

## **REPORT TO GYPSY TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE – 30 JUNE 2021**

### **ACTION PLAN FOR THE GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB-COMMITTEE**

#### **1 Reason for Report / Summary**

- 1.1 It has been agreed that the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee Action Plan will be monitored at every meeting of the sub-committee. It should also help to inform the agenda for future meetings.

#### **2 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 2.1 **Comment on the new action plan to meet the needs of Gypsy/Traveller communities in Aberdeenshire.**

#### **3 Purpose and Decision Making Route**

- 3.1 The Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan can be viewed at Appendix 1. The Action Plan has been informed by engagement with Gypsy/Travellers, community representatives and discussion with the Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group.
- 3.2 Members of the Sub Committee are asked to consider the actions within the Action Plan and continue to monitor it at its regular meetings

#### **4 Discussion**

- 4.1 Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023, identifies minority ethnic communities as one of nine priorities. For each of the priorities in the local housing strategy, there is an action plan and performance management framework.
- 4.2 The action plan has been reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure it reflects the needs of Gypsy/Traveller communities in the years ahead.
- 4.3 Members are asked to consider the proposed actions in the plan.

#### **5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk**

- 5.1 This action plan contributes to all of the Council priorities and particularly resilient communities, health and wellbeing, education and infrastructure.
- 5.2 The Aberdeenshire action plan is aligned with the Scottish Government and COSLA joint action plan 'Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers' national action plan that was published in late 2019. This report helps deliver against Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan and the priority of Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing. This report helps deliver on the Local Outcome Improvement Plan Priority of Child Poverty.

5.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			x
Staffing			x
Equalities	x		
Fairer Scotland Duty	x		
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	x		

5.4 An equality impact assessment was carried out as part of the development of The Action Plan. This has been previously reported to the Sub-Committee and can be viewed at:

[Aberdeenshire Council - Committees and Meetings](#)

It identified a positive impact as follows:

- The Action Plan includes increasing site provision for Gypsy/Travellers
- Gypsy/Travellers will have better incomes in and out of work
- Gypsy/Travellers are to be able to access appropriate land, housing and support and encourage social integration.
- The provision of well-maintained permanent and stop over sites will contribute to meeting the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller Community.
- Gypsy/Travellers wishing to build private sites will be provided with assistance.

5.5 Any resource implications arising from these actions will be reported to the sub-committee accordingly.

## 6 Scheme of Governance

6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make.

6.2 This committee is able to consider this item because it relates to a function of the committee to develop and approve Council policies and practices in respect of a) addressing the accommodation needs which meets the needs, culture and lifestyle of Gypsy/Travellers and unauthorised encampments.





**Alan Wood, Director of Infrastructure Services**



Report by Ally Macleod, Housing Strategy and Building Standards Manager  
21 June 2021



**List of Appendices** Appendix 1. Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee Action Plan.


**GYPSY/TRAVELLER SUB COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN – 30 JUNE 2021**




**Appendix 1**

	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Better incomes in and out of work	Help Gypsy/Travellers maximise their incomes and increase uptake of financial support they are eligible for	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer is part of the Financial Inclusion Partnership and has been progressing benefits claims on behalf of the Travelling community, establishing any other entitlements to maximise incomes.	
		Support parents to overcome barriers to work, and in-work poverty	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer has been progressing the provision of iPad, laptops and chrome books for adults as well as children to facilitate digital inclusion, to assist with benefit claims and other online activities. She is also arranging training courses in, for example, chainsaw competency and towing licences. She also provides practical assistance with job applications and CVs.	
		Improve standard of living by reducing daily living costs for Gypsy/Travellers	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer assists with additional payments for utilities, replacement white goods, foodbank deliveries and provisions for children from Abernecessities.	
	Provide more and better accommodation	Develop and agree a new Gypsy/Traveller Site Provision Strategy 2021-2026	Housing Manager	Area Committees have commented on the strategy and it is to be considered by the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee on 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2021.  It has been agreed that identifying land for a site in central Aberdeenshire is a priority. Officers monitor the asset disposal register for possible new sites in addition to those identified in the LDP	

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Update	Status
				<p>There is a lack of suitable permanent site provision in Aberdeenshire where Gypsy/Travellers can live in a culturally appropriate manner and there is a need for at least one such site.</p> <p>Consultation to be carried out with Gypsy/Travellers on the type of provision they would like to see in Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>The Strategy should reflect a mixture of provision.</p> <p>Support continues to be provided to Gypsy/Travellers wishing to build their own sites.</p>	
		Consider upgrades for Aikey Brae as part of new national fund.		To be discussed and suggested improvements to the site drawn up previously to be reviewed in the light of the funding.	
		Carry out site improvements at Aikey Brae and Greenbanks.		<p>Improvements to Aikey Brae and Greenbanks sites are ongoing.</p> <p>Works starting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at Aikey Brae and include the provision of a height restricted, security barrier additional safety lighting, water stance, storage facilities, educational playground markings, play equipment, planters, outdoor seating, picnic benches, rotary driers and Wi-Fi.</p> <p>Wi-Fi is now in place at Greenbanks facilitating digital inclusion for the residents. Seating, picnic benches and planters are also on the site.</p>	

