

Birmingham Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

Report

May 2024

RRR Consultancy Ltd



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Policy context</i>	3
<i>Population Trends</i>	4
<i>Stakeholder consultation</i>	6
<i>Accommodation need</i>	6
<i>Conclusions and recommendations</i>	8
1. Introduction	10
<i>Study context</i>	10
<i>Methodological context</i>	10
<i>Geographical context</i>	11
<i>Map of the study area</i>	12
2. Policy context	14
<i>Introduction</i>	14
<i>National Policies</i>	14
<i>Summary</i>	26
3. Trends in population levels	26
<i>Introduction</i>	26
<i>Data on unauthorised sites</i>	32
<i>Local authority data on unauthorised sites</i>	33
<i>Permanent residential pitches within the study area</i>	34
<i>Travelling Showpeople</i>	34
4. Stakeholder consultation	36
<i>Introduction</i>	36
<i>Accommodation needs</i>	37
<i>Locations of new provision</i>	39
5. Gypsies and Travellers consultation	47
<i>Introduction</i>	47
<i>Requirement for permanent residential pitches first 5 years</i>	48
<i>Requirement for permanent residential pitches for following 20-year period</i>	53
<i>Requirements for transit pitches / negotiated stopping arrangements</i>	54
<i>Summary</i>	55
6. Travelling Showpeople consultation	56
<i>Introduction</i>	56
<i>Methodology</i>	56
<i>Calculation of Permanent Accommodation Need</i>	57
<i>Requirement for permanent plots for first 5 years: steps of the calculation</i>	58
<i>Need for permanent plots</i>	59
<i>Summary</i>	61

7. Boat Dwellers Consultation.....	62
<i>Introduction.....</i>	62
<i>Birmingham waterways</i>	62
<i>Permanent accommodation needs.....</i>	64
<i>Requirement for permanent residential moorings</i>	64
<i>Requirements for transit moorings.....</i>	65
<i>Summary.....</i>	65
8. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	65
<i>Permanent accommodation needs.....</i>	65
<i>The size of new provision.....</i>	68
<i>Transit provision.....</i>	69
Appendix 1: Example negotiated stopping place protocol	74
Bibliography.....	77
Glossary	78

Executive Summary

Introduction

ES1. In 2023 Birmingham District Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2042. The findings of this study should be used to assist policy development and planning decision making and supersedes any previous GTAAs (including any accommodation needs calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities.

ES2. The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Showpeople, non-Gypsy and Traveller, Gypsy and Traveller, residential caravan dwellers, and boat dwellers is established through national guidance contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department of Communities and Local Government (DLUHC), December 2023).

ES3. To achieve the study aims, the research drew on a number of data sources including:

- Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTAAs, and analysis of secondary data. This included analysis of the most recently published (July 2023) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
- Consultation with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
- Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs.

ES4. The above provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

Policy context

ES5. On 19 December 2023, the government announced changes to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which had previously been updated in August 2015. In the 2023 update, the government has reverted to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers used in the PPTS as adopted in 2012. This change is in response to a Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022). The government intends to review this area of policy and case law further in 2024. Like the 2015 update,

the 2023 version is to be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- ES6. Whilst it is clear that the 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel, it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes.
- ES7. Given differences in defining Gypsies and Travellers, this GTAA provides two accommodation needs figures: first, one based on the ethnic identity definition; second, based on the PPTS 2023 definition. The two accommodation needs definitions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
- ES8. In March 2016, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its *Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance* to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It states that, when considering the need for caravans and houseboats, local authorities must include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances including, for example, caravan and houseboat dwelling households and households residing in bricks and mortar dwelling households.
- ES9. According to the NPPF (2023) and related planning practice guidance, a sound local plan seeks, as a minimum, to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and address the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The NPPF (2023) refers to the need to both assess and then address the accommodation needs of those who are ethnically recognised Gypsies and Travellers (as in line with the Equalities Act 2010), both of whom are covered by the definition of the PPTS 2023, and those outside of the definition.

Population Trends

- ES10. The 2021 Census indicates that there were 686 Gypsies and Travellers residing in Birmingham representing around 0.06% of the usual resident population.¹ This is lower than the average for England & Wales of 0.11%. The most common accommodation type occupied by Gypsies and Travellers in Birmingham is 'purpose-built flats or tenement' (29%), with only a small proportion (2%) of Gypsies and Travellers reside in a caravan or mobile home. This means that almost all (98%) of

¹ See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

Gypsy and Traveller households in Birmingham reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.

- ES11. The DLUHC July 2023 Count shows there were 285 caravans recorded in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority with 16 caravans recorded in Sandwell, 49 in Wolverhampton, 55 in Birmingham, 69 in Dudley, and 96 Walsall. The 285 caravans recorded included 133 on social rented pitches, 97 on private pitches, and 55 on unauthorised pitches.
- ES12. In relation to density, Birmingham and Sandwell both recorded 5 caravans per 100,000 population. In contrast, Wolverhampton recorded 19 caravans per 100,000 population, Dudley 21, and Walsall 34. This compares to 104 caravans per 100,000 population in relation to the West Midlands and 42 in relation to England.
- ES13. The total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities over the period January 2020 to July 2023 varied with a maximum of 320 caravans recorded in July 2023 compared to a minimum of 189 caravans recorded in January 2022 (a difference of 41 caravans). On average, 10 caravans were recorded on authorised pitches in Birmingham between January 2020 to July 2023.
- ES14. On average, just over two fifths (42%) of caravans on authorised pitches during the period January 2020 to July 2023 were recorded in Walsall compared to just under a third (30%) in Dudley, and a fifth (20%) in Wolverhampton. Only small proportions were found in Sandwell (7%) and Birmingham (2%).
- ES15. There are 12 permanent authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches across 2 sites, and 8 Travelling Showpeople plots within the Birmingham City Council local authority area. There is also a transit site consisting of 15 pitches (currently unused due to refurbishment), and a proposed 4-pitch transit site.
- ES16. According to Birmingham City Council data, there was a total of 502 unauthorised encampments recorded over the period 2018/19 to 2022/23. Around four fifths (78%) of unauthorised encampments took place on publicly owned land compared to around a fifth (22%) on privately owned land. On average, each unauthorised encampment consisted of between 9 and 10 vehicles and lasted 6 or 7 days. Analysis of the unauthorised encampment data shows that there is a need for at least one transit site consisting of around 20 pitches to meet the need of transiting households in Birmingham. (However, this accommodation need can be met by refurbishment of the currently unused transit site.)

Stakeholder consultation

- ES17. Consultations with stakeholders were conducted to gather qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers aiming to understand both general and local-specific issues. Stakeholders from both the study area and neighbouring authorities contributed to a comprehensive perspective on the challenges faced by these communities.
- ES18. The consultations revealed a severe shortage of temporary and permanent sites for these groups, exacerbated by land availability issues, landowners' reluctance, and the challenge of finding suitable locations. For boat dwellers, specific challenges include restrictive travel range requirements and a lack of secure residential moorings. Travelling Showpeople struggle to find large enough plots of land for their operations. The current provisions often fail to meet the communities' needs due to unsuitable locations, inadequate facilities, and management issues.
- ES19. The need for additional accommodation is clear, driven by the demand observed through GTAA's and the presence of unauthorised encampments. There is a strong preference for new provisions to be located near essential amenities and distributed across the city to prevent concentration in one area.
- ES20. Significant barriers to providing new accommodation include the NIMBY phenomenon, high costs associated with establishing and maintaining sites, and the reluctance of landowners to release land. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including financial support, strategic planning, and a shift in policy priorities.
- ES21. Traveling patterns vary, with increased activity during summer and before Christmas for Gypsies and Travellers. Boat dwellers' patterns are mainly cyclical, moving between specific sites. The trend in roadside encampments remains steady, mainly due to the lack of suitable transit sites.
- ES22. Access to services is hindered by systemic, logistical, and societal challenges, including prejudice and lack of awareness of rights. Good practices exist in some local authorities and organisations, but are not widely known or implemented, indicating the need for greater dissemination of successful models to effectively meet the diverse needs of these communities.

Accommodation need

- ES23. Table ES1 summarises permanent accommodation need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches over a 20-year period. It is important to note that the figures shown in Table ES1 include all need as of 2023, including any which may have been identified by

previous GTAA's but remained unfulfilled by the time of this assessment. The table shows that 42 new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 34 new permanent pitches (based on PPTS 2023) are needed over the 20-year period.

Table ES.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
1-5 years	25	20
6-10 years	5	4
11-15 years	6	5
16-20 years	6	5
Total	42	34

Source: GTAA 2024

ES24. There is also a need for 15 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the 20-year period.

Table ES.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need
1-5 years	8
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	3
Total	15

Source: GTAA 2024

ES25. The need for additional boat dweller moorings over the 20-year period is as follows:

Table 8.3: Boat Dweller accommodation needs

Period	Need
1-5 years	35
6-10 years	1
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	2
Total	40

Source: GTAA 2024

ES26. In relation to transit provision, this assessment recommends that, as well as reopening the existing 15-pitch transit site, the local authority adopts a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed

and limited period, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The advantages of this approach are set out in detail in Chapter 8.

Conclusions and recommendations

ES27. There is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 42 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches (ethnic definition), and 34 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (PPTS 2023 definition). It is recommended that the local authority adopts a policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments. There are also a need for 15 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the 20-year period. [Boat dweller need TBC].

ES28. This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition accommodation needs figures i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed.

ES29. Alternatively, the local authorities may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and 'Ethnic' definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authorities would first meet the need of 34 (20 within the first 5 years) as the obligation but accept the need of a further 8 (5 within the first 5 years) as potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls.

ES30. It is also recommended that the local planning authorities consider the accommodation needs that might materialise over the plan period from households (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) not considered by this assessment. This could include households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, new households due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separate to the need identified below and could be met through windfall applications.

ES31. In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:

- In relation to the different community groups, it is recommended that the local authorities work closely with the families to determine how their accommodation need can best be met.
- Also, for the local authorities to provide pre-planning application advice to households who have identified land to help determine if it is suitable to address accommodation need.

- It is recommended that the local authorities review the planning of unauthorised developments and consider granting permanent status.

ES32. As well as quantifying accommodation need, the study also makes recommendations on other key issues including:

Planning policy:

- To reopen the currently unused 15-pitch transit site.
- To consider how the accommodation needs can be met by expanding existing provision and/or providing new sites, or yards.
- To consider alternative options for developing new sites, and yards such as developing them on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use.
- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the different community groups..
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authorities, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Showmen's Guild (local and national)), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- To consider safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller sites and Showpeople yards with permanent planning permission for their current use unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed to meet identified need.
- Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.
- To liaise with owners of the sites to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

- Housing organisations need to consider the type of housing allocated to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar in order to minimise the psychological aversion and feelings of isolation.

- Develop a holistic vision for their work with the different community groups, and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- In liaison with relevant enforcement agencies such as the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities can change. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

1. Introduction

Study context

- 1.1 In 2023 Birmingham District Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2042. The findings of this study should be used to assist policy development and planning decision making and supersedes any previous GTAAs (including any accommodation needs calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities.
- 1.2 The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Showpeople, non-Gypsy and Traveller, Gypsy and Traveller, residential caravan dwellers, and boat dwellers is established through national guidance contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department of Communities and Local Government (DLUHC), December 2023).

Methodological context

- 1.3 To achieve the study aims, the research drew on a number of data sources including:
 - Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTAAs, and analysis of secondary data. This

included analysis of the most recently published (July 2023) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.

- Consultation with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
- Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs.

1.4 The above provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

Geographical context

1.5 The estimated 2021 population of Birmingham is 1,144,919 people (ONS 2021). According to the Development Plan 2031 (Adopted January 2017), Birmingham is a major city, the UK's largest outside London, with an established international standing and reputation as well as being the capital of the West Midlands. Birmingham is one of the most connected cities in the UK. There are three main railway stations (New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill), located in the city centre with direct services to cities across England, Scotland and Wales. Birmingham Airport, adjacent to the city boundary, operates routes worldwide. The city has excellent links with the national motorway network. The city is also served by an extensive road network, linking the surrounding areas into the city centre. There is a network of local bus and suburban rail services and a Metro line. There are cycling and walking routes, including the National Cycle Network and the canal network.

1.6 The city is a major employment centre, drawing in workers from across the West Midlands. It is a leading European business destination with an economic output of £20bn per annum. The local economy has major strengths, particularly in business, professional and financial services; digital media; advanced manufacturing (including the automotive industry); jewellery and environmental and medical technologies. Many international companies are based in the area, including Jaguar Land Rover, Kraft, KPMG, Deutsche Bank and GKN.

1.7 The city is one of Britain's greenest with more than one fifth of its area consisting of parks, nature reserves, allotments, golf courses and playing fields, many of which are linked by rivers, watercourses and a significant number of canals. Some of these assets are of national significance, including Sutton Park. There are also a number of Local Nature Reserves and sites identified for their nature conservation value and the city forms part of the Birmingham and Black Country Nature Improvement Area.

