

Adults and Health Committee

Date of Meeting:	27 March 2023
Report Title:	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Report: Update on progress
Report of:	Dawn Taylor: Cheshire & Warrington Traveller Team Manager (CWTT)
Report Reference No:	AH/44/2022-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All in Cheshire East

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to raise awareness, and update Committee on the progress of the Council and its partner organisations in addressing the inequalities experienced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within the borough. As well as sharing the ambitions for future work and engagement with the communities.
- 1.2. The report fits in well with the Councils aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support the most vulnerable residents. It is also in line with the Councils priority to be a council that empowers and cares about people.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Currently the only policy the Council has around, Gypsy, Roma, Travellers, is the management of unauthorised encampments. Meanwhile the inequalities experienced by those communities have grown and been exacerbated the recent pandemic.
- 2.2 The We Are Still Here report highlighted the voices of the communities and the issues it faces on a daily basis; the very same communities served by the council and its partners.
- 2.3 The council saw this as an opportunity to start working with its partners in addressing the inequalities, and ensuring services were accessible and welcoming to these communities.

- 2.4** The starting point was the setting up of a multi-agency operational group that could carry out this work.
- 2.5** We are at the beginning of this journey and need to make certain we are working with the communities and involving them throughout the processes. At the same time, we are taking services and staff along with us, enhancing staff training to cover issues particular to Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities. This will lead to a better understanding for all, and increased satisfaction in services from those communities, and a reduction in inequalities; as well as giving the communities a voice.

3. Recommendations

That Adults and Health Committee:

- 3.1.** Note the ongoing work of the multi-agency operational group and support the development of a framework.
- 3.2.** Agrees that an update will be brought back to Adults and Health Committee at a future date.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1.** To ensure that members and colleagues are aware of all the work currently been undertaken by the multi-agency group, and how these link the councils strategic aims and objectives.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1.** 'Doing nothing' is not an option, the inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities will only be exacerbated by that approach.

6. Background

- 6.1.** In 2006, Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC) commissioned a piece of research to establish an evidence base to demonstrate the need for and aid the development of a Gypsy/Travellers network across Cheshire. The research was innovative and participative, engaging people from the Gypsy/Traveller communities from the start. The work was co-designed, co-conducted, co-produced and co-presented. The result was the 'Here To Stay: An Exploratory Study into the Needs and Preferences of Gypsy/Traveller communities in Cheshire, Halton & Warrington.'
- 6.2.** Through the Cheshire Strategic Partnership, it was agreed to fund an updated research project, in partnership with CHAWREC and Irish Community Care. All the Cheshire authorities, through their Public Health departments, Cheshire Police and contributions from the John Moores Foundation and the Big Lottery funded the research.

- 6.3. 'We're Still Here' began gathering information through a consultation process with Gypsy and Travellers in February 2018. Data was collected over a 10-month period September 2018 to July 2019. The guiding principle of the research was to fully engage with the communities by employing members of those communities. A consultant was commissioned to train the community-based researchers to design and conduct the research into the needs of their communities.
- 6.4. The principles and methodology used in the first research were highly successful and were duplicated in the second project; engaging community members to carry out the research, enabling community members to be involved at every stage, encouraging ownership and empowering the communities.
- 6.5. A report was then presented to Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2020 (Appendix 1). This highlighted the 13 recommendations from We Are Still Here, under 3 headings;
- **Trust:** a very important commodity with any community. Many need, mainstream services but there is a lack of trusted navigators, as well as trust in services.
 - **Training:** empowering members of the communities to deliver training for example to, mental health teams, GPs and health workers, so they have a better understanding of the culture; *'nothing about us, without us!'*
 - **Hate Crime/discrimination:** This causes great mental distress to the communities, making people feel very isolated and can be seen in the number of suicides within the communities.
- 6.6. Members were very keen to see work develop to focus on providing access to a range of services and opportunities to raise awareness of the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities.
- 6.7. The Multi Agency Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Operational group was set up as a direct result of the impact of We Are Still Here report. The group first met on 22 September 2020, and is made up of representatives from, council services, health providers and the volunteer sector, as well as the police and the Romani community. The purpose of the group is to establish a clear and consistent approach to working with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities and to help address inequalities.
- 6.8. Significant progress has already taken place;
- an increase in interest in the group from council services and partners
 - redesigned webpages dedicated to Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities

- the launch of Pride of Romani (24th June 2022) -a newly constituted group supported by SCEP funding.
- Work towards the development of a framework to improve inequalities within Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, as well as support staff working with the communities.

6.9. The framework is a work in progress and is in its early stages of development, with 5 cross cutting themes.

- Increase awareness & understanding of the communities
- Ensure the communities are aware of services & how to access them
- Improve data collection locally
- Tackle discrimination
- Build strong partnerships

7. Consultation and Engagement

7.1. Throughout the development of the framework, the operational group has taken the lead, and agreed the processes and the way forward. Pride of Romani are part of this group and the decision making.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

8.1.1. The council needs to have robust policy's and procedures in place for working with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in line with Equality legislation and its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

8.2. Finance

8.2.1. May have implications for individual teams budgets around training for staff.

8.3. Policy

8.3.1. The development of a Framework will see improvements in policy's and outcomes for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities.

8.4. Equality

8.4.1. Gypsies, Roma, Travellers are all protected under equality legislation, and the Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between those groups.

8.4.2. The Corporate Plan’s vision reinforces the Council’s commitment to meeting its equalities duties, promoting fairness and working openly for everyone. Cheshire East is a diverse place and we want to make sure that people are able to live, work and enjoy Cheshire East regardless of their background, needs or characteristics.

8.5. Human Resources

8.5.1. none

8.6. Risk Management

8.6.1. none

8.7. Rural Communities

8.7.1. none

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. The work undertaken by the group, especially the development of a framework will have both direct and indirect implications for children and young people. Our ambition is that it will work towards decreasing the inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, and give better life chances for its children and young people.

8.9. Public Health

8.9.1. Our ambition is that it will work towards decreasing the inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, and give better life chances for its children and young people.

8.10. Climate Change

8.10.1. none

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Gypsy and Traveller Report: We Are Still Here
Background Papers:	None