

Gors Farm, Gors Road, Towyn

**STONE PLANNING SERVICES  
LIMITED**

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**Outline Planning Application for the erection of a manager's house, 13 Park homes for Travelling Showmen families, area for resident only touring caravan storage, external storage area, covered barn for maintenance of equipment, restoration of former granary to garden store, and green and other infrastructure, demolition of farm house and outbuildings, Land at Gors Farm, Gors Road, Towyn, Conwy, North Wales. Point of access onto Gors Road not reserved**

May 2017

Gors Farm, Gors Road, Towyn

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Stone Planning Services Limited is instructed by Mr Charles Holden to prepare and submit an Outline Planning Application for the erection of a manager's house, 13 Park homes for Travelling Showmen families, area for resident only touring caravan storage, external storage area, covered barn for maintenance of equipment, restoration of former granary to garden store, and green and other infrastructure, demolition of house and outbuildings, Land at Gors Farm, Gors Road, Towyn, Conwy, North Wales. Point of access onto Gors Road not reserved
- 1.2 Discussions have been held with planning officers to agree the range of documents to be submitted to ensure the submission is valid. The following comprises the submission:
- a) Pre-Application Consultation Report
  - b) Planning application forms, certificate and declaration.
  - c) Planning Drawings:
    - i. Red Line Site Location Plan
    - ii. Indicative layout
    - iii. Typical unit
  - d) Planning Support Statement
  - e) Design and Access Statement
  - f) Assessment of Housing Needs for Showmen
  - g) Flood Consequences Assessment
  - h) Foul & Surface Water Drainage Strategy
  - i) Affordable Housing Viability Assessment
  - j) Planning Obligations Statement
  - k) Landscape Strategy
  - l) Bio-Diversity Statement
  - m) Tree Survey
  - n) Lighting Assessment
  - o) Noise Assessment
  - p) Transport Statement, including Highway Visibility Requirements and Parking Assessment
  - q) Community and Linguistic Statement
  - r) Open Space Assessment
  - s) Structural Survey of Granary Building
  - t) Pre-application consultation report (PAC)

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

### **Application Site**

- 2.1 The application site covers 1.87 hectares of land, and is located on western side of Gors Road just south of the route of the River Gele, Towyn.
- 2.2 The site has a long frontage to Gors Road (approximately 160 metres) with two existing points of access; one at the north and the other in the south. The southern access was constructed to serve a previously approved proposal (See Site History) whilst the northern access is an historic access that serves the site. It also contains a right of way to the replacement Gors Farm, located to the south west.
- 2.3 The site contains a number of buildings and structures, notably:
- a. Gors Farm House - this is a large 2 storey property
  - b. Former Granary - this is a partially derelict stone building located to the east of the house,
  - c. Outbuilding - this lower level range is located to the west of Gors Farmhouse.
  - d. A partially constructed internal track leading from the southern access through the site.
  - e. A number of concrete bases to accommodate tourist lodges.
- 2.4 The land around the buildings has had a low level of management over recent years. There are a number of fairly poor quality trees along the Gors Road frontage with more significant trees along the northern boundary. The west and south boundaries are more open although there is a large agricultural style storage building immediately to the west of Gors Farm House.
- The land generally falls north to south although there are areas of undulation
- 2.5 To the north is the River Gele and beyond that a single property (Collie Crest) gaining access off Gors Road and Towyn Way West. Other properties on Towyn Way West are some distance (300 metres) away to the west.
- 2.6 To the east across Gors Road is open farm land. To the south is undulating unused land and Bodoryn Marsh and agricultural land beyond. To the north west is a group of houses fronting onto Gors Road and Brook Avenue.
- 2.7 Approximately 1km to the north at the junction of Gors Road and Towyn Road is a parade of shops including a Londis Convenience Store, Pharmacy, Newsagent, Delicatessen and Public House. There are also numerous hot food takeaways. Towyn /Kinmel Bay also has an Asda supermarket.
- 2.8 Towyn has primary schools, places of worship and employment opportunities. There is a very regular bus service (Service 14) on Towyn Road linking Llandudno with Rhyl. There is also a local Towyn Town link service (Service 46) on Gors Road, north of the site.

### **Application Proposal**

- 2.9 The planning application is made in Outline for the erection of Managers House, 13 Park homes for Travelling Showmen families, area for resident only touring caravan storage, external storage area, covered barn for maintenance, restoration of former granary to garden store, and green and other infrastructure, demolition of house and outbuildings, Land at Gors Farm, Gors Road, Towyn, Conwy, North Wales. Point of access onto Gors Road not reserved.

- 2.10 The proposal relates to the provision of 13 serviced plots for Park Homes. The home homes will be approximately 14 metres by 4 metres in size and located on concrete hard standings. The Park Homes will be affixed to the concrete pad and connected to electricity, calor gas, water supply, foul drains and internet.
- 2.11 The applicant will provide the concrete foundation and all utility connections and the maintenance of the site. The individual occupants will purchase their own property.
- 2.12 Each area will have scope for vehicle parking, washing lines and a private amenity space etc. In the middle of this area will be a small play area for children living on the development. This will be provided and maintained by the management company that will operate the site. It will only be available to residents.
- 2.13 Manager House - the site will need a manger's house. This will be occupied by the applicant who will have responsibility for dealing with the site, the maintenance of the communal area, site licence matters, the use of the storage and maintenance areas, dealing with utility suppliers etc.
- 2.14 All of the properties, including the manager's house, will be occupied by families who are Members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain or successor organisation. They will not be available to the general public.
- 2.15 External Storage Area - an area of hard standing is proposed in the northern part of the site. This will be used for the parking of the fairground equipment, vehicles, stalls, rides etc.
- 2.16 Covered area - this building will be approximately 20 metres by 40 metres and have a height of approximately 9 metres. It will be located adjacent the neighbour's existing agricultural style building which is used for motor vehicle restoration. Its design will be the subject of a Reserved Matters submission but will reflect the fringe of settlement location. This will be used for under cover equipment maintenance. The maintenance will in the main involve hand and power tools for maintenance of equipment. It is anticipated that it will be a part brick and part sheeted building with three vehicle access doors on the eastern elevation facing the external storage area. An Acoustic Report accompanies the application.
- 2.17 Touring caravan storage - this area will be in the centre of the site. It will enable residents to store their touring caravans when not in use. When residents go to venues they often take their touring caravans as their temporary, at venue, accommodation. When not required they will be stored in the compound rather than next to their Park Home. This area will be fenced and landscaped.
- 2.18 Former Granary Building - it is intended to restore this building and utilise for the storage of equipment associated with the maintenance of the communal areas on the site. A Structural Survey is submitted demonstrating that the building is structurally sound. It is not intended to extend this building.
- 2.19 Demolition of former Gors Farm House and outbuildings – save for the old granary building all other buildings will be demolished.
- 2.20 Access - the site has two existing points of access onto Gors Road. The southern access constructed in association with the extant planning consent (see site history).
- 2.21 The northern access has been in situ for many years serving the original Gors Farm. That access serves the application site and there are two rights of way; one for access into the agricultural fields to the west and the other for access to the adjacent unit.

