

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 24 JUNE 2014****REPORT OF: MARY ANGELL, CABINET MEMBER FOR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES****LINDA KEMENY, CABINET MEMBER FOR  
SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****LEAD OFFICER: NICK WILSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND  
FAMILIES****SUBJECT: SURREY'S STRATEGY FOR GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2014-2017**

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**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey's strategy for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children and young people is informed by needs analysis, which found that across a range of health, education and social indicators, Surrey's GRT children and young people have some of the poorest life chances compared with the county's 0-19 population generally. The strategy identifies how the Children, Schools and Families (CSF) Directorate, and wider partners, can reduce local inequalities and improve outcomes for Surrey's GRT children and young people.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the strategy (Annex A) for implementation with immediate effect.
2. The strategy and needs analysis should be published on Surrey County Council's website.
3. Officers should develop a short, accessible summary of the strategy to share with Surrey's GRT communities.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Implementing the strategy is key to reducing local inequalities and improving outcomes for Surrey's GRT children and young people. The strategy also contributes to the Directorate's wider approach to improving outcomes for all vulnerable groups of children and young people. Publishing it will help to communicate Surrey's commitment to these objectives.

## DETAILS:

### Key findings from needs analysis

1. Our needs analysis (Annex B) was developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including staff within our own Directorate, external partners and members of Surrey's GRT communities. It provides a clearer understanding of the needs of GRT children and young people in Surrey than we have had previously. The following is a summary of key findings:
  - a. Despite notable achievements in some Surrey schools, educational outcomes for Surrey's GRT children and young people overall are significantly poorer than those of their non-GRT peers. School attendance tends to fall off as children get older. Experiences of bullying and racial discrimination are commonly cited. Many GRT families find vocational training and employment more relevant than academic qualifications.
  - b. Social issues impacting on GRT communities include high levels of domestic abuse; cultural expectations for females to take on significant domestic and caring responsibilities at a young age, and experiences of discrimination and difficulty in trusting services.
  - c. The physical and mental health of GRT children and young people and adults is significantly poorer than in the population as a whole. GRT life expectancy is ten years lower than the national average and infant mortality is twenty times higher than in the rest of the population.
  - d. There is insufficient accommodation to meet local need; and overcrowding and poor conditions on some sites.
  - e. Child poverty disproportionately affects GRT children and young people, and many families experience economic exclusion. Many GRT families will be impacted by the welfare reforms.
  - f. Data collection systems vary in their effectiveness in identifying outcomes for GRT service users. This is compounded by the reluctance of some families to self-ascribe.

### Overview of the strategy

2. The aim of the strategy is that life opportunities for Surrey's GRT children and young people should be no different to the life opportunities of the majority of Surrey's 0-19 population. Given the complexity and long-standing nature of many of the issues involved, it may be unrealistic to claim that we can fully achieve this aim by 2017, so the strategy needs to be part of an ongoing approach, with progress reviewed regularly. The impact of some of our strategic actions may not be fully visible for a number of years.
3. The strategy focuses on 0-19 year olds but includes broader issues relating to the needs of Surrey GRT families and communities where these impact upon children and young people's wellbeing. Many of the actions can be implemented by Surrey County Council's Children, Schools and Families Directorate, and there are also recommendations for wider partners that would benefit from political support and high level leadership as they are taken forward.
4. The action plan with the strategy aligns with Surrey's Lifecourse Outcomes approach, which was developed in consultation with children, young people, parents and practitioners to find a common way of looking at the outcomes we believe children and young people can be supported to achieve at key stages in their childhood. It has sections covering the period from conception to birth; the early years (0-5); the primary years (6-11) and the teenage years (12-19 years), and a section referring to whole communities.

5. Overall, the action plan is intended to:
- a. Improve educational outcomes for GRT children and young people by developing a better coordinated response to attendance, bullying and exclusions; and ensure that GRT young people are better prepared to become economically successful adults.
  - b. Address identified social issues, for example, tackling domestic abuse and understanding the needs of GRT young carers.
  - c. Improve health outcomes by increasing GRT knowledge of relevant health issues for both adults and children and increasing early uptake of health services.
  - d. Ensure that plans are developed to tackle deficits in GRT accommodation through best use of available resources.
  - e. Ensure that the needs of GRT communities are considered in arrangements to support Surrey families impacted by economic exclusion and/or welfare reforms.
  - f. Ensure our services respond effectively to GRT needs by strengthening data collection and outcomes monitoring; increasing workforce awareness of GRT cultural needs; and encouraging positive engagement with GRT communities to ensure that our services respond effectively to their needs.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

6. The action plan names accountable leads who will ensure delivery and monitor the effectiveness of individual actions against agreed success measures. In some cases, action is already underway, for example, work has started towards developing an improved collaborative approach to GRT attendance. Other aspects of the strategy are in earlier stages of development (e.g. refresh of the anti-bullying strategy). Defining appropriate timescales and specific outcomes targets will be part of ongoing implementation work. Implementation will be led by the Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, on behalf of the CSF Directorate Leadership Team.

### **Governance**

7. The CSF Directorate Leadership Team will receive regular updates about overall implementation progress and outcomes. Where actions are assigned to partner organisations, nominated leads will be accountable for implementation and outcomes monitoring through their own governance arrangements. Overall impact of the strategy will be monitored through Surrey's Children and Young People's Partnership.

