Hearing Statement on behalf of Gypsy Traveller Wales Cardiff Council Replacement Local Development Plan Examination - additional Gypsy and Travellers hearing session 3 December 2026

Introduction

1. This statement will address the additional evidence provided by the council. It will address:

- Pengam Green
- Further site allocations
- Transit provision

Pengam Green

2. We maintain our concerns about the allocation of this site, including the concerns identified by the examining Inspectors. The Council's continued reliance on the allocation leaves important questions about its suitability unresolved. In particular, the examination needs to address whether funding is available to deliver the proposed provision and meet the identified need in full.

3. Action point HS4.4 requires the *Council to confirm funding is secured for Pengam Green for temporary or permanent provision.* Paragraph 35 of the September committee report sets out:

Based on experience of the costs of creation of the four additional pitches identified in the report, it is expected that the creation of a site at Pengam Green will have financial implications which at this stage remain uncosted and ***with no indication as to whether external grant at such levels would be receivable****. No funding for creation, upgrade, acquisition of additional land or ongoing revenue costs of operation for new sites is included in the Council's budget framework. [emphasis added]*

4. External grants would realistically only come from the Welsh Government, and given this it is important to have regard to the *Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant Programme for 2025-2026 Guidance Notes* (appended to this statement).

5. There are a number of points which are relevant. First, the guidance states at page 4 that the following is ineligible for funding:

….land remediation costs and feasibility studies are ineligible. This includes, amongst other things, costs arising from investigating or rectifying former mine workings, landfill or archaeological digs

6. The September committee report at para.10 notes that ground investigations have been commissioned but there is no evidence provided as to what the findings are. As such its not clear whether any remediation costs can be met.

7. The guidance continues:

Sites on unsuitable development land. The panel will also take account of any wider evidence or objections from other Welsh Government departments or statutory bodies (Natural Resources Wales) and reject applications where proposed sites are located in inappropriate locations e.g C1 and C2 flood zones

8. We agree with the findings of the examining Inspectors on this point:

We remain unpersuaded the principle of development is acceptable and the site suitable for residential occupation.

9. Given this, it is hard to see how funding would be forthcoming for this site as the Welsh Government would be unable to credibly adopt a contrary view. This aside, the guidance continues at page 6 by setting out how the assessment of bids will be assessed:

• *Does the development align with the Welsh Government's 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' (2015) guidance? [recently updated]*

10. The examining Inspectors have already identified conflict with the site design guidance.

11. Given all the above, it is clear that the site does not meet the criteria set out in the *Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant Programme for 2025-2026 Guidance Notes*.

12. In effect this means that the council have a strategy for site provision for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation that as no realistic prospect of being able to be delivered. As such, the plan in our view is unable to be found sound.

Further site allocations

13. We welcome the council's commitment to a *further site assessment process across the city to identify additional pitches that will meet the gap in provision of 55 pitches.*

We would like to know the timescales for this as in our view the plan is unable to be adopted in advance of this happening.

Transit provision

14. The Inspector's clearly state that in order for the plan to be found sound provision must be made for 10 transit pitches. However, the 11th September committee report does not commit to this, and the response to Action Point HS4.1 sets out the following:

The Replacement LDP does not rule out provision within Cardiff; rather, it recognises that the most appropriate location for transit pitches may emerge through ongoing research and regional discussions. The plan therefore retains sufficient flexibility to accommodate transit provision should a Cardiff-based site ultimately be required.

15. Given this, the council have failed to address this point properly and the plan is unable to be found sound.

Dr Simon Ruston MRTPI on behalf of Gypsy Traveller Wales November 2026

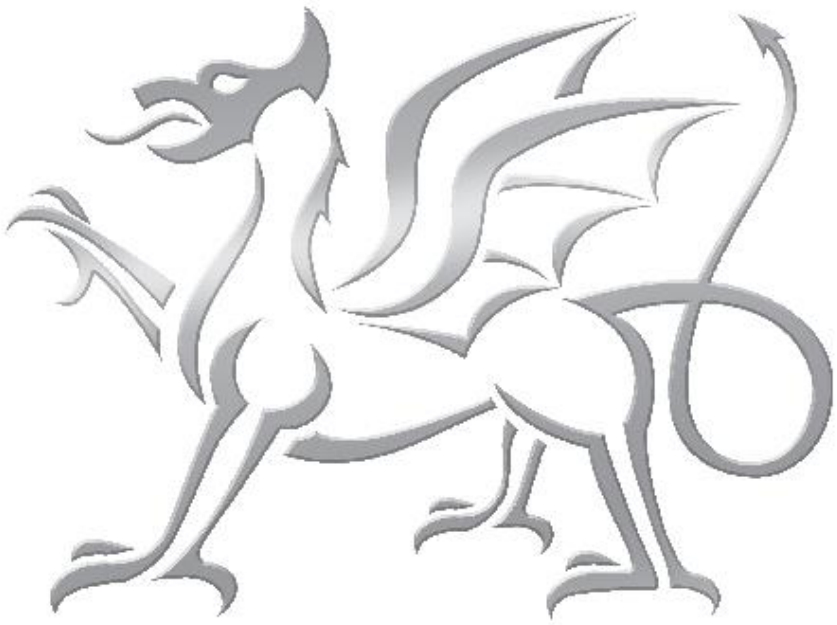
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant Programme for 2025-2026 Guidance Notes

Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant

Programme for 2025-2026

Guidance Notes



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Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant Programme Guidance 2025-2026

Introduction

The Sites Capital Grant is intended to improve the quality of life for Gypsy and Traveller site residents by:

- Developing new pitches
- Acquiring land for the purpose of new pitches
- Providing new facilities on existing sites
- Improving existing facilities provided on sites

A local authorities application for funding must clearly demonstrate how its proposal fits in with local strategic plans (e.g. the Local Development Plan and their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment).

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant Programme

The Sites Capital Grant is available for developments which will commence during the year 2025-2026. Applications will be considered for single or multi-year projects. The grant funding may cover up to 100% of site development costs. Welsh Government operates a £200k per new pitch threshold on local authority sites.

This guidance sets out what information and administrative arrangements are required from local authorities as part of the application process. All applications must be made on the application template provided by the Welsh Government. Both essential documents and additional documents to be attached, as appropriate.

Funding of £3.44million has been made available for this programme during the financial year 2025-26.

Eligibility

Funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant is currently only available to Welsh local authorities and not privately owned sites. If in doubt about the eligibility of a funding request please contact the team to discuss in advance of submitting an application.

What we are looking to fund:

- New site development (local authority transit sites and pitches including land acquisition). In addition, we will consider applications supporting temporary/negotiated stopping places that meet a transit need even if the requirement is primarily seasonal and not year-round
- Site extensions to existing local authority sites
- Enhance energy efficiency
- Renewable energy installations
- Establish digital infrastructure connectivity
- Refurbishment of existing local authority sites (See Annex 2 for criteria)

<u>Things which are ineligible for funding:</u>

☒ Privately owned sites
☒ This grant cannot be used for any maintenance issues. These should be funded by the local authority site owner through pitch fees received
☒ Land acquisition may be considered for the purpose of new pitches, but land remediation costs and feasibility studies are ineligible. This includes, amongst other things, costs arising from investigating or rectifying former mine workings, landfill or archaeological digs
☒ Sites on unsuitable development land. The panel will also take account of any wider evidence or objections from other Welsh Government departments or statutory bodies (Natural Resources Wales) and reject applications where proposed sites are located in inappropriate locations e.g C1 and C2 flood zones
☒ Retrospective works

If there is an outstanding objection relating to site suitability on any matter from a statutory body or Welsh Government Department in relation to a planning application, this will be considered when determining the acceptability of grant funding.

Application process

Local authorities can bid throughout the year from April onwards with no deadline for submissions. However, until July priority will be given to bids received across this financial year, for new pitches in order to address the unmet need across Wales.

If funds remain thereafter, other bids will also be considered with priority of the following sub-categories:

- Energy – installation of domestic rate utility meters
- Digital connection
- Installation of renewable energy
- Refurbishment

Applications must be clearly itemised and fully costed in the application form. No grants can be awarded without this.

All applications must set out how the proposed development aligns with the Welsh Government's 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (2015)' guidance to maximise renewable energy generation and benefit energy efficiency by providing an energy efficiency report on the planned utilities being put in and/or a projection of the total costs per pitch in terms of affordability.

The design and location of proposed developments must address any significant risks arising from climate change and extreme weather (including flooding, drought, wildfire, storms, and high temperatures).

- Each application will be assessed in line with these guidance notes and the presence of any individual element on the eligibility list above is not a guarantee the Welsh Government will award funding.
- Stage 1 Applications will be assessed against the criteria above by a Welsh Government panel. - Has all relevant information and supporting documentation been received?
- Stage 2 applications reviewed. The panel will then provide recommendations to the Welsh Ministers to approve or reject applications.

- Those local authorities whose applications are approved will be issued with award letters to enable them to formally commence their project. Monthly virtual monitoring meetings arranged by WG's Grants Manager.
- 6 monthly monitoring visits will be arranged by WG's Grants Manager at which residents or potential residents views/feedback will also be sought about the progress of the site development/refurbishment.

