

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee The Executive Committee
<b>Date:</b>	13th May 2016 – Scrutiny 31 May 2016 - Executive
<b>Subject:</b>	Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Anglesey – Temporary Stopping Place in the Holyhead vicinity.
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Councillor Aled M Jones
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Shan L Williams, Head of Housing Services
<b>Report Author:</b> Tel: E-mail:	Lucy Reynolds, Housing Strategy and Development Manager Ext 2225 lucyreynolds@ynysmon.gov.uk
<b>Local Members:</b>	Dafydd Rhys Thomas Jeffrey M Evans Trefor Lloyd Hughes J Arwel Roberts Raymond Jones Robert Llewelyn Jones

<b>A –Recommendation/s and reason/s</b>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b> following analysis of the responses to the consultation exercise and site assessment exercises outlined within the report, it is recommended that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. None of the three sites included in the consultation to provide a temporary stopping place in the vicinity of Holyhead should be progressed or included in the Local Development Plan.</li> <li>2. IACC should carry out further work to identify alternative sites to meet the need for a temporary stopping place in the Holyhead vicinity, as identified in the statutory Gwynedd and Anglesey Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2016 and to comply with the Council’s duties under Part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014</li> <li>3. Further work should be undertaken by IACC to understand the level of use of Holyhead port by Gypsy Travellers and the level of unauthorised encampments occurring as a result of travel to and from the port. This to include discussion with the port authority and shipping companies.</li> <li>4. IACC should continue to fulfill its role to promote community cohesion. This must</li> </ol>

balance the needs of residents to feel safe and to be consulted on development issues with the recognition that the Council must act to counter racist attitudes and challenge inflammatory comments.

## **Reasons**

For each of the three sites included in the consultation, significant factors have been highlighted which suggest they are unsuitable. A summary of the consultation is provided later in the report. However, as outlined below, certain critical issues were raised that means these sites cannot be considered suitable for inclusion in the Local Development plan and proceed to a planning application.

### Re. recommendation 1

- **Site 1 Vacant Plots, Penrhos Industrial Estate, Holyhead**  
This land is part of the Welsh Government Enterprise Zone. For planning purposes it falls within business use classes B1, B2 and B8. Existing business interests in the area have argued strongly that the creation of a temporary stopping place in this location would adversely affect existing businesses and discourage further investment which creates jobs in the locality. Policy in the Council's Deposit plan supports this argument ie. Policy CYF2 , Ancillary Uses on Employment Land, confirms the need to protect employment land and that land for ancillary uses will only be released in exceptional circumstances. Policy CYF4 , Alternative Uses of Employment Sites also states that land allocated for Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 would only be granted alternative uses in special circumstances.
- **Site 2 Land immediately to east of B&M (formerly Homebase), Holyhead**  
Orthios group, the owner of part of the land, have indicated that their plans include the need to use some of the land, and its designation as a temporary stopping place could compromise the Orthios project infrastructure and future development.
- **Site 3 Land to the south of Alpoco**  
Evidence has been brought forward by AMG Alpoco UK Ltd that the use of this site as a temporary stopping place would present serious health and safety risks to potential users of the stopping place. This is because
  - a) the plant produces aluminium powder which has high fire and explosion risk
  - b) Haulage access to the plant runs alongside the proposed travellers site.

The site owners also have concerns about security at the site. Orthios Group have also stated that the cable which will transport electricity from the new power station to the national grid system runs directly through the land forming this site.

#### Re. Recommendation 2

The Council must continue to seek a suitable site in order to fulfill its duty under part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Welsh Government has powers to direct the Council to act if reasonable progress is not made. The Council must also include sites in the Joint Local Development Plan or face a high risk that the plan will be found unsound.

The Police have supported the need for transit site(s) within Anglesey which to their knowledge are usually from those waiting for onward ferry travel to Ireland.

#### Re. Recommendation 3

The consultation has started dialogue between Council officers and residents, businesses and Community and Town Councils about the current situation in relation to Gypsies and Travellers passing through the town. This needs to continue so that a joint approach can be found to understanding and addressing issues arising. The port authority is a vital participant in this process.

#### Re. Recommendation 4

Gypsies and Travellers are a recognised ethnic minority and are therefore protected by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The Council has an important role to play in creating understanding and addressing prejudice to this minority group. There was evidence that rumours and misconceptions about the type and size of the site proposed arose in the course of the consultation period. Some of the responses to the consultation were disparaging and inaccurate.

### **Background**

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's *Travelling to a Better Future* describes Gypsies and Travellers as having long been one of the most disenfranchised and marginalised groups in society. The Welsh Government is committed to redressing the inequalities faced by Gypsies and Travellers by improving equality of opportunity for all.

The Anglesey and Gwynedd Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment 2016, undertaken in accordance with the Welsh Government statutory guidance on *Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* ,

identified need both permanent and transit sites in the the two local authority areas in autumn 2015.

