

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
12 February 2014****Gypsy/Traveller Strategy for Perth and Kinross 2013 - 2018****Executive Director Housing & Community Care****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report asks the Council to endorse and approve the Perth and Kinross Gypsy / Traveller Strategy. It summarises the rationale behind the development of a Gypsy / Traveller Strategy, the wide consultation undertaken and the resultant issues.

The Strategy has been developed with the Gypsy / Travellers community and community planning partners. It will be submitted to the Community Planning Partnership for approval.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Scottish Gypsy/Travellers is the term officially used by the Scottish Government to refer to an indigenous, nomadic ethnic minority whose history has been entwined with, but distinct from, that of the wider Scottish population for many centuries.
- 1.2 Perth and Kinross has traditionally been an area that Gypsy/Traveller community members have lived in or travelled through.
- 1.3 The Council has a history of positive working relationships with Gypsy / Travellers which has sought to improve engagement and foster harmony within the whole community. The absence of an informed strategy has sometimes resulted in a reactive approach which has failed to deliver positive outcomes for all concerned.
- 1.4 The objective of bringing the Gypsy /Traveller Strategy forward for approval is to build on existing good practice and further develop a positive relationship between the Council, its partners and the Gypsy / Travellers community. It describes within the one key document the range of outcomes sought for the Gypsy / Traveller families and children and also sets out future planned work which the community has identified as a priority for them during the consultation process. One document with an accompanying Action Plan ensures a more cohesive approach by all partners involved in service delivery and also provides the Gypsy/Traveller community with one source of information which will help manage expectations.
- 1.5 The strategy describes a continuing and inclusive way of working with the Gypsy/Traveller community which will help to achieve better outcomes for their children and families into the future. Activities outlined within the document offer opportunities to bring all communities together to learn about different aspects of their respective cultures and create more tolerance and greater understanding which can help reduce prejudice.

- 1.6. The Scottish Census figures for 2011 included “Gypsy/Traveller” as a classification for the first time and the results were recently released. Nationally 4,212 people were recorded as such with the highest individual local authority population being 415 in Perth and Kinross.
- 1.7. Many Gypsy/Travellers face difficulties in trying to live their traditional lifestyle and in understanding what services are available to help. Through extensive consultation, we have been told that our local Gypsy/Travellers have faced discrimination in our communities and they have not always received services to a standard in common with the settled community. This means that they have found it difficult to trust organisations to meet their expectations. This Strategy has been developed in order to respond to these issues appropriately and continue to take forward the items of good practice which already exist.

2 The Need for a Gypsy / Traveller Strategy

- 2.1 Access to health, education and social services can be difficult for Gypsies/Travellers. Encampments, some of which can experience tensions within communities, have been established for a variety of reasons, including pressure created by inadequate site provision in Perth & Kinross, particularly for transient travellers in and around Perth City.
- 2.2 There is a need for a strategy to improve and sustain community relations through action that can be supported by all parties (individuals, politicians, public authorities, representative organisations, Gypsy/Travellers and local communities), and in a manner underpinned by improved communication, respect and understanding.
- 2.3 In so doing, it seeks to identify the actions required to address the legitimate concerns of the settled community and to improve options available to Gypsies/Travellers who spend time in the area. The main aims of the strategy are:
 - To develop a more coordinated approach to the provision of services and accommodation for Gypsy / Travellers in Perth and Kinross
 - To deliver joined - up services to meet the needs of the Gypsy/ Traveller community in Perth and Kinross
 - To ensure we are meeting our equalities legislative requirements
 - To build on existing consultation with the local Gypsy / Traveller community and continue to engage and consult with this community

3 National and Local Progress

- 3.1 Nationally the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee has published 2 Inquiry Reports ‘Gypsy/Travellers and Care’ (September 2012) and ‘Where Gypsy/Travellers Live’ (March 2013) and these reports were recently subject to a Parliamentary debate <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=8467&mode=pdf>. Local Gypsy/Traveller community members joined Council staff in providing evidence to these inquiries. This Strategy provides a positive response to many of the issues raised in these Reports.

