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# Carmarthenshire Gypsy Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment

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Version 1.0

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## 1. Foreword....

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2019 update of Carmarthenshire's Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

I have been involved with the steering group looking at developing a new local authority gypsy traveller site in the Llanelli area for the past 18 months, which is in response to the results of the last Assessment in 2016. Members of the gypsy traveller community serve on the group, and their hard work is now seeing a result with the Council taking forward proposals for a new site in the coming months. This site and additional pitches on our existing site at Penybryn will be set out in the Council's proposed new Local Development Plan. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have served on the steering group. The role of the steering group will now change. It will now advise us on the design of the new site, making sure that it becomes a place where its residents will be happy and proud to live.

This assessment is a key document which will help to ensure that the changing needs of gypsies and travellers are addressed throughout the County.

The Council wishes all sections of the community in Carmarthenshire to have a home which meets their needs and respects their culture.

I look forward to this becoming a reality.

Cllr. Linda Davies Evans  
Executive Board Member for Housing

## 2. Executive Summary....

This assessment covers the need for residential pitches for gypsies and travellers, who are defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 as:

- (a) Persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:
  - (1) Persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and
  - (2) Members of an organized group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such); and
- (b) All other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a mobile home.

**Purpose of this Assessment** is to provide a robust evidence base for current and likely future need for gypsy and traveller pitches in Carmarthenshire. The baseline date for this assessment is 31 October 2019.

**Current provision of pitches** (see table 2, page 8 for details)

There are 30 private pitches for gypsies and travellers, of which 22 have permanent planning status; 2 have temporary planning permission and 6 are subject to a current planning application.

There are 15 public pitches for gypsies and travellers.

There are 9 pitches for travelling show-people.

**Additional pitch needs – gypsies and travellers** (see table 3, page 12)

Unmet need now: 19 pitches

Likely unmet need in 5 years: 23 pitches

Likely unmet need in 2033: 31 pitches

It should be noted that these three figures will need to be revised depending on the outcome of current planning applications at sites which are either unauthorised development or have temporary planning permission, as mentioned above.

**Additional pitch needs – travelling show-people** (see table 4, page 13)

Unmet need now: 4 pitches

Likely unmet need in 5 years: 4 pitches

Likely unmet need in 2033: 6 pitches

### 3. National policy context.....

*Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* (June 2018) sets out Welsh Government's vision for the inclusion of these communities in Welsh society. The document includes a commitment from Welsh Government to work with local authorities to deliver new gypsy and traveller sites. 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 the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Welsh Government is committed to making funding available for new sites and improvements to existing local authority sites through the Sites Capital Grant fund.

Under section 106 of the 2014 Act the Welsh Government published *Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments: Guidance* in May 2015 to help local authorities to produce a robust assessment of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs in their area. This Assessment has been produced in accordance with the guidance. Our last Assessment was produced in December 2016. Normally, a new Assessment must be carried out every 5 years. This Assessment is being done now to provide an evidence base for the review of the Local Development Plan, which will cover development up to 2033.

Other legislation and guidance on the provision of gypsy and traveller sites includes:

- The Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 provides additional safeguards for those living on and running local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- Welsh Government Circular 005/2018 *Planning for gypsy, traveller and show-people sites* was published in June 2018. It provides an updated guidance on the planning aspects of identifying sustainable sites for gypsies and travellers and how planning authorities can work with gypsies and travellers to achieve this aim.
- Welsh Government's *Designing gypsy and traveller sites: guidance* (May 2015) provides practical advice to help local authorities to ensure their sites are fit-for-purpose. It informs the development and improvement of gypsy and traveller sites in Wales, and is taken into account when authorities apply for funding for gypsy and traveller sites.

Once the Assessment has been approved by Welsh Ministers, local authorities have a legal duty to exercise their functions to provide mobile home pitches to meet the identified needs. They may do this in a variety of ways - by providing local authority gypsy and traveller sites; supporting households to develop private sites and community-led approaches such as community land trusts.

If the Council wishes to develop additional pitches or sites it can apply for the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant. The maximum available per site is £1.5 million. Priority is being given to schemes providing additional pitches. There is no guarantee that a bid for funding will be successful.

#### 4. Local development plan policies.....

Carmarthenshire's current Local Development Plan was adopted in December 2014, and covers up to 2021, or until a revised Plan is adopted. Policy H7 makes provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers, setting out a policy framework through which proposals will be considered in response to identified need.

The target in the annual monitoring report was to provide a new gypsy traveller site by 2017, which has not been met. In terms of LDP Policy H7, there is flexibility within that policy to allow gypsy and caravan sites / pitches, and this is reflected in the permissions that have been granted over the last few years.

