

Item 9 – Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Housing & Health Advisory Committee (14 June 2023, Minute 11)

The Housing Strategy Manager presented the report which proposed a Gypsy and Traveller Allocations Policy in relation to Romani Way, Edenbridge. She explained that as part of the agreed Sevenoaks District Housing Accommodation Policy, it was recommended that applicants for vacant pitches on the site would be required to join the Housing Register. The new policy would bring the process in line with the advertisement and letting of social housing within the district and provide a fair and transparent method of allocating pitches when they became available. It would also be tailored to better accommodate the culture of a Romani Traveller.

Members were informed that Officers from the Council had attended the site on 22 March 2023 to discuss the policy and assess the needs of the Residents. Turn out from Residents had been high and feedback had been positive.

The Housing Strategy Manager also explained that the policy was open to comments and would be kept under constant review. She explained that revisions had been made to the report which included updating exclusions to the register to tackle the use of threatening language or behaviour to any officer of the Council or agent or any persons attending sites on behalf of the Council. In addition, the decision to exclude an applicant would be made by the Housing Register Allocation Panel. They would take into account any supporting information from the applicant, a current or previous landlord(s), the Police and/or Probation or any other relevant professional body.

In response to questions around the vacant pitches at Romani Way, it was explained that works were required to make them habitable as there had been problems with fly-tipping. Officers were working on getting the pitches back into use.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the draft Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy, be approved and adopted for implementation.