



Llywodraeth Cymru  
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# Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites

## Guidance



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## Chapter One – Introduction

**1.1** The Welsh Government's *'Travelling to a Better Future: a Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan'* ("the Framework") sets the Welsh Government's vision for the inclusion of these communities in Welsh society. The Framework also seeks to ensure the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are assessed, planned and implemented in a more strategic way. Through the Framework we are seeking to improve access to services for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. We recognise the cultural differences which have often led to the social exclusion of these groups and we want to ensure these communities are heard in service delivery.

**1.2** *Travelling to a Better Future* includes a commitment from the Welsh Government to work with Local Authorities to deliver new Gypsy and Traveller sites (objective 5). This commitment is being addressed through the continued availability of Sites Capital Grant funding for the development of new sites. Changes to legislation through the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 have also supported this objective. Revising this guidance should also support Local Authorities with up-to-date guidance when designing new sites. The Welsh Government committed to revising our existing *'Good Practice Guide on Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales,'* during 2014.

**1.3** There is a current trend towards Gypsies and Travellers becoming more 'settled' on permanent sites or moving into conventional housing. Travelling has become more difficult due to changing patterns in work and also the lack of legal stopping places. Census 2011 suggested there are only 2,785 Gypsies and Irish Travellers living in Wales. Across England and Wales only 24% of all community members were recorded as living in mobile homes, with 76% residing in various types of conventional ('bricks and mortar') housing.

**1.4** At the time of publication, there are 19 Local Authority sites divided among 13 Local Authorities in Wales, providing approximately 374 pitches.

### Purpose of this guidance

**1.5** This document is intended as a guide to Local Authorities in providing appropriate services at reasonable cost to the public purse for Gypsies and Travellers living on residential sites in Wales. It contains practical guidance to assist Local Authorities to ensure their sites are fit-for-purpose.

**1.6** This guidance is not statutory. However, following this guidance will help Local Authorities and others in the development and improvement of Gypsy and Traveller sites in their area, and will form part of the consideration of the Welsh Government in assessing applications for Sites Capital Grant funding in relation to Gypsy and Traveller sites.<sup>1</sup>

**1.7** This *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance should be used in conjunction with the Welsh Government's *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* (referred to together as the "Sites Guides").

**1.8** The *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance sets out Local Authority and residents responsibilities in line with the terms of pitch agreements required under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. The Welsh Government recommends both of the Sites Guides are read

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government, Sites Capital Grant guidance notes [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites-capital-grant/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites-capital-grant/?lang=en)

before designing new sites to ensure Local Authorities fully understand the eventual impact of their decisions.

**1.9** Local Authorities having regard to the Sites Guides will help to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wales:

- are sustainable, well managed and maintenance is planned and not always reactive;
- are equivalent to the relevant parts of standards which would be expected on other types of mobile home sites and social housing; and,
- create the necessary conditions to encourage and develop good relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community, and between site residents and owners / managers.

**1.10** Where a new site is being developed the Site Guides should inform the design of the site. Local Authorities and others are strongly advised to bear this guidance in mind when refurbishing existing sites and/or developing new sites. Bids for the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant will be assessed under a range of criteria, including following the Sites Guides.

## Developing this guidance

**1.11** This guidance replaces the existing *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance, which was developed through engagement with professionals across Wales, including Local Authority housing, planning, environmental health and education personnel. The Gypsy and Traveller community was also consulted and officials undertook a number of site visits in rural and urban locations to investigate site provision. Other examples of design and management in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were also drawn upon.

**1.12** The revised guidance embeds the principles of *Travelling to a Better Future* and includes substantive changes based upon legislative and policy development since the previous guidance was published in 2009.

**1.13** In developing this guidance the Welsh Government has aimed to consolidate standards with those the settled community can expect to experience. In most cases the direct comparison is made to other types of Mobile Home sites but in some instances it is more appropriate to draw comparisons with social housing provision. The right balance may not yet be achieved but the guidance will be monitored and reviewed in 2020, with reference to relevant legislation, policies and evidence.

**1.14** Through *Travelling to a Better Future*, the Welsh Government has stated its commitment to, "ensure that Gypsies and Travellers in Wales have appropriate accommodation provision." Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites were also brought within the definition of 'protected sites' in 2013 and subsequently within the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act during 2013, providing equal security of tenure for residents and clarifying roles and responsibilities on these sites.

## Definitions

**1.15** This guidance focuses solely on Local Authority owned or leased Gypsy and Traveller sites.

**1.16** The phrase ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ has been used in many different ways in legislation and guidance. This guidance uses the consolidated definition of Gypsies and Travellers included under section 62 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 and section 108 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

**1.17** Section 108 defines ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ as –

- a) Persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including –
  - i) 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
  - ii) 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.

**1.18** The intention of the above definition is to ensure ethnic Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers are included, as well as those from any ethnic group who follow a nomadic habit of life. The definition also includes Travelling Showpeople. New Travellers could also be captured by the definition if they can demonstrate a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in mobile homes. Members of these communities do not necessarily need to demonstrate a continued nomadic habit of life to be considered to be Gypsies or Travellers.

**1.19** Gypsies and Travellers are amongst the most socially excluded groups, with health and education outcomes significantly worse than the settled population. Some evidence suggests<sup>2</sup> where they are able to settle on well managed and maintained sites, Gypsies and Travellers are better able to access health and education services and this leads to a better quality of life.

**1.20** As recognised by Estyn<sup>3</sup>, children should benefit through better attendance and attainment within the education system as education professionals are able to build stable and trusting relationships with families.

**1.21** Better health will result from, for example, uptake of preventative healthcare, including vaccinations of children as health visitors are able to access families which they couldn’t access previously. Greater integration of Gypsies and Travellers is also likely as individuals access local facilities, which can also lead to the reduced likelihood of children having to live or play in unsafe environments.

**1.22** Most fundamentally, many more Gypsies and Travellers will be able to access culturally-appropriate accommodation. This pays due regard to Human Rights case law and supports Objective 6 of the Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Plan by reflecting the needs of those with protected characteristics in meeting housing needs.

**1.23** This guidance refers to the Model Standards for Caravan Sites in Wales (2008).<sup>4</sup> Although Local Authorities do not require site licences to operate these sites under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013, we expect that Local Authorities should follow these standards as closely as possible on Gypsy and Traveller sites as many issues, such as fire safety, will apply to all caravan sites in similar ways.

<sup>2</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: A review*

<sup>3</sup> Estyn (2011) *The Education of Gypsy Traveller Pupils - An Update on Provision in Secondary Schools*

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government, *Model standards for Caravan Sites in Wales* [www.gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en)

## Chapter 2 – Site Provision

**2.1** Demand for pitches on *Local Authority Gypsy Traveller* sites exceeds the number of pitches available. The Welsh Government estimates that there is a current need for at least 240 permanent residential pitches across Wales, with additional transit site needs. This estimate has been created through analysis of Census 2011 data. However, Pat Niner's *Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales* report<sup>5</sup> estimated there was a need for 275-300 pitches by 2011. The Welsh Government expects that new Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments (GTAAAs) in 2016 will produce a more reliable estimate across Wales.

**2.2** Achieving these sites is the responsibility of the Local Authority but the Welsh Government provides support through the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant, the provision of planning and housing related guidance and the establishment of the All-Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Forum.

### The duty to provide sites

**2.3** The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and firmly believes everyone in Welsh society should have the opportunity of a good quality home, regardless of their cultural need for mobile home accommodation or bricks and mortar housing.

**2.4** The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to ensure that the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are properly assessed and the identified need for pitches is met.<sup>6</sup> Local Authorities are required to exercise their powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act, as far as necessary, to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites for the unmet need. This doesn't necessarily mean additional Local Authority owned sites will be required but where they are needed the Local Authority is responsible for providing them. More information about understanding accommodation needs can be found in the Welsh Government's '*Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments guidance*'.<sup>7</sup>

**2.5** This document provides guidance for designing Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites. However, Local Authorities may also wish to consider working with Gypsy and Traveller communities to encourage the development of new private sites.

**2.6** Welsh Government planning circular 30/2007 '*Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*'<sup>8</sup> provides guidance to Local Authorities when trying to identify suitable site locations in their statutory Local Development Plans. As a statutory consultee for each Local Development Plan, the Welsh Government will provide feedback to Local Authorities in relation to their Gypsy and Traveller accommodation plans.

