

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 27 November 2019

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None



Subject: East Devon Traveller Forum

Purpose of report: This report explains why a Traveller Forum is needed in East Devon and how it should be established. It sets out the proposed membership and terms of reference.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet agree to;

- 1. The establishment of an East Devon Traveller Forum which shall report to Cabinet.**
- 2. That the draft Terms of Reference be noted with the final Terms of Reference being left to the Forum to consider and agree upon (having regard to any advice from the Monitoring Officer))**
- 3. That the three Members nominated to attend the forum on a regular basis shall be the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes & Communities, Lead Member for Cranbrook and Vice Chair of Development Management Committee.**

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the needs of Travellers are adequately met in East Devon and that this under-represented group do not feel disenfranchised

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Financial implications: No specific financial implications at this initial stage of forming the forum.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications other than as set out in the report

Equalities impact: High Impact

Travellers (a definition which includes Gypsies) are recognised by the Government as one of the most disadvantaged groups in the UK and are protected under Equalities legislation. The establishment of a Forum will positively impact upon them as it will provide an opportunity to liaise with the Council, and other bodies, and ensure that their needs are taken into account in decision making.

Climate change: Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk

If a Forum is not established then Travellers will not have this opportunity to liaise with the Council and may feel disenfranchised. Travellers are underrepresented in conventional planning policy consultations and are unlikely to engage with the Council as part of general consultation.

Links to background information: .

Report in full

1 Introduction

1.1 This report proposes that a Traveller Forum be established by the District Council in order to ensure that Travellers views are fairly represented in decision making and enabling important information to be disseminated to them. This is particularly relevant as the Council is required to meet the outstanding need for new pitches (see Appendix 1) identified in the 2015 needs assessment and future occupants input would be invaluable in determining the location, layout of pitches and future management. This will enable the different Council Services to work together to offer timely and targeted support e.g. planning sites initially, delivery through the planning system, ongoing maintenance issues through the housing service, benefits clinics and advice.

1.2 Neighbouring authorities of Teignbridge, Mid-Devon and South Somerset all have Traveller forums and a similar format would allow consistency across boundaries (particularly important given the travelling nature of attendees).

1.3 The Forum, as proposed, would aim to meet the needs of those who pursue a Travelling lifestyle through heritage or choice but may also reduce the issue of those who would prefer to live in bricks and mortar dwellings but live in vehicles only as an alternative to being homeless. This is an increasing problem that can afflict people from all walks of life, e.g. following the breakdown of a relationship, illness or redundancy, especially where they are single and childless so qualify for minimal state assistance.

1.4 The Government definition of a 'Traveller' is broad, essentially persons of nomadic habit.

The Government, in "Planning policy for traveller sites"

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf advise that for the purposes of planning policy "gypsies and travellers" means:

"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such."

In determining whether persons are "gypsies and travellers" for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life

b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life

c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances."

2 Why is a Forum needed?

Public Sector Equality Duty

2.1 The Traveller community is a group with protected characteristics (predominantly their culture but, in some cases, other characteristics such as disability) so the Council has an equality duty to ensure that their needs inform any decisions which are taken. This means that sites cannot be located where residents would experience harm or discomfort to a greater degree than settled housing. This is a particular issue in noisy locations as caravans are less insulated and so have a lower tolerance.

2.2 The creation of a forum is justified in order to advance equality of opportunity for Travellers and provides an opportunity to promote good relations and advance efforts to eliminate discrimination. Statistics demonstrate the Gypsies and Travellers have the poorest life chances of any ethnic group today and experience particularly poor outcomes in terms of life expectancy, health, education and employment. Many of the challenges the community faces are exacerbated by a lack of suitable accommodation and experiencing discrimination in every aspect of their lives. Furthermore, there is evidence from elsewhere to show that site provision can lead to significant tensions with the settled community. Better communication can foster a greater understanding of the needs of different communities and enable more informed decision-making. The subject of this report cuts across several areas of the Council's activities including housing, planning, public health and licencing.

Inclusive Consultation

2.3 Planning policy consultations are always designed to be as inclusive as possible but traditional means of consultation – through the website, local press, parish councils, emails to those on our database- rarely receive any responses from Travellers (or homeless people). Previously, letters have been sent directly to Travellers, and the DCC Traveller Liaison Officer has visited them individually, but the former received almost no response and the latter is extremely labour intensive and can only be done when issues are directly relevant to a small number of Travellers e.g. enforcement action is being taken. There is also a fear of attending public meetings amongst many Travellers who are afraid that they will be subject to hostility from local residents, so they can't debate or put their perspective in public.