### **Type of sites which need to be provided and size**

The Anglesey and Gwynedd Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment identified that a temporary stopping place for up to 12 caravans is required in the vicinity of Holyhead. The evidence for this was the recorded pattern of unauthorized encampments occurring in the Holyhead area.

### **Supporting information including options considered:**

The following sites were included in the consultation as potential shortlisted sites in Holyhead

- Vacant Plots, Penrhos Industrial Estate, Holyhead
- Land immediately to east of B&M (formerly Homebase), Holyhead
- Land to the south of Alpoco

### **Summary of consultation**

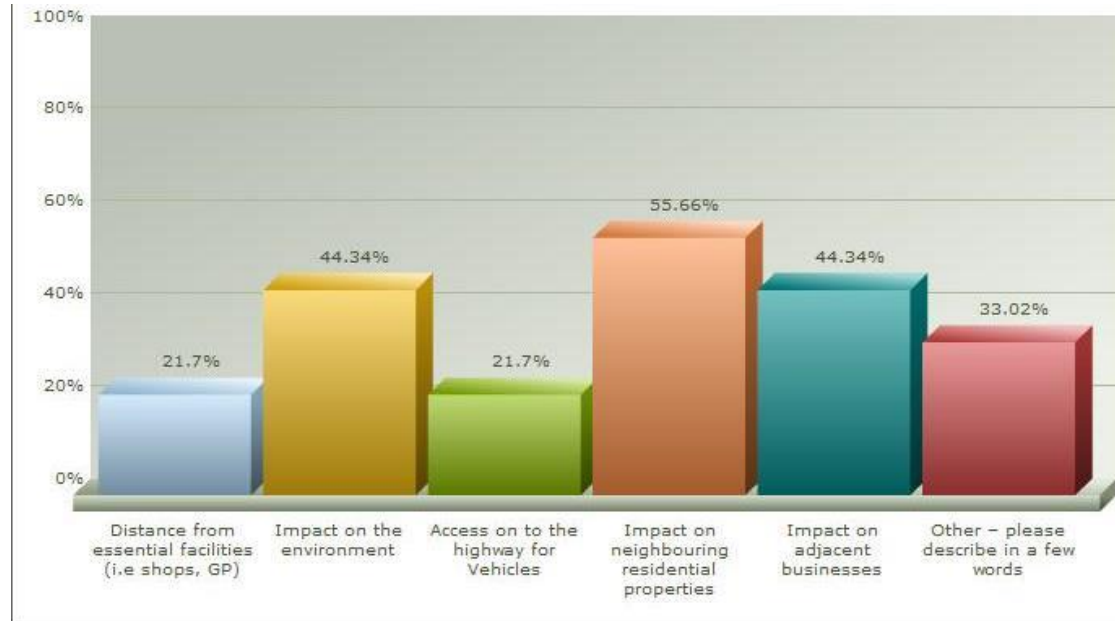
#### **Questionnaire responses**

120 questionnaires were fully completed. 20 questionnaires were also received where the questionnaire had been crossed through or the statement of acknowledgement of the Council's legal obligation to provide sites crossed out as a protest against sites in Holyhead.

The following table sets out the responses to the first question in the consultation questionnaire which asked respondents rank the consultation sites using 1 for preferred site and 3 for least preferred site.

	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
Vacant Plots, Penrhos Industrial Estate, Holyhead	31	19	34
Land immediately to east of B&M (formerly Homebase), Holyhead	32	33	19
Land to the south of Alpoco	21	32	31

The following graph shows the response to the final question in which respondents were asked to indicate the two factors which were most important in their choice of site.



The chart above indicates that the respondents to the questionnaire considered that the main factors that should be considered in site selection are the impact on neighbouring residential properties, impact on adjacent businesses and impact on the environment.

A petition was also presented to the Council. Individuals signing the petition endorsed the following statement at the top of the petition "We the undersigned would like to oppose the Travellers sites in Holyhead". A similar petition was signed by business in the area of the Penrhos industrial estate. A total of over 1000 signatures were included on both petitions.

### **Summary of comments received**

The tables below summarise the theme of comments made most frequently via letter, email or the questionnaires and other issues raised that have direct impact on determining suitability and reasonableness of selecting individual sites.

