

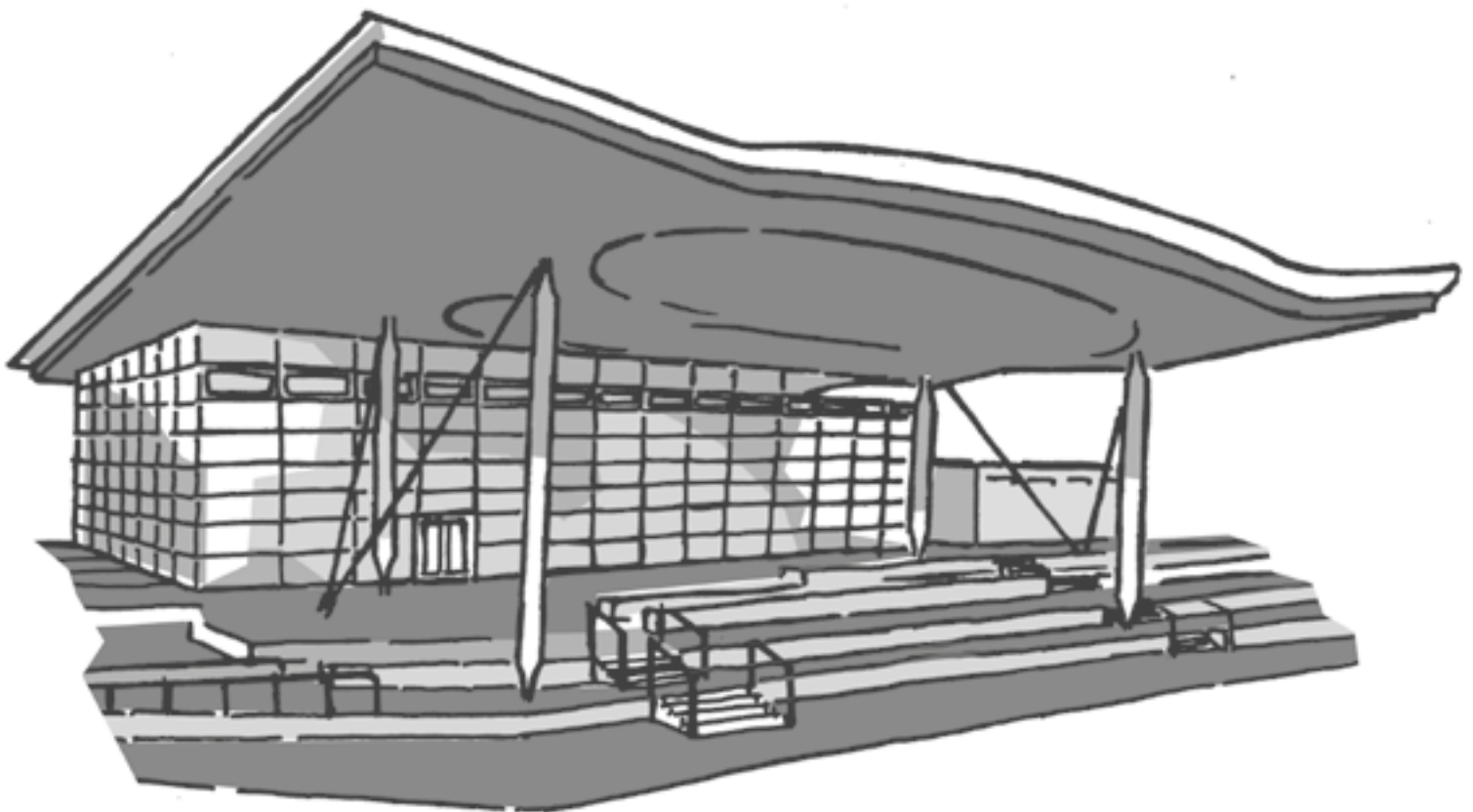


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites

This is an **Easy Read** document from the
Welsh Government



May 2015

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Chapter 1

Why have we made this booklet?



The Welsh Government's '*Travelling to a Better Future*' booklet explains how we plan to help Gypsies and Travellers be treated fairly.

This booklet gives advice to help Councils design Gypsy and Traveller sites.

We expect Councils to follow this advice as closely as possible.

Some of the information in this booklet is not law but we think Councils should be doing it anyway.

This booklet is for Gypsies and Travellers who want to know more about how these sites should be designed.

What things in this booklet mean



This booklet is only about **Council Gypsy and Traveller sites**.

