1. Details of Site Provision

1.1 Size & Facilities

There is one Gypsy Traveller Permanent Site within South Ayrshire Council which has 8 ground level Pitches, with 1 pitch having specific disabled access & facilities. Each pitch has hard standing with an amenity unit and can accommodate 2 caravans.

The amenity units consist of a kitchen, bathroom & storage room. Power to the caravan and the amenity unit is paid through a power card meter. The cards are available to purchase from the site manager and the local housing office in Girvan.

There is a children’s playground on site, there is also a portacabin used as a classroom with computer and internet connection. The site was built in 1987 with the office and amenity units being pre built portacabins. Then in 1998 the site was upgraded with a new office and amenity units and all buildings are now of brick construction.

1.2 Location

The site is located 2 miles north of the town of Girvan and 22 miles south of Ayr.

1.3 Site Management

The Site Manager is employed full time 35 hours per week Monday to Friday and provides both a manager and liaison officer role. He is part of the Girvan Housing team and is responsible to the manager within the Area Housing Office. To maintain service during the Site Manager’s absence the site is managed from the Area Housing Office.

1.4 Rent and Council Tax

The weekly rent per pitch is £69.21 and the council tax is Band A i.e. £769.30 per annum. There are no other additional costs to gypsy travellers as there are no water or sewage charges for the site.

1.5 Temporary Absences

To accommodate the traveller’s culture & individual lifestyle, the residents are entitled to be absent from the site for 12 weeks in any 12 month period and still retain their tenancy. This is in line with historical guidance from the Advisory Committee on Scotland’s Travelling People, which has not been superceded.

1.6 Details of Proposed Sites

In 2007, a needs assessment indicated a requirement for a transit, or series of transit sites in Ayrshire. The Scottish Government has awarded South Ayrshire
Council funding to develop a transit site for 4-6 caravans. Discussions are ongoing with neighbouring authorities to identify a potential suitable location for this site.

Although there is no building programme for additional sites, any site would be maintained through the Area Housing Service. Current provision has addressed the queried building and maintenance issues as follows:

1.6.1 **Access to services**

a. Health: The main contact for residents is the local health visitor located in Girvan hospital. Ayrshire & Arran NHS also provide a dedicated nurse in South Ayrshire whose remit includes homeless people and travellers. Both of these professionals regularly attend on site and are available on request as well as part of delivering health awareness raising campaigns in the community. The hospital and health centre, including GP surgeries, are all located within Girvan hospital which is half a mile from the site.

b. Education: Educational provision includes a nursery school, 2 primary schools, 1 secondary school and 1 special needs school, which are all located within 2 miles of the site in Girvan. All traveller children of nursery and primary school age attend the schools in Girvan. However, to support children of secondary school age who may not regularly attend, the Council provides a tutor on site once a week from our Central Peripatetic Support Services (CPSS).

c. Transport links: The Council provides a school bus service which collects and returns all primary school children on site. Suitable transport is also provided for those children attending the special needs school. In addition, both bus and train services are available within half a mile of the site. Road access to the A77 trunk road is also close to the site.

2. **Complaints**

Gypsy Travellers are provided with information on the Council’s Complaints Procedure as part of a Welcome Pack and Tenancy Agreement. In addition, to accommodate potential literacy issues, the procedure is also advised in person by the Site Manager during his initial discussion of their pitch agreement. Rather than just being reactive to complaints the Council actively encourages Gypsies and Travellers to take part in ongoing consultations to further improve the site and services.

3. **Private Sites**

There are no private Gypsy Traveller sites in South Ayrshire.

4. **Unauthorised Encampments**

Management of unauthorised encampments is carried out by the site manager (who also takes on the role of liaison officer offering the traveller’s the services)
as per our policy for dealing with unauthorised encampments. The Council’s policy was revised in 2009. Where health, education or welfare issues are identified within unauthorised encampments, the Site Manager arranges for appropriate support from relevant services.

5. Criteria of Encampments

The Council defines an unauthorised encampment as one which is set up by any person without the permission of the land owner.

6. Policies & Staff Awareness

The Council provides Equality and Diversity Training to its Elected Member, Senior Managers and staff which includes Gypsy Travellers within the Race protected characteristic. As part of the arrangements to meet its general equality duty under the Equality Act 2012, the Council has an Equality Impact Assessment process which ensures that all policies and procedures include consideration of any potential positive and negative equality impacts across all protected characteristics.

Regarding service specific training, all Children and Community Directorate staff are trained in providing services to Gypsy Travellers, with more in depth training as required e.g. within the Girvan Area Housing Office awareness training and practical advice on responding to travellers’ needs and issues on a daily basis is provided. The site manager also attends different Directorates and Services to make staff aware of traveller cultures, the operation of the site and unauthorised encampments through site visits and presentations.

To ensure continuous professional development the Site Manager attends bi-annual training, arranged jointly with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIS) and the Traveller’s Site Manager Association Scotland (TSMAS). The Site Manager also attends the quarterly meetings held by TSMAS with relevant speakers presenting on traveller issues. The Site Manager is also supported and encouraged to attend any meetings relating to traveller issues with many different agencies.

7. Liaison Officer

As mentioned the role of Liaison Officer is undertaken as a joint role within the Site Manager’s remit. This works particularly well in South Ayrshire, as it builds up a rapport and trust between the travelling community and the Site Manager.

David Anderson
Chief Executive
South Ayrshire Council
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