- 2.22 Boundaries The northern boundary has a 2 metre high close boarded fence in situ. Due to the requirements of Natural Resources Wales about flood defence much of the northern, eastern and western boundaries will need a solid flood defence wall. That is shown on the drawings in the Flood Consequences Assessment. It is likely to be in the region of 2 metres high and constructed in concrete block on the inner elevation and local stone on the outer elevation. In addition, there are hedges and a small number of trees along the Gors Road frontage. These will be retained. Further strategic and domestic planting will also take place as shown on the Indicative Layout and set out in the Landscape Strategy.
- 2.23 Foul water will be drained to a bespoke Klargestor system located to the south of the main development area. This will then drain into Bodoryn Marsh. Full details are set out in the Foul Water strategy.
- 2.24 Surface water will be disposed of via a treatment train involving an attenuation pond and then into Bodoryn Marsh. Full details are set out in the Surface Water strategy.
- 2.25 The Indicative Site Layout Plan provides a general landscaping strategy. This recognises the need for further boundary planting of native species, specimen planting within the residential area and around the tourers compound. Full details will be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 2.26 It is understood that all utilities are available to serve the development.
- 2.27 Overall the development principle is to keep the park homes area separate from the area of equipment storage and maintenance. Traditionally individual Showmen families have had self-contained Yards which would accommodate their homes, touring caravans, equipment and a garden area. However, more recent developments have separated out the uses and this has proved to be more successful and provides a better quality of life. One such site is in Hyde, Greater Manchester.

### **Reports Accompanying the Planning Application**

- 2.28 A number of specialist reports have been commissioned to accompany the planning application.
- 2.29 Assessment of Housing Needs for Showmen – this has been prepared by the Council's Housing Strategy Manager in conjunction with the applicant. It concludes that there is demand for:
- a. 8 existing households
  - b. 3 emerging households
  - c. A further 5 emerging households in the next 5 years
- 2.30 Flood Consequences Assessment - this has been prepared by Brian Killingworth and concludes that the proposal represents an improvement when compared with what is capable of implementation on the site. Mitigation is proposed in terms of a flood barrier around the site.
- 2.31 Foul & surface Water Drainage Strategy - this has been prepared by Brian Killingworth and demonstrates that the site can be adequately drained.
- 2.32 Affordable Housing Viability Assessment - discussions have taken place with the Council's Housing Strategy Officer regarding the provision of affordable housing. The Travelling Showmen Park Home model essentially provides land, plots and all utility connections to enable individuals to secure their own home. It creates affordable housing for Travelling

Showmen. It is accepted that the Manager House, whilst still occupied by a Travelling Showmen family should be treated differently. Hence, a contribution towards off site affordable housing provision will be secured by way of a Section 106 Agreement. This is set out in the submitted affordable housing statement.

- 2.33 Planning Obligations Statement – it is understood that a contribution will relate to affordable housing only.
- 2.34 Parking Assessment – parking will be provided as follows:
  - a. 2 spaces per park home
  - b. Area for storage of touring caravans – sufficient for 14 households
  - c. Parking of fun fair rides and equipment etc on the open area in the north of the site.
- 2.35 Community and Linguistic Statement – this has been prepared and is submitted. It demonstrates that the proposal will have a positive impact on the community.
- 2.36 Open Space Assessment – open space will be provided on site for residents. It will be self-contained.

### **Relevant Planning History**

- 2.37 There have been several planning permissions either relating to or impacting on the site. Three are of particular relevance which are considered in turn:
- 2.38 Application 1/16320 - this related to:
  - a. Conversion of farmhouse, erection of motel rooms to form 18 bed hotel/motel
  - b. 20 detached two storey tourist lodges spread across the entire site
  - c. Conversion of granary to restaurant
  - d. Landscaping including lake
  - e. Means of access (amendment to scheme approved under ref: 1/11488)
  - f. Car Park - the plan attached to the Section 106 Agreement shows approximately 45 car parking spaces together with parking adjacent to each lodge.
- 2.39 The Section 106 Agreement was signed on 18th October 1995 and there were 4 clauses:
- 2.40 Landscape Strategy - this sets out the proposed landscaping. It involves:
  - 1. Significant areas of native species planting around the perimeter of the site and particularly along the southern boundary
  - 2. More domestic scale ornamental planting within the residential area of the site
- 2.41 Bio-Diversity Statement - this has been prepared by CBE Consulting Associates and concludes that development of the site would not have any significant impact on local biodiversity. There is potential for bat roosting in the former farm house and additional surveys will be undertaken.
- 2.42 Tree Survey - this has been prepared by **CBE Consulting**
- 2.43 Lighting Assessment - it is intended to have low level lighting throughout the residential part of the site and along the access drives. There will be a need for higher level lighting on the external storage area. A preliminary Lighting Assessment is submitted.
- 2.44 Noise Assessment – this demonstrates that there will be no adverse impact of noise on the prospective residents and no adverse impact on existing residents from activities on the site.



