

SUBJECT:	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	6th January 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet Adoption of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2021 - 2026 detailing the accommodation needs for Gypsy and Travellers in Monmouthshire.
- 1.2 To seek approval for its submission to Welsh Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopts the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpersons Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2021 – 2026) and to submit it to the Welsh Government.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Opinion Research Services Ltd. (ORS) assisted the Housing and Communities Department at Monmouthshire with the preparation of this assessment as part of a wider commission to support the preparation of new GTAA's for Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
- 3.2 Summary
 - 3.2.1 The report identifies a need for 13 pitches by 2033 comprising 8 pitches in current need, 1 newly arising 2020-2025 (child growing up) and 4 newly arising 2026-2033 (children growing up).
 - 3.2.1 The current need for 8 pitches comprises 5 pitches on an unauthorised site at Llanccayo, 1 on an unauthorised site at Llanvetherine, 1 overcrowded in Portskewett and 1 overcrowded dealt with via recent planning permission in Crick.
- 3.3 Under Part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, all local authorities must undertake a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment every five years and to make provision where assessments identify an unmet need for mobile home pitches
- 3.4 The Council conducted a previous assessment in 2015 covering the period 2016 – 2021. This is the Council's second assessment and it will run concurrently with the Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018 – 2033, providing a robust and up to date evidence base.
- 3.5 The process of undertaking the Assessment followed the guidance contained in the Welsh Government's document, 'Undertaking Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments' published in May 2015.
- 3.6 The following paragraphs provides a brief summary of the Assessment process and its findings. For detailed information, please refer to the Assessment report.

3.7 Process:

3.7.1 Steering Group: Due to the time constraints involved in meeting the LDP timeframe, the small number of Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople households in the county and the COVID 19 pandemic it was agreed that the steering group convened for the 2016 assessment would reconvene as a “virtual group” for the present assessment. Its responsibilities remained the same, that is:

- Helping to identify households living within the community to contact;
- To help scrutinise and provide feedback on the results;
- To sign off the report to be submitted for scrutiny and adoption by the Council and its subsequent submission to Welsh Government for approval.

3.7.2 Household Questionnaire: Gypsy and Traveller households identified through the forum completed the standard questionnaire as per the 2015 Guidance during October, November and December 2019.

3.7.3 The “Pitch Need” Calculation:

3.7.3.1 Welsh Government GTAA Guidance requires an assessment of current and future pitch needs and sets out a prescribed framework for undertaking a GTAA assessment. This GTAA follows the proscribed framework contained in Guidance.

3.7.3.2 As with any assessment of housing need the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case, the key issue for residential pitches is to compare the supply that is available for occupation with the current and future needs of the households. The “need” for Gypsy and Traveller pitches consists of the following components:

1) Current Residential Supply:

- Occupied local authority pitches - there are no public sites in Monmouthshire;
- Occupied authorised private pitches - there are three in Monmouthshire;
- Vacant local authority pitches and available private pitches - there are no vacant local authority pitches and five unimplemented private pitches;
- Vacant pitches expected in the near future – there are no vacant pitches expected in the future in Monmouthshire;
- New local authority pitches and private pitches with planning permission - there is one pitch with planning permission.

2) Current Residential Demand: Assessing current need by the following method

- Households on unauthorised encampments;
- Households on unauthorised developments;
- Concealed /over-crowded/doubled-up households;
- Conventional housing – movement from bricks and mortar;
- New households to arrive from waiting lists/in-migration.

3) Future Demand: The formation of new households during the study period.

3.7.3.3 Normally, the household growth rate used for an assessment of future needs is informed by local demographic evidence which is used to adjust the national growth rate of 1.50% up or down based on the proportion of those aged under 18 (by travelling status).

3.7.3.4 The approach taken for this GTAA is to treat need as:

- Only those households on unauthorised and tolerated sites that are already in the planning system (i.e. sites/pitches for which a planning application has been made or is likely to be made);
- Those otherwise known to the Council as being resident in the area;
- Those identified through the household survey as requiring pitches.

3.8. Findings:

3.8.1 The assessment identified thirteen households in total as being from the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople community in Monmouthshire. Seven households completed the questionnaire. Four household had their applications completed by proxy that is, using household composition details from previous planning applications. Two households declined to participate in the Assessment.

3.8.2 There is an estimated unmet need for nine pitches to 2025, with a further unmet need of four pitches from 2026 to the end of the Replacement LDP Plan period in 2033;

3.8.3 There is not a need for a permanent transit / stopping pitch in Monmouthshire.

3.8.4 No additional households who wanted or needed to live in Monmouthshire have been drawn to the attention of the Council from other Welsh authorities.

4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 The Gypsy and Traveller communities are recognised in law as an ethnic minority and the Council is required by law to address identified housing need. The communities are often subject to prejudice and statistically have lower outcomes in health and education than the settled community. Not having a safe and authorised place to call home reduces the likelihood of those outcomes being positive. This report seeks to positively address this issue by identifying the level of accommodation need to 2033. In terms of sustainable development, this would be considered via land use planning decisions. The Equalities Impact and Sustainable development assessments are attached (See Appendix 2).

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1

	Benefit	Risk	Comment
Option 1: The <u>recommended option</u> is to agree the contents and findings of the GTAA.	<p>The Council has to be able to meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Showpeople.</p> <p>The GTAA is an up-to-date assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller and Showpeople households in Monmouthshire. It will inform the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).</p>	<p>There are no risks to this option.</p>	<p>It is a statutory duty that the Council conduct a GTAA every 5 years. It has followed the methodology recommended by Welsh Government Guidance to produce an accurate and robust evidence base of the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller and Showpeople</p>

			households in Monmouthshire.
Option 2: Not to accept contents and findings of the GTAA.	There are no benefits to this option.	The risk of this option is that the Council will not be able to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller and Showpeople and will be in breach of its statutory duty.	

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1. Financial

Should the Council decide to develop site provision there could be a capital cost including land acquisition and provision of services. It is worth noting that the Council can bid for financial assistance from Welsh Government to assist in meeting the costs of site delivery; but the funds are limited, cannot be used for land purchase, and are subject to a bidding process.

7. CONSULTEES:

Enterprise DMT

Head of Placemaking, Housing, Highways and Flooding

Head of Planning

Housing and Communities Manager

Planning Policy Manager

MCC Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Steering Group

Select Committee

- 7.1 The Committee supported the Recommendations. Councillor Brown proposed a multi-disciplinary approach, in which the Housing, Planning, Environmental Health and Licensing colleagues provide combined advice to applicants. Officers agreed that joint working is a good idea. Joint guidance would be considered but, as they are separate regulatory systems, the suggestion that this is a shared policy is not permissible legally.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Undertaking Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments' (May 2015)

Part 3 Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Gypsy and Traveller Assessment Report

9. **AUTHOR:** Stephen Griffiths, Strategy & Policy Officer (Housing & Communities)

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644455

E-mail: stephengriffiths@monmouthshire.gov.uk