

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Community Participation Committee: 20 February 2008

Subject: Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee regarding the West Dunbartonshire Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy which sets out the Council's strategy for providing services to Gypsies/ Travellers and dealing with unauthorised encampments. This strategy is being presented to Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee on 30 January 2008 for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Council has developed this strategy to co-ordinate our approach to delivering services to Gypsies/ Travellers in West Dunbartonshire. This has developed from the work of the Gypsy Traveller Corporate Forum and also reflects legal requirements and good practice guidance.
- 2.2** The Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy will form part of the Council's portfolio of equality and diversity policies including the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and under the overall umbrella of the Equality and Diversity Strategy. The Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan, included at Appendix 1 of the strategy.
- 2.3** Gypsy/ Traveller communities are regarded by West Dunbartonshire Council as an ethnic minority and as such come under the protection of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended in 2000, and the Council's Race Equality Scheme.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy aims to develop a co-ordinated approach between departments to providing services for Gypsies/ Travellers. The implementation of the Strategy will be carried forward by the Gypsy Traveller Corporate Forum with annual reports to the Equality and Diversity Working Group, Race and Gender Working Group and Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee as part of the Annual Equalities Report.
- 3.2** A key part of the implementation of the strategy will also be to develop links between the Gypsy/ Traveller Corporate Forum and the Gypsy Traveller Action Group to ensure representation of the interests of Gypsies/ Travellers.
- 3.3** The Race Equality Scheme is due for review in 2008 and will be linked with the Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy.

- 3.4** The procedure for dealing with unauthorised encampments is outlined in Appendix 2 of the strategy, this includes a flowchart, which summarises the process.
- 3.5** An integrated impact assessment of this policy has been carried out with the report available as a background paper. This process highlighted some potentially positive impacts on health and equalities which could result from this strategy. However there were some areas requiring further work, consideration or information gathering. This will involve working with partner organisations such as the Health Board to develop joint approaches. Also a key part of the implementation of the strategy involves consultation with gypsies/ travellers which will allow these issues to be addressed.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** No direct personnel issues are raised in this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The report has no immediate financial implications, although any future agreement to improve or increase site provision or other services would have financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** A risk assessment was not required for this report.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1** The draft strategy aims to co-ordinate the Council's approach to providing services to Gypsies/ Travellers and outline its procedures for dealing with unauthorised encampments.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1** The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Draft Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy and Action Plan associated with it and make any comments relating to this strategy.
- 8.2** The Committee is asked to note the continuing work with the Gypsy Traveller Corporate Forum in implementing the strategy and developing closer links with the Gypsy Traveller Action Group.

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 4 February 2008

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Appendix 1	Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy
Background Paper	Integrated Impact Assessment of Gypsy/ Traveller Strategy
Wards Affected:	All wards are affected by the report.