- 2.45 Transport Statement – this has assessed the potential impact of the proposal on the local highway network. It has also designed the main access into the site. This access will be 7.3 wide to ensure vehicles can enter and leave the site in a safe manner. Internally the road will be designed to ensure vehicles can negotiate the internal road and leave the site in a forward gear. Those are detailed design matters for the Reserved Matters submission.
- 2.46 Highway Visibility Requirements following assessment indicates a need for visibility splays 2.4m x 120m in either direction from the southern access.
- 2.47 Parking Assessment – parking will be provided as follows:
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  - f. Car Park - the plan attached to the Section 106 Agreement shows approximately 45 car parking spaces together with parking adjacent to each lodge.
- 2.52 The Section 106 Agreement was signed on 18th October 1995 and there were 4 clauses:
- A. Reference to 20 lodges for holiday accommodation
  - B. The Lodges are not permanent dwellings
  - C. The Lodges cannot be sold separately
  - D. The Lodges cannot be occupied by the same person for more than 180 days in a calendar year.
- 2.53 There were nothing to restrict the restaurant being used by non-residents The plan attached to the Section 106 is enclosed as Appendix 1. It gives an indication of the distribution of the lodges, the motel, restaurant and parking across the site.
- 2.54 Unfortunately the relevant planning file cannot be located by the Council consequently there is limited further information. This permission is extant - see later in this statement.
- 2.55 Notwithstanding the unavailability of the planning file a promotional brochure for the development does provide a good impression of the scale of the use. A copy of this is attached as Appendix 2. The main issues of note are:

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- Lodges are 2 storeys with a steep pitch roof
- There was to be a swimming pool - no restrictions on the use. Non-residents could have used it
- Picture of interior shows hotel was two storeys
- Lodges described as "extremely spacious
- Restaurant and tea rooms- no restrictions on the use. Non-residents could have used it
- Gymnasium - no restrictions on the use. Non-residents could have used it
- Classic car museum

2.56 We have also located a copy of the approved landscaping scheme which is attached as Appendix 3. This is a scale drawing (1,000 at A3) and so provides an appreciation of the scale of development. The T Shape Motel for example has a footprint of 960 sq m, the Granary 54 sq m, the Hotel Building 295 sq m and the tourist lodges 1,400 sq m. An approximate total of 2,700 sq m.

2.57 Application 1/TOW/6752 and Reserved Matters 10156/D related to a replacement farmhouse on land to the west of the current application site. A Section 52 Legal Agreement required that on practical completion of the new dwelling the old Gors Farmhouse (which is on the current application site) should cease to be used as a dwelling and that the house has been abandoned.

2.58 Application 0/41464 - construction of a 150mm diameter foul sewer within Gors Road, Towyn between Gors Farm and the end of the DCWW foul sewer at the junction of Gors Road and Towyn Way West. The sewer was proposed in an open trench within the western carriageway. This received planning permission on 31st March 2016.

2.59 The officer delegated report contains references that are material to the determination of the current application. That application was submitted in compliance with condition 8 of planning permission 1/16320.

2.60 At paragraph 14 of the delegated report it states:

" As the development at Gors Farm already has the benefit of an extant planning permission **the development of that site is not an issue**. [my emphasis]. The only matters that the local planning authority can therefore consider relate to the construction and operation of the sewer itself."

This reiterates the fact that permission 1/16320 is extant.

### **Other Correspondence**

2.61 There has also been a series of responses from the Council on a number of issues which are worthy of reference. In correspondence from the Council to Mr Brian Killingworth dated 9th September 2014 it stated:

**". . . I have reconsidered my conclusion on planning permission 1/16320 , and consider on the basis of the available evidence that that permission is extant.**

2.62 In the pre-application response to Stone Planning Services Limited dated 6th October 2016 the council stated:

**"Planning permission ref: 1/16320 is extant . . . "**

2.63 Lastly in an email to Stone Planning Services Limited dated 13th January 2017 the Council accepts that the application site is **'previously developed land'**.

### **Travelling Showmen**

- 2.64 Section 108 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 established a definition of Travelling showmen as:
- "Members of an organized group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such)"**
- 2.65 Whilst grouped with Gypsies for categorization convenience the two lifestyles and cultures are extremely different. There is no relationship between the two cultures.
- 2.66 The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain was founded in 1889. Its principal objective is to serve travelling showmen who gain their livelihoods by attending funfairs.
- 2.67 Historically Showmen were involved in the provision of "Winter quarters". When the travelling season was over, the Showmen need a permanent base where he and his family can spend the winter months. Ideally it would be within reach of schools and shops, and be large enough to enable vital maintenance work on equipment to be undertaken.
- 2.68 With the passage of time, changing working patterns, extended tourist and event seasons, the need to address education requirements and family commitments Travelling Showmen have developed permanent high quality sites. The only site in the entire North Wales Region is a very small site in Wrexham which is in need of investment. More sites are needed.
- 2.69 This need has been recognised by some local authorities, who have shown considerable understanding in the matter. Parliament, too, has been sympathetic and granted the Showmen Guild exemption from the licensing provisions of the 1960 Caravan Site Act. However, many established winter quarters have been lost in recent years because of redevelopment schemes. That hasn't been the case in North Wales as there were none to redevelop.
- 2.70 A home is of vital importance to everyone - including the Showmen. They only ask that in housing terms they be accorded the same consideration as any other member of the community.
- 2.71 Typically Travelling Showpeople will attend events both in the District but also in the North Wales/North West region and beyond. They need a base from which they can live and maintain their equipment side by side. The lack of such sites is holding back business and investment which would otherwise bring benefits to the local community.
- 2.72 This Section of the Statement has described the application site and the nature and scale of the proposed development. A series of detailed specialist reports accompany the application and their conclusions have been outlined. The Statement now details the relevant planning policy.