<sup>5</sup> Pat Niner / Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, *Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales* (2006): [www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-wales/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-wales/?lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> Duty to meet identified needs under section 103 is expected to be commenced in March 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government, *Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments guidance*, [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/accommodation-needs/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/accommodation-needs/?lang=en)

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites* [www.wales.gov.uk/about/foi/publications-catalogue/circular/2007/gypsy/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/about/foi/publications-catalogue/circular/2007/gypsy/?lang=en)

**2.7** The planning circular outlines the importance of:

- involving Gypsies and Travellers proactively in the GTAA and planning process via Community Involvement Schemes in Local Development Plan preparation and ensuring communication is direct and accessible;
- considering potential site sustainability, including access to suitable community facilities for occupiers;
- guidance for Gypsies and Travellers making planning applications;
- local planning authorities identifying suitable locations in their Local Development Plan for permanent and transit sites which meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- ensuring the criteria against which site applications will be judged are fair;
- including a fair criteria-based policy in the Local Development Plan;
- considering specific Gypsy and Traveller Rural Exception Sites; and
- Local Authorities' responsibilities under Equality and Human Rights legislation and case law.

**2.8** By utilising the Welsh Government's *Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* guidance and the Sites Guides Local Authorities should be equipped with the tools to undertake the accommodation assessment and to meet the identified pitch needs.

**2.9** In order to reduce unauthorised encampments and to ensure Local Authorities can effectively enforce against unauthorised sites there needs to be appropriate provision of authorised sites (see Welsh Government Managing Unauthorised Camping guidance 2013<sup>9</sup>). Delivering more sites whether public or private is an issue for the Local Authorities to address, as they have to find local solutions for local needs. Appropriate accommodation provision has a positive and beneficial impact upon access to services for Gypsies and Travellers and a beneficial effect on all in the long-term through better community cohesion and reduced unauthorised encampments.

**2.10** When designing Gypsy and Traveller sites, Local Authorities are required to consult the local Fire and Rescue Authority under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. It is also recommended for Local Authorities to discuss their plans with the local Police force to ensure they conform to Secured by Design principles.

## The Sites Capital Grant

**2.11** The Welsh Government provides funding to Local Authorities for the refurbishment of existing sites and the development of new sites, through the Sites Capital Grant. £8.85m has been made available since the previous Designing Sites guidance was published in 2009. Approximately £2m was provided to support the development of the King's Meadow site in Brecon, Powys, which opened in April 2014.

**2.12** There is an ongoing commitment contained within the Programme for Government<sup>10</sup> to invest in ensuring these communities have adequate sites which are of a reasonable standard.

<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government, Managing Unauthorised Camping [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/accommodation-needs/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/accommodation-needs/?lang=en)

<sup>10</sup> [www.gov.wales/about/programmeforgov/equality/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/about/programmeforgov/equality/?lang=en)



**2.13** The Sites Capital Grant can be used for up to 100% of capital costs, to a maximum of £1.5m per site project. For example, this funding could be used for creating hardstandings, internal roadways, amenity blocks, utility supply infrastructure, play areas etc. However, the grant cannot be used to fund feasibility studies, land acquisition costs or routine maintenance. More information can be found in the Sites Capital Grant guidance notes<sup>11</sup>, which are updated on an annual basis.

**2.14** This funding is available for Local Authority permanent residential or transit Gypsy and Traveller sites. It will not fund temporary stopping places or other unsustainable sites. More information on the types of site which will be funded can be found on the Welsh Government website<sup>12</sup> Local Authorities intending to apply for Sites Capital Grant funding should consult the Welsh Government on its plans at an early stage to identify whether the proposal will be eligible.

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<sup>11</sup> Welsh Government, Sites Capital Grant guidance notes [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites-capital-grant/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites-capital-grant/?lang=en)

<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/learner-travel/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/learner-travel/?lang=en)

## Chapter 3 – Site Design

This chapter details the crucial components of a Gypsy and Traveller site which should be considered when designing a site. For more information about the management, maintenance and responsibilities relating to these sites please refer to the Welsh Government's *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance.<sup>13</sup>

### Size of site and layout

**3.1** The recommended number of pitches and layout of residential Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites should be closely linked. Smaller sites can be easier to manage and are more likely to attract compatible family units.

**3.2** New sites should comprise 20 pitches or less, other than in exceptional circumstances and where consultation and engagement have taken place with all stakeholders.

**3.3** Exceptional circumstances may include a decision to keep a large community together if households are being re-located from an unsustainable existing site or where local circumstances, including lack of suitable land or high levels of unmet pitch needs (as defined in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment) occur.

**3.4** However, a high level of unmet need in the area would not necessarily suggest sites in excess of 20 pitches should be developed. Instead, Local Authorities should explore other avenues to develop smaller sites in the first instance.

**3.5** Where larger sites are developed, Local Authorities should consider the possible impact of the site on community cohesion, access to services and environmental sustainability. It is important that the views of prospective residents and the surrounding local community are gathered during consideration of developing larger sites.

**3.6** Extensions to existing residential sites may lead to the Local Authority exceeding 20 pitches on a particular site. This may be appropriate where the Local Authority seeks to keep families together and has had regard to the views of existing residents and the surrounding community.

**3.7** The Welsh Government's Sites Capital Grant can provide up to £1.5m per site project. This level of finance is based upon the costs of developing a 12-pitch site. Local Authorities may apply for more than £1.5m for the same site in different years, if costs are associated with different phases of site development.

**3.8** A number of factors will have to be taken into account when deciding upon the physical layout of the site. These include: the number of families to be accommodated, type and location of facilities or amenities, access issues and the environment and aesthetics of the land to be developed. The ethnic, cultural or family groupings who are resident on the site may also give rise to particular design considerations. For example, where sites are to be shared by different communities a 'tree branch' design may be preferable to a 'circular' design (see **Annex 1**).

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Government, *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance, [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites/?lang=en)

**3.9** Where possible, the physical layout of the site should take into consideration the specific preferences of site residents or potential site residents. Site orientation should also be considered in order to maximise renewable energy generation and benefit energy efficiency.

**3.10** Ensuring a degree of privacy is essential for site residents. There is a balance to be struck between providing the right level of privacy while ensuring a sense of community is maintained.

**3.11** Local Authorities may wish to consider ways to retain the feeling of community, which is an important part of the culture of living on sites. The circular design may mirror the traditional camp design more closely and would suit sites of 12 pitches or less. The circular layout may be impractical for larger sites.

**3.12** It is particularly important that the site does not include any empty spaces which could be used for occupation, without the consent of the Local Authority. Landscaping techniques such as planting, walls or altering the land levels could prevent this.

**3.13** Landscaping will help to create a residential look and create an attractive environment in which to live. Where possible, the Local Authority should seek to provide natural rather than artificial solutions to creating boundaries. For example, Local Authorities should consider planting native species as screening around site perimeters instead of using high concrete walls.

**3.14** Providing trees to create a perimeter boundary around the site will keep the site size clearly defined and discourage site expansion. It will also support the screening of sites, where appropriate.

**3.15** Sites may include a range of facilities, including community buildings or play areas, which could affect the layout of the site. These are discussed further in Chapter 4 – Site Facilities.

## Site location

**3.16** Local Authorities should ensure they have analysed findings from the Caravan Count data collection and the GTAA to ascertain any location preferences identified by Gypsy and Traveller community members or any areas of frequent encampments. This analysis should support discussions around identifying sites.

**3.17** When considering locations for permanent residential sites, the preferences of community members should be included in the assessment process. However, Local Authorities are not expected to always provide sites in locations which mirror these aspirations. It is recognised other factors such as availability of land, site sustainability and achievability of planning permission will be more significant matters to consider.

**3.18** Gypsies and Travellers may have longstanding connections to a specific area of a Local Authority and may wish to be accommodated there. Local Authorities should take account of these views, especially where the desire relates to continued registration with local services with experience and expertise engaging with these communities. However, Local Authorities should also consider the long-term impact of a concentration of pitches / sites in one particular part of the authority area. It is important the provision of large or multiple sites in one small area does not create spatial segregation of these communities and reduce interaction and long-term inclusion within mainstream services.

**3.19** When considering locations for transit sites, Local Authorities should consider the history of encampments in the area. Local Authorities can review Caravan Count data regarding encampments and occupiers reasons for occupying the land to assess whether transit sites would be desirable in the local area. Such sites should also be easily accessible for large vehicles from major roads.

