

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

AGENDA

Tuesday, 22 April 2008, at 10.00 am
in the Darent Room, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen Mannering**
Telephone: **(01622) 694297/694367**

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes - 30 November 2007 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Legislation, Policy and Practice Changes from Central Government (Pages 7 - 10)
5. Gypsy and Traveller Health Issues (Pages 11 - 16)
6. Update: National Developments, outcomes of early consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service (Pages 17 - 24)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

Monday, 14 April 2008

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 30 November 2007.

PRESENT: Mr A H Bowles (Chairman), Mr A R Bassam (substitute for Mrs A D Allen), Mr M J Fittock, Mr J B Fullarton, Mr I T Jones and Mr S J Koowaree.

OFFICERS: Miss C Highwood, Director – Resources, Kent Adult Social Services, Mr B Forrester, Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit; Mr A Casson, Operations Manager, Gypsy and Traveller Unit; Ms J Robson, Head of Language and Traveller Achievement Service; and Mr G Mills, Democratic Services.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2007 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Dates of Meetings – 2008

- (1) These were agreed as follows:-
Wednesday, 13 February
Tuesday, 22 April
Tuesday, 2 September
Thursday, 27 November

- (2) The Advisory Board agreed that in future all its meetings would commence at 10:00 am.

3. Promoting Access and Achievement: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children (Item 5) (Ms L Robinson, Strategy and Standards Officer, Specialist Teaching Services; Louise Simpson, Advisory – Refugee & Traveller Achievement (Mid-Kent); and Carol Mellors, Advisory – Refugee & Traveller Achievement (West Kent) were present for this item)

- (1) This presentation detailed the work of the Minority Communities Achievement Service and provided information on the statutory responsibilities the County Council had in providing educational services. The presentation also detailed the range of other work and services which the County Council undertook through the Minority Communities Achievement Service. The County Council has been recognised nationally for its work and is acting as a pilot authority on a project with the DCSF aimed at raising achievement in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

- (2) The Minority Communities Achievement Service particularly provides a range of help and support aimed at improving access to educational services and raising

achievement. This involves working collaboratively with schools, clusters of schools and other agencies and by promoting the development of inclusive policies and practice. Support is given to the most vulnerable children and young people at risk of not accessing education and this work also has links to corporate and directorate actions linked to equality and diversity. The Service works to DfES Guidance "Aiming High" 2003 which is designed to give support and advice to schools and professionals with newly arrived pupils. The Guidance gives advice on bullying and race equality issues and through Family Liaison Officer support, and gives support to new arrivals and vulnerable families. The Service is also developing strategies designed to build closer links with traveller communities and to develop closer inter agency working. The Service is also providing advice on culturally appropriate resources and curriculum development and help with secondary transfer issues.

(3) In the course of a wide ranging discussion, Members of the Advisory Board asked Officers a number of detailed questions about the challenges which the Service was facing and the strategies and protocols which it was adopting in order to meet these.

(4) At the conclusion of discussion, Members placed on record their thanks and appreciation to Officers for the presentation which clearly demonstrated the commitment and resources being focussed on what is often a challenging and complex area of work.

4. Improving Educational Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children through Commissioning Services within the evolving arrangements for Local Children's Trusts in Kent

(Item 6 – Report by Managing Director, Children, Families & Education)

(1) This report provided Members with an update on the development of arrangements for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children through the Commissioning of Services within the evolving arrangements for Local Children's Trusts. In July 2006, the Department for Schools, Children & Families set out an agenda for the future for local authorities through "Positive Pathways for the Future Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children" and specialist services were encouraged to reassess the orientation of their core work within the context of the agenda for Every Child Matters.

(2) Jenny Robson said that as part of the development of Children's Trust arrangements in Kent, the Local Children's Trust Reference Group and the Children's Trust Board had endorsed three guiding principles. These were to provide a streamlined and highly strategic County arrangement with a key focus on commissioning and improved outcomes for children and young people; having a presumption in favour of decision-making at the most local level that was consistent with excellent performance (Outcomes for Children) and Value for Money (Quality and Infrastructure); and providing a focus on earlier intervention and prevention services for Children, Young People and Families. Specialist services to promote access to education are currently funded through the Children's Services Grant and in 2007/08 Kent had committed some £626k through the Minority Communities Achievement Service on specialist posts to support achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. However, confirmation had not yet been received as to the level of funding through the Children's Services Grant for 2008/09 for this area of work.

(3) In March 2007, the Children, Families & Education Senior Management Team established a multi-agency stakeholder group to steer the future commissioning of services currently delivered through the Minority Communities Achievement Service and the Specialist Teaching Services. A sub-group including representatives of schools, agencies, voluntary sector and the Gypsy and Irish Traveller Communities was to meet in order to undertake a needs analysis, research effective practice, map existing provision, conduct consultation with the community on priorities and develop options for the future. This work would be undertaken within the context of the development of Local Children's Trusts, the establishment of integrated teams, contact point and the common assessment framework.

