

Gypsy and Traveller Forum Terms of Reference

“Working with the Gypsy and Traveller Community in Mid Devon”

Terms of reference (DRAFT) 2/02/18

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

Name of group: Mid Devon District Council Gypsy and Traveller Forum

Purpose and role of the group: The forum is intended to function as a two way information sharing environment.

The forum will be:

Welcoming – it will provide a friendly place where all members of the travelling community can come along.

Trusting – it will provide an opportunity for members of the travelling community, Councillors and professionals from planning, housing, public health, licensing, education, transport and other backgrounds from the Council, the NHS and other partner organisations to meet together in a safe and friendly environment, to build a working relationship based on trust and respect.

Learning and sharing – it will allow everyone to join in an open, honest and frank 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.

Influential – it will not have any formal decision making powers, but will have great value in helping to shape the thinking and work of the Council and other organisations.

Membership: The forum will be made up of Council Officers, Elected Members, Gypsies and 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 Gypsy and Traveller communities in Mid Devon: the Council's current understanding that this is made up of New Travellers, Romany Gypsies and Travelling Showmen. Gypsies and Travellers living outside of Mid Devon may attend by advanced written request or invitation.

The forum will be open to all elected members, however it is anticipated that a select group of 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 be 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 meet twice yearly at times to suit the Gypsy and Traveller community. Suggested timings February/March and October/November, to be agreed in consultation with all parties.
- Inaugural meeting – May 2018?
- Officers will 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 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 Gypsy and Travelling communities in Mid 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 minutes of the forum meetings will be made available to all attendees on the Mid Devon website within one calendar month of the meeting.
- A page specifically for Gypsies and Travellers for the sharing of information will be set up on the Mid 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.