2.4 As part of the Cranbrook Plan consultation, a Policy Officer visited all the residents of the Broadclyst and Sowton DCC sites (with a DCC Officer) and discussed the proposals with them. This resulted in a comprehensive written response to the draft Plan and it was amended as a result. Of particular importance was the universal request that any transit provision be sited well away from the permanent pitches, so possible antisocial behaviour would not be associated with permanent residents; and suggestions around the laying out of sites and accommodation which would increase the likelihood of new residents staying permanently. As the Cranbrook Plan progresses, a Forum would enable site layouts and future management proposals to be agreed, reducing the likelihood of conflict and increasing the chance of the new sites successfully integrating.

2.5 A Forum would enable consultation to reach a wider group regarding Policy documents and other Council matters and would be less labour intensive than visiting individual Travellers in their homes. Consultation could be carried out through the Forum and the results would be truly representative and allow Travellers views to be heard without fear of retribution or hostility.

Unauthorised encampments

2.6 The number of unauthorised encampments in the District has increased over recent years. This is due to a loss of transit sites/stopping places elsewhere in the region and a sharp increase in the number of 'homeless' Travellers. These homeless Travellers include those Travellers without a permanent site from which to travel but also the increasing number of homeless people from the general population who have moved into vehicles for want of alternative housing. There are no accurate figures for this category of homeless people but it is the fastest growing housing sector according to charities such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and, whilst they are covered by the definition of 'Traveller', most would rather be in bricks and mortar housing if it were available.

2.7 The Council has very limited interaction with these homeless people for whom living in vehicles is seen as a last resort. The Council may be able to offer them support, even if they do not qualify for local authority housing, but they are no longer part of the system. As proposed, the Forum would not directly include such homeless people, however Membership could be reviewed

after a year to consider widening its remit. Members might feel that they should be invited to join the Forum from its inception, as they meet the 'Traveller' definition, but they have not chosen this lifestyle and much of the Forum content - particularly where site provision and management are concerned - may not be relevant to them.

2.8 In East Devon, the unauthorised encampments of Travellers choosing such a lifestyle, are mainly concentrated around the old A30 and there have been several high profile encampments in the Broadclyst and Cranbrook areas as well as long-term tolerated use of the Daisymount layby. Police are able to act immediately where there are vacant transit pitches in the District to move Travellers onto, but a lack of pitches has led to protracted legal action in the recent cases.

2.9 In Teignbridge, where a Forum has been established for several years, the number of unauthorised encampments has decreased significantly. Officers put this down to having vacant transit pitches to direct unauthorised residents to, and greater liaison between Council sections and external organisations so that, for example, those who are homeless rather than Travellers can be found bricks and mortar housing.

2.10 There is also an issue in East Devon whereby some Traveller pitches are being occupied by non-Travellers, contrary to planning conditions. It is very difficult to police these as occupiers will not admit to being non-Travellers in case they lose their homes but it increases the shortage of pitches available to genuine Travellers and in some cases leads to anti-social behaviour and conflict between residents, and an increase in unauthorised encampments. A Forum would provide an opportunity for issues such as these to be discussed (or reported in confidence if necessary) with the organisations who can resolve them, and liaison between Travellers and bodies who they might ordinarily view negatively, such as the Police.

Benefits to the Settled Community

2.11 A Forum would provide a conduit between Travellers and the settled population. This can reduce the anxiety and tension of direct face-to-face discussion and provide an opportunity for matters to be raised in a neutral, non-confrontational way. A Forum would enable concerns to be raised (by Travellers or settled residents) with elected Members and Officers so that they can be debated directly with those responsible and the outcome may be fed back to the complainant. Concerns could relate to a variety of issues- including site management, anti-social behaviour, discrimination- which could be mediated through a Forum (although resolution may need to take place through other channels).

2.12 The settled community may be invited to attend Forum meetings where relevant issues are to be discussed (for example the local community and potential occupiers could debate the layout details of a new Traveller site to ensure the optimum position of facilities which could be shared e.g. playspace) and which may be resolved through direct debate.