(4) During the course of discussion, Members of the Advisory Board asked a number of questions related to the report and the provision of services.

(5) The Advisory Board noted the report and there would be a further report in 2008 setting out the options for future Commissioning of Services to secure improved outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families.

5. Project Update: Sites in Swale and Tonbridge and Malling Boroughs

(Item 7 - Report by Oliver Mills, Managing Director – Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) Mr Forrester reported on progress with two major capital projects. The first was at a site known as Three Lakes, Murston, Sittingbourne. This site was one that had remained without improvement for some considerable time and was, of all the sites managed by the Unit, in most need of substantial improvement, redevelopment or relocation. The other site was at Coldharbour, Aylesford which was first built in 1981 and currently had consent for 26 caravans or 22 pitches. However, it had been in use since about 1994 as an 8 pitch site with a maximum of 16 caravans. As part of a four-borough Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, published in 2007, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council had been assessed as having a need for a further 10 pitches during 2006/11 and 5 more for the period 2011/2016 and there was therefore a strong case for redeveloping, expanding and/or relocating the site in the same general area. Project Boards have been established to take forward both these projects, each involving the County Council and the relevant borough council.

(2) During the course of discussion Mr Forrester confirmed that there would, as appropriate, be briefings for local Members relevant to each site and also the occupants of sites and with local residents. There would also be briefings made available for Ward Members from the borough councils.

(3) The Advisory Board endorsed the approaches taken to achieve the successful new site provisions as detailed in the report and supported the bids for grant in 2008. There would be further updates on progress as appropriate.

6. Security of Tenure on Public Sites for Gypsies & Travellers

(Item 8)

(1) In 2004, the Government lost a case in the European Court of Human Rights. The Plaintiff had showed that the ability of authorities to evict someone from a site within 28 days' notice, and there being no statement of reason within the Site Licence Agreement, was a breach of human rights of himself and others in the same position. As a result of this finding, the Government improved security of tenure slightly by allowing challenge to

eviction decisions through the County Courts and ensuring that sites run by County Councils had a minimum figure of 28 days' notice. Due to a legal anomaly, there had been no minimum period for sites managed by County Councils up until then. The Government still have to improve security of tenure further to comply with the European Court of Human Rights ruling and this would be done through the Housing and Regeneration Bill, a major bill for the current session of Parliament.

(2) Mr Forrester said that in Kent the Site Licence Agreement used on KCC sites had been substantially improved within the past couple of years and it had been KCC practice not to seek to evict anyone unless there was sufficient reason to do so. Once the new security of tenure provisions had passed into law or government guidance was finalised on changing site licence, or both happened together, the plan was to consult on the wording of a new licence.

(3) Mr Forrester also briefed the Advisory Board on how this matter related to planning enforcement. Currently a site licensee (of any caravan or park home site) whether or not it is specifically for gypsies or travellers does not have what is called "an interest in the land" but only a right to occupy the land with the caravan. This means that a planning enforcement notice could not be validly served on such licensee but only on the owner or operator of the site. The effect of this legal difference from social housing is that the County Council had to be prepared to evict licensees from their pitches if they breached planning policy. Mr Forrester said that representations were being made to the Community & Local Government Department about the need for a change in the law in this area.

(5) Mr Forrester said that although KCC's site licence complies with the current law it would need to be changed when the law changes. Those changes would be the subject of consultation with all KCC licensees and with licensees of other socially rented sites in Kent that wanted similar updated licenses. Mr Forrester also said that a change in the law on planning enforcement notices making it possible for them to be served on those who rent caravan pitches would also be welcomed.

(6) Following discussion, the Advisory Board endorsed the approach on these matters as outlined in the report.

7. Engagement with Gypsy & Traveller Communities

(Item 9 - Report by Oliver Mills, Managing Director – Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) This report had links with the earlier reports on educational issues. Over past 5 years there had been a welcome growth in the number of agencies who were engaging direct with gypsy and traveller communities. When the government re-introduced grant aid for the improvement of public gypsy sites in 2001, it required authorities to consult with site residents before a grant bid could be approved. This was a practice that Kent authorities had already adopted, especially over major redevelopments, such as that which saw the Swan Farm land become the Barnfield Park Site and, following the 2001 changes, when the Aylesham site was redeveloped in 2002.

(2) In 2006, the Kent and Medway County Wide Officer Group was established specifically to drive forward the recommendations which arose from the KCC Select Committee report on this subject and a number of individuals from the gypsy and traveller communities, including those from gypsy and traveller organisations are invited to attend every alternate meeting. This had proved to be very successful in developing understanding on both sides.