**3.20** Local Authorities should consider issues of sustainability when identifying suitable site locations, as outlined in the *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* circular. Sites must be able to be occupied as Gypsy and Traveller sites for at least 21 years to be eligible for Sites Capital Grant funding. The needs and preferences for services arising from community members themselves can be ascertained by analysing GTAA responses.

**3.21** If a location is considered inappropriate for conventional housing use on the grounds of health and safety, then it should also be considered inappropriate for a Gypsy and Traveller site. A Gypsy and Traveller site should not be located in areas which will have a detrimental effect on the general health and well being of the residents. The location of a site should enable, not hinder, access to services such as health and education.

**3.22** As with all developments, it is likely that Local Authorities will need to follow the 'line of best fit' when assessing potential sites. It may be that none of the potential sites can completely satisfy the guidance in this document. However, Local Authorities should first seek to identify such sites if they exist. The general themes Local Authorities should consider are:-

- **Access** – Local Authority residential sites should be located with access to public roads and footpaths leading to the site. Although access to public transport would be ideal, it may be unrealistic in close proximity to the site in rural settings;
- **Suitability of land** – A site survey should be undertaken which will identify possible problems such as drainage, risk of flooding, contaminated land etc. Local Authorities should consider whether remediation work to resolve any problems is financially viable. Mobile homes are considered to be highly vulnerable to flooding so sites should not be situated in C2 flood zones. Locations in C1 flood zones should be subject to a justification test.<sup>14</sup>
- **Local Services** – Ideally located within reasonable distance from education settings, health services and shops. If a site is located, or is going to be located, in a rural area this will not be achievable in many instances. Local Authorities must comply with the Learner Travel (Wales Measure) 2008 (as amended) and associated guidance. For further details please see the Learner Travel pages of the Welsh Government website<sup>15</sup>;
- **Environment** – sites should not be located next to hazards such as rivers or canals, unless appropriate mitigation can be installed. Locating sites next to industrial sites or major roads should be carefully considered, which may require monitoring of noise and air quality and resultant design measures to reduce the impact.
- **Utilities** – water, electricity, sewerage, drainage and refuse disposal should be provided on all sites. This may require consultation with utility providers to ensure any essential criteria for new connections is understood.

<sup>14</sup> More information in the Welsh Government's, Planning Policy Wales, *Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15*, [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan15/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan15/?lang=en)

<sup>15</sup> [www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/learner-travel/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/learner-travel/?lang=en)

- **Sustainability** – the site should be available for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site in the long-term (at least 21 years).

## Roads

**3.23** All sites need to have traffic calming measures leading into and through the site. Public roads should have clearly displayed signs requesting cars to slow down for site access. Only Local Authorities are authorised to erect signs on public highways and this may need to be made clear to residents. Internal roads should also have signs at regular intervals requesting drivers to slow down and speed-limiting ramps.

**3.24** Good quality roads which are capable of withstanding heavy vehicles should be constructed. Normally concrete or tar macadam on a suitable sub-base appropriate to soil conditions is preferable. Roads should be wide enough to allow mobile homes access on low loader vehicles and yet not encourage on road parking. Roads should be a minimum of 5.5 metres wide<sup>16</sup> and accommodate vehicles towing caravans up to 10 metres long.

**3.25** The design of roads leading to and through residential sites must allow easy access for emergency vehicles. Mobile homes must not be more than 50 metres from a road (including internal site roadways). Roads should not have overhead cables less than 4.5 metres above the ground. Vehicular access and gateways must be at least 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum clearance of 3.7 metres.

**3.26** Local Authorities should provide only one access point to the site to prevent non-residents using the site as a through road. A speed-ramp will be required near to the entrance to the public road to ensure a reduction in vehicular speed. If the site is a tree / cul-de-sac layout there should be adequate turning space to accommodate large vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances, refuse lorries and, of course, large vehicles used by the residents. The Local Authority should liaise with the local Police force to ensure the proposed design aligns with *Secured by Design* principles.<sup>17</sup>

**3.27** The site should be connected to the local community by means of a footpath, except where a rural location makes this impossible. Local Authorities should include internal pathways of at least 0.9 metres in width, especially where children may play or on a route to a play area. On sites with a tree layout, alleyways connecting cul-de-sacs should be avoided for crime prevention reasons.

**3.28** Residents will be aware to be cautious when driving on to and around the site due to children playing. However visitors to the site may not realise the potential danger and therefore warning signs should be placed at the entrance to the site and throughout warning drivers of the presence of children. On sites with a circular layout a one-way system is recommended for vehicles, which should be marked by one-way signs or painted arrows on the road. This will make traffic flow more predictable and support children's welfare.

**3.29** Installing a site entrance barrier could be considered. However, this should only be installed after consultation with site residents and after balancing the potential impact on wider community cohesion. An entrance barrier may make site residents feel safer whilst alienating the surrounding community. Local Authorities should consider the need for emergency services to access the site if a barrier is proposed, as set out in Welsh Government Technical Advice Note 12.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Department for Transport, *Manual for Streets*

<sup>17</sup> ACPO, *Secured by Design: New Homes 2014*

<sup>18</sup> [www.gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan12/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans/tan12/?lang=en)

## Boundaries

**3.30** Care should be taken to integrate the boundary treatment of the site into the local environment. The aim should be to achieve a balance between securing the boundaries and maintaining a pleasant and more open environment on site.

**3.31** The health and safety of children should be a priority when considering boundary arrangements. Site boundaries should be constructed in a way which will minimise the risks to children playing. There should be a 3 metre gap within the inside of all site boundaries as a fire prevention measure.<sup>19</sup>

**3.32** The Local Authority must consult the local Fire and Rescue Authority regarding the planned measures to prevent and detect fire on the proposed site and the planned means to fight the fire before providing a site.<sup>20</sup>

**3.33** It is important to differentiate between public and private spaces on the site so it is very obvious where pitch boundaries are. The maintenance responsibilities of site owners and residents differ in relation to pitches and communal areas so the boundaries need to be clearly defined.

**3.34** Poorly defined boundaries can lead to unauthorised site expansion. Different materials can be used to prevent this, such as planting or low walls. Where natural features exist it would be helpful to integrate these into the design of the site. The boundaries between pitches also act as a fire break so grass embankments, raised plant beds or low walls, rather than wooden fences, should be considered.

**3.35** Each pitch should have a secure lockable gate. This will enable pitch residents to secure their own pitches. The gates should be of a robust and pleasant design and not so imposing they act as a barrier screening off pitches completely. It is recommended gates are designed to prevent most pets or small children escaping from the pitch. Gates should be at least 3.1 metres wide.

## Pitch

**3.36** The layout of the pitch will depend on the overall site design. However an important element in the design and size of pitches is the intended capacity. Gypsies and Travellers traditionally have larger families than the settled community and so there is likely to be more of a demand for larger family sized pitches. In addition to this they will need space for vehicles capable of towing caravans and also large vehicles used for employment. All of these taken together will place a particular requirement for large well designed pitches.

**3.37** As a minimum, each pitch should be capable of accommodating an amenity block, a mobile home, touring caravan and parking for two vehicles. Section 60 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act, defines 'mobile home' as measuring up to 20 metres in length and 6.8 metres in width. However, Local Authorities should consider consulting the proposed occupiers of the site to determine whether they intend to occupy smaller static caravans or mobile homes which meet these maximum dimensions.

**3.38** Parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.4 x 4.8 metres each. The size of amenity blocks is discussed below.

<sup>19</sup> Welsh Government, *Model standards for Caravan Sites in Wales* [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en)

<sup>20</sup> Section 56(4), Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013

**3.39** It is important to ensure that the orientation of the pitch allows for a degree of privacy for individual residents without inhibiting a sense of community. Providing clear pitch boundaries which are not too high will support this. Preventing footpaths directly behind the pitch will also support household privacy and reduce the potential for criminality.

**3.40** Pitches should provide:-

- an amenity block connected to water supply, electricity and other services/facilities;
- a hard surfaced level area with drainage falls;
- an easily cleaned and maintained surface;
- a suitable container for domestic refuse;
- electricity hook-up points to allow for the different positioning of mobile homes within the pitch;
- a way of securing mobile homes to the pitch during high winds, such as steel rings laid in concrete;
- hook up to drains and sewerage systems; and
- space for drying clothes.

