



## From mountain to sea

### **Briefing Note – Private Gypsy/Traveller Sites in Aberdeenshire**

#### **1. Executive Summary/Recommendation**

**1.1 This Briefing Note is to provide members of the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee with background information relating to Gypsy/Traveller private site provision in Aberdeenshire.**

**1.2 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.**

#### **2. Discussion**

- 2.1. At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Gypsy/Traveller Sub Committee requested information on the number of private Gypsy/Traveller sites in Aberdeenshire, those with planning permission and those awaiting permission.
- 2.2. There are currently nine privately owned and managed sites in Aberdeenshire with a total of 54 pitches.
- Boddam, Peterhead - 4
  - Boyndie - 5
  - Clola - 3
  - Findon – 5
  - Kemnay – 11
  - Newmachar (Land at Sandyford Farm) - 1
  - New Pitsligo - 5
  - North Esk (Residential) - 11
  - North Esk (Transit) - 9
- 2.3. Aberdeenshire has received four planning applications for private sites since 2018. Three of these applications were made in 2021. The site at Newmachar was approved in July 2022. The new site in Portlethen is awaiting a decision. The application made in 2021 in relation to a request for four additional pitches on the existing site at Quarry Wood, Kemnay was approved in January 2022. There was also an application approved in early 2019, for the formation of the North Esk transit site which is currently operational.
- 2.4. Some Gypsy/Travellers have expressed a preference for living on private sites as they can live in family groups and monitor who is admitted on the site.

Barriers:

- Cost of land itself.
- Quality of land for less expensive plots is poor requiring expensive solutions in order to get planning approval, i.e. porosity tests, drainage, etc.
- Applying for planning permission is challenging.
- Finding an architect to draw up plans can also be difficult.
- There tend to be lots of objections and prejudice from the settled community.
- Literacy issues make it difficult to contact Scottish Water, electric/gas companies, etc. when getting basic infrastructure put on these sites.
- Cost of residential site licence from council and fire risk assessments for this. Licences have to be renewed every five years. The prime purpose of the licence is to protect the public health of those people living on the site.

- 2.5. The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer continues to provide support to Gypsy/Travellers who wish to investigate private site provision.

Report and additional information prepared by Liz Hamilton, Strategic Housing Officer  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2024.