## SECTION 3: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the statutory Development Plan comprises the Conwy Local Development Plan 2013. In addition to the Development Plan, there is the National Planning Guidance for Wales. The purpose of this section is to set out the relevant planning policy background as well as identifying any key studies or reports. For ease of reference, these are considered under the following headings:

1. National Planning Guidance for Wales including TANs and specific policy guidance relating to Gypsy and Travelling Showmen
2. Conwy Local Development Plan 2013
3. Housing Need
4. Site History - the fall-back position
5. Flood Risk/Drainage
6. Amenity
7. Access Issues
8. Bio Diversity

### 1. National Planning Guidance for Wales including TANs and specific policy guidance relating to Gypsy and Travelling Showmen

3.2 Planning Policy Wales (2016) at Chapter 9 relates to Housing. At paragraph 9.2.21 it states: *"Local authorities are required to assess **the accommodation needs of Gypsy families**. It is therefore important that local planning authorities have policies for the provision of Gypsy sites in their development plans. In drawing up policies local planning authorities should consult providers of social housing, representatives of Gypsies and Travellers and landowners in areas likely to be appropriate for Gypsy sites, in accordance with their Community Involvement Scheme"*.

3.3 A GTANA survey was undertaken in Conwy but unfortunately the vast majority of the Travelling Showmen community were unaware of it. This need has now been identified by both the applicant and the Council's Housing Strategy Officer and this proposal seeks to deal with the need.

3.4 TAN 1 - Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (2015). This sets out the methodology for preparing a Joint Housing Land Availability Study to establish the housing supply and demand position at a point in time and 5 years hence. At para 3.2 it states: *"Housing land availability, and the need to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, is a key part of the LDP examination process. Local planning authorities are required to demonstrate that there is a five-year housing land supply at the time the plan is adopted and the latest approved JHLAS can be used as an important piece of evidence."*

Unfortunately, there is no reference to Travelling Showmen in the TAN

3.5 TAN 2 - Planning and Affordable Housing (2006). This sets out technical advice regarding affordable housing needs. At paragraph 7.2 and 7.3 it states:

*"Local authorities should undertake Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) to establish the nature and level of housing requirements in their local housing market(s). They provide the joint evidence base for local housing strategies and development plans. A LHMA should assess:*

- *the number of current and anticipated households by type;*
- *the current and anticipated household need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing and what this would mean in terms of net housing provision;*
- *how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area, for example between the urban and rural areas; and*
- *the particular accommodation needs of specific groups, such as homeless households, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, first-time buyers, students, disabled people, older people and Gypsies and Travellers.*

*Where local housing markets cross administrative boundaries, assessments may be conducted jointly between local authorities. The results of any joint assessments must, however, be disaggregated to individual local planning authority areas for development plan purposes. In preparing assessments, local authorities should work in partnership with stakeholders, including private sector house builders and, where appropriate, the national park authority. It is important that the relevant data is provided to national park authorities, where they are involved, as soon as it is available. Local authorities should keep the assessment up-to-date once it is completed as new information emerges and market circumstances change."*

- 3.6 TAN 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) provides specific guidance with regard to nature conservation and bio diversity. An Ecological Assessment accompanies the application and this concludes that there is little of bio diversity significance on the site.
- 3.7 TAN 12 - Design (2016) provides advice regarding design. The application is submitted in outlined only at this stage but the illustrative master plan has evolved following a number of Design Team meetings. A number of parameters have driven design. The Park Homes have been arranged in the general area which would have been occupied by the previously approved lodges. The lodges would have been two storey in height had constructed in timber - not a common design in the locality. The proposal is for 13 Park Homes not dissimilar in nature to the numerous caravan / park home site in Towyn.
- 3.8 The manager's house will be designed to reflect local vernacular and materials of construction. The former granary will be restored.
- 3.9 The maintenance building located in the north-west corner of the site will be designed to reflect existing storage buildings in the area- immediately to the west and to the north. The site will be bordered by a wall, for flood purposes. Indigenous landscaping will be introduced along sensitive boundaries and within the residential part of the site. Further details on design are contained in the Design and Access Statement
- 3.10 TAN 11 - Noise (1997) . Part of the site will be residential use but it should be noted that houses and business for Travelling Showmen are inseparable. It is only by being side by side that their businesses can operate and grow. A noise assessment has been completed to support the application
- 3.11 TAN 15 - Development & Flood Risk (2004) provides detailed advice regarding flood risk. Our client is fully aware of the flood issues in the locality being a long-term resident of the town. Advice within the TAN together with the nature of the extant planning consent on the site have been very material in the preparation of the flood consequences assessment that accompanies the application.

3.12 TAN 18 - Transport (2007) - whilst the site will generate both residential and commercial traffic movements. Careful consideration has been given to traffic generation and a Transport Statement accompanies the application that takes account of TAN 18.

3.13 TAN 20 - Planning & the Welsh Language (2013) - this mainly relates to Development Plans. However, we can confirm that a Community and Linguistic Statement accompanies the application.

3.14 Attention is also drawn to DCLG publication "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" (August 2015) which make a clear distinction between Gypsy communities and Travelling Showmen. It defines Travelling Showmen as:

*Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.*

3.15 The publication sets out Government aims in respect of traveller sites:

- a. that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning*
- b. to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites*
- c. to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale*
- d. that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development*
- e. to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites*
- f. that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective*
- g. for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies*
- h. to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply*
- i. to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions*
- j. to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure*
- k. for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.*

3.16 "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites" (WAG Circular 30/2007 December 2007) sets out general guidance for dealing with planning applications for Travelling Showmen sites. However, at paragraph 4 it states:

*"Planning advice relating to the travelling show people is given in Welsh Office Circular 78/91 "Travelling Showpeople" which remains in force".*

- 3.17 Circular 78/91 - "*Travelling Showpeople*" provides advice to Local Authorities about considerations relating to Travelling Showpeople. It requires Local Authorities to "*consider the needs of Travelling Showpeople*". It encourages Local Plans to contain specific policies with regard to Travelling Showmen and, where there is a need, for sites to be allocated. However, where there is no such allocation, applications should be treated on their merits.
- 3.18 The Welsh Government has recently published (March 2016) the "Travelling to a better future - Delivery Plan Update". It assesses progress against a number of established objectives which include:

*Objective 1: Improve mutual understanding and trust between Gypsy and Traveller communities and settled communities so there is an increase in the sense of belonging and acceptance within the Gypsy and Traveller community.*

*Objective 2: The Welsh Government will continue to work with local authorities towards bringing the existing site network up to reasonable standards as outlined in the Welsh Government Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales.*