- 3.2 Work has been ongoing for some time with many members of the local Gypsy/Traveller community in terms of support and service provision. Community facing services have established a track-record of work with the community whilst external partners such as NHS Tayside; MECOPP Gypsy/Travellers Carers Project and Police Scotland have also been actively involved. This Strategy consolidates existing engagement work with the local Gypsy/Traveller community into one key document and also sets out future planned work which the community has identified as a priority for them during the Strategy consultation process. One document with an accompanying Action Plan ensures a more cohesive approach by all partners involved in service delivery and also provides the Gypsy/Traveller community with one source of information which will help manage expectations.

4 Key Issues identified through Consultation

4.1 Site Development

It is acknowledged that the development of new site provision (whether permanent or temporary) can be a challenging issue. The needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community (highlighted in the consultation responses) must be balanced with the views of the wider community to avoid creating unnecessary tension when seeking potential site locations. Unfortunately media reports can often sensationalise and inflame a particular situation. A Site Development Group has been examining the suitability of potential site locations for some time. This work is ongoing and potential sites are being identified through due process.

4.2 Anti -Discrimination Advice and Equality of Access to Services

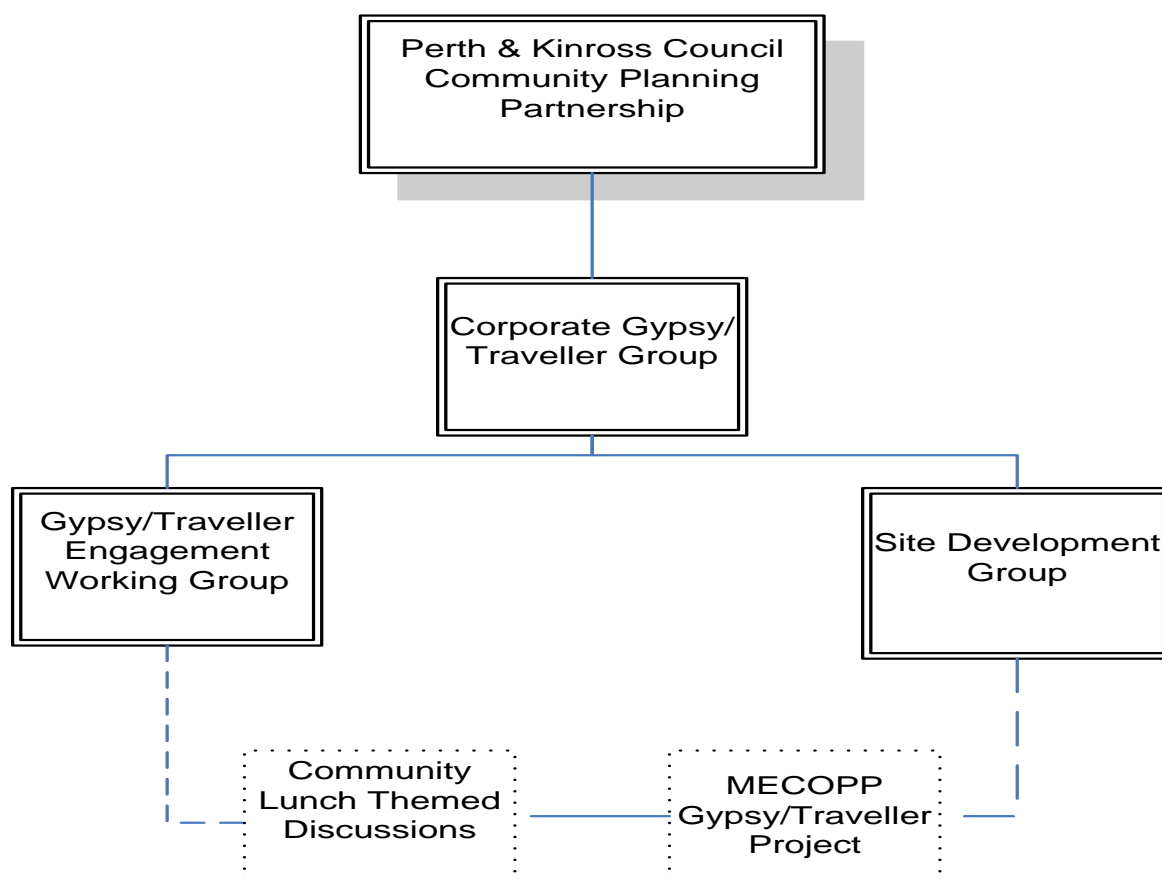
This includes work with local communities in the areas where potential site locations may be identified. Awareness raising with local communities dispels myths using training materials delivered by MECOPP Gypsy/Traveller Carers Project. Staff, Elected Members and Tenants Groups have received awareness training which includes factual community intelligence related to issues of concern raised at previous site locations and methods used to address these.

