

Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Delivery Plan

Summary and Recommendations

COSLA and the Scottish Government have passed a significant milestone in producing the joint Action Plan to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers. We are now making progress on the development of Delivery Plans. A Short Life Working Group was set up over the summer to support Scottish Ministers and COSLA to take forward the accommodation actions as a priority.

This paper invites the Community Wellbeing Board to:

- i. Comment on and agree the proposals for governance of the plan set out in paragraphs 6 to 8;
- ii. Comment on and agree the draft accommodation Delivery Plan attached at Appendix 1;
- iii. Provide feedback on activities proposed under Action 1 of the Delivery Plan and any support that councils may need to ensure that the £2m additional funding can deliver immediate site improvements (this Action is specifically for local authorities that currently have site provision); and
- iv. Provide feedback on activities proposed under Action 3 of the Delivery Plan and what further data collection may be needed to improve understanding of accommodation needs and demands.

References

- 19-09-27 Leaders – Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan
- 19-09-20 CWB – Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan
- 19-06-28 Leaders – Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan Update
- 19-04-08 CYP – Improving the Lives of Gypsy/Traveller Children and Young People
- 19-02-22 Leaders – Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy-Travellers
- 18-12-17 CWB – Improving outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers
- 18-09-21 CWB – Improving outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers – housing / accommodation priorities
- 18-06-22 CWB – Improving Gypsy/Travellers Lives
- 18-04-13 CYP Gypsy/Traveller Education
- 18-03-11 CWB – Improving outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers

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Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the launch of the Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan and seeks Board members' views on the proposed approach to governance and delivery. It specifically shares a draft Delivery Plan for the accommodation actions, for input and in-principle approval.

Current COSLA Position

2. COSLA and the Scottish Government have passed a significant milestone in producing the joint Action Plan to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers. The plan reflects Local Government's commitments to protect and promote human rights and to improve outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers. It sets out realistic and achievable actions that can be taken in the next two years, to help to tackle entrenched inequalities and secure longer term change on accommodation, improve access to services, address racism, tackle poverty and improve representation.
3. COSLA has secured some initial resources to support the delivery of Local Government activity in the short term, namely a £2m commitment investment in public sector sites; the offer of an additional post at COSLA to support delivery of the plan; and some additional resources to support agreed activities (still under discussion but likely to include £10,000 allocated to support community research and engagement). Scottish Government has provided explicit reassurances that work to deliver 'more and better accommodation' will also be supported by sustainable longer term changes in policy and funding arrangements.
4. The Action Plan was approved by Leaders in September and launched by Councillor Whitham and the Minister for Older People and Equality at an event in Edinburgh on 9 October. It secured high profile media coverage and a positive response from Gypsy/Traveller activists. The plan can now be accessed digitally at this [link](#) and a limited number of hard copies, including a summary version, are available from COSLA on request.
5. As part of the launch, COSLA delivered a workshop to support the development of Action 28 in the plan, which commits to *create "a network of politicians to champion Gypsy/Travellers rights and to help to deliver the action plan locally"*. This was a specific action suggested by the Board in earlier stages of development. A final panel discussion also focused on the importance of taking forward the actions locally and included representations from COSLA's President and the European Commission Rapporteur on Roma, Gypsy and Traveller issues, Councillor John Warmisham.

Proposed COSLA Position

6. We are now making progress on the development of Delivery Plans. These will be published online at regular intervals. A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was also set up over the summer to support Scottish Ministers and COSLA to take forward the

accommodation actions as a priority. The SLWG is Chaired by John Mills (Fife Council and co-Chair of ALACHO) and includes representatives from South Lanarkshire Council and East Ayrshire Council along with COSLA and the Scottish Government, representatives from the third sector and individual Gypsy/Traveller activists. The group has met twice and has supported the development of the draft Delivery Plan (attached as an Appendix). It is intended that the group further develops and agrees the draft at the third meeting scheduled for 27 November. Further plans are in development across the four action areas.

7. COSLA and Scottish Government will continue to work closely together, and with the Gypsy/Traveller community, to deliver the Action Plan. It is proposed that COSLA co-ordinates the development and delivery of actions across Local Government. The Community Wellbeing Board will be accountable for supporting the majority of actions relevant to Local Government. Remaining actions will be overseen by the Children and Young People Board and the Health and Social Care Board, as appropriate. Decisions relating to the distribution of funding under Action 1 and the Terms of Reference for the funding review, under Action 2 of the plan, will be taken to Leaders for approval.
8. In addition, it is proposed that all local authorities put in place plans to implement agreed actions in a way that is relevant to and best meets local needs, and provide updates to COSLA through the Community Wellbeing Board and the Migration, Population and Diversity Team.

Accommodation Actions

9. Actions relating to 'more and better accommodation' will be taken forward as a priority by Local Government. The draft plan will be further developed following input from the Board and submitted to Scottish Ministers and COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson for final approval at the end of November.
10. The draft plan is attached at Appendix 1 for members' review. The proposed activities are summarised below:
 - **Short term investment:** Supporting immediate improvements to existing public sector sites, through work with residents to invest additional capital funding by March 2021.
 - **Funding review:** contributing to a joint review of housing funding and investment programmes to ensure that Gypsy/Traveller accommodation is fully included in the future.
 - **Needs and demands:** work to strengthen local approaches to accommodation needs and demands assessments for Gypsy/Travellers, including supporting local engagement and developing and testing data collection tools with the communities; and producing a worked example of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and additional guidance.
 - **Housing 2040:** working with community members to identify the forms of culturally appropriate accommodation that Gypsy/Travellers want to have access to in the longer term, to inform future provision and the development of the Housing 2040 strategy and route map.
 - **Local and National Data:** work to consider what further quantitative and qualitative data on accommodation aspirations and preferences would add value to local and national housing strategies, and how this can best be achieved.

- **Minimum Standards:** work with the Scottish Housing Regulator and local authorities that have not met the National Minimum Standards to ensure that there are no avoidable delays to their plans; consideration of whether the minimum standards need further development in the longer term, and/or should be supplemented with a development guide for the quality of culturally appropriate accommodation in the future.
- **Piloting Negotiated Stopping Places:** work with local authorities to develop and test positive approaches to managing unauthorised encampments and developing learning and recommendations for consideration across Local Government.
- **Mapping Traditional Stopping Places:** work with Community Researchers and MECOPP to help build a map of traditional stopping places and travelling routes with a view to re-opening them if practical.

Next Steps

11. Members are invited to comment on and agree the proposed approach set out in paragraphs 6 to 8.
12. Members are also invited to provide feedback on the accommodation Delivery Plan (Appendix A). COSLA officers will input any suggested changes to the final meeting of the short life working group on 27 November. The draft plan will then be submitted to Scottish Ministers and COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson for approval.
13. Local Authorities that currently have site provision are specifically invited to feed back on activities proposed under Action 1, and any support they believe they may need to ensure that the £2m additional funding delivers immediate site improvements.
14. All local authorities are invited to provide feedback on activities proposed under Action 3 and on what further data collection is needed to improve understanding of accommodation needs and demands and to inform the development of Local Housing Strategies.

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