*Objective 3: Raise awareness of the planning circular WAGC30/2007 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites among planning practitioners*

*Objective 4: Establish the effectiveness of the planning circular WAGC30/2007 – Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites on the planning process when planning bids for Gypsy and Traveller sites are being assessed*

*Objective 5: The Welsh Government will work with local authorities to deliver new sites in line with needs identified in local development plans.*

*Objective 6: The Welsh Government will continue to work with local authorities to reduce the occurrence of unauthorised encampments.*

*Objective 7: Assess the implementation of the 'Moving Forward' guidance to determine the impact it has had on standards of support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils.*

- 3.19 The Welsh Government publication "Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites" (May 2015) sets out some design criteria for Gypsy and Traveller sites. At paragraphs 2.1 onwards it states:

2.1 Demand for pitches on *Local Authority Gypsy Traveller* sites exceeds the number of pitches available. The Welsh Government estimates that there is a current need for at least 240 permanent residential pitches across Wales, with additional transit site needs. This estimate has been created through analysis of Census 2011 data. However, Pat Niner's *Accommodation Needs of Gypsy-Travellers in Wales* report estimated there was a need for 275-300 pitches by 2011. The Welsh Government expects that new Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments (GTAAs) in 2016 will produce a more reliable estimate across Wales.

2.2 Achieving these sites is the responsibility of the Local Authority but the Welsh Government provides support through the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant, the provision of planning and housing related guidance and the establishment of the All-Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Forum.

The duty to provide sites

2.3 The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and firmly believes everyone in Welsh society should have the opportunity of a good quality home, regardless of their cultural need for mobile home accommodation or bricks and mortar housing.

2.4 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to ensure that the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are properly assessed and the identified need for pitches is met. Local Authorities are required to exercise their powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act, as far as necessary, to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites for the unmet need. This doesn't necessarily mean additional Local Authority owned sites will be required but where they are needed the Local Authority is responsible for providing them. More information about understanding accommodation needs can be found in the Welsh Government's '*Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments guidance*'.

2.5 This document provides guidance for designing Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller sites. However, Local Authorities may also wish to consider working with Gypsy and Traveller communities to encourage the development of new private sites.

2.6 Welsh Government planning circular 30/2007 '*Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*' provides guidance to Local Authorities when trying to identify suitable site locations in their statutory Local Development Plans. As a statutory consultee for each Local Development Plan, the Welsh Government will provide feedback to Local Authorities in relation to their Gypsy and Traveller accommodation plans.

2.7 The planning circular outlines the importance of:

- involving Gypsies and Travellers proactively in the GTAA and planning process via Community Involvement Schemes in Local Development Plan preparation and ensuring communication is direct and accessible;
- considering potential site sustainability, including access to suitable community facilities for occupiers;
- guidance for Gypsies and Travellers making planning applications;
- local planning authorities identifying suitable locations in their Local Development Plan for permanent and transit sites which meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- ensuring the criteria against which site applications will be judged are fair;
- including a fair criteria-based policy in the Local Development Plan;
- considering specific Gypsy and Traveller Rural Exception Sites; and
- Local Authorities' responsibilities under Equality and Human Rights legislation and case law.

3.20 In considering sites it provides assistance at paragraphs 3.17 onwards:

*3.17 When considering locations for permanent residential sites, the preferences of community members should be included in the assessment process. However, Local Authorities are not expected to always provide sites in locations which mirror these aspirations. It is recognised other factors such as availability of land, site sustainability and achievability of planning permission will be more significant matters to consider.*



*3.22 As with all developments, it is likely that Local Authorities will need to follow the 'line of best fit' when assessing potential sites. It may be that none of the potential sites can completely satisfy the guidance in this document. However, Local Authorities should first seek to identify such sites if they exist. The general themes Local Authorities should consider are:-*

*Access – Local Authority residential sites should be located with access to public roads and footpaths leading to the site. Although access to public transport would be ideal, it may be unrealistic in close proximity to the site in rural settings;*

*Suitability of land – A site survey should be undertaken which will identify possible problems such as drainage, risk of flooding, contaminated land etc. Local Authorities should consider whether remediation work to resolve any problems is financially viable. Mobile homes are considered to be highly vulnerable to flooding so sites should not be situated in C2 flood zones. Locations in C1 flood zones should be subject to a justification test*

*Local Services – Ideally located within reasonable distance from education settings, health services and shops. If a site is located, or is going to be located, in a rural area this will not be achievable in many instances. Local Authorities must comply with the Learner Travel (Wales Measure) 2008 (as amended) and associated guidance. For further details please see the Learner Travel pages of the Welsh Government website<sup>15</sup>;*

*Environment – sites should not be located next to hazards such as rivers or canals, unless appropriate mitigation can be installed. Locating sites next to industrial sites or major roads should be carefully considered, which may require monitoring of noise and air quality and resultant design measures to reduce the impact.*

*Utilities – water, electricity, sewerage, drainage and refuse disposal should be provided on all sites. This may require consultation with utility providers to ensure any essential criteria for new connections is understood.*

*Sustainability – the site should be available for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site in the long-term (at least 21 years).*

3.21 As will be demonstrated later in this statement the proposal satisfies these criteria; it is deliverable.

## **2. Conwy Local Development Plan 2013**

3.22 The Conwy Local Development Plan was adopted in 2013 and provides a specific context for determining planning applications. In the pre-application response from the Council dated 6th October 2016 (Ref DC/ENQ/26606) the Council helpfully set out the Development Plan policies against which any application would be assessed. Whilst a number of these relate to the principle of development many are matters to be considered following the submission of an application for the approval of Reserved Matters. The policies are considered in turn.

3.23 Policy DP/1 - Sustainable Development. The application site is located on the edge of Towyn adjacent the recognised limit of development. It is well related to everyday services in Towyn; it is a place where Travelling Show people can be close to all service and other members of their families. Furthermore, the site is "**previously developed land**" where development should be encouraged. The site does not have any local, regional or national heritage, landscape or bio diversity designations. Its development would be consistent with Policy DP/1.

