



Home Office

Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2008 Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. **By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.** Please complete the following form in full, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25th April 2008**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811 or alex.blackwell@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Section A: Application basics

1. Title of the project: Northampton Countywide Traveller Unit
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: **Unauthorised Traveller Encampments**

Author contact details

3. Name of application author: **PS44 Mark McDonnell (Police Traveller Enforcement and Liaison Officer)**
4. Organisation submitting the application: Northamptonshire Countywide Traveller Unit
5. Full postal address: 1st Floor, Kingsthorpe Housing office
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Northampton NN2 7BB
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7. Telephone number: 07799786514

Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Steve Wilkinson (CTU Manager)
9. Secondary contact email address: CTU@northampton.gov.uk
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01604 837230

Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Pat Percival, Head of Corporate Communications Department

12. Endorsing representative's email address: pat.percival@northants.pnn.police.uk

13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government covers your area e.g. GO East Midlands: **GO** East Midlands

14. Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):



Section B: Summary of application - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).*

Scanning:

During 2000 Unauthorised Traveller encampments were possibly the subject of more debate in Northamptonshire than almost any other problem.

A continuing cycle of problematic encampments and evictions created an increasingly volatile situation and criticism of perceived Police and Council inaction against antisocial behaviour, particularly of antisocial behaviour and the rubbish left at locations where Travellers had been.

The challenge was to reduce the impact of the unauthorised encampments and to produce a less hostile atmosphere where the provision of authorised Travellers sites could progress.

Analysis:

In 2000 there was five times the number of Unauthorised Traveller encampments in Northampton compared with nearby cities, a core group of local Travellers continually re-circulated, many had were members of extended families living in permanent accommodation in the town. Authorities and Police had inconsistent approaches to encampments and were incurring high costs in evictions and waste clearance.

Response:

A Countywide Traveller Unit (CTU) became operational in December 2003

The CTU is unique in Britain in having countywide responsibilities by a single multi-agency unit including Police, Local Authorities and Health.

Travellers are represented on the CTU consortium advisory board. A Traveller Action Group has been formed which is recognised and consulted with by statutory agencies.

Enforcement policies followed extensive consultation with the Traveller community. Enforcement action in response to unauthorised encampments is seen, by both the Travelling and settled community, to be consistent – Firm but Fair directly linking with antisocial behaviour and the state previous encampments were left in.

Work with Housing officers resulted in Travellers in Northampton obtaining permanent accommodation.

Assessment:

The CTU has dealt with over 850 unauthorised encampments. About 80 evicted using Police powers. The number requiring Police evictions has rapidly reduced as occupation of inappropriate locations and antisocial incidents fell; since 2006 all evictions have been carried out by the CTU Police officer and Support officer alone.

Northampton Borough Council's spending on clearing rubbish has reduced from £13954 to £167.

The number of caravans on unauthorised encampments has shown a sustained reduction with (150 in Northampton in 2000 reducing to zero in January 2008.

Police recorded incidents reduced from 1246 in 2000 to 428 in 2007 and only 2 in January 2008.

State number of words: 362

Section C: Description of project - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 12.

Scanning:
SCANNING

On 24 July 2000 an editorial in the Northampton Chronicle and Echo stated "Travellers are possibly the subject of more debate in Northamptonshire than almost any other problem. It is also fair to say that certain groups cause a massive amount of mess and disruption"

On 18 August 2000 the paper reported; "More than 40 police officers were involved in a four-hour stand-off at an illegal travellers' camp in Northampton. Children pelted police vans with stones after officers were called to the encampment of 30 caravans."

The Police recorded 1246 incidents relating to Gypsies and Travellers during 2000 the majority complaints about antisocial behaviour associated with unauthorised encampments.

In January 2000 there were 279 caravans on unauthorised encampments in Northamptonshire with 124 Police recorded incidents; the majority related to the 42 caravans located within the town of Northampton.

Complaints specified noise, vehicles driving on parkland and in particular domestic waste and 'fly tipping' left on the land when the Travellers left.

