

## **Transit Gypsy and Traveller site - Community and Linguistic Statement**

This Community and Linguistic Statement has been developed in accordance with Planning Policy RD5 - Welsh Language and the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities, and it is structured around the **prescribed questions** in Appendix 3 of Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh language.

Please note the '*Housing type development*' questions towards the end of this document have been answered due because people will be resident on the site once completed. However, following consultation with Denbighshire County Council Planning they confirmed, when submitted, the application should be treated as 'other' as Gypsy and Traveller sites do not fall within any specific use class. The Welsh Government Circular 005/2018 states; The definition of a Gypsy and Traveller site for the purposes of this Circular does not include a dwelling (i.e. housing that falls within Use Class C3 under the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987[as amended]).

### **1. Community Engagement**

In January 2017, Denbighshire County Council Cabinet agreed to submit the Denbighshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to Welsh Government. This was subsequently approved by Welsh Government March 2017.

Following this in September 2017 Denbighshire County Council has undertaken the following:

- Issues a Public call for land (See Appendix 1 of the Design and Access Statement)
- Written directly to over 300 relevant parties including landowners, agents and town and community councils (See Appendix 2 of the Design and Access Statement)
- Reviewed all local authority owned land;

All potential sites were then appraised against planning requirements, WG guidance, viability/deliverability considerations (See Appendix 3 of the Design and Access Statement for criteria used)

Denbighshire County Council Cabinet approved the development of the preferred location to Planning Application Stage on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018. This was reinforced at a Cabinet meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

During the development of the proposals a technical assessment of the site has been ongoing. During this time, consultation has taken place with organisations such as Denbighshire County Council Housing and Highways departments, North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue.

Consultation with the local community will take place in line with Pre Planning process, this includes issuing a notice in the local area, issuing a press release, delivering letters to the neighbours in the vicinity, together with directly contacting the town and community councils. All with the aim of encouraging feedback from the local community.

All associated documents will also be available for viewing in St Asaph library and hosted on a dedicated section of the Denbighshire County Council web site <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/community-and-living/gypsies-and-travellers/gypsies-and-travellers.aspx> during the consultation period. This will enable people to submit their comments, either in person or on line.

A public drop in event will also take place, at which representatives from Denbighshire County Council will be present to answer questions raised by those who attend, and to help those who wish to do so, provide feedback.

Once the Pre Planning consultation period has ended the feedback received will be reviewed and considered against relevant planning policy. A report based on this process will be compiled and submitted with the planning application.

## **2. Population Profile**

The proposed development sits within City of St Asaph Council administrative area, but also in close proximity to Bodelwyddan Town Council and Cefyn Meiriadog Community Council areas.

The total population of St Asaph as recorded in the 2011 Census was 3355, a reduction of 137 from the 2001 census, which recorded a total population of 3492. This reduction in the local population was actually against the trend across Denbighshire as a whole, as this saw a slight increase over the same period, 93102 in 2001 to 93734 in 2011.

The age profile of the population in St Asaph area based on the 2011 census is as follows 0-14yrs 528 (16%), 15-64yrs 2060 (61%) and 65yrs+ 767 (23%). This is roughly in proportion to Denbighshire as a whole. However, the figures do suggest a slightly older population in the St Asaph area compared against Denbighshire, which breaks down as 0-14yrs 17%, 15-64yrs 62% and 65+yrs 21%.

The percentage of welsh speakers in St Asaph as recorded in the 2011 census was 22.9%, lower than the Denbighshire figure of 24.6% and neighbouring area of Cefyn Meiriadog (30.4%) but higher than Bodelwyddan (17.9%). Comparison with older census figures indicates a fluctuating picture, as in 2001 it was recorded at 24% but in 1991 it was 20%.

As the term 'Gypsy and Travellers' covers a wide culturally diverse group the impact on the population profile is difficult to determine. The GTAA identified a need for a site offering 4-5 pitches, however as the details of the users are unknown it would be speculation to state any impact on the local demographics in terms of age or Welsh speakers.