## Hardstanding

**3.41** Each pitch should have hardstanding which is constructed of hard wearing material, covering the entire area to be occupied by mobile homes and other vehicles. The hard standing should be constructed to industry code of practice.<sup>21</sup> Local Authorities will be responsible for repairing the hardstanding if it becomes damaged in future so it is important this is considered. Where possible, some soft landscaping is also recommended for each pitch.

## Amenity block

**3.42** Each pitch must have an amenity block which must be constructed or refurbished to meet the requirements of the current Building Regulations, the Institution of Electrical Engineers regulations, and the requirements of the relevant water company. Detached or semi-detached designs should be appropriate. Having a residential appearance will enhance the look of the pitch and the general aesthetic of the site.

**3.43** Amenity blocks should include a separate WC with a sink unit for hand washing which is accessible through a lobbied room. Baths with overhead showers are recommended. The block should also include a store room, a kitchen and food preparation area and a small dining area for the family. The diagram at Annex 2 provides an example illustration of how this could be designed. The minimum recommended floor space of an amenity block is 23m<sup>2</sup>.

**3.44** Local Authorities should consult with the prospective occupiers of the site to determine the finer details of amenity block plans. Residents may prefer showers to baths, prefer to have slightly differently sized rooms or have particular needs which require adaptations.

<sup>21</sup> Currently, National Park Homes Council and British Holiday and Home Parks Association standard:

"A hard core base to a minimum depth of 150 mm, well consolidated and topped with 100 mm of concrete (mix as BS8500-2:2006) shall be used. The finished raft must be generally level with due allowance for surface drainage. Where the ground conditions so require, thickening or the introduction of reinforcement of the raft may be necessary."

**3.45** The construction and layout of the amenity block should take into account that some users may have special requirements, for example disabled users and the elderly can find steps hard to manage if using a walking aid or wheelchair. All new blocks should have access ramps rather than steps (or both). Further adaptations may be required to amenity blocks which will be allocated to disabled residents. Amenity blocks should be designed in such a way that will allow for easy adaptations to be made in the future to accommodate disabled and or elderly residents. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that it complies with the Equality Act 2010 when designing amenity blocks.

**3.46** Local Authorities should consider replacing steps with small ramps on existing sites. Internal walls in bathrooms and WCs should be capable of holding support aids. Basic aids can be fitted to allow flexibility of use. Local Authorities may wish to utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant<sup>22</sup> to fund required adaptations.

**3.47** To accommodate wheelchairs, prams and walking frames, main entrances, doorways and passageways should have a minimum width of 0.8 metres, 0.75 metres and 0.9 metres respectively.

**3.48** Blocks should have adequate water supply including hot water which can be thermostatically controlled. Bathrooms should be well screened and walls should be tiled where there are showers or baths. Plumbing for washing machine/dryer should be installed, as should electrical points for a cooker/washing machine/drier. Electrical sockets should be provided throughout the block. The block should be connected to a sewer or other suitable drainage disposal system.

**3.49** The food preparation / cooking area should have adequate storage space for food stuffs and other household items. A sink and drainer should also be fitted. There should be room for additional appliances such as microwaves. The internal design should allow as much natural light in as possible. It is likely the family will spend a considerable amount of time in the dining area. The store room should be lockable to ensure cleaning products or other hazards can be kept out of reach of children.

**3.50** Local Authorities should explore cost effective energy efficiency systems for amenity blocks. Solar panels could be provided on amenity blocks to provide photo-voltaic heating. Environmentally-friendly waste systems and rainwater harvesting could also be pursued. To ensure the blocks are energy efficient, water tanks and pipes should be insulated to keep heat and prevent frost damage. Each room should have a heating system which provides temperature control and be economical.

**3.51** All light fittings should be low energy and heating and ventilation systems should be appropriate. All precautions should be taken to ensure electrical sockets and other fittings and fixtures are child proofed, such as rounded work surfaces. All fixtures and fittings should be robust, durable and hardwearing but domestic in nature. The intention should be to create a safe but comfortable environment. Local Authorities should also consider compliance with Secured by Design principles when designing new amenity blocks.

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<sup>22</sup> [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/grants/dfgs/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/grants/dfgs/?lang=en)



## Spacing of Caravans and Trailers

**3.52** In line with the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales<sup>23</sup>, a gap of 3 metres should be observed between a mobile home and any pitch boundary. The measurement should be taken from the mobile home wall. Each individual mobile home should be spaced at a distance of no less than 6 metres from any other mobile home. This is because mobile homes are highly flammable and helps to ensure privacy from neighbouring households.

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<sup>23</sup> Welsh Government, Model standards for Caravan Sites in Wales [www.gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en)

## Chapter 4 – Site Facilities

This chapter outlines various facilities which should be factored into the design of a Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller site. For further information on the management, maintenance and responsibilities relating to these facilities please refer to the Welsh Government's *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance.<sup>24</sup>

### Children's play area

**4.1** Due to limited indoor space, the outdoor environment is particularly important to Gypsy and Traveller children. An area for children and young people to play and gather is important, especially if there is not suitable provision within walking distance on a safe route. Each site needs to be considered individually and in the context of local conditions; existing play area provision in the area and the size of the site should be taken into account. Ideally, children living on site will be able to safely access nearby existing play areas utilised by the wider community. However, where this isn't possible sites should include designated play areas.

**4.2** Where site layout allows, communal play areas should be positioned to enable parents to supervise their children. This will help to reassure parents of the whereabouts and safety of children. The area allocated for children's play must take into account the number of children it has to accommodate. Fields in Trust have recommended a minimum standard for outdoor playing spaces via their 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' guidance. The document aims to help land use planners ensure a sufficient level of open space to enable residents of all ages to participate in sports and games with an emphasis on access for children to play grounds and other play space.

**4.3** Play areas should be located away from vehicular traffic and should be inaccessible to vehicles. In addition they should be fenced, walled or grassed embankments and clearly delineated as a play area. Play areas should be well lit and designated as dog free areas. The designated play area should be flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting. Providing features such as shrubs or sand will allow children to manipulate the play space and promote good quality play.

**4.4** A youth shelter or other form of seating should be included, which can promote socialising, maximise the use of the play area and have the additional use as a bus shelter if school transport collects from the site. The provision of play equipment should be carefully thought out and consultation with children is recommended. Play areas can include open spaces and fixed apparatus. It is very important to ensure any designated play space is clearly differentiated from residential or working space and it should be maintained by the Local Authority to ensure it is not used for other purposes.

**4.5** Local Authorities need to undertake Play Sufficiency Assessments as required by the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010<sup>25</sup>. These assessments relate to the sufficiency of the play opportunities in each Local Authority area and must include an action plan for improving (or maintaining) the opportunities for children to play. Local Authorities are required to report on opportunities for play on their Gypsy and Traveller sites.

<sup>24</sup> Welsh Government, *Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* guidance, [www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites/?lang=en](http://www.gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/sites/?lang=en)

<sup>25</sup> Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

**4.6** On smaller sites or where physical restrictions will not allow for a play area, existing local provision should be utilised to encourage integration and alleviate community segregation. However, in these circumstances Local Authorities should ensure there are safe walking routes to play areas in the local area.

**4.7** Play Wales and Save the Children's Travelling Ahead project have created a good practice guide to support Local Authorities to develop play spaces on their Gypsy and Traveller sites.<sup>26</sup>

### Community facilities

**4.8** On larger sites (sites with more than 20 pitches) a communal building is likely to be necessary and should be discussed with site residents. The community building could be used for outreach and support work, youth clubs, playgroups, quiet space for children doing homework, adult education, early years' sessions or health clinics.

**4.9** Running costs for such a facility could potentially be met through charging statutory and voluntary organisations for use of the facilities or through local action by the residents in the same way many village halls are administered as Trusts. It may also be possible to meet the running costs through pitch fees, however this is subject to the agreement of the residents, as required under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

**4.10** On smaller sites or where physical restrictions prohibit the installation of a community facility, nearby community facilities should be used. This could encourage community relations with the settled community. As mentioned above, Local Authorities should consider ways to ensure safe access routes from the site to the community facility.

**4.11** Where a permanent community facility is not feasible, consideration could be given to the provision of a mobile unit which could be used for early years' engagement purposes. The advantage of such a unit is it can be moved from one location to another. A suitable and safe location should be identified for the mobile unit. Where a mobile unit is not feasible, the site manager should facilitate discussions between residents and service providers to agree a mutually convenient location where sessions may be held.

