

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Pitch Allocation Policy - Draft

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council own and manage two permanent residential caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers. The Council's sites are specifically designed to help meet the needs of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the allocation of pitches on Council sites is made in a fair and transparent manner and that those in the greatest need are given priority assistance in securing accommodation.

The Council managed sites are specifically designed to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Therefore to apply for a pitch, applicants must be a Gypsy or Traveller as defined in the Housing Act 2004 or any subsequent legal definition.

Lead officer: Dawn Taylor

Stakeholders: Gypsies, Traveller and their representatives.

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do

While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about outcomes

Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

| | Neutral | Positive | Negative |
|---|----------------|--|---|
| Target group / area | | | |
| Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.) | | Positive action taken to meet the accommodation needs of specific ethnic groups | There are only a limited number of pitches and it is recognised that there may not be enough pitches to meet the requests from everyone. Priority will be given to those in the greatest need, in accordance to 4 priority bands. Medium Impact |
| Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities) | | Vulnerability used in development of priority | Disabled users could fall into the High priority and medium priority needs – depending on the nature of the condition – this could have a long term impact on their health and wellbeing Medium Impact |
| Gender | | The Policy positively impacts men and women of the Gypsy/Traveller community who are looking for a permanent place to stay. It enables them to register with healthcare services, gain | |

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| | | access to social benefits and for their children to access education and schools | |
| Gender reassignment | | Pitches are allocated in a fair and open way to all members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities | |
| Religion and belief | | Pitches are allocated in a fair and open way to all members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities | |
| Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual) | | Pitches are allocated in a fair and open way to all members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities | |
| Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50, younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs) | | Vulnerability used in development of priority taking into account the needs of children and older applicants | Older users could fall into the High priority and medium priority needs – depending on the nature of the condition – this could have a long term impact on their health and wellbeing Medium Impact |
| Rural communities | | | |
| Areas of deprivation | | | |

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| Human rights | | Pitches are allocated in a fair and open way to all members of the Gypsy and Traveller community | |
| Health and wellbeing (consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, as well as the possible impacts on lifestyles and the effect there may be on health and care services) | | Vulnerability used in development of priority taking into account the needs of the applicant and their family. | |
| Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance) | | | |

Evidence: the Council has taken a proactive approach to the lack of suitable, available and appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers within the borough, developing 2 permanent sites. The draft allocation policy uses a banding system to determine the priority given to each application, prioritising those in most need.

Action plan:

| Actions required | Key activity | Priority | Outcomes required | Officer responsible | Review date |
|---|---|-----------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Ensure that the priority bands are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure a fair allocation practice | Monitoring progress of allocations delivery | M | Fair allocation of pitches according to need | Dawn Taylor | Nov 2016 |

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| Sign off | |
| Lead Officer: | Dawn Taylor |
| Approved by Head of Service: | Dr Alison Knight |
| | |
| Moderation and/or Scrutiny | |
| Date: | |
| Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years) | The policy is in draft form at present and will be updated after consultation ends and a new EIA will be completed. |