- 3.24 Policy DP/2 - Overarching strategic approach. This policy sets out the settlement hierarchy. Towyn forms part of the Urban Area". The application site is on the edge of the Urban area where everyday facilities are most concentrated. The policy states:  
"Most development will take place within, and on the fringe, of these urban areas."
- 3.25 Policy DP/3 - Promoting design quality and reducing crime. This sets out the more detailed design and crime prevention/reduction criteria for site development. These are design issues to be considered at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 3.26 Policy D/P4 - Development Criteria. As with Policy DP/3 the criteria set out in part 1 will be considered at the Reserved Matters stage. Only consent for the point of access onto Gors Road is sought now.  
Part 2 of the policy assesses the scheme against a higher set of principles. All matters raised in the pre - application discussion have been addressed by the commissioning of specialist reports which accompany the submission. No insurmountable issues have been raised.
- 3.27 Policy D/P5 - Infrastructure and new developments. It is not envisaged that infrastructure contributions will be sought from the site. This will be a matter of further discussion with the Council.
- 3.28 Policy D/P6 - National Planning Policy & Guidance. This has been considered in detail earlier in this statement.
- 3.29 Policy HOU/1 - Meeting the Housing Need. This policy sets out the housing needs over the plan period. It establishes a figure of 6,520 houses with a contingency figure of 7,170. The contingency includes potential sites to cover a number of housing needs. Criteria 4 states:  
*"The Council will need to address the need for gypsies and travellers in line with policy HOU/9 - Meeting the Site Need for Gypsies and Travellers."*
- The application site provides a site on the edge of Towyn that will meet an identified need and contribute to the housing needs of the area.
- 3.30 Policy HOU/2 - Affordable Housing for local need. This sets the level of affordable housing provision on housing sites. It sets a figure of 10% in Abergele, Towyn and Kinmel Bay. Outside of Tier 1 settlements, small scale 100% affordable sites will be acceptable (up to 5 dwellings) with preference given to previously developed land. This is considered later in the statement.
- 3.31 Policy HOU/4 - Housing density sets a density target of 30 dwellings per acre on sites of more than 10 dwellings.
- Provision of a site for Travelling Showpeople with their special needs for storage do not readily fit with the density criteria set out in the policy. The site will accommodate as many units as possible within the operational requirements of the site and the needs for amenity space about buildings.
- 3.32 Policy HOU/5 - Housing Mix. It seeks to reflect housing mix as set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment. The site will provide individual opportunities for park homes with a mix of 2 and 3 bedrooms.
- 3.33 Policy HOU/9 - Meeting the need for gypsies and travellers. This policy states:  
*"1. Where a need is identified for a gypsy and traveller caravan site, proposals will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:*

*a) The site must be suitable for this type of use with a realistic likelihood that the site can be developed during the Plan period;*

*b) Previously developed land, or vacant land, on the edge of urban areas will be considered before sites in rural locations. Sites in rural or semi rural settings may also be acceptable provided they respect the scale of nearby communities and do not place an undue burden on local infrastructure.*

*c) A site allocated for other uses will only be released as an exception where a local housing needs assessment has established a need for a gypsy or traveller site, the need cannot be met in any other way and the scale of development does not exceed the level of need identified;*

*d) The site is accessible to shops, schools and health facilities by public transport, on foot or by cycle;*

*e) There is good access to the main transport network and the proposed development will not cause traffic congestion and highway safety problems;*

*f) The site is already appropriately screened or capable of being adequately screened and landscaped;*

*g) The site will have adequate on-site services for water supply, power, drainage, sewage disposal and waste disposal facilities;*

*h) The proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of adjacent occupiers.*

*2. Based on the need identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) the Council will identify and seek to obtain planning permission for suitable sites by September 2014."*

This policy sets out the criteria against which any application for Travelling Showmen sites will be assessed. The individual criteria are addressed in turn:

a) The site is ideally suited in a location where there is a strong Travelling Showmen presence. The funfair and entertainment industry play an important role in the economy of Towyn and in particularly the Tir Prince Leisure site and race track. The site is also located close to the broader North Wales coastal town of Llandudno, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Llandules , Rhos etc which makes it an ideal location.

The site is in the ownership of the applicant, it is available and developable and therefore suitable. It would be developed and operational in a short time after the issue of planning consent.

b) The application site is a **previously developed land**. It has an extant planning consent (See site history). It is located on the edge of Towyn close to everyday services.

c) The site does not have an allocation. A need has been identified by both the applicant and the Council. This need has to be satisfied and the site is well placed to meet that need in a sustainable manner.

d) The site is well placed with regard to everyday facilities with shops just over a kilometre away at Towyn Road. There are other pedestrian routes into Towyn, a very good bus service on Towyn Road.

e) A safe and appropriate access can be achieved to serve the site. There will be no adverse impact on the local highway network. Much of the traffic movements associated with the proposal already using the highway network now. This is demonstrated in the Transport Statement.

f) The site has good screening on the northern and eastern boundaries and this will be supplemented. Woodland planting of native species will be introduced on the southern and part eastern boundaries. This will be considered in more detail at the Reserved Matters stage.

g) The site will have all of the necessary utility connections and recycling/waste disposal facilities. Unlike Gypsy Sites, Travelling Showmen sites do not require amenity blocks. There are facilities within each park home.

h) The proposal would not affect existing residential amenity.

Again, unlike the Gypsy community the Travelling Showmen do not need any assistance from the Council in identifying a site or setting it up. The Travelling Showmen community is self sufficient and independent. The applicant has purchased the application site to provide much needed accommodation in the area. This will assist the Council in meeting its statutory duty under the Housing Act (Wales) 2014.

