

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	25th January 2016
Subject:	Identifying suitable sites for the Gypsy and Traveller Community
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Aled Morris Jones
Head of Service:	Shan Lloyd Williams
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Local Members:	Local Members for the following Wards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ynys Gybi • Talybolion • Canolbarth Môn • Bro Rhosyr • Aethwy • Seiriol

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p>Executive Committee Members are requested to:-</p> <p>Recommendation 1: support the inclusion of the following sites for Gypsies and Travellers in the joint Gwynedd Anglesey Local Development Plan and subject to further work as described in the report, that planning permission is sought for the development of the final chosen sites.</p> <p>Permanent Residential Pitches/Site</p> <p>a) Preferred option The redevelopment of the tolerated site on Pentraeth Road to create a managed site with four pitches.</p> <p>b) As secondary options to this site, two further sites have also been shortlisted these are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portion of a Council owned smallholding in Gaerwen • A piece of fallow land located between the A5 and A55 between the Llanfairpwll and Star crossroads. <p>Temporary Stopping Place – centre of the island Preferred option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant land at Mona Industrial Estate <p>Temporary Stopping Place – Holyhead A preferred site from the three shortlisted options below to be included in the Joint Local Development Plan subject to further discussions with the Welsh Government as owners of</p>

one of the sites, and to ascertain ownership of another site.

- Parc Cybi, Holyhead (part of the site to be leased from the Welsh Government)
- Land at Penrhos industrial estate (on a temporary basis only)
- Land South of Kingsland School, Holyhead (ownership needs to be ascertained).

Recommendation 2: approve the use of vacant land at Mona Industrial Estate as a temporary stopping place during 2016.

Background and context

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on all local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified. With effect from March 2016, there will be an expectation that all local authorities comply. Under the same Act, there is a requirement that all local authorities in Wales must complete a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment by February 2015 and must subsequently ensure sufficient sites are made available which meet any need evidenced. This must include both sites for permanent residential occupation and transit provision and the assessment will need to be updated every 5 years.

In addition, Welsh Governments Planning Policy Wales places a requirement that local authorities identify and make provision for appropriate Gypsy Traveller sites in their Local Development Plans. The Joint Anglesey and Gwynedd Deposit Plan will be submitted to Welsh Government in February 2016. This must include allocation of land for Gypsy and Traveller sites sufficient to meet the need identified in the GTAA. If this requirement is not met the examination in public which is expected to take place later in 2016 could find the Plan was unsound and adoption of the JLDP could be delayed.

Over the past 5 year period, there has been an increased number of unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers on Anglesey. During 2015 encampments have taken place at Mona Industrial Estate, a public car park in Llangefni and at several locations in Holyhead. There is also a permanent encampment in the layby on the Pentraeth Road which has been in place for over 7 years. This is currently tolerated by the Council but there is a need to establish an official site which will be managed by the Council or another appropriate body.

Recommendations from the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, we have recently undertaken an analysis of needs jointly with Gwynedd Council, the Anglesey and Gwynedd Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment. The assessment will be presented to the Partnerships and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the 2nd February 2016 and to the Executive Committee on the 8th February 2016. This replaces the last assessment completed in 2013.

The Assessment shows that we need:

1. One Permanent Residential site with four pitches to accommodate the four households identified in the survey currently resident at the Pentraeth Road lay by. In order to meet Welsh Government guidance. The site selected must include enough land to fulfil Welsh Government guidance on site design and to allow Welsh

Government grant to be applied for. In order for the site to be sustainable it should have capacity for growth for some additional pitches. The Council is required to reassess need within a maximum of 5 years and there is the possibility of household growth from the existing families.

2. Two Temporary Stopping Places:
 - One in the centre of the island large enough to accommodate 15 caravans.
 - One in the Holyhead area large enough to accommodate 12 caravans.

Methodology used for site selection

We have undertaken the site selection exercise in several stages to identify the most suitable locations for the sites needed.

A transparent set of scoring criteria to identify suitable sites for the needs identified has been used. See Appendix 1.

All sites identified for use as possible Gypsy Traveller sites were first assessed at Stage one by considering fundamental issues that would prevent use of the site as a Gypsy Traveller site – both temporary and permanent. This included other uses of the site, significant landscape considerations, flood risk concerns and problems relating to location or access.

Following this filtering process, the second stage involved intensive research on a number of sites that remained which had reasonable potential for use as Gypsy Traveller sites, subject to consultation and further detailed information being obtained. These sites were then assessed inline with the Welsh Governments Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 7 2014), Circular 30 / 2007 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites' and against a range of criteria to determine the deliverability of each site.