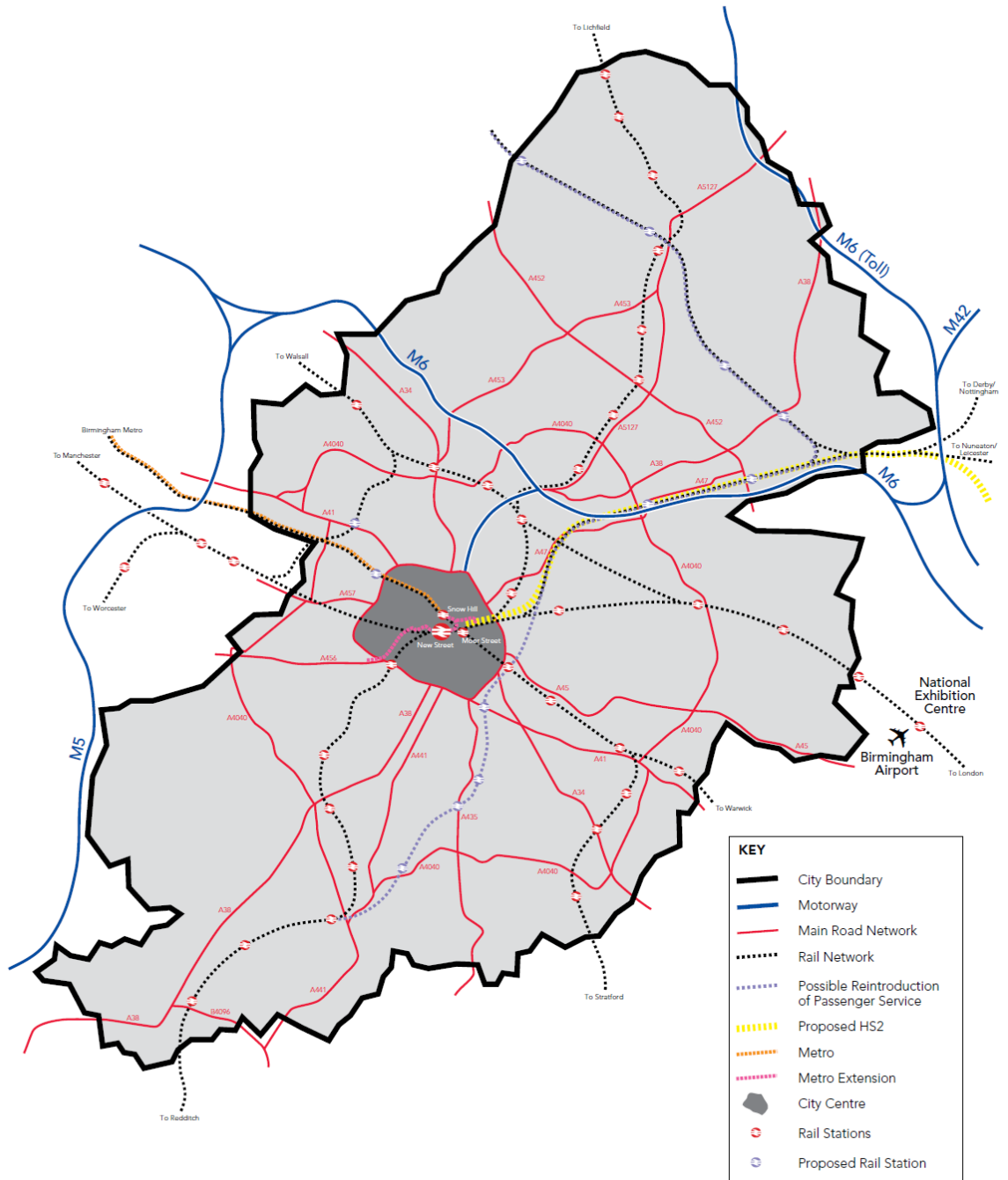
1.8 Birmingham is at the centre of the West Midlands region and has important relationships with surrounding areas. There are significant amounts of in-commuting

to Birmingham, particularly from South East Staffordshire, South Warwickshire, Solihull and North Worcestershire and net migration from Birmingham to these areas. There are also important connections to neighbouring communities, regeneration programmes and environmental networks in the Black Country, North Solihull and Bromsgrove. The City collaborates with these areas through partnership arrangements.

Map of the study area

1.9 A map of the study area is shown below.

Figure 1: Study area (with main transport routes)



Source: Birmingham Development Plan 2031 p.25

Summary

1.10 The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in Birmingham up to 2042. This is in terms of

permanent pitches, sites, and transit sites and/or negotiated stopping arrangements for Gypsies and Travellers. This report will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan review.

- 1.11 To achieve the study aims, this report focusses on the assessment of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers. The research provides a range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

2. Policy context

Introduction

- 2.1 To assess the current policy context, existing documents have been examined to determine what reference is made to Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and residential caravan dweller issues.
- 2.2 The intention is to summarise key national and local policies and examine the findings of GTAAs recently undertaken by neighbouring authorities. Furthermore, understanding the current position will be important in the development of future strategies intended to meet accommodation need and housing related support needed among Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

National Policies

'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (PPTS) (December 2023)

- 2.3 On 19 December 2023, the government announced changes to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which had previously been updated in August 2015. The key difference between the PPTS published in August 2015 and the December 2023 version primarily involves changes made in response to a recent legal judgment and ongoing policy reviews.
- 2.4 In the 2023 update, the government has reverted to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers used in the PPTS as adopted in 2012. This change is in response to a Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022). The government intends to review this area of policy and case law further in 2024. Like the 2015 update, the 2023 version is to be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2.5 The key difference between PPTS 2015 and 2023 is that the former removed the word 'permanently' from the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers. This meant that local planning authorities were not obliged to consider the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who had permanently ceased to travel.
- 2.6 However, the Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022) determined that PPTS was discriminatory, by excluding households who had permanently ceased to travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2.7 The guidance emphasises the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development. The PPTS requires local authorities to work with neighbouring local authorities to determine transit and permanent pitch and plot targets. It states that in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local authorities should:
- effectively engage with traveller communities
 - co-operate with traveller groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit/emergency accommodation needs of their areas
 - and use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

- 2.8 According to NPPF (2023) and related planning practice guidance a sound local plan seeks, as a minimum, to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and address "the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The NPPF (2021) refers to the need to both assess and then address the accommodation needs of those who are ethnically recognised Gypsies and Travellers (as in line with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010), both who are covered by the definition of the PPTS 2015 and those outside of the definition. Whilst distinguishing between those who travel and do not, it emphasises the need to both assess and address the accommodation of all who are ethnically Gypsies and Travellers. The Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 protect Gypsies and Travellers' cultural and ethnic way of life, including living in a caravan.

Definition Context

2.9 The DLUHC's December 2023 definition of Gypsies and Travellers², is set out below:

1. *For the purposes of this planning policy "gypsies and travellers" means:*

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

In determining whether persons are "gypsies and travellers" for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life*
- b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life*
- c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.*

2.10 Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople are not considered to be an ethnic minority by the Equality Act 2010 (and previously the Race Relations Act 1976). Although some Gypsies and Travellers may earn a living as 'travelling showpeople', Travelling Showpeople as a group do not consider themselves to belong to an ethnic minority³.

2.11 The DCLG definition of Travelling Showpeople is:

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.⁴

2.12 For the purposes of this planning policy, "Travellers" means "Gypsies and Travellers" and "Travelling Showpeople" as defined above from PPTS annex 1. Also, for the purposes of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs), Travelling

² See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>.

³ DCLG, *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople*, January 2007, p. 8

⁴ DCLG, *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, August 2015.

Showpeople are included under the definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers' in accordance with The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006, and the Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs (March 2016). It recommends that Travelling Showpeople's own accommodation needs and requirements should be separately identified in the GTAA⁵. This GTAA adheres to the definition of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as defined by the DCLG 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) (see above).

- 2.13 It is important to note that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have separate accommodation need requirements. Different terminology is used to distinguish between Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies and Travellers occupy pitches on sites, while Travelling Showpeople occupy plots on yards. As well as space for residing quarters, Travelling Showpeople also require additional space in order to store and maintain large equipment.
- 2.14 Whilst it is clear that the 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel, it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes.
- 2.15 One interpretation is that 'a nomadic habit of life' means travelling for an economic purpose. Previous case law e.g. *R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay* (1990) and *Hearne v National Assembly for Wales* (1999) has been used to support this point. There is nothing within PPTS 2015 which indicates that Gypsy or Traveller status (for planning purposes) is solely derived from whether there is any employment-related travelling.
- 2.16 More recent Planning Inspectors' reports have reached differing conclusions regarding whether the Gypsy and Traveller status (for planning purposes) should be based on patterns of employment-related nomadism. For example, a 2016 planning appeal decision regarding a site at Throcking, Hertfordshire, concluded the appellant was not a Gypsy and Traveller for planning purposes as there was insufficient evidence "that

⁵ DCLG, *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, August 2015 and DCLG, *Draft Guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs (Caravans and Houseboats)* March 2016.

he is currently a person of a nomadic habit of life”⁶ for employment purposes (i.e. he did not meet the August 2015 PPTS definition).

- 2.17 In contrast, some other Planning Inspectors’ reports have appeared to give less weight to the travelling status of Gypsies and Travellers. For example, an appeal decision regarding a site in Blythburgh, Suffolk, states that whilst the appellant had permanently ceased to travel, he is nonetheless an ethnic Romany gypsy with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010⁷.
- 2.18 Similarly, a local authority rejected a planning application as it determined that the household did not meet the PPTS 2023 definition. However, despite evidence that the family had reduced the extent to which they travel due to educational requirements, the Planning Inspector allowed the s78 appeal on the basis that they should be regarded as Gypsies for planning purposes⁸. Also, in deciding whether to allow a S78 appeal for a site in West Kingsdown, Kent, the Planning Inspector acknowledged that the local authority included within its future calculations the accommodation needs (in terms of pitches) of ‘cultural’ Gypsies and Travellers⁹.
- 2.19 Much case law precedes the December 2023 definition. The commonly cited R v South Hams DC ex parte Gibb et al judicial decision was undertaken in response to the now partly repealed Caravan Sites Act 1968. Also, it is increasingly recognised that defining Gypsies and Travellers in terms of employment status may contravene human rights legislation. For example, in 2003 the Welsh Assembly’s Equality of Opportunity Committee noted the:

‘...apparent obsession with finding ways to prove that an individual is not a ‘Gypsy’ for the purposes of the planning system. This approach is extremely unhelpful...and there can be no doubt that actual mobility at any given time is a poor indicator as to whether someone should be considered a Gypsy or a Traveller’¹⁰.

⁶ Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/16/3145267 Elmfield Stables, Thirty Acre Farm, Broadfield, Throcking, Hertfordshire SG9 9RD, 6 December 2016.

⁷ Appeal Ref: APP/J3530/A/14/2225118, Pine Lodge, Hazels Lane, Hinton, Blythburgh, Suffolk IP17 3RF 1 March 2016.

⁸ Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/W/18/3198435 Ten Acre Farm, Love Lane, Headcorn TN27 9HL 9 May 2019.

⁹ Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/17/3170535 Land north-west of Eagles Farm, Crowhurst Lane, West Kingsdown, Kent TN15 6JE 27 November 2018.

¹⁰ Welsh Assembly 2003 cited in Johnson, Murdoch and Willers, *The Law Relating to Gypsies and Travellers*, no date).

- 2.20 In September 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published research into the impact of the PPTS 2023 definition on assessing accommodation needs¹¹. The research examined a sample of 20 GTAA's undertaken since the August 2015 revised definition. The report found that there had been a 73% reduction in accommodation need in post-2015 GTAA's compared to pre-2015 GTAA's undertaken by the same local planning authorities.
- 2.21 Importantly, on 31 October 2022, the Court of Appeal determined that PPTS 2015 was discriminatory in relation excluding households who had permanently ceased to travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers. The case relates to Lisa Smith who resides on a site occupied by Ms Smith, her husband, their children and grandchildren. Two of Ms Smith's adult sons are severely disabled and cannot travel for work. The judgment determined that PPTS 2015 characterises nomadic Gypsies and Travellers as different from Gypsies and Travellers who, as a result of age or disability, are no longer able to travel. This creates sub-classes of an ethnicity which 'seems to sit uneasily with the stated aim of PPTS 2015 to facilitate the "traditional" way of life" of Gypsies and Travellers, and not simply the "nomadic" way of life'. The judgement concluded that the objective of PPTS 2015 in excluding households from being defined as Gypsies and Travellers was not 'fairness'.
- 2.22 Given the above, our approach is to use a methodology which provides first, an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity; and second, a figure based on the PPTS (August 2015). Different GTAA's reach differing conclusions on which approach / definition to adopt and it is for local authorities to decide individually which approach to take for planning purposes. It is recommended that this be kept under review in the light of evolving appeal decisions and case law. This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition accommodation needs figures i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed. An alternative is the adoption of the PPTS figure and for the difference between the PPTS and ethnic based need to be covered by a criteria-based policy. It is recommended that the work interpretation of need should simply be used as a form of reference and comparison with other authorities who use this approach.

