



Statement re: Departmental Response to National Traveller Partnership Proposal from Traveller CDP Network

March 21st 2011

The Board of Southside Travellers Action Group would like to express their concern at the ways in which the (then) Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs has responded (March 4th, 2011) to the proposal put forward by the Traveller CDP Network regarding the establishment of a National Traveller Partnership to oversee the Traveller focused elements of Local and Community Development Programme. During these challenging times, we must continue to work together and build upon the strengths of a movement that has been in place for over a quarter of a century. Whilst we may have chosen to remain in close collaboration with our long standing partner - Southside Partnership (DLR) – we respect the decisions of each individual local group to commit to the structure that they feel is most appropriate to Travellers in their local areas.

The Board also expressed significant concern about the proposed infrastructural mergers which would see the number of organisations working to ensure that Travellers' voices are heard at local, regional and national level reduced from "twenty to eight". As an organisation that has worked for over twenty five years to develop sustainable and realistic responses to the express needs of Travellers in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown, Southside Travellers calls on all of the national Traveller organisations to:

- continue to provide support to local groups to explore the best possible structures for them to maintain their autonomy and remain central to decision making in their local areas;
- to focus on seeking to ensure that the real and lived experiences of the Traveller community inform and impact upon the ways in which current discussions are framed and that any arrangements emerging reflect this;
- that any agreements or arrangements emerging from these discussions are built from the strengths of those organisations and endeavour to ensure that local level work remains central to the outcomes of the current discussions.

ENDS