

Environment Select Committee

4 September 2018

Traveller Reference Group Update

Purpose

1. To provide an update to the Environment Select Committee on the progress of the Traveller Reference Group and Traveller Strategy.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Gypsy and Traveller communities and saw the publication of a refreshed Traveller Strategy in September 2016. The refresh of the strategy contributed to reigniting partnerships between services, and put in place a new action plan to provide an integrated and supportive approach to engaging with Traveller communities to help them live safer, healthier, active and high-quality lives. In line with previous Wiltshire Council's Business plan, the strategy aimed to create strong resilient communities and protecting those most vulnerable.
3. Wiltshire Council provides services to all people, regardless of their lifestyle, and at the moment, Traveller communities do not have equal outcomes and life chances compared with settled communities. Services across the public sector then need to work together to empower and support both Traveller and settled communities to live together.
4. There are several definitions of 'Travellers' used in different legal and policy documents. According to the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, and the Human Rights Act 1998 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as having ethnic status. For the purposes of this document, and in line with the strategy, Travellers are defined as *"persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show-people or circus people travelling together as such."*
5. Travelling showpeople are defined as *"Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above."* Boaters or Boat Dwellers (referred to as 'Bargees' in the original strategy) have several definitions which were collated in the Bath and North-East Somerset Council task and finish group review on Boat Dwellers and River Travellers. The document identifies several organisations which have varying definitions but with the following commonalities: boat

dwellers live on boats, whether or not they have a permanent residential mooring or are travelling inland waterways. Boaters are described as nomadic people.

6. The precise number of Travellers in England and Wiltshire is unclear. The latest ONS analysis released in 2014 using 2011 Census data recorded 58,000 who identified themselves as a gypsy or Irish Traveller (this doesn't include those who identify themselves as Roma) in England and Wales. This suggests that this is the smallest ethnic group and accounts for 0.1% of the population. According to the 2011 Census, 757 people in Wiltshire identified themselves as being of gypsy or Irish traveller ethnicity; this is 0.2% of our population.
7. Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Traveller communities and saw the publication of a refreshed Traveller Strategy in September 2016. This report demonstrates the work undertaken by the Traveller Reference Group over the past 12 months to support implementation of the strategy which is now in its second year. This report has reflected the work undertaken to support Traveller communities.
8. The Traveller Reference Group recognises the role of the Council in supporting Traveller communities. The group understands the needs of Traveller communities in line with our aim to create strong and resilient communities with residents that are living longer, happier and healthy lives. The council has a key role in supporting its workforce to better understand of the diversity in traveller cultures in a bid to dispel stigma and prejudice within these communities and reduce inequality.

Traveller Reference Group (TRG)

9. The TRG aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the traveller population of Wiltshire in line with the strategic objectives of Wiltshire Council to create stronger and more resilient communities and ensure those from traveller communities have healthy, high-quality lives.
10. The TRG oversees and supports the implementation of the Traveller Strategy and has a membership of council and non-council partners. Council departments represented include housing, communications, commissioning, planning, early help, enforcement, public health, community engagement and councillor representation. External partners include NHS and primary care, fire services, and police service.
11. The group is coordinated by public health, meets four times a year, and has recently introduced a 'rolling chair' model of delivery. The group oversees the implementation plan linked to the Traveller strategy whilst also addressing other relevant issues related to Traveller communities.
12. The terms of reference for the TRG were refreshed in April 2018 (see Appendix 1).

Wiltshire's Traveller strategy

13. There is a 23-point action plan that supports the strategy, which supports: (a) better accommodation; (b) better intelligence; (c) better community engagement and involvement; and (d) better health and education. A summary of progress to date on the actions by theme below:

(a) Better Accommodation

What we said we would do	Progress to date	RAG rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 1: All new public and private sites should be in the locations which meet the particular needs of Traveller communities. People from across communities (travelling and settled) will be consulted to help identify and allocate future sites in the most effective locations in accordance with national policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays with DPD and Local Plan refresh Emergency stopping site strategy currently approved July 2018 Plans to consult on joint framework with Swindon summer 2018 and new local plan option in autumn 2018. Work is ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 2: Continue to gather intelligence on preferred travelling routes and locations of unauthorised encampments over time to understand the repeating patterns of accommodation needed to reduce unauthorised encampments in Wiltshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 unauthorised sites identified at last count (Jan 2017) Emergency stopping site strategy currently approved July 2018 Officers are now embarking on a strategy implementation plan which is due to be reported back to cabinet this Autumn. Work is ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 3: Alternative ways to provide sites should be researched and taken forward, for example considering shared ownership schemes or RSL development management of sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet has agreed disposal of two of the Council's gypsy and traveller sites at Oak Tree Field and Dairy House Bridge. The team is working with the current site residents to explore options for them to put together a bid including developing a Community Land Trust. The marketing agent has also been 	

(including transit sites)	asked to approach any Housing Associations that might be interested in owning and managing G&T sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 5: Encourage Traveller communities to begin discussions about potential sites or pieces of land early in the planning process. This should include the provision of information, support, and pre-application advice on planning issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to action 1 above • No consultation is currently planned but will include traveller communities when appropriate • The advice remains available but it would also be helpful to provide the information on the council website. Key Officers are known to the community and can provide the advice face to face or by telephone. Where agents are involved the Council will charge the applicants. • Work is ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 20: To make the process as consistent as possible, agencies will share information about unauthorised encampments and new residents arriving on sites as quickly as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practice principles on data sharing amongst council departments in place • Spatial planning agreed to share addresses of private traveller sites with health visiting to expand the healthcare offer • Action closed 	

(b) Better Intelligence

What we said we would do	Progress to date	RAG rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 9: Intelligence gathered about the health and wellbeing needs of Traveller communities will be fed in to the Joint Needs Assessment (JSNA) and all held in one place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most up to date intelligence is reflected in the 2016 strategy and is reflected in the JSNA refreshes • Action Closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 24: To gain intelligence and develop a better understanding of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border work is currently underway with BANES • Boater survey is completed but with little response from boaters. 	

<p>cross-border boater community and issues in conjunction with neighbouring Local Authorities in order to inform Council policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to recirculate survey with further promotion • Work is ongoing 	
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(c) Better community engagement and involvement

What we said we would do	Progress to date	RAG Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 4: A cultural awareness training programme will be run for Councillors in order to support them with knowledge and information about the needs of Traveller communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A traveller culture awareness workshop delivered April 2018, with 32 delegates (mix of councillors and council officers) • A second workshop is in development (based on feedback from the first session) and is due to take place September 2018 • Online training via Grow available until Feb 2019 • On track 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 6: Source, develop and disseminate clear and easy to read information in accessible formats to support Traveller communities in understanding how to access complex planning systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to action 5 - Advice remains consistent from key services across the council but it would be helpful to provide the information on the council website. Key Officers known to the community can provide advice face to face or by telephone. Where agents are involved the Council will charge the applicants. • Action Closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 7: Source, develop and disseminate easy to read guides on enforcement policy will be made available to Traveller communities, along with general advice on what all communities can expect during an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy and Traveller Planning guide (2013) already in place • Action Closed 	

<p>unauthorised development.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 8: All council services providing support to the traveller community should pro-actively engage with Traveller communities to ensure their views are represented and inform council policy and procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council proactively engages with traveller communities as required on issues that directly affect them. Action Closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 10: A system for customer feedback will be designed and implemented to assess the satisfaction of Traveller communities on all types of sites to ensure satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer services does not hold any information showing customer service enquiries from the G&T community. Action Closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 13: Training will be provided for frontline staff across the public sector on cultural awareness, and information and advice on how to interact and communicate with Traveller communities. Particular focuses should include verbal explanation of information and ensuring that any written information provided is appropriate and accessible in easy read formats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A traveller culture awareness workshop delivered April 2018, with 32 delegates (mix of councillors and council officers) A second workshop is in development (based on feedback from the first session) and is due to take place September 2018 Online training via Grow available until Feb 2019 On track 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 14: Public sector agencies will endeavour to work together to share information on a regular basis, and as issues emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traveller Reference Group meet four times a year. The membership is made up of public sector agencies to share information. Action Closed 	

<p>through the formation of a new travellers forum.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 15: A communications protocol will be developed and put in place to ensure that where possible, any community services frontline worker visiting a local authority site speaks with a member of the Traveller Services team to ensure that services are as coordinated as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action completed – 2017 • Action Closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 21: Officers, Members and frontline staff will be supported in liaising with members of settled communities to provide reassurance and to tackle prejudices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action merged with Action 14 (above) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 22: Engagement with Area Boards will also take place where traveller related issues have been identified to communicate with Members and the general public. This will include appreciating the issues raised by both settled and Traveller communities, as well as providing support to communities to understand each other better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRG are in current discussions regarding the relevance of this action. An alternative action will be proposed to the ESC in late Autumn (after October TRG). 	

