Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Welsh Assembly Government is developing a policy framework that will have important implications for provisions of services to Gypsies and Travellers.

The objective of the Welsh Assembly Government is to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are assessed, planned and implemented in a more strategic way. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring an approach which delivers fairer outcomes in terms of the services and support available for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. That is; an approach which recognises cultural difference and the issues which have often led to the social exclusion of this group; which recognises the tensions which often exists between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community; and which attempts to address these by the promotion of inclusive service responses.

In December 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned Pat Niner of the University of Birmingham to establish the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. The purpose of the study was to inform the development of the Welsh Assembly Government’s policy on Gypsies and Travellers by providing information on the number, location and condition of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wales.

In summer 2006 The Welsh Assembly Government published the research undertaken by Pat Niner. The Accommodation needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales is the first report of its kind in Wales and gives an indication of the obstacles to new site provision, the contribution of the planning system to the promotion of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and good practice in site provision.

Recommendation 8 of the report states “The Welsh Assembly Government should seek to develop in conjunction with local authorities and Gypsy-Travellers – a ‘decent site standard’ which would incorporate location and environment as well as site design, facilities and infrastructure, and amenity unit size, design and facilities. Wherever possible, improvements of existing sites should aim to meet this standard; the standard will also be applied to new site proposals. The standard should reflect the fact that Gypsy-Traveller sites are a species of housing and should thus conform to expectations for residential development”. This Good Practice Guide in Site Design and the Good Practice Guide in Site Management (together referred to as ‘the Good Practice Guides’) have been developed in response to the above recommendation.

The Gypsy Traveller population in Wales is ethnically diverse, including Welsh and English Gypsies, Scottish and Irish Travellers; we are also seeing ‘New Travellers’ especially in parts of Pembrokeshire, Powys and rural North Wales. Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most marginalised groups in society and as a result are one of the most socially excluded groups in Britain. As a result of this they have greater probability of ill health and poor educational attainment (by settled community measures). According to Niner, improved accommodation and particularly avoiding
frequent forced movement through eviction is seen as pivotal to tackle social exclusion.

Gypsies and Travellers have very distinct demographic and economic characteristics. Through research such as the Niner Report and the Bi Annual Caravan Count and during consultation with the Gypsy Traveller community, the Welsh Assembly Government are seeing a trend where Gypsies and Travellers are becoming more ‘settled’ on permanent sites or in housing. Travelling has become more difficult due to changing patterns in work and also the lack of legal stopping places. Niner estimated the population of Gypsy and Travellers in Wales to be around 2,000 people, mostly concentrated along the key transport routes in the North and South Wales.

In her report to the Welsh Assembly Government, Niner concluded that the existing network of sites is not entirely fit for purpose. She estimated that the network requires just under £3 million expenditure over the next five years to bring it up to a good standard of repair. Over the next 30 years it will require £10 million expenditure to bring sites up to standard and maintain them at that level. In Wales there are 19 local authority sites divided among 13 local authorities which provide approximately 380 pitches.

1.1 Purpose of this Good Practice Guide

1.1.1 This Good Practice Guide is intended as a guide to local authorities in providing appropriate services at reasonable cost to Gypsies and Travellers living on residential sites in Wales. It contains advice and examples of good practice and should be used as a basis to facilitate authorities in making decisions specific to their own particular local circumstances. It is not the intention of the Welsh Assembly Government to impose uniform solutions since situations may vary considerably across regions in Wales.

1.1.2 This Good Practice Guide is not statutory. It constitutes a guide for local authorities and others in the development and improvement of Gypsy and Traveller sites, and will form part of the consideration of the Welsh Assembly Government in providing grants in relation to Gypsy and Traveller sites.

1.1.3 Local authorities having regard to the Good Practice Guides, will help to ensure that Gypsy Traveller sites in Wales:

- are sustainable, well managed and that maintenance is planned and not always reactive;
- are equivalent to standards that would be expected for social housing in the settled community; and
- have the effect of encouraging and developing good relations between Gypsy Travellers and the settled community, and Gypsy Travellers and site owners/managers.

1.1.4 The Welsh Assembly Government appreciates that it will not be possible to implement the Good Practice Guides in every respect on every site.
Local authorities will have to decide what elements of the Good Practice Guides are appropriate to adopt for existing sites and should make every effort over a period of time to apply the Good Practice Guides to all of their sites. This is something that will take time but will benefit site residents as well as the settled community. Where a new site is being developed the Good Practice Guides should inform the design of the site. While the Good Practice Guides are advisory, local authorities and others are strongly advised to bear this Guide in mind when refurbishing existing sites and/or developing new sites. The Good Practice Guides will be tied into the existing Welsh Assembly Government Gypsy Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant Programme and the Welsh Assembly Government Gypsy Traveller New Sites Grant Programme. Therefore any bids for funding will be considered in light of these Guides and applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the Good Practice Guides have been considered and applied where appropriate on existing sites and new sites.

1.2 Developing the Good Practice Guide

1.2.1 The development of this document has been informed through engagement with local authority personnel and from various departments in the Welsh Assembly Government such as: housing, planning, environmental health, and health and education professionals working with Gypsies and Travellers, site managers, and the Gypsy and Traveller community. Welsh Assembly Government officials undertook a number of site visits throughout Wales in both rural and urban locations and investigated accommodation provision and design in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland drawing upon the best examples and notable practice.

1.2.2 In developing this Guide the Welsh Assembly Government has aimed to incorporate guidelines that are on a par with those publicly funded developments for the settled community. The right balance may not be achieved straight away and it is the intention for the Good Practice Guides to be monitored and reviewed. This will be an ongoing process. At every stage in the development of these Good Practice Guides the Welsh Assembly Government has aimed to give consideration to the different cultural needs and preferences of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales.

1.2.3 The Welsh Assembly Government has set out its commitment to diversity in housing in the National Housing Strategy for Wales “Better Homes for People in Wales”. The strategy recognises how people’s homes impact on the quality of life. The strategy clearly states that “People should not be denied a good home because of their social, cultural or ethnic background, or be stigmatised because of where they live. Wales should be a place where diversity is celebrated, and where equality of opportunity is a reality for all.” (Better Homes for People in Wales, 2001:7) This Guide is about making the above statement a reality for Gypsies Travellers in Wales. The National Housing Strategy can be found on the Welsh Assembly Government’s website at:

www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity

References to all publications in this Guide can also be found at Annex A.
Chapter 2

Provision

2.1 Site Provision

2.1.1 Currently in Wales the demand for pitches on local authority Gypsy Traveller sites exceeds the number of pitches available. It is estimated that between now and 2011 approximately 275-305 additional residential pitches will be needed. The Welsh Assembly Government is establishing a programme of work which will work towards increasing site provision to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This will be achieved through the planning circular WAG30/2007 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites” which will provide guidance to local authorities when trying to identify suitable site locations in their statutory Local Development Plans. In addition, the £1 million Gypsy Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant Programme will aim to ensure that the existing network is fit for purpose within the confines of current site locations and the £1.5 million Gypsy Traveller New Sites Grant Programme aims to address the issues of site provision in Wales. This developing programme of work and the commitment to develop a national Gypsy Traveller Strategy along with the work of the dedicated Gypsy Traveller team, will contribute to promoting and improving good race relations between Gypsy Travellers and the settled community. These two grant programmes are committed to until the financial year 2010/11.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and firmly believes that everyone in Welsh society should have the opportunity of a decent home, be that a cultural preference for caravans or bricks and mortar houses.