¹¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Gypsy and Traveller sites: the revised planning definition's impact on assessing accommodation needs, Research Report 128, September 2019 located at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/190909_gypsy_and_traveller_sites_-_impact_of_the_revised_definition_-_final.pdf

*DCLG Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance (March 2016)*¹²

2.23 The 2016 DCLG draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats states that when considering the need for caravans and houseboats local authorities should include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances, for example:

- Caravan and houseboat dwelling households:
 - who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside
 - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded¹³ or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation
 - who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and
 - who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop on.

- Bricks and mortar dwelling households:
 - Whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable ('unsuitable' in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of a person's cultural preference not to live in bricks-and-mortar accommodation).

2.24 Importantly, in respect of this report, the draft guidance states that assessments should include, but are not limited to, Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, New Age Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.

2.25 The guidance recognises that the needs of those residing in caravans and houseboats may differ from the rest of the population because of:

- their nomadic or semi-nomadic pattern of life
- their preference for caravan and houseboat-dwelling
- movement between bricks-and-mortar housing and caravans or houseboats
- their presence on unauthorised encampments or developments.

¹² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-housing-needs-for-caravans-and-houseboats-draft-guidance>

¹³ Overcrowding e.g. where family numbers have grown to the extent that there is now insufficient space for the family within its caravan accommodation and insufficient space on the pitch or site for a further caravan (DCLG 2007 p.25)

2.26 Also, it suggests that as mobility between areas may have implications for carrying out an assessment local authorities should consider:

- co-operating across boundaries both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions
- the timing of the accommodation needs assessment
- different data sources.

2.27 Finally, the DCLG draft guidance (2016) states that, in relation to Travelling Showpeople, account should be taken of the need for storage and maintenance of equipment as well as accommodation, and that the transient nature of many Travelling Showpeople should be considered.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

2.28 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 which gained Royal Assent on 12 May 2016, omits sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004, which previously identified ‘gypsies and travellers’ as requiring specific assessment for their accommodation needs when carrying out reviews of housing needs. Instead, the Act amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to include all people residing in or resorting to the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, the DCLG ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.

2.29 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing on places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. The term ‘houseboat’ is not defined by DCLG guidance. As such, the GTAA adopts the National Bargee Travellers Association’s (NBTA) definition who define a boat dweller as:

“Someone who lives aboard a vessel (which may or may not be capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main or only residence and where that vessel is either (i) moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year (but may occasionally or periodically leave its mooring); or (ii) has no permanent mooring and navigates in accordance with the statutes appropriate to the navigation such as inter alia s.17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995 or s.79 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932”.

Local Planning Policies

Birmingham Development Plan 2031

2.30 The Birmingham Development Plan 2031 (adopted January 2017) outlines the Council's policy regarding Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. According to Policy TP34 ('Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople') the following sites are allocated to provide for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers:

- Hubert Street/Aston Brook Street East.
- Rupert Street/Proctor Street.

2.31 Other proposals for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be permitted where:

- The site is of sufficient size to accommodate pitches/plots of an appropriate size, and, in the case of Travelling Showpeople, to accommodate appropriate levels of storage space.
- There is safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the public highway and adequate space for vehicle parking and manoeuvring within the site.
- The site is accessible to shops, schools, health facilities and employment opportunities and is capable of being served by services such as mains water, sewerage and power and waste disposal.
- There is no conflict with other relevant policies such as those relating to the protection of the Green Belt, other greenfield land and industrial land, and those concerned with development within areas at risk of flooding and on contaminated land¹⁴.

Duty to cooperate and cross-border issues

2.32 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England, and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation relating to strategic cross boundary matters. Also, the need for

¹⁴ Birmingham Development Plan 2031 adopted January 2017 p.116.

councils to cooperate reflects the characteristic that Gypsy and Traveller travelling patterns transcend local authority borders¹⁵.

- 2.33 Local authorities are required to work together to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs for their areas. They should also consider the production of joint development plans to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has specific development constraints across its area.
- 2.34 As part of this assessment, consultation in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers, was undertaken with adjoining planning and housing authorities. The findings from the consultation are discussed in Chapter 4.
- 2.35 Given the transient nature of Gypsies and Travellers it is important for the GTAA to consider Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need in neighbouring authorities. The following section summarises the results of GTAA's recently undertaken by both the study area local authorities and neighbouring or nearby local authorities.

Birmingham Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2019

- 2.36 According to the GTAA, for those households that meet the PPTS 2015 planning definition there is a need for 19 additional pitches over the GTAA period to 2033. This is made up of 3 households on unauthorised pitches at Tameside Drive; 9 households who have been living on unauthorised encampments in Birmingham for many years and need a permanent pitch; 3 teenagers living on one of the encampments who will need a pitch of their own in the next 5 years; and new household formation of 4 pitches based on the demographics of the households on the encampments. There is also a need for 1 additional pitch for households that do not meet the planning definition. This is made up of 1 teenager living on the private site who will be in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years. In relation to transit provision, the GTAA notes that the Council are looking at options to bring back into operational use between 15-18 public transit pitches on the former transit site at Tameside Drive. This would lead to a total of up to 37 transit pitches which would exceed the recommendations made by the previous GTAA for between 10-15 transit pitches. It also recommends that the local authority consider the use of High Court injunctions to prevent groups of Travellers from moving onto specific areas of public land known to be popular for encampments in

¹⁵ It should be noted that the government's white paper 'Planning for the Future' (August 2020) indicates that it intends to abolish the duty to cooperate.

Birmingham, and other management-based approaches such as short-term toleration or Negotiated Stopping Agreements. This 2024 GTAA is an update of the 2019 GTAA.

Black Country GTAA 2022

2.37 The GTAA was undertaken by *RRR Consultancy Ltd.* on behalf of the four Black County local authorities of Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall Council, and City of Wolverhampton Council for the period 2021-2039. It determined that a further 172 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), 125 pitches (based on PPTS 'travel for all' definition), or 81 pitches ('travel for work' definition) are required over the period 2021-2039 in the study area. It also identified a need of 81 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the same period. The GTAA noted that transit provision already exists in Sandwell and Dudley, and that a transit site is under construction in Walsall. The GTAA recommended that Wolverhampton proceed with the development of a transit site.

Bromsgrove GTAA 2019

2.38 For the period 2019 to 2030 the GTAA identifies a 'cultural' need of 28 pitches and a 'PPTS' need for 24 pitches. The key driver is the number of children expected to form households over the plan period in addition to needs arising from an unauthorised site. In relation to transit provision, evidence shows a downward trend in the number of unauthorised encampments and number of caravans reported over recent years. This would indicate a weakening in the potential demand for pitches from households on unauthorised encampments. This evidence would suggest that a transit site is not a particular priority for Bromsgrove at present but this situation should be continually monitored.

Coventry City Council GTAA 2023

2.39 The GTAA concludes that there are currently 5 authorised pitches on Burbages Lane and an expected supply of 12 pitches following the redevelopment of the Siskin Drive site. This is able to cater for the assessed need (15 pitches) over the short term 2022/23 to 2026/27. Over the longer plan period to 2041 the GTAA concludes there will be a shortfall of 6 pitches but that these could potentially be accommodated at Burbages Lane.

Lichfield District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Tamworth Borough Council GTAA 2019

2.40 The GTAA assessed accommodation need over the period 2019-33/34/40 (dependent on the Local Plan period of respective local authorities). In relation to Gypsies and Travellers the GTAA found a total need for 35 additional pitches for households who

meet the PPTS 2015 definition; 16 additional pitches for households who do not meet the PPTS 2015 definition; and 5 additional pitches for households whose planning status is unknown. There were no Travelling Showpeople identified in Lichfield, North Warwickshire or Tamworth so there was no current or future need for plots for the GTAA period 2019-33/34/40. In relation to transit provision, the GTAA recommended that an unused 12-pitch site in North Warwickshire be brought back into use. Also, the private transit pitches in Lichfield appeared to be reducing the numbers of encampments and there are insufficient numbers of encampments in Tamworth to suggest that formal transit provision is required.

Rugby GTAA 2022

- 2.41 The GTAA was undertaken by *RRR Consultancy Ltd.* for the period 2022-2037. The GTAA showed that a further 79 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), or 56 pitches (based on PPTS 2015) are needed over the 15-year period. In relation to transit provision the GTAA recommended the adoption of a negotiated stopping policy and/or new transit provision consisting of between 6-10 pitches situated in or close to Rugby Town, near to main arterial routes e.g. M45 or M6, but not close to any existing accommodation provision.

South Worcestershire GTAA 2019

- 2.42 The GTAA was completed on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council, and Wychavon District Council for the period 2019-2041. It found a need for a further 167 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identify definition), 104 pitches (based on PPTS 2015), or 71 pitches ('work' definition) are needed over the period 2019-2041 in South Worcestershire. There is also a need for 10 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the same period. The main drivers of need within the first 5-year period are from overcrowding and new family formation. The GTAA suggests that accommodation need can be addressed by expanding the number of pitches permitted on existing private sites and/or providing new sites. In relation to transit provision, GTAA recommends that the local authorities continue with the Worcestershire negotiated stopping policy which involves caravans being sited on suitable land for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The GTAA is currently being updated by RRR Consultancy Ltd. and is due for publication summer 2024.

Stratford on Avon and Warwick GTAA 2024

- 2.43 The GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy Ltd. for the period 2022-50. The GTAA determined that there is a need for 79 new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 63 new permanent pitches (based on PPTS 2023) over the period 2022-2050 in the study area. The GTAA also

determines a need for an additional 18 permanent Travelling Showpeople plots over the same period. In relation to transit provision, the GTAA recommends that the local authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. In conjunction with this, the GTAA recommends each of the two study area local authorities could consider the development of a transit site to accommodate between 8 and 10 caravans.

Summary

- 2.44 DLUHC 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) emphasises the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to include all people residing in the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, as noted above, the DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.
- 2.45 The GTAA is based on a methodology which provides first, an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity; and second, a figure based on the PPTS (December 2023). Local planning policies regarding the provision of new Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople pitches and plots are outlined in Policy TP34 of the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 (2017) which outlines the criteria used to determine suitable locations for new sites and yards.
- 2.46 Given the cross-boundary characteristic of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, it is important to consider the findings of GTAAs produced by neighbouring local authorities. GTAAs recently undertaken by neighbouring local authorities indicate that there remains some Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need throughout the region, but none have suggested a need arising in their area should be met within the study area.

3. Trends in population levels

Introduction

- 3.1 This section examines population levels in the GTAA study area and population trends. The primary source of information for Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in England is the DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count. This was introduced

in 1979 and places a duty on local authorities in England to undertake a twice-yearly count for the DLUHC on the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in their area. The count was intended to estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population for whom provision was to be made and to monitor progress in meeting accommodation need.

- 3.2 Although the duty to provide sites was removed in 1994, the need for local authorities to conduct the count has remained. There are, however, several weaknesses with the reliability of the data. For example, across the country counting practices vary between local authorities, and the practice of carrying out the count on a single day ignores the fluctuating number and distribution of unauthorised encampments. Also, some authorities include Travelling Showpeople in the same figures as Gypsies and Travellers, whilst others distinguish between the different groups and do not include Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.3 Significantly, the count is only of caravans (tourer and static caravans) and so Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar accommodation are excluded. It should also be noted that pitches / households often contain more than one caravan, typically two or three.
- 3.4 Despite concerns about accuracy, the count is a useful indicator because it provides the only national source of information about numbers and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. As such, it is useful for identifying trends in the Gypsy and Traveller population, if not determining absolute numbers.
- 3.5 The DLUHC Count includes data concerning Gypsies and Travellers sites¹⁶. It distinguishes between caravans on socially rented authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised pitches. Unauthorised sites and pitches are broken down as to whether they are tolerated or not tolerated. The analysis in this chapter includes data from January 2020 to July 2023.

Population

- 3.6 The total Gypsy and Traveller population residing in the UK is unknown although the government estimate there to be between 100,000 and 300,000 Gypsy and Traveller

¹⁶. Data regarding Travelling Showpeople is published separately by the DLUHC as 'experimental statistics'.

people¹⁷. There are uncertainties partly because of the number of different definitions that exist, but mainly because of an almost total lack of information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. Estimates produced for the DLUHC suggest that at least 50% of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population are now residing in permanent housing.

- 3.7 Local authorities in England provide a count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in January and July each year for the DLUHC. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Count did not take place in July 2020 or January 2021. The July 2023 Count (the most recent figures available) indicate a total of 25,220 caravans. Applying an assumed three person per caravan¹⁹ multiplier would give a population of 75,660 persons.
- 3.8 Again, applying an assumed multiplier of three persons per caravan and doubling this to allow for the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in housing²⁰, gives a total population of 151,320 persons for England. However, given the limitations of the data this figure can only be very approximate, and may be a significant underestimate.
- 3.9 The 2021 national census included the category of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the question regarding ethnic identity. Table 3.1 below shows total population and Gypsy and Traveller population as derived from the 2021 Census. It shows that in March 2021 there were 6,209 Gypsies and Travellers residing in the West Midlands representing around 0.10% of the usual resident population.²¹ This is slightly lower than the average for England & Wales of 0.11%. The proportion recorded in each local authority area varied with 0.13% of the population in Dudley recorded as Gypsies and Travellers compared with 0.06% in Birmingham.