(3) Mr Forrester briefed the Advisory Board on other areas where KCC was actively seeking to improve engagement and these were detailed in the report. Kent Police were also working to improve engagement with gypsy and traveller communities and great progress was being made in helping police officers and those from Traveller communities to understand each other much better. Mr Forrester also highlighted the work of the Minority Communities Achievement Service and said that KCC was involved in a working group to steer the future commissioning of specialist services to promote access to education and raise achievement. In addition, the Minority Communities Achievement Service was providing training to professionals working with schools and other agencies in order to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding and this work was gaining increased momentum within the emerging context of Children's Trust arrangements in Kent. In addition, the Gypsy & Traveller Unit was providing awareness training for staff of Canterbury City Council and plans were being discussed for such training to be made available to KCC staff across the directorates.

(4) In the course of discussion, Members said they welcomed the initiatives and progress being made and in particular the engagement of Kent Police in the work of the Advisory Board. Mr Forrester also confirmed that the Kent and Medway Fire Rescue Service was working with young people across communities in order to raise fire awareness and were producing a DVD aimed specifically at fire safety on gypsy and traveller sites. The Service also provided Fire Warden training.

(5) The Advisory Board endorsed the approaches being taken forward as detailed in the report and supported the further widening of engagement and the development of awareness training.

8. Future Plans for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in Kent

(Item 10 - Report by Mr Oliver Mills, Managing Director – Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) This report which provided an overview of the planning advice to SEERA by Kent and Medway Planning Authorities, plus recommendations on KCC's involvement in future processes.

(2) The Advisory Board noted the advice presented in the report to be given to SEERA by the Kent and Medway Planning Authorities and endorsed the report's conclusions. The Advisory Board also endorsed the cautious but co-operative approach suggested whereby KCC would, if approached, assist other Kent Authorities in assembling site locations for inclusion within their Local Development Frameworks. The Board also endorsed the support for the SEERA public consultation exercise to be undertaken in summer 2008.

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By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 22 April 2008
Subject: **LEGISLATION, POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGES FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT**
Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: News of a number of current and future legislative changes, policy developments and practice guidance documents which will impact on KCC and/or District Councils in Kent and/or Gypsies and Travellers

Introduction

1. As a result of the Policy Review by central government on this subject area 2003/5, and developments since then on the subject of Gypsies and Travellers as well as caravan sites and Park Homes policy as well, there are a number of changes planned or taking place which this item addresses.
2. Details of most of them are available on the following weblink:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/gypsiesandtravellers/>

Security of Tenure

3. At the last meeting of this Board on 30 November 2007, it was reported that security of tenure for people on public Gypsy and Traveller sites was to be extended so that the Mobile Homes Act 1983 would apply to such sites, for the first time.
4. The proposed changes will have a significant impact on the management of the 17 current publicly-provided caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers in Kent and Medway, eight of them managed by KCC's Gypsy and Traveller Unit, one by Medway Council and eight by individual district councils.
5. The specific changes which will happen, if the proposed changes are agreed by Parliament as part of the current Housing and Regeneration Bill include those which follow:
 - a) Licensees on public sites are likely to become tenants, especially if a new model agreement is devised nationally for these sites. Of itself, this does not make a difference to their security of tenure, but it means that they would have "an interest in the land" and therefore be in a similar position to tenants of social housing, for the first time.
 - b) Tenants/Licensees will have a right to assign their plot to someone else. This has considerable implications for waiting-lists for sites, and allocation arrangements made by each authority running them. It will give site providers less opportunity to

accommodate those on waiting-lists on sites that are managed, and make new sites much more important to accommodate new demand from families not linked to current sites. It also potentially increases the risks of people selling on their pitch and yet still requiring accommodation.

- c) Other people living on plots when a licensee/tenant dies will have rights to succession to the plot, for the first time on these sites.
- d) Rents for sites will not be able to be raised, without full justification being given, including reference to the Retail Price Index and expenditure incurred on the site and other factors which have increased provider costs. Bearing in mind the history, since 2001, of Housing Benefit not necessarily paying the reasonable rents charged by KCC, this has important implications

Park Home Model Standards

- 6. These standards were published around 7 April 2008 by the Communities and Local Government department. The introduction says that “The standards ... do not apply to sites occupied by gypsies or travellers or caravan sites which house agricultural workers”, but licensing authorities (district councils) must “have regard to them” in the licensing of all other caravan sites in Kent.

Review of Caravan Site Licensing

- 7. The Government is committed to a review of the system of caravan site licensing, which has implications for most caravan sites in Kent, and there will be a consultation on the proposals, probably this summer or autumn.

Site Management Guidance

- 8. Board Members contributed to the consultation on this document, which is due to be published, in final form on 15 May 2008.
- 9. Much of the best practice on Kent and Medway sites is likely to be included in the final document.

