which needs to be celebrated and shared.

We are committed to working with Travellers and other residents to provide more pitches in the area.

- **Residents' Groups**

- 4.25. Residents' groups provide a collective voice for people who live in the same area, or who have the same landlord. They are set up to provide support and assistance to their neighbourhood. Members work together to improve housing and the environment in their neighbourhood and to build a sense of community. Residents' groups may be called 'residents' associations or forums' but they have the same job. It is important that resident groups are constituted.
- 4.26. Support and encouragement should be given to GRT on private and social sites to establish residents' groups and participation with wider community forums. This will increase opportunities for interaction with the wider community and civic engagement.
- 4.27. Several boroughs have or are launching resident groups. These include:
 - Stable Way Residents association has recently been formed. Chaired by residents themselves, it meets once a month to identify needed provision and solutions to existing issues. The group is currently not constituted.

- **Employing dedicated staff**

4.28. Ten boroughs state that they have employed staff with the responsibility of liaising with/increasing involvement with GRT. These include:

- Greenwich's Travellers and Community Development Manager.
- Hackney's Gypsy Traveller Service Development Officer employed through Hackney Homes. This position is a strong example of good practice. Further details of the job description are available in Appendix C.
- Hillingdon's Traveller Liaison Officer, based with TES and Housing Service, is trained in Travellers' needs awareness and works with Traveller families as required.
- Kensington and Chelsea's Gypsy and Traveller Development Manager, based within Supporting People, addresses social inclusion and helps develop a Traveller Inter Agency Forum.
- Lewisham's Council appointed officer who liaises with local travellers.

Dedicated Staff to work for and on behalf of the GRT community

With four Traveller sites in the London Borough of Hackney accommodating around 27 families and over 500 Gypsies and Travellers living in mainstream housing, Hackney's Gypsy and Traveller community has a significant presence.

Hackney Homes is responsible for managing Travellers sites in the borough as well as providing a Floating Support Service for Gypsies and Travellers living in housing and on sites. Strategic work and project management is also undertaken by Hackney Homes who work closely with different Hackney Council departments. Hackney Homes recognises that not all Travellers in Hackney live on sites, some choose to live in mainstream housing whilst others live in housing because of a shortage of pitches and sites.

In March 2008 twenty families were relocated from the Waterden Crescent site which was situated within the Olympic Development Park onto new sites. Twelve families moved on to new permanent sites whilst the remaining eight families were relocated onto a temporary site while their site was being built. In March 2009 the remaining eight families moved from their temporary site onto their new site. Throughout the process of building new sites; the families played a large part in planning refurbishment works and site design, meeting regularly with the London Development Agency, Hackney Homes and the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit. Hackney Homes Floating Support Service has worked closely with families to meet their individual needs throughout the relocation and many of these families are still supported by this service.

Angie Emerson, Hackney Homes Traveller Service Development Officer said "Building three new sites consecutively was a challenge and at times stressful for all those involved in the process especially the Traveller families who had to endure living on a building site within the Olympic Development whilst their new sites were being built. The new sites have been built to a high standard and individual families choice of kitchens, tiles etc exceed decent homes standards."

4.29. While not employing a specific staff member, Brent's Policy and Research Team have undertaken several meetings with groups representing Gypsies and Travellers in the borough as a part of their work.

- **Identifying sites**

- 4.30. The Southwark-based charity Willowbrook has established good links with Springtide, a council owned site in the borough. Through this link a working group has been set up to locate a potential site and eventually apply for planning permission to help overcome overcrowding on the site. The working group will also be informed about progress and consultation on the borough's Core strategy and area action plans.

Springtide Authorised Site, Southwark

"We do not want the redevelopment of existing site [Springtide]. We want a new site in Southwark"

Initially established as a temporary site in 1978, Springtide is now a permanent part of Staffordshire Street. Standing in the shadow of the local police station this authorised site has 5 pitches, each with their own amenity facilities. The most pressing environmental concern for the residents is overcrowding. *"Travellers are too close together. We are that close that I can touch my next door neighbours window. It's a fire hazard. Does there have to be a death before any changes?"* It was clear that as this family of Traveller people grows, that the existing provision is simply inappropriate. *"Springtide needs an additional 7 pitches – this would mean a site of 12 pitches that would last us for perhaps 10 years"*

The Southwark Traveller Action Group (STAG) and Willowbrook are supporting residents in being involved in the decisions affecting their accommodation needs. This relationship between a front line development organization and an independent local charity offering free, professional advice on planning, regeneration and development, works really well.

Springtide residents are actively involved in consultation about the Core Strategy. Indeed some people recently attending "jargon busting" training delivered jointly by Willowbrook and Planning Aid for London. When asked about the future of GRT accommodation the response focused on sites that were not overcrowded, that were big enough to maintain a growing family of people, that had decent facilities for themselves and their young people and that had good access to services."

- **Designing Sites**

London Borough of Tower Hamlets has involved GRT residents extensively in the design process for the relocation of the Eleanor Street site in Bow.

Tower Hamlets: Plans to Relocate Eleanor Street Travellers Site

The 19 pitch Council run site at Eleanor Street, found itself after 21 years in the path of plans for the construction of a new railway. Parliament considered and approved an Act for the construction known as Crossrail, which by 2017 will run from Shenfield to Maidenhead. A ventilation shaft will have to be built in the top right hand corner of the site to allow for the safe use of the rail tunnels passing underneath.



The Council and residents petitioned Parliament and negotiated undertakings from Crossrail to build a new and enlarged modern, site on land along side the current location. Amongst the undertakings was an agreement that the Council, residents representatives and colleagues from CLG would work directly with Crossrail to develop a detailed design, a relocation plan and a community support strategy.

Design Process

Crossrail appointed Fereday Pollard Architects to develop the design through a staged process under the direction of the Steering Group established by the Parliamentary Undertaking.

The architects initially established a design brief based on the CLG Site Design Guide, Development Guidance and the requirements of the Council and Residents petitions. They informally met with residents and the London Gypsy and Travellers Unit and carried out a series of visits to Eleanor Street and other sites. An initial design set was developed having considered a range of issues including feasibility, fire separation, pitch size, green & communal space, orientation of pitches & amenity units and layout options.

Three Design Workshops meetings open to all residents took the design from basic layout, through detailed pitch arrangements and on to very detailed consideration of amenity units and finishes.

A large amount of 3D representation was used and found to provoke the best discussion. The comments made by residents were recorded and form part of the report containing the final design.

A draft report setting out the design has been referred to the adjacent commercial property managers, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, the Secure by Design Officer and the Highways authority. The draft final report will be presented to residents for further consultation before contracts are procured to build the new site scheduled to begin in 2011.

Consultation Process

During the process different locations and times for meetings were given in order to attract the broadest range of resident participation. Two residents were appointed to the Steering Group which has met seven times to date. They have assisted greatly with an advisory role to ensure transparency in the process and a reality check on design or management expectations.

The design workshops provided the architect and Steering Group with an understanding of the range of expectations, concerns and practical revisions to the design as it passed through each stage. Whilst differences of opinion amongst the community were expressed, a general sense of consensus was achieved in formulating a design which will meet residents needs based on the CLG Design Guide and the additional space provided in the new location.

Next Steps

The Steering Group focus is moving to the production of a relocation plan and the development of a specific community support strategy. The next immediate step will be the all resident consultation meeting to discuss the design which is reaching a conclusive stage. This will build on the consensual approach to the established design and allow the inclusion of refinements which may be necessary before the procurement process commences.