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Update	Status
	Improve access to public services	Raise awareness	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	<p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer provides advice, support and signposting for occupants on unauthorised encampments.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer continues to monitor unauthorised encampments and provide regular updates to members.</p> <p>Engagement continues to take place with Gypsy/Travellers and concepts for well managed encampments forms part of the discussion.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire is a member of COSLA's 'Negotiated Stopping as an approach' group, considering best practice and listening to feedback.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer continues to provide support for Gypsy/Travellers wishing to access housing and Officer supports families with homeless applications and housing issues.</p>	
		Health		<p>During the pandemic and lockdown the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer contacted every family of which she was aware on a weekly basis, in the settled community and on private sites throughout Aberdeenshire as per COVID-19 Response Planning Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Communities, to ascertain if any assistance was required and assuring them of her support and concern. This was invaluable for their wellbeing and mental health.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer also contacted members of the Travelling community to inform them of the opportunity for vaccination.</p>	

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Update	Status
				<p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer raises awareness of services available and will assist Travellers to access them as required. Child Smile visited Aikey Brae pre pandemic as did Health Visitors.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer has assisted with PIP claims and blue badge applications.</p>	
		Education		<p>The pandemic has had a significant effect on education provision. Throughout, support for families was provided by the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer, Additional Support for Learning teacher and the Quality Improvement Officer.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer and Lyndsay Aspey, Teacher of ASL ensured learning packs were delivered to families. Learning boxes have been developed by Lyndsay Aspey for distribution by the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer.</p> <p>Through the Connecting Scotland initiative, families and young people were provided with Chromebooks, laptops, iPads and Mi-Fis to support learning, through digital connectivity to improve education outcomes and avoid digital isolation. Lyndsay Aspey and QIO, Paul Cruickshank have identified families who have not yet received devices and collated applications.</p> <p>Three families are being supported through the digital families' pilot project, through STEP. Online resources have been developed for National 2 and 3 literacy and numeracy.</p>	

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Update	Status
				<p>Collaborative and partnership working continue to be at the forefront of developing learning provision with the Additional Support for Learning teacher attending appropriate national and local events and continuing to investigate ways to support families to engage in learning.</p> <p><a href="#">Improving education outcomes for children and young people from Travelling Cultures: Guidance</a> is now on the Scottish Government Website.</p>	
	Tackle racism and discrimination	Combat prejudice against the Gypsy/Traveller community, including, by providing information about culture, history and needs, whenever opportunity arises		<p>Gypsy/Traveller Cultural Awareness raising sessions have been rolled out in-house, with partners and the third sector, to promote a positive message.</p> <p>Awareness raised on North East activities run by Article 12 for Gypsy Roma and Traveller history month.</p> <p>Officers work together, to monitor and respond where appropriate to counter prejudiced media coverage and continue to work closely with Corporate Communications.</p>	
	Improve Gypsy/Traveller Representation	Consult regularly with Gypsy/Traveller communities on accommodation and services to ensure these are fit for purpose	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	<p>Annual surveys take place at Greenbanks Travellers Site as per Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) requirements. The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer carries out ad hoc surveys with the occupants of Aikey Brae Travellers Site.</p> <p>Additional targeted surveys are carried out as required.</p>	
		Involve Gypsy/Travellers in the design and delivery of any new accommodation proposals	Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer	<p>Residents on Greenbanks were consulted on the upgrade of the facilities to achieve Scottish Government minimum standards. The upgrade was completed in 2020 and feedback has been positive.</p> <p>Residents on Aikey Brae Greenbanks have been consulted on improvements from the Scottish</p>	

	Outcome	Action	Lead	Update	Status
				Government '£2m additional funding for public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites over and above the Minimum Standards.'	
		Ensure regular input from Gypsy/Traveller communities into decision-making groups	Strategic Housing Officer	<p>The Strategic Housing Officer and the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer attend the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee meetings, are members of the Gypsy/Traveller Interagency Group and COSLA's Negotiated Stopping as an approach 'group.</p> <p>The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison has a list of details of Gypsy/Travellers who she can contact for input to decision making.</p> <p>Introduce a Scrutiny Panel</p>	