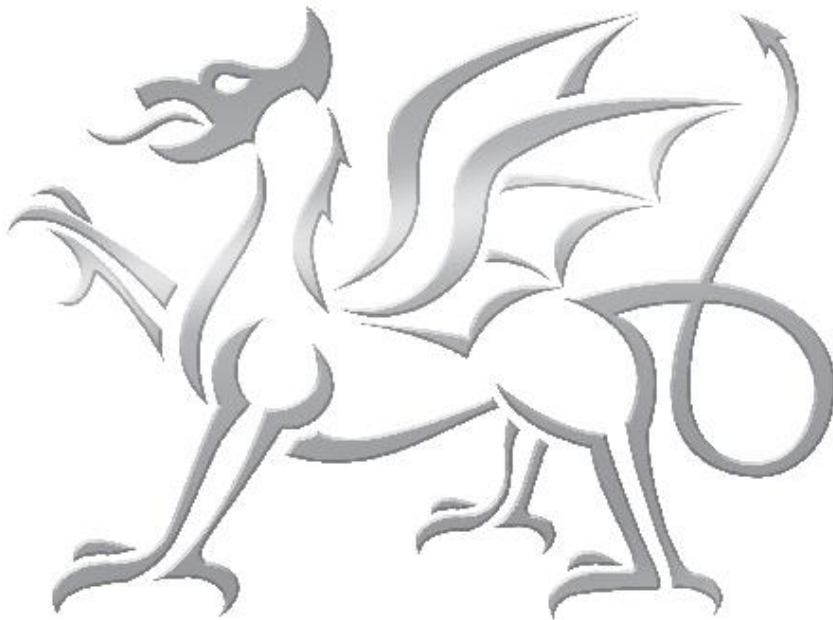


# Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant Programme for 2024-2025

## Guidance Notes



# Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant Programme Guidance 2024-2025

## Introduction

The Sites Capital Grant is intended to improve the quality of life for Gypsy and Traveller site residents by improving existing facilities provided on sites, the provision of new facilities on existing sites and the provision of new sites. A local authority's application for funding must clearly demonstrate how its proposal fits in with local strategic plans (e.g. the Local Development Plan or 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 2024-2025 and conclude by 31 March 2025. If developments will commence in 2024-25 but conclude *after* 31 March 2025 then Local Authorities should contact us to discuss their proposals prior to submitting an application. The grant funding may cover up to 100% of site development costs. Welsh Government operates a £150k per pitch threshold for new developments.

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 should be attached, as appropriate.

There will be two bidding windows for applications. The first from **8<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 and the second in the summer 2024.**

**The Welsh Government has the discretion to consider late applications in exceptional circumstances. Such decisions will be made by the Welsh Government in the interest of achieving fairness in respect of all applications.**

Funding of £3.44million has been made available for this programme during the financial year 2024/25, Expressions of Interest are welcomed from all 22 Welsh local authorities.

## **Eligibility**

Funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant is currently only available to Welsh local authorities. If in doubt about the eligibility of a funding request please contact the team to discuss in advance of submitting an application.

### **Things which are eligible for funding:**

- New site development (permanent residential sites and transit sites). In addition, we will consider applications supporting, temporary stopping places that meet a transit need even if the requirement is primarily seasonal and not year-round. Temporary stopping places will be considered as long as local authorities can demonstrate the facilities are suitable and appropriate.
- Site extensions to existing local authority sites;
- Refurbishment of existing local authority sites. This can include demolishing existing amenity blocks and building new blocks in line with Welsh Government's ['Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites \(2015\)'](#) Guidance. Eligible elements of capital expenditure include:
  - Drainage
  - Hardstanding
  - New roads
  - Fencing and gates
  - Site lighting
  - Electrical supply / distribution / rewiring
  - Water supply / distribution
  - Gas supply / distribution
  - Underground systems / pipes / sewerage
  - Communications infrastructure
  - Amenity block refurbishment
  - Digital infrastructure
  - 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
  - Energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation

- In exceptional case land acquisition may be considered but see note below as some associated costs are excluded.

### **Things which are ineligible for funding:**

- This grant cannot be used for ongoing maintenance costs. These should be funded by the local authority site owner through pitch fees received.
- In exceptional cases land acquisition may be considered, 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.

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.

### **Assessment criteria**

Requirements must be clearly itemised in the application. No claims can be paid 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).

## **Application process:**

- Applications to be submitted by the deadline of either bidding window.
- Stage 1 checks by WG assessment panel - Has all relevant information and supporting documentation been received?
- Stage 2 applications reviewed.
- Successful applications confirmed and Grant Award Letters sent to LAs.
- 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 Criteria**

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**?
- 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' <sup>1</sup>under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

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<sup>1</sup> [Sustainable Development Principle](#)

### **Financial considerations:**

- Does the application represent **value for money**?
- Is the site and proposed work **sustainable**? Is the land sustainable and suitable 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?