<b>Response from residents and individuals</b>			
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Site to which issue refers</b>	<b>Summary of comment from consultees</b>	<b>Officer Response to the comment  (provided where clarification or factual information can be provided)</b>
<b>Harm to environment and visual impact</b>	All	The landscape and scenery will be ruined by rubbish and littering.  Existing encampments create mess whenever they occur in Holyhead	The creation of a temporary stopping place would create a more managed environment with refuse facilities. The absence of temporary stopping places means that there is a high likelihood that unauthorised encampments will continue in Holyhead with resulting environmental impacts.
<b>Cost implications</b>	Penrhos (in support)	If Penrhos is selected as preferred site, this would avoid the additional cost of creating hardstanding and as already owned by the Council there would be no land purchase costs.	It is the case that where a site requires less development work there will be cost savings to the Council.  Unauthorised encampments already create costs for the Council when they arise. The development of official temporary stopping places with refuse facilities and toilets is intended to provide better control of these costs.
	All	Free camping sites should not be provided for this group. The costs of clean up will be	Unauthorised encampments already

		<p>borne by Anglesey residents.</p> <p>Gypsies and Travellers do not contribute financially to society.</p> <p>If the Council are instructed that they must make a site for Travellers will the Travellers be asked to pay for it?</p> <p>Extra money will need to be spent for police to do extra patrols on the area and they are already stretched enough as it is</p> <p>Residents are paying more tax for less bins collections and services needed by residents.</p>	<p>create costs for the Council when they arise. The development of official temporary stopping places with refuse facilities and toilets is intended to provide better control of these costs.</p>
<b>Too close to residential area</b>	Land immediately east of B&M (in opposition)	<p>Too close to a residential area</p> <p>Will decrease the value of neighbouring properties/properties overlooking the sites.</p>	<p>Noted. However impact on values is not a planning consideration.</p>
<b>Health &amp; Safety of residents of Holyhead</b>	All	<p>Concern about the safety of the residents of Holyhead and surrounding areas. People want to feel safe in their own homes. Worrying for parents with children.</p> <p>People will feel increased vulnerability, especially in residential areas where there are families and elderly people.</p> <p>Although the consultation is about temporary sites they will end up being permanent and not temporary as the Travellers will choose not to leave.</p> <p>There will be problems between locals and the Travellers which could escalate.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>There is a long-standing tradition of Irish Travellers staying in Holyhead on their way to and from Ireland via the port.</p>

<b>Crime &amp; Anti Social Behaviour</b>	<b>All</b>	<p>The Police station in Holyhead isn't open 24hrs. A permanent travellers site needs to be situated near a town which has the ability to provide Policing instantly. Holyhead has existing problems with drug addiction and petty crime without adding to this.</p> <p>Fear of links between Gypsy and Traveller sites and increases in crime including vandalism and theft.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Council cannot take into account responses to the consultation which contain racist, discriminatory and inflammatory comments.</p>
<b>Impact on Business &amp; Tourism</b>	<b>Land south of Alpocho (in opposition)</b>	Shouldn't be chosen as this would affect tourism and a pleasant location for Anglesey residents leisure. AONB not for this purpose.	Noted
	<b>Land East of B&amp;M (in opposition)</b>	There is a small campsite to the rear of this proposed site. I am sure no-one would want to spend their holidays backed on to a gypsy site.	Noted
	<b>Vacant plots Penrhos Industrial Estate</b>	A site at Penrhos industrial estate would deter businesses from further investment in the Penrhos area.	Noted
		<p>Anglesey has an economy strongly based on tourism. Council should not jeopardise this by encouraging Travellers to come to Anglesey.</p> <p>There are positive developments in the area such as the Eco Park and possibility of Land and Lakes coming to Holyhead and this will bring the area down. One step forward and two steps back.</p> <p>Holyhead already struggles to attract businesses and this will be detrimental to image of Holyhead.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>There is a long-standing tradition of Irish Travellers staying in Holyhead on their way to and from Ireland via the port.</p>



<p><b>Other</b></p>		<p>Welsh Government sites should be consulted on. It is WG who are insisting on sites. Why should their sites be treated differently?</p> <p>Additional strain on GP surgeries and local schools.</p> <p>Preferable to place them further from residential areas and businesses. An area in the countryside would be more suitable.</p> <p>Anglesey provided 100s of stopping places already in shape of caravan and camping sites. Anyone else who decided to park a caravan on a layby / main road should be given a list of sites and told to move.</p>	<p>The temporary stopping place is to provide a site to relocate unauthorised encampments that occur for a few nights in the area. It would not therefore impact on schools and surgeries.</p> <p>The location of the site should be suitable to prevent unauthorised encampments which occur at present in Holyhead.</p>
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<p><b>Response from organisations and businesses</b></p>			
<p><b>Organisation</b></p>	<p><b>Issue</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of comment from consultees</b></p>	<p><b>Officer Response to the comment</b> (provided where clarification or factual information can be provided)</p>
<p>North Wales Police</p> <p>CC-14562-LB/186954</p>	<p>North Wales police made a response to the three sites in the consultation collectively</p>	<p>Support the need to have transit site(s) within Anglesey.</p> <p>Police should be involved in design and management plans for all sites.</p> <p>Temporary stopping places should not be allowed to expand and /or become permanent (The full text of the response is included as Appendix 1)</p>	<p>Page 9 of 2</p>

