

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee The Executive Committee
Date:	Scrutiny Committee 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2016 The Executive 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2016
Subject:	Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Anglesey – the Consultation process
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Aled M Jones
Head of Service:	Shan L Williams, Head of Housing Services
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Local Members:	

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p><b>Recommendation:</b> to scrutinise the consultation process and offer comments for future consultation processes regarding Gypsy and Traveller site selection.</p> <p><b>Background summary</b></p> <p>The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified. The Welsh Government <i>Circular 30/2007 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites</i> also strengthens the requirement that local authorities identify and make provision for sufficient appropriate sites in their Local Development Plans.</p> <p>A document known as the <i>Anglesey and Gwynedd Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment 2016</i> (GTAA) has been produced jointly between Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council during the Autumn of 2015 and updates the previous North West Wales GTAA which was published in 2013. The GTAA was approved by Anglesey Council's Executive on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The new Anglesey and Gwynedd GTAA identified the need for the following on Anglesey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A permanent residential site to meet the needs of the New Travellers arising from the unauthorised tolerated site at Pentraeth Road (four pitches)</li> <li>▪ Two sites to be used as Temporary Stopping Places for Gypsies and Travellers along the A55 on Anglesey, one in the Holyhead area and one in the centre of the Island.</li> </ul> <p>This report sets out the process undertaken. There are separate stand-alone reports for the permanent site and two temporary sites - each with their specific recommendations.</p> <p><b>The consultation process</b></p> <p>Between 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016, extensive public consultation was undertaken by the Council on potential Gypsy and Traveller Sites on the Island. These sites were recommended, based on an officer assessment of 8 shortlisted sites - of these, 5 were</p>

Council owned sites.

The process has attracted a great deal of interest. The consultation exercise included discussions with local stakeholders through

- a series of 7 drop-in sessions between 16<sup>th</sup> February and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016, attended by approximately 215 adults, (see appendix 1)
- attendance at 8 Town and Community Council meetings by Senior Officers, the Council Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder and
- attendance at public meetings arranged by Bodffordd Community Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> February and Penmynydd Community Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

A consultation document with maps and consultation questionnaire was available on the Council's website and at the drop-in sessions. Copies were also sent to businesses adjacent to the 8 sites, land owners and tenants - where we knew the contact names and addresses before the consultation was launched. As we did not have all the details to hand, the consultation document was also sent to the Federation of Small Businesses, Farmers Union of Wales and National Farmers Union. Letters and the consultation document were also sent to the North Wales Police, North Wales Fire Authority, Wales Ambulance Service, Betsi Cadwalader Health Board, Ministry of Defence, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Water and the Welsh Government.

Throughout the consultation period, information was prominently displayed on the Council's web-site, facebook and twitter, press releases, and two Elected Member Briefing sessions were held on 11/02/16 and 03/03/16. The Leader was interviewed on Radio Cymru and Môn FM at the start of the consultation process.

An Independent Advocate was employed to engage with the community that resides on Pentraeth Road, and engage with the unauthorised encampment that were at Mona during the consultation period.

### **Key responses received which led to the recommendations**

Information received in responses from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Orthios Group, AMG Alpoco Limited, Welsh Water, Oaktree Environmental and The Royal Air Force have raised questions about the suitability of some of sites consulted upon. Further information and copies of the responses are appended to the respective site specific consultation reports.

### **Some actions which we would do differently in future consultations**

- Adopt a more pro-active approach with key stakeholders, including the local media and training of Elected Members and staff to set a positive tone to inform discussion and decision making on site provision. Adopting a liaison process with the local media and training of local Members and staff to tackle prejudices would possibly have lead to a

more positive tone in local debates. A training session was held jointly with Members of Gwynedd and Anglesey in December 2015 was attended by 4 Members from Anglesey. Adverse media coverage and public opposition re-inforced each other to create a hostile context for the consultation, which was unfortunate.

- Provide more information about the Gypsy and Traveller Communities - whilst we want to encourage residents in the settled communities to come forward with their concerns and engage with the consultation process, we would in no way wish to excuse those who made racist, offensive and inflammatory comments.
- Provide better information about the potential of an official site by using pictures and information from existing sites showing that a properly managed official site would reduce the problems communities are experiencing as a result of unofficial / unauthorised encampments.
- Better understanding of the principles of effective site management - information for staff would have been advantageous to equip them to answer the questions raised. Evidence from elsewhere shows that well-managed sites are not only good places to live for Gypsy Travellers but also improves the perception of the travelling community in the eyes of settled communities.
- Better communication with the households currently residing in the tolerated site on Pentraeth Road, so that they are fully aware of the consultation process, aware of and understand options and are aware of negative media and adverse public perceptions and interest from the local community and Members.
- When areas of land were identified as being suitable in terms of the assessment criteria, specific boundaries were not indicated. Clearly some of the sites are much bigger than the area needed for such a use and precise locations are difficult to define because there may be requirements imposed by the design stage and planning application process when a site has been chosen.
- Some of the aerial maps used were out of date, which created distrust amongst a small number of people who attended the drop-in sessions. However, these were the most recent Ordnance Survey photographs available to us.
- Many comments were received during the consultation process stating that the scoring system used was flawed. This statement cannot be accepted, however the process can be improved through the adoption of clearer information on the site selection criteria and

these should be conveyed through well-developed communications policies.

