

Essex Countywide Traveller Unit

Communications Strategy

September 2013

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Operations Board sign off: 26 September 2013

Joint Committee sign off:

Introduction to the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit

The Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU) is a partnership initiative hosted by Essex County Council (ECC), with the aim to create a consistent approach to Gypsy and Traveller communities and the way associated activities that impact upon them are conducted across Essex.

The objectives of the Unit are:

1. To reduce the frequency of fires and fire related incidents occurring on Gypsy and Traveller sites across Essex.
2. To provide an effective, efficient and consistent response to unauthorised encampments for partner areas in Essex.
3. To facilitate improved access and take-up of educational opportunities for children and adults.
4. To improve Gypsy and Traveller access to health and wellbeing related services to reduce issues around childhood health, long-term conditions and lifestyle health.
5. To enable improved engagement between Police and Gypsy and Traveller communities and address instances and impacts of reported hate crime/incidents.

Statement of purpose

This Communications Strategy shows how effective communications will:

- help us achieve the objectives of the ECTU
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- demonstrate the success of our work
- ensure people understand what we do and access our services
- change behaviour and perceptions where necessary.

Communications SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Good networks in place across a range of agencies	Networks are mostly based on personal connections instigated by individuals on a case by case basis
Good national profile and reputation – through NAGTO and LGC award	The ECTU message may not be cascading up and down hierarchies within agencies and partners
The ECTU has a positive message to share on how a minority group is being supported and being dealt with consistently on behalf of partners	Majority of engagement with public is negative through reporting of problems of ECC run sites and unauthorised encampments
Other authorities are following our lead	Currently don't have a communication tool to communicate direct with Gypsy and Traveller communities, other than 1:1 through outreach and site management
	Currently do not proactively engage with Members of Parliament
Opportunities	Threats
Members of Parliament could act as advocates	Public perception of Gypsy and Traveller community is often poor – difficult to get positive messages into the public arena
National profile could enable ECTU to lead a national group to enable benchmarking and representation at that level	Contact with media and public is mostly reactive
Could develop a new way to communicate with Gypsy and Traveller community to bring the communities closer together	Many partners are not taking up offer of 1:1 meetings with ECTU to discuss progress
Be more proactive with good news stories to create a new perspective on the Gypsy and Traveller community	Partners may only be interested in key area of the ECTU offering, rather than supporting/promoting the ECTU as whole on its behalf
Partners could engage and add value across the whole of the ECTU operational area, rather than just retaining interest in their key areas of interest	