¹⁷ House of Commons 'Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' April 2019 located at: www.parliament.uk

¹⁸ The House of Lords 'Inequalities Faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities' (25 February 2020) provides useful links regarding inequalities faced by the GRT community.

¹⁹ Niner, Pat (2003), Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

Table 3.1 Gypsy and Traveller Population (2021)

	Population (no.)	G&T Pop (no.)	G&T Pop (%)
Birmingham	1,144,922	686	0.06%
Dudley	323,488	428	0.13%
Sandwell	341,832	324	0.09%
Walsall	284,126	356	0.13%
Wolverhampton	263,726	255	0.10%
West Midlands	5,950,768	6,209	0.10%
England	59,597,578	67,757	0.11%

Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2024

3.10 It is also possible to determine the Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area by tenure. Derived from 2021 Census data, Table 3.2 shows the housing type of 702 Gypsy and Traveller households residing in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities. The most common housing type is 'semi-detached house or bungalow' (30%), followed by 'terraced' (18%), 'purpose-built flats or tenement' (18%), 'a caravan or other mobile' (15%), 'detached house or bungalow' (15%), and 'other' (5%). This includes households residing both on sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation. The most common accommodation type in Birmingham is 'purpose-built flats or tenement' (29%), with only a small proportion (2%) residing in a caravan or mobile home meaning that almost all (98%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in Birmingham reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Table 3.2 Gypsy and Traveller households by accommodation type

	A caravan or other mobile home		Detached house or bungalow		Purpose-built flats or tenement		Semi-detached house or bungalow		Terraced		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Birmingham	5	2%	40	17%	67	29%	62	26%	43	18%	18	8%	235	100%
Dudley	32	20%	27	17%	16	10%	59	37%	20	13%	4	3%	158	100%
Sandwell	19	20%	10	10%	14	15%	25	26%	25	26%	3	3%	96	100%
Walsall	24	23%	13	12%	12	11%	38	36%	16	15%	2	2%	105	100%
Wolverhampton	22	20%	17	16%	17	16%	25	23%	20	19%	7	6%	108	100%
Total	102	15%	107	15%	126	18%	209	30%	124	18%	34	5%	702	100%

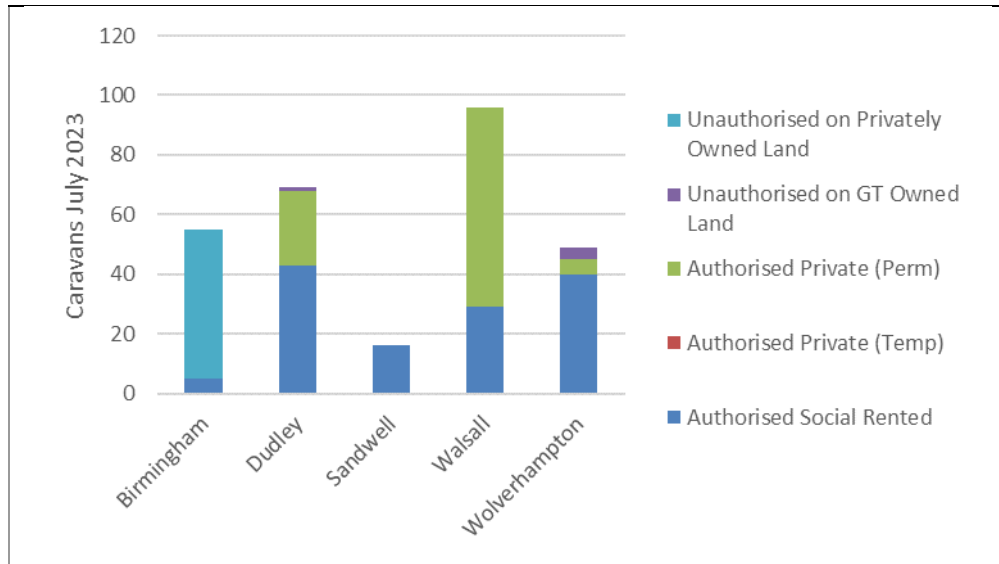
Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2024

3.11 Figure 3.1 below shows that a total of 285 caravans were recorded in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities by the January 2023 Caravan Count. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority with 16 caravans recorded in Sandwell, 49 in Wolverhampton, 55 in Birmingham, 69 in Dudley, and 96 Walsall.

The 285 caravans recorded included 133 on social rented pitches, 97 on private pitches, and 55 on unauthorised pitches.

3.12

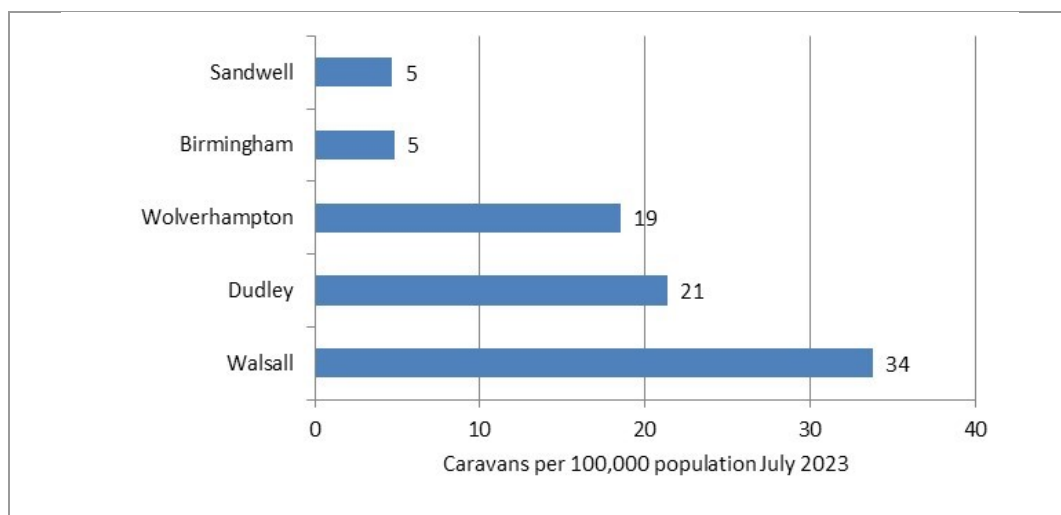
Figure 3.1 Caravans in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities July 2023



Source: July 2023 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

3.13 Figure 3.2 below shows that when the population is taken into account the density of caravans varies. Sandwell and Birmingham both recorded 5 caravans per 100,000 population. In contrast, Wolverhampton recorded 19 caravans per 100,000 population, Dudley 21, and Walsall 34. This compares to 104 caravans per 100,000 population in relation to the West Midlands and 42 in relation to England.

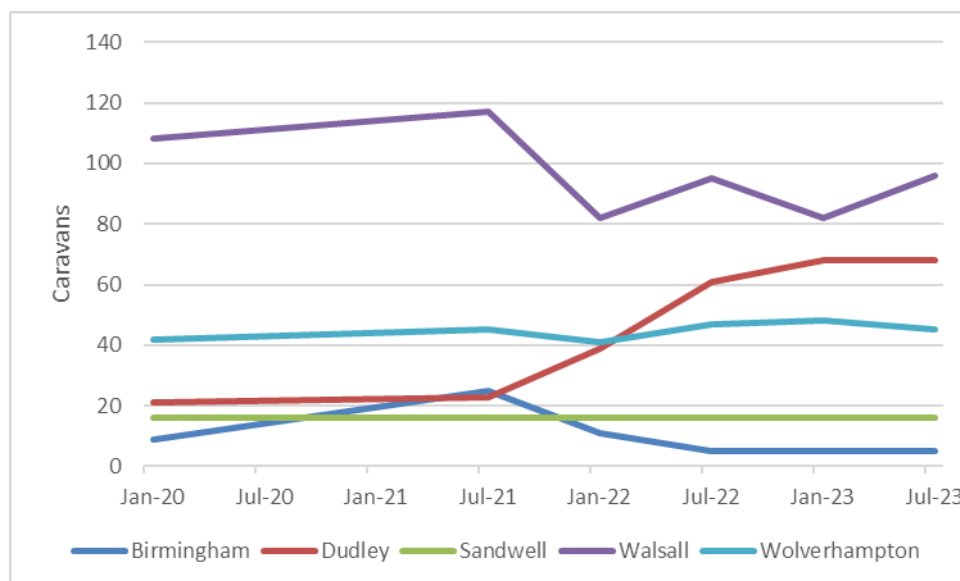
Figure 3.2 Pro rata comparison of caravans per 100,000 population July 2023



Source: July 2023 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

- 3.14 Figure 3.3 shows the total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities over the period January 2020 to July 2023. The number of caravans recorded during the period varied fairly widely with a maximum of 320 caravans recorded in July 2023 compared to a minimum of 189 caravans recorded in January 2022 (a difference of 41 caravans).
- 3.15 On average, just over two fifths (42%) of caravans on authorised pitches during the period January 2020 to July 2023 were recorded in Walsall compared to just under a third (30%) in Dudley, and a fifth (20%) in Wolverhampton. Only small proportions were found in Sandwell (7%) and Birmingham (2%).

Figure 3.3 Authorised caravans Jan 2020-Jul 2023

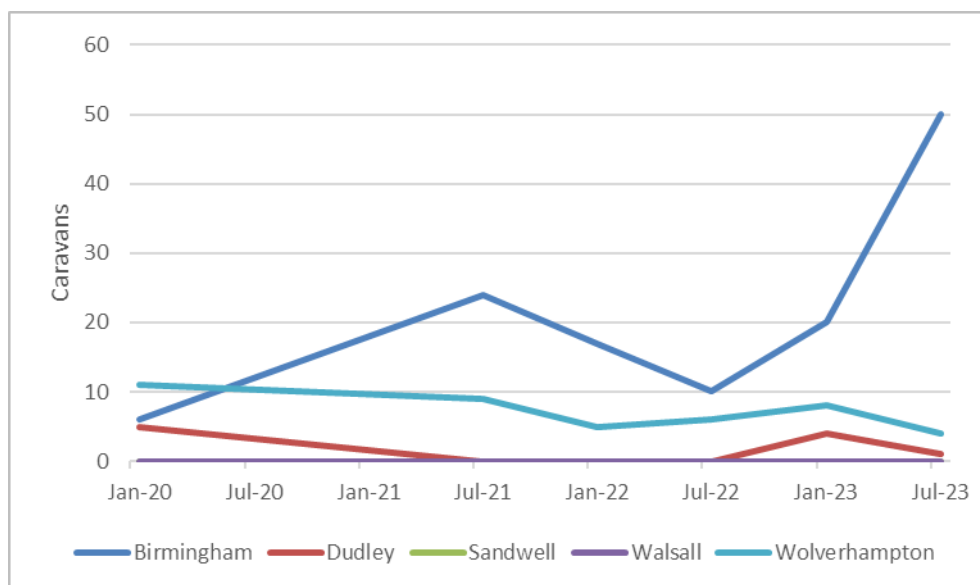


Source: July 2023 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

Data on unauthorised sites

- 3.16 The DLUHC Count also records data on unauthorised encampments (i.e. caravans residing temporarily on 'pitches' without planning permission). Figure 3.4 shows the number of caravans recorded by between January 2020 to July 2023 in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities. The number of unauthorised encampments recorded ranged from a maximum of 55 in July 2023 to a minimum of 16 in July 2022 (a difference of 39 caravans).
- 3.17 On average, over two thirds (71%) of caravans on unauthorised sites were recorded in Birmingham compared to just under a quarter (24%) in Wolverhampton. Only a small proportion (5%) was recorded in Dudley with none being recorded in Sandwell or Walsall. As can be seen by Figure 3.4, the number of caravans on unauthorised sites in Birmingham recorded by the DLUHC Count has increased since July 2022 peaking at 50 caravans in July 2023.

Figure 3.4 Unauthorised caravans in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities Jan 2020-Jul 2023



Source: July 2023 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

Local authority data on unauthorised sites

3.18 Birmingham City Council record more detailed data regarding unauthorised encampments. Figure 3.4 shows the number of caravans recorded between 2018/19 and 2022/23 in the Birmingham City Council local authority area. There was a total of 502 unauthorised encampments recorded during the 5-year period.

3.19 The dotted trend line shows a gradual decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments over the period 2018/19 and 2022/23 (although Covid-19 restrictions may have impacted on the number of unauthorised encampments recorded during 2020 and 2021). The number of unauthorised encampments recorded in each financial year ranged from a maximum of 152 in 2018/19 to a minimum of 40 in 2021/22. Around four fifths (78%) of unauthorised encampments took place on publicly owned land compared to around a fifth (22%) on privately owned land. On average, each unauthorised encampment consisted of between 9 and 10 vehicles and lasted 6 or 7 days.

