

GYPHY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 9 MARCH, 2016

- Present:** Councillors A Hendry (Chair), G A Carr, G J Clark, L Clark (as substitute for Councillor I W Gray), G L Owen (as substitute for Councillor J Latham), P Oddie and E A Robertson.
- Apologies:** Councillors I W Gray, J Latham and D Stewart, and H W Vernal and A S Grant (ex officio).
- Officers:** Housing Manager (Strategy); Team Manager (Public Health), Infrastructure Services; Committee Officer (Claire Young), Business Services; Minority Ethnic Communities Officer, Infrastructure Services; and Trainee Solicitor (John Forsyth), Business Services.
- In Attendance:** Education Support Officer (Ian Mitchell), Education & Children's Services; CLD Worker (Carol Bambrough), Education & Children's Services; Dr Leanne Townsend, Research Fellow, Aberdeen University; and Deputy Head Teacher and Pupils from Kinellar Primary School.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared by any member of the Sub-Committee, in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Sub-Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 25 NOVEMBER, 2015

There had been circulated and was **noted** the Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 25 November, 2015, subject to Cllr E A Robertson highlighting that she had requested that her dissent be recorded in relation to the decision taken at Item 4.

The members further **requested** that officers take forward the request agreed at the last Sub-Group meeting, that a report be considered at a meeting of Aberdeenshire Council requesting that a planning application be submitted for the development of a Gypsy/Traveller stopover site at Aikey Brae, Old Deer.

4. EDUCATION UPDATE – ORAL PRESENTATION BY IAN MITCHELL, EDUCATION OFFICER, ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Mr Mitchell provided the members with an overview of the approach that the Education Service was taking to encourage the children of Gypsy/Traveller families to attend school. He informed that Aberdeenshire Council were represented on the Traveller Education Network which shared good practice and ideas, highlighted national issues and was also a source of advice to travelling families in terms of accessing education. In addition to this there was cross-authority working with Highland, Moray and Angus Councils as well as a pan-Grampian group which Aberdeenshire Council was part of.

During discussion, the members asked if Education officers considered the health and wellbeing of the children they worked with, as well as their education; whether there were performance indicators to demonstrate that the Council were 'getting it right for every child'; whether there was a different attitude within Gypsy/Traveller families towards secondary education and what percentage of these children went on to secondary education; for further detail of the communication strategies used between authorities to support interrupted learning; and whether it was difficult to maintain a named person for each child.

Thereafter, and having thanked Mr Mitchell for his informative presentation, the Sub-Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the information provided, and
- (2) **requested** that officers report back to the Sub-Committee with further information on the methods used to demonstrate that the authority was getting it right for every child in terms of the GIRFEC legislation.

5. GYPSY/TRAVELLER ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS – ORAL PRESENTATION BY PUPILS FROM KINELLAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms Stannard, Depute Head Teacher at Kinellar Primary School, was in attendance with three pupils. They provided information on the initiatives being used at the school to ensure the integration of the pupils from Gypsy/Traveller families and the young people demonstrated that everyone was treated equally and that they did not see any differences between the Gypsy/Traveller and settled community pupils, within the school.

Ms Stannard explained that when working with Gypsy/Traveller families, the school considered prior learning and culture; communication strategies; any additional supports that might be required; nursery provision; and future education.

During discussion, the members asked the children questions about what they liked to do in school; if there was anything that they thought would make school better for them; what they hoped to achieve whether they were older; and what they liked to do during their holidays.

Thereafter, and having commended the staff, pupils and parents of Kinellar Primary School, the Sub-Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked Ms Stannard and her pupils for an excellent presentation.

6. ENGAGING WITH THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY – ORAL PRESENTATION FROM CAROL BAMBROUGH, COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Ms Bambrough provided the members with an overview of the Big Blue Bus project which was a six week summer project run within Aberdeenshire in the summer. The bus, with agreement from the Gypsy/Traveller communities, would attend encampments to provide a range of relaxed and informal services, including fun projects to involve the children and their parents; sports based activities; a library service; an approach to address health issues; and local contact information. It was a multi-agency approach which identified how best the Council and other partners could support the families in the area.

During discussion, the members asked if the service measured performance to evidence that the services being provided were making a difference; asked what the service hoped to achieve in terms of their mission statement; queried whether any services were being provided in South Aberdeenshire; and asked about the reaction of the adults to the services provided.

Thereafter, and having thanked Ms Bambrough for her informative presentation, the Sub-Committee:-

- (1) **noted** the information provided, and
- (2) **requested** that officers report back to the Sub-Committee with further information about performance outcomes and how these could be measured by the service in order to evidence the impact of the services provided.

7. EXPLORING DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AMONGST GYPSY/TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES IN NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND – ORAL PRESENTATION BY DR LEANNE TOWNSEND, RESEARCH FELLOW, ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY

Dr Townsend advised the members that she had spent five years with the Digital Economy Hub, exploring the benefits of digital engagement for rural communities. Gypsy/Traveller sites had been consulted as part of a pilot project in order to understand how they currently engaged with digital content and whether they had experienced any issues. The project was looking at the many ways that digital material could make information more accessible and included things such as digital storytelling and short videos.

During discussion, the members asked whether older persons in the community were as engaged as younger persons. Suggestions were also made that the project could focus on heritage as this was very important; that there was currently a digital bus in South Aberdeenshire which could possibly be utilised; and that a mini festival might be a good way to engage with more people from the Gypsy/Traveller community.

It was further commented that, in terms of the Gypsy/Traveller festivals that were currently held in the area, it might be helpful to have digital material about these to evidence good practice and to promote a positive story to those in the settled community.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked Dr Townsend for her presentation.