Site Design Guidance

- 10. Board Members contributed to the consultation on this document, which is due to be published, in final form on 15 May 2008.
- 11. The document will be significant for new site developments being pursued in Kent and Medway at the moment.

Grant Funding for new site provision and refurbishments

- 12. £97m is being made available by Government 2008/2011 for new sites (at a rate of 100% grant aid) and refurbishments (at 50% grant). South East Region is being allocated £5-6m in each of these three years.

Bidding Guidance for new Grant

13. This is now available on the web, and is highly relevant for bids currently being worked up within Kent and Medway authorities.

Registered Social Landlords (RSL) involvement

14. As part of the government initiatives, there is a desire that RSLs (mainly housing associations) should be encouraged to be involved in the development and management of sites. KCC and Swale Borough Council have taken the initiative in inviting Swale Housing Association to be on the Board for the Three Lakes Project.
15. A guide for RSLs on this subject may follow in due course from government.

Conclusions

16. There are clearly major changes taking place to improve and update both the legislation and the policy underlying caravan site development and management, including those specifically for Gypsies and Travellers.
17. A key issue is the extent to which regulation applies to both private and publicly-run Gypsy and Traveller sites, where the regulatory framework is very much still behind that for caravan sites generally.
18. Representations about this have been made to the LGA and CLG, who are beginning to address some of the issues.
19. Other groups who are left quite out of the reckoning are migrant and other farm workers, increasingly living on farms in Kent and other rural areas of England.

Recommendations

20. Members of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board are asked to:
 - a) Endorse this report, with the implications of the changes for KCC and other Kent and Medway authorities and other stakeholders in the process.
 - b) Agree that a further report be produced, once the legislation and guidance on security of tenure is finalised by Government.
 - c) Agree that representations continue to the Local Government Association and Government on the importance of model standards being extended to all those who live on permanent caravan or mobile home sites, including gypsies, travellers and agricultural workers

Background Papers: None

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By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 22 April 2008
Subject: **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER HEALTH ISSUES**
Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: A report describing the various health inequalities experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Kent and joint work to address these.

Background

1. The communities that perhaps experience the most extreme health inequalities are Gypsies and Travellers. However, very little authoritative data (including health data) on these populations exist, either nationally or locally. The national census does not include categories for these communities, although we understand that that should change in time for the next survey in 2011. Kent has a history of involvement with English Romany Gypsy communities, evidenced by connections with agricultural work, including hop-picking. Many of those families have settled and integrated substantially into housed communities, but the numbers can only be guessed at, and many of those who are now settled would not necessarily self-declare as English Romany Gypsies or Irish Travellers. However, it is important to note that settlement in housing and integration with the surrounding population does not mean that there are no remaining issues about lifestyle and support needs.

Numbers in caravans or mobile homes

2. As a result of Gypsy and Traveller Unit monitoring of countywide unauthorised encampment data over the last four years, and data collected as a by-product of the Government's bi-annual caravan count, we can estimate that there are approximately 3,000-4,000 Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans in Kent.

Numbers in housing

3. There is strong evidence – for example through the relatives and connections of those who live on private and public sites - that the majority of the Kent Gypsy and Traveller population live in houses. Our best estimate, assuming 0.6% of the population is a Gypsy or Traveller is that there would be 9,600 people in total, and thus 5,600 to 6,600 in housing. However, in Kent, with its history of connections with, and settlement of, English Romany Gypsies, that figure is likely to be much higher, and it could conceivably be double or treble that number. Many of those in housing are probably living in forms of social housing. Whilst a few housing forms include a category of Gypsy or Traveller, many are reluctant to declare themselves as such, for fear of discrimination. The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) also collects ethnicity data and whilst response rates are improving, there is still a general reluctance amongst Gypsy and Traveller parents to declare their children as members of these communities. The numbers of Irish Traveller children recorded by

PLASC data in Kent are very small indeed, and do not appear to reflect the total numbers either of Irish Traveller children in school, or numbers overall.

Which communities?

4. The principal Gypsy and Traveller populations would currently appear to be English Romany Gypsies and some Irish Travellers, and we estimate that the split is approximately 85%/15%. Very rarely does the Gypsy and Traveller Unit encounter Scottish, Welsh and New Travellers, although we cannot rule out the possibility that populations exist.
5. The Gypsy and Traveller Unit manages eight of the seventeen permanent public caravan sites that are provided specifically for Gypsies and Travellers. The location of these sites are spread across the county. Pitch turnover on most of sites managed by the GTU is very low, with most families staying on our sites for long periods.
6. The majority of caravans are on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers, both with planning consent and without. These families are generally more independent, content and self-sufficient than those without a base. Although they may well encounter long difficulties in establishing their own sites, and they may be unsuccessful and have to leave such land, otherwise they are unlikely to have specific needs that are linked, for others, with accommodation problems and shortage.
7. We do know that there are about eight to ten families that are permanently travelling around the county (and have been doing so for at least four years, particularly in Swale and Canterbury Districts) that would appear to have no permanent base to live on. Some of the families used to live on a publicly-run site in Canterbury District that was closed in 1998.
8. About half of the unauthorised encampments that occur in Kent are Gypsies and Travellers visiting from outside Kent, who are thought to have settled bases elsewhere.

