
Cymorth Cynllunio Cymru

Ymgysylltiad y gymuned a chynllunio

Planning Aid Wales

Community engagement in planning



Consultation response to 'Draft circular for the planning of Gypsy, Traveller and showpeople sites'

To: planconsultations-h@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 22nd May 2017

1. About Planning Aid Wales

1.1 Planning Aid Wales is the charity supporting communities and planning authorities to work better together in shaping places. We are core funded by Welsh Government but retain a high degree of freedom to act independently on behalf of communities.

1.2 Planning aid is about giving people the information and support they need to understand and engage positively with planning. We work to help local communities in Wales to understand and engage more effectively with planning. We do this by explaining the planning process from a community perspective and building capacity for constructive community engagement.

1.3 We also work with local planning authorities and Welsh Government to encourage more effective community involvement in the planning process.

1.4 When responding to consultations such as this, our aim is to identify potential barriers which might prevent effective or manageable community involvement in planning.

1.5 We are happy for our response to this consultation to be made public.

1.6 Our responses to specific consultation questions are given in italics below:

2. Consultation response

Consultation Question 1

Do you agree that the draft Circular provides appropriate information on current legislation and guidance that sets the context for local authorities to provide appropriate sites and accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities ?

Yes, we do agree.

Planning Aid Wales has been helping Gypsy and Traveller families engage with the planning process for many years. In the past we have given extensive free advice through to appeal and inquiry level. We have also helped Welsh Government to produce accessible planning guidance for Gypsy and Traveller communities. We welcome the reference to Planning Aid Wales in the draft Circular.

Planning Aid Wales would like to continue to provide advice in association with our network of volunteers and specialist practitioners who have experience in dealing with the issues involved. However, the number of requests we receive for help currently exceeds the resources we have available to assist. Ideally, our Helpline service needs specific financial support to meet the demand for planning assistance arising from Gypsy and Traveller communities. With more funding we could help to develop expertise in dealing with these complex planning issues in local planning authorities and among other relevant professions.

While we welcome the update of policy and technical guidance relating to provision of sites and accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople, we are concerned that implementation will be hampered by the lack of resources available to deal with the complex and time-consuming issues involved.

Consultation Question 2

Do you agree that the draft Circular provides appropriate information on all types of site considered to be 'Gypsy and Traveller Sites' under current legislation and guidance ?

No, we do not agree.

We suggest that it would be helpful for the advice relating to Showpeople to be separated from that for Gypsy and Traveller communities as the two groups have very different needs.

Consultation Question 3

Do you agree that the draft Circular provides appropriate guidance to local authorities on how to use the findings of their Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments to inform site provision during LDP preparation? If not, how can this guidance be improved ?

Yes, we do agree.

However, we suggest that the guidance could be presented in ways that would encourage planning authorities, Gypsy and Traveller communities and others to use it more readily. Planning Aid Wales would be happy to assist in preparing an accessible version of the guidance, with the aim of maximising take-up.