### Site manager / warden facility

**4.12** A site office is important, particularly on larger sites. The office should be located close to the entrance of the site and support private consultations with visiting professionals. It may be appropriate to provide communal facilities and the site office within the same building, though the confidentiality of records must be ensured.

**4.13** If a site manager / warden is provided with their own pitch on site this should be located in a position to enable good management of the site. Managers / wardens who also live on the site should be provided with a separate site office.

### Public lighting

**4.14** Public lighting should be adequate for safety and security purposes on site, allowing residents to move about the site at night, both as pedestrians and as drivers. The location of street lighting should not cause light pollution by shining directly into caravans or amenity buildings but have regard to the density and overall layout of the site. Play areas for children should receive special attention in terms of appropriate lighting.

<sup>26</sup> Play Wales / Save the Children, 'Good Practice Guide: Play and early years – developing and managing Gypsy and Traveller sites', [www.playwales.org.uk/eng/gypsyandtraveller](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/gypsyandtraveller)

## Working space

**4.15** Residential pitches should be for residential purposes only and potentially hazardous activity on pitches should be discouraged. Such activities on sites not designated for work purposes can lead to health and safety, pollution and environmental concerns.

**4.16** Local Authorities may wish to consider the provision of designated 'working space' in a segregated part of the site or on adjacent land, where there is a demonstrable reason why 'working space' needs to be provided. For example, Showpeople sites are likely to require separate facilities for the storage and maintenance of fairground rides. An example site layout is included in Annex 1.

**4.17** Local Authorities have the power to provide 'working space' on Gypsy and Traveller sites, under section 56(2) (c) of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. However, any such areas should be clearly delineated to ensure residential areas are kept separate from areas used for work or storage.

**4.18** Individuals may require working space however the Local Authority may not be convinced that their needs require specific facilities to be provided. Where this is the case community members should be encouraged to pursue private leasing agreements for nearby space or facilities. Local Authorities with relevant commercial land for rent make these lists available to such residents.

**4.19** Residents should not be prevented from undertaking non-hazardous home working, such as teleworking. Gypsies and Travellers are more likely to be self-employed and may need to park commercial vehicles on their pitches.

## Artistic features

**4.20** Including artistic features on site could be an ideal opportunity for existing residents or potential residents to celebrate Gypsy and Traveller culture and identity. If this is to be considered, consultation with existing or potential residents should take place at an early stage. It is important any feature is agreed in partnership with residents. This would be a good opportunity to get Gypsy and Traveller children involved in the design and development of artistic features on site, particularly if there is a children's play area.

## Water supply

**4.21** Each pitch must have a mains water supply suitable for drinking and its supply should be sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of residents. The water supply must comply with current legislation and British standards.

**4.22** Water supplies must feed directly into individual amenity blocks. Individual meters should be installed for each pitch to ensure billing can relate directly to actual usage. The relevant water company may allow individual connections for each new pitch, subject to meeting the water company's criteria. Outside taps and hook up points for caravans should be provided on each pitch with internal isolation valves and suitable backflow protection for security of the water supply, subject to the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

**4.23** To ensure the water supply can meet required quality standards, the Local Authority should consult directly with the relevant water company regarding the proposed site design. The relevant water company may provide advice to ensure appropriate infrastructure can be installed.

**4.24** Communal taps should be avoided to ensure appropriate billing for water usage can be made. If communal taps are installed, the responsibility for this supply will rest with the Local Authority.

## Drainage and Sewerage

**4.25** It is essential that surface water drainage is provided. The use of sustainable drainage (SuDS) should always be considered for the management of surface water. The SuDS approach aims to manage surface water as close to source as possible using a wide range of techniques, including rainwater harvesting and infiltration where appropriate. These techniques should reduce water consumption and customer bills. All provision must comply with current legislation, regulations and British standards and should take account of the Welsh Government Interim Standards for Sustainable Drainage<sup>27</sup>. Surface water management must be given early consideration in the site design.

**4.26** Where possible, connection to a public sewer should be made for foul drainage. The relevant water company must be consulted regarding construction standards and sewer capacity. A connection to a public sewer will not always be possible. In such circumstances, provision should be made for discharge to a properly constructed and maintained sewage treatment facility, either a sewage treatment plant or a septic tank. Provision must comply with current legislation, regulations and British standards and a permit will be required for the discharge from Natural Resources Wales. Sealed cess-pits or cess pools are not appropriate.

## Gas Supply

**4.27** All provision and services of gas must comply with statutory requirements, relevant standards and codes of practice. All storage facilities provided for Liquid Propane Gas cylinders must meet health and safety regulations. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and site managers to seek guidance from local environmental health services in relation to gas supply and the maintenance and inspection of services and facilities.

## Post boxes

**4.28** Each residential pitch should have a secure post box accessed by a key held by the pitch resident. It is not appropriate to require residents to collect their post from a site office except where the pitch resident is not home and there is a delivery of a large parcel or package which cannot be delivered through the post box.

**4.29** Where delivery to individual pitches is not possible, a 'pigeon hole' system near the entrance to the site or on the site office wall should be considered. This must have lockable individual boxes for each pitch.

## Grazing land

**4.30** Local Authorities may consider providing grazing land adjacent to sites, where appropriate. Horse ownership is an important part of Romani Gypsy and Irish Traveller culture. Where Local Authorities consider it appropriate to provide grazing land, they could charge residents who use the land.

<sup>27</sup> Or subsequent Welsh Government standards.

## Communications

**4.31** Local Authorities should explore the possibility of ensuring sites include phone lines. Developing or refurbishing sites could provide an opportunity to ensure the necessary communications infrastructure is installed to enable residents to make their own arrangements for landlines or internet access.

## Chapter 5 – Safe Sites

### Health and Safety

**5.1** It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and site manager to ensure a risk assessment is regularly undertaken, including a specific fire risk assessment. All health and safety equipment provided by the Local Authority must conform to British/European standards and be regularly inspected by a competent person. Site managers must keep records of all testing undertaken and inspections should be completed yearly. Site managers must ensure that every care is taken to protect equipment from the elements if stored outside, for example via suitable casing.

**5.2** All buildings provided on the site by the Local Authority must be provided to mobility standards and where applicable comply with the requirements of Part M (Access to and Use of Buildings) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 and associated relevant legislation. Developers must also have regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### Designing out crime

**5.3** It is important that residents feel safe and secure on site without feeling isolated or imprisoned. Any new site design should aim to limit the potential for crime. Local Authorities should consult Police 'Designing Out Crime Officers' to ensure security and crime issues are addressed from the outset.

**5.4** Site designs should aim to conform to *Secured by Design* principles<sup>28</sup> to reduce the likelihood of crime. Areas without a clearly defined use are avoided which will reduce acts of vandalism, fly tipping and unauthorised encampments.

### Fire Safety

**5.5** Mobile homes should be situated in a way which will reduce the risk of fire spreading between buildings and structures on the pitch. The minimum distance between caravans should be 6 metres. Pitches should be no more than 30 metres from a fire point.<sup>29</sup> Fire points must be housed in a weather proof structure, easily accessible and clearly marked 'Fire Point'. A clear notice should be displayed to indicate what action is to be taken in the event of a fire, including details of the assembly point.

**5.6** Standpipes or hydrants must be provided on each site as determined by the risk assessment and in consultation with the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority. All equipment must conform to relevant British/European standards.

**5.7** Each fire point must have a method of raising the alarm in the event of a fire. This must be appropriate to the size and layout of the site and informed by consultation with the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority.

<sup>28</sup> ACPO, *Secured by Design: New Homes 2014*

<sup>29</sup> Welsh Government, *Model standards for Caravan Sites in Wales* [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/model-standards-2008-for-caravan-sites-in-Wales/?lang=en)

**5.8** Hydrants must be positioned so no caravan is more than 100m from a hydrant. Hydrants must conform to British Standard 750. It is important to ensure hydrants and other water supplies are easily accessible and they are not obstructed or obscured. Hose reels could be considered, however, residents must be made aware they should not delay contacting the fire service by trying to put the fire out themselves. Any hoses provided should be protected from the elements and care taken to prevent them from being misused.

**5.9** Notices outlining what action should be taken in the event of a fire etc. should be placed in prominent locations throughout the site. Where possible pictograms should be used to explain what should be done and what arrangements are in place in the event of a fire.