In order to reduce unauthorised encampments and have effective enforcement against unauthorised sites there needs to be appropriate provision of authorised sites. (See Welsh Assembly Government/ Home Office Guidance on Managing Unauthorised Camping, 2005). 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 the access of other services by Gypsies and Travellers.

2.2 Welsh Assembly Government £1 million Gypsy Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant

2.2.1 The Gypsy Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant Programme provides capital funding for the refurbishment of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wales by local authorities. Since 2007-2008, £1 million a year has been available for local authorities towards the costs of refurbishing existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wales. The Refurbishment Grant, currently committed until financial year 2010/11, is intended to improve the quality of life, health and well-being for Gypsy Traveller site residents by modernising existing facilities provided on sites by local authorities, and the provision of new facilities on sites where needed. In the first year of the grant, 9 local authorities successfully bid for the refurbishment grant and the Welsh Assembly Government secured an additional £500k meaning the grant...
awarded for 2007-2008 totalled £1.5 million. The extra £500k was a one off additional sum and there is no guarantee that additional amounts will be available in future years.

2.3 Welsh Assembly Government £1.5 million New Sites Grant

2.3.1 In 2008, the Welsh Assembly launched a £1.5 million capital grant programme for the provision of new Gypsy Traveller sites in Wales known as the Gypsy Traveller New Sites Grant Programme. The current grant programme is available until 2010/11 and is open to local authorities who are able to demonstrate the need for a new site in their area via an application to the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.4 Sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004

2.4.1 Section 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004 places a duty on local housing authorities to carry out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers residing in or resorting to their district and to consider these identified needs. This survey of Gypsy Travellers in the area, the potential accommodation needs of and the consultation with the community is known as an Accommodation Needs Assessment. The Accommodation Needs Assessment will inform the development of Housing Strategies and will assist Local Planning Authorities in identifying sites for Gypsies and Travellers as part of the Local Development Plans as outlined in the Planning Circular WAG 30/2007 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”. Section 225 and 226 came into force in December 2007.

2.4.2 The Accommodation Needs Assessments allow proper consideration to be given to the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and result in any provision being properly researched and therefore needs based rather than imposed.

2.5 Planning Circular

2.5.1 The Welsh Assembly Government Circular WAG 30/2007 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites” was published in December 2007, and replaces the guidance contained in Welsh Office Circular 2/94 “Gypsy Sites and Planning”. The key policies addressed in the planning circular are:-

- a change to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers for land use planning purposes. The new definition recognises that Gypsies may stop travelling, either permanently or temporarily, for health or educational reasons or because of caring responsibilities;
- involving Gypsies and Travellers proactively in the planning process via Community Involvement Schemes in Local Development Plan preparation and ensuring communication is direct and accessible;
- guidance for Gypsy Travellers making planning applications;
- a requirement that local planning authorities identify suitable locations in their Local Development Plan for residential and transit sites and also for
mixed uses, that meet the current working patterns of Gypsies and Travellers;

• improved guidance on drafting the policy criteria in development plans against which applications for sites not allocated in the plan will be judged;

• guidance on new Gypsy and Traveller Rural Exception Sites; and

• a section on local authorities’ responsibilities under the Race Relations Act asking them to monitor and then analyse decisions on planning applications for Gypsy Traveller sites as against those for other types of residential development to inform policy development. In addition they should monitor applications from Gypsy and Irish Travellers in order to identify any adverse impact on race equality.
Chapter 3

Site Design

3.1 Size of site

3.1.1 The ideal size of a site should generally be no more than 12 pitches. Consultation with the Gypsy and Travelling community has shown that there is a preference for smaller sites, around 10-12 pitches. Having smaller sites makes the management of the site much easier and is more likely to attract compatible family units. However, local authorities may consider it necessary to be flexible by allowing more pitches on a site when taking into account local circumstances and the current level of need. Sites should presume to be no bigger than between 15-20 pitches. Sites bigger than 20 pitches should only be developed where there is a clear and demonstrable need to act against such a presumption and where consultation and engagement has taken place with all stakeholders.

3.2 Site location

3.2.1 When considering where to locate a new site, local authorities will have to think very carefully about locating sites, including transit sites, in locations that meet the current working patterns of Gypsies and Travellers and that are in close proximity to transport links. If transport links do not exist, the authority should consider very carefully providing links. Due to changes in Gypsies and Travellers’ working patterns over recent years, these locations may not be the same areas they have located in or frequented in the past. The majority of Gypsies and Travellers live in extended family groups; this along with travelling is a part of their culture and way of life. These features should be considered when planning for their accommodation needs. Local authorities will have to consider issues of sustainability when identifying suitable site locations. (see paragraphs 17 to 23 of the Welsh Assembly Government Circular WAG 30/2007 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites” for criteria to consider when identifying suitable site locations. Site locations should be identified in Local Development Plans).

3.2.2 Local authorities should engage with the Gypsy Traveller community when identifying sites. When deciding on site location, local authorities must first consider locations with access to local services, e.g., shops, doctors, schools. Local authorities should avoid locating sites next to or near hazards which present specific risks to children and adults such as dual carriage-ways, industrial sites, river or canals. In the event that a site chosen by Gypsy Travellers is near a potential hazard, these hazards should be made clear to the Gypsy Travellers and steps taken to minimise the risks. If existing sites are located near these hazards, steps must be taken to eliminate the risks to children and adults. Such measures might include pedestrian crossings or secure perimeter fences.

3.2.3 The Welsh Assembly Government circular WAG 30/2007 “Planning for Gypsy Traveller Caravan Sites” contains guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for Gypsies and Travellers and how local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers can work together to achieve this aim. This circular has recently been
revised and takes into account new legislation. The circular can be found on the Welsh Assembly Governments website at:

www.wales.gov.uk/gypsytravellers

3.2.4 It is important that if a location is considered inappropriate for residential use, either private or social then it should not be considered appropriate for a Gypsy Traveller site. A Gypsy Traveller site should receive the same considerations as other forms of accommodation and 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 and shopping facilities.

