



RTPI Cymru

Royal Town Planning Institute
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e-mail response sent to: SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: Inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 27,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,300 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of planning, working for the long-term common good and well-being of current and future generations. The RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the above Inquiry. Our general comments on the key issues in relation to planning are set out below.

Provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers can often be a complex matter, requiring effective and efficient joint working across a wide range of sectors and stakeholders, including local settled communities and the Gypsy, Roma and Travelling communities.

Provision of sites should be addressed at both local and regional levels by Local Development Plans (LDPs), and eventually the emerging Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) – as identified by Policy 19 of [Future Wales: The National Plan](#). SDPs and joint working across Authorities provide the opportunity to address a number of issues in respect of the provision of sites, including the joined-up planning of transit sites and other cross boundary issues.

The existing policy framework in relation to the provision of sites requires up dating to take into account the latest version of Planning Policy Wales, (PPW11) etc. The opportunity

should also be taken to address any issues around interpretation of the guidance, ensuring that it is clear and consistent across all parties involved, including Planning Inspectors.

We are aware that many Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) experience difficulties with sites coming forward, particularly at the allocation stage, and estate agents, landowners etc. are not as willing to engage, unlike with residential sites. Any good practice on this could be usefully shared to inform future improvements to the process.

Equally, we recognise the difficulties of the travelling communities engaging with the planning process at the right stages. A shortage of professional agents with the specialist knowledge could be a factor in this respect. Planning Aid Wales has produced a guide on the legislation and the planning process for gypsy and traveller communities: [Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites – Planning Aid Wales](#) Resources to support such initiatives, engagement and wider understanding is important.

Throughout the planning process, both officers and elected members are required to deal with a number of complex and subjective issues, which can sometimes be difficult to balance and weigh up in the decision-making process. The importance of on-going member training in this respect along with the sharing of experiences and good practice across Wales would be helpful in supporting processes and a general wider understanding of the issues.

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 020 7929 8197 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPI
Director
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