

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Cabinet Meeting: 18 December, 2017**

### **Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services**

### **Welsh Government Consultation 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers'**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to submit the attached response ([Appendix B](#)) on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' issued on 28th September 2017.

#### **Recommendation**

1. That Cabinet approve the response attached at Appendix B to Welsh Government.

#### **Reason for the Recommendation**

1. To ensure that the views of the Vale of Glamorgan Council are taken into account by the Welsh Government before finalising the action plan to 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers'.

#### **Background**

2. In September 2011, the Welsh Government published the document 'Travelling to a Better Future' which represented an opportunity to develop a new relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the 'settled' community. It also offered a chance for local and national governments to engage more effectively with these communities to improve equality of opportunity for all.
3. Welsh Government has acknowledged that significant progress has been achieved towards improving the outcome for these communities since the publication of this document, but that there is much more which is yet to be achieved and that it should also consider the needs of the migrant Roma in developing policies.
4. 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' ([Appendix A](#)) therefore builds upon work undertaken since 2011 in the areas of accommodation, education, health and community participation. It also introduces additional commitments relating to employment and training as well as building bridges with social services and the criminal justice agencies. The eight aims within the draft document are linked to the

Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations objectives and Strategic Equality Plan.

### **Relevant Issues and Options**

5. A working group of Officers was set up to discuss the document and to formulate a response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. The group was made up of representatives from Housing, Planning, Social Services, Education and the Community Cohesion Regional Co-ordinator Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.
6. The response attached at Appendix B was subsequently drafted for Cabinet approval.

### **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

7. There continues to be resource implications for the Council to meet the accommodation provision of a Gypsy and Traveller site in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant offers 100% funding to a maximum of £1.5million per project which can be sought to assist the Council.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

8. By the Council assisting to deliver the aims listed in the draft action plan, including meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers through the development of a permanent site based on Welsh Government Guidance in its design, it will assist in minimising the impact of climate change. In addition, the proposal will help the long term sustainability of the Vale of Glamorgan by meeting the accommodation needs of some of its residents and contribute to community sustainability.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

9. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient sites are available to meet the identified needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers under Section 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
10. In the absence of an approved Local Authority site Welsh Government Guidance requires that Councils consider 'toleration' of unauthorised encampments as in the current circumstances.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

11. By identifying and meeting the accommodation, education and health and community needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers it will ensure that the Council is able to respond appropriately. In respect of unauthorised encampments it will also greatly strengthen the ability of the Council to respond swiftly and firmly and help to avoid these in the future.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

12. The draft action plan for 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' is supportive of the Council's Equal Opportunities ethos as it identifies the mechanisms needed to respond appropriately to these communities..
13. The Council's Local Housing Strategy 2015-20 includes an aim which focuses on promoting equality of access to housing and housing services:

Aim 4: To promote equality of access to housing and housing services. This aim includes a number of objectives which include:

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Respond to the diverse housing needs of people in the Vale of Glamorgan.

### **Corporate/Service Objectives**

14. This report is consistent with the Corporate Plan 2016 - 20, as follows:

Well-being Outcome 1: An inclusive and safe Vale.

Objective 2: Providing decent homes and safe communities:

Provide appropriate accommodation and support services for particularly vulnerable groups.

Increase the number of sustainable, affordable homes.

Well-being Outcome 2: An environmentally responsible and prosperous Vale:

Objective 4: Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment:

Adopt and implement the Local Development Plan as a framework for sustainable development in the Vale of Glamorgan.

### **Policy Framework and Budget**

15. This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

### **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

16. No ward Member consultation has been undertaken as the consultation response relates to the whole of the Vale of Glamorgan.

### **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

17. Homes and Safe Community

### **Background Papers**

Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers - . Consultation Document, Welsh Government, 28th September 2017.

### **Contact Officer**

Pam Toms - Housing Solutions & Supporting People Team Leader

### **Officers Consulted**

Mike Ingram, Head of Housing & Building Services

Victoria Robinson, Operational Manager, Development Management

Marine Coles, LAC Education Coordinator and Lead Professional EAL, Education Department

Amber Condy, Operational Manager, Children and Young People Services

Sian Sanders, Community Cohesion Regional Co-ordinator Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Committee Services, Legal Services

Carolyn Michael, Operational Manager, Accountancy

**Responsible Officer:**

Miles Punter, Director of Environment and Housing Services