

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 22 NOVEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), A M Allan, N Baillie, M Ewenson, M A Ford (as a substitute for Councillor S Wallace), D Robertson, H Smith and I W Taylor.

Apologies: Councillor S Wallace.

Officers: Head of Housing, Housing Manager (Strategy), Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer, Quality Improvement Officer (ASN Pupil Support), Strategic Housing Officer, Inspector C Taylor, Police Scotland and Senior Committee Officer (Mr N David).

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were declared.

2A. 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.
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment has been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

2B. RESOLUTION

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of Item 7, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF 6 SEPTEMBER, 2017

There was circulated, **noted** and **approved** as appropriate, the Minute of Meeting of 6 September, 2017.

4. ACTION PLAN FOR THE GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 6 September, 2017 (Item 4), there was circulated a report dated 30 October, 2017, by the Housing Manager (Strategy) on the Action Plan for the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee.

The report reminded members that the Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017 identified minority ethnic communities as one of nine priorities. For each of the priorities in the Local Housing Strategy there was an action plan and performance management framework. Within the Minority Ethnic Communities' Priority there was a Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group which monitored and delivered an action plan across partner agencies. Whilst much of this work was shared with the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee, it was agreed at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 6 September, 2017 to formalise this approach by creating an action plan for members to review at each meeting.

In this regard the Action Plan was included as an appendix to the report. It had been formed by actions from previous meetings of the Sub-Committee, including the wide ranging information session held on 21 June, 2017 about meeting the needs of Gypsy/Travellers.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee discussed the Action Plan and **agreed** to continue to monitor it at future meetings.

5. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM GYPSY/TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES – UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 6 September, 2017 (Item 6), there was circulated a report dated 31 October, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services which provided an update on the educational provision for children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller communities.

The report explained as background that all children and young people had a right to education in Scotland. Under Section 2 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, a clear duty was placed on education authorities and schools to have regard to a child's right to a "school education". In this respect, learning packs were currently being developed with the first English language pack almost complete. Advice had been sought from officers within the Curriculum Team. The contents of the learning pack had been discussed and resources ordered. It was intended that these would also be made available to families who had children who did not attend school.

The report went on to explain that the model to provide support for school colleagues for children enrolling with interrupted learning was being investigated. An information leaflet for parents and families was at draft stage and would be finalised.

The report concluded by explaining that progress was being made regarding professional support for schools, such as: the draft Children Missing from Education (CME) guidance contained specific information regarding children from gypsy/traveller communities; and the sharing of good practice was taking place via the Grampian Gypsy/Traveller Interagency Sub Group.

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

- (1) that further development take place regarding learning provision for children and young people from the travelling culture within Aberdeenshire, based on a mixed model of delivery,

- (2) that further development on partnership working to support families, children and young people from the travelling culture within Aberdeenshire take place, and
- (3) that the update on educational provision for children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller community remain as a permanent item on agendas of future meetings of the Sub-Committee; and that in the meantime the Housing Manager (Strategy) make arrangements to submit an item for inclusion on the agenda of a future meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee on the educational provision for children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller Community.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Sub-Committee **agreed** that the following meetings take place in 2018, at 10.15am, in Woodhill House, Aberdeen:

21 February
20 June
5 September
21 November

7. GREENBANKS GYPSY/TRAVELLER SITE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Sub-Committee of 6 September, 2017 (Item 4) and the Banff and Buchan Area Committee of 14 November, 2017 (Item 22), there was circulated a report dated 15 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Greenbanks Gypsy/Traveller site.

The report explained as background that, in recent years, Greenbanks in Banff had been the only permanent site for Gypsy/Travellers in Aberdeenshire. It was currently open on a seasonal basis from April to September. It comprised twenty pitches on the site and each pitch had its own chalet with a kitchen area, plumbing for a washing machine, toilet and a separate shower room. There was a warden's office onsite. Occupancy was high every year and the site had a waiting list.

The Scottish Government had guidance on improving Gypsy/Traveller sites run by local authorities. This set out a series of minimum standards covering physical facilities and services provided by the site provider. There was a particular focus on energy efficiency and the requirement that all amenity blocks should meet a rating of band E or higher. A set of core rights and responsibilities had been developed for tenants of gypsy/traveller sites. Site providers had until 30 June, 2018 to meet these new requirements. The implications for Greenbanks had been assessed by officers in Property and Tenancy Services. A working group was established under the Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group to consider the different options. These options were outlined in detail within the report.

There followed a discussion by the Sub-Committee. During the discussion members suggested that officers explore the potential for there to be a flexibility in extending the seasonal basis of the site beyond the current April to September arrangement. It was also highlighted that the Banff and Buchan Area Committee had indicated that they supported the option whereby the existing facilities would be upgraded to meet the 2018 Scottish Government standards.

The Chair advised that the Greenbanks Gypsy/Traveller site would be discussed at the Policy Budget Steering Group. Thereafter, the Sub-Committee **agreed** that the Housing Manager (Strategy) report to a future meeting with full financial details regarding the options for the future of the Greenbanks site, including the potential to be flexible in extending the seasonal basis beyond the current April to September arrangement.