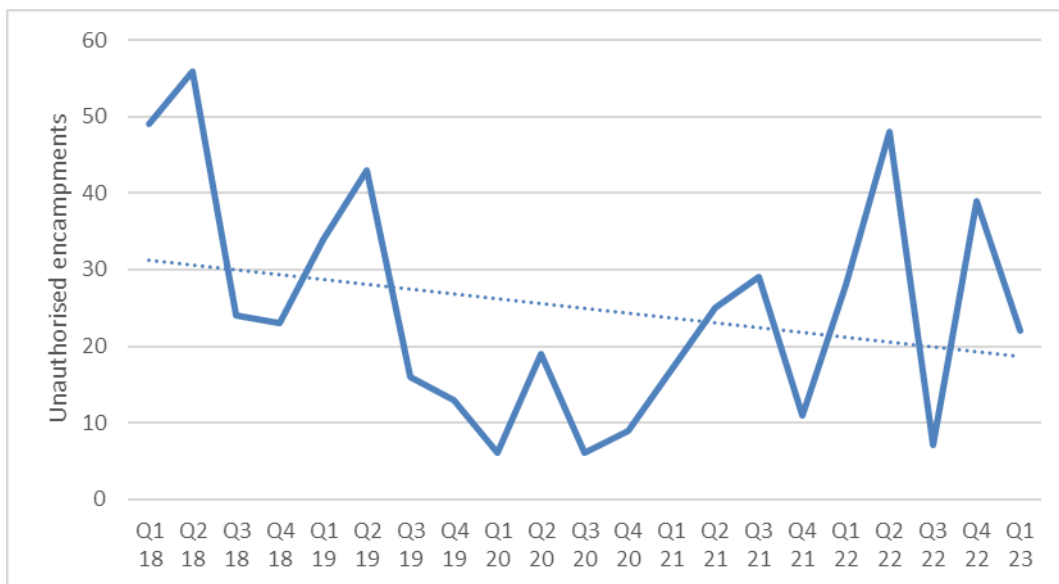
3.20 Using the data above, it is possible to determine the number of transit pitches required to meet the needs of transiting households. This determined by multiplying the number of vehicles in each unauthorised encampment by the number of vehicles involved in each encampment, and then dividing by the number of years and days:

Days x vehicles over the period 2018/19 to 2022/23: 34,590
 Yearly number i.e. 34,590 divided by 5: 6,918

Daily number i.e. 6,918 divided by 365: 19

3.21 This means that there is a need of at least one transit site consisting of around 20 pitches to meet the need of transiting households in Birmingham.

Figure 3.4 Birmingham City Council data on unauthorised encampments in Birmingham 2018/19 to 2023/24



Permanent residential pitches within the study area

3.22 As Table 3.3, shows that there are a total of 12 authorised pitches in the study area. There are also 15 transit pitches owned and managed by the local authority. Although the transit site is currently unused, refurbishment of the site would, alongside a negotiated stopping policy, meet the transit need identified by this assessment. There is also a proposed 4 pitch site bordering an existing permanent site. However, the land could better used to accommodate need arising on the existing permanent, authorised site.

Table 3.3 Study area Gypsy and Traveller pitches

Sites	Pitches	Occupied
Site 1	8	4
Site 2	4	2

Source: GTANA 2024

Travelling Showpeople

3.23 The cultural practice of Travelling Showpeople is to live on a plot in a yard in static caravans or mobile homes, along with smaller caravans used for travelling or inhabited

by other family members (for example, adolescent children). Their equipment (including rides, kiosks and stalls) is usually kept on the same plot. Table 3.4 shows that there are 8 plots.

Table 3.4 Study Showpeople yards

	Private plots	Temp plots	UD plots	Total
Total	8	0	0	8

Summary

- 3.24 The 2021 Census indicates that there were 686 Gypsies and Travellers residing in Birmingham representing around 0.06% of the usual resident population.²² This is lower than the average for England & Wales of 0.11%. The most common accommodation type occupied by Gypsies and Travellers in Birmingham is 'purpose-built flats or tenement' (29%), with only a small proportion (2%) of Gypsies and Travellers reside in a caravan or mobile home. This means that almost all (98%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in Birmingham reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.25 The DLUHC July 2023 Count shows there were 285 caravans recorded in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority with 16 caravans recorded in Sandwell, 49 in Wolverhampton, 55 in Birmingham, 69 in Dudley, and 96 Walsall. The 285 caravans recorded included 133 on social rented pitches, 97 on private pitches, and 55 on unauthorised pitches.
- 3.26 In relation to density, Birmingham and Sandwell both recorded 5 caravans per 100,000 population. In contrast, Wolverhampton recorded 19 caravans per 100,000 population, Dudley 21, and Walsall 34. This compares to 104 caravans per 100,000 population in relation to the West Midlands and 42 in relation to England.
- 3.27 The total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Birmingham and selected neighbouring authorities over the period January 2020 to July 2023 varied with a maximum of 320 caravans recorded in July 2023 compared to a minimum of 189 caravans recorded in January 2022 (a difference of 41 caravans). On average, 10

²² See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

caravans were recorded on authorised pitches in Birmingham between January 2020 to July 2023.

- 3.28 On average, just over two fifths (42%) of caravans on authorised pitches during the period January 2020 to July 2023 were recorded in Walsall compared to just under a third (30%) in Dudley, and a fifth (20%) in Wolverhampton. Only small proportions were found in Sandwell (7%) and Birmingham (2%).
- 3.29 There are 12 permanent authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches across 2 sites, and 8 Travelling Showpeople plots within the Birmingham City Council local authority area. There is also a transit site consisting of 15 pitches (currently unused), and a proposed 4-pitch transit site.
- 3.30 According to Birmingham City Council data, there was a total of 502 unauthorised encampments recorded over the period 2018/19 to 2022/23. Around four fifths (78%) of unauthorised encampments took place on publicly owned land compared to around a fifth (22%) on privately owned land. On average, each unauthorised encampment consisted of between 9 and 10 vehicles and lasted 6 or 7 days. Analysis of the unauthorised encampment data shows that there is a need for at least one transit site consisting of around 20 pitches to meet the need of transiting households in Birmingham. (However, this accommodation need can be met by the expansion and refurbishment of the currently unused transit site.)

4. Stakeholder consultation

Introduction

- 4.1 Consultations with a range of stakeholders were conducted to provide qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers. The aim of the consultation was to obtain both an overall perspective on issues facing these groups, and an understanding of local issues that are specific to the study area. In recognition that Gypsy and Traveller issues transcend geographical boundaries and the duty to cooperate in addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, consultation was undertaken with officers from neighbouring authorities, as well as from within the study area.
- 4.2 Themes included: the need for additional provisions and facilities; travelling patterns; the availability of land; accessing services; and work taking place to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This chapter highlights the main points that were raised. Please note that the below reflects the views of stakeholders and not necessarily the

views of the report authors. Also, that the comments may relate to areas outside of the study area.

Accommodation needs

- 4.3 The main accommodation issues facing Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers in Birmingham and surrounding areas include a severe shortage of both temporary and permanent sites due to a lack of land availability. This scarcity is exacerbated by landowners' reluctance to make land available for these communities, coupled with the challenge of finding suitable locations that meet the diverse needs of these groups. The situation is further complicated by competing land uses in a densely populated and rapidly growing urban area, limiting potential opportunities for GRT communities. The existing provisions are not only inadequate but also suffer from management inconsistencies and are often rendered unusable due to vandalism and subsequent repair delays.
- 4.4 For boat dwellers, specific issues include travel range requirements that disrupt their access to work and education, increasingly restricted mooring durations, a scarcity of safe and legally permissible residential moorings, high mooring fees, and a general lack of security regarding mooring tenure. These challenges are compounded by restrictive regulations within marinas, and a perceived lack of responsiveness to residents' concerns or needs for repairs.
- 4.5 Travelling Showpeople face difficulties in finding large enough plots of land to accommodate their operations, especially during the winter months or for setting up mobile homes for family units. There's a notable gap in appropriate permanent sites, as well as affordable and desirable short-term transit options for Gypsies and Travellers, with no specific needs identified for Travelling Showpeople in certain localities like Solihull.
- 4.6 Overall, these communities are faced with a complex array of accommodation challenges, including a lack of suitable and affordable sites, issues with site management and location, and additional pressures from legal and regulatory constraints, all of which significantly impact their ability to secure stable, long-term living situations.
- 4.7 Locations of current sites are often deemed unsuitable for other types of housing due to factors such as being in flood zones, near motorways, or within the Green Belt. This suggests that the choices of location may be driven by necessity rather than suitability. For Gypsy and Traveller communities, the only working transit site in Birmingham has faced issues with damage and misuse, raising questions about its utility and the

sufficiency of facilities provided. The management of sites and provision of adequate amenities are highlighted as areas needing improvement.

- 4.8 The current number and condition of sites do not meet the needs of those wishing to occupy them, with existing provisions often requiring significant repairs. The limited number of sites and the inefficient use of available spaces suggest a mismatch between supply and the actual needs of the communities. For boat dwellers, there is need for safer 14-day mooring spaces and a need for residential moorings with full planning consent to address the lack of services and security.
- 4.9 Sites such as the purpose-built one in Sandwell, offer good accommodation but lack community facilities, green spaces, and have parking issues, indicating that while some sites may be fit for purpose in terms of housing, they fall short in providing a comprehensive living environment. Concerns about the adequacy of moorings, particularly for boat dwellers, include insufficient spaces, inadequate services, and the need for facilities refurbishment, highlighting a general neglect and under-provision in this area.
- 4.10 Overall, there's a consensus that the current sites, yards, and moorings fail to fully meet the needs of their occupants due to a variety of factors ranging from poor location and inadequate facilities to management issues and a general lack of provision. There is also a recognition of the need for more sites, better management, and improved facilities to adequately support these communities.
- 4.11 Stakeholders agreed that there is a need for additional accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dweller communities in various areas. Some stakeholders point to the results of their most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA) as evidence of this need. While there is recognition of a probable demand for more accommodation, particularly for Gypsies and Travellers, based on the number of unauthorised encampments in some cities, there are also concerns about the willingness of these communities to use and pay for transit sites.
- 4.12 For boat dwellers, the need for more long-term and winter moorings is explicitly stated, pointing towards a shortfall in provisions that accommodate the lifestyle and mobility of these communities.
- 4.13 Overall, the responses paint a picture of a clear and pressing need for additional accommodation across all three communities, driven by a combination of assessed demand, observed pressures, and policy directives aiming to bridge the gap between current provisions and future requirements.

Locations of new provision

- 4.14 For Gypsy and Traveller communities, there's a strong preference for sites near road links and within parts of the city that are well-served by amenities like GP practices, schools, shops, and open spaces. This aligns with current development plan policies, which advocate for new provisions to be in locations suitable for other types of housing as well. Additionally, the idea of distributing new transit sites across the city is highlighted to cater to needs in different areas and prevent the concentration of sites in one sector of the city, ensuring equitable access and integration into community services.
- 4.15 The specific needs of boat dwellers are acknowledged with a focus on ensuring that new moorings, especially for itinerant boat dwellers, are available in city centres and along routes into the city. This would cater to their mobility and lifestyle, providing access to essential services while on the move. For those in need of more permanent moorings, suggestions point towards Canal & River Trust mooring sites within the city as initial locations.
- 4.16 There's an acknowledgment of the unique needs of these communities, including the importance of being near local amenities like bus routes, schools, and medical facilities, while also maintaining a sense of privacy and inclusion. For Travelling Showpeople, the requirements differ slightly due to their need for accessibility and storage of equipment, suggesting that their provisions may need specialized consideration regarding location and facilities.
- 4.17 For boat dwellers, specific suggestions include the installation of additional mooring rings at strategic points along the canal network to enhance accessibility and connectivity to various city centres and residential areas.
- 4.18 In summary, the location of new provisions for these communities should be thoughtfully considered, balancing accessibility to amenities and services with the unique lifestyle and needs of each group, ensuring that provisions are integrated, sustainable, and facilitate a good quality of life.

Barriers to new accommodation provision

- 4.19 The main barriers to providing new accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dweller communities include a range of social, economic, and regulatory challenges. A significant obstacle is the "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) phenomenon, where local residents oppose the establishment of new sites in their area. This lack of community willingness is compounded by difficulties in finding land outside of the Green Belt that has a willing landowner.

- 4.20 Other barriers include the high costs associated with locating, dedicating, establishing, and maintaining sites, as well as ongoing operational management. The perception of local communities towards these groups and the cost of repair due to regular vandalism and break-ins significantly hinder efforts to maintain current provisions operational.
- 4.21 Funding limitations and the challenge of identifying suitable sites are noted as critical barriers, alongside the pushback from local residents and businesses due to perceived anti-social behaviour associated with the sites. Additionally, policy challenges, such as the anti-itinerant liveboard boater policy by the Canal & River Trust, exacerbate the situation by promoting shorter stay moorings and imposing cruising range requirements, which do not align with the needs of boat dwellers.
- 4.22 The reluctance of public and private landowners to release or identify land for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, along with a lack of a unified approach and resources to manage site operations effectively, also stand as significant obstacles. Cultural differences within the Gypsy and Traveller communities, as well as between these communities and the settled population, further complicate the provision and use of suitable sites.
- 4.23 Addressing the barriers to providing new accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dweller communities requires a multifaceted approach focused on support from both planning authorities and elected members, alongside financial backing and political will. Essential measures include having a comprehensive plan that covers the suitable number of sites, management resources, budget for maintenance, and effective processes for dealing with unauthorized encampments and behaviour issues through coordination with housing, environmental health, police, and other relevant agencies. This would ensure that sites remain usable and suffer minimal damage.
- 4.24 Additional funding and enhanced support systems are critical to overcoming these obstacles, as well as agreeing on a management approach and formalising policies within a GRT strategy that has been widely consulted upon. A clear understanding of future needs and a commitment from council decision-makers to prioritize accommodation provision, even over competing land uses in high-growth areas, are also necessary.
- 4.25 From the perspective of boat dwellers, applying pressure on the Canal & River Trust to reinstate and increase the number of 14-day moorings in city centres and to reform enforcement policies is seen as a way forward. Furthermore, securing funding for more secure moorings and ensuring planning consent for residential use of existing leisure moorings could significantly help.