If further information is requested, the application will not be able to move forward through this process until that information is provided.

Assessment of bids

Applications will be assessed by a panel of Welsh Government officials against the following criteria:

Eligibility:

- Does the funding request meet the eligibility criteria above?

Meeting identified needs:

- Will the proposal address a clearly **assessed need** within the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment?
- Do affected Gypsy and Traveller communities support the application?
- What is the expected impact of the proposed work on Gypsy and Traveller communities within the local authority and across Wales?

Standards:

- Does the development align with the Welsh Government's 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' (2015) guidance?
- Does the site and proposed work meet the 'sustainable development principle' under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

Financial considerations:

- Does the application represent **value for money**?
- Is the site and proposed work **sustainable**? Is the land sustainable, suitable and safe for development? What is the lifespan of the site? Is the site sustainable in terms of the families future growth and needs? Are the quality of the

materials proposed sustainable in the longer term? Will the development be resilient to the impacts of climate change?
- Will the project **deliver** to time and budget?

Equality

We (Welsh Government) want to work with organisations who are proud of their reputation, what they deliver, and their conduct. This guidance is designed to highlight and clarify the types of behaviours, cultures and values Welsh Government expects to see 'lived out' by its grant recipients and the need to remove the barriers that particular groups face, including Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority people, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, disabled people and LGBTQ+ people.

Supporting Documentation

Please ensure you enclose the following documents with your application for funding:

Essential (all applications):

- Evidence that full planning permission is in place for the proposed works. Without this, an application will not be considered
- A completed application in the template form, outlining a prioritised list of work to be undertaken.
- Breakdown of projected expenditure (Excel format);
- Project Plan / Gantt chart outlining proposed timetable for delivery of works (including breakdown for each financial year included in the bid);
- Risk Register setting out any potential risks to delivery of the project which the local authority has identified and mitigation;
- Evidence that relevant site development permissions are in place and the local authority is the owner in relation to the land, as defined by section 3 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013;
- For new sites, evidence of need as identified by your Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs).
- Evidence of meaningful consultation with residents, or prospective residents, of the site to be developed and a summary of their views of proposals and how the proposed works will improve their living conditions.

- Including the views of Gypsy and Traveller stakeholder organisations. For new sites confirmation of meaningful consultation is required that potential residents have had the opportunity to view the works and provide feedback
- An assessment of the environmental impact of the site and proposed work.
- For refurbishment bids, evidence of a site management and maintenance plan to include the proposed schedule of ongoing maintenance work for the site including work undertaken in the last 12 months.

Additional documents if applicable:

- A copy of the management contract if the local authority has contracted another individual or organisation to manage the site which is subject to the application.
- For refurbishment bids, evidence will be required of how much of the rental income goes towards the maintenance of the blocks
- Evidence of an agreement between local authorities if they plan to develop a shared Gypsy and Traveller site such as a transit site.

Please note that essential and applicable additional information must accompany all applications. Where any such information is omitted, the Welsh Government may offer a limited opportunity for its re-submission.

Further Information

Assessed Need

The purpose of the Sites Capital Grant is to improve the quality of life for Gypsy and Traveller site residents. Applications must demonstrate how refurbishment projects will improve conditions for existing residents or how new site projects will address an existing lack of provision. Costs of extensive refurbishment can sometimes match or exceed the costs of new site development so local authorities must make the case for change and consider the impact of current facilities on residents' quality of life.

Local authorities are also expected to have consulted fire service, police and utility companies prior to achieving planning permission

to ensure that new sites (or extensions) can meet the Welsh Government's 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' standards. The Welsh Government will request these responses if they are not already included in the application.

It may not be possible for the Welsh Government to fund all elements of the work proposed. In this event, it is possible the Welsh Government may fund an individual element or elements of the work. It would be helpful for applicants to list the work in order of **priority** and clearly identify if one element of the work is dependent on another.

Deliverability

Applications for funding spanning more than one financial year must set out the works and budgets for each financial year. The works should clearly be outlined in supporting Gantt charts covering each financial year. The Welsh Government will only approve funding claims for works completed.

A key aspect of assessing the deliverability of proposed projects will be scrutiny of the Gantt chart and risk register which must be submitted. The Welsh Government retains the right to refuse funding where it is not convinced a project will deliver to time or budget, based upon the evidence provided in the application and responses to subsequent requests for information.

Where problems affecting delivery of the project arise, the allocated grants manager within the Welsh Government must be notified **immediately.** If the local authority cannot complete the project within the specified timetable, some or all of the grant award may be withheld or recovered. Further details regarding this issue are included within the award letters which will be issued to successful applicants.