### **Further information gathered since / during the consultation**

As part of and as a result of the Consultation exercise:

- All consultation responses have been reviewed.
- The views of the Gypsy and Traveller families at the recent unauthorised encampment at Mona and the views of the New Age Travellers at the current tolerated site on Pentraeth Road have been established, through an independent advocate.
- Views of the key organisations such as the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and North Wales Police received.
- Additional information gained in relation to locating sites on or near industrial land.

### **Next steps**

The recommendations from the consultation process are that further work is required to identify additional temporary stopping sites, looking at sites in private ownership on the Island. The work will involve scoring the sites against the previously developed scoring matrix, making enquiries with the relevant statutory bodies and the Landowners, before going out to consultation. The timescale is that the whole process will be completed, with recommendations to Elected Members by mid-July 2016. This will enable the Council to present the sites to the Joint Planning and Policy Unit to forward to the Joint LDP Examination Programme Office, as part of the Joint Local Development Plan. Achieving the date of the end of July 2016 is crucial.

**B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?**

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**C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?**

Statutory provision

**D – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**

yes

**DD – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

yes

<b>E – Who did you consult?</b>		<b>What did they say?</b>
1	<b>Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)</b> (mandatory)	
2	<b>Finance / Section 151</b> (mandatory)	
3	<b>Legal / Monitoring Officer</b> (mandatory)	
5	<b>Human Resources (HR)</b>	
6	<b>Property (Head of Planning and Public Protection)</b>	
7	<b>Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	
8	<b>Scrutiny</b>	<p><b>RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Committee noted that concerns raised in the January meeting regarding the consultation process had been addressed.</li> <li>• That the Executive approves the report and agrees that Officers implement issues identified to improve consultation exercises in future.</li> </ul>
9	<b>Local Members</b>	
10	<b>Any external bodies / other/s</b>	

<b>F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)</b>		
1	<b>Economic</b>	
2	<b>Anti-poverty</b>	
3	<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	
4	<b>Environmental</b>	
5	<b>Equalities</b>	<p>If a permanent site is developed, this will allow the householders to have a permanent address and increase their access to local services, which will, in turn, reduce inequalities over time (eg, health, education, employment).</p> <p>If temporary sites are developed, this will increase access to basic amenities (such as water, electricity, waste collection) that will improve quality of life.</p>
6	<b>Outcome Agreements</b>	n/a
7	<b>Other</b>	

**FF - Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – consultation events

**G - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**

1. Consultation Document, Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller sites on Anglesey, February 2016.
2. Gwynedd and Anglesey Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment, February 2016

Executive 08/02/16 and Partnership and Economic Regeneration Committee 02/02/16.

3. Presentation and minutes of the Joint Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan Panel dated 20/11/15 'Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the Plan'.

## Appendix 1

# Sesiynau Galw i Mewn Drop-in Sessions

Lleoliad Location	Dyddiad Date	Niferoedd Numbers
Canolfan Gymuned Bodffordd	16.2.16	36
Neuadd Llandegfan	17.2.16	26
Canolfan Penmynydd	18.2.16	16
Capel Disgwylfa, Gaerwen	19.2.16	26
Ysgol Gymuned y Fali	22.2.16	7
Canolfan Gymuned Kingsland	24.2.16	51
Neuadd Bentref Bae Trearddur	24.2.16	53

# Cyngorau Tref a Chymuned Town and Community Councils

Cyngor – Council	Dyddiad - Date
Y Fali	17.2.16
Bae Trearddur	22.2.16
Llanfihangelesceifiog	22.2.16
Pentraeth	23.2.16
Bodffordd (a Threwalchmai) – cyfarfod cyhoeddus	25.2.16
Penmynydd – cyfarfod cyhoeddus	2.3.16
Cwm Cadnant	2.3.16
Caergybi - Holyhead	7.2.16

[www.ynysmon.gov.uk](http://www.ynysmon.gov.uk)  
[www.anglesey.gov.uk](http://www.anglesey.gov.uk)



## **Awareness Raising Letters and information packs**

Businesses adjacent to the 8 sites  
Landowners and tenants  
FSB/FUW/NFU  
Police, Fire, Ambulance, Health Board  
Natural Resources Wales  
Welsh Government

## **Information**

Council web-site  
Facebook and Twitter  
Press Releases  
Members Briefing session 11/02/16  
Town and Community Councils