- 4.26 Local authorities could assist by helping to identify and make land available at reasonable prices, and larger housing developments could be encouraged to either allocate space for these communities or contribute financially towards the establishment of sites elsewhere in the borough. Central government financial resources are essential for site identification, acquisition, preparation, delivery, and management, alongside a legal framework that mandates relevant agencies and authorities to meet these needs effectively.
- 4.27 For specific community needs, such as family growth within the Gypsy and Traveller communities, options like intensifying or expanding existing sites could be explored, including the regularisation of existing unauthorised sites after thorough assessment and consultation. For boat dwellers, a shift in priority by the Canal & River Trust to focus more on the needs of boaters, who contribute significantly to their income, over other marketing ventures could alleviate some of the current challenges.
- 4.28 In summary, overcoming the barriers to providing new accommodation requires a combination of strong leadership, financial investment, strategic planning, and a shift in policy and priorities, all aimed at meeting the specific needs of these communities.

Transit provision and travelling patterns

- 4.29 The travelling patterns of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers in the area covered by the respondents vary significantly, reflecting a range of lifestyles and needs within these communities.
- 4.30 For Gypsies and Travellers, traveling patterns are often linked to significant events such as weddings, funerals, and family events, with increased activity observed during the summer and shortly before Christmas. While some respondents noted a lack of definitive information on these patterns, others mentioned that there are both settled communities living in established sites for many years and groups who travel through the area, possibly visiting relatives or passing by. One local authority area hosts a community of mainly retired Travelling Showpeople and long-established showmen who own their sites. Additionally, there's mention of a single small site with residential narrowboats, indicating some level of permanence for certain boat dwellers.
- 4.31 The itinerant boat dwellers' travel patterns are described as mainly cyclical, with movements between the city centre and surrounding canal networks. Specific routes include the Shropshire Union Canal north of Wolverhampton, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal between Great Haywood and Wolverhampton, the Coventry Canal towards Tamworth, and the Trent and Mersey Canal around Rugeley.

- 4.32 A few responses highlighted the difficulty in identifying clear travel patterns, noting that movements could be unpredictable and often driven by employment, business purposes, or seasonal events like fairs. Some Travellers have temporarily ceased their nomadic lifestyle due to factors like education, ill health, or old age, though there are still movements for work purposes. Unauthorized encampments are mentioned but are typically short-term and result from Travellers passing through the area.
- 4.33 Continuous cruisers wishing to remain in the Birmingham area are described as moving between specific sites every 14 days, confined to the stretch between Kings Norton and the City Centre. This indicates a semi-regular pattern within a defined geographical area, balancing the need for mobility with the restrictions of local mooring regulations.
- 4.34 The responses to the question regarding the trend in the number of roadside encampments in recent years and the main reasons behind these encampments vary, with some respondents indicating a steady number of encampments, while others do not have enough information to comment on trends. A key reason cited for the occurrence of roadside encampments is the lack of suitable provision of transit and permanent sites, which forces some members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to resort to setting up encampments on the roadside or in public parks.
- 4.35 In some cases, the presence of roadside encampments is attributed to insufficient management and maintenance of existing sites, which can lead to closures due to vandalism, further exacerbating the shortage of available accommodations. This issue highlights the critical need for adequate and well-maintained transit sites to accommodate the Gypsy and Traveller communities effectively.
- 4.36 Anecdotal observations from one respondent noted instances where Gypsies pulled into parks or even fair sites, sometimes damaging barriers to gain access, underscoring the desperation for living spaces. This contrasts with the activities of Travelling Showpeople who pay for their sites, emphasizing the disparities in access to suitable living arrangements.
- 4.37 While some respondents are unsure about the specific reasons for the increase or steady state of roadside encampments, a general consensus points to a lack of sufficient sites as a primary cause. However, one respondent noted a decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments since 2017, suggesting that in some areas, measures might have been taken to address this issue, possibly through the provision of more suitable sites or by facilitating the passage of Travellers through the area.
- 4.38 Overall, the responses underscore the complex issue of roadside encampments, which is largely driven by a lack of adequate and accessible transit and permanent

sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities, coupled with challenges in site management and maintenance.

- 4.39 The responses overwhelmingly indicate a recognition of the need for additional transit sites, yards, and moorings across various areas, highlighting a significant demand within the communities they serve. Some organisations, referencing their most recent GTAA acknowledge the need for more permanent Traveller sites and Showpeople yards, noting that these assessments were completed prior to the development of their transit sites.
- 4.40 There's a general consensus that, based on previous answers and assessments, the need for such facilities is evident, although one response points out that while there's a demand for more moorings, it's also important to recognize that not everyone desires a mooring, indicating diverse needs within the boat dweller community.
- 4.41 Some areas have addressed the identified transit needs through the provision of emergency/transit sites, and there's mention of ongoing work to further assess needs through the production of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD). However, data on mooring needs seem to be less defined, with indications of a lack of available residential moorings and limited leisure moorings within certain boroughs.
- 4.42 One response explicitly states that their GTAA concluded there is no need for additional transit sites, contrasting with the majority view that more facilities are needed. This discrepancy underscores the variability in need and provision across different areas.
- 4.43 In summary, there's a clear acknowledgment of the need for more transit sites, yards, and moorings to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers, although the extent and specifics of these needs vary. The call for further assessments and strategic planning to address these requirements is evident, reflecting a broader challenge in meeting the diverse and dynamic accommodation needs of these communities.

Access to services

- 4.44 The main barriers to Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat communities accessing services revolve around systemic, logistical, and societal challenges. One significant barrier is the limited availability of spaces on lists for accessing services, with these communities often being prioritized last. While some respondents do not perceive these communities as facing greater difficulties than

others, especially when sites and yards are close to services, others highlight a range of specific obstacles.

- 4.45 Fear, prejudice, and a lack of policy and strategy around service provision are cited as substantial barriers. These communities face prejudice and a lack of awareness about their rights, compounded by services not being adapted to the transient nature of their lives. For boat dwellers, specific challenges include social care services refusing to cater to their needs due to perceived health and safety hazards or jurisdictional issues with the police. Additionally, administrative hurdles like GP practices refusing patients without a local address or the DVLA not accepting certain types of addresses exacerbate access issues.
- 4.46 A lack of a permanent or settled base contributes to feelings of unsettledness and complicates access to services. Educational challenges, particularly in secondary education, lack of early intervention, and understanding the needs of people without a fixed address highlight systemic inadequacies in addressing the unique needs of these communities.
- 4.47 The absence of permanent, settled, or transit sites limits the ability of service providers to offer consistent support, and the community's ability to access services is further hampered by potential difficulties in navigating the process to access such services, reluctance to seek help, and a general unavailability of services. The lack of liaison officers who could bridge the gap between local authorities and these communities is also noted as a barrier.
- 4.48 Finally, the issue of registering for local services poses a significant challenge for continuous cruisers, who might live in a different area than their official mailing address, complicating their access to essential services. Overall, these barriers underscore the need for a more inclusive and adaptive approach to service provision for Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat communities.

Good practice

- 4.49 The responses indicate a varied awareness and implementation of good practices for meeting the needs of Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dweller communities across different local authorities and service providers. While some respondents are not aware of any practices or do not have any examples to share, others point to specific local authorities and organisations that have demonstrated effective strategies and initiatives.
- 4.50 Several local authorities, such as Walsall and Dudley, are mentioned as examples where good practices might exist, although specifics are not provided. The process of

liaising with neighbouring local authorities to gain insights into best practices is highlighted, suggesting an ongoing effort to learn and adopt effective strategies.

- 4.51 Notably, Bath & North East Somerset and Wiltshire Councils are recognised for their approaches to accommodating these communities. Cambridge City Council's residential mooring licence scheme is mentioned as a good example, despite some criticisms, such as the operation of its waiting list, which does not prioritize based on need or vulnerability but rather on the date of application.
- 4.52 Organisations like the National Association of Gypsy & Traveller Officers (NAGTO) are acknowledged for bringing together a community of officers from various sectors to share best practices and provide education and training, indicating the value of collaborative and cross-sectoral efforts to improve service provision.
- 4.53 Specific initiatives, such as those in Bath St Paul's that allow people to use addresses for accessing services suggest innovative approaches to addressing some of the unique challenges faced by these communities.
- 4.54 Overall, while there is some awareness of good practices and examples of effective service provision for Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dweller communities, the responses suggest that such practices are not widely known or uniformly implemented across local authorities and service providers. This highlights the need for greater dissemination of successful models and the potential for learning and adaptation by other organizations to meet the diverse needs of these communities effectively.

Summary

- 4.55 Consultations with stakeholders were conducted to gather qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers aiming to understand both general and local-specific issues. Stakeholders from both the study area and neighbouring authorities contributed to a comprehensive perspective on the challenges faced by these communities.
- 4.56 The consultations revealed a severe shortage of temporary and permanent sites for these groups, exacerbated by land availability issues, landowners' reluctance, and the challenge of finding suitable locations. For boat dwellers, specific challenges include restrictive travel range requirements and a lack of secure residential moorings. Travelling Showpeople struggle to find large enough plots of land for their operations. The current provisions often fail to meet the communities' needs due to unsuitable locations, inadequate facilities, and management issues.

- 4.57 The need for additional accommodation is clear, driven by the demand observed through GTAAs and the presence of unauthorised encampments. There is a strong preference for new provisions to be located near essential amenities and distributed across the city to prevent concentration in one area.
- 4.58 Significant barriers to providing new accommodation include the NIMBY phenomenon, high costs associated with establishing and maintaining sites, and the reluctance of landowners to release land. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including financial support, strategic planning, and a shift in policy priorities.
- 4.59 Traveling patterns vary, with increased activity during summer and before Christmas for Gypsies and Travellers. Boat dwellers' patterns are mainly cyclical, moving between specific sites. The trend in roadside encampments remains steady, mainly due to the lack of suitable transit sites.
- 4.60 Access to services is hindered by systemic, logistical, and societal challenges, including prejudice and lack of awareness of rights. Good practices exist in some local authorities and organisations, but are not widely known or implemented, indicating the need for greater dissemination of successful models to effectively meet the diverse needs of these communities.

5. Gypsies and Travellers consultation

Introduction

- 5.1 This section of the assessment focuses on the consultation with Gypsies and Travellers. It involved questions covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs, based on a standard questionnaire. Whilst covering all questions, the method and order of questions varied in order to maximise response rates. Methods ranged from an informal style to a more formal approach which involved asking questions in a specific order.

Methodology

- 5.2 The consultation included questions regarding issues such as family composition (per pitch), accommodation and facilities, the condition, ownership, management and suitability of current sites and pitches (including facilities and services), occupancy of existing pitches (including the number of, and reasons for, vacant and / or undeveloped pitches, and future plans for pitches), travelling patterns, and accommodation needs.
- 5.3 The data was used to calculate the level of supply, occupancy and need and which of the two needs categories those with need met. Also, general comments in terms of the key issues were also gathered and recorded, in order to gain and present further insight and evidence the need calculations (summarised below).
- 5.4 The number and location of pitches were determined using local authority data. Households were consulted on key issues regarding accommodation needs. The combination of local authority data, site visits, and consultation with households helped to clarify the status of pitches (i.e. which pitches are occupied by Gypsies and Travellers, vacant pitches, pitches with planning permission which are planned to be developed or redeveloped, overcrowded pitches, pitches occupied by household members with a need for separate accommodation, and hidden households, amongst other needs issues). Locations where planning permission has lapsed, refused or withdrawn, or where enforcement action has previously taken place, were also visited to confirm occupancy and use.
- 5.5 Although attempts were made to access Gypsies and Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation, it was not possible to consult with them. However, an alternative method of determining the accommodation needs of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation has been applied (see step 15 below).

The methods used in attempting to contact households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation included:

- Asking households residing on sites if they were aware of any relatives or friends residing in bricks and mortar accommodation;
- Contacting key stakeholders to request help to access Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar; and
- Seeking information about the location of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation through the stakeholder consultation

Existing Supply

5.6 There are a total of 12 authorised pitches in study area. Table 5.1 shows the occupied pitches, vacant pitches (current pitches with planning permission but not occupied at the time of the consultation), and potential pitches (pitches with planning permission expected to be developed or redeveloped and occupied within the first five-year period). There are no known unauthorised developments in the area.