**5.10** Each Local Authority site should have protocols in place which are clearly laid out in a site management plan. Residents need to be made aware they have a responsibility to prevent fire and it is their responsibility to maintain fire extinguishers owned by them. All alarm and fire fighting equipment provided by the Local Authority must be installed, tested and maintained in working order by a competent person. All equipment susceptible to frost must be suitably protected.

**5.11** The requirements of the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority should be taken into account when storing Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) and other flammable materials on the site. The storage of these materials should meet statutory requirements. Every care should be taken to ensure these materials are stored safely and measures are in place to prevent misuse.

**5.12** Access to and circulation around the site should be such as to allow easy access for Fire and Rescue services and ambulances.

**5.13** The Fire safety standards which apply in England and Wales are contained in The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Relevant provisions of the Order apply to all amenity blocks and communal areas of Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites. However, this does not include the mobile homes themselves, as these are domestic premises. Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring they comply with the fire safety legislation in force at any given time.

**5.14** If the Local Authority wishes to put alternative fire prevention, detection and fighting measures in place they should consult the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority. For more detailed guidance refer to the *Model Standards for Caravan Sites in Wales*.



## Chapter 6 – Transit sites

### Introduction and Context

**6.1** The Welsh Government's Sites Capital Grant can be used to fund either residential sites, as referred to above, or transit sites. The Sites Capital Grant seeks to provide funding to secure long term mobile home accommodation and to facilitate the traditional Gypsy and Traveller way of life.

**6.2** Wales currently experiences a significant shortfall in residential pitches and the increasing loss of legal transit sites or 'stopping places' also threatens the continuation of important aspects of cultural identity for these communities.

**6.3** Therefore, the Welsh Government has decided to consider transit sites for funding to develop a Wales-wide network of transit sites in the mid-term. Providing such sites, coupled with effective management of them, should reduce the incidence of unauthorised encampments in unsuitable locations. Transit sites are appropriate where a Local Authority experiences frequent encampments, especially from March until October.

**6.4** The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty upon Local Authorities to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites to meet the pitch needs identified through Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments<sup>30</sup>. This includes both residential sites and transit sites.

**6.5** Gypsy and Traveller sites should not consist of shared residential and transit functions, except where only one or two transit pitches exist on a site to facilitate family members visiting permanent residents of the site. Previous examples of shared sites have created extremely challenging management issues and problems for permanent residents of the site.

**6.6** This chapter will outline any differences which might need to be considered when designing transit sites, rather than residential sites. Standards on transit sites should mirror those expected on residential sites, unless otherwise stated below.

### Site location

**6.7** When considering locations for transit sites, Local Authorities will need to consider the most practical place for those who only intend staying in the area for a maximum of three months (but frequently less than this).

**6.8** The Caravan Count and data from the GTAA should provide Local Authorities with evidence of recent unauthorised encampments in the area and some reasons for them. Local Authorities should analyse this data to find the most preferable site for community members. However, it should be noted that encampment may occur in available, rather than ideal, locations.

**6.9** It is not recommended transit sites are located adjacent to residential sites.

**6.10** Transit sites are likely to need to be situated closer to major transport links to facilitate travelling. However, some areas with a high number of encampments may need to consider other issues such as proximity to cultural events and religious sites.

**6.11** Proximity to ferry ports may also be an important consideration when planning transit site locations.

<sup>30</sup> Duty to meet identified needs under section 103 is expected to be commenced in March 2016

## Layout and access

**6.12** Local Authorities should consider the likely numbers of caravans which may occupy the site together. The Caravan Count may provide useful data to ascertain the average number of caravans on unauthorised encampments in the area. The size of transit sites should balance the need to keep travelling families together on the site whilst ensuring effective management and keeping site development and maintenance costs down.

**6.13** The Welsh Government believes transit sites should provide up to 10 pitches, enabling two touring caravans to occupy each pitch. Sites larger than this could give rise to management issues. However, Local Authorities should consider their local circumstances when considering the site size.

**6.14** Pitch sizes may be smaller to reflect the fact static mobile homes will not be occupying pitches. Nevertheless, pitches should accommodate two touring caravans and two parking spaces.

**6.15** Parking provision should accommodate at least two vehicles per pitch to a minimum size of 2.4m x 4.8 metres per space.

**6.16** Spacing between pitches and caravans should be the same as for permanent sites as the fire risks are not reduced on this type of site. A space of 3 metres from the pitch boundary and 6 metres between mobile homes should be observed.

**6.17** Instead of individual amenity blocks on each pitch, sites should include shared amenities featuring toilets, washbasins and shower facilities with hot and cold water supply. At least one male and one female amenity block are required.

**6.18** All transit sites should include a height-restriction barrier to prevent unauthorised access to the transit site. Only the site manager should have access to the key to open the height restriction barrier. Local Authorities should consult with the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority to ensure fire engines can access the site or the design of the sites allows fire fighting from the entrance to the site.

**6.19** Although the construction of the hardstanding itself should meet the same standard as on residential pitches, it may be appropriate to make use of alternative surfaces, such as grass-crete or other materials which can help deliver sustainable drainage instead of tarmac in some areas.

**6.20** The layout of transit sites will differ from residential sites due to the lack of individual amenity blocks and shared facilities instead, the provision of separate working space and the installation of an entrance barrier. Local Authorities may also consider the need for an on-site warden to restrict unauthorised access. If this is the case, a permanent pitch and site office will need to be included near the entrance to the site.

## Site Facilities

**6.21** It is recommended Local Authorities provide separate parts of the site or adjacent working space facilities to ensure site occupiers are able to travel for economic purposes. Unlike residential site residents, the occupiers of transit sites are unlikely to be able to make alternative arrangements. Travelling for work is an important part of Gypsy and Traveller culture and provision of working space should support this. However, as with residential sites, potentially hazardous activities should not be permitted on pitches themselves.

**6.22** Unlike residential sites, utility meters cannot be installed for each pitch as only shared amenity blocks will be provided. Nevertheless, Local Authorities will need to apportion utility bills fairly.

**6.23** Postal services are not required on transit sites due to the limited time occupiers will spend on site and the likely undeliverable mail which will continue to be delivered to the site once the occupiers have left.

## Chapter 7 – Temporary Stopping Places

### Introduction and Context

**7.1** The Welsh Government does not provide funding for temporary stopping places as they are unsustainable short-term sites in response to a pressing need to provide accommodation. Temporary stopping places should not be considered as a long-term alternative to residential or transit sites. Appropriate temporary stopping places could include at fairs or cultural events, such as the Royal Welsh Show, or infrequent encampments in the area. If encampments are rare within the area, temporary stopping places may be a more economically viable solution to relocate inappropriate encampments.

### Site location

**7.2** The nature of these sites is to provide an alternative location for the re-location of inappropriate encampments. Therefore, temporary stopping places need to be pro-actively identified before encampments occur.

**7.3** The location of a temporary stopping place should be safe and have good access to road networks. The intention should be to minimise disruption to surrounding communities. When considering locations careful consideration should be given to the needs and welfare of children.

### Layout and access

**7.4** Site capacity must be given careful consideration. Factors to take into consideration include the number of previous and current unauthorised encampments in the area and the frequency of cultural events, which may give rise to the need for temporary stopping places.

**7.5** Access roads leading to and on site should be robust enough to accommodate heavy vehicles. A barrier around the site must be built which will discourage unauthorised expansion of the site. It is recommended the site is gated or includes an entrance barrier.

**7.6** As these sites may lay dormant for long periods, a material such as grass-crete could be used to ensure rainwater can drain naturally whilst providing a surface which can be driven on when occupied.

**7.7** At all times the emergency services should be able to enter the site without hindrance. At all times a safe distance between trailers and caravans must be maintained and also to other combustible materials. The advice of the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority must be sought when planning for temporary stopping places. It is recommended the local Police force should also be consulted on design proposals, where possible and appropriate. The Local Authority should undertake risk assessments at regular intervals during occupation of the site.

## Site facilities

**7.8** As a minimum, cold water supply should be provided for the use of site residents.

**7.9** Portable toilets should be provided, including consideration of separate provision for men and women. The recommended ratio is one portable toilet for every four households on site. The provision of portable showers is also recommended. A sewerage disposal point should be provided.

**7.10** Refuse collection facilities should also be provided on temporary stopping places.

**7.11** Providing these services should help to reduce clean-up costs once the site is vacated. Charges could be incurred for services provided on site.