What do we know about the health of these communities?

9. There is very little reliable scientific and statistical data available about the health of the Gypsy and Traveller populations, both nationally and locally. Perhaps the most significant and reliable information nationally is a 2004 report produced for the Department of Health by the University of Sheffield – summary report attached (Appendix 1).
10. Most commentators accept that life expectancy is considerably less than that of the settled community - perhaps by as much as 10 years or more. Complications in pregnancy including still births and miscarriages are more prevalent, as well as the incidence of breathing problems such as asthma. A paper published by the Commission for Racial Equality in 2004 reported that Gypsy and Irish Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely to experience the death of a child than other mothers.
11. Locally, there is no separate ethnicity category for Gypsies and Traveller in health monitoring data. That makes it difficult to ensure that services are designed to meet

the cultural and lifestyle needs of these communities. Kent's Public Health Strategy contains the following short paragraph in its Health Inequalities section:

“Gypsies and Travellers: A travelling lifestyle makes getting routine health care more difficult. Continuity of care and preventative measures, like vaccinations, are particular problems. One study showed life expectancy is 10 years shorter than average in traveller communities and complications in childbirth are 20 times more likely. Kent has more Gypsies and Travellers than most other counties.”

12. From its various dealings with Gypsies and Travellers, the Gypsy and Traveller Unit is aware that health is an important and significant issue among these communities, particularly those on unauthorised encampments. Being able to access healthcare when mobile, and continuity of care appear to be the main issues. There is also a fear or mistrust of vaccination programmes, and a perception that it can be difficult to access GPs.
13. A workshop on Gypsy and Traveller health involving a number of agencies and community members took place on 11 January 2008. A number of workstreams emerged from that meeting.
 - Investigate whether the Public Health Observatory could collate currently available Gypsy and Traveller health data, so that partners can identify what is missing and consider how best to fill that gap. The Observatory is not yet fully operational but initial discussions have taken place, with a view to identifying what might be possible.
 - Investigate whether this issue could be included within the remit of the Access to Healthcare Select Committee. The Committee is in the process of being constituted, but our desire to include evidence on Gypsy and Traveller health inequalities has been raised and it is likely to be supported by the Strategic Health Authority. It would be useful if this Board endorsed this proposal.
 - Improve continuity of care for Gypsies and Travellers when they are mobile, by introducing a Gypsy and Traveller Health Passport more widely as other areas have done. We are currently obtaining a number of Health Passport examples from other SHA areas and will then discuss the matter further with health colleagues.
 - Improve awareness amongst health and social care professionals of these communities and their needs. Our health colleagues are considering how best to achieve this. Internally, the Gypsy and Traveller Unit are having discussions with colleagues with a view to establishing a familiarisation course for KCC staff, initially for those in KASS who provide services to these communities. We are seeking to provide this training in partnership with English Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
 - Identify those healthcare professionals that have expertise and awareness of Gypsies and Travellers, their culture and their medical needs. A number of healthcare staff that regularly deal with these communities have already been identified by PCT colleagues.
 - Improve awareness of immunisation programmes and their uptake in the community. Dr Chandrakumar, Director of the Kent Health Protection Unit, has expressed an interest in pursuing an awareness campaign involving community members. Further discussions are being arranged to determine what may be possible.
 - Investigate the extent to which the Department of Health's Pacesetter scheme can be used to fund work in this area. The Pacesetter programme aims to improve the health status of Gypsies and Travellers by trialling a number of initiatives, broadly in line with the bullet points above. They have held two events in the South East that were well attended by SHAs, PCTs and local authorities. Our SHA and PCT

colleagues are leading on this programme, although we are supporting them where we can. A Department of Health summary report on the health status of Gypsies and Travellers is attached (Appendix 2).

Recommendations

14. Members of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board are asked to:

- (a) Endorse the approach outlined in this report; and
- (b) Agree that it would be useful to include evidence on Gypsy and Traveller health outcomes and inequalities during the planned Select Committee on Access to Healthcare.

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The health status of Gypsies and Travellers

Evidence – health status

Although evidence on the health status of Gypsies and Travellers has been hard to come by, in recent years two reports have addressed this problem. In 2002, the South West Public Health Observatory reviewed the various small scale research studies that had been published to date. In 2004 the University of Sheffield, under a commission from the Department of Health, published the results of their research which compared, in a robust way, the health status of Gypsies and Travellers with the health status of a number of comparator communities. The broad findings are summarised as follows.