Consultation with statutory bodies (Highways service, Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Power and North Wales trunk road agency) to consider in more detail the issues that may affect delivery of each site is on-going, together with site visits and further work to confirm land ownerships. The views of private and other public sector landowners will also need to be ascertained.

Appendix 2 includes an explanation for the 8 criteria against which the sites were assessed at Stage 2 which were:

1. Location
2. Accessibility
3. The Site
4. Amenities
5. Environment
6. Utilities
7. Ownership

8. Availability

Note: It will be necessary for planning permission to be obtained before land could be used as Gypsy Traveller sites.

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

A longlist of sites was developed by an officer group. An objective scoring process was used to filter this list. This was refined further following site visits and further enquiries. The sites recommended above meet criteria for location and suitability of the land. Two of the three preferred sites are already in Council ownership which will ensure that delivery the sites and meeting the Council's duties under the Housing Wales Act (2014) can be achieved in a shorter timescale than any alternatives which are in private ownership. Further discussions need to be undertaken to ascertain the ownership of one possible site in Holyhead, and discussions with the Welsh Government need to be continued in relation to other possible sites.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

There is a statutory duty on the Council to identify sites to meet assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

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

Not applicable

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

This is a policy decision. Further advice about costs will follow once potential sites have been designated and planning permission sought. A bid for capital money has been submitted internally within the Council towards the costs of temporary stopping places. Outcome of the bid is subject to consultation on the Council Budget. A bid will be presented for costs to establish a permanent site to Welsh Government for 2016-2017, after planning permission is gained.

Rent will be charged to occupants of the Residential site who will be issued with tenancy agreements. Charges may also be levied for the use of temporary stopping places.

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	The Assistant Chief Executive responsible for Governance and Business Processes has been involved in the policy work on identifying possible sites for Gypsies and Travellers since early January 2016.

2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	The recommendation is a necessary step towards the Council fulfilling its legal duties as set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014
5	Human Resources (HR)	
6	Property	Officer involvement throughout the process
7	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	
10	Any external bodies / other/s	

F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)		
1	Economic	
2	Anti-poverty	
3	Crime and Disorder	
4	Environmental	
5	Equalities	Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognized in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Race Relations Act.
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

FF - Appendices:
Appendix 1 Scoring of sites Appendix 2 Assessment criteria for possible Gypsy and Traveller sites in Anglesey

G - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
Anglesey and Gwynedd Council Joint Local Development Plan, February 2015, Topic Paper 18: Identifying Gypsy and Traveller sites Anglesey and Gwynedd Council Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, 2016 [as yet, unadopted by both Councils]

V2 - following site visits

Residential Sites

Map No.	Location	Site Area hectares	Location- Need	Accessibility	The Site	Amenities	Environment	Utiilies	Availability	Ownership P/LA/PS	Total Score	Initial conclusions following site visits
3. R	Gaerwen Smallholding		3	4	3	3	4	3	4	LA	24	Site visit identified that part of the smallholding could be used which would have good highway access . Amenties are in walking distanct though there is no footpath / pavement. Availability would be subject to notice to the tenant for that part of the small holding.
17. T & R	Vacant Plots Llangefni Industrial Estate		1	4	4	4	2	4	3	PA	22	WAG guidance on developing Gypsy and Travellers site for permanent residential use does not favour land located on industrial estates. This option is also located at a considerable distance from the existing encampment.
18.T &R	Existing Camp near Pentraeth		5	3	3	2	3	2	5	LA	23	Site visit established that site does have potential for re-development for a limited number of pitches. There is land alongside the existing hardstanding which is currently wooded or grass which could be used for pitches leaving the existing road for access.
29 T &R	Land between A5 and A55 between Llanfairpwll and Star Crossroads		3	3	3	3	4	3	3	P	22	Site visit confirmed this is fallow land which does not appear to be farmed or grazed at present. New access to site required. Use of western part of the site preferable as well screened from A55.

V2 - following site visits

Sites for temporary stopping places - Holyhead area												
Map no.	Site	Site Area hectares	Location-Need	Accessibility	The Site	Amenities	Environment	Utilities	Availability	Ownership	Total score	Initial conclusions following site visits
6. T	Penrhos Industrial Estate Vacant Plots		5	5	4	4	2	4	4	LA	28 (on basis of short term use only)	Planning permission is secured for employment units and these will be developed once funding is obtained. While the site is well located it could only be used for a short period until the employment units are developed.
22.T	Parc Cybi, Holyhead		5	4	4	3	3	4	3	PA	26	Strong contender. There are a number of parts of this site which could be used. WAG would need to agree to the use.
28 T	Land South of Kingsland School, Holyhead		5	2	4	3	3	3	3	LA	24	WAG now identified as owners. Weakness of site is narrow access road and adjacent to school and housing estate.

