

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 23 NOVEMBER, 2016

Present: Councillors A Hendry (Chair), G W Carr, G J Clark, J Ingram, J J Latham, P Oddie and E A Robertson.

Apologies: Councillor D Stewart.

Officers: Head of Housing, Housing Manager (Strategy), Minority Ethnic Communities Officer, Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer, Senior Solicitor (I Meredith), Policy Planner (W Myslowiecka), and Committee Officer (K Macleod).

In Attendance: Inspector C Taylor, Police Scotland.

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and no declarations were intimated.

2. STATEMENT ON EQUALITIES

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 15 JUNE, 2016

There had been circulated and was **noted** the Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 15 June, 2016.

4. MULTI-AGENCY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT APPROACH FOR DEALING WITH UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

There had been circulated a report dated 28 October, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which (1) provided the Committee with the revised policy on Management of Unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller Encampments and the revised Gypsy/Traveller Code of Conduct and explained that these had been updated to reflect changes in service responsibilities for unauthorised encampments and the employment of a full time Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer; and (2) provided information and a memorandum of understanding in relation to a new Multi-Agency Emergency Management Procedure for

dealing with unauthorised encampments where the Code of Conduct had been persistently breached.

During discussion, members commented and asked questions in relation to possible changes to relevant legislation following withdrawal from the European Union; policing issues at unauthorised encampments and ensuring the Code of Conduct was followed; mapping of encampments; dealing with waste; draft Scottish Government guidance; involvement of trading standards; community-operated caravan sites and whether any guidance was given to the groups running these; officer safety when visiting encampments; and dealing with dogs. It was further suggested that more could be done to seek payment from Gypsies/Travellers for provision of refuse and toilet facilities and remedial work on vacation of sites.

The Sub-Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) the revised policy on the Management of Unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller Encampments;
- (2) the revised Gypsy/Traveller Code of Conduct;
- (3) the new Multi-Agency Emergency Management Approach for dealing with encampments that persistently breached the Code of Conduct as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding;
- (4) to request that the Gypsy/Traveller Officers Group give further consideration to the interpretation of what constituted an overcrowded site in terms of the Code of Conduct;
- (5) to request that members of the Sub-Committee be notified of unauthorised encampments; and
- (6) that the policy be reviewed in twelve months' time.

5. MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL FOR THE AIKEY BRAE GYPSY/TRAVELLER SITE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 29 September, 2016, (Item 15), when the Council had agreed to the submission of a planning application for a Gypsy/Traveller stopover site at Aikey Brae and instructed officers to submit a report to the Sub-Committee on options for the future management of the site, there had been circulated a report dated 4 November, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which detailed three options for managing a Gypsy/Traveller site at Aikey Brae.

The Housing Manager (Strategy) advised that there were challenges and opportunities associated with each option and that, informed by engagement with the Gypsy/Traveller community and consideration of practice in other areas, the preferred option was a site owned by Aberdeenshire Council and managed by the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the three options for the management of the Aikey Brae site, Old Deer, as detailed in the report, should it gain planning permission for a Gypsy/Traveller site;
- (2) to support option 1: site owned by Aberdeenshire Council and managed by the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer based on site; and
- (3) that the management arrangements of the Gypsy/Traveller site at Aikey Brae should be kept under review.

6. GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE DATES FOR 2017

There had been circulated a report by the Director of Business Services which sought consideration of proposed Sub-Committee meeting dates for 2017.

The Sub-Committee **agreed** to meet on the following dates:-

Wednesday, 1 March, 2017;
Wednesday, 21 June, 2017;
Wednesday, 13 September, 2017; and
Wednesday 22 November, 2017.