3.2.5 Sites should not be considered if they are near refuse sites or facilities, industrial locations and other hazardous locations such as motorway flyovers. (In practice the site should already have been designated in the Local Development Plan at an earlier stage) The following detailed criteria will help local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers to choose a suitable location. These are:-

- accessibility – a site should have good access to a public road which is safe and direct;
- the site – land should be flat and suitable for development as planned. A site survey must be undertaken which will identify possible problems such as water logging, risk of flooding, landfill contamination etc. It is acknowledged that a shortage of suitable land may increase the probability of a new site being situated on land with a previous occurrences of flooding. Where such a piece of land is being considered for a new site, as with other potential risks, residents and potential residents should be made aware of these risks.
- local Services – as stated above a site should be located within reasonable distance from school, shops, medical services and other community facilities. If a site or a proposed new site is located or going to be located in a rural area this will in many situations not be achievable. For further details on the ‘Home to School Transport, 3 mile rule’ please see section 3.2.6;
- environment – the location of a site should always be in acceptable surroundings or where the surroundings can be made pleasant at a reasonable cost. Sensitive landscaping and boundary definition should be able to provide seclusion for the residents from the elements without making them feel imprisoned in the site; and
- on site services – water, electricity, sewage, drainage and refuse disposal should be provided on all sites. For further detail please refer to the Welsh Assembly Government’s publication ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’.

3.2.6. Current Position - Local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide free transport if they consider it necessary to facilitate a pupil's attendance at school. The Education Act 1996 states that if the distance between home and the nearest
suitable school is over 3 miles (or 2 miles for pupils under 8 years of age) the local authority should provide free transport to those children. Over and above this statutory obligation, local authorities have discretionary powers to offer transport arrangements for other pupils, either free of charge or for payment. The exact arrangements will depend upon the individual local authority.

**Future position** - The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 30 September 2008 and received Royal Approval on 10 December 2008. The main provisions in the Measure are expected to take effect from September 2009. The Measure provides that all primary school pupils will be entitled to free transport if they are ordinarily resident at a place 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable school. Secondary school pupils will be entitled to free transport if they are ordinarily resident at a place 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school. If a child has no ordinary residence the Measure specifies that the child is to be treated for the purposes of the Measure as being ordinarily resident at the place he or she is for the time being resident. This would include Gypsy or Traveller sites.

### 3.3 Layout

3.3.1 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, type of amenities, access issues and the environment and aesthetics of the land to be developed. Where possible the physical layout of the site should take into consideration the specific preferences of site residents or potential site residents in the design and layout of the site. Site orientation may also be considered in order to maximise natural energy resources and benefit energy efficiency.

3.3.2 Whether the local authority opts for a ‘circular’, ‘tree branch’ or other layout there will be advantages and disadvantages with all. For example if a circular layout is adopted then there will need to be speed deterrents, and if a tree branch layout is preferred then roads should have no through access or should be ‘dead ends’ to eliminate on-site racing or through traffic either by site residents or the settled community. Ensuring a degree of privacy is essential for site residents. The same consideration that is given to the privacy of housing for the settled community should be applied to Gypsy and Traveller sites. There is a balance to be struck between providing the right level of privacy while ensuring that a sense of community is maintained. Secured by Design Guidance may be used for further information:

[www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

3.3.3 The design of amenity units should be such as to allow extension at a later date to allow for normal family growth. It is particularly important that the design of the site does not have any spaces that are not designed for a specific purpose as this can lead to the appropriation of a space for a purpose not intended. Erecting a barrier could be considered but as with other aspects of the layout the views of residents and/or potential residents should be sought if possible. If a barrier is erected it should be robust in design and situated in such a way as not to be a hazard to vehicles entering and leaving the site. A barrier should also help to
discourage unauthorised parking. A key card or access card barrier should be considered, as it would only allow site residents to enter and would control access to the site by non residents thereby restricting opportunities for unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping on site. Landscaping will help to create a residential look and create an attractive environment in which to live. This is further explored in section 5.6. When considering both site entry barriers and pitch barriers local authorities should consider how this will compliment features of the surrounding settled community with a view to ensuring parity and encouraging a cohesive community.

3.4  Roads

3.4.1  All sites need to have traffic calming measures leading to and on the site. Public roads should have clearly displayed signs requesting cars to slow down for site access. (N.B. It should be made clear that only local authorities are authorised to erect signs on public highways) Internal roads should also have signs at regular intervals requesting drivers to slow down and speed-limiting ramps.

3.4.2  Good quality roads should be built which are fit for purpose. Normally concrete or tar macadam on suitable sub-base appropriate to soil conditions is preferable. Roads should be wide enough to allow chalet/mobile homes access on low loader vehicles and yet not encourage on road parking. They should also be wide enough to allow two lorries to pass each other, and should be a minimum of 5.6 m wide which should accommodate vehicles towing caravans between 7-8 metres long.

3.4.3  The design of roads leading to and on the site should allow easy access for emergency vehicles. Caravans and trailers must not be more than 50 metres from a road. 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.

3.4.4  If feasible, there should be more than one access point to the site. In addition a ramp will be required near to the entrance to the public road to ensure a reduction in vehicular speed. If the site is a cul-de-sac layout then there should be adequate turning space to accommodate large vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances and of course large vehicles used by the residents. There should be footpaths at the entrance from the public road into the site along with footpaths on the site.

3.4.5  Residents will be aware that they should 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.

3.5  Boundaries

3.5.1  A site should be pleasant to stay on and designed in a manner which is complimentary to the surrounding environment. If a site is designed or refurbished with these considerations in mind it will go a long way in meeting the needs of
residents as well as the settled community. Boundary treatment is crucial to this and as such merits particular attention in consultation with the local Gypsy and Traveller community at an early stage in the design process. The aim should be to achieve a balance between securing the boundaries and maintaining a pleasant and more open environment on site. Care should be taken to integrate the boundary treatment of the site into the local environment.

3.5.2 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. It is essential that there is a 3 metre gap within the inside of all site boundaries as a fire prevention measure. The advice and guidance of a fire officer should be sought and the fire service should be consulted when designing or refurbishing sites.

3.5.3 It is important to differentiate between public and private spaces on the site so that it is very obvious where pitch boundaries are. In addition ill defined boundaries can lead to unauthorised site expansion. Utilising screening on site can give a more open feel while encouraging integration and hopefully contribute to the elimination of exclusion. Different materials can be used to achieve the required effect such as fences, hedges, low wall and where natural features exist it would be helpful to integrate these into the design of the site.

3.6 Pitch

3.6.1 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. Each pitch as a minimum should be capable of accommodating an amenity block, large trailer, touring caravan and parking for two vehicles. Where space permits the inclusion of a children’s play space is essential. 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. Pitches should provide:

- a service unit connected to water supply, drainage, electricity and other services/facilities;
- a hard surfaced level area with drainage falls;
- designed to take cognisance of future management, maintenance and cleansing needs;
- provision for drying clothes;
- a lockable shed for tools, bikes, extra storage;
- a suitable container for domestic refuse and/or access to container for bulkier waste;
• permanent and readily identifiable markings for caravans and parking spaces;
• a distribution of electricity hook-up points to allow for the different positioning of caravans and trailers;
• a way of securing caravans and trailers during high winds such as steel rings laid in concrete which would allow ropes to be threaded through and secured to keep caravans and trailers from being buffeted by the wind;
• hook up to drains and sewage systems; and
• alleviation from flood risk.

3.7 Hardstanding

3.7.1 Each pitch should have hard standing which is constructed of hard wearing material which covers the entire area to be occupied by caravans, trailers and other vehicles. The hard standing should be constructed to industry code of practice and must enable occupants to access and leave safely. When constructing the hard standing consider the heavy loads it will have to bear and so it must be sufficient to bear the weight of caravans, trailers and other vehicles which will be moved about a lot. Where possible, some soft landscaping is also recommended for each pitch.