**7.12** If Local Authorities intend to use the temporary stopping places to relocate unsuitable encampments, the services above should be provided on site to ensure pitches are considered to be suitable.

## Chapter 8 – Consultation with stakeholders

### When to consult

**8.1** Local Authorities should consult with Gypsies and Travellers and relevant organisations from the initiation of a proposal through to the completion stage, where possible. Local Authorities should take into consideration the expectations and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers, with reference to the need to provide for the traditional way of life of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. If Local Authorities are proposing improvements to existing authorised sites, Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to consult directly with residents of the site by virtue of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013<sup>31</sup>.

**8.2** The degree of sensitivity which often surrounds Gypsy and Traveller issues will make it very important to achieve buy-in to the refurbishment of an existing site or the provision of a new site, from local politicians and the settled community. If the process is not seen as legitimate, it will be much harder to get support for the development of a site.

**8.3** It is strongly recommended Gypsies and Travellers are included in design meetings with architects / developers as this will help to ensure costly design errors are not made and challenges can be expressed in relation to professional perceptions of what will work on site.

**8.4** Local Authorities should inform representatives of the local community about their proposal at an early stage in the process. Local Authorities should consider hosting local information days in their area to provide information stands and make planning, housing and equality officers available to discuss concerns with local residents. An informal approach, allowing residents to raise their thoughts in a conversational manner is likely to be more productive than a public meeting style approach.

**8.5** Where a site is intended for use by a mix of Gypsy and Traveller communities (for example, Romani and Irish Traveller) it will be appropriate for the views of each of the different communities to be considered.

**8.6** The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment should inform this process. However, it should not be a substitute for engaging and consulting with the community on site design and or refurbishment.

**8.7** Local Authorities are also advised to consult with the Welsh Government Inclusion team at an early stage if they intend to apply for Sites Capital Grant funding. This will ensure that site proposals will meet eligibility criteria.

### Who to consult?

**8.8** It is important that those who may be affected by Gypsy and Traveller sites are properly consulted on any proposal. Existing residents have to be consulted on proposals for site refurbishment. It is recommended potential residents are consulted on proposals for new site design. Consultation may involve some or all of the following, depending on the scale and type of work:-

- the Gypsy and Traveller community and representative groups;
- local residents and businesses;

<sup>31</sup> Paragraph 22(1)(e) of Schedule 2 Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

- education, health, social services departments and transport authorities;
- relevant local agencies such as police or fire services;
- neighbouring authorities within the expected catchment area;
- planners;
- site managers and maintenance officers; and
- Local Health Board.

## Methods of consultation with Gypsy and Traveller Communities

**8.9** To develop a consultation methodology it is important to liaise with key individuals / groups who have experience of working with Gypsies and Travellers, but who are also trusted and respected by the community. The views of these groups should be sought to inform the development of a consultation approach.

**8.10** The type and extent of consultation will vary depending on the scale of the scheme and local circumstances, but should be sufficient to explain the objectives and scope of the proposed work. If there is no prior history of engaging and consulting with the community, the Local Authority should look to other Local Authorities or organisations which have an existing good relationship and history with the community and seek their advice and assistance. Traveller Education Services and health workers or advocates may have a good relationship with the community and as such they are ideally placed to facilitate introductions and help with the consultation exercise. Existing site managers and liaison officers can also facilitate this process, particularly if relationships are good. In some instances this might not be possible as they have an enforcement role which can bring them into conflict with residents and therefore might deter some members of the community to participate in the exercise.

**8.11** Ideally, consultation should be held in familiar and informal surroundings to ensure a greater degree of participation by the community. Consider using the offices of a local organisation with a good relationship with the community.

**8.12** Consultation must not solely rely on written methods of communication as there are low levels of literacy among some sections of the community. It is strongly recommended face to face consultation with the community is employed. This will enable the community to influence decisions as opposed to just commenting on them. Be careful about engaging with just a small number of people from the community to represent the views of the larger group. It is likely the perspectives of some members will not be highlighted, such as children and young people, older members of the community and disabled people.

**8.13** Local Authorities should take into careful consideration the timings of the consultations. Arranging consultations during the working day may not achieve a gender balance. However, early evening sessions do not necessarily improve participation. It is best to consult members of the community about the best time to call and arrange sessions appropriately. Hosting events on site will enable better participation by older and disabled people, as well as women, children and young people.

**8.14** Site managers should ensure children and young people are given opportunities to use their right to be heard. This right is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and young people will often have a substantially different view from their parents but may be as significantly affected by changes. Most consultation

processes affecting the site as a whole will also affect children and young people living on site in some way and their views should be sought where this is the case. When consulting with young people it is recommended site managers utilise the National Standards for Children and Young People's Participation.

**8.15** To ensure the continued credibility of the exercise, feedback on the results of the consultation must be provided to the community. It is recognised the needs and demands of those who participated cannot always be met. This must be explained to the community in clear terms and reasons for adopting a different approach should be given and explained.