Northamptonshire County Council identified costs equivalent to 4 full time posts and Northampton Borough council 1.5 posts for the provision of Traveller eviction services. Evictions and clearing sites cost £424k (1995-1999)

In July 2000 amendments to DOE Circular 18/94 provided guidance on toleration of unauthorised encampments recommended that local authorities identify potential authorised sites.

Northampton Borough Council proposed locations for three authorised Traveller sites. Considerable hostility was expressed by local communities to the proposal and towards the Council and Police's response to the antisocial behaviour and mess associated with unauthorised encampments.

Constant negative publicity contributes to a further deterioration of public attitude towards all Travellers and a decision was made by NBC to withdraw the proposal for the identified sites.

There was public pressure to move unauthorised encampments quickly and bunding (earth banks to protect land) had reduced available sites and number of encampments but the result was a core group of Travellers who did not move out of the town but just re-circulated.

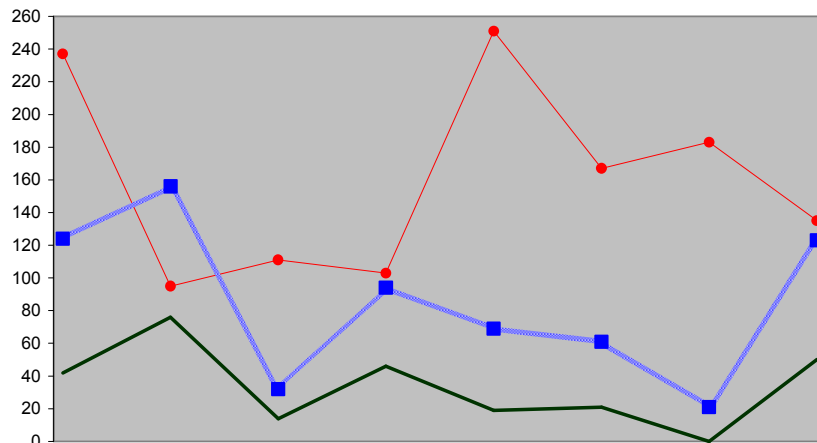


Analysis:

A Best Value review of encampments was undertaken by Northampton Borough Council in 2001 and during 2002 a mapping exercise for Northamptonshire County Council showed unauthorised encampments ranged in size from 1 to 140 caravans, with an average of 301 caravans on unauthorised encampments each day.

Analysis of the Police command and control system compared with number of Caravans on unauthorised encampments from the biannual Home Office Caravan counts showed that the majority of the calls of complaint to the police related to the unauthorised encampments within Northampton rather than other parts of the county.

Caravans on unauthorised encampments in Northamptonshire and Police incidents



	Jan-00	Jul-00	Jan-01	Jul-01	Jan-02	Jul-02	Jan-03	Jul-03
Caravans on Unauthorised Encampments, rest of Northamptonshire	237	95	111	103	251	167	183	135
Police incidents	124	156	32	94	69	61	21	123
Caravans on Unauthorised Encampments: Northampton Town	42	76	14	46	19	21	0	50

A comparison of unauthorised encampments in Northampton during 2000 with nearby cities showed a disproportionately large number of encampments:

	Population	no. of encampments
Peterborough	160,000	30
Leics. City	293,600	30
Northampton	196,000	150

Residents and businesses in Northampton indicated:

- 55% had been personally affected by problems in their home or place of work caused by Travellers.
- Experience of contacting the council was not good and over 72% felt they did not have enough information on Council's powers
- There was very strong opinion against toleration of unauthorised encampments.
- Over 55% supported the principle for providing authorised sites, but
- 67% were not prepared to pay for future options.



Consultation carried out with Travellers on unauthorised sites indicated.

- 66% stated they were local to the area
- 11% were visiting relatives.
- A lack of perception regarding the Council's role and procedures and reported an inconsistency of treatment by Officers (both Police and Council).
- The majority did not know why some encampments were allowed to stay and others not, consequently evictions were resisted and on occasions violently apposed.

Northampton Town has a large resident population of Irish Travellers, many living in housing or on the one Local Authority Site. Those on the unauthorised encampments were therefore part of a close interlinked community with generations of families resident in the town. 91% stated that they would use (and pay for) an authorised site if one were available.