4.3 Management of Temporary Sites

It is acknowledged that when Gypsy/Traveller community members travel through Perth and Kinross and encampments are established temporarily such a situation needs to be managed sensitively and consistently by the Council and other partners involved (Police Scotland and NHS Tayside). Again the expectations of the Gypsy/Traveller community must be balanced with the views of the wider community where any temporary sites are located. A protocol for the Management of Temporary Sites has been in operation for a number of years and it is currently being reviewed and updated by community planning partners. It will be circulated to Elected Members for consultation before being finalised.

5 Monitoring Progress

- 5.1 The structure below outlines a delivery mechanism for a Perth and Kinross wide Strategy. This structure has already been proven to work. For example ,it has enabled successful engagement and extensive consultation with Gypsy / Travellers; an annual Health & Wellbeing event for Gypsy / Travellers ; wider community Involvement in Scottish Government Inquiries; accreditation of Gypsy /Travellers learning and improvements in health and living conditions.



- 5.2 The Strategy will report quarterly on progress to the Corporate Gypsy/Traveller Group and annually to the Community Planning Partnership to reflect the commitment of partners in Police Scotland and NHS Tayside in the development of this Strategy. The structure above outlines how this reporting process will work. A report will also be submitted annually to the Council's Equality and Diversity Member Officer Working Group.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 6.1 It is recommended that members:

- (i) Approve the content of the Perth & Kinross Gypsy /Travellers Strategy
- (ii) Note the strategy will be submitted to the next Community Planning Partnership for approval
- (iii) Note the monitoring and reporting arrangements through the Community Planning Partnership

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The undernoted table should be completed for all reports. Where the answer is 'yes', the relevant section(s) should also be completed. Where the answer is 'no', the relevant section(s) should be marked 'not available (n/a)'.

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report supports all outcomes in the Community Plan:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

1.2 This report supports all outcomes in the Corporate Plan:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no additional financial implications arising directly as a result of this report at this time. Ongoing work is managed within existing budgets and any new developments which arise in the future will be subject to budget approval as appropriate.

Workforce

2.2 There are no additional workforce implications arising directly as a result of this report at this time. Ongoing work is managed within existing officer workloads.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no additional Asset Management implications arising as a result of this report at this time. Any new proposed developments which arise in the future will be subject to the relevant approval process at that time.

3. Assessments

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation:
- provision of appropriate information and access to appropriate services
 - increased engagement with all members of the Gypsy/Traveller community regardless of gender
 - improved service for those taking account of their disability or age-related requirements as appropriate

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

The proposal recommended in this paper has been considered under the Act and the pre-screening has identified that the proposal will have no environmental effects, it is therefore exempt. The reason for concluding this is that the recommendation in this report will have no direct environmental effects.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

No steps are required to be taken in this area.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted during the development of this Strategy.

Risk

- 3.5 Any risks associated with this Strategy will be mitigated by the monitoring and reporting procedures which have been put in place.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 This Strategy has been developed across services within the Council and all relevant Senior Management Teams have been consulted along with the Executive Officer Team and the Equality and Diversity Member Officer Working Group.

External

- 4.2 This Strategy has been developed in partnership with key Community Planning Partners NHS Tayside and Police Scotland. Members of the Gypsy/Traveller community have also contributed to the consultation process (as detailed in full in Section 3 of the Strategy document). The consultation was also made publicly available on the Council website.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Section 6 of the Strategy document outlines the process for managing, monitoring and reviewing it. This includes the communication process. Easy-read versions of the Strategy and an audio version were also made available during the consultation.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No other background papers were referred to in the preparation of this report.

3. APPENDICES

The Gypsy/Traveller Strategy for Perth and Kinross is appended to this Report.