Carmarthenshire published a revised site assessment methodology in January 2019, based on the 2015 Welsh Government guidance on site design referenced above. A call for sites was held between 28 January and 8 April 2019 for gypsy pitches in the Llanelli area and travelling show-people anywhere in the County. Nine sites were put forward for gypsy sites in the Llanelli area. No sites were proposed for travelling show-people.

The nine sites have been assessed using the revised methodology. A proposed site has been identified in the Deposit Local Development Plan, as well as additional pitches adjacent to the Council's existing site in Llanelli which are outside the area liable to flooding.

Part of Brecon Beacons National Park lies within Carmarthenshire. The park authority has its own policies on providing sites for gypsies and travellers, which are in line with Welsh Government planning guidance. There are no known gypsy sites, either authorised or unauthorised, within the Carmarthenshire part of Brecon Beacons National Park, and no unmet need identified in either this or the previous Assessment.

The draft new monitoring and implementation arrangements are based on new draft policies SP9 and GTP1. The key indicator will be the number of gypsy and traveller sites and pitches built on land allocated in the LDP. There will be a local indicator of sites and pitches built on land not allocated in the LDP. The target will be to provide the required pitches identified in this Assessment by 2033, and progress on achieving this will be reported each year. The trigger for further action will be if planning permission is not secured on allocated land in the LDP.

## **5. Existing data sources .....**

### **- Population .....**

Information from the 2011 Census was used in the previous Assessment, and this is still the most up-to-date information that we have. The Census counted 120 households, containing 335 people, who identified themselves as gypsies or Irish travellers. This may be an under-estimate of the true figure.

Figures for England and Wales as a whole show that:

- Gypsy and traveller families are more likely to have dependent children (45%) than other families (29%).
- Gypsies and travellers are less likely to be aged 65 or over (6% compared with 16% for the population as a whole).
- Gypsies and travellers are more likely to be aged 10 or under (20% compared with 12% for the population as a whole).
- Gypsies and travellers are less likely than average to rate their own health as good or very good – 70% compared with 81%

The 2011 Census also shows that in Carmarthenshire gypsies and travellers were far more likely than households in general to live in a social rented home – 54% compared with under 15% of all households. Gypsies and travellers were also much less likely to own their own home, either outright or with a mortgage – just under 32% compared with just under 72% of all households.

### **- Caravan count .....**

Welsh Government publishes a caravan count twice a year, based on returns from local authorities. It counts caravans on authorised and unauthorised gypsy and traveller sites and encampments. It does not count pitches. It is a snapshot on a particular day, and so does not include caravans that are away travelling.

The caravan count gives a general impression of the extent of gypsies and travellers in each area who have a travelling lifestyle, but it does not match directly to the number of pitches that are occupied, vacant or needed, and so a survey of gypsy and traveller households is still needed.

The latest count took place on 18 July 2019.

The figures for Carmarthenshire and Wales as a whole are summarised overleaf:

	On local authority sites	On private sites	On tolerated sites	On not tolerated sites	Total
Carmarthenshire	22	26	0	7	55
Wales	635	301	64	51	1,051

Table 1: Caravan Count July 2019. Source: Welsh Government

Since January 2018, the number of caravans reported in Carmarthenshire has varied between 53 and 62.

Although it does not count pitches, the caravan count does track the number of sites. Across Wales, the number of authorised sites – sites with full planning permission – has grown from 30 in 2008 to over 90 today. The number of unauthorised sites has varied a little, but has hovered around 30 over the same period.

A number of private sites in Carmarthenshire have either gained full planning permission or a certificate of lawfulness over the past few years, which matches the trend in Wales as a whole.

**- Current provision .....**

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Pitches</b>
Private gypsy site	Full planning permission / certificate of lawfulness / tolerated	9	22
Private gypsy site	Temporary planning permission	1	2
Private gypsy site	Current planning application	1	6
Public gypsy / traveller site	Full planning permission	1	15
Travelling show-people yard	Full planning permission / certificate of lawfulness / tolerated	3	9
Transit site	-	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>

Table 2a: Summary of existing gypsy, traveller and travelling show-people sites, by type and status, as at October 2019. Source: GTAA survey 2019 + Carmarthenshire Planning Portal

Due to the small numbers of households at each location, it risks breaching confidentiality to give the situation by each site, as it could be possible to identify individual personal information. To give an idea of the spread of the sites, these are listed by the Council ward in which they are located.

Ward	Number of sites
Bigyn	1
Bynea	1
Garnant	1
Glanymor	1
Glyn	2
Hendy	1
Hengoed	1
Llandeilo	2
Llanfihangel Aberbythych	1
Llangennech	1
Llannon	1
Pembrey	1
Trelech	1

Table 2b: Locations of gypsy, traveller and travelling show-people sites in Carmarthenshire

The number of gypsy / traveller sites either with planning permission or some other form of permanent status has increased from 7 to 9 since the last Assessment in 2016. The number of pitches on these sites has increased from 16 to 22.