3.8 Amenity block

3.8.1 Each pitch should have an amenity block which must be constructed/refurbished to building regulation requirements and in accordance with good building practice. The grouping of amenity units should be avoided. Building materials will have to meet with relevant British standards. Having a residential appearance will enhance the look of the pitch and help to ensure that the overall appearance of the site is not industrial but residential in appearance and attractive. Minimum floor space of the amenity block should ideally be 7.5 m².

3.8.2 The construction and layout of the amenity unit needs to 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. On existing sites it is worth considering replacing steps with a small ramp. As a minimum requirement all new sites should have ramps into amenity blocks, no steps. Taking into account the needs of disabled people and the elderly, internal walls in bathrooms and WCs should be able to hold support aids. Basic aids can be fitted to allow flexibility of use. To accommodate wheelchairs, prams, and walking frames, main entrances, doorways and passageways should have a minimum width of 800 millimetres, 750 millimetres and 900 millimetres respectively.

3.8.3 Blocks should have adequate water supply that includes hot water and that can be thermostatically controlled. There should be a separate WC with a sink unit for hand washing that is accessible through a lobbied room. Opinion is divided as to the benefits of having showers installed over baths. Showers are more economical, environmentally friendly, take up less space and are easier to keep clean. However a bath offers a dual function in that a shower can be installed over a bath and it allows
for easier washing of children and keeps water spillage to a minimum. It is recommended that a bath is installed with a shower over it.

3.8.4 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, there should also be a sensible supply of electrical sockets throughout the block. The block should be connected to a sewer or other suitable drainage disposal system. Local authorities will have to consider how many blocks, if any, they want to allocate for disabled users. The units will need further adaptations than the basic measures outlined in 3.8.2 above. Further adaptation will ensure an amenity block meets the requirements of 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. Certainly a percentage should be developed that are fully designed to meet disabled residents needs. It is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that where applicable amenity blocks are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)1995 compliant. Early engagement with the community will establish what existing needs are and should help to flag up future needs and requirements.

3.8.5 The amenity block should be able to accommodate a minimum family size of 5/6. Provision should be made for food preparation/cooking area with adequate storage space for food stuffs and other household items including a lockable cupboard for harmful products such as bleach etc., a sink and drainer should also be fitted. There should be room for additional appliances such as microwaves. The internal design should be light and airy and allow as much natural light in as possible. It is likely that the family will spend time here so it is important that it feels comfortable, safe and secure.

3.8.6 Amenity blocks should have cost effective energy efficiency systems. The design and layout should aim to maximise on energy conservation including mechanical and electrical systems. To ensure the blocks are energy efficient water tanks and pipes should be lagged to keep heat and prevent frost damage. Each room should have a heating system which provides temperature control and be economical. All light fittings should be low energy and heating and ventilation systems should be appropriate. Where possible, energy should be from renewable sources. All precautions should be taken to ensure that electrical sockets and other fittings and fixtures are child proofed, such as rounded work surfaces as opposed to angled ones. All fixtures and fittings should be robust, durable and hardwearing but domestic in nature. The intention should be to create an environment that is safe but comfortable, and the same standards that are used for social housing should be applied here.

Other technical advice may be obtained from TAN 12 available at:

www.wales.gov.uk/planning

3.9 Spacing of Caravans and Trailers

3.9.1 In line with Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales, a gap of 3 metres should be observed between a caravan, trailer, chalet or park home and
the pitch boundary. The measurement should be taken from the caravan wall. Equally, in line with the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales each individual caravan, trailer, chalet or park home must be spaced at a distance of no less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan, chalet or park home. This is imperative to the safety of all site residents as caravans and trailers are highly combustible. This distance also helps to ensure privacy from neighbouring caravans. To ensure this fire break is maintained between pitches the inclusion of a walled, raised bed could be incorporated into the design. This could double as a green area and could easily be planted with small shrubs and plants which would enhance the look of the pitch.

3.9.2 It is recommended that all new sites and sites undergoing refurbishment programmes to pitches should consider adopting a clear colour coding approach to highlight clear delineation between caravans and other vehicles. For example red lines should represent fire breaks between caravans with green lines representing space for cars etc. A consistent approach across Wales would help to illustrate spacing required and alleviate the problem of overcrowded pitches.

3.10 Electrical supply

3.10.1 Each pitch should have its own electrical supply adequate to meet the reasonable needs of the pitch residents and separate metres for each pitch. All cabling should meet with appropriate industry/health and safety requirements and be laid underground. Yearly inspections by qualified personnel are essential to ensure installations are compliant with current regulations. Electricity supply on site should take account of environmentally friendly initiatives as well as energy and cost efficiency. For further details please refer to the Welsh Assembly Government publication ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’.
Chapter 4

Site Facilities

4.1 Children’s play area

4.1.1 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 essential, especially if there is not suitable provision within walking distance on a safe route. Each site needs to be considered individually and local conditions; existing play area provision and the size of the site should be taken into account. Where provision allows, communal play areas should be overlooked and should be positioned to enable parents/families to supervise their children. This will help to develop social cohesion among the residents and 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 the ‘Six Acre Standard’. The Six Acre Standard 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. The Six Acre Standard document developed by Fields in Trust, has recently been reviewed and is now available. The following link provides further detail:

www.fieldsintrust.org

4.1.2. Play areas should be located away from vehicular traffic and should be inaccessible to vehicles. In addition they should be fenced, clearly delineated as a play area and they should be well lit and designated as dog free areas. The designated play area should be able to cope with a range of play activities that will suit children of different ages. To help maximise play potential shrubs, grass, trees, flowers and natural fences should be developed and children could be encouraged to cultivate a small patch of land. A form of seating should be included, some of which should be located in shaded areas. The provision of play equipment should be carefully thought out. An addition such as a basketball hoop can be beneficial and fun at little cost. It is very important to ensure that any designated play space is clearly differentiated from residential or storage space and it should be maintained to ensure it is not appropriated for other uses. It is important to ensure that the play area environment is not attractive to vermin who may find such spaces ideal for infestation.

4.1.3 Where there is an existing site the local authority needs to undertake an assessment which will determine how they meet, or fail to meet, the play and recreation needs of children and young people. An assessment of this kind will inform plans for further development and or improvement of existing play and recreation areas.

4.1.4 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.
4.2  Community facilities

4.2.1  On larger sites (sites with more than 12 pitches) the need for a communal building is essential and this should be explored with site or potential site residents. The value of such a facility should not be underestimated for larger sites. It could be used for outreach work, support work, youth work, playgroups, quiet space for children doing homework, adult education, pre-school or health clinics. Running costs for such a facility could be met through charging statutory and voluntary organisations that avail of the facilities and through local action by the residents in the same way that many village halls are administered as trusts however local authorities would need to seek their own legal advice on any potential arrangements.

