

CWB Item 3.3

**Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan**

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| **Summary and Recommendations**  This paper advises the Board on the finalising of the joint action plan with Scottish Government to ‘improve the lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers’, and updates on current progress in meeting Leaders’ requirements for publication.  This paper invites the Community Wellbeing Board to:   1. Comment on the joint action plan and, in particular, advise of any key local authority investments and achievements in 2018/19 for potential inclusion. 2. Note the invitation, and indicate availability to attend, an event to promote local leadership and meet with Gypsy/Traveller activists, which will be held on Wednesday 9 October in Edinburgh. |

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| **References**  Previous reports on Improving the Lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers:   * 19-06-28 Leaders Item 12 Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan Update * 19-02-22 Leaders Item 02B 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 * 18-03-11 CWB – Improving outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers |

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**September 2019**



**Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan**

# Purpose

1. This paper advises the Board on the finalising of the joint action plan with Scottish Government to ‘improve the lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers’, and updates on current progress in meeting Leaders’ requirements for publication.
2. The paper invites comment on the action plan and, in particular, asks for examples of positive local authority investments and achievements in their work with Gypsy/Traveller communities locally, which could potentially be included in the introduction to the plan. It also encourages members to promote, and where possible attend, an event planned for Wednesday 9 October in Edinburgh, to potentially launch the action plan and promote local leadership.

# Current COSLA Position

1. COSLA officers have been working closely with civil servants to develop a joint action plan to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. Leaders and the CWB have previously approved the five thematic areas under which actions are being developed and have agreed to publishing the plan on a partnership basis.
2. In June, Leaders agreed that COSLA should lobby for three specific commitments from Scottish Government as part of this work.  It was agreed that officers would seek to secure these, and also participate in a Short Life Working Group to agree the detail of a joint Action Plan.  Leaders have asked that the finalised action plan be brought for their consideration in September.

# What is changing?

*Action Plan*

1. COSLA officers and civil servants have now, subject to any final amendments, finalised the action plan. It is attached at Appendix A. It sets out key commitments and high-level actions that will be taken during the delivery period (October 2019 - March 2021).  The actions focus on supporting leadership and culture change, as well as strengthening delivery of existing public sector equality duties.
2. Draft actions have been shared with ALACHO, ADES, the Scottish Council Equality Network and discussed with the Local Authority Housing Network.  SOLACE have also considered the principles behind the plan and the purpose of this partnership on two occasions. Actions have additionally been considered and discussed at a political level, both by the Community Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young People Board.
3. The draft plan clarifies the delivery approach, which is proposed to be a shared responsibility and based on local need and priorities (i.e. there is not an expectation that individual local authorities will take forward or contribute to every action specified).

Achievements and progress will be captured through the continuation of the Ministerial Working Group and relevant officer groups (which include COSLA and Scottish Government representation).

*Leaders conditions for publication*

1. Leaders considered the principles associated with the action plan in June 2019 and agreed that they would support its publication, if it was accompanied by a commitment to both short and long term funding, and if COSLA was adequately resourced to enable the implementation of the strategy at a national level. The response from Scottish Government to these ‘asks’ can be summarised as follows:
   1. Scottish Government has confirmed that Gypsy/Traveller accommodation will be included within the national approach to housing to 2040.  They have also agreed that as part of the review of their housing and investment programmes, they will ensure that the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are “appropriately and collectively resourced”.
   2. Scottish Government has identified one off short-term funding to invest in site improvements, over and above the Minimum Standard, of up to £2m over 2019-2021. This commitment was included in the Programme for Government.
   3. Scottish Government has provided in principle agreement to funding a Policy Officer post in COSLA, subject to the joint action plan being agreed by Leaders. They have also indicated that at least £10,000 may be available to support partnership work focused on understanding accommodation needs (a proposed action area in the plan).
2. Leaders will consider the finalised action plan at their September meeting, together with the response from Scottish Government to their ‘asks’.

# Proposed COSLA Position

1. Subject to Leaders’ agreement to proceed, COSLA will work with our member councils and partners, including members of the Gypsy/Traveller community, to support the delivery of the action plan in local areas.
2. The Community Wellbeing Board will continue to play a key role in overseeing the partnership work being undertaken to support Gypsy/Travellers. A particular focus of this work will be on developing local leadership to address racism and discrimination, and work to strengthen the quality and availability of culturally appropriate accommodation / temporary stopping places.

# Next Steps

1. Councillor Whitham will attend the Ministerial Working Group on 26 September, where it is anticipated that the action plan will be formally signed off by Ministers. Subject to approval from Leaders the following day, the aim is then to jointly launch the plan.
2. Provisional arrangements have been made for an event on 9 October that will focus on championing local leadership.  An invitation has been circulated to elected members and we would welcome an indication of who may be available to attend.

**September 2019**