

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board held in the Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 18 November 2010.

PRESENT: Mr J D Kirby (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr M J Angell, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr R B Burgess, Mr A D Crowther and Mr S J G Koowaree

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr W Forrester (Head of Gypsy & Traveller Unit), Mrs A Gamby (Head of Early Years & Childcare), Mrs L Simpson (Advisor Refugee & Traveller Achievement, Mid Kent), Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive)) and Mr A Ballard (Democratic Services - Business Support Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes

(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Rents on Public Sites Managed by KCC for 2011/12

(Item. 5– report by Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) Mr Forrester introduced this report and detailed the proposed increases in all site rents from 1 April 2011 by a recommended 3.1% which would enable the costs of managing and maintaining the sites to be more adequately covered by the income received. Mr Forrester said that the government intended that the Mobiles Homes Act 1983 will from February 2011 apply to the sites covered in the report and therefore future increases would be regulated under the terms of the Act.

(2) KCC Gypsy and Traveller Unit manage two Maidstone Borough Council sites and consultation will take place with the Borough Council over the rents they plan to charge for 2011/12.

(3) During the course of discussion members raised a number of questions of detail to which officers responded accordingly. As part of this Mr Forrester said he would look into the possibility of closer equalisation for all site rents in the next increase.

(4) The Board Agreed to:

(a) endorse the new rents detailed in the report being applied from 1 April 2011 and that Licensees (or, if the 1983 Act by then applies, those holding “pitch agreements”) be advised of the increases within the required 28 days notice in advance of that date;

(b) the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services be advised accordingly so that he can take the views of the Advisory Board into account when he takes his decision on this matter

3. Application of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 to Council-run Gypsy and Traveller Sites

(Item. 6–Report by Managing Director for Kent Adult Social Services)

(1) Mr Forrester introduced this item and said the current position was complex and there was a need to find clarity for County Councils, especially, on what law currently applied to agreements with licensees or tenants on sites they manage. KCC would be seeking counsels opinion jointly with other County Councils on the question of whether the Mobile Homes Act 1983 has applied since 2005, and any further decisions on this issue would need to await that advice.

(2) During the course of discussion Mr Forrester confirmed KCC would be taking a lead on this issue and also confirmed he would be working with other local authorities on a partnership basis.

(3) The Board Agreed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services:

- (a) to support the seeking of joint legal advice with other County Councils about the current application of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 Act to Gypsy and Traveller sites occupied by county councils, and if necessary, other related issues of joint concern with other County Councils or other Councils.
- (b) to support a joint or solo approach to the Communities and Local Government Department, including an approach to a relevant Minister, if appropriate, about the benefits of a standard recommended pitch agreement for all such Council site, and seeking their support for this.
If the CLG Department was unwilling to give its support, then endorsement be given for work to be undertaken with other Councils and interested parties to devise such a recommended agreement, with costs shared amongst the interested parties.

4. The Minority Community Achievement Service - Gypsy Roma Traveller update

(Item. 7– report by Acting Manager, Minority Communities Achievement Service, Children, Families and Education Directorate)

(1) Mrs Simpson introduced this report and provided the Board with an update on the work of the Minority Community Achievement Service (MCAS).

(2) Significant recent developments/events included:

- (a) Pupil Voice

- (b) Moving Forward Together: Raising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement
- (c) Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month and,
- (d) School Development.

(3) Following discussion the Board Received this report.

5. Minority Community Achievement Service

(Item. 8– report by Mrs Alex Gamby, Head of Learners with Additional Needs, Children, Families and Education Directorate)

(1) Mrs Gamby summarised the current role and resourcing of Minority Community Achievement Services (MCAS), and outlined the future issues and challenges.

(2) Future funding streams through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant would cease in March 2011 and be replaced by Dedicated Schools Grant but to what level was currently unclear. Assuming that funding continued through DSG, albeit at a reduced level then the MCAS service would need to be strategically restructured in line with identified need and available resources. On this basis options for consideration by the Board would be brought forward once the budget situation for 2011/12 (and beyond) had been confirmed.

(3) During the course of discussion members raised a number of points of detail to which officers responded as appropriate. In particular discussion took place around the possibility of recruiting volunteers and Mr Forrester said he thought this could be a good opportunity to tackle some of the barriers as direct experience can do much to alter people's perceptions.

(4) The Board then noted this report.

This meeting was webcast and you are able to view the full discussions at:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/how_the_council_works/watch_council_meetings.aspx

Alternatively please contact Andy Ballard on 01622 694297 for further details: