

# ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

**Agenda Item 16**  
Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Review of Brighton & Hove Travellers Strategy  
**Date of Meeting:** 5 June 2008  
**Report of:** Director of Environment  
**Contact Officer:** Name: **Judith Macho** Tel: **29-2433**  
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**Key Decision:** Yes Forward Plan No. *ENV0001*  
**Wards Affected:** All

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To present to the Cabinet Member the proposed city-wide Traveller Strategy following consultation undertaken as part of the review to ensure it is in line with latest Government legislation and reflects the Council's Inclusive Council Policy.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) Agree and adopt the reviewed city-wide Traveller Strategy.

### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Council has had a Traveller Strategy since 1999. The Strategy has been routinely updated to reflect new legislation. However a number of significant changes have required a wider review of the strategy in order to reflect the current position. These changes include:

- i) The provision of Horsdean Transit Site to meet the needs of Gypsies and Irish Travellers passing through the city.
- ii) The requirement for local authorities to provide permanent accommodation for the assessed need within their areas.
- iii) Introduction of multi agency working to support the delivery of the Travellers Service.

- 3.2 The council's *Traveller Strategy* aims to promote community cohesion and to protect the rights and needs of both the settled and travelling communities. The Strategy acknowledges that Gypsies and Travellers have a right to a nomadic life style, to equal access to services (such as education, health and accommodation) and to protection from discrimination and harassment.

- 3.3 If agreed the Strategy will support and direct the work carried out with Gypsies and Travellers by the City Council and its partners.

#### 4. CONSULTATION

A cross party group of Councillors has met to consider the proposed strategy.

The draft Strategy was reported to the Equalities Forum in February 2008.

The consultation process also involved Traveller support groups, the Police, representatives of the Parks & Open Spaces Service, Traveller Education Providers, Primary Care Trust and East and West Sussex County Councils.

An opportunity for other interested parties to take part in this consultation was made via the Council's Web Site.

The consultation period ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. All responses received have been considered and amendments incorporated as appropriate. A copy of the amended strategy is contained in **Appendix 1**. A summary of the comments and officers response is contained in **Appendix 2**.

#### 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

**Capital** - The future provision or refurbishment of transit or permanent sites would attract a capital grant from the Government. For 2008-9, there is a grant of £250k, along with additional agreed funding of £70k, for the transit site.

**Revenue** - The revenue costs of enforcement and waste clearance will be met within the current budget off set by rental income from the sites.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 This report takes account of the Council's duty under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004. This duty requires the Council, when undertaking a review of housing needs under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers residing in or resorting to Brighton & Hove. This is referred to in the 'Future Provision' paragraphs of Section 4 of the Traveller Strategy.

Section 2 of the Strategy contains a reference to human rights, specifically the need to have regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 and associated case law in any enforcement action contemplated against travellers or gypsies.

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Gypsies and Travellers are ethnic groups which are recognised by the Race Relations Act. They have a right to a nomadic lifestyle, to equal access to services (such as education, health and accommodation) and to protection from discrimination and harassment.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 Clear procedures are necessary to manage unauthorised encampments, anti social behaviour, discrimination and harassment.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 Failure to have in place an effective Traveller Strategy could lead to poorly delivered traveller services.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 None.

## **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 Alternative wording for the strategy proposed during the consultation process but not adopted is detailed in Appendix 2.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 A formally adopted strategy for the city will provide a clear framework to support and direct the work carried out with Gypsies and Travellers by the City Council.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Traveller Strategy – Brighton & Hove
2. Summary of consultation comments and officer response