3 Establishing a Liaison Forum

3.1 One of the common measures taken by local authorities who successfully integrate new Gypsy and Traveller sites into settled areas is the establishment of a liaison forum or panel to address concerns as they arise. Teignbridge run a Gypsy and Traveller Forum, attended by a range of Gypsies, Travellers, Officers, District and Parish Councillors and relevant organisations. Meetings are typically attended by 20 or so people and were initially held at 3 monthly intervals- now that most concerns have been addressed they tend to be six-monthly or annually. Using the Forum, Teignbridge has delivered a Traveller site of 15 pitches and unauthorised encampments have reduced significantly. Mid-Devon have recently established a similar Forum, using the Teignbridge model. At present attendance numbers in Mid-Devon are low, but are slowly rising. Terms of Reference (Appendix 2), based on the Teignbridge and Mid-Devon examples are

appended to this report, in draft. It is anticipated that they would be agreed and updated at the Forum meeting. These fora do not include homeless people, whether living in vehicles or not, even though they may be considered to meet the Government definition of 'Travellers'. This is because they have not chosen to pursue a travelling lifestyle.

3.2 The creation of a forum in East Devon will engender better understanding of the needs of the Traveller community and to work with the community over the design of sites and pitches to help facilitate delivery and ensure what is provided meets their needs. Greater engagement with the Traveller community via the forum could assist in unlocking the provision of pitches as part of wider strategic housing allocations.

3.3 The forum also provides opportunity for a waiting list to be set up to allow the Council to better understand the housing needs of the Traveller community and inform the production of the next Housing Needs Assessment- if this is produced 'in house' it will save the cost of consultants and is likely to be more accurate. There is an opportunity to work to strengthen collaborative working to prevent the homelessness of those occupying unauthorised sites and illegitimate spaces.

Membership

3.4 The forum could be made up of Travellers, Elected Members, Council Officers and other key stakeholders/partnership bodies. Other persons including experts and guest speakers would be permitted to attend by invitation. It is recommended that invitations to the inaugural meeting are extended to 3 East Devon Members, Devon County Council Traveller Liaison Service, EDDC planning, benefits, housing and environmental health officers (1 from each service) and Travellers living in the district. Attendance will be refined once the issues are narrowed down.

3.5 The forum should be open to be attended by all members of Travelling communities in East Devon: the Council's current understanding is that these travelling communities and ethnic groups are made up of New Travellers, Romany Gypsies and Travelling Showmen. Gypsies and Travellers living outside of East Devon could attend by advance request or invitation. Membership may be reconsidered after a year to assess whether it should be widened.

3.6 Whilst the forum will be open to all elected members, it is anticipated that a select group of members would attend regularly for consistency. It is suggested that 3 members be nominated to attend regularly.

3.7 The forum would not be open to the public.

Administration

3.8 In Teignbridge the Forum is organised by a Community Projects Officer at Teignbridge District Council, as it is seen as a community engagement role rather than a planning function. If the travelling community are to attend and speak openly it is important to make a clear distinction between the meeting facilitator and Officers who are involved in particular aspects of identifying and delivering a site (and potentially taking enforcement or eviction action). In the longer term, once sites are available, it is envisaged that the Forum would have a role in respect of site management, occupancy and addressing wider issues relating to Traveller integration and welfare. In East Devon, this is a role that would logically sit in the team responsible for operating sites and tenant welfare, albeit it is suggested that a Housing Association such as Elim might be engaged to operate sites on EDDC's behalf. The table below sets out the various roles and responsibilities that different sections of the Council will have and demonstrates why the Forum will need to be a cross-service initiative.

Key Task	Lead Service at EDDC	Lead External Service	Relevant legislation or Government Policy	Commentary and benefits of a forum
Calculating need for future traveller accommodation	<p><u>Planning Policy Team</u></p> <p>The planning Policy team has typically taken the lead in establishing need, though close liaison with housing services, in particular, would be standard practice.</p>	Housing needs assessment (for travellers and the settled community) can have cross-boundary considerations and therefore working with external bodies and neighbouring authorities is expected.	Planning legislation and the NPPF/Planning Practice Guidance require needs to be assessed and with respect to cross boundary working legal requirements under the Duty to Cooperate are central.	The last assessment of needs for traveller accommodation was completed in 2015 and it is now increasingly dated. To support production of a new local plan, and to help meet wider Council responsibilities, a new assessment is needed. Establishment of a forum should greatly assist needs assessment work and negate the need (and cost) of buying in external consultancy support.
Providing sites for traveller accommodation	<p><u>Planning policy Team</u></p> <p>The Policy team identify sites</p> <p><u>Housing Team</u></p> <p>Where sites are provided/owned/managed by the LPA the Housing Team are responsible (but may devolve this to external bodies)</p> <p><u>Environmental Health</u></p> <p>Issue licences to sites meeting at least minimum standards</p>	<p>Private Developers</p> <p>Housing association</p> <p>Travellers</p>	<p>NPPF and planning policy for traveller sites (2012 upd.2015)</p> <p>Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996</p>	<p>Sufficient, deliverable, sites must be allocated through the development plan. If the private sector does not deliver sufficient plots then the LPA should provide them. Currently most pitches need to be 'affordable' so the likelihood is that the Council will need to provide them.</p> <p>The Forum will help to identify locations and deliver sites</p> <p>Monitoring of site licences</p>
Managing traveller sites	<p><u>Housing Service</u></p> <p>Most authorities that directly operate traveller sites will do so through housing services; where sites</p>	Where a body external to the Council operates any site they would be a key partner. In	ODPM (Feb 2006) Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – Guide to	The Forum will enable the Housing service to directly liaise with site residents so that the site can be set up and run to meet both