If the local authority wishes to significantly vary the work for which grant funding was awarded, written approval must be sought from the Welsh Government **in advance** of implementing any changes. There is no guarantee the Welsh Government will be prepared to agree to or approve any such changes as these will also need to be assessed in line with the assessment criteria and significant changes may impact on the level of grant which can be paid. The

allocated grants manager must be notified at the earliest opportunity.

Please note no applications for funding will be accepted until confirmation of full planning consent for the project has been received by the Welsh Government.

Designing Sites standards

The Welsh Government published the 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites' guidance in May 2015. The guidance aims to improve conditions on Gypsy and Traveller sites across Wales. The guidance is intended as a guide to local authorities to design and provide appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. It contains practical guidance to assist local authorities to ensure their local authority sites, temporary/negotiated stopping places and transit sites.

The guidance advises each site will need to be considered in the context of its own particular circumstances. The size of sites in terms of pitch numbers is best determined by local need, planning permission and through engagement with local communities.

The Welsh Government will require the full specification for the site project, as part of the application, and at the minimum prior to any funding claims being processed. This is to ensure that our standards are achieved and that the project is delivered as expected.

Payment and monitoring arrangements

The grant will be monitored to ensure value for money and quality is achieved. On a date specified in the award letter, the local authority must submit a progress report to their allocated grant manager explaining the development progress to date and a claim for grant payment in relation to the works completed. The local authority will also need to address pre-funding conditions which are outlined in greater detail within their award letter. The Welsh Government may also process any additional claims for grant payment providing they relate to works completed and are supported by a progress report, breakdown of expenditure and Welsh Government claim form.

An end of project report, breakdown of expenditure and Welsh Government claim form is required once a project is completed. The required contents of these reports are outlined in the terms and conditions of the grant funding award letter which will be sent out to successful applicants. Funded projects will be subject to monitoring visits during 2025/26 and beyond for projects covering more than one financial year. If a project is behind schedule, the Welsh Government may request a revised Gantt chart and risk register setting out mitigating actions to ensure the project remains deliverable and on track.

The local authority must provide the Welsh Government with such other information as to its activities or proposed activities, and as to its use or proposed use of all or any part of this funding, as the Welsh Government may reasonably require. The Welsh Government will require photographs of the funded development with permission to reproduce them in publications and on the Welsh Government website.

The Welsh Government also recommends regular meetings with residents throughout the project to ensure that expectations can be managed and a dialogue maintained. The end of project report should include feedback from residents on the project's delivery.

Land ownership

All applications must provide a clear explanation and evidence of the ownership arrangements in place in relation to the land on which the site or proposed site is/will be constructed. This explanation must explain who owns the freehold and whether the land is subject to a lease. If the land is subject to a lease in favour of the local authority then evidence must be provided to demonstrate the local authority has entered into a lease agreement with the land owner for a minimum of 21 years and the site will continue to be used as a Gypsy and Traveller site for at least 21 years from the date of submitting the grant application. The terms of any lease must ensure the local authority possesses all the rights of an "owner", as defined in the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

Welsh Ministers may consider registering a land charge in respect of any land in connection to which funding has been given. Where applications do not provide sufficient evidence as to the ownership of the land, or where the evidence provided suggests the ownership

arrangements are unsatisfactory or inappropriate for the application to receive funding, the application will be unsuccessful.

Sustainability

Sustainability issues should be considered when sourcing materials used for refurbishment and new sites. Responsible sourcing of materials has environmental, social and economic dimensions. Sourcing of materials is based on the fundamental principle of life cycle of the materials ensuring the materials are recycled or re-used where possible or are controlled in the supply chain by responsible sourcing. This can be achieved by following a Sustainable Procurement Hierarchy and obtaining materials from independent, licensed competent bodies who can confirm compliance with the required standards of sustainability. For example, suppliers of building materials can provide information in relation to products which certify their sustainable values. Please refer to the Low Carbon & Resource Efficient Construction Procurement Guide on WRAP Cymru's website for more information.

The design and location of proposed developments, and any materials used, must be appropriate for future climate and weather scenarios over the intended lifespan of the development.

Where possible, applications should demonstrate a clear sustainable, long term approach to reducing natural resources consumption (i.e. water, gas, electricity) on sites, such as through the installation of solar panels or the installation of rainwater harvester systems, to contribute towards the sustainability of the project, and help keep energy and utility costs for residents on site reasonable. Any reduced household utility bills resulting from these improvements should be passed on to residents.

