

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION

by

County Councillor James Evans

**Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing & Public Protection
June 2018**

REPORT AUTHOR: Housing Policy and Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy and Procedure

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed policy and procedure regarding the allocation of gypsy and traveller plots.
- 1.2. Please refer to Appendices 1 and 2 Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy and Procedure for further information.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. The Council's Housing Service (the Council) is landlord to two Gypsy and Traveller sites, one in Brecon which has 14 residential pitches and one in Welshpool which has 10 residential pitches. In addition there are plans to develop a permanent authorised site in Machynlleth.
- 2.2. When a pitch becomes vacant, it is the responsibility of the Housing Management and Options Officer to ensure allocations are made according to the needs of applicants and in such a way as to ensure the effective management of sites.
- 2.3. The policy and procedure looks to formalise the current practice with regard to the allocation of gypsy and traveller plots. It aims to ensure applicants and staff are aware of the assessment process, the criteria needed to be accepted onto the scheme, how applicants are prioritised and how an allocation is made
- 2.4. It is worth noting that there is no specific guidance contained in the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness on which a gypsy and traveller allocation policy is to be framed.

- 2.5. In order to achieve consistency, the policy mirrors the Common Housing Allocations policy which governs how social housing within Powys is allocated.
- 2.6. In order to be accepted onto the register, an applicant must be in housing need and ready to move. The applicant is then placed within one of four bands and within each band priority is given to those on the list the longest.
- 2.7. Family connection is key and due account will be taken of the need to ensure that families on the list will be compatible with other existing family groups in order to create and maintain a stable situation on the sites.
- 2.8. Consultation took place with:
 - Current Gypsy and Traveller tenants
 - Relevant Housing Staff
 - Legal Services
 - Welsh Government
- 2.9. The report is supported by the following appendices:
 - 1: Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy
 - 2: Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Procedure
 - 3: Single Integrated Impact Assessment
 - 4: Common Allocation Policy and Procedure

3. Options Considered / Available

- 3.1. Approve the policy and procedure. This will ensure clarity and consistency across the County and bring the Gypsy and Traveller Allocation policy in line with the Common Allocation Scheme policy. Appropriate advice and assistance will be given to applicants to help ensure their needs are met and where allocated help to create and maintain a stable environment on site.
- 3.2. Do not approve the policy and procedure. This will result in the Council having to follow an out of date policy where the assessment process and eligibility criteria are no longer viable given the introduction of a new housing IT system resulting in a failure to allocate sites appropriately.

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 4.1 The preferred choice is to approve the policy and procedure for the reasons provided above.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Is an impact assessment required? Yes

5.2 If yes is it attached? Yes

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

6.1 The policy feeds into the Councils priority of “Supporting people in the community to live fulfilled lives” as it will help to ensure that suitable housing for everyone, including gypsy and traveller sites, is provided.

6.2 It also helps to meet the wellbeing goal of “A more Equal Wales” as the policy recognises that everyone’s needs are met in different way and in the same way that an applicant can register their interest for social accommodation, so an applicant can register their interest for a gypsy and traveller site.

6.3 The policy also helps to ensure the wellbeing goal “A Wales of Cohesive Communities” as it allows the Council to maintain a stable situation on sites by ensuring that families on the waiting list will be compatible with other existing family groups so as not to destabilise the harmony of life for existing occupants.

7. Local Member(s)

7.1 At the current moment the policy and procedure may have significance for those local members covering the Welshpool and Brecon areas due to the location of the gypsy and traveller sites however, ultimately the policy applies county wide.

8. Other Front Line Services

8.1 Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

9. Communications

9.1 Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes

Have they made a comment? If Yes insert here.

“No proactive communication action required for this report”

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT,

10.1 Legal – The policy is in line with other LA's and appropriate to our current Common Housing Register Policy

10.2 Finance – The Finance Manager notes the content of the report.

11. Scrutiny

11.1 Has this report been scrutinised? No

12. Statutory Officers

12.1 The Head of Financial Services (Deputy S151 Officer) notes the content of the report.

12.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) commented as follows: "I note the legal comments and have nothing to add to the report."

13. Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest, he/she should declare it, complete the relevant notification for and refer the matter to Cabinet for decision.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Policy and Procedure set out in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively	This will ensure clarity and consistency across the County and bring the Gypsy and Traveller Allocation policy in line with the Common Allocation Scheme policy. Appropriate advice and assistance will be given to applicants to help ensure their needs are met and where allocated help to create and maintain a stable environment on site.

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All members
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Simon Inkson
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	

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