## Shirenewton site, Cardiff - an example of the 'tree branch' layout

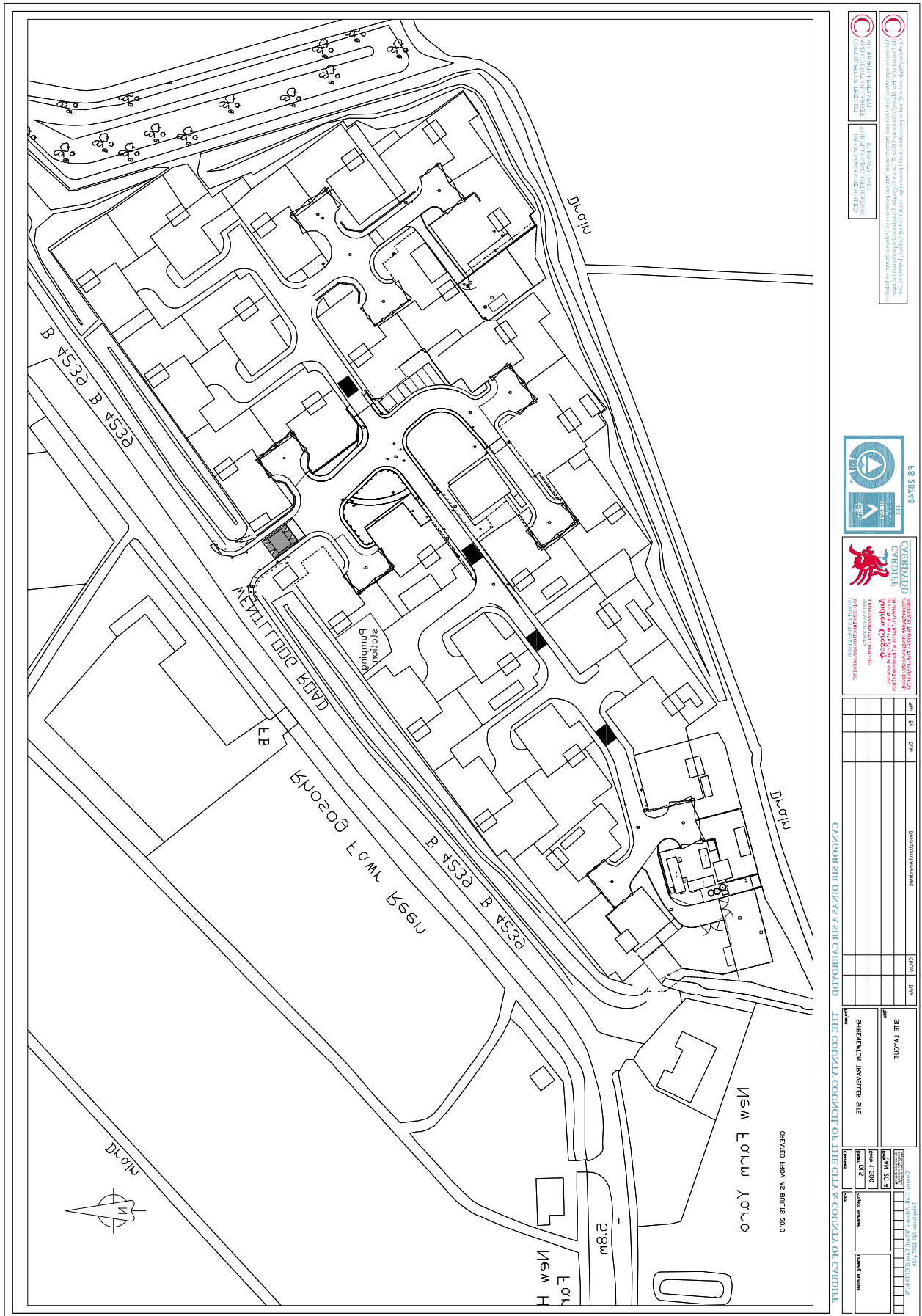


Photo Credit: Cardiff County Council

## Travelling Showpeople example layouts

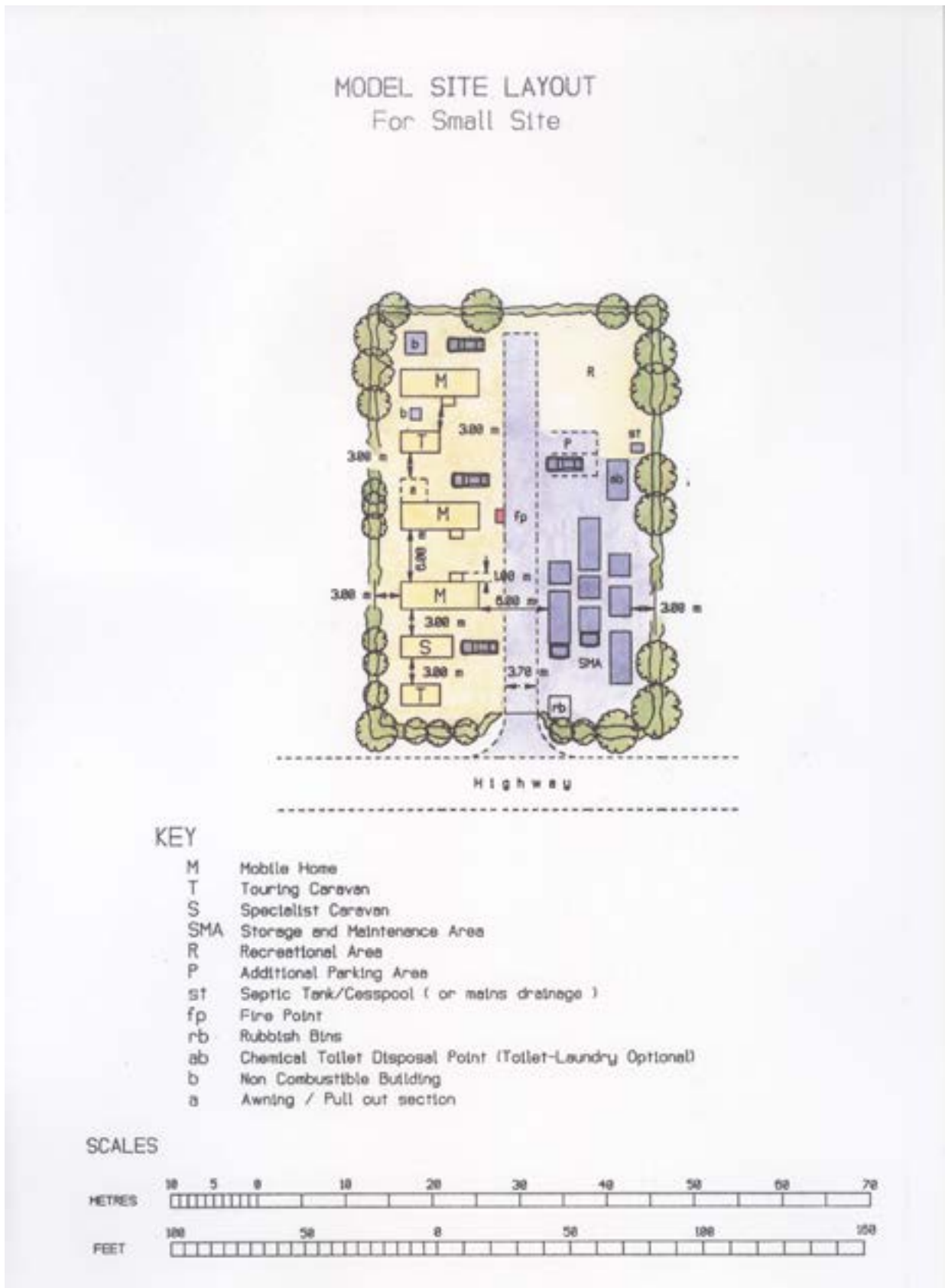


Photo Credit: The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

## Travelling Showpeople example layouts

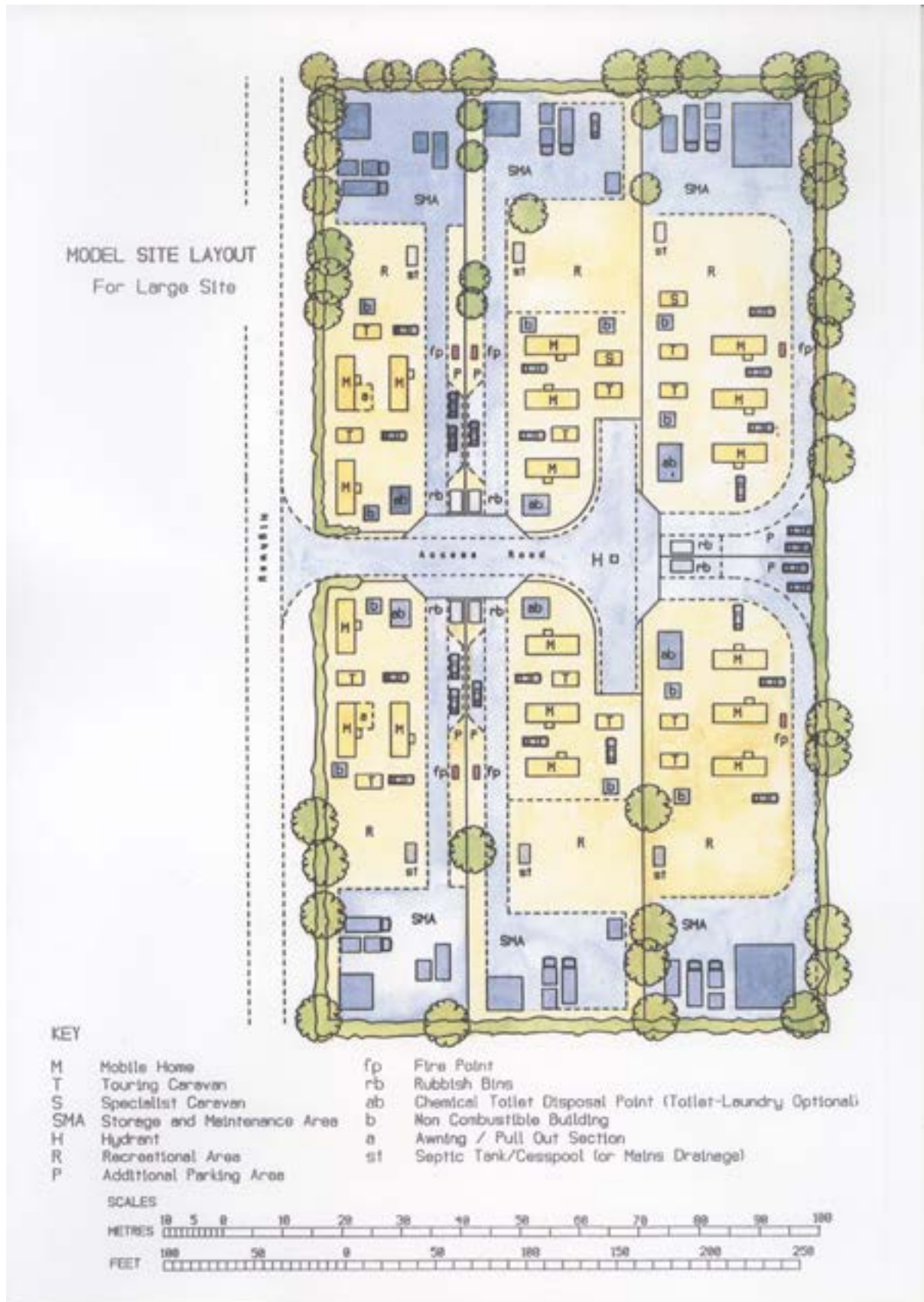


Photo Credit: The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

# Annex 2: Example of amenity block layout

## King's Meadow site amenity block example



Photo Credit: Powys County Council and Capita Symonds