

SUBJECT: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

MEETING: Special Select

DATE: 11th January 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide information regarding the Monmouthshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) undertaken by Housing and Communities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To note and provide observations on the recommendations of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpersons Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) annexed to this report (Appendix 1).

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Under Part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, all local authorities must undertake a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment and to make provision where assessments identify an unmet need for mobile home pitches (See Appendix 2).
- 3.2 The assessments were undertaken with reference to Welsh Government guidance document, 'Undertaking Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments' published in May 2015 (See Appendix 3).
- 3.3 All Local Authorities have until the 26th February 2016 to submit their assessments to the Welsh Government for scrutiny.
- 3.4 The purpose of the assessment is to inform the Council's LDP Annual Monitoring Report and the LDP Review Process to meet both current and future needs for Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 3.5 The following provides a brief summary of the Assessment process, and its Findings. For a more detailed information please refer to the Assessment report.

3.5.1 Process:

- A Steering Group comprising of important key stakeholders and members of the Gypsy and Traveller community was formed to oversee the assessment process and its findings. The group had a number of responsibilities including:
 - Helping to identify households living within the community to contact and survey using the standard questionnaire contained in the Guidance.
 - To help scrutinise and provide feedback on the results:
 - To sign off the report to be submitted to Welsh Government.
- Household survey interviews were conducted between June and November 2015 by officers from Housing & Communities Service, with the assistance of the Regional Equalities Council's Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer. The Assessment's core findings, conclusions and recommendations are based on the answers to the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Findings:

- The Assessment identified a higher number of Gypsy & Traveller households in Monmouthshire than previous data sources indicated. 11 households were identified in total, 7 living in bricks and mortar and 4 in mobile accommodation.
- There is an estimated unmet need for eight pitches to 2021, based on overcrowding, unauthorised occupation and the likelihood of cultural aversion to conventional housing.
- A need for a transit site has not been identified due to the low number of unauthorised encampments in the County.
- A need for stopping place has been identified.
- A need for travelling Showpeople pitches has not been identified.
- There is an expectation that the Council should have a waiting list to allow Gypsy & Traveller households to register an interest in obtaining an authorised pitch for a mobile home, as well as for bricks and mortar accommodation
- A number of households within the community do not understand the Council's Planning Policy in relation to pitch provision.
- No additional households who wanted or needed to live in Monmouthshire have been drawn to the attention of the Council from other Welsh authorities
- Further consideration is given to amending current planning permission to allow lifetime occupation by additional named individuals in order to address identified unmet need

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council will be in breach of its statutory duty should it fail to provide and submit a Gypsy and Traveller Assessment to the Welsh Government by the 26th February 2016.

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To comply with its statutory duty under Part 3 of Housing (Wales) Act 2014

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 Welsh Government grant assistance can be applied for to assist in meeting these costs; but these are limited and are subject to a bidding process.

7. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 No implications have been identified in respect of this report. The Equalities Impact and Sustainable development assessments are attached (See Appendix 4).

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications identified (See Appendix 4).

8. CONSULTEES:

Planning

MCC Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Steering Group

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Undertaking Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments' (May 2015)

Part 3 Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Gypsy and Traveller Assessment Report

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