In this booklet, 'Gypsies and Travellers' includes Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers, as well as people from any group who follow a travelling life. It also includes Travelling Showpeople.

New Travellers may also be included. They must have a history of travelling or living in trailers.

In this booklet, **Countryfolk** means people who are not members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Some people call this the 'settled community'.

The **Council** means the local authority that owns or manages the site.



Pitch Agreements are the written deal between you and the Council. It includes the site rules and what you and the Council should do.

Permanent pitches allow residents to live on that pitch for as long as needed as long as they follow the rules.



Transit pitches allow residents to live on that pitch for a maximum of 3 months.

There is a more detailed booklet to explain how Councils should design these sites.

It is available here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites/?lang=en>

Chapter 2

Building sites



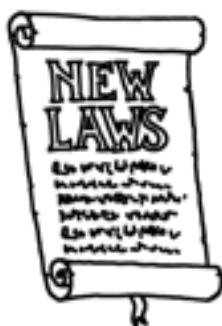
The Welsh Government thinks at least 240 permanent pitches are needed across Wales. There is also need for transit pitches.



The Council must make sure sites are built but the Welsh Government can provide money to help with this.



The Welsh Government believes that everyone in Wales should have a good quality home, including Gypsies and Travellers who wish to live in trailers.



The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 is a new law that means Councils must check if Gypsy and Traveller sites are needed in their area and make sure sites are built.



The Welsh Government '*Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*' booklet gives advice to Councils about finding sites.

Chapter 3

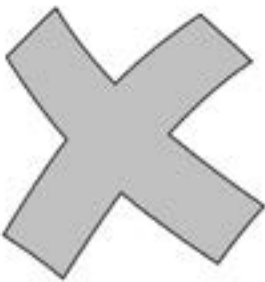
Site Design

Size of site



New sites should be no bigger than 20 pitches.

Sites of this size are more likely to help Gypsies and Travellers and Countryfolk to get on better together.



Sites with more than 20 pitches should only be made if there are good reasons.

If lots of pitches are needed, it does not mean sites larger than 20 pitches should be built. Councils should think about building a few small sites first.



The Welsh Government can give up to £1.5m per site project.

Site location

Councils need to think about the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and other people when deciding where to put a site.



Councils should know where Gypsies and Travellers want to live as they will have asked them in the 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment'.

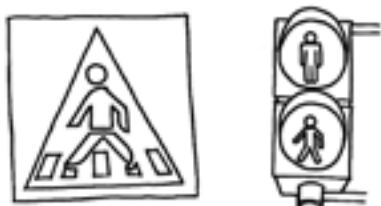


It will not always be possible for the Council to build a site where Gypsies and Travellers want it.

Gypsies and Travellers may be from the local area and want to carry on living there. They may also want sites near work locations.



Sites should be close enough for services like doctors, schools and shops.



Sites should have safe access to roads and, ideally, public transport. Public transport may not be possible in more rural areas.



Sites should not be where residents are likely to be harmed or made ill, such as on toxic land or near dangerous locations.



The Council should check if site locations are likely to get flooded. Trailers are at risk in floods so Councils should think carefully about placing them in flood zones.



The chosen site should be available for at least 21 years.



Transit sites may be best placed near travel routes. Councils will know where encampments have happened before.

Layout

There are a number ways to design a Gypsy and Traveller site, including ‘circular’, ‘tree branch’ and other designs.



The ‘circular’ (also known as loop or horseshoe) design has a shared entrance and exit with a looped road. Trailers are placed around the loop. A play area is usually in the centre.



The ‘tree branch’ (also known as cul-de-sac) design has small areas for different families to live together on the same site. These sites are usually bigger.



The design should protect privacy but also help to keep a sense of community.



The Council could think about having entrance barriers to stop caravans coming onto the site without permission. Residents and emergency services should be asked for their opinions.



Planting trees on the edge of the site will keep the site to the planned size. It is better to use trees than walls.



Councils should think about including play areas if community play areas are far away or dangerous to get to.

Play areas can be protected from being used for trailers by using grass banks or raising the play area above the road. Low walls or fences around the play area could also be used.



Roads

All sites should have speed bumps leading in and out of the site. Public roads should have signs asking cars to slow down for site access.



Roads should also be wide enough to allow lorries, trailers or emergency vehicles to access the site.

There should be footpaths at the entrance and inside the site.



Residents should be careful when driving on the site as children may be playing. Warning signs should be placed along the roads.

Pitch



Each pitch should be big enough to include an amenity block, a mobile home, a touring caravan and parking for two vehicles.