4.2.2  On smaller sites or where physical restrictions prohibit the installation of a community facility, existing community facilities should be utilised. This could help increase the use of existing facilities and encourage community cohesion with the settled community.

4.3  Pre-School facility

4.3.1  Where a permanent facility is not feasible, consideration could be given to the provision of a mobile unit which could be used for pre-school purposes. The advantage of such a unit is that it can be moved from one location to another. A suitable and safe location should be identified for the mobile unit.

4.4  Caretaker’s facility

4.4.1  A Caretakers’ facility is important, especially on larger sites. A simple structure close to the entrance of the site which can also accommodate private consultations with visiting professionals. If a caretaker is being provided with residential accommodation this should be located in a position to enable good management of the site.

4.5  Public lighting

4.5.1  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.

4.6  Waste disposal

4.6.1  Each pitch should have standard domestic waste disposal arrangements in compliance with current legislation and regulations. If additional waste disposal facilities are required such as skips they should be suitably located within easy reach of but screened from individual pitches and other buildings on site. Fly-tipping and dumping, whether by site residents or the local settled community, is a persistent problem on some sites and is an issue for site managers. Disposal facilities should
be regularly cleared to ensure the cleanliness of the site and discourage tipping. For further details please refer to ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’.

4.7 Fly tipping

4.7.1 Fly tipping is a criminal offence punishable by prison and or a fine up to £50,000 depending on the severity of the crime if caught. In order to reduce incidents of fly tipping in and around permanent sites, local authorities must, in accordance with Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, provide a waste collection service and may not charge for this service. This should ideally be from individual pitches on a weekly or fortnightly basis, depending on the local authority policy on refuse collection. The license agreement between the resident and the landlord should include clauses relating to maintenance and cleanliness of the site in relation to waste and state what the responsibilities of the local authority and pitch residents are. For example site residents have to follow the same procedures and recommendations required of the “housed” community – i.e. only domestic waste is put out, at the designated location, designated time and in the receptacle provided by the local authority.

4.7.2 Residents of a Gypsy Traveller site should also have the same access to collection services provided by the local authority as afforded to other forms of housing, for example some local authorities arrange a collection service for larger items of furniture but by appointment only.

4.7.3 Local authorities should take steps to ensure that the site is not used for any kind of commercial activity. The local authority may want to consider the benefits of installing motion sensitive CCTV cameras to monitor waste disposal areas on site and to monitor remote areas of the site or areas vulnerable to fly-tipping. CCTV should not be used to monitor individual pitches.

4.7.4 It is recommended that the local authority/landlord produce and implement a Code of Practice that is consistent with other local authorities in Wales and that a designated person is assigned to liaise directly with the enforcement officers in each local authority to enable reporting of fly tipping in the area, not associated with the travelling community, and so build up an accurate picture of the fly tipping problem.

4.8 Recycling

4.8.1 In order to optimise recycling on site, local authorities should consider a recycling scheme for sites. Local authority Gypsy Traveller site residents should however have the same access to recycling facilities as other residents of the authority, for example green bags or boxes. For further details please refer to ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’.

4.9 Telephones

4.9.1 A public telephone for calling the emergency services should be located close to but not inside a site warden’s office. A public phone will also be useful for residents who do not have a phone line on their pitch. Coin phones should be avoided and card phones installed instead.
4.10 **Support for economic activities**

4.10.1 Designated residential sites should be for residential purposes only and economic activity on pitches should not be encouraged. Economic activities on sites not designated for work purposes can lead to problems around health and safety, pollution and environmental concerns. There are also issues for site management and the monitoring of work on site to ensure residents are compliant with the law, this is an extra burden on site managers whose role is not to police a site but to manage it. There may be situations where residents need to store equipment used in their work, the local authority will have to decide if the provision of storage space is possible and ensure the site is clearly delineated to ensure residential areas are divided from areas for the storage of commercial equipment. Please refer to the planning circular, ‘WAG 30/2007, Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites’ for further guidance on economic activities on sites.

4.10.2 Where individuals require additional space for commercial activities they should be encouraged to pursue private rental agreements for space and/or facilities. Local authorities that have commercial land for rent, for example garages, should make these lists available to members of the Gypsy Traveller community wishing to pursue this option.

4.11 **Artistic feature**

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

4.12 **Animals**

4.12.1 Domestic animals can be kept on site where the local authority is in agreement and any agreement around keeping pets should be part of the licence agreement. However it should be impressed upon the owners that responsibility for looking after, controlling and cleaning up after domestic animals is theirs. This is not only important for the health purposes of the residents but also for the health and welfare of the animals themselves. There are now legal animal welfare requirements for owners of all normally domesticated animals and wild animals in captivity to take appropriate care as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. These are known as the ‘five freedoms’. Please refer to Annex B for further details on the five freedoms. Economic activities involving animals on residential sites are to be discouraged.

4.12.2 Where residents own horses and/or ponies they should be encouraged to pursue private rental agreements for land and/or facilities. Local authorities that have land for rent should make these lists available to members of the Gypsy Traveller community. It is not the responsibility of the local authority to provide land for resident’s livestock and livestock should not be kept on sites. Owners are legally responsible for the welfare of their animals. For further details please refer to the Welsh Assembly Government’s ‘Good Practice Guide in Site Management’.

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4.13 Water provision

4.13.1 Each pitch must have mains water supply suitable for drinking and its supply should be sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of residents. Water supply must comply with current legislation and regulation and British standards. Ideally individual supply may be arranged to each pitch and billed directly to that pitch. Alternatively, water meters may be installed on each pitch for domestic use and should be in good working order. Where individual supply is arranged, residents should be aware that they are directly responsible for the cost of all water used on that pitch. The water pressure should be sufficient to enable the use of fire hydrants. Outside taps should be provided on each pitch.

4.14 Waste/recycling containers

4.14.1 Standard domestic arrangements for waste disposal should be applied to Gypsy Traveller sites and each pitch should have waste disposal pick up. If there is a communal waste area in addition to individual refuse collection then this should be well designed so as to be convenient, accessible and inconspicuous. It should be made clear to residents that fly-tipping or non-domestic waste will not be tolerated. Access should be provided for local authority refuse collection from individual pitches as well as any central locations. For further details on waste and recycling, please refer to the Welsh Assembly Government’s ‘Good Practice Guide in Site Management’

4.15 Site address and post arrangements

4.15.1 Each pitch should have an individual address to allow for the delivery of mail. The address should not identify the site as a Gypsy Traveller site. A name for the site should be chosen in consultation with site residents. In addition each pitch should have a secure post box accessed by a key held by the pitch resident. It is not acceptable to have residents picking up post from the site manager/wardens office except where the pitch resident is not home and there is a delivery of a large parcel or package that can’t be put in the post box. There may be circumstances where the delivery of post to individual pitches is not possible. For alternative arrangements for the delivery of post please refer to the Welsh Assembly Government’s ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’.

4.16 Pitch Gates

4.16.1 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 but not so imposing that they act as a barrier screening off pitches completely. If small animals are living on the pitch then the design of the gates should ensure that pets cannot escape through bars, this should also ensure the safety and security of small children.