	<p>are run by external bodies a housing service at a council would typically be the commissioning body.</p> <p>In East Devon, all Travellers in 'need', bar one family, require 'affordable' pitches, the provision of which will be the responsibility of EDDC and/or a Housing Association.</p>	<p>some parts of the UK housing associations are site managers or leaseholders from the Council.</p>	<p>responsibilities and powers</p>	<p>parties requirements and any issues can be resolved promptly.</p> <p>Sites which are managed in partnership with residents have less anti-social behaviour and are generally more successful than those without.</p> <p>On EDDC sites regular clinics can be held in a meeting room. The need for such clinics, and their advertisement, could be established through the Forum</p>
Meeting the needs of homeless people	<p><u>Housing Service</u></p> <p>Many homeless people fall under a definition of traveller and the housing service at the Council has responsibilities for finding appropriate accommodation.</p>	<p>There may be a need for intervention by external services, e.g. healthcare, social services especially where people are vulnerable</p>	<p>Part 7 of the Housing Act, 1996</p> <p>Homelessness Act 2002</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</p>	<p>A Forum may not directly assist homeless people as it is aimed at those who choose to pursue a travelling lifestyle (rather than having to, e.g. living in a car being preferable to sleeping rough) however some of the information may be useful and it will help to identify the scale of the problem.</p>
Enforcing Against Unauthorised Encampments	<p><u>Planning Enforcement Service</u></p> <p><u>Housing Service</u></p>	<p>There may be a need for intervention by external services, e.g. healthcare, social services, Police</p> <p>DCC Traveller Liaison Service</p>	<p>Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (S171A)</p> <p>Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994</p>	<p>Breaches of planning control are much less likely if there are sufficient authorised pitches available.</p> <p>The Forum will enable all Travellers to feel enfranchised so they are less likely to create unauthorised encampments, and will clarify the law.</p>
Health and Wellbeing of Travellers	<p><u>Environmental Health</u></p> <p>Local authorities have a public duty to</p>	<p>DCC Traveller Liaison Service</p> <p>NHS</p>	<p>Health and Social Care Bill (2013)</p>	<p>The Forum will enable liaison, facilitated by EH, between attendees</p>

	<p>promote the health of their population and Travellers are recognised in the Strategic Plan as having worse health, and shorter life expectancy, than the general population. Environmental Health are responsible for ensuring that robust plans are in place to protect the local population and in providing public health advice to NHS commissioners.</p>	Social Services	Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	<p>and the various health bodies so that Travellers are able to access the wide range of provision available to the general population. In particular, vaccination and routine screening, would reduce mortality rates but are often not available to Travellers (as they do not receive automatic notification by post) and cannot guarantee they can access their 'local' clinic if travelling</p>
Sites Meeting Health and Safety Standards	<p><u>Environmental Health</u></p> <p>Sites need to be licensed to ensure they are safe for residents and meet legislator requirements</p>	<p>There may be a need for intervention by external services, e.g. Fire Service, Police, DCC Traveller Liaison Service</p>	Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (S5)	<p>The Forum will promote safe, healthy sites and ensure that attendees are informed about licensing requirements.</p>
Sites on Public Highways	<p><u>Planning Enforcement Service</u> <u>Housing Service</u></p> <p>There is an agreed protocol which is followed in respect of unauthorised encampments, agreed by DCC and EDDC. It ensures that residents are treated fairly and with respect and any special circumstances are accommodated. Generally Travellers are moved on from unauthorised sites as soon as possible however, if they are vulnerable and there are no authorised sites available locally, DCC</p>	<p>DCC On Highway Land DCC have a permissive policy where unauthorised encampment are not moved on provided they are safe and there are no alternative, authorised, sites</p> <p>Police Social services</p>		<p>The Forum will help to deliver and manage authorised sites so that roadside sites are no longer needed.</p>