Table 5.1 Occupied, vacant and potential Gypsy and Traveller pitches

Occupied	Vacant	Potential	Total
4	0	8	12

Source: Study area local authorities 2023

Permanent accommodation need

5.7 Additional accommodation need mainly derives from: households residing on unauthorised pitches or pitches with temporary planning permission requiring permanent permission; households residing on overcrowded authorised pitches; and new family formations expected to arise from within existing family units. Accommodation need for pitches also derives from households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. Households residing on sites and stakeholders commented on how it is important to determine this component of accommodation need.

Requirement for permanent residential pitches first 5 years

5.8 The need for residential pitches in the study area is assessed according to a 15-step process, based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey. The results of this are shown in Table 5.4 below, while the subsequent section contains explanations of the sourcing and calculation of figures for each step. The following table (Table 5.4) relates to the study area as a whole.

5.9 As discussed in Chapter 2, there are differing interpretations of the PPTS (2023) definition. As such, the needs assessment provides two accommodation needs figures: first, based on ethnic identity ('Ethnic' column); and second, based on PPTS 2023 ('PPTS' column).

Table 5.4 Estimate of the need for permanent residential site pitches first five years

	Ethnic	PPTS
1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	4	4
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	0	0
3) Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant through mortality	0	0
4) Net number of household units on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	2	2
5) Number of household units on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0	0
6) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use	8	8
Total Additional Supply	10	10
7) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	0	0
8) Household units (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area	0	0
9) Household units on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0	0
10) Household units on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0	0
11) Household units on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	0	0
12) Household units currently overcrowded (or hidden members or doubling up)	3	3
13) Net new household units expected to arrive from elsewhere	2	2
14) New household formations expected to arise from within existing family units	7	7
15) Household units in housing with need for a pitch	23	18
Total Need	35	30
Total additional pitch need	25	20

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent residential pitches 2023-2028: steps of the calculation

5.10 Information from local authorities and the census plus evidence from the survey was used to inform the calculations including:

- The number of Gypsies and Travellers housed in bricks and mortar accommodation
- The number of existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- The number of families residing on unauthorised encampments requiring accommodation (and surveyed during the survey period)
- The number of unauthorised developments (during the survey period)
- The number of temporary pitches
- The number of vacant pitches

- The number of planned or potential new pitches
- The number of transit pitches

5.11 The remainder of this chapter describes both the process and results of the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs calculations.

Supply of pitches

Supply steps (steps 1 to 6) are the same irrespective of which definition of accommodation need used.

Step 1: Current occupied permanent site pitches

5.12 Based on information provided by the councils and corroborated by site visits and household surveys, there are currently 4 occupied authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the study area.

Step 2: Number of unused residential pitches available

5.13 This relates to those pitches that have planning permission, are developed but not currently in use. There are currently 0 vacant pitches within the study area.

Step 3: Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant

5.14 This is calculated using mortality rates as applied in conventional Housing Needs Assessments. However, the figures for mortality have been increased in accordance with studies of Gypsy and Traveller communities suggesting a life expectancy approximately 10 years lower than that of the general population.²³ This results in the supply of 0 pitch.

Step 4: Number of family units in site accommodation expressing a desire to leave the study area and resulting in the creation of a vacant pitch

5.15 Two households surveyed as part of the GTAA stated that they intend to leave the study area in the next 5 years. As there is no data regarding households who would like to in migrate from outside the study area, both in- and out-migration are determined as 2.

Step 5: Number of family units on permanent pitch site accommodation expressing a desire to reside in housing and resulting in the creation of a vacant pitch

²³ E.g. L. Crout, *Traveller health care project: Facilitating access to the NHS*, Walsall Health Authority, 1987.

- 5.16 This is determined by survey data. It was assumed that all those currently residing on sites planning to move into housing in the next five years (step 5), or preferring to move into housing from an overcrowded pitch (step 11), would be able to do so. This resulted in a supply of 0.

Step 6: Residential pitches planned to be built or brought back into use

- 5.17 This is determined by local authority data and from an assessment of sites during visits. Such pitches are referred to as 'potential'. This means that the pitches have been granted planning permission but have not yet been developed. Potential pitches include those which have been partly developed or which were previously occupied but are currently not occupied and in need of redevelopment. There are 8 pitches in the study area that are expected to be built or brought back into use during the period of the first five years.

Need for pitches

- 5.18 As discussed in Chapter 2, this needs assessment provides two accommodation needs figures: first, based on ethnic identity ('Ethnic' column); and second, based on PPTS 2023 ('PPTS' column).

Step 7: Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites

- 5.19 This is determined by local authority data. It is assumed that families residing on pitches whose planning permission expires within the period 2023-2028 will still require accommodation within the study area. There are currently 0 pitches with temporary planning permission located in the study area. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 8: Family units on pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area and not leading to making a pitch vacant and available for others to occupy

- 5.20 This is determined by survey data. These family units reported that they 'needed or were likely' to move to a different home in the next five years, and wanted to stay on an authorised site, or that they were currently seeking accommodation.
- 5.21 This category of accommodation need overlaps with those moving due to overcrowding, counted in step 12, and so any family units which both are overcrowded and seeking accommodation are deducted from this total. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 9: Family units on transit pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area

- 5.22 This is determined by survey data. These family units reported that they required permanent pitches within the study area in the next five years. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 10: Family units on unauthorised encampments seeking residential pitches in the study area

- 5.23 Guidance (DCLG 2007) indicates that it should be considered whether alternative accommodation is required for families residing on unauthorised encampments. Using survey data, it has been calculated how many families on unauthorised encampments want residential pitches in the study area. Please note that only Gypsies and Travellers requiring permanent accommodation within the study area have been included in this calculation – transiting Gypsies and Travellers are included in separate calculations. There were 0 households surveyed on unauthorised encampments within the study area during the survey period.

Step 11: Family units on unauthorised developments seeking residential pitches in the area

- 5.24 This was determined by consultation data. The guidance also indicates that the accommodation needs of families living on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected must be considered. Regularising families living on their land without planning permission would reduce the overall level of need by the number of pitches given planning permission. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 12: Family units on overcrowded pitches seeking residential pitches in the area and not leading to making a pitch vacant and available for others to occupy

- 5.25 This was determined by the consultation. Households which also contain a newly formed family unit that has not yet left are excluded. This is because it is assumed that once the extra family unit leaves (included in the need figures in step 14) their accommodation will no longer be overcrowded. The calculations suggest that the need for additional pitches in the study area to resolve overcrowding over the period 2023-2028 are as follows: 3 pitches ('ethnic definition'), and 3 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

Step 13: New family units expected to arrive from elsewhere

- 5.26 In the absence of any data derivable from primary or secondary sources (beyond anecdotal evidence) on the moving intentions of those outside the study area moving into the area, as in the case of those moving out of the area, it is assumed that the inflow of Gypsies and Travellers into the area will be equivalent to the outflow. This amounts to a net inflow of 2 households into the study area.

Step 14: New family formations expected to arise from within existing family units on sites

5.27 The number of individuals needing to leave pitches to create new family units within the period 2023-2028 was estimated from consultation and excludes those included in steps 8, 12 and 13. This will result in the formation of 7 new households requiring residential pitches over the period 2023-2028 ('ethnic definition'), and 7 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

Step 15: Family units in housing with need for a pitch

5.28 This was determined firstly by the number of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation was determined using 2021 Census data which records how many Gypsies and Travellers living in the district and by type of accommodation. The number of those living in a caravan (as recorded by the census) was removed from the total to give the number living in bricks and mortar. Based on 2021 Census data there is an estimated 230 households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation in the study area. Applying a 10% ratio in relation to cultural need results in a need of 23 pitches for ethnic category and 8% ratio in relation to PPTS which results in a need of 18 pitches.

Balance of Need and Supply

5.29 From the above the Total Additional Pitch Requirement is calculated by deducting the supply from the need.

Table 5.5: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs for first five years

	Ethnic	PPTS
Supply	10	10
Need	35	30
Difference	25	20

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent residential pitches for following 20-year period

5.30 Considering future accommodation need it is assumed that those families with need stemming from psychological aversion to residing in houses, overcrowding, unauthorised developments and encampments will move onto sites within a 5-year period. As such, only natural population increase (same as step 14 above), mortality, and movement into and out of the study area need to be considered. The base figures regarding the number of pitches on sites at the end of the first 5-year period are shown in Table 5.6 below. Please note that the base figures at the start of the first

five-year period include both authorised occupied and vacant pitches, whilst the base figures at the start of the second five-year period assume that vacant pitches will be occupied, potential pitches will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need has been met by new supply.

- 5.31 In relation to this accommodation assessment for need beyond the first five years, analysis of the current population indicates an annual household growth rate of 2.29% per annum (compound) equating to a 5-year rate of 12.0%. This is based on an analysis of various factors derived from the surveys including current population numbers, the average number of children per household, and marriage rates. A mortality rate of 2.825% applied over the 5-year period leads to a net population growth rate of 9.175%.
- 5.32 Table 5.6 shows the accommodation needs for the study area for the following 15-year period:

Table 5.6: Summary of accommodation needs for following 15 years

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
6-10 years	5	4
11-15 years	6	5
16-20 years	6	5
Total	17	14

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirements for transit pitches / negotiated stopping arrangements

- 5.33 This assessment recommends that, as well as reopening the existing 15-pitch transit site, that the local authority adopts a negotiated stopping policy (see Appendix 1 for an example negotiated stopping place protocol). This involves households residing in caravans being able to stop at a suitable location for an agreed and limited period of time, and if necessary, with the provision of services such as waste disposal and toilets. Whilst it is important that all local authorities adopt the negotiated stopping place policy, it could be implemented on an individual local authority, across the study area, or on a countywide basis.
- 5.34 The term ‘negotiated stopping’ is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its

occupants or the local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, the transient households (and landowner if situated on privately owned land).

- 5.35 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved onto an alternative location that is more suitable. It is important for local authorities to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the local authority area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities.
- 5.36 The characteristics of negotiated stopping places means that there is no inherent cost of purchasing land or the requirement for the local authority to gain planning permission. It is simply an agreement for transiting households to use appropriate land for an agreed period of time and provision of e.g. wheelie bins or skips, and if possible, porta loos and porta showers.
- 5.37 Also, local authorities should consider allowing visiting family or friends who reside on permanent sites in the local authority area to temporarily reside on the site for an agreed amount of time. This will allow households to temporarily accommodate family and friends without fearing that their licence will be at risk due to having too many caravans on site.

Summary

- 5.38 This chapter has provided both quantitative and qualitative data regarding key characteristics of respondent households residing on Gypsy and Traveller sites. It has determined accommodation needs resulting from the calculations in the tables above for the study area as a whole:

Table 5.7: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation need (summary)

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
1-5 years	25	20
6-10 years	5	4
11-15 years	6	5
16-20 years	6	5
Total	42	34

Source: GTAA 2024

6. Travelling Showpeople consultation

Introduction

6.1 As described in Chapter 1, this GTAA considers the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople. Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople are not considered to be an ethnic minority and, as such, are not protected by the [Equality Act 2010](#). Nonetheless, government guidance (DCLG '[Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#)' December 2023) indicates that local authorities should consider the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople families. As such, they have been included in this report.

Methodology

6.2 The method adopted, as outlined in previous chapters, is based on a combination of secondary data, local authority data on number of authorised and unauthorised plots and yards, confirmation numbers of plots and yards through consulting with households and community representatives (primarily Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and the Association of Circus Proprietors of Great Britain) and consultation with households and the community representatives. The consultation has taken into account all known Travelling Showpeople households residing in the study area on authorised and unauthorised plots²⁴, with the accommodation needs of all (100%) known plots being considered by the assessment.

6.3 The consultation with the community representatives and the households included questions regarding issues such as: family composition (per plot), occupancy of existing plots (including number of and reasons for vacant and /or undeveloped plots and future plans for plots), management and suitability of current yards and plots (including facilities and services), travelling patterns, health, education and employment, and accommodation needs.

Existing Supply

6.4 Table 6.1 below lists the number of authorised plots, and unauthorised developments (UD) (plots), and yards and plots with temporary planning permission per local authority within the study area (primarily based on data provided by the local authorities).

²⁴ Please see the Glossary for definitions of Travelling Showpeople yards and plots.

Table 6.1 Showpeople yards and plots

TS Plots	UD plots	Transit plots
8	0	0

Source: Study area local authorities 2023

- 6.5 Consultation is based on all (100%) known plots. The consultation included questions regarding issues such as: family composition (per plot), occupancy of existing plots (including number of and reasons for vacant and /or undeveloped plots and future plans for plots), management and suitability of current yards and plots (including facilities and services), space, travel, work and accommodation needs.

Calculation of Permanent Accommodation Need

- 6.6 The need for permanent plots for Showpeople in the study area is based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities. It provides calculation of accommodation need for the period of 2023-2038 in 5-year periods.

Requirement for permanent plots

- 6.7 The need for plots in the area is assessed according to a 14-step process, based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey. The results of this are shown in Table 6.2 below, while the subsequent section contains explanations of the sourcing and calculation of figures for each step.