Gypsies no longer live at the Westover site in Whitland, which is now managed as a park home site. Most of the families that used to live there now live in social rented and private housing in Whitland and St Clears. Others have developed a new gypsy site on their own land with planning permission; have moved out of the County or have passed away.

There is a temporary permission on one site with two pitches. There is a current application to add an extra pitch to this site, and to make the planning permission permanent. There is a site of 5 pitches which is subject to a planning application dating back to April 2010.

## 6. Survey 2019 .....

The survey took place between 25th June and 16th October, and included gypsies and travellers in sites; in unauthorised encampments and in ordinary housing. The standard questionnaire was used from the Welsh Government guidance. The locations were identified from a combination of the previous Assessment; the Council's own records and information from other people who took part in the survey. An advertisement was also placed in Travellers' Times and World's Fair.

Most pitches and houses had someone at home, and the residents were happy to answer the survey questions. One survey was conducted on the telephone. At one site, there was no-one at home on three separate occasions and at different times of day, and a letter with contact details was left. Another site of five pitches was visited three times, and a letter was left at each pitch, but the only contact was with two pitches occupied by non-gypsies, and someone employed by the gypsy families who was working at the site.

## **Current residential demand .....**

Total current residential demand is made up of the following components:

- Households on unauthorised encampments who wish to live on a site
- Households on sites without planning permission, or with temporary planning permission.
- Overcrowded / doubled-up households
- Households in ordinary housing who wish to live on a site
- Inward migration – families on waiting lists who currently live in another local authority area

## **Demand within five years .....**

Demand within five years – namely by 2024 – is derived from survey data, from households which include family members aged 15 and over who are not already included in current residential demand as above.

## **Demand by 2033 .....** (the Local Development Plan period)

As explained in the previous Assessment, the best estimate of the growth rate of the gypsy traveller community which is available is 1.5% a year. Calculating a local rate of growth would be ideal, but this would be subject to a huge margin of error due to the small population. Evidence would also need to be gathered over a long period of time, specifically for households who would be included as residential need for pitches, as opposed to those who choose to live in ordinary housing. For these reasons, a growth rate of 1.5% is used.

## **Transit provision .....**

There is no evidence in terms of a clear pattern of encampments from either the 2019 survey or from the caravan count that there is a need for a transit site in Carmarthenshire. The Council will continue to monitor this situation.

## **Suitability of current accommodation .....**

Most residents of sites, both public and private, were satisfied with both the location and the standard of their accommodation. Residents of two private sites raised issues about their sites. One site raised the lack of a mains electricity supply – it currently uses a generator – and the other raised issues with toilet provision. These have both been referred to the Council's Home Improvement team, with a view to applying for an improvement loan.

Some of the gypsies and travellers interviewed who now live in ordinary housing expressed a strong intention to return to living on a site, and these families are for this reason unhappy with their current accommodation. Other families were still angry and upset about the way they had been forced to leave a site some years ago, but were now enjoying living in ordinary housing.

One family was living in a caravan in an unauthorised encampment, and so was unhappy about current living conditions, but was looking to be rehoused into ordinary housing.

## 7. Results – Gypsies and Travellers .....Table 3

<b>Current residential supply</b>	<b>Number of pitches</b>
A: Occupied local authority pitches	15
B: Occupied authorised private pitches	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

<b>Planned residential supply</b>	<b>Number of pitches</b>
C. Vacant local authority pitches and available vacant private pitches	0
D. Pitches expected to become vacant in near future	2
E. New local authority and private pitches with planning permission	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

<b>Current residential demand</b>	<b>Pitch demand</b>
F: Unauthorised encampments	0
G: Unauthorised development	7
H: Overcrowded pitches	0
I: Conventional housing	20
J: New households to arrive	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

	<b>Current households minus expected supply within 12 months</b>	<b>Future households at year 5</b>	<b>Future households at end of plan period (2033)</b>
<b>Current households</b>			
K. 52	44	56	64
L. Additional household pitch need	19	23	31

## 8. Results – travelling show-people .....Table 4

<b>Current residential supply</b>	<b>Number of pitches</b>
A: Occupied local authority pitches	0
B: Occupied authorised private pitches	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>Planned residential supply</b>	<b>Number of pitches</b>
C. Vacant local authority pitches and available vacant private pitches	0
D. Pitches expected to become vacant in near future	0
E. New local authority and private pitches with planning permission	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Current residential demand</b>	<b>Pitch demand</b>
F: Unauthorised encampments	0
G: Unauthorised development	0
H: Overcrowded pitches	4
I: Conventional housing	0
J: New households to arrive	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

