

Appendix 3:

Member Guide and Reporting Processes

Guide for Members Cherwell District Council South Northamptonshire District Council

Unauthorised encampments

What is an unauthorised encampment?

An unauthorised encampment occurs when trespassers enter and occupy land belonging to private landowners or local authorities without permission. Unauthorised encampments tend to occur on car parks, highway verges, parks, sports pitches, agricultural fields and any other area of accessible land.

Powers to remove an unauthorised encampment

A range of powers and options exist for local authorities, police and private land owners to take steps to remove encampments. The choice of who leads and which powers are used will depend on individual circumstances.

In both Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, the local authorities have protocols in place with the local police force outlining the circumstances under which different parties will take action to remove encampments.

In seeking to remove encampments, it is a legal requirement for the welfare of the travellers to be considered before action is taken. The welfare of the local community is of course also paramount. Balancing the two is a delicate and sensitive decision which local authorities and the police are required to make.

Reporting an unauthorised encampment

Initially, details of new unauthorised encampments should be referred to the Northamptonshire Countywide Traveller Unit or Oxfordshire County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service as appropriate. The Police should also be informed via 101. The Countywide Traveller Unit and Gypsy and Traveller Service only provide a response within normal office hours.

Northamptonshire

The Northamptonshire Countywide Traveller Unit (CTU) leads the response to unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments in Northamptonshire. The CTU is a single team that manages gypsy and traveller related issues on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council and local borough and district councils, with the exception of East Northamptonshire Council.

Northamptonshire Countywide Traveller Unit:

Tel: 01604 366234

Email: ctu@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Webform: <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/gypsies-and-travellers/Pages/contact-the-countywide-traveller-unit.aspx>

Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service is authorised to represent all district councils in Oxfordshire and act to remove campers from county council or district council owned land. They will also liaise with and advise private landowners or parish/ town councils when an unauthorised encampment occurs on their land.

Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Service

Tel: 01865 815545

Email: travellers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Webform: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/2186>