



AGENDA ITEM NO.:
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REPORT OF SCRUTINY SUPPORT MANAGER

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE BOARD

DATE : 18th MAY 2005

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY BOARD REPORT – GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITES

Electoral Wards Affected : All	Specific Implications For : Ethnic Minorities <input type="checkbox"/> Women <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled People <input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Board Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligible for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not eligible for Call In <input type="checkbox"/> (details contained in the report)	

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to put before the Executive Board recommendation 1 and 2 of Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) final report made following completion of its Inquiry into Gypsy and Travellers Sites.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

- 2.1 The issue of sites for Gypsies and Travellers first came to Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) in June 2003. At that time Members agreed to undertake an Inquiry into the Council's approach to tackling unauthorised encampments.
- 2.2 The driving force for the Inquiry in 2003 was the serious and negative effect the use of unauthorised sites by Gypsies and Travellers had on the settled community and the environment.
- 2.3 In May 2004 Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) resolved *to conclude that, at this stage, the Board would not recommend the development of transit travellers sites in the city for tackling unauthorised encampments.*
- 2.4 In July 2004, the newly appointed Members on Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) concluded that with the changes outlined in proposed legislation, in relation to the duties of local authorities to respond to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, there was sufficient reason for Scrutiny to revisit the question of site provision.
- 2.5 In re-visiting this Inquiry, the Scrutiny Board's objective was to review new legislation, (the Housing Act 2004) government guidance and consultation documents, namely

“Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites”, a review of the DOE guidance 1/94 “Gypsy sites and Planning”, which seeks to update and improve on previous guidance. The Scrutiny Board also wished to consider the implications of the comments made by the Government in its response to the ODPM Select Committee’s Report on Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

3.0 FINAL REPORT

- 3.1 The final report of Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing) which is attached contains a number of recommendations. The majority of these are addressed to officers. However, recommendation 1 and 2 are specifically addressed to the Executive Board.

Recommendation 1

That the Executive Board, upon receipt of the appropriate government guidance, instructs the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing to undertake a housing needs assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and that this assessment is completed within a planned timeframe.

Recommendation 2

That the Executive Board instruct officers to develop meaningful and demonstrative ways in which the views and opinions of the Gypsy and Travellers Community can be considered when drafting a strategy for Gypsies and Travellers.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Members are asked to consider the above recommendations contained within the Scrutiny Board’s report.