Value for Money

The Welsh Government is committed to improving value for money in relation to Gypsy and Traveller site provision. This grant has an upper threshold of £200k per pitch.

All applications will be assessed for value for money. Local authorities should demonstrate 'best value' in the procurement of services and goods has been applied and outline their procurement approach to ensure value for money. The Welsh Government also

sets out specific requirements for procurement approaches in its award letters to successful applicants.

Costs

Where possible, costs should be based on quotes obtained from contractors. If this has not been possible, the application must explain the reasons for this and how the quotations were found. There is no guarantee funding will be approved for increased projected costs after the application is submitted. However, requests to re-profile project expenditure in year may be considered and will be subject to applicants demonstrating key outcomes and a commitment the project will be delivered on time.

Management fees

Any management and professional fees relating to the project work must be clearly itemised and should be proportionate. They must not exceed 10% of the overall amount of funding requested.

Contingency

An application for grant funding may include a sum, not exceeding 10% of the total project cost, to cover contingency costs. Where an application is successful, the element of the grant which relates to contingency costs will be withheld by the Welsh Government pending a request for its release. Any request for the release of this element of the grant must be set out in writing and include a full explanation of the circumstances which give rise to it being required.

Annex 1: Glossary

Local authority site	This is a site owned and operated by the local authority. This site will be designated for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site indefinitely. Residents on these sites can expect to occupy their pitches for as long as they abide by the terms of their pitch agreements, under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. Working space may also be provided on, or near, sites for activities carried out by community members.
Pitch	Land on a mobile home site where occupiers are entitled to station their mobile homes indefinitely (unless stated in their pitch agreement). Typically includes an amenity block, space for a static caravan and touring caravan and parking. The layout of the pitch will depend on the overall site design. An important element in the design and size of pitches is the intended capacity. 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.
Private site with planning permission	A private Gypsy and Traveller site refers to private owned land with planning permission that has been officially approved by the local planning authority for permanent residential use by Gypsies and Travellers. Usually, these sites are small and contain a small number of pitches usually for a family. These sites are private for use by that family only.
Private site without planning permission	Land that has been purchased by a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community, which has not received the necessary planning permission from the local planning authority to be used as a Gypsy and Traveller site.
Site	A site will include a range of facilities, (dependant on size of land and requirements), connections to utilities, community building, play area, footpath around the site, public lighting, and fencing/trees to create a perimeter boundary for security and enclosure.

Temporary/Negotiated stopping place	These are intended to be short-term in nature to assist local authorities where a need for pitches is accepted. Provision should be made for waste disposal, water supply and sanitation at a minimum. These sites only have planning permission or a site licence for a limited period. Residents on these sites can expect to occupy their pitches for the duration of the planning permission or site licence (or as long as they abide by the terms of their pitch agreements, under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013, whichever is sooner).
Transit pitch	Land on a mobile home site where occupiers are entitled to station their mobile homes for a maximum of three months. Transit pitches can exist on permanent local authority sites, however, this is not recommended.
Transit site	Transit sites are permanent facilities designed for temporary use by occupiers for a maximum of three months at a time. Local authorities will be responsible for maintaining the site waste disposal, water supply and sanitation may be made available subject to a charge. Specific terms under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 apply on these sites. Working space may also be provided on, or near, sites for activities carried out by community members.
Unauthorised encampment	Land occupied without the permission of the owner or without the correct land use planning permission. Encampments may be used on a temporary basis in the absence of available transit or temporary/negotiated stopping places provision and may be accepted by the local authority, whilst alternative sites are developed.

Annex 2: Refurbishment criteria

- This can include demolishing existing amenity blocks and building new blocks in line with Welsh 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites (2015)' Guidance, which will be updated and reviewed in 2025. Eligible elements of capital expenditure include:

  - ✓ Drainage / pipes / sewerage
  - ✓ Hardstanding
  - ✓ New roads
  - ✓ Fencing and gates
  - ✓ Site lighting
  - ✓ Electrical supply / distribution / rewiring for domestic rate meters
  - ✓ Water supply / distribution
  - ✓ Gas supply / distribution
  - ✓ Amenity block refurbishment – evidence will be required of how much of the rental income goes towards the maintenance of the blocks
  - ✓ Digital infrastructure - explore options for providing all sites with phone lines and broadband connections.
  - ✓ Installation or refurbishment of site manager's office
  - ✓ Community building installation or refurbishment
  - ✓ Safety improvements e.g. speed bumps, pedestrian barriers
  - ✓ Play area installation or improvements
  - ✓ Landscaping and green spaces
  - ✓ Energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation
  - ✓ land acquisition may be considered but see note below as some associated costs are excluded.
  - ✓ Site security