	may 'tolerate' their presence.			
Other Services eg Benefits	<p><u>Revenues and Benefits</u></p> <p>Some residents will be entitled to benefits and support with their Council Tax and information about changes to the claims process would reduce the likelihood of mis-claiming or delays.</p>	<p>DCC Traveller Liaison Service</p> <p>Police Health Service</p> <p>Other bodies offering support</p>		<p>The Forum will act as an information point for attendees to gain up to date advice. This could relate to a range of issues but universal credit, the introduction of trespass as a criminal (rather than civil) matter and changes to the definition of 'Traveller' and the resultant legal implications are all current matters.</p> <p>Support and guidance through the Forum would lessen the likelihood of unknowingly breaking the law.</p>

3.9 In East Devon it is suggested that Officers would be responsible for the administration of the forum, for reporting back on any issues or actions raised and in coordinating the operation and running of the forum. It is likely that 'ownership' and organisation of the Forum will not rest with one Service, for example as sites are delivered the input from Planning would lessen. Issues raised and actions identified by the forum would be reasonably pursued by Officers as part of a commitment to work with the community to help identify and resolve issues but, it will be made clear that due to the resources available, the Council cannot guarantee that all issues and actions raised by the Forum will be addressed. It is not intended that the Forum be a decision making body.

3.10 There could be meetings with Officers, Members and other relevant persons between the forum dates to discuss and action progress. This would provide an opportunity to review the relevance of the work and terms of reference if necessary.

Format of the Forum

3.11 It is anticipated that the forum will meet two to four times per year although meeting dates and frequency may vary if particularly relevant issues/consultations need to be discussed and depending on attendees seasonal travelling patterns; appropriate timings are to be discussed and agreed with all members of the forum. Chairmanship would be agreed by forum members.

3.12 An agenda for each meeting will be agreed in advance and will seek to incorporate topics put forward by all members of the Forum. The agenda will be circulated with all members of the Forum and will be publically available.

3.13 Attendance at the forum by members of the travelling community will be on a voluntary and unpaid basis and rules will be established at the outset which everyone will agree to abide by. These terms of reference will be available on the EDDC website.

3.14 A Forum page will be set up on the East Devon website, specifically for Travellers and this will be used to share the agenda and minutes of each meeting and other relevant information of interest. Any confidential information discussed by the forum will not be shared publically or published on the Council website.

4 Member Representation

4.1 The draft Terms of Reference suggest that the Forum should be open to elected Members and, to ensure consistency, that 3 Members should attend regularly. Mid-Devon and Teignbridge have agreed to open their Forums to a small group of East Devon Members should they wish to see them in operation. Unfortunately both authorities held their meetings in October, so too early for this meeting, and the next ones won't be held until late Spring, however the minutes are available to view here: <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/community-and-people/people/gypsies-and-travellers/gypsy-and-traveller-forum/> and <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/gypsies-and-travellers/gypsy-and-traveller-forum/>

Appendix 1

Need for Pitches

Based on the 2015 needs assessment, <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1298707/devon-partnership-2015-gtaa-final-report.pdf> . The needs assessment forecasts need up to 2034, so the figures below have been adjusted to 2031 (to correlate to the Local Plan period). A small number of pitches have been provided but the current position with regard to need is:

- 28 new Gypsy and/or Traveller pitches are still needed between 2014-2031. Of these 28 pitches, 16 should have been provided in the first 5 years (up to 2019). There is little prospect of providing any of the 16 urgently needed pitches before 2020.
- Two sites, containing 4 pitches, have been purchased by non-Gypsies and are understood to no longer be available for Gypsies/Travellers. This is not reflected in the needs assessment figures above, but results in a net decrease in pitches available of 4.
- 4-5 emergency stopping places/transit sites, each comprising 4-5 pitches, are required across the Devon study area. No specific East Devon need has been identified.

A pitch is the space required to accommodate one household, and should consist of at least an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers), drying space for clothes, a lockable shed, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden. The methodology we have produced suggests that a minimum typical pitch size of 500 sqm is applied to new sites, although this may be varied where the Travellers lifestyle warrants it e.g. New Travellers living communally.

What is the current position regarding potential new pitches?

