



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: DE - Draft Traveller Child In Education Action Framework
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Frank O'Hagan Traveller Liaison Officer and David Purchase Policy and Business Development Officer

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Council have been asked to respond to the DE's consultation on their Draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework. This framework works to the following principles:
1.2	Every child is an equal child <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The expectations for Traveller children should be the same as for all others, including access to the full range of educational experiences free from racial discrimination and prejudice- Outcomes for Traveller children should parallel the range of outcomes for all children. Parents have the same entitlements and responsibilities as all other parents- All schools should be open to and welcoming of Traveller children- Parents of Traveller children should have access to any school of their choice, on the same basis as any other parents, for the education of their children- The Department has a key responsibility in ensuring the achievement of these outcomes
1.3	The Framework covers the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strategic Delivery and Partnership- Monitoring and Evaluation- Access to Educational Opportunities- Improved School Attendance- Ambitions and Expectations- Inclusion Integration and Interculturalism- Attainment and Achievement

1.4	There are no specific questions for the consultation. Instead we are invited to say if we agree with the approach and add comments where we do not.
1.5	Appendix 1 contains the draft framework and further information is available online: http://www.deni.gov.uk/draft-traveller-child-in-education-action-framework-consultation.htm
1.6	and: http://www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce_on_traveller_education.htm
1.7	Community Services were made aware of the consultation on 28 th September and comments are required to be returned by the 31 st December 2012.
1.8	The consultations document was distributed to officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as Appendix 2.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The response is required via an online form or by filling in a fixed PDF template. Therefore there is limited scope to raise issues outside of the scope of the consultation, such as highlighting the range of Traveller support the Council provides.
2.2	The proposals in the document seem sensible and in line with the work of our Traveller Support Unit.
2.3	The main area of concern is that despite some areas of improvement since the introduction of the Race Relation Order NI 1997, Traveller achievement statistics are still significantly worse than the general population. The "Taskforce on Traveller Education – Report of the Taskforce to the Department of Education" Aug 2011 showed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In 09/10 absence level at primary level were 29% for Traveller children compared to 5.3% for all children. – In 09/10 absence level at post-primary level were 46.7% for Traveller children compared to 7.7% for all children. – From 03/04 to 08/09 61.9% of Traveller children achieved no GSCEs compared to 2.9% of all children. – From 03/04 to 08/09 9.5% of Traveller children achieved at least 5 A* - C or higher compared to 70.1% of all children. – In 08/09 19% of Travellers school leavers went into Higher or Further Education compared to 75.3% of all school leavers. – In 08/09 35.2% of Travellers school leavers were unemployed compared to 3.1% of all school leavers.
2.4	Against this, the document states that there is very limited resource available for the framework. There is also no vision or overarching targets with timescales e.g. to increase Traveller attendance or achievement by XX% by the year XXXX.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications attached to this report.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations implications in the Council's response though the Traveller Framework might benefit from a full Equality Impact Assessment.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: 31 st December 2012	Reporting Officer: David Purchase

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 "Draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework." DE. September 2012. Appendix 2 "Consultation: Draft Response DE Traveller Child in Education Action Framework."	