Those on unauthorised encampments tended to be families with young children who had left overcrowded accommodation in houses or authorised sites. During the summer they were joined by relatives from as far away as Leeds.

Analysis of the Police intelligence system, particularly of vehicles recorded on unauthorised sites during evenings, showed that many more people visited the sites than were normally resident in the caravans. There was a lack of knowledge of the identity and family connexions of those resident, or visiting, the site with many individuals having multiple alias details. Many vehicles were untaxed and uninsured.

Travellers resident on Unauthorised sites indicated that much of the noise and fly tipping was the responsibility of 'visitors' over which they had no control. A lack of knowledge of individuals by the Police and the transitory nature of Unauthorised encampments was exploited by those Travellers involved in crime, flytipping and antisocial behaviour. While analysis of crime figures showed that in the immediate vicinity of an unauthorised encampment crime rates fell by about 8% (probably due to extra security measures taken by fearful residents) many of the 'visitors' were believed known to be actively involved in crime throughout Britain.

The conclusion was drawn that the situation, particularly within Northampton was both wasteful in resources and intolerable both for the Travelling community resident on unauthorised encampments and the settled community.



Following a consultation exercise with Travellers efforts were made to identify land for use as Authorised encampments. 15 sites were investigated, however all but one were either considered unacceptable by the Local Authorities or were not available to purchase. A grant has been obtained for the development of the one identified site, in Corby.

While a Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been produced, with Gypsies and Irish Travellers on the working party, it was clear that it may be some years before adequate authorised site provision can be provided.

Until the association of Travellers sites with antisocial behaviour, particularly fly-tipping was changed, it was clear that the provision of authorised sites will always be resisted by the business and settled community.

A response was therefore required to reducing the negative impact and perception of unauthorised Traveller encampments.

Response:

A Countywide Traveller Unit (CTU) became operational in December 2003 following a formal agreement with Northamptonshire County Council, the local Borough and District Councils, the Police, Police Authority, Chamber of Commerce and the Northamptonshire Teaching Primary Care Trust.

Overall responsibility for the performance of the CTU rests with an Executive Board (which comprises representatives from each funding organisation) and an Advisory Panel that includes Council officers, Northampton Chamber, Police, Police Authority, Primary Care Trust; and since 2007 representatives of the Gypsy and Irish Traveller Communities.

The CTU is unique in Britain in having a single multi-agency unit with formal agreement to manage or co-ordinate work relating to Traveller and Gypsy issues throughout a county covering a number of Local Authority areas. The Policing of the Travelling Community is within the context of 'Neighbourhood Policing' with the Travellers resident or regularly visiting Northamptonshire are seen as a virtual 'neighbourhood' known personally by the CTU team members. The structure of the CTU with a small-dedicated team with countywide responsibilities allows for an individual based holistic service that facilitates access to health, education and social care.



■ Front page of the Chron from January 24. The story outlined the proposals of the Countywide Travellers Unit

The most important element of the CTU response to unauthorised encampments is to be seen, by both the Travelling and settled community, to be acting in a consistent manner – Firm but Fair.

A Compact was produced in which each Council agreed to delegate its executive functions, in relation to the management of unauthorised encampments, to the CTU. A protocol with Northamptonshire Police and a seconded full time Police officer allows a common approach to enforcement countywide.

On local authority land the CTU Manager has sole responsibility for deciding on the use of Local Authority discretionary eviction powers, using section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (CJPOA) and requesting the CTU Police Liaison and Enforcement officers use of the Police discretionary eviction powers under section 61 of the CJPOA (This includes privately owned land where the CTU will give advice to the landowner).

The Police Eviction Policy and Procedural Guidance, was reviewed during 2005 in consultation with Northamptonshire Police Independent Advisory Group and Northamptonshire Police Equality of Service Advisory Group (Travellers are now represented on both of these Police groups) and with the Community Law Partnership (a nationally recognised law firm specialising on representing Travellers in eviction cases). The most important consultation process was with the Northampton Traveller Action Group (which includes family members of those who were on unauthorised encampments) and with the Travellers who resided on unauthorised encampments. The policy reflected the current working practices and with some minor changes following the consultation was adopted.

