

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

To: STRATEGY COMMITTEE	Report Number: <b>N73</b>
From: ECONOMY	Date of meeting: 17 October 2013

### A JOINT GYPSY AND TRAVELLER STEERING GROUP FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK COUNCILS

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to gain approval for the formation of a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group across the two Councils.
- 1.2 The report sets out the advantages of a joint group and the area of work the group would consider as a working group reporting to the Executive and Strategy Committees respectively.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the formation of a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group made up of Members from both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, Officers and representatives of the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Services, be approved.
- 2.2 That each Council proposes 4 Councillors to sit on the Joint Steering Group.
- 2.3 That meetings of the Steering Group be held every 2 months with alternate meetings at Hadleigh and Needham Market.
- 2.4 That any items requiring a formal decision be reported to the Executive and Strategy Committees as necessary.

#### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Savings have been identified in terms of Officer time if a Joint group is established.

#### 4. Risk Management

- 4.1 There are no key risks.

#### 5. Consultations

- 5.1 The MSDC G and T Steering group discussed this at their last meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September and agreed with the recommendation. There has not been a Babergh G and T Steering group recently.

#### 6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 An Equality Analysis has not been carried out as this would be part of the terms of reference that any new group would agree if the recommendation is approved.

## **7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

- 7.1 Currently there is a Gypsy and Traveller Steering group for each Council. Many of the issues that are covered are applicable to both Councils and both Officers and Members would benefit from a joint approach. Both Councils have approved the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Strategy – a joint group would work through the action plan that goes with the Strategy and also look at the issues of permanent and transit accommodation across the two Authority areas.
- 7.2 A joint group would assist with the sharing of good practice and a better understanding of protocols in place, and would reduce the time burden on officers who currently support the two separate groups.

## **8. Key Information**

- 8.1 Both Councils have had a separate Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group for some years, working on the progression of accommodation related issues and the recommendations of the 2007 GTAA report.
- 8.2 With the integration of the staff teams across the two Councils it would be advantageous for there to be a Joint G&T Steering group to reflect comments made in section 7.1 and 7.2, but also to reflect the need to work together to address cross boundary issues and housing and planning policy issues.
- 8.3 Other Councils in Suffolk where there are shared services are also looking at joint groups to consider Gypsy and Traveller issues.
- 8.4 Joint groups are also a feature of work across Norfolk and Suffolk, with the joint Norfolk and Suffolk G and T Forum meeting 4 times a year and feeding work into the sub-groups that meet.

## **9. Appendices**

Title	Location
(a) Draft Terms of Reference for a Joint Gypsy and Traveller Group	Attached

## **10. Background Documents**

- 10.1 None.

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# Draft Terms of Reference

## Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group

### Membership:

MSDC Member	Housing Portfolio Holder
BDC Member	Housing Lead
MSDC Members	3 Members
BDC Members	3 Member
Julie Abbey-Taylor	Corporate Manager -Strategic Housing
Vanessa Oliver	Administrative and Support officer
Phil Isbell	Corporate Manager - Development Management
David McHardy	Planning Policy Officer
Keren Wright	N&SCC Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Officer
James Buckingham	Corporate Manager - Environmental Control
To be determined	Gypsy Community representative x 2
Jonathan Free	Head of Communities
Private Sector Housing representative	To be determined

### Meeting Schedule

Every 8 weeks or more regularly (if required to deal with particular pressing issues).

### Roles

Chairperson – in a joint group – Chair to alternate between Babergh and Mid Suffolk, dependent upon venue. Both Councils to agree a Chair and Vice Chair. In the absence of both, a chair will be nominated to stand in for the meeting.

Vanessa Oliver will take Minutes unless she is unavailable, whereby the Chair will request a volunteer. Officers will look to provide Agendas at least 3 days before a meeting and minutes to be drafted for comment no later than 3 weeks after the meeting.

### Main Responsibilities

- To respond to consultation documentation relating to Gypsies and Travellers and where necessary present these to the relevant committee;
- To ensure that the recommendations included within the Suffolk Cross-Authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) are acted upon and work taken forward.
- To progress work on the retention of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites and the future identification of new sites to meet the Council's pitch requirements and land supply.
- To support the Council in ensuring that Gypsies Travellers are included in any consultation including other areas of the Council's work.
- To ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are included in terms of the scoping work with regard to work being carried out as part of the Local Development Framework and in particular concerning the identification of future sites.
- To develop a Corporate Communication Plan for matters relating to Gypsy & Traveller Site provision across the district.
- To include Ward members in any site specific discussion for that agenda item only.

## **Aims**

- To ensure that the two Councils understands the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community, consulting and communicating with them, together with the settled community to ensure that the recommendations included within the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy and other adopted Council documents relating to Gypsies and Travellers, are progressed.
- To ensure that any relevant new legislation or emerging good practice guidance relating to Gypsies and Travellers, are reported to the Steering group and Executive and Strategy Committees as required.

## **Objective**

- To ensure that these aims are realised through carrying out effective communication and involvement with Gypsies and Travellers, internal Council departments, Ward Members, Parish councils, other Councils'/statutory agencies and the settled community to ensure that there is community cohesion relating to the work being carried out by the Group.

## **Quorum:**

With regard to recommendations by the Group these will be taken to Executive and/or Strategy Committees. In order to progress the work included within the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy action plan and to legitimise the recommendations there will be no fewer than 5 Members of the group present (one of whom must be the Chair or Vice-Chair).

## **Reporting to:**

This is a working group and is the main group that makes recommendations to relevant Council Committees.

## **Equality and Diversity**

As a Group we are committed to giving an equal service to all. This means we will not treat individuals any differently because of their: sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national origin, age, marital status, disability, political or religious belief, sexuality or class. It also means our work will focus on individual groups within the community who may be disadvantaged and therefore require help the most.

Signed:

Signed: ..... (Chair)

Date: .....