4.17 Drainage

4.17.1 It is essential that surface water and storm water drainage must be installed. All provision must comply with current legislation and regulations and British standards. This must be given early consideration in the site design.
4.18  **Sewerage**

4.18.1 Where possible connection to a public sewer must be made, however this will not always be possible and in such circumstances provision must be made for discharge to a properly constructed and maintained sealed septic tank. Provision must comply with current legislation, regulations and British standards.

4.19  **Gas Supply**

4.19.1 All provision and services 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. For further details on the supply of utilities please refer to ‘Good Practice Guide in Site Management’.
Chapter 5

Management and Maintenance

5.1  Site management and maintenance

5.1.1  To accompany this Guide we have also developed ‘Good Practice Guide to Site Management’. For more detailed guidance on management and maintenance please refer to the ‘Good Practice Guide in Site Management’.

5.1.2  In her report to the Welsh Assembly Government Pat Niner expressed the view that “lack of formal policies leads to lack of transparency and to complaints, and leaves a manager open to challenge over fairness”. Establishing sensible rules around allocation of pitches and site management from the beginning will ensure residents live in an environment in which they will enjoy the safety and security taken for granted by the majority of the settled community.

5.1.3  Respectful and sensitive management of sites is paramount to ensuring the sustainability of a site and the creation of a home space for Gypsies and Travellers to live free from intimidation and prejudice from both within and out of their own communities.

5.2  Site management and maintenance plan

5.2.1  Having a site management and maintenance plan in place will help to ensure the long term sustainability of a site and to reassure managers and residents that systems for maintenance and emergencies are in place. The plan should be flexible and pay particular attention to the involvement and participation of site residents in the management and maintenance of the site. In addition the plan should have regard to best practice in housing management guidelines. A management plan should have a programme of planned maintenance as well as contingencies for reactive maintenance. A clear management structure should be included and relevant contacts in appropriate departments identified.

5.3  Caretaking Arrangements

5.3.1  Caretaking arrangements should be discussed and agreed with site residents. These arrangements may fall to different departments of the local authority depending on the roles and responsibilities delegated to the site manager. The level of involvement by the caretaker will be greater or lesser depending on how much responsibility site residents have or would like to have. For varying definitions of site staff please refer to the Good Practice Guide in Site Management.

5.4  Entrance control

5.4.1  The installation of a site barrier control should be given very careful consideration and the views of residents and future residents sought. A balance needs to be struck between securing the site for residents and ensuring social inclusion is not threatened. Having a barrier in place can prevent unauthorised encampments; fly tipping, other undesirable behaviour or unwanted intrusions by
non residents. The installation of an electronic gate with keypad access or a key card is a good way of securing a site without a big physical barrier while not making residents feel hemmed in and socially excluded. The needs and preferences of the Gypsy Traveller community/site residents should inform the final decision on this issue. As well as consulting site residents, the emergency services and police views should be sought. Whatever form of entrance control is installed keys or codes will have to be made available to these services to ensure they can access the site in an emergency without hindrance.

Good Practice Example

On one local authority site in north Wales, a height restriction barrier secured with a padlock has been installed at the site entrance in order to secure a site from unauthorised encampments and to avoid unauthorised visitors. The height restriction barrier is set at 2 metres tall, which allows access for most vehicles with the exception of commercial vehicles, HGV’s and caravans. This allows residents to come and go in cars, 4 by 4’s and small vans. It prevents large vehicles entering the site. The Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer allows access to larger vehicles for residents and visitors by arrangement. The Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer is the primary key holder with other keys being held by other site staff and local authority officers.

A mechanical safe has been installed at the site entrance which holds the key to the barrier padlock. The safe is opened using a specific code. The local authority staff and the emergency services have been issued with the access code and can therefore open the barrier and access the site in cases of emergency.

The key safe is a mechanical product which does not require an electrical supply. The key safe allows the local authority to change the access code and padlock as necessary whilst ensuring that access is always ensured for the emergency services. In the event that the safe is damaged, both it, and the padlock can be replaced at a relatively low cost.

On a site in England, a low level barrier has been erected at the site entrance. This barrier prevents any vehicles, including cars and motor bikes accessing the site without prior knowledge of the entrance code. The code is issued to all residents to allow vehicles to access and leave the site with ease.

The barrier is also equipped with an intercom system connected to all amenity blocks and the site office. The system is similar to that used in flats and apartments where by each numbered blocked can be ‘buzzed’ by the corresponding number on the entrance system. This facility allows residents to ‘buzz’ visitors into the site. The residents are aware that the code should not be issued to non residents and this is included in the license agreement.

The barrier code is issued to all emergency services and the site manager can also be contacted by the local authority and emergency services in cases of emergency. The system was installed at accost of circa £2,000.
Chapter 6
Safe Sites

6.1 Health and Safety

6.1.1 It is the responsibility of the local authority and site manager to ensure a risk assessment is regularly undertaken, to include 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 every care is taken to protect equipment from the elements if stored outside, for example via suitable casing.

6.1.2 A site map should be made available to the emergency services clearly pinpointing where hydrants, hose reels etc are located on the site. This will assist the emergency services to locate them in the event of an emergency.

6.1.3 All private and communal buildings on the site must be provided to mobility standards as specified within Building Regulations 2000. Other relevant legislation may apply but in particular, attention is drawn to part M of the Building Regulations 2000. Developers must also have regard to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment undertaken by every local authority in compliance with Sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004 should identify to what extent pitches, parking spaces and amenity units should be suitable for wheelchair users. Where provided these should be consistent with the standards and arrangements for disabled people as contained within the revised Annex D of National Assembly for Wales Circular 20/02 which can be accessed via the link below:

www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity

6.2 Designing out crime

6.2.1 Design layout plays a very important role in the attitude of residents to the site. It is essential that residents feel safe and secure on site without feeling isolated or imprisoned. The intention in any new site design should be to design out crime. Design plans and proposals should have the involvement of the police to ensure security and crime issues are addressed from the outset. Site residents should be involved from the beginning as should the local settled community to ensure they have an opportunity to input into the development. Site residents will have a sense of ownership and the local community will feel involved and this will hopefully alleviate concerns they have. This will help to design in community inclusion and hopefully contribute to a design that advocates openness and bring about a site that is welcoming and amenable to residents, managers and visitors alike.

6.2.2 The design should take advantage of natural observation areas which will allow residents to oversee all areas of the site without hindrance, essential where children will be residing. All spaces both public and private and boundaries should be clearly differentiated so as to eliminate onsite disputes over territory. It is
recommended that communal areas without a clearly defined use are avoided which will reduce acts of vandalism, fly tipping and unauthorised developments. ‘Secured by Design Guidance’ may also provide a useful reference point:

www.securedbydesign.com

6.3 Fire Safety

6.3.1 Distance - caravans should be situated in a way which will reduce the risk of fire spreading between caravans, caravans and buildings or from a building to a caravan. The minimum distance between caravans should be 6m. Pitches should be no more than 30 metres from a fire point. Fire points must be housed in a weather proof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked ‘Fire Point’. A clear notice in text and pictograms should be displayed to indicate what action is to be taken in the event of a fire, including details of the assembly point. For more detailed guidance refer to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales.