<b><u>CONSULTATION:</u></b>
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8. Consultation to develop the needs analysis and strategy has included:
- a. A working group comprising representatives from NHS Surrey; Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Surrey County Council's Children, Schools and Families Directorate; the voluntary, community and faith sector, and community development workers who are themselves members of Surrey's GRT community.
  - b. Engagement with GRT communities via Surrey's Gypsy and Traveller Forum, and with young people attending Surrey's Gypsy Skills project.
  - c. Meetings and discussions with internal and external partners, in particular, the accountable leads named in the action plan.
  - d. Engagement with elected Members through a Member Reference Group representing the Children and Education Select Committee, and briefings to CSF portfolio holders.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

9. It is expected that the majority of actions within the strategy can and will be achieved, and that there will be measurable impacts by 2017. However, two risks to delivery have been identified as set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 below.
10. The strategy includes various proposals intended to strengthen engagement with GRT communities, and, critically, to improve GRT trust in our willingness to work with them collaboratively. Achieving this relies upon Surrey's Gypsy and Traveller Forum as the key mechanism for public engagement and obtaining GRT feedback. The forum has been well attended by public agencies and members of GRT communities, and provides a positive model for engagement going forward. However, it depends heavily upon certain key individuals, which highlights risks to its sustainability. It is proposed that options to strengthen sustainability should be explored with partners, for example, supporting the development of GRT and non-GRT staff who could, in due course, succeed current steering committee members.
11. As identified in the needs analysis, the availability and quality of site accommodation for GRT families is a significant factor in GRT children and young people's wellbeing and outcomes. Tackling local shortfalls is the responsibility of district and borough partners, who are currently making progress in meeting local needs as identified in their Traveller Accommodation Assessments.

## **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

12. Our needs analysis and strategy should ensure that our services are informed by a sound understanding of local GRT needs and issues, and that resources are used as effectively as possible to deliver improved outcomes for GRT children and young people. All actions within the strategy will need to be delivered within available resources.

## **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY:**

13. The section 151 officer expects the actions from this strategy to be delivered within available resources allocated to it.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER:**

14. The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty, which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 itself, and the specific duties which came into law on the 10th September 2011 in England which are imposed by secondary legislation. The general equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011.
15. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

16. These are referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. Having due regard for advancing equality involves:
  - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
  - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
17. The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

#### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:**

18. Cabinet Members' attention is drawn to the Equalities Impact Assessment attached (Annex C).
19. The strategy is expected to have a positive impact upon GRT children, young people and adults by strengthening existing practice in order to improve educational, health and social outcomes for GRT communities in Surrey.
20. The shortfall in site accommodation for GRT families is likely to remain a challenging area to fully address. The strategy identifies the role of districts and boroughs in working with GRT communities to tackle this; however, they face various constraints including availability of suitable land and resources. Therefore, the EIA identified a continuing negative impact upon GRT children and young people's wellbeing and outcomes, which could be difficult to fully mitigate in the near future.

#### **CORPORATE PARENTING/ LOOKED AFTER-CHILDREN IMPLICATIONS:**

21. Although not directly targeted towards looked-after children, the recommended actions to improve the collection of data and outcomes monitoring for GRT service users, and recommendations to increase workforce awareness of GRT cultural needs, should have a beneficial impact upon GRT children and young people who are looked-after, and their families.

#### **SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS IMPLICATIONS:**

22. Our needs analysis identified high levels of domestic abuse within GRT communities, so the strategy includes actions to ensure, through Surrey's Domestic Abuse Strategy, that there is an effective response to these issues within GRT communities.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:**

23. The physical and mental health of GRT children and young people and adults is significantly poorer than in the population as a whole. The strategy includes actions that are intended to increase GRT knowledge of relevant health issues, and encourage early uptake of health services.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

24. Subject to Cabinet approval, the following next steps are proposed:

Date	Actions
July 2014	Publication of strategy and needs analysis
July 2014 onwards	Implementation and monitoring
July 2014	Final strategy to be shared with Children and Young People's Partnership, and District and Borough Lead Officers for Children and Young People
July-October 2014	Explore options with partners to ensure sustainability of Surrey's Gypsy and Traveller Forum
September 2014 – January 2015	Share accessible version of strategy with Surrey's GRT families, using outreach through existing networks and at Surrey's Gypsy and Traveller Forum

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**Consulted**

- CSF Directorate Leadership Team; CSF Directorate Equalities Group; service leads across CSF Directorate.
- Policy and Performance team, Chief Executive's Office
- Representatives from Public Health; NHS Surrey; Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; district and borough councils.
- Representatives from the voluntary, community and faith sector
- Surrey's Gypsy and Traveller Forum; GRT young people attending Gypsy Skills; Community Development Workers who are themselves members of Surrey's GRT community.
- Member Reference Group (Zully Grant-Duff and Denis Fuller) on behalf of Children and Education Select Committee

**Annexes**

- Annex A – Surrey's Strategy for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people 2014-2017
- Annex B - Needs Analysis for Surrey's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people 2013
- Annex C – Equalities Impact Assessment

**Sources/background papers**

None