A mobile home (or static caravan) could be up to 20 metres in length and 6.8 metres in width but is usually smaller.

Parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 x 4.8 metres each.

Pitches should provide:

- an amenity block connected to water supply, drainage, and electricity;
- a hardstanding with drainage gutters;
- a surface that is easy to clean and look after;
- bins;
- electricity hook-up points to allow trailers to be moved around;
- a way of securing trailers during high winds;
- hook up to drains and sewerage systems;
- space for drying clothes.

Each pitch should have hardstanding which is made of a hard wearing material, covering the whole pitch.

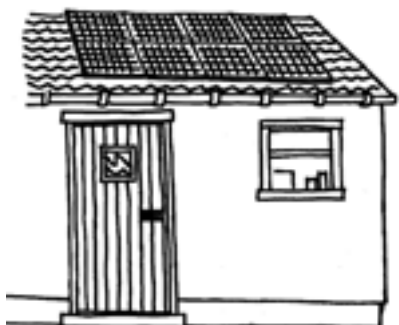
Each pitch must have an amenity block. These should include a toilet, washing areas, a kitchen, an area to eat and storage.



All new sites should have ramps into amenity blocks rather than steps (or both). This is to make sure disabled people can still use the blocks.



Blocks should have hot and cold water supply. There should be a separate toilet with a sink for hand washing. Baths with overhead showers are recommended, though the Council may ask the views of residents. The block should be connected to a sewer.



The Council should think about how to reduce energy and fitting things like solar panels to keep bills low.



A gap of 3 metres should be kept between trailers and the edge of the pitch. Caravans should not be less than 6 metres from any other caravan. This is to prevent fires spreading between caravans.



Each pitch should have a secure gate that can be locked. Gates should be designed to stop most pets or small children escaping from the pitch.



Each pitch should have its own electric and water supply. The Council should arrange for these supplies to be tested regularly.

Chapter 4

Site Services



An area for children to play on the site is important if it is not safe for children to walk to other local play areas.



Play areas should have fences or grass banks to stop cars or vans parking or turning. They should have lighting and dogs should not be allowed in the area.



If there is not space for a play area, the Council should make sure that there are safe walking routes to these play areas.



On larger sites the Council should think about having a community building. Homework clubs, play groups and health workers may use these buildings.



If a community building is given, residents may have to pay towards it from their pitch fees.



If a site manager or warden lives on site, they should be given an office by the Council.



The site should have street lights to make sure the site is safe at night. Lights should not shine into caravans.



The Welsh Government does not think work should be allowed on pitches for safety reasons. Councils should think about having parts of the site where work is allowed.



The site is a place where Gypsy and Traveller culture can be celebrated. Painting murals or other art may give residents pride in the site and be fun for children.



Water meters should be fitted to each amenity block. Outside taps should be fitted on each pitch.



Each pitch should have a post box with a key held by the resident. Residents should not have to collect their post from the site manager or warden.

Where delivery to each pitch is not possible, the Council should think about a 'pigeon hole' system near the entrance to the site or on the site office wall.



Drains should be fitted to the pitch to make sure it does not flood.



The Council should think about having cages to store gas bottles. The Council should make sure cages are safe.

Chapter 5

Safe Sites



The Council must make sure that the site has been checked for safety by doing something called a 'Risk Assessment.'

All buildings provided on the site by the Council must be designed to give easy access for disabled people.



It is important residents feel safe on site without feeling imprisoned. Any new site design should limit the chances of crime. Residents and the police should be asked for their opinion of the design.

It is recommended that areas without a clear use are avoided. This should reduce damage, fly tipping and unauthorised encampments.



Pitches should be no more than 30 metres from a fire point. There should be a clear notice about what to do in a fire and an alarm.

Water standpipes or hydrants must be fitted on each site. Trailers should be no more than 100 metres away.



If water hoses are fitted, residents should be told they should not delay phoning the fire service by trying to put the fire out themselves.

Residents should look after their own fire extinguishers. The Council must look after fire alarms and fire fighting equipment.

Chapter 6

Transit sites



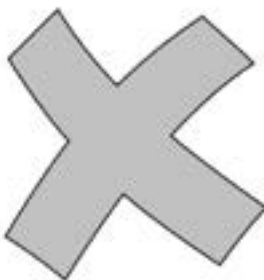
The Welsh Government thinks it is important that transit sites are built to help the travelling way of life.



The Welsh Government can give Councils money to build these sites. Building transit sites should reduce unauthorised encampments.