(d) Better health and education

What we said we would do	Progress to date	RAG rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 11: To develop and disseminate a local area information pack about the local area, and how to access local services (including health and educational services) for travellers moving onto new sites or are new to the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome pack has been developed and shared with key partners Action closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 12: A checklist will be produced for unauthorised developments and encampments to provide information to support Travellers to stay safe whilst in the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action complete – 2017 Action closed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 16: Undertake some community-led health promotional events to provide Information and advice to communities to raise awareness about particular health conditions that are prevalent for Traveller communities, in order to increase take-up of preventative services and access to primary care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health trainer programme in place and working directly with traveller communities Wider interest from public health and primary care colleagues to work closer with traveller communities Work ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 17: Under 'making every contact count' frontline staff will receive access to behaviour change training in order to support healthier lifestyles and effectively signposting to appropriate health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action merged with action 14. 'MECC' training is available and is currently being cascaded throughout the health and social care system. Action Closed 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 18: Training will be offered to senior leadership teams in schools to increase the support available for Traveller children. Also, the barriers to accessing educational funding and other forms of education, for example vocational training, should be identified and assessed to understand the reasons for higher and further education not being accessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training offered to all schools to be delivered November 2018. Work ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 19: Adult literacy services should be assessed and targeted information should be provided to Traveller communities in order to increase their take-up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Family Learning Programme is in place to provide a targeted family learning programme. All family learning courses are free and aim to recruit the less confident learners (below L2). Childcare may be funded and adults will be provided with information, advice and guidance to support them back into work or pursue further education. Work ongoing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 23: All Council officers who work with Traveller communities to understand their roles and responsibilities in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children within these communities and to understand the safeguarding processes and be able to action them as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed at TRG that council officers should understand their roles and responsibilities around safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children regardless of their backgrounds. E-learning and face-to-face courses available to support council officers. Action closed. 	

Summary of Progress against Implementation Plan

Action	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Action	Sept 2017	Sept 2018
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1			13		
2			14		
3			15		
4			16		
5			17		
6			18		
7			19		
8			20		
9			21		
10			22		
11			23		
12			24		

14. In the 2017 report, delivery against actions included: 11 red actions (incomplete), 7 amber actions (work underway) and 6 green (completed actions). Across 2017-18, we have now progressed to 1 red action (incomplete), 6 amber actions (work underway) and 17 green actions (completed / closed) so demonstrable outcomes can be seen.

15. The bulk of the amber actions (action 1-3, 5) focus around the ongoing work related to the planning documents which is current being undertaken. Training for schools (action 18) is scheduled for November 2018 and the boater survey (action 24) is scheduled to be recompleted with additional support given to promote uptake.

16. Although the TRG have made good progress with regard to the traveller strategy action plan, further work is required to drive the strategy forward in the remaining 2 years of the strategy. It has been discussed at the TRG that a comprehensive review of actions is now required to be undertaken which will take place at the October TRG. This will allow us to archive completed actions, and review, refresh and renew the remaining actions to drive forward the Gypsy and Traveller agenda forward in Wiltshire.

Conclusion

17. Wiltshire Council brings together a wide range of services and responsibilities that engage with Traveller communities and saw the publication of a refreshed Traveller Strategy in September 2016. This report demonstrates the work undertaken by the Traveller Reference Group over the past 12 months to support implementation of the strategy which is now in its second year. This report has reflected the work undertaken to support Traveller communities.

18. The TRG recognises the role of the Council in supporting Traveller communities. The group understands the needs of Traveller communities in line with our aim to create strong and resilient communities with residents that are living longer, happier and healthy lives. The council has a key role in supporting its workforce to better understand of the diversity in traveller cultures in a bid to dispel stigma and prejudice within these communities and reduce inequality.