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Appendix 2

Anglesey - Ranking of Submitted Sites

All sites submitted for use as gypsy/traveller sites were first assessed at Stage 1 by considering fundamental issues that would prevent use of the site as a gypsy/traveller camp. This included other uses of the site such as significant landscape considerations; flood risk concerns and problems relating to location or access.

Following this filtering process, a number of sites remained that had reasonable potential for use as gypsy/traveller sites, subject to consultation and further detailed information being obtained. These sites were then assessed in-line with the Welsh Governments Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 7 2014), Circular 30 / 2007 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites' and against a range of criteria to determine the deliverability of each site.

Consultation with statutory bodies (Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales, Highways, etc) to consider in more detail the issues that may affect delivery of each site will be required, together with site visits and further work to confirm land ownerships. The views of private and other public sector landowners will also need to be ascertained.

The following provides an explanation for the 8 criteria against which the sites were assessed at Stage 2.

Location – Need

-Temporary Stopping Places - Evidence from the Councils own records of incidences of unauthorised encampments indicate that the A5 A55 corridor being where need is greatest. As one might expect unauthorised encampments tend to occur in the Holyhead area near to the Ferry Port. The Mona Industrial Estate is a popular stopping place for Gypsy Travellers with a relatively large group of Gypsy Travellers choosing to stay for 2-3 weeks in July /August each year.

It is considered at least 2 temporary stopping places should be provided on the Island to serve the needs of Gypsy Travellers. Some groups of GT's may for various reasons not wish to share the same temporary stopping place.

In recognition of the locational needs of the GT's who chose to camp in the Holyhead area and those that choose to camp at Mona, two sets of concentric circles have been drawn on the attached map, one centred on the Ferry terminal and the other at the Mona Industrial Estate. Possible sites have been scored depending on the distances from these two centres. Possible sites within 2km of these 2 centres have been allocated a maximum score of 5 whilst sites further away have been scored less depending on the distance from the identified centres.

-Permanent Residential Sites – It would appear that the existing residents at the tolerated site near Pentraeth would prefer to reside close to their current location. In terms of location the Island has been divided into 5 bands based on distance from their existing site. The parts of the Island furthest from their existing site have been allocated a score of 1 whilst the part of the Island nearest to their current site have received the maximum score of 5.

Accessibility

Access to/from the main roads & particularly the A55/A5 for Temporary Stopping Places and from main roads and main public transport routes for permanent residential sites. This includes distance from the site to the road, visibility and other safety considerations. The difficulty of providing a suitable access to a site would affect the cost and timescale for site provision.

The Site

Suitability of the site and the extent of physical works that would be required to allow the site to provide basic facilities for use as a gypsy/traveller site.

Amenities

Local amenities and facilities, such as shops and schools should be close by. It is considered that the proximity of local amenities and facilities is more important when considering the location of residential sites than Temporary Stopping Places. Since the occupiers of temporary Stopping Places have managed to travel to such sites, it is considered that they would have their own transport to access local amenities and facilities.

Environment

The quality of the environment surrounding the site, including on-site contamination, nearby pollution, noise levels, flood risk. As a gypsy and traveller site would class as Highly Vulnerable Development, in accordance with TAN15 any sites within the C2 flood risk zone would not be permitted and anything within a C1 zone would only be allowed subject to meeting both the criteria contained in chapter 6 of TAN15

Utilities

Electricity, water and sewerage will be required on all permanent residential sites and ideally on temporary stopping places; Non-mains sewerage and electrical generators could be used at temporary stopping places but easy connection to mains services would be an advantage.

Ownership

A council or owned site is likely to be easier and less expensive to deliver in comparison to a site in private ownership which may require extensive negotiation or Compulsory Purchase action in order to acquire it for use as a gypsy and traveller site. Delivery of sites not already in public ownership is likely to be complicated and therefore impact on the need to deliver a site in the short term. Some sites may benefit from planning permission or have development potential for other uses that would affect their value.

There would a need to serve 12 month notice on tenants of Council Smallholdings to obtain land for residential sites. It may be possible to secure use of sites for temporary use when required by negotiation and the offer of compensatory payment.

Note: Private Landowners have not been approached to establish their willingness to sell, or lease land to the Council for use as Gypsy Traveller Sites.

Availability

Although the owner of land may be willing for it to be used as a gypsy and traveller site, it may not be immediately available for this use if it is being used for other purposes has planning permission for another use, or the site is subject to a lease. The availability criterion reflects the speed with which a site may be able to be delivered.

Note: It would be necessary for applications to be made and planning permission obtained before land could be used as GT sites.