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. Applications will be assessed against the criteria above by a Welsh Government panel. 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.

### **Supporting Documentation**

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

#### **Essential (all applications)**

- A completed application in the template form provided, outlining a prioritised list of work to be undertaken.
- Evidence of consultation with prospective or existing residents and the impact or benefit for residents, this will include what residents want to see at their sites and how the proposed works will improve their living conditions.
- 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 (GTAAAs).
- Evidence of meaningful consultation with residents, or prospective residents, of the site to be developed and a summary of their views of proposals and the views of GRT stakeholder organisations. For new sites confirmation 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.

### **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.
- Evidence of maintenance work which has been undertaken by the local authority in the last 12 months and details of any planned maintenance on the site to be refurbished.
- Evidence of an agreement between local authorities if they plan to develop a shared Gypsy and Traveller site.
- Evidence residents on any site to be refurbished have written agreements under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

**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.

## **Annex 1**

### **Glossary**

#### **Assessed Need**

Because 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 make the case for change and consider the impact of current facilities on residents' quality of life.

Applications for new sites must show how the proposal is linked to and accords with the local authority's GTAA findings and Local Development Plans.

Evidence of meaningful consultation with residents and other stakeholders when applying for funding, in line with the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 is essential. This includes evidence of consultation with prospective site residents for new site developments, if possible. Evidence of consultation should include dates of discussions, comments from stakeholders (positive and negative) and any agreed amendments made to the original proposals. Advocacy services and community tenant participation services can be accessed to support with this consultation and engagement work.

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.

Applications made in relation to transit sites may only be made by a single local authority but relate to a site which is intended to serve a local or regional purpose. Funding applications for regional transit sites should detail which authority will physically host the site, how running costs will be met and who will manage the site,



as well as any other relevant information on how local authorities intend to work together in relation to the site. Evidence must be provided that the costs of using the site will be accessible for Gypsies and Travellers.

We recognise that temporary stopping place options may be considered by local authorities, including in response to recurring seasonal demand. Welsh Government will consider applications for temporary stopping places provision if they are accessible, provide suitable facilities and security for Gypsy and Traveller communities and would be an improvement on unauthorised encampment options.

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 dependant on another.

## **Authorised Sites**

### **Permanent Residential Site**

A permanent residential site can be privately owned or owned 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 written statements, as required by Part 4 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. **Local authority sites would be eligible for Sites Capital Grant funding, private sites are ineligible.**

### **Transit Site**

Transit sites must be designated as such and cannot be occupied by residents for longer than 3 months at a time. This is to ensure pitches can be used for the intended purpose of facilitating the Gypsy and Traveller nomadic way of life. Specific provisions under chapter 3 of Schedule 2 to the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 apply in relation to these sites. **These sites are eligible for Sites Capital Grant funding.**

## Temporary Stopping Place

These are intended to be temporary and assist local authorities where a need for Gypsy and Traveller site accommodation is identified though none are currently available. Temporary stopping places can be provided to relocate inappropriately located encampments whilst alternative sites are found. Unlike transit sites, these are not intended only for transient communities and should not be a permanent solution. Temporary stopping places must make provision for waste disposal, water supply and sanitation at a minimum. Part 4 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 does not apply to these places because occupiers would not be legally entitled to a place on this site. **These sites would generally not be eligible for Sites Capital Grant funding.**

## Deliverability

Applications for funding spanning more than one financial year must set out the works and budgets for each 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 Welsh Government will not pay for any retrospective work completed prior to awarding funding to a Local Authority.

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 addresses the sizes of sites and amenity blocks, as well as natural resource efficiency, communications infrastructure, transit sites and children's play areas.

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 2024-25 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. These must be provided promptly on request.

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.

### **Sustainability**

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 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.

Applications should also demonstrate sustainable development under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including the impact environmental factors such as flooding, air quality, water quality and land quality can have on the well-being of individuals.

### **Managing Unauthorised camping<sup>2</sup>**

The Guidance on *Managing Unauthorised Camping (2013)* explains how public authorities should deal with vehicles on land without the landowner's or occupier's consent.

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<sup>2</sup> [Managing unauthorised camping: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

This is where Gypsies and Travellers occupy land without the permission of the owner or without the correct land use planning permission. The local authority, police, and anyone with sufficient interest in the land have powers to take possession of the land. The possession process is easier if alternative authorised sites are available. It is possible for local authorities to negotiate and encourage the use of negotiated stopping places rather than take enforcement action, where appropriate.

### **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 £150k per pitch.

### **Value for Money**

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 must be clearly itemised and should be proportionate. They must not exceed 10 per cent 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.