The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a legal duty on Councils to build Gypsy and Traveller transit sites if there is need in their area.



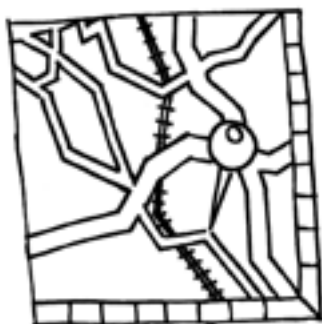
Transit pitches and permanent pitches should not be put together on the same site as this does not usually work well.



Councils will need to think about the best place for people who only want to stay in the area for a maximum of 3 months.



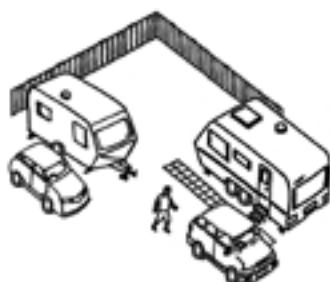
The Caravan Count and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) should give Councils information about what community members want.



Transit sites could be put close to major roads to help with travelling. Other things might cause encampments in the area, like cultural fairs or religious places.



The Welsh Government believes transit sites should usually be 10 pitches or less.



Pitches may be smaller as they will not need to fit static caravans. The pitch should be big enough for two touring caravans and two parking spaces.



Transit sites should have shared amenity blocks rather than one per pitch. There should be separate men's and women's amenity blocks.



All transit sites should have a height-restriction barrier to stop trailers coming onto site without paying. Residents should not be able to open the barrier. The emergency services may need to get access onto the site.



Transit sites should have the same access to water, electricity, drainage, sewerage and lighting as on permanent sites.



Councils should fit meters in amenity blocks and collect payment for services fairly.

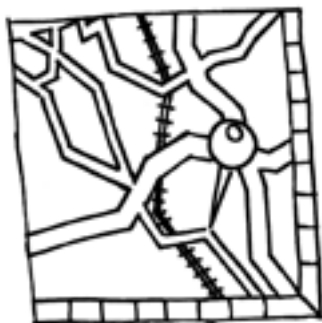


Bins for each pitch are recommended on transit sites. As a minimum, a shared bin area could be made available away from the trailers.

Chapter 7

Temporary Stopping Places

The Welsh Government does not give Councils money for temporary stopping places as they only last for a short time. These sites can be a useful way of stopping encampments in areas where the camp causes problems.



Temporary stopping places should be safe and have good access to road networks. The site should not cause too much trouble to neighbours.

The Council should think carefully about how much room they need on the site. Previous encampments should help them to decide.



Access roads leading to and on site should allow heavy vehicles to pass. A barrier around the site should be built to stop the site getting too big. It is recommended that the site also has a front gate.



The emergency services should be able to enter the site without being blocked. A safe distance of 6 metres between caravans must be kept at all times.



As a minimum, cold water supply should be available for residents.



Portable toilets should be available. There should be separate men's and women's toilets. There should be one portable toilet for every four households on site. Portable showers are also recommended.



Bin collection should also be given on temporary stopping places. Having these services should help to reduce clean-up costs once the site is empty. Residents may have to pay for these services.



If Councils give these services they may be able to move encampments to the Temporary Stopping Place.



The local fire officer should be asked for their views when planning the site. The police should also be asked.

Chapter 8

Asking for opinions



Residents must be asked their views on site design if they already live on the site. If it is a new site the Council should still try to ask the views of Gypsies and Travellers who might live on the site.



The Council will not always be able to do what Gypsies and Travellers want but they should think carefully about what they can do.



It is important the Council also talks to local Councillors and Countryfolk to make sure they understand what is happening. They may also have some good ideas about how to improve the design.



The Council should think about holding an information day to explain what is happening for anyone who is interested.



The information day should allow Countryfolk or Gypsies and Travellers to talk about their views with Council officers. This would be better than a formal public meeting.



There may be a number of rumours about the site which the Council could correct by talking things through.



It is likely that people will complain about plans for a new site. The Council should plan for this by explaining why there is a need and having all the information available.



The Council should ask for views from each group of Gypsies and Travellers, if the site will be used by more than one group.



It is better to ask the views of these communities face to face. Meetings at the Council office can be too formal and difficult to get to.



Be careful about talking to a small number of people as they may not have the same views as everyone.



It is best to ask members of the community about when you should call to ask them for their views.



It is important that community members are told how their views were used by the Council. If the Council chooses a different option to the one that residents want, the reasons should be explained.