

TRAVELLERS' ISSUES

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1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Committee on progress on Travellers' issues since the previous meeting.

2. Summary

2.1 This report provides statistical information relating to the numbers of unauthorised encampments.

2.2 The report outlines progress on a number of initiatives being implemented.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to note the current levels of unauthorised encampments and the progress made so far.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Committee called for update reports at each meeting of this Committee.

4.2 An analysis of the level of unauthorised encampments shows a very similar picture this year compared with 1998. Statistics are based on weekly counts.

Snapshot counts (i.e. the situation at any one time)

Average number unauthorised encampments during 1998	7
Average number of unauthorised encampments during 1999	7
Average number of caravans in 1998	53
Average number of caravans in 1999	51

Unauthorised encampments 1999

Total number of encampments up until 31 December 1999	297
Proportion of sites vacated following MKC "request to leave"	37%
Proportion of sites vacated following landowner eviction	17%
Proportion of sites vacated following Police warning	9%
Proportion of sites vacated following Police notice	7%
Moved of own volition	30%
Proportion of sites vacated following Court action (1)	0%
Average length of encampment September 1999	5 days
Average length of encampment December 1999	5 days

5. **Issues and Choices**

5.1 Central Office

Arrangements are being made to launch the Travellers Management Unit (TMU) in late January/early February 2000. An oral update will be provided at the meeting. Andy Standen from Thames Valley Police will manage the TMU from middle of January 2000. A recruitment process is underway to fill all the approved posts within the Unit.

5.2 Overall Strategy and Enforcement Policy

An overall Strategy is currently being developed and a draft document will be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Planning Forum.

5.3 Cleansing Issues

The Council, MK Parks Trust and English Partnerships have jointly approved targets to remove litter and rubbish from identified unauthorised encampments. The MK Parks Trust will continue with their current target of 48 hours, whilst the Council and English Partnerships have agreed a maximum of 7 days.

5.4 Site Search

No further development to report since the last meeting of the Committee.

5.5 Joint Planning Forum

The first meeting of the Joint Planning Forum on Travellers took place on 8 November 1999. The Forum approved its Terms of Reference. Members agreed that the representatives from Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Training and MK Citizens Advisory Group on Travellers be invited to become Members of the Forum.

5.6 Welfare Issues

No further developments to report since the last meeting of the Committee.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

The future environmental impact of unauthorised encampments should be minimal.

6.2 Equalities

Equalities issues are prominent in the development of the Partners proposals on managing Travellers' issues and are being covered fully through the Travellers Action Plan.

6.3 Financial

None.

6.4 Legal

None.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

The Traveller Management Unit will be located in Saxon Court and will be operational following the launch.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The next few months will see the Travellers Management Unit become fully operational following the recruitment of appropriate staff. The partners will continue to work together to improve the management of Travellers' issues over the coming months and report regularly to the Joint Planning Forum.

Background Papers: Report to Neighbourhood Services Committee 9 November 1999