- ❑ The overall health status of Gypsies and Travellers is relatively poor in comparison with other disadvantaged groups and very poor compared with the general population.
- ❑ Certain health conditions and illnesses are significant for Gypsy and Traveller adults; these include anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, depression, and long-term illness.
- ❑ There are significant health issues for children, many relating to lack of immunisation.
- ❑ In addition, there are considerable risks to mothers and their babies leading up to, at, or just after birth.
- ❑ Life expectancy may be very low. (One study in Leeds revealed a life expectancy of 50 years.)

Access to healthcare

Despite these health problems, access to healthcare is often difficult for Gypsies and Travellers. For example, many Gypsies and Travellers feel that health workers, including GPs and their staff, have a poor understanding of their needs, circumstances and culture.

Furthermore :

- ❑ Preventive care and screening may be inadequate.
- ❑ Access to initial or continuing healthcare can be very limited for Gypsies and Travellers, sometimes hampered by a lack of medical records.
- ❑ In particular, Gypsies and Travellers report considerable problems in registering with GPs and/or receiving appropriate care from GP practices.
- ❑ As a result, many Gypsies and Travellers tend to make greater use of A&E for basic health needs than the general population.

Department of Health's response

- In response, to the research findings, the Department of Health has engaged with Gypsy and Traveller communities to discuss appropriate action. As a first step, as part of its Pacesetters Programme, over the next two to three years, the Department will be trialling innovative approaches to some of the more deep-seated health access problems experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. Further work will follow. Learning and good practice will be disseminated widely to the NHS.

Finally, sound information is the source of good planning and good commissioning. The Department of Health, and others, have successfully argued with ONS for the inclusion of a "Gypsy and Traveller" ethnic code in the 2007 Census test. If eventually included in the 2011 Census, NHS and other public bodies will be encouraged to change their ethnic monitoring systems to include "Gypsy / Traveller" as a code, and use the resulting data for better planning and commissioning.

By: Managing Director (Children, Families and Education)

To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 22nd April 2008

Subject: Update: National Developments, outcomes of early consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service

Classification: Unrestricted – for information

Summary: This report updates members on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, National Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement programme, the outcomes of early consultation with the community and the review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service.

DCSF: Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Programme

1. (1) Kent has been selected as one of 10 Local Authorities taking part in a pilot programme to address the national underachievement of Gypsy Roma and Traveller children. This is in recognition of Kent's significant and diverse Gypsy Roma and Traveller population, and the effective work MCAS is currently undertaking to support Gypsy Roma and Traveller pupils (including new EU arrivals). This is one of the specialist programmes within the Primary and Secondary National Strategies. Kent has joined in the second year of the project, MCAS and Advisory Service Kent are working collaboratively to support five targeted schools, Sittingbourne Community College, (Swale), Dover Road Primary (Gravesham), Edenbridge Primary (Sevenoaks), Castle Hill Primary (Folkestone) and St Peter's (Folkestone). Each school has received £4,000 additional funding to enable them to contribute to the development of effective practice at a national level. The project focuses on:-

- Using data to inform planning
- Trialling literacy interventions
- Developing parental and community engagement

(2) Schools and services attend national and local network meetings to share good practice and feedback termly to the National Strategy Regional Advisor. The project has been extended for a further year and will be evaluated before being rolled out to all Local Authorities. This is providing Kent Local Authority with an opportunity to focus on underachievement within the mainstream school improvement agenda. The pilot work in Kent will inform our future strategy for working with schools to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month – June 2008

2. (1) In January 2008 the Department for Children Schools and Families designated June 2008 as the first Gypsy Roma Traveller Month. This reflects national recognition that these are the most marginalised groups who continue to suffer extreme levels of prejudice and discrimination. The aims of the GRTM are to:-

- Explain the history and culture of the communities
- To challenge myths and break down barriers
- To celebrate the richness that these communities contribute to everyday life

(2) Following a series of national meetings facilitated by the DCSF, it was agreed that planning would be led by community members on a regional basis. The contact for the South East is Jake Bowers. Kent is being represented at regional network planning meetings by an MCAS member of staff and members of the local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. This has enabled the exchange of information and ideas for the implementation within the region. 'Education Leeds'¹ has received funding from the DCSF to establish a website to promote Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month (www.gypsyromatravellerhistorymonth.co.uk)

(3) In Kent, schools are being encouraged to take part in a national poster competition led by Education Leeds launched in the House of Lords and endorsed by Lord Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of state for Schools and Learners.

(4) Locally this is an opportunity to draw attention to the projects and developments already in place to promote a greater understanding of Gypsy Roma and Traveller history and achievements, for example, curriculum resources to address the absence of factual information relating to the genocide of Gypsies and Roma in the Holocaust. This forms a significant contribution to KCC's wider strategy to promote equality and community cohesion.