The proposal is consistent with Policy HOU/9

- 3.34 Policy CFS/1 - Community Facilities and Standards. The proposal will not adversely impact on the provision or retention of community facilities in the locality. By having a base in Towyn it will provide the Travelling Showmen community an ability to integrate into community life.
- 3.35 Policy CFS/11 - Development & Open Space. An area of children's' play will be set aside on the site. This is shown on the illustrative layout.
- 3.36 Policy NTE/1 - the natural environment and Policy NTE/3- Biodiversity are considered in the Bio Diversity report submitted with the proposal. The suite contains little bio diversity significance.
- 3.37 Policy NTE/4 - The Landscape and Special Landscape Areas. The site does not fall within a Special Landscape Area as defined in the Plan. The site will be adequate landscaped and this will be a matter for the reserved matters stage. Initial landscape proposals are shown on the Illustrative layout submitted with the application.
- 3.38 Policy NTE/6 - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies in new development. This will be considered at the Reserved matters stage.
- 3.39 Policy NTE/8 - Sustainable Drainage Systems. A SuDs based system is proposed and full details are submitted with the application.
- 3.40 Policy NTE/9 - Foul Drainage - An onsite self contained treatment works is proposed which will satisfactorily deal with foul water generated from the site.
- 3.41 Policy NTE/10 - Water Conservation. Measures will be incorporated in the design to minimise water consumption.

- 3.42 Policy CTH/1 - Cultural Heritage. There are no heritage assets on the site save for the old Victorian granary building which is in a poor state of disrepair. A structural survey of this building has been undertaken and it had been found to be structurally sound. It is intended to restore this building so it can be used for storage in association with the maintenance of the site.
- 3.43 Policy CTH/5 - The Welsh Language. A Community and Linguistic Statement has been prepared and is submitted as an integral part of the submission.
- 3.44 Policy STR/1 - Sustainable Transport, Development and Accessibility. The site lies adjacent the settlement boundary of Towyn which itself forms part of the Urban Area as defined by Policy DP/2. It is approximately a kilometre from the centre of Towyn on Towyn Road. Towyn Road also has a very regular bus service linking Towyn to Rhyl and Llandudno. There is also a local Towyn Bus service on Gors Road. Towyn also has primary schools, employment opportunities and places of worship. It is a sustainable site.
- 3.45 Policy STR/2 - Parking Standards. Adequate parking will be provided for each unit. This will include a screened storage area for residents' tourers.
- 3.46 Policy STR/3 - Mitigating Travel impact - It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant impacts on the locality. The majority of vehicles are currently using the local highway network. A Transport Statement is submitted with the application.
- 3.47 In addition to Policy there is Supplementary Planning Guidance:
- a. LDP02 - Parking Standards (2014)
  - b. LDP04 - Planning Obligations (2014)
  - c. LDP05 - Bio Diversity in Planning (2014)
  - d. LDP06 - Welsh Language (2014)
  - e. LDP09 - Design (2014)
  - f. LDF27 - Coastal Flood Risk Protocol

The detailed advice in the SPGs will inform the Reserved Matters submission.

- 3.48 Overall it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the relevant policies in the Conwy Local Development Plan.

### **3. Housing Need**

- 3.49 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 at Section 101 places a duty on Local Authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Travelling Showmen "residing in or resorting to its area." The assessment is to be undertaken every 5 years. Section 103 places a further duty on a Local Authority to meet the assessed needs. Section 108 provides an interpretation of terminology and indicates that "*Gypsies and Travellers*" includes "*members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).*"
- 3.50 The Welsh Office encourages groups of Authorities to work together to identify both current and emerging need and supply. In terms of supply, there is a single Travelling Showmen's site in the administrative areas of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy. That site is at Wrexham and accommodates 5 families with extremely limited space for storage, maintenance and homes.

- 3.51 A Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment survey was undertaken by Conwy Council in 2016 but, apart from a small number of individuals, neither Travelling Showmen in North Wales nor their representatives at the Guild engaged with the Council. Hence, there is very little reference to Travelling Showpeople in the report presented to the Welsh Office.
- 3.52 Since then the applicant has worked closely with the Council's Housing Strategy Manager (HSM) to assist in identifying Travelling Showpeople housing demand at the present time and moving forward over the next 5 years.
- 3.53 Interviews were conducted by the HSM to assess demand. The report is submitted with the Planning Statement. Its main findings are:
- A Showmen's equipment is inseparable from their home.
  - Equipment is almost regarded as an extension to the family.
  - 8 households identified with an aspiration to live on a private yard plus 3 emerging households identified.
  - Further 5 emerging households by 2022 identified.
  - Household report that their current storage arrangements are inadequate.
- 3.54 It is clear that at the present time there is an identified need and no other sites in Conwy or in neighbouring Councils. There is not a 5-year supply of suitable sites. This lack needs addressing as a matter of urgency.

#### **4. Site History - the fall-back position**

- 3.55 The issue of "fallback" position is a material consideration in the determination of the planning application. In correspondence to Stone Planning Services Limited dated 6th October 2016 the Council stated:
- " Planning permission 1/16320 is extant. However, given the passage of time following the grant of planning permission and the current condition of the site, Officers consider that the planning permission is unlikely to be implemented and therefore can be given little weight as a "fallback" position."
- 3.56 We don't agree with this statement on a number of grounds:
1. The last consent for the final condition discharge was in 2014. That is recent and shows an intention to implement. Why otherwise would the then site owner fund such an exercise?
  2. The current condition of the site has no bearing on whether the consent would be implemented or not. Our client will deal with the site as it is, it's "current state" is immaterial.
  3. There is a high degree of likelihood that the permission would be implemented. A number of floor slabs for the lodges are in situ . It is an easy exercise to create the 20-lodge area and then move onto the rest of the development. It does not all have to be completed at once.
- 3.57 In any event we feel there is a need to take cognisance of case law regarding the "fallback" position. The High Court dismissed a challenge to North Lincolnshire Council's grant of planning permission to Simons Developments Limited for a retail park in Gunness near Scunthorpe. Paragraph 73 of the judgement stated:

" The prospect of the fallback position does not have to be probable or even have a high chance of occurring; it has to be only more than a merely theoretical prospect. Where the possibility of a fallback position happening is very 'slight indeed' or, 'merely an outside chance' that is sufficient to make the position a material consideration."

- 3.58 As has been outlined above there is potential to develop the site in accordance with the extant consent. The fallback position is a material consideration and because it would be relatively simple and inexpensive to firstly develop the lodge park the fall-back should be afforded significant weight in the decision-making process.
- 3.59 Our client is also mindful that the "lodges" and the hotel would have been two storey in nature (see Appendix 2). Furthermore, their design is completely out of keeping with local designs and materials. Towyn has a large amount of caravans/park homes and that is exactly what is now proposed.
- 3.60 The proposed use will have less impact in terms of flood risk and transport movements as it is less intense than the extant consent. These matters are dealt with in other statements submitted with the application.

