

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 20th January 2022

LOCATION: Virtual

TITLE: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To scrutinise the draft Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2022 and to make recommendations to Cabinet

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is a highly sensitive matter which requires detailed scrutiny prior to approval to submit to the Welsh Government for agreement.

BACKGROUND:

The assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and the duty to make provision for sites where the assessment identifies need, became statutory requirements under Section 101 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The purpose of a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is to ensure Local Authorities better understand how many Gypsy and Traveller pitches are required in their area, and should form a robust evidence base for local planning policies which meet those needs.

The GTAA must be carried out at least every five years and in this context Welsh Government published 'Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments Guidance' (2015) to assist Local Authorities in producing a robust assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in their area.

Ceredigion County Council submitted a GTAA to Welsh Government in January 2020, and received feedback requesting further work be undertaken on the potential need for transit site in the county. However following this advice, the Covid 19 pandemic emerged and this made engagement very difficult. Thus, Welsh Government provided an extension to all LPAs to undertake their GTAA until February 2022, in order to allow sufficient engagement with the GT community to be undertaken. The GTAA has been prepared in consultation with the Gypsy Traveller Steering Group.

CURRENT SITUATION:

This report presents the results of the 2022 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) undertaken by Ceredigion County Council (CCC) with the aim of establishing the need for transit, temporary or permanent pitch provision over the next five years and over the fifteen-year period of the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-2033.

Currently there are no local authority Gypsy Traveller sites and only one authorised private site in the county. Nor is there any permanent provision for Showmen. New Travellers are believed to be present in the county but the Council holds no records of their location. Since June 2016, ethnicity has been included in the housing register application process which identified four members of the Gypsy Traveller community, three of whom are not currently living in Ceredigion and one who lives in bricks and mortar accommodation. There are two further members of the Gypsy Traveller community who have been housed in bricks and mortar accommodation for a number of years and prior to the ability to identify ethnicity through the housing register application process.

As expected, it has proved extremely difficult to locate the target population for this assessment. Data from the 2011 Census and relevant information gathered from Council departments including Education, Schools and Housing, other public bodies and third sector organizations were pooled to try to create the best possible sample frame, but only 5 potential households were identified and unfortunately 4 of these were unwilling to take part in the survey. The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain were contacted but no responses were received from them.

The assessment is based on responses received from a survey completed by members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, which highlights whether they need permanent/transit accommodation or not. Due to the low numbers of Gypsy and Travellers in Ceredigion, every effort was made to try and engage with the community to encourage them to complete the questionnaire and take part in the assessment, however the response was limited.

In 2016, the Caravan Count reporting system became a live system, the results of which have been considered in detail. The Caravan Count only identifies one outstanding record for 6 caravans on a site in Plwmp, the site is currently not occupied.

Following advice from WG who requested further engagement was undertaken on whether a transit site is required in the county, the GTAA steering group has (once covid relaxations allowed) undertaken a number of site visits and discussions with relevant parties. This further engagement has revealed the temporary residents at the Plwmp site have a historic link to this particular site and landowner and would not be interested in utilizing a transit site if one were provided.

Therefore, from the very small number of questionnaires returned and interviews/site visits carried out, and discussions with WG the assessment concludes that there is no need for a permanent residential Gypsy Traveller site in the county, and following further engagement with the landowner and residents of the site in Plwmp no need for a transit site. However further work with the landowner and residents is required to formally arrange for a 'tolerated site' approach allowed under the WG guidance² and consideration of potential improvements.

Following approval of the GTAA 2022 by Welsh Government, another GTAA will be required in 5 years time.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

No. The GTAA is not developing proposals, making policy decisions, reviewing existing policies, or proposing a reduction or closure of service. The GTAA is not identifying a need for a site. The LDP Preferred Strategy has been subject to an IIA. Any future proposals for the development of a Gypsy Traveller site would also be subject to IIA at the time. The GTAA has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Government guidance on Undertaking GTAA published in 2015. This guidance was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which is available here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/undertaking-gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-assessments-impact-assessments.pdf>

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Summary:

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

The Committee recommends to Cabinet that the GTAA 2022 is submitted to Welsh Government for Agreement

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

- **To ensure that the authority meets the requirement under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to prepare a GTAA at least every 5 years.**
- **To ensure an up to date and comprehensive evidence base is in place to inform the preparation of the replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 when**

formal pause of the LDP ends.

Contact Name: Dr Sarah Groves-Phillips
Designation: Planning Policy Service Manager
Date of Report: 09/12/2021
Acronyms: GTAA – Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment
LDP – Local Development Plan
WG – Welsh Government