6.3.2 Water standpipes or, hydrants must be provided on each site as determined by the risk assessment and in consultation with the local fire officer. All equipment must conform to relevant British/European standards. For more detailed guidance refer to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales.

6.3.3 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 local fire officer. For more detailed guidance refer to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales.

6.3.4 Hydrants must be positioned so that no caravan is more than 100m from a hydrant. Hydrants must conform to British Standard 750. It is important to ensure that hydrants and other water supplies are easily accessible and that they are not obstructed or obscured. Providing suitably located hose reels should be seriously considered and these should be protected from the elements and care taken to prevent them from being misused. For more detailed guidance please refer to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales.

6.3.5 Notices – 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.

6.3.6 General fire safety – each local authority site should have protocols in place in the event of a fire, these protocols should be clearly laid out in a site management plan. Residents need to be made aware that they have a responsibility to prevent fire and that it is their responsibility to maintain fire extinguishers owned by them. All alarm and fire fighting equipment must be installed, tested and maintained in working order by a competent person. All equipment susceptible to frost must be suitable protected.
6.3.7 Storage of Flammable materials - the requirements of the relevant fire 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 that measures are in place to prevent misuse.

6.3.8 Access to and circulation around the site should be such as to allow easy access to fire and rescue services.

6.3.9 The Fire safety standards that apply in Wales are contained in The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which came into effect on 1 April 2006. Information on British Standards can be found at www.bsi-global.com. Guidance to support the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order will also contain the current standards and is available on the CLG website.

www.communities.gov.uk

Welsh Assembly Government Guidance is available at:

www.wales.gov.uk/fire

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring they comply with the legislation in force at any given time.

6.4 Security

6.4.1 Ensuring residents feel safe and secure on a site will encourage a greater investment in the upkeep, maintenance and care of individual pitches and the site as a whole. A sense of safety will encourage greater community cohesion and parents will have peace of mind when their children are playing outside. Secure boundaries will help to stop wandering on pitches but a balance must be struck as residents will not want to feel fenced in.

6.4.2 Access is an issue that needs to be considered very carefully and residents or potential residents should be consulted as to what their preferences are. Controlling access to sites can help to create a sense of entering a definite place that is separate to the outside world and for site residents this will contribute to a sense of community. What ever measure is used to control access it should not create a sense of exclusion from the rest of the community as this may lead to distrust and suspicion.
Chapter 7

Transit sites

Introduction and Context

At present the Welsh Assembly Government does not provide funding for ‘transit sites’. The focus of the Welsh Assembly Government Gypsy Traveller Refurbishment Grant programme and the Gypsy Traveller New Sites Grant programme is to secure long term accommodation for the Gypsy Traveller community. However, the Welsh Assembly Government is giving consideration to transit site provision and are exploring options.

Given that the demand for public site provision for Gypsies and Travellers exceeds the number of pitches available, few designated transit pitches on local authority sites in Wales are actually used as transit pitches. The bi-annual Caravan count in July 2008 revealed that only two local authorities reported having transit pitches. Niner in 2006 identified 7 local authorities with transit provision, although it was not clear how may actually fulfilled that transit function. This reduction in transit provision could indicate that transit pitches are being used for more permanent residential use because there is a lack of pitches to meet current demand. It could also be indicative of a trend towards more ‘settlement’ by many Gypsy Travellers. However many families still choose to travel particularly during the summer months or for special occasions like weddings, fairs etc. Without suitable transit provision this ‘travelling’ is accommodated by way of unauthorised encampments. This situation is not acceptable to the travelling community, settled community or local authorities.

It is not recommended that sites should consist of shared functions. i.e. sites should not contain both transit and permanent pitches. There is a danger that where sites are overcrowded or oversubscribed the transit pitches may be utilised on a permanent basis and therefore not fulfil their transit function.

7.1 Site selection/location

7.1.1 The same considerations that are applied to permanent residential sites should be applied to transit sites.

7.2 Layout, access and design

7.2.1 The number of pitches on a transit site should not exceed 10.

7.2.2 Boundary treatment should be the same as for permanent sites.

7.2.3 Pitch layout should be the same as for permanent pitches and the same degree of consideration for privacy should be applied. Pitch size should accommodate a touring caravan, one parking space and private amenities.

7.2.4 Hardstanding should be the same as for permanent pitches.
7.2.5 **Parking** provision should accommodate at least one vehicle per pitch to a minimum size of 2.4m x 4.8 metres.

7.2.6 **Space** between pitches should be the same as for permanent sites.

7.2.7 It is essential each pitch has **private amenities** to include a toilet, wash basin and shower with hot and cold water supply. Consideration should be given to the need for hook-up to the main sewerage system for toilets.

### 7.3 Site Facilities

7.3.1 In terms of **water, electricity, drainage, sewerage and lighting** the guidance for permanent sites should be applied to transit sites.

7.3.2 **Gas installation** guidance for permanent sites should be applied to transit sites. However, mains gas supply is not required for transit sites.

7.3.3 **Waste disposal** for individual pitches is recommended for transit sites. As a minimum requirement there should be provision of a communal refuse disposal which is conveniently located, but situated away from dwellings, it should be fenced off, robust and inconspicuous.

7.3.4 A **sluice** should be provided on each pitch.

7.3.5 **Postal** arrangements should be put in place, but are recommended as opposed to essential.

### 7.4 Health and Safety

7.4.1 **Health and safety** requirements that apply to permanent sites should be applied to transit sites.

7.4.2 Access for **emergency vehicles** should be the same as for permanent sites.

7.4.3 **Security** arrangements should be the same as for permanent sites.

7.4.4 The same guidance that applies to **Fire Safety** on permanent sites applies to transit sites.
Chapter 8

Temporary Stopping Places

Introduction and Context

The Welsh Assembly Government does not provide funding for temporary stopping places. The issue of temporary stopping places will be discussed in the Welsh Assembly Government Gypsy Traveller Strategy. Temporary stopping places should be just that, temporary. The purpose should be to accommodate on an intermittent basis Gypsies and Travellers who have a need for site accommodation. This might be because of fairs or cultural events such as the Royal Welsh Show or even travel between Wales and Ireland which might lead to an increase in demand for such places. As mentioned in the chapter on Transit Sites the provision of those sites can help to reduce numbers of unauthorised encampments. The same can be said for temporary stopping places.

8.1 Site selection/location

8.1.1 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 presence of young children. In addition the use of adjoining land may have a considerable impact on the site and its temporary occupants.

8.2 Layout, access and design

8.2.1 Site capacity must be given careful consideration. Factors to take into consideration include the number of previous and current unauthorised encampments, the frequency of cultural events, the existence (if any) of any authorised sites and the number of families’ resident and frequency and number of visitors to the site. In addition, the local authority should take into account proximity to ferry ports, and whether the area is an established route of travel for Gypsies and Travellers going from region to region or country to country.

8.2.2 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 that access to the site is gated.