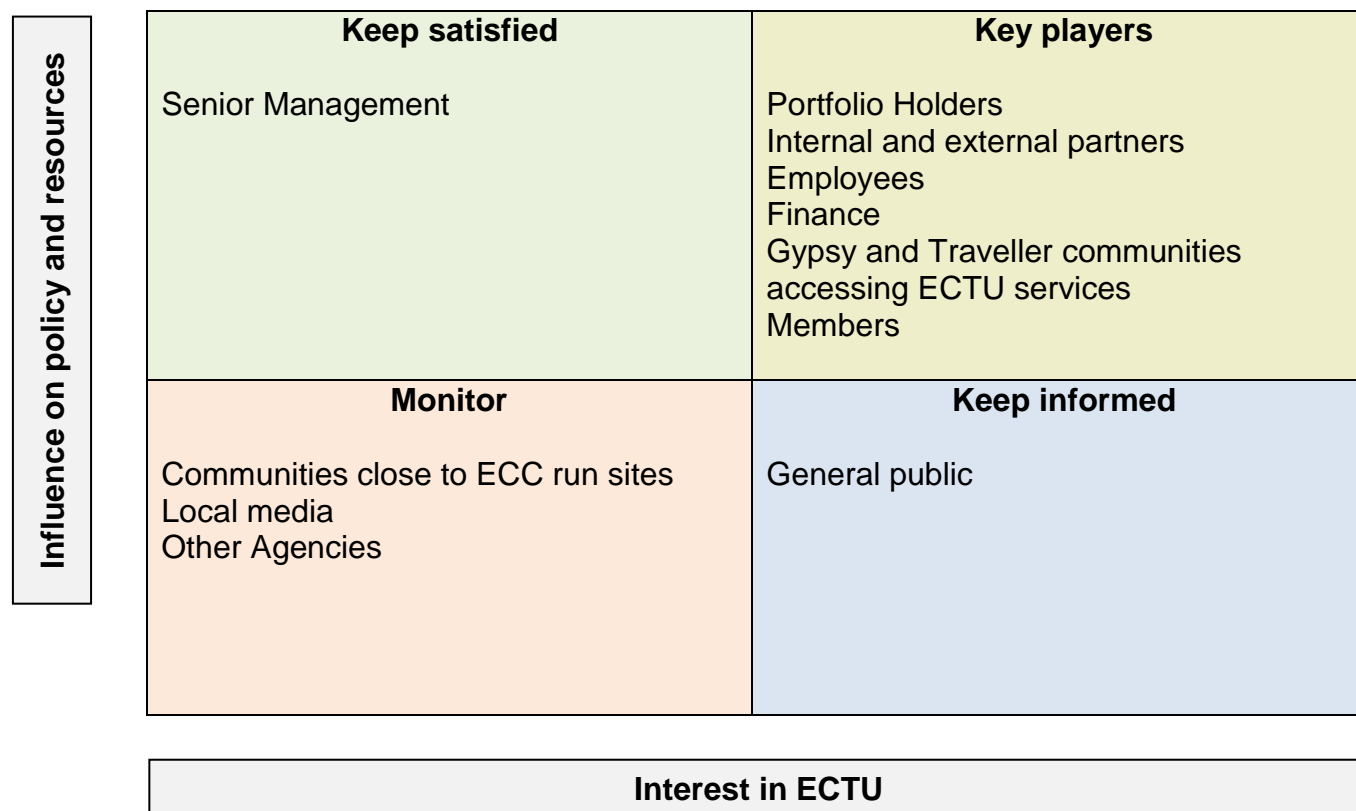
Stakeholders

Audience	What are they interested in?
Internal	
Portfolio Holder responsible for ECTU	Progress of the Unit against business plan, strategic issues
Members	Issues affecting their districts
Senior Management	Progress of the Unit against business plan, strategic issues
Finance	Any issues affecting budgets
Employees of ECTU	Any issues affecting their jobs and the Unit
Internal Partners: Public Health, Education	Achievement of key performance indicators, meeting business plan targets
External	
Partners: District and Borough Councils, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Essex Police, CCGs	Achievement of key performance indicators, meeting business plan targets
Gypsy and Traveller Communities accessing ECTU services	Issues affecting the service they receive
General public	What the Unit does, activities relating to unauthorised encampments
Local media	What the Unit does, problems potentially caused by Gypsy and Traveller communities

Communities close to ECC run sites	Resolving identified problems on sites
Other agencies: RSPCA, Highways Agency	What the Unit does, unauthorised encampments, animal welfare

Stakeholder Map

The following diagram provides a map of all the stakeholders of the ECTU; assessing their influence on policy and resources and their interest in the ECTU. This Strategy will focus most on engaging with those stakeholders in the key players section.



COMMUNICATIONS WORKPLAN

Audience	Timing	Communication Channel	Key message	Who	Budget
ECC services and individuals (Youth Offending Service, Drug Action Team, Schools, Social Services, Public Health)	Day to day	Face to face/telephone/email contact	Case by case discussions. Reinforce what ECTU provides for their service users	ECTU Outreach officers	No additional budget required
	Quarterly	Newsletter	The overall aims of ECTU/good news stories	Liz Higgins	Budget allocated from ECTU budget
	As required	Lunchtime awareness raising session (to be researched)	Raise awareness of ECTU services and joint working opportunities	ECTU team	TBC
	Bi-monthly	Public Health update meetings	Note: Procurements will be changing in Health that ECTU will need to interact with (eg Stop Smoking, Sexual Health, Weight Management)	Steve Andrews to liaise with Public Health	No additional budget required
External agencies (Police, Fire, CCGs, RSPCA, Highways Agency)	Day to day	Face to face/telephone/email contact	Case by case discussions. Reinforce what ECTU provides their service users.	ECTU Outreach officers	No additional budget required
	Quarterly	Newsletter	The overall aims of ECTU/good news stories	Liz Higgins	Budget allocated from ECTU budget
	As required	Lunchtime awareness raising session (to be researched)	Raise awareness of ECTU services and joint working opportunities	ECTU team	TBC
		Meetings/telephone/email	Policy development discussion, update	Essex Police	No additional

			of relevant work or projects	and ECTU	budget required
Audience	Timing	Communication Channel	Key message	Who	Budget
Partners (ECC and Partner Members and Officers)	As required in addition to offer of annual progress meetings	Face to face/telephone/email contact	Includes reporting on unauthorised encampments and other issues	All ECTU officers	No additional budget required
	Monthly	Monthly meeting to discuss ECTU with lead ECC Member	Progress update meeting on ECTU activity	Julie Ellis, Director responsible for ECTU	N/A
	Quarterly	Newsletter	The overall aims of ECTU/good news stories	Liz Higgins	Budget allocated from ECTU budget
Employees of ECTU	Monthly	1:1/team meetings	Key issues for teams and individuals	Line managers	No additional budget required for all activities
	Quarterly	Full ECTU meeting	General updates and information as required	Steve Andrews	
	Ad hoc	Face to face/telephone/email	Communications as required	Line managers	N/A
Gypsy and Traveller community accessing ECTU services	Day to day	Face to face	Day to day activities, e.g. rent collection, outreach interactions around health, education, fire	Site Managers and Outreach Workers	N/A
	Bi-annual	Publication - Essex	Good news stories, relevant	Liz Higgins	Budget

		Travellers Times (to be developed)	information		allocated from ECTU budget
Members of Parliament	One off event	Possible Parliamentary Joint Committee session (to be researched)	Review of ECTU – sharing success stories at national level	Steve Andrews/Liz Higgins	TBC
Audience	Timing	Communication Channel	Key message	Who	Budget
Local media	As opportunities arise	Press releases	Good news stories that support work of ECTU	ECTU team	N/A
General public	As required	Face to face/telephone/email contact/website	Communications as required regarding unauthorised encampments and other issues raised, manage expectations and reduce repeat calls.	ECTU team	N/A