- New supplementary planning guidance on site design and layout has been adopted. This does not consider location of sites.
- Enforcement action has commenced on an unauthorised, but previously tolerated, site at Shute Woods for up to 4 pitches. We do not have anywhere to relocate them as yet but they will count towards the overall 'need' figure.
- A long-standing but unauthorised site for 5 pitches in Sidmouth is being investigated by planning and environmental health. The site may be available to purchase by EDDC but the cost of providing services and laying out the site will be high and existing (non-Gypsy) residents would need to be relocated.
- The Cranbrook Plan has been submitted for Examination. Land east and west of Cranbrook, which forms the expansion areas of the town identified in the Local Plan, is required to accommodate up to 30 pitches; as these pitches cannot be provided quickly enough to meet the immediate need, it is likely that 12 pitches will be provided, across two sites, to meet the need beyond 2016.
- Members agreed that a budget of £500k be allocated to the purchasing and laying out of a site/s if one became available. To date, formal offers have been made on 6 potential sites and around 20 landowners have been approached. To date no offers have been successful (3 sites were withdrawn from sale and three sold to other buyers) and few landowners have been interested (all sites have been investigated and discounted, mainly on access grounds).

APPENDIX 2

Traveller Forum Terms of Reference

(DRAFT) 27/11/19

Terms of reference to be agreed by the Forum (DATE)

Name of group: East Devon Traveller Forum

Purpose and role of the group: The forum will provide an opportunity to share information and develop relationships

The forum will be:

Friendly – it will provide an inviting place where all members of the travelling community will be welcome.

Trusting – it will provide an opportunity for members of the travelling community, Councillors, Council Officers and other partner organisations to meet together in a safe and friendly environment, to build a working relationship based on trust and respect.

Informative – it will allow everyone to join in an open and honest discussion about travelling lifestyles, the needs of households from all travelling backgrounds and how these needs can best be met. Everyone will have the right to have their say and be listened to.

Effective – it will not have any formal decision making powers, but will inform decisions made by the Council and other organisations.

Membership:

- The forum will be made up of Council Officers, Elected Members, Travellers and other key stakeholders/partnership bodies. Other persons/experts/guest speakers will be permitted to attend by invitation.
- The forum is open to all members of the Traveller communities in East Devon: the Council's current understanding that this is made up of New Travellers, Romany Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople. Should other Traveller communities be present in East Devon, for example Roma, Irish Travellers, Bargees, they will be welcome to attend. Travellers living outside of East Devon may attend by advanced written request or invitation. Membership will be reviewed after a year.
- The forum will be open to all elected members, however it is anticipated that a select group of 3 members will attend regularly for consistency.
- The forum will not be open to the public.

Accountability:

- Council Officers will be accountable to the forum, and will be responsible for reporting back on any issues/actions raised.
- All issues raised and actions identified by the forum will be reasonably pursued by Council Officers. Due to the resources available, the Council cannot guarantee that all issues and actions raised by the forum will be addressed.

Review:

- There will usually be six-weekly/bimonthly officer meetings between the forum dates to discuss and actions progress. This will provide an opportunity to review the relevance of the work and terms of reference if necessary.

Meetings:

- The forum will usually meet two to four times per year at times to suit the Traveller community although meeting dates and frequency may vary if particularly relevant issues/consultations need to be discussed; appropriate timings are to be discussed and agreed with all members of the forum. Due to seasonal travelling patterns frequency may need to be adjusted in consultation with all parties.
- Inaugural meeting – February 2020?
- Officers will usually meet bimonthly between forum meetings.
- The agenda for each meeting will be agreed in advance and will seek to incorporate topics put forward by all members of the forum. The agenda will be circulated with all members of the forum and attendees one week prior to the forum meeting.
- The forum will elect a chair person/s to facilitate the meetings; such a person will be elected by a majority vote. For the first year there will be an interim chair who will chair the meetings during the establishment period of the Forum. In future, it would be preferred if the chairs represent each of the Travelling communities in East Devon.
- The forum will agree a set of rules that all attendees must abide by, to include that: All attendees of the forum will be treated with respect and will be given the opportunity to speak should they wish to do so. The forum will not tolerate any discrimination.

Sharing of information and resources:

- The (draft) minutes of the forum meetings will be made available to all attendees via the East Devon website within one calendar month of the meeting.
- A page specifically for Travellers for the sharing of information will be set up on the East Devon website.
- The officer/s responsible for updating the website will be: TBC
- Confidential information: any confidential information discussed by the forum will not be shared publically or published on the Council website.
- The terms of reference and other documents shared with the forum will not use acronyms and will be in language that is easily understood by all.