8.2.3 Boundary markings have to clearly indicate where it is safe for residents to park. 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 local fire officer must be sought when planning for temporary stopping places.
8.3 Site Facilities

8.3.1 Cold water supply must be provided for the use of site residents. Portalooes must be provided and there must be separate provision for men and women. The recommendation ratio is one portaloo for every four households on site. The provision of portashowers is recommended.

8.3.2 A sewerage disposal point must be provided and provision for refuse disposal.

8.4 Health and Safety

8.4.1 As mentioned in 8.2.2 the local fire officer should be consulted during the planning of the site, it is also recommended that police views are sought. In addition a risk assessment should be carried out not just during the planning stages but at regular intervals especially during times of occupancy.
Chapter 9
Consultation with stakeholders

9.1 When to consult

9.1.1 It is imperative that local authorities consult with Gypsies and Travellers and relevant representative organisations and individuals from the initiation of a proposal through to the completion stage. Local authorities should take into consideration the expectations and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers, subject to due regard to the need to provide for the migratory way of life of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. The degree of sensitivity that 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(s), 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. Therefore it is essential that the process has credibility within the Gypsy and Traveller community.

9.1.2 Issues requiring consultation include: site selection, design features, facilities and services, management and maintenance of sites and provision of accommodation other than through permanent or temporary transit sites. Local authorities should establish at an early stage if there are families with special needs as these can be incorporated into the design at an early stage. Particular attention should be paid to the concerns of elderly and disabled people. It is strongly suggested that 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 at an early stage.

9.1.3 Local authorities should seek to minimise local opposition and an increasing tendency towards litigation in regard to the location of sites by informing representatives of the local community about their proposal at an early stage in the process. Where a site is intended for mixed communities it will be essential for the views of each of the different communities to be canvassed.

9.1.4 The Accommodation Needs Assessment should inform this process but should not be a substitute for engaging and consulting with the community specifically on site design and or refurbishment. Specific guidance on conducting an accommodation needs assessment is in the Local Housing Market Assessment Guidance, Annex F, produced by the Welsh Assembly Government. There can be no substitute for first hand experience of living on a site and engaging with the community at an early stage will help to ensure the sites sustainability and success. The guidance can be found on the Welsh Assembly Governments website at:

www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity
9.2 Who to consult?

9.2.1 It is important that those who may be affected by Gypsy and Traveller sites are properly consulted on any proposal. Existing or potential residents have to be consulted on proposals for site refurbishment or new site design and planning. 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;
- 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;
- the Fire Officer;
- the Policy Architect;
- site managers and maintenance officers; and
- local health board

9.3 Methods of consultation with the Gypsy Traveller Community

9.3.1 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 people/groups should be sought to inform the development of a consultation methodology/approach.

9.3.2 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 that 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. While 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 that can bring them into conflict with residents and therefore might deter some members of the community to participate in the exercise.

9.3.3 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 that has a good relationship with the community or maybe even a local community building.
9.3.4 Consultation must not rely on written methods of communication as there are low levels of literacy among some sections of the community. It is strongly recommended that face to face consultation with the community is employed. This will enable the community to influence decisions as opposed to just comment 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 that the perspectives of some members will not be highlighted, such as children and young people, older members of the community and disabled people.

9.3.5 Take into careful consideration the timings of your consultations. Running a session outside school drop off and pick up hours will ensure a greater number of women are able to participate. Men will most likely be more available in the evening, after the working day. Also think about having events on site as this will enable better participation by older and disabled people, as well as women, children and young people.

9.3.6 Give careful consideration to the use of a facilitator, particularly if using focus groups as sometimes discussions can become heated because of differing perspectives. A good facilitator should help to bring about a consensus position. If tension is expected between different members of the community then think about running smaller meetings or group discussions. It is important that the facilitator is a neutral individual and someone who the residents trust and who is credible to the local authority. The local Traveller Education Service or health workers might be able to help identify someone who the community and the local authority would be content to use as a facilitator.

9.4 Feedback to the Community

9.4.1 To ensure the continued credibility of the exercise feedback on the results of the consultation must be fed back to the community. It is recognised that the expressed needs and demands of those who participated cannot always be meet, this must be explained to the community in clear terms and reasons for this must be provided and explained.

9.5 Consulting with the settled community

9.5.1 In the same way the settled community are consulted about other types of development they must also be consulted about and able to provide their views and opinions on plans for refurbishing existing sites or on the provision and development of new sites. Early engagement and consultation will help to reassure the settled community about the development of the site and hopefully reduce objections to the proposals. It is important to dispel misconceptions and challenge incorrect assumptions not only about the proposals but also about the Gypsy Traveller community. Be prepared for opposition and plan for this early on in the process. You must clearly demonstrate to the settled community the need for refurbishment or new site provision in any consultation and demonstrate that steps will be taken to address the concerns of the settled community.
Annex A - References


Communities and Local Government, Fire Safety Guidelines
www.communities.gov.uk

Fields in Trust The Six Acre Standard
www.fieldsintrust.org

www.wales.gov.uk
Niner, Pat, 2006, Accommodation Needs of Gypsy Travellers in Wales,

www.communities.gov.uk

Secured By Design:
www.securedbydesign.com

TAN 12
www.wales.gov.uk/planning

Welsh Assembly Government, Better Homes for People in Wales: www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity

Welsh Assembly Government Codes of Practice for Equines, Cats and Dogs available at www.wales.gov.uk/animalwelfare

Welsh Assembly Government, Housing Renewal Guidance
www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity

Welsh Assembly Government, Local Housing Market Assessment Guidance: www.wales.gov.uk/housingandcommunity

Welsh Assembly Government, Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in Wales www.powys.gov.uk


www.wales.gov.uk/publications
Welsh Assembly Government, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety)
www.wales.gov.uk/fire

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Annex B – Animal Welfare

What are known as the Five Animal Freedoms are set out in section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. These are:-

- an animal’s need for a suitable environment – includes shelter and comfortable resting area;
- its need for a suitable diet, - providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
- its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviours patterns – sufficient space for habitation and exercise;
- any need it has to be housed with or apart from, other animals - proper facilities and company as appropriate; and
- its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease – by ensuring appropriate conditions for the animal and appropriate treatment to avoid physical and mental suffering.

The Code of Practice for Equines, Cats and Dogs was launched on the 3 December 2008 by the Welsh Assembly Government. The document includes contact points that may be able to offer site managers, local authorities and Gypsy Travellers, guidance and support in regards to animal welfare.

In addition each local authority has a team that will have responsibility for animal welfare in a commercial and residential sense. This team is normally located in Environmental Health, Trading Standards or Public Protection Department, depending on the local authority and will be able to provide assistance to site managers and the public.

If Gypsy Travellers use animals for their economic activities, they must ensure, for the animals’ purposes, compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060045_en.pdf). In the case of economic activity they must comply with the “Welfare of Animals in Transport (Wales) Order 2007” (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2007/20071047e.htm) and for all purposes, whether domestic or economic, all horses must have a passport in accordance with the “Horse Passport (Wales) Regulations 2005” (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2005/20050231e.htm)