There were great operational advantages in having a single Police Traveller liaison and enforcement officer who had personally developed an agreed Policy and procedures for dealing with unauthorised encampments. This officer working with a single Local Authority liaison and enforcement officer throughout the whole of the County developed a personal relationship with almost every Traveller family residing on Unauthorised encampments, or habitually passing through, Northamptonshire, ensuring consistency.

The decision as to the timescale of toleration and eviction is made by the CTU team after consideration of known facts relating to:

- Location of land (distance from houses etc)
- Use of land (Play area, business premises etc)
- Behaviour of occupiers at the present encampment (ongoing assessment)
- History of occupiers at last Encampment (antisocial behaviour, crime, fly-tipping)
- Welfare issues of occupiers including family links in the locality (after consultation with the CTU Health Specialist and Traveller Education)

As the CTU staff has continually dealt with some of the same families for over five years, and the Police, Local Authority and Health officers all work from the same location quick informed decisions can be made, and reviewed on a daily basis. Decisions related to individuals and reasons for eviction timing was fully explained, particularly the link between behaviour on one site affecting decisions on enforcement on any subsequent sites.

Police powers (Section 61 CJPOA) are a consideration only in exceptional circumstances; when the time taken to achieve other lawful methods of eviction would result in disproportionate harm to the lawful users of the land occupied or to the community within the vicinity.

The procedural guidance fully explains the criteria used in assessing an encampment for eviction, consequently the Travellers have a fair idea of the likely response by the CTU to encampments in particular locations (e.g. on a children's play area or the loading bay of a business compared with a waste ground or yard of a empty industrial unit) and soon began avoiding those locations where Police powers were most likely to be employed.

The direct linking of impact and behaviour, by the multi-agency CTU, to the speed of eviction has resulted in a few unauthorised sites being tolerated for a number of years, some for a number of months, the majority are evicted after 7-10 days and in exceptional circumstances within a few hours. The CTU has dealt with over 850 unauthorised encampments since December 2003 with about 80 of these evicted using Police powers.

On occasions only those acting antisocially (noise, litter and driving vehicles in a manner to cause harassment or danger) have been evicted using Police powers; the remainder evicted using the slower Council powers.

By having personal knowledge of individuals, and a defined aim of using evictions to reducing antisocial behaviour rather than to eradicate encampments by driving Travellers from an authority area the process of eviction has changed

All evictions since 2006 have been conducted without conflict and have required the presence of no other persons than the CTU Police Officer and Council Officer with the actual time of eviction by agreement (where possible the planned eviction date is specified as a Monday allowing a voluntary move to take place during the weekend)

It is made clear by the CTU Police Officer, (who usually attends encampments within a few hours of setting up), that all vehicles will be required to be fully legal. Vehicles that are untaxed and uninsured are seized, a number of stolen caravans have been recovered. Several Travellers resident on unauthorised encampments in Northampton successfully passed driving tests during 2006 to enable insurance to be obtained on their vehicles.

One Traveller in Northampton was prosecuted for flytipping in 2006. (The Environment agency changed the procedure for obtaining 'Waste Carrier Certificates', removing the need to provide a postal address and payment by cheque and assistance in filling in the required forms was provided, allowing Travellers to legitimately dispose of their trade waste).

Any toleration is supported by the provision of plastic refuse bags for domestic waste and the regular co-ordination of collection of rubbish, sometimes on a daily basis, by Northampton Borough Council as part of their mainstream domestic waste collection' rather than clearing of sites when finally vacated.

The fact that the CTU Officer is known to have personal knowledge of the majority of the Travellers has not only resulted in these enforcement actions been conducted without physical conflict but deterred those who are criminally active and likely to be wanted or disqualified from driving coming into the County.

The consistent message expressed the is that; by firm but fair enforcement the CTU is able to dispel negative stereotypes by been able to state (at public meetings, and in press interviews), that the proportion of vehicles that are Taxed and insured on Traveller encampments is actually higher than in the settled community.