(5) CFE Equality and Diversity Strategy Group are aware of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month and consideration is being given to other opportunities to mark this event including through the Equalities Lead Officer Group.

Outcomes of consultation with Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller Community members. Background DCSF: Positive Pathways Statement July 2006.

4. (1) In July 2006 the Department for Schools, Children and Families set out an agenda for the future through 'Positive Pathways for the Future provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children'. Specialist services were encouraged to reassess the orientation of their core work within the context of the agenda for Every Child Matters:-

- To assess the educational needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities by assisting the Local Authority and other partners to fulfil their legal and professional responsibilities.

¹ Education Leeds is a company contracted to provide education services by Leeds City Council. The Traveller Education for Leeds is provided by 'Education Leeds'.

- To focus on the traditional work of supporting families, children and schools, including outreach work with the conditional justification and mutual agreement for modelling what needs to be done.
- To clarify the role, function, leadership and service delivery model within the Local Authority and for any specialist service with the goal of achievement of equality in terms of access, attendance and achievement.

Consultation arrangements

(2) As part of the reassessment of the orientation of the work of MCAS a group including representatives of schools, agencies, voluntary sector and the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities met between July 2007 and November 2008 to oversee a number of tasks including mapping existing provision and early consultation with communities on priorities and development of options for the future.

Outcomes of consultation

(3) Parents, carers, children and young people were asked about their priorities (within the framework for the five Every Child Matters outcomes), what was working well and their suggestions for actions that would make a real difference. Consultation was conducted informally through an event celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller culture as well as through the day to day work of the Service. In addition, EU Roma young people were consulted through a community youth provision.

(4) During the consultation community representatives put forward the view that consultation needed to better reflect the diversity of views and experiences within the Kent Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. There was a strong view that future consultation arrangements should enable the collection of the distinct views of Irish Travellers, English Gypsies, EU Accession State Roma and other groups.

(5) Responses from parents and carers included:-

- The majority of parents and carers stated that 'staying safe' was their highest priority for their children. This was clarified in terms of freedom from bullying and racism. 'Enjoying and achieving' and 'Being Healthy' were also identified as the priority by most parents.
- Parents and carers identified that access to pre-school was better where the pre-school was linked to a primary school. Most parents and carers identified that where their child had accessed pre-school this was often with support from MCAS Family Liaison Officers. Some parents and carers indicated that their children had not been to pre-school.
- Parents and carers valued the support they had received in gaining access to school places and in making the transfer to secondary schools particularly in locations where there were shortages of school places.
- The majority of parents and carers identified that schools could do more to tackle racist bullying and also to promote greater understanding amongst the school staff, children and young people about Traveller culture (including language and through cultural events/resources in the school). Parents expressed concern where teachers were perceived to have negative attitudes towards Traveller children and not understand the importance of sibling relationships.
- The majority of parents and carers indicated that they valued face to face and telephone communication with the school rather than letters. Having access to a

known teacher or headteacher was seen as important as was schools being proactive in contacting parents when their children were not in school or when there was good news.

- EU Roma parents and carers emphasised the barriers in terms of language (access to interpretation and translation) and unfamiliarity with the UK education system. Many parents and carers felt it had taken too long to identify school places.

(6) **Responses from young people:-**

Consultation with young people took place in small groups in Key Stages 3 and 4:-

- The majority of young people stated that 'Enjoying and achieving' and 'Achieving economic well-being' were their highest priorities. 'Staying safe' was also identified as a priority.
- Young people valued the support they received from MCAS Family Liaison Officers in enabling them to settle into a new school.
- Young people identified racist bullying and prejudice as a problem, they felt that schools did not always listen to their concerns.
- Young people felt that schools could do more to improve understanding of the diversity of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in the school.
- Young people felt that curriculum options should provide genuine choice and schools should not make assumptions about what young people want to do. Young people indicated they valued the opportunity to learn a trade but sometimes felt their options were restricted if they had limited literacy skills.
- EU Accession State Roma also identified that language was a barrier to making friends.

EU Accession State Roma felt it would be helpful for teachers to understand more about the issues they faced in their home country.

(7) The outcome of this consultation will inform:-

- the further development of specialist services during Phase 2 of the implementation of the Local Children Service Partnerships,
- the projects and developments within the Minority Communities Achievement Service Business Plan
- the implementation of the KCC Anti-Bullying Strategy
- the planning of further consultation and involvement structures and activities for example the Maidstone Student Voice network

Mapping of specialist services the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community

3. (1) A priority for the Minority Communities Achievement Service is to work with other service providers to ensure that the services offered to all children, young people and their families/carers in Kent are accessible to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Strategies to achieve this priority already in place include:-

- partnership work with service managers or commissioning groups to ensure that planning of services is inclusive of, and based on an understanding, of the needs of the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Kent. An example of this would be a member of MCAS being a core member of the Young Carers Strategy Implementation Group.