## **5. Flood Risk/Drainage**

- 3.61 A Flood Consequences Assessment is submitted which demonstrates that the proposed development is an improvement, in terms of flood risk, compared to what could be built on the site. This is betterment. A flood defence wall will be constructed and faced in local stone. Full details will be agreed as part of a Reserved Matters submission.
- 3.62 Strategies for the disposal of foul and surface water are submitted. Surface water will be positively captured and will ultimately drain to the Bodoryn Marsh Drain. A small in line attenuation pond will be constructed.
- 3.63 Foul water will be dealt with by way of an onsite sewage treatment plant. Full details are set out in the strategy. The final treated effluent will discharge into the Bodoryn Marsh Drain

## **6. Amenity**

- 3.64 The site is located on the edge of Towyn. The nearest residential properties are some distance away such that any activities on the site will not adversely impact on existing residential properties. A noise assessment accompanies the application.
- 3.65 Subject to design we do not feel that the proposal will adversely impact on amenity.

## **7. Access**

- 3.66 The site has two points of vehicular access onto Gors Road; one adjacent the northern boundary and the other near the southern boundary. The site has an extant planning consent as set out earlier in this statement.
- 3.67 The main access will be the southern access which will be redesigned to ensure that vehicles accessing and egressing the site can do so in a safe manner.
- 3.68 Traffic from the site will be limited because of the nature of the business. For some family's rides/equipment will leave the site in spring and would return infrequently during the summer and autumn. In winter, there will be fewer movements.
- 3.69 On a daily basis there will be trips to school, shops, work and leisure activities in cars.
- 3.70 A full Transport Statement accompanies the planning application and this demonstrates that there will be no adverse impacts on the local highway network. Much of the traffic is already on the system.

## 8. Biodiversity

3.71 The site has very limited value in terms of bio diversity. A further bat survey is required due to the potential for roosting in the old farm house. Otherwise there is no significance on the site. The proposal provides an opportunity to inverse bio diversity by:

- a. Strategic planting of indigenous species along the main site boundaries.
- b. More domestic scale planting within the site
- c. Provision of the attenuation area.
- d. Bat mitigation if required.
- e. Bird nesting boxes
- f. Creation of habitats where appropriate.

Overall enhanced biodiversity will ensue.

3.72 The Planning Balance is shown in the table below:

Table 2: Planning Balance

Dimension	Potential Benefits	Potential Adverse Impacts
<u>Economic</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and retention of local employment</li> <li>• Travelling Showmen generally use local shops and services and as business expands there will be increased spend into the local economy</li> <li>• A purpose-built site will enable businesses to expand</li> <li>• Local employment opportunities in the construction phase.</li> <li>• A base in the area will reduce travelling time to events.</li> <li>• There will be income for the public purse.</li> <li>• There will not be a draw on the public purse as the applicant is able to provide the site without public subsidy or financial assistance.</li> </ul>	None
<u>Social</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a Travelling Showmen site in the locality to meet identified need.</li> <li>• Provision of affordable accommodation for Travelling Showmen families.</li> <li>• A base will enable further integration into the local community and reduce any prejudices</li> <li>• A local base will enable resident to be nearer to their families in the area.</li> <li>• Some Travelling Showmen speak Welsh and being together will help develop linguistic skills</li> </ul>	None
<u>Environmental</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased bio diversity on a fairly bland site</li> <li>• Native species planting to improve this approach into Towyn</li> </ul>	None

3.73 This table demonstrates that there are significant benefits to this proposal. There are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits associated with the development. The proposal represents sustainable development for an identified need and should be supported.



## **SECTION 4: CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The development proposals need to be assessed within the context of the Development Plan and other relevant guidance as set out in the previous section and other material considerations.
- 4.2 The proposed use is to satisfy an identified need in the locality. Save for a very small and unsatisfactory site in Wrexham there are no Travelling Showmen sites in North Wales. That is a discord with the tradition of fairs, community events and tourism along the coastal North Wales area.
- 4.3 The applicant has worked closely with the Council's Housing Officer to identify need and the Council's assessment shows a need for 16 park homes in the next 5 years.
- 4.4 Travelling Showmen, whilst often classified with the Gypsy community in need surveys have a completely different culture. Their housing needs are very different. Their life style makes their home and business vehicles/rides inseparable. Hence there is a need to accommodate both cheek by jowl. There are very few opportunities to do this and conventional houses have inadequate space to store equipment, let alone maintain it. Hence purpose built sites are required.
- 4.5 The application site is ideally placed, sufficiently close to Towyn to provide good access to everyday services and facilities but remote enough from existing properties so as to protect amenity.
- 4.6 Welsh Housing law requires public bodies to assist in meeting housing needs for gypsies and Travelling Showmen. We are aware that a site has recently been provided for the gypsy community in Conway. The Travelling Showmen community deal with need in a different way; they are essentially self sufficient and do not require assistance from the public purse in terms of providing a site or utility connections. The applicant has purchased a suitable site and will provide all of the necessary infrastructure for 13 families.
- 4.7 There are no technical matters that cannot be resolved in respect of flood defence, drainage of foul and surface water and protecting amenity. An access can be provided that ensures vehicles enter and leave the site in a safe manner.
- 4.8 The proposal will secure and provide additional employment opportunities in the locality. The applicant and other Travelling Showmen in the locality already employ local workers. Having their own base will enable them to expand their businesses.
- 4.9 Travelling Showmen provide an important service in the area. They not only operate some of the semi-permanent fun fair sites in the area but also operate the various seasonal fairs and entertainment at weekends. These are important cultural experiences and having a local base will help develop these further.
- 4.10 We believe that there are no planning reasons to object to the proposal. It will meet an identified need, there are no other available sites coming forward and the site at Gors Farm, Towyn provides the only prospect of providing much needed accommodation for this community. We hope that the Council will support the proposal.