

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 13 September 2012

18

Title: Delegation of relevant powers to Essex
Countywide Traveller Unit Joint Committee

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Susan Barker

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. The Essex Countywide Travellers Unit (ECTU) will bring together Councils and other agencies across Essex to work together.
2. The main priorities of the Unit are education, health and social issues related to the traveller community. In addition matters related to fire and other health and safety issues are considered of high priority. Essex Police, Essex Fire Service and the National Health Service are signatories of the unit.

Recommendations

3. For Uttlesford District Council to formally sign up to the unit, and attend the appropriate Joint Committee and Officer's Operations Board.
4. Appointment of Cllr Susan Barker as a member of the executive to the Essex Countywide Traveller Joint Committee.

Financial Implications

5. There is budget provision for the Council's contribution to the budget of this Joint Committee.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Draft Agreement between the Essex authorities and other parties

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	A countywide traveller unit reporting to a joint committee has been discussed between the Essex authorities.
Community Safety	Fire safety awareness is a key objective of the ECTU.

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Equalities	Decisions by the Joint Committee would be informed by EqIAs. The services of the ECTU include support to gypsy and traveller communities in respect of access to learning opportunities, health and social care.
Health and Safety	Not applicable
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Full regard will be had to the human rights and legal implications of the Committee's work.
Sustainability	Not applicable
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Transfer of work to the Unit would free up resources to tackle other enforcement issues.

Situation

8. The Essex Countywide Travellers Unit (ECTU) will undertake the following activities:
 - Fire safety on sites
 - Improving education outcomes
 - Health and social care
 - Management of local authority sites
 - Unauthorised encampments
9. The main priorities of the Unit are education, health and social issues related to the traveller community. In addition matters related to fire and other health and safety issues are considered of high priority. Essex Police, Essex Fire Service and the National Health Service are signatories of the unit.
10. An additional activity of the unit relates to unauthorised encampments on public land within the ownership of signatories of the unit. In essence the district's powers with regards to handling unauthorised encampments will be delegated to the unit. The unit will respond and take appropriate action where necessary on unauthorised encampments. The decision as to whether action is appropriate and levels of tolerance will be considered by the unit, consistently through the County in line with the Code of Practice for Travellers to which this district is a signatory. The local authorities, through identified Single Points of Contact, will update the action of the unit to local members and neighbours.

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11. The unit will not be involved on matters related to unauthorised development (i.e. development on private land). Such matters will remain within the remit of the Local Planning Authorities through their statutory planning powers. Although, the unit will assist with support, information in responding to unauthorised encampments and will assist with the serving of notices as necessary.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Lack of deliverability of outcomes	1. Low	1. Low impact as formal enforcement powers are retained by the authority.	The unit has considerable experience of deliver through experienced gained working at Dale Farm, Basildon

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.