- Supporting families, children and schools, including outreach work with the conditional justification and mutual agreement for modelling what needs to be done with other professionals and services. An example of this is joint work with Connexions, Education Welfare Officers and school based Family Liaison Officers.
- Training to groups of professionals within the Children's Services arena to raise awareness of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and to share strategies to enable inclusive service delivery.

In 2007 MCAS undertook a small scale mapping exercise to assess the number of other specialist services engaged in outreach work to the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Kent.

Process

(2) Using the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Children's Services Mapping pilot as a model, a questionnaire was developed for an online survey to collect key information on the range and type of services provided e.g.:-

- What type of service and is any part targeted in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people?
- How is the service accessed?
- What is the catchment area?

A number of service providers across different sectors including, Health, Social Care, Early Years, Education, Culture and Youth Services were contacted directly and invited to participate in the survey.

Information on the provision mapping exercise was published on the www.kenttrustweb.org.uk and shared via an e-bulletin.

Responses

(3) 35 Services and Schools responded; 4 had dedicated service provision and 12 some dedicated provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people.

Of the 16 Services and Schools with dedicated service provision or some dedicated sessions:-

- open access and referral through other agencies is the most common access route
- all 5 key outcomes are addressed within the Every Child Matters framework
- services are primarily planned and delivered by single agencies
- very few services are locality based
- service is provided across all age bands of children and young people
- self referral and referral from family and other carers are the main routes of access
- nearly all services offer information and advice and outreach to the community
- some services involve children, young people, parents and carers in the development of service

Innovative Practice

- (4) Innovative practice identified through the mapping exercise:-
- facilitating inter-cultural understanding and awareness of human rights
 - dedicated service provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people e.g. Traveller Youth Club, Roma Youth Club
 - new ways of providing advice and information e.g. the Choice Advice Service provided by Admissions and Transport in Children, Families and Education.
 - more flexible ways of delivering service e.g. Keep Moving IT card to enable access to the People's network and library services
 - initiating multi-agency action at a local level to ensure positive community relations
 - service delivery driven by what young people say and need
 - promoting declaration of ethnicity to support schools and other agencies in being able to monitor the effectiveness of their services
 - increasing parental involvement at locality level to achieve wider participation and representation.
- (5) The outcome of this provision mapping will inform:-
- the further development of multi-agency working during Phase 2 of the implementation of the Local Children Service Partnerships, for example Children's Centres and Extended Schools
 - the projects and developments within the Minority Communities Achievement Service Business Plan

Review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service 2008

4. (1) In March 2008 KCC Children, Families and Education Senior Management Team agreed a proposal for informal and formal consultation setting out how MCAS intends to meet budget reductions agreed through the Medium Term Plan whilst maintaining high quality services to schools, settings, children and young people and supporting the transition to Local Children's Service Partnerships.

- (2) Budget savings required by the Medium Term Plan are:

Unit	2008/9	2009/10
MCAS	113.8	81.3

Service Unit Budget 2008/9

Funding Source	2007/8	2008/9
KCC Base	533.1	429.3
Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant	164.8	150.
Children's Services Grant	992.6	998.5
¹ Children's Services Grant	0	46
TOTAL	1,690.5	1,623.8

(3) It is proposed to achieve the savings by:-

- Deleting the Monitoring Officer and incorporating this function within all senior service posts
- Deleting 6fte Advisory Teacher Traveller Achievement and replacing them with 4fte Advisory Teacher Minority Ethnic Achievement. The rationale for this development is:-
 - to work with schools to address underachievement of Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children through the broader strategic framework in place to raise achievement of all children from minority ethnic background.
 - many newly arrived Gypsy Roma children are also learners of English as an Additional Language and any advisory teacher function to address their needs must be linked with locality based provision.
 - Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant 2008-11 (Standards Fund Guidance) identifies Gypsy Roma and Irish Travellers as underachieving groups and are a focus at a national and local level for the Grant. Clusters should identify how they will improve outcomes for this group alongside all other groups.
 - National Primary and Secondary Strategy: Gypsy, Roma and Travellers provides a framework to work systemically this schools, this needs to be within the context of the Primary Strategy and the broader agenda of Black and Minority Ethnic Achievement in order to ensure improved outcomes for all minority ethnic groups.
 - Duty to promote community cohesion places a responsibility for schools and the local authority to engage with all communities. Engagement of Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers needs to be within the broad framework of engagement of all minority ethnic groups, recognising that different groups may have different needs.

It is also proposed to review all Job Descriptions in the service to ensure they take account of the changing context in which the service is working. .

¹ Funding for one year for Assessment Coordinator for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- (a) Note the report for information
- (b) Receive a further report on the pilot of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme

Officer details:

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