

BRIEFING PAPER

SCRUTINY REVIEW – Gypsies and Travellers

Members: Councillor Mrs Healy

Councillor Taylor

Lead Officer: Martin Freeman, Assistant Director – Corporate Services

Support: Katie Armstrong, Scrutiny Co-Ordinator

OUTLINE

Councillors Healy and Taylor, met with Assistant Director Corporate Services, Head of Legal Services, Principal Lawyer, Senior Lawyer and the Communication and Participation Manager to discuss the Council's policies on Gypsies and Travellers and the work being co-ordinated across the County.

Cabinet had received a report in December 2004 regarding the funding of a countywide Traveller Liaison Officer and the changes to local protocols, government guidance and 'best practice' in dealing with unauthorised encampments. The report also outlined the development of an action plan for the review of systems to deal with unauthorised encampments.

Members were advised that a meeting had been scheduled for 4 February 2005 to discuss an interim procedure devised in August 2004, based on the principles outlined in the Department of the Environment's Circular 18/94: including how the Council got there, where the documents were derived from and what interim procedure permits us to do and finally, the limitations and the risks of continuing in this way any longer than essential.

The Group agreed that there was a need to develop an integrated corporate travellers' strategy, which would be endorsed by Scrutiny Committee.

The Strategy should include a policy, which delineated appropriate objectives and complies with equalities and human rights requirements. The Group also agreed the processes to be followed in formulating a policy. This would include a consultation process to ensure buy-in both by appropriate agencies and also those individuals/groups with an interest. It was also Important to tie-in with other corporate and East Sussex initiatives.

TIMESCALE

Councillor Healy and Taylor would receive feedback from the meeting on 4 February 2005. Following on from this a draft timetable for the development of the strategy would then be circulated.