All telephone calls to Local Authorities regarding Travellers are routed through to the CTU to provide a 'One Stop service'; calls are logged and filed with the papers relating to specific unauthorised encampments. Callers are updated on any developments such as eviction dates. Legitimate complaints of antisocial behaviour are used as evidence in the decision-making process relating to toleration or eviction. Keeping both callers and key community contacts informed of the response to any unauthorised encampment has been found an effective way of reducing community tension.

For the same reason Police control room staff were identified as having a key role, providing a first point of contact both for Travellers and the settled community. A cultural knowledge as well as an understanding of the Powers of Police, Local Authorities and private landowners was identified as important in preventing reinforced negative stereotyping or undue alarm. Training is now a standard part of induction of control room staff as well as Police Officers.

Acknowledging that the building of new Authorised Sites was not going to occur for some years and an



understanding that Travellers in 'Bricks and Mortar' housing would still be assessed for site accommodation resulted in nine families habitually resident within Northampton registering themselves as homeless with the borough council. Northampton Borough Council Housing Needs Allocation Policy was reviewed in 2006 as many of the Travellers were not obtaining sufficient 'points' Travellers in caravans on unauthorised encampments were not considered in need or were assessed as intentionally homeless. It was felt that this was racially discriminatory and changed. By December 2007 all the families had been housed (one moved onto a vacant plot on the Council Travellers site).

Assessment:

Through the CTU there is in place formal ongoing links between mainstream services and members of the Travelling Community within Northamptonshire. Travellers are represented on bodies that are making decisions that will affect their community in the future.

The open and consistent decision-making in implementing enforcement policies allows Travellers to have a reasonable anticipation of the likely eviction/toleration response, by the CTU, to their choice of site for occupation. As a result, totally inappropriate locations have reduced with a consequential reduction over time of the number of Police evictions (none since December 2007).

Over the duration of the CTU's existence the amount of resources needed to achieve an eviction has significantly reduced, since 2006 no eviction required the attendance of anyone other than the CTU Police officer and CTU Liaison Officer.

The press has been used proactively to inform the public of the complex issues surrounding housing provision for Travellers and a reduction of hostile coverage. During 2007 there were 10 articles in the Northampton Chronicle and Echo regarding unauthorised encampments in the town (compared with the 92 in 2000).

On 7 November 2007, following a freedom of information act request the paper report;

"Travellers site clean-up bill cut. Northampton Borough Council spent only £162 on traveller-related rubbish clearance costs last year compared with £13,954 during 2005/06 and £13,411 the year before.... Councillor Trini Crake (Lib Dem, Boughton Green), Northampton Borough Council cabinet member for environment, added: "We have been able to substantially reduce the cost of cleaning up after illegal encampments by working with the Countywide Traveller Unit. The CTU encourages travellers to bag their rubbish and our refuse collectors collect it."

Initially unauthorised encampments and evictions were used as performance indicators. The number of encampments in the town of Northampton reduced from 150 in 2000 to 55 in 2007 and following an eviction on 3 January 2008 there was no unauthorised encampments within the town.

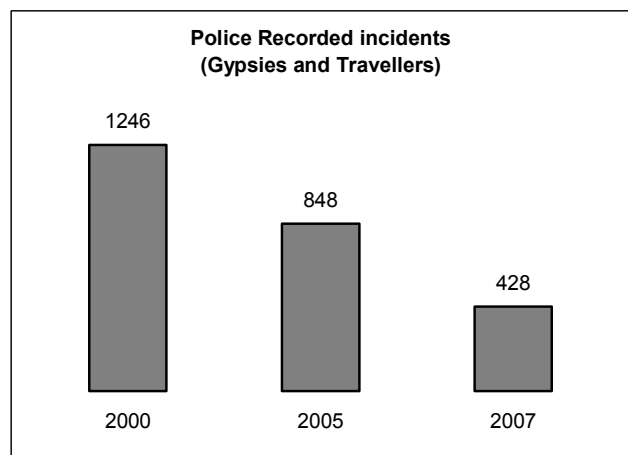
Numbers of encampments is not necessarily a good performance indicator; Small encampments caused far less negative impact and so two encampments of five caravans were preferable to one of ten.

Conversely the number of evictions and therefore individual recorded encampments is effected by enforcement action against inappropriate sites, as such locations were avoided and antisocial behaviour reduced so did the need for continual rapid evictions.

It was felt that the number of Caravans in total on unauthorised encampments as well as the number of complaints regarding these encampments was a far more relevant performance indicator.

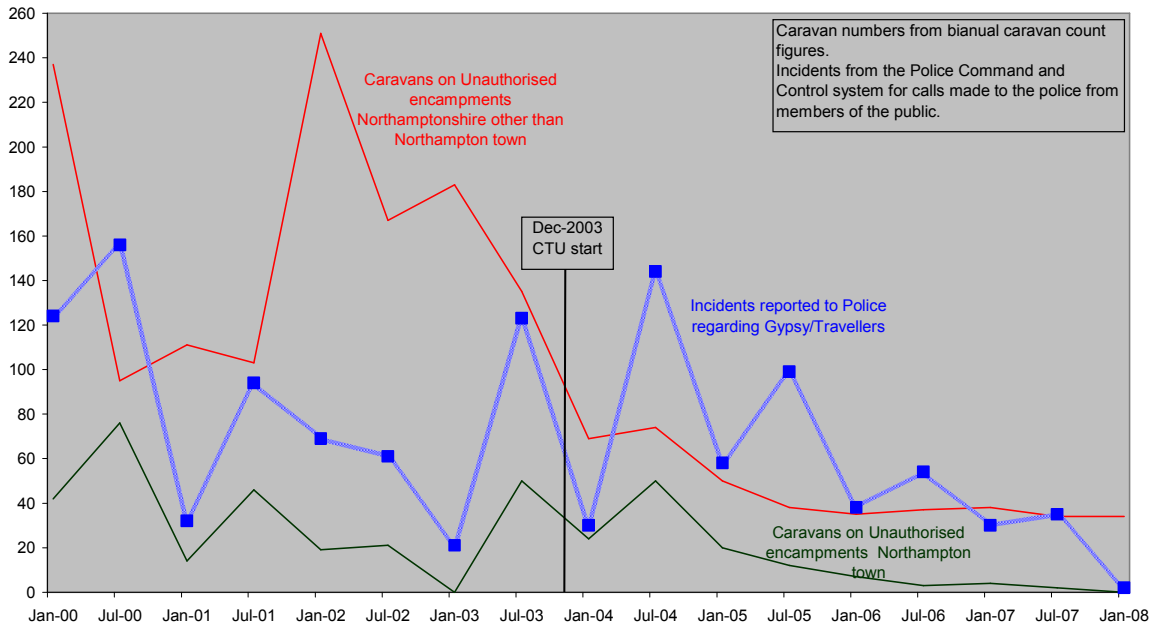
During 2000 there were 1246 incidents recorded by the Police, by 2005 this had reduced to 848 and in 2007 to 428. A similar reduction in telephone complaints received by the CTU has occurred.

In December 2007 there were only 2 calls to the Police and 4 to the CTU regarding unauthorised encampments which for the first time was below the total number of unauthorised encampments that month.