	<b>Current households minus expected supply within 12 months</b>	<b>Future households at year 5</b>	<b>Future households at end of plan period (2033)</b>
<b>Current households</b>			
K. 13	13	13	15
L. Additional household pitch need	4	4	6

## 9. Conclusions .....

- Most residents of both private and public sites in Carmarthenshire are satisfied with conditions.
- Residents that have identified issues with their sites have options to take forward to resolve those issues.
- There are no overcrowded or doubled-up households on existing gypsy and traveller pitches. The unmet need from gypsies and travellers is mainly from families that are in ordinary housing who wish to return to live on a site. There is also unmet need due to pitches with temporary planning permission and where a planning application is still under consideration.
- There is identified unmet need for four additional pitches for travelling show-people.
- Locations have been identified for additional pitches for gypsies and travellers for inclusion in the new Local Development Plan.
- No land was identified for travelling show-people in the call for sites earlier this year.

## 10. Recommendations .....

1. Ensure that land for additional pitches is identified in the new Local Development Plan, in accordance with the need outlined in this Assessment
2. Progress planning applications on this land as soon as possible, with the aim of applying for Sites Capital Grant from Welsh Government
3. Adopt policies in the new Local Development Plan which will make it possible for travelling show-people to gain planning permission on suitable land
4. Continue to work with residents of all sites, public and private, to improve living conditions

## Appendix 1

### Definitions of key words and phrases.....

Word or phrase	Meaning
Amenity block	Bricks and mortar living accommodation on a gypsy / traveller site, typically including a kitchen, a bathroom and a day room.
Caravan	Also known as a travelling caravan. A mobile home small enough to be moved fairly easily. Often used for sleeping, even on permanent pitches with statics or utility blocks. In the caravan count, tents and other moveable structures are also counted as caravans.
Certificate of lawfulness	People occupying a pitch that does not have planning permission can apply for this, to show that the existing use is legal, and does not need planning permission.
Household	All the family members who normally live together on a pitch.
Pitch	A defined area on a site, occupied by members of the same family. It will usually include a static or amenity block, caravans, and a parking area for vehicles.
Planning permission	The legal right to build a building or carry out a particular type of activity on land. Permission can be <i>permanent</i> or <i>temporary</i> . If a gypsy site has only temporary planning permission, it must be included as <i>need</i> in this Assessment.
Site	A group of pitches within the same boundary. A site may have other services provided, such as a children's play area.
Static	A mobile home that often takes the place of an amenity block on private sites.
Tolerated	Pitches which have been occupied continuously for at least 10 years, in which case the Council is unable to take enforcement action, due to a time limit imposed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 171B
Unauthorised encampment	Temporary stopping of caravans on land without the permission of the landowner.
Unauthorised development	Development of a site or additional pitches without having first gained planning permission.

## Appendix 2

### Engagement checklist.....

1	<p>Visit every Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-person household identified through the data analysis process up to 3 times, if necessary.</p> <p><i>Where it was not possible to interview residents at the first visit subsequent visits were made to each pitch at different times of the day and days of the week.</i></p>	✓
2	<p>Publish details of the GTAA process, including contact details to allow community members to request an interview, on the local authority website, Travellers Times website and the World's Fair publication. In addition adverts were placed by Welsh Government.</p> <p><i>Whilst details of the GTAA were published in Travellers Times and World's Fair, members of the steering group felt that face-to-face and word of mouth publicity would be more appropriate for gypsies and travellers in Carmarthenshire than using the Council's website.</i></p>	✓
3	<p>Consult relevant community support organisations, such as those in Annex 1.</p> <p><i>Emails were sent to Gypsies and Travellers Wales, the Showman's Guild and the Association of Independent Showmen.</i></p>	✓
4	<p>Develop a local authority waiting list for both pitches and housing, which is accessible and communicated to community members.</p> <p><i>There is already a well-established and communicated waiting list in operation in Carmarthenshire.</i></p>	✓
5	<p>Endeavour to include Gypsies and Travellers on the GTAA Project Steering Group.</p> <p><i>9 members of the gypsy / traveller community have been serving on our accommodation steering group from its inception.</i></p>	✓
6	<p>Ensure contact details provided to the local authority by community members through the survey process are followed up and needs assessed.</p> <p><i>All contacts provided for the survey were followed up with a combination of interviews and face-to-face meetings.</i></p>	✓
7	<p>Consider holding on-site (or nearby) GTAA information events to explain why community members should participate and encourage site residents to bring others who may not be known to the local authority.</p> <p><i>The Council's Housing Officers sought to engage on a one-to-one basis with all known gypsy and traveller households that the Council was aware of in Carmarthenshire to explain the purpose of the Assessment and to encourage them to participate and also to pass on information to friends and family.</i></p>	✓