<p>Cocon Construction Ltd</p>	<p>Opposition to plot at Penrhos as a site for Gypsies and travellers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Park is for business use and not residential and other purposes</li> <li>2) Concern that nature of the business makes it a prime target for theft. The development would potentially be a blight on the business.</li> <li>3) Regards the group for whom the site would be provided as not in need of a facility which would take public funds.</li> <li>4) Unfair that Welsh Government land should be ruled out.</li> </ol>	
<p>Signatories from: (NB the designation of the signatory eg. Manager was not provided)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cocon Ltd</li> <li>• Premier Graphics</li> <li>• Mon Maintenance Services</li> <li>• Anglesey Kitchens</li> <li>• Mon Fire Management</li> <li>• GMS Ltd</li> <li>• HLS</li> <li>• Cymell Ltd</li> <li>• Poundstretcher</li> <li>• Farmfoods</li> <li>• Argos Ltd</li> <li>• Brantano</li> <li>• Peacocks</li> <li>• New Look</li> </ul>		<p><u>Opposition to a Traveller site at Holyhead</u></p> <p>“We as local shops, businesses and employers are opposed to proposals to create a traveller site in Penrhos Industrial Estate or anywhere else within the town of Holyhead due to the adverse affects we believe it will have on the community”</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poundland</li> <li>• Wilkinsons</li> <li>• ACS ltd</li> <li>• Penrhos Hire</li> <li>• Lands End Tyres</li> </ul>			
<p>Economic &amp; Community Regeneration Service, Isle of Anglesey County Council</p>	<p>Unsuitability of site 1 Penrhos Industrial Estate</p>	<p>Isle of Anglesey Economic Development department made 11 points setting out why it considered that vacants plots on Penrhos industrial estate is not suitable as a temporary stopping site for Gypsy Travellers in the Holyhead area. These focus on the estate's economic importance for Holyhead and impacts on existing on future businesses.</p> <p>(The full text of the response is included as Appendix 2)</p>	
<p>Orthios Group (owners of land included in both Site 2 and Site 3)</p>	<p>Site 2 – land to east of B&amp;M</p> <p>Site 3 – Land to South of Alpoco</p>	<p>Orthios object to the use of either of these sites as a temporary stopping places. The themes of the objection are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical security</li> <li>• security of key infrastructure</li> <li>• future development</li> <li>• reputational risk and employment</li> </ul> <p>The full text of the response is included</p>	

		as Appendix 3	
AMG Alpoço UK	Site 3 – Land to South of Alpoço	<p>Objections to the site on grounds including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• road running alongside proposed site is used by haulage vehicles creating both risk to potential users of the temporary stopping place and business risk</li> <li>• Safety risks to users of any site due to plant producing aluminium powder</li> <li>• need to increase security at the plant site</li> </ul> <p>The full text of the response is included as Appendix 4</p>	
Holyhead Town Council	All sites in Holyhead	<p>The Town Council, at its meeting on 7 March, resolved</p> <p>“That the Holyhead Town Council reject the sites in Holyhead as they could not be included in the Local Development Plan at this stage as the Local</p>	<p>As stated in the report, transit sites must be provided to meet the Council’s statutory duty that where a need has been identified. Cost are already arising from clean up costs and court</p>

		Development Plan has now closed and also that two of the sites suggested were close to businesses and in areas of outstanding natural beauty. Also the Town council was concerned that the cost of setting up and maintaining these sites would fall on the rate-payers of Anglesey”	action resulting from unauthorised encampments
Secretary, Trearddur Bay, Residents' & Tenants' Association (TBR&TA)	Site 1 preferred.	Land is owned by IACC so cost is less	
Coed Cymru	Site 1 preferred.	Archaeology - the land by Alpoco and land by B&M still have remains from the gardens of Plas Penrhos	

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

Not applicable

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

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified.

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

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

The Council's budget for 2016-17 includes capital funding to facilitate temporary stopping places.

<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</b>	
7	<b>Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	
8	<b>Scrutiny</b>	
9	<b>Local Members</b>	
10	<b>Any external bodies / other/s</b>	

**F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)**

1	<b>Economic</b>	
2	<b>Anti-poverty</b>	
3	<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	
4	<b>Environmental</b>	
5	<b>Equalities</b>	Recommendation 4 of the report recognises that identifying sites for Gypsies and Travellers is an issue where the Council must be aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and must take positive steps to promote community cohesion and prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation of Gypsies and Travellers who are a protected group under the Act.
6	<b>Outcome Agreements</b>	
7	<b>Other</b>	

#### **FF - Appendices:**

Consultation response from

- Police
- Economic & Community Regeneration Service, Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Orthios Group
- AMG Alpoco UK
- Holyhead Town Council

#### **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'.