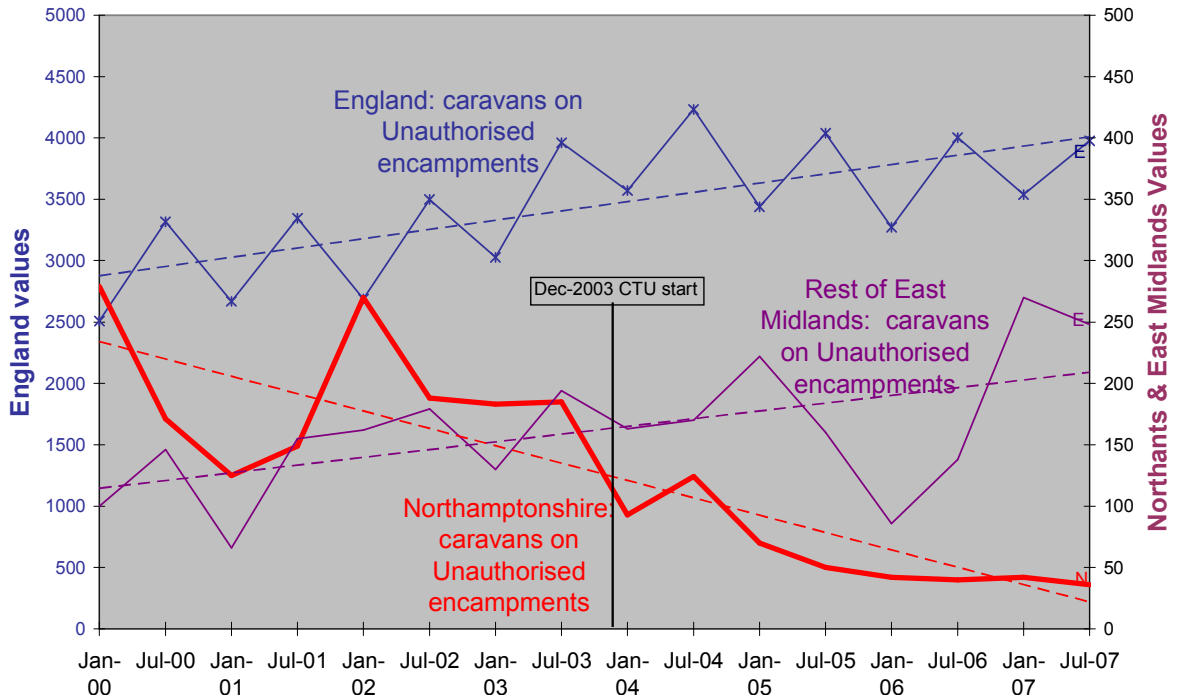
The biyearly caravan count shows the sustained reduction in numbers of caravans both within Northampton and Northamptonshire, with a similar sustained reduction in reported incidents.

Caravans on unauthorised encampments in Northamptonshire and Police incidents



A comparative analysis with the rest of the East Midlands region and of England demonstrates the difference to the trend within Northamptonshire. (It should be noted that as habitual residents within the county have been housed within Northamptonshire the reduction is not purely displacement).

Caravans on unauthorised Encampments: Trends 2000 -2007



The CTU is now moving from a primary enforcement role to one of support. Two floating Support officers managed by a Housing Association but reporting to the CTU Consortium will shortly be appointed to coincide with the building of the new authorised sites already planned within the county.

The Road Ahead: Final Report of the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers, (December 2007 Department for Communities and Local Government) stated;

“One of the many barriers to community cohesion is the lack of trust that many Gypsies and Travellers have in authority... hampering cooperation between Gypsies and Travellers and local authorities. Taking time to build those relationships and communicating effectively can bring real dividends. In the case of unauthorised encampments, for example, we heard that in many instances it was possible to deal with the issues through negotiation, without having to use formal enforcement powers. And where those powers are used, good relationships can mean that action is prompt and cost effective – the Northamptonshire experience of carrying out enforcement with a single police officer is a striking example of what can be achieved.”

State number of words used: 3287

NORTHAMPTON Chronicle & ECHO SAYS...

Police report significant reduction in calls from public over camps
Traveller complaints hit lowest level ever

■ Today's report on page 2

THE Chron has in the past criticised the authorities over a lack of willingness to deal with the problem of travellers. So, credit where it's due, we congratulate the hard-working Northamptonshire Travellers' Unit (CTU) and allied agencies on a dramatic fall in the number of complaints and unauthorised encampments.

Latest figures show that complaints fell to 428 last year. In 2000 there were 1,246.

The number of illegal camps on "sensitive" areas like playing fields has also dropped. This means that the cost of moving on travellers – a cost met by council tax payers – has also fallen.

Complaints are running at less than one per month per unauthorised camp.

3 march 2008 press cutting

Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative - *Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.*

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25th April 2008.