Proposal:

That the Environment Select Committee:

- i. Notes the update of the Traveller Reference Group and supports the on-going work programme of the Traveller Reference Group
- ii. Endorses the aim, objectives and responsibilities of the Traveller Reference Group (as set out at Appendix 1)
- iii. Receive a brief update at 6 November Environment Select Committee regarding a proposed way forward for 'Action 22', as set out in the Group's strategic action plan

Report Author (on behalf of the Traveller Reference Group)

**Steve Maddern
Public Health Consultant (acting)**

23 August 2018

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference – Traveller Reference Group

Date Ratified by Group: 16 April 2018

Date for

Review: April 2019

Aim	The TRG aims to improve intelligence, the accommodation, education health and wellbeing of the Traveller* population of Wiltshire.
Objective	<p>The TRG support the strategic objectives of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan (2017-2027) to create stronger and more resilient communities and protecting the vulnerable.</p> <p>The group will support the Traveller residents of Wiltshire, supports the aims of the Health and Wellbeing Board's Strategy (2015-18) under the prevention theme to promote people in Wiltshire to have safer, healthier, active and high-quality lives, live independently for longer and address health inequalities.</p> <p>The TRG also supports the implementation of the Wiltshire Traveller Strategy (2016) in which by 2020, service provision and engagement with Traveller communities will be strengthened, coordinated and in line with Wiltshire Councils aims.</p>
Responsibilities	<p>The TRG will report to the Environmental Select Committee as appropriate</p> <p>Programme delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a leadership role in taking forward the Traveller agenda in Wiltshire, working collaboratively with other partners within and external the Council to address Public Health priorities. • Responding to the findings of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health Needs Assessments and contribute to and complement / support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board aims as appropriate. • Working to develop shared understanding of local issues for Traveller communities, supporting Wiltshire Council's Business Plan to encourage communities to come together and enable and support them to do more for themselves. • Supporting the development of projects and action plans based on evidence of effectiveness to meet prioritised housing, educational and health needs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the delivering of specific projects identified through the strategy implementation plan. <p>Service gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and notify service / programme / intervention gaps and feedback to the environmental select committee as appropriate <p>Report on delivery of the Wiltshire Traveller Strategy action plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report progress against the strategy to the Environment Select Committee. <p>Promoting good practice/partnership working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing and shape partners in Wiltshire to share objectives / responsibilities / priorities • To help maintain constructive relationships between key parties. • Promoting the Traveller agenda across Wiltshire to partners and the wider population • Forming a TRG network with statutory, voluntary, community and private sector partners to support the Traveller agenda <p>Link to Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to strategic planning and prioritisation process led by the Health and Wellbeing Board. • Advise the Board of issues relating to the delivery of the prevention aspects of the strategy • Facilitate the linkages between the strategy and local work being delivered through communities.
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chacksfield, Sean – Communications • Davies, Mike – Gypsy and Traveller manager • Gibson, Carolyn – Planning • Higson, Emily - Corporate support (equalities) • Matthew Girdlestone – Wiltshire Police • Maddern, Steve – Public Health • Jane Vowles – Public Health • Mullings, Andy – Enforcement • O'Brien, Janet – Housing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oliver, Ken – Country side officer • Sparrow, Pete – Police representation • Rowe, Jenny – Corporate property • Smith, Nicole – Housing (minutes only) • Sturgis, Toby – Councillor, Cabinet member for traveller communities • Steven Donohue – Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Service • Totz, Henning – Planning • Daniel Tyrell – Enforcement • Jane Vaughan – Community Engagement Manager • Sam Heathcote – Safeguarding • Jim Lynch, Councillor • Mike Hewitt, Councillor <p>Members of the TRG will be expected to send appropriate representative if they are unable to attend meetings themselves. The membership of the group will adapt to the needs, priorities and objectives of the TRG.</p>
Frequency of meetings	<p>4 times a year, plus task and finish groups as needed.</p> <p>Members of the group will take their turn in chairing the meetings as a rotating chair.</p>
Quorum	Not required
Accountability	The TRG will be accountable to the Environmental Select Committee.
Products/Reports	Records of decisions, actions, forward work plan; written and verbal highlight reports to the environmental select committee.