

REPORT TO: Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 19th November 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: The Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive a presentation from the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller team regarding the work that it carries out in the Borough Of Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team (CWTT) is hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council and is based in Civic Way, Ellesmere Port. The team is managed by Dawn Taylor and the team is made up of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers (GTLOs) from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire Police.

Council officers are Senior GTLO Kyler Ashcroft, who has responsibility for the management of the two Council sites, Lyndsey Eddleston, Tim Kingston and one other post currently vacant. Helen Crampton provides information support.

Cheshire Police are represented by PC Greg Thompson and one other post currently vacant.

3.2 Halton Borough Council (HBC) has a full time Gypsy and Traveller (GTLO Liaison Officer who is responsible for the day to day management of the G&T Service including the G&T sites (through the site warden x1 for both of HBC sites), unauthorised encampments, general enquires and complaints relating to G&T within Halton.

3.3 In practice, HBC has a number of duties and responsibilities which impact on the lives of Halton's population including Gypsies and

Travellers: education, public health, community safety, and equalities and social cohesion in all aspects of service provision.

3.4 Halton has three HBC owned and managed sites:-

- Widnes, Riverview - A permanent site offering 23 pitches
- Runcorn, Transit Site - A temporary stopping site with 14 pitches
- Runcorn, Canalside – A permanent site offering 12 pitches.

In addition to the HBC sites, there are additional sites all in Runcorn.

Private sites with planning permission are:-

- Runcorn, Bigfield Lodge
- Runcorn, Windmill Street

3.5 Whilst most encampments are managed within office hours with the officers making full use of Section 62 powers (direct the encampment to the HBC transit site) available to the police and HBC.

3.6 HBC and Cheshire Police devised a joint protocol to tackle illegal encampments, which was effective from 1st May 2017. The Protocol is in line with statutory guidance, national policy frameworks and best practice. Due consideration was given, with due regard to statutory obligations including the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other government statutory guidance.

3.7 The Protocol covers Gypsies and Travellers and other Travelling ethnic groups who have a nomadic lifestyle for all or part of the year. The Protocol takes into consideration the fact that Halton Borough Council has provided a transit site (opened February 2009) within its ownership and management. The Protocol applies to all land which the Council either own or exercise rights or obligations over including highway land and public rights of way or with the agreement of the land owner, with regards to private land.

3.8 The purpose of this protocol 'unauthorised encampment' relates only to trespass by Gypsies and Travellers on land they do not own as opposed to 'unauthorised development', where Gypsies and Travellers are developing land they themselves own, or with the permission of the landowner, without the necessary planning permissions.

3.9 The Aim of this protocol is to ensure an effective, efficient, fair and consistent approach to the management of unauthorised encampments. It takes into account the reasonable needs and expectations of both the settled and Travelling communities; and enables the public sector partners to undertake their statutory responsibilities.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The policy implications of the review relate primarily to the Safer Halton priority. However this is a cross cutting work area which has wider implications on other areas of council business.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the health, safety and well-being of young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None identified.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.