### **3. Development Characteristics**

#### **General:**

- ***Are national and local policies including local planning policies in the Denbighshire LDP met?***

Yes, national and local policies including planning policies in the Denbighshire Local Development Plan are met with this proposal. See Design and Access Statement section 6.6, Response to Planning Policy for a list of all relevant documents.

Specifically relevant to this application are - Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales – Welsh Government Guidance (May 2015), Welsh Government Circular 005/2018: Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites (June 2018) and Local Development Plan theme BSC 10 – Gypsy and Traveller sites.

- ***Will the proposal create new opportunities to promote the language and local initiatives in the community?***

At this stage, it is unclear if the proposal will create opportunities to promote the language and local initiatives in the community. However, like all residents in Denbighshire, those resident on the site may express a preference for English or Welsh medium education, or faith-based education.

- ***Are there appropriate local services such as shops, residential/community facilities to serve the development?***

Yes, although in a semi-rural area there is a variety of appropriate local services.

St Asaph is only a short distance away and has numerous shops, restaurants and public houses, together with community facilities such as Schools, a Library and a Leisure Centre.

In closer proximity is a Bus Stop with regular services providing access to the wider area. A post box and cycle path are also in close proximity to the proposed site.

- ***Is the proposal sustainable in the long term?***

Yes, the proposal is sustainable in the long term.

The new amenity building will be constructed to a high efficiency standard and will meet current building regulation requirements. This will help to reduce the effect of rising fuel prices for Denbighshire County Council and potential users.

Careful selection of appropriate robust building and hard landscaping materials will ensure long term use and help minimise ongoing maintenance.

With the need for such accommodation highlighted in the GTAA these pitches are expected to be sustainable in the long term.

- ***Is there adequate infrastructure provision to serve the development?***

Yes, there is adequate infrastructure provision to serve the development.

A Transport Statement prepared by Denbighshire County Council Highways Department. Although the report highlights some relatively minor improvement required to Cwttir Lane, these will be undertaken as part of the proposed works.

Electricity, mains water and telephone lines are all available in very close proximity to the site.

With regard to drainage. Due to the potentially sporadic use of the site and proximity to the foul drain system a cesspit will be installed. It will be located outside of the 'hardstanding' area for ease of access and emptying. Whilst a sustainable drainage system with appropriate attenuation will help manage the surface water on the site.

### ***Housing type development***

- ***What is the expected market price for the houses and how does this compare with local household income?***

The rents and deposits for the pitches will be set with consideration to the existing Denbighshire County Council social rent levels, ensuring they remain affordable.

- ***Does the development include for an appropriate element of affordable housing to meet local need?***

Yes, the development does include culturally appropriate element of affordable pitches to meet identified need.

In fact, the pitches should all be considered affordable. As mentioned above the rents and deposits will be set with consideration to the Denbighshire County Council social rent levels structure.

The local need has been established in the GTAA which identified a need for 'A transit site for 4-5 pitches'.

**• Have there been similar developments in scale completed in the past 5 years?**

No, there have not been similar developments completed in the last 5 years.

There are currently no Gypsy and Traveller sites providing culturally suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in Denbighshire. Furthermore, the duty to make provision for sites where the assessment identifies need became statutory requirements under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

**• What has been the rate of residential growth in the community in the past 5 years?**

As the immediate area is semi-rural and has a mix of varying industrial and business developments, together with a substation / transformer site, residential property and working farms, residential changes in the community, either up or down, are always likely to be minimal. Census information on the last 5 years is not available, however based on the most recent census figures of 2011 and 2001 the population in St Asaph has fallen by 137 from 3355 to 3492.

**• How will the development be phased?**

Due to the relatively small scale of the development, it will be constructed in a single phase.

**4. Positive Promotional Mitigation Measures**

Providing an affordable, culturally appropriate facility in Denbighshire will positively contribute to the local community, together with Denbighshire as a whole.

It is intended, although as yet unnamed the new site will have its name, which will be derived or inspired by the welsh language or surrounding area. Therefore, street signage will be in welsh.