Table 6.2: Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots for first 5 years

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	8
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Number of existing plots expected to become vacant through mortality	0
4) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
5) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
6) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
7) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
8) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area,	0
9) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
11) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	0
12) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members)	4
13) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
14) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on sites	4
Total Need	8
Total additional plot need	8

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent plots for first 5 years: steps of the calculation

6.8 Information from local authorities and evidence from the survey was used to inform the calculations including:

- The number of existing plots
- The number of families residing on unauthorised encampments requiring accommodation (and surveyed during the survey period)
- The number of unauthorised developments (during the survey period)
- The number of temporary plots
- The number of vacant plots
- The number of planned or potential new plots
- The number of transit plots

6.9 The remainder of this chapter describes both the process and results of the Travelling Showpeople's needs calculations.

Supply of permanent plots

Step 1: Current occupied permanent plots

6.10 Based on information provided by the study area local authorities and corroborated by information from the consultation. There are currently 8 occupied plots.

Step 2: Number of unused residential plots available

6.11 As the plots are all occupied there are 0 unused plots.

Step 3: Number of existing plots expected to become vacant

6.12 This is calculated using mortality rates as applied in conventional Housing Needs Assessments. It then calculates the number of plots that would become vacant as a result of mortality. This results in 0 additional plots.

Step 4: Number of households in plot accommodation expressing a desire to leave the study area and resulting in the creation of a vacant plot

6.13 This was determined by survey data. It was assumed, that those currently residing on plots expecting to leave the area permanently in the next five years – out of choice (step 4) or due to overcrowding (step 12) - would generally be able to do so. This resulted in the supply of 0 plots.

Step 5: Number of family units on permanent plot accommodation expressing a desire to reside in housing and resulting in the creation of a vacant plot

- 6.14 This was determined by survey data. It was assumed that all those currently residing on plots planning to move into housing in the next five years (step 5) or preferring to move into housing from an overcrowded plot (step 12), would be able to do so.
- 6.15 As with step 5, a supply of 0 plots in the study area were expected from this source, excluding those moving out of the study area, since these are already counted in step 4.

Step 6: Residential plots planned to be built or brought back into use

- 6.16 This can include plots which have been partly developed or which were previously occupied but are now vacant and in need of redevelopment. There are 0 plots in the study area that are expected to be built or brought back into use during this period.

Need for permanent plots

Step 7: Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots

- 6.17 This is determined by local authority data. It is assumed families residing on plots whose planning permission expires within the period 2023-2028 will still require accommodation within the study area. There are currently 0 plots with temporary planning permission located in the area.

Step 8: Households on plots seeking residential plots in the study area and not resulting in the creation of a vacant plot

- 6.18 This was determined by survey data. These households reported that they 'needed or were likely' to move to a different home in the next five years, and wanted to stay on an authorised plot, or that they were currently seeking accommodation.
- 6.19 This category of need overlaps with those moving due to overcrowding, counted in step 12, In order to avoid double-counting households which both are overcrowded and seeking accommodation are counted only once. This generates a total need of 0 plots in the study area.

Step 9: Households on transit plots seeking residential plots in the study area

- 6.20 This generates a total need of 0 plots in the study area.

Step 10: Households on unauthorised encampments seeking residential plots in the study area

- 6.21 There were 0 households residing on unauthorised encampments interviewed during the survey period, so there is a need of 0 plots arising from this source.

Step 11: Households on unauthorised developments seeking residential plots in the study area

6.22 There are no unauthorised plots in the study area and therefore there is a need of 0 plots.

Step 12: Households on overcrowded plots seeking residential plots in the study area and not resulting in the creation of a vacant plot

6.23 Overcrowding on a Travelling Showpeople plot may differ to that on Gypsy and Traveller pitch due to the larger need for equipment and vehicle storage. Showpeople require more space for their equipment and vehicles as well as enough space for accommodation such as caravans (static and tourers). This generates a total need of 4 plots in the study area.

Step 13: New households expected to arrive from elsewhere

6.24 This generates a total need of 0 plots in the study area.

Step 14: New family formations expected to arise from within existing households

6.25 This generates a total need of 4 plots in the study area.

Balance of Need and Supply

6.26 From the above the net additional plot requirement is calculated by deducting the supply from the need.

Table 6.3: Summary of permanent Travelling Showpeople plot needs for first five years

	Plots
Supply	0
Need	8
Difference	8

Source: GTAA 2023

Requirement for permanent residential plots for following 15 years

6.27 Considering future accommodation need, it assumed that those families with need stemming from psychological aversion to residing in houses, overcrowding, unauthorised developments and encampments will move onto yards within a 5-year period. As such, only natural population increase (same as step 14 above), mortality, and movement in and out of the study area need to be considered. The base figures regarding the number of plots on yards at the end of the first 5-year period are shown in Table 6.4 below. The figures at the start of the second 5-year period assume that

vacant pitches will be occupied, potential pitches will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need has been met by new supply.

6.28 In relation to this accommodation assessment for need beyond the first five years, analysis of the current population indicates an annual household growth rate of 2.29% per annum (compound) equating to a 5-year rate of 12%. This is based on an analysis of various factors derived from the surveys including current population numbers, the average number of children per household, and marriage rates. A mortality rate of 2.825% applied over the 5-year period leads to a net population growth rate of 9.175%. It is assumed that the population growth rate is likely to continue during the 5-year periods between 2033-2037.

6.29 Table 6.4 shows the accommodation needs for the study area for the 15 years.

Table 6.4: Summary of permanent accommodation needs for following 15 years

Period	Need
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	3
Total	7

Source: GTAA 2024

Summary

6.30 This chapter has provided both quantitative and qualitative data regarding key characteristics of respondent households residing on Travelling Showpeople plots. Accommodation need resulting from the calculations in the tables above are as follows

Table 6.5: Summary of permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need
1-5 years	8
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	3
Total	15

Source: GTAA 2024

7. Boat Dwellers Consultation

Introduction

- 7.1 As described in Chapter 1, this GTAA considers the accommodation needs of boat dwellers. Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, boat dwellers are not considered to be an ethnic minority and, as such, are not protected by the [Equality Act 2010](#). Nonetheless, government guidance (DCLG 2016) indicates that local authorities should consider the accommodation needs of boat dweller.

Birmingham waterways

- 7.2 Birmingham is renowned for its extensive network of canals, which historically played a crucial role in the Industrial Revolution by facilitating the transportation of goods. The main waterways running through Birmingham include the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN), which is a series of interconnected canals. Among the most significant of these are the Birmingham Main Line Canal, linking Birmingham to Wolverhampton and providing a direct route for industrial transport; the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, connecting Birmingham to Worcester and offering a scenic route that passes through the picturesque Worcestershire countryside; and the Grand Union Canal, which links Birmingham to London, serving as a vital commercial and leisure waterway. Additionally, the Tame Valley Canal and the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal also contribute to the city's canal network, enhancing its connectivity and accessibility.
- 7.3 These canals are fully navigable today and are primarily used for recreational purposes. They accommodate a wide range of activities, including narrowboating, canoeing, and kayaking, offering unique perspectives of the city's industrial heritage and urban landscape. The waterways also support vibrant canal-side communities and businesses, such as cafes, bars, and art galleries, contributing to Birmingham's cultural and leisure scene. The canals are maintained by the Canal & River Trust, ensuring they remain accessible and safe for navigation and leisure activities. The adaptability of Birmingham's canals from industrial conduits to leisure and tourism assets showcases the city's dynamic evolution and the enduring significance of its waterways.

Methodology

- 7.4 Given that the requirement to determine the accommodation needs of boat dwellers was only recently introduced by the DCLG Draft Guidance on Housing Needs (Caravans and Houseboats) (March 2016), there is no established method to determine need. As such, the need for residential moorings in the study area is assessed according to DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities and consultation with stakeholders (in particular the boat dwellers). It is also in accordance with NBT guidance. This methodology has previously been

used by *RRR Consultancy* to undertake Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessments (BDAAAs) on behalf of Oxford City Council (2018) and Wokingham Borough Council (2019), and for other authorities as part of their GTAAAs.

- 7.5 Whilst households residing on boats in the study area were consulted, there was an insufficient number to base accommodation needs calculations on household consultation alone. As such, the extent of boat dweller supply and needs was determined by consulting with key stakeholders and analysis of secondary data including an assessment of online data regarding marinas, yards and the waterways in the study area.

Households on boats

- 7.6 According to stakeholders very few boats within the study area are permanently occupied by families with children. Stakeholders stated that households with older children tend to seek accommodation in housing due to a lack of space and to better access health and education facilities.
- 7.7 Whilst most boats on local marinas are used for leisure purposes by households with residential accommodation elsewhere, some are being used as a form of permanent accommodation. An unconfirmed number of leisure cruisers are being occupied on a regular basis, including being used as accommodation during the week by people working in the local area, by students during term-time, and as alternative bed and breakfast facilities.
- 7.8 Boat dwellers derive from a broad range of social backgrounds with a wide range of professions, skills and interests. Some boat dwellers permanently live and work within the local area, particularly those residing on residential moorings and constant cruisers. Some boat dwellers have residential residency elsewhere but work in the area and reside on a boat only during the working week. Similarly, some boat dwellers only access boats in the area for leisure purposes at weekends or during holidays.
- 7.9 Boats are increasingly being used as student accommodation. Some parents who may have previously purchased a house to accommodate their children whilst at university or college are purchasing boats as a more affordable option. A preferred option is narrow boats. However, some student boat dwellers do not reside on residential moorings and are continuously cruising.
- 7.10 Some boat dwellers are retired whilst others are unemployed. There are also boat dwellers who previously resided in a house but are separated from partners and reside on boats due to a lack of alternative or affordable accommodation. This enables them

continued access to their children and employment. There is an increasing number of people residing on boats as an alternative form of accommodation.

Permanent accommodation needs

- 7.11 Whilst many boat dwellers permanently reside on boats due to a desire to live an alternative lifestyle, some do so due to a lack of affordable accommodation. The cost of buying or renting housing in the study area was regarded by stakeholders as leading to boat dwelling as an affordable alternative. However, potential mooring locations are restricted by land ownership and or not suitable for new moorings.
- 7.12 It is recommended that study area local authorities work closely with the Canal and River Trust (CRT), and organisations such as the National Bargee Traveller Association (NBTA), and existing marinas to address accommodation need.

Requirement for permanent residential moorings

- 7.13 There are a range of marinas and moorings across the study area including leisure and temporary. This is limited mooring provision for residential boat dwellers 12 months of the year. However, it is possible that some of those moored are permanent boat dwellers who move off the mooring for an agreed period of time, travel the waterways and then return.
- 7.14 It is not possible to confirm the actual number of permanent residential boat dwellers in the study area as a whole. There is no current council data confirming the number. However, from consultation and data collection and analysis of secondary data, there is anecdotal evidence that there are boat dwellers in need of permanently residential moorings in the study area – consisting of boat dwellers who reside on licensed moorings and boat dwellers who moor at the end of gardens, along river and canal banks or are constantly cruising in and around the area. It is estimated that there is a need of 40 permanent residential moorings across the study area over the local plan period. This takes into account current potential need and need resulting from future need (including population growth) over the duration of the local plan.

Table 7.1: Boat Dweller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Study Area
1-5 years	35
6-10 years	1
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	2
Total	40

Source: GTAA 2023

Requirements for transit moorings

- 7.15 It is evident that in addition to the need for additional permanent residential moorings in the area, there is also evidence of need for more transit moorings. In particular, constant cruisers have need for additional and more flexible transit moorings, particularly within the city area. Additional transit provision would be helpful, but more flexible lengths of time boat dwellers can stay is essential for accommodating their unique needs and lifestyles. Also, as with Gypsies and Travellers, the adoption of negotiated stopping policy would also be effective with addressing transit mooring needs of boat dwellers.

Summary

It is estimated that there is a need for 40 additional permanent residential moorings across the local plan period. It is recommended that the local authorities liaise with marine and boat yard owners, and agencies such as the NBT and CRT, to help determine how boat dweller accommodation needs can be met.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

- 8.1 This final chapter draws conclusions from the evidence. It then makes a series of recommendations relating to meeting the identified need for new provision, facilities, and recording and monitoring processes.
- 8.2 The chapter begins by presenting an overview of the policy changes, followed by review of the needs and facilitating the additional accommodation needs. As previously discussed, this report focusses on the assessment of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers.
- 8.3 The accommodation needs calculations undertaken as part of this GTAA were based on analysis of both secondary data and primary consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, Traveling Showpeople and key stakeholders and site owners and managers.

Permanent accommodation needs

- 8.4 The following outlines the permanent accommodation need over the 20-year period:

Table 8.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
1-5 years	25	20
6-10 years	5	4
11-15 years	6	5
16-20 years	6	5
Total	42	34

Source: GTAA 2024

Table 8.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need
1-5 years	8
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	3
Total	15

Source: GTAA 2024

Table 8.3: Boat Dweller accommodation needs

Period	Need
1-5 years	35
6-10 years	1
11-15 years	2
16-20 years	2
Total	40

Source: GTAA 2024

The location of new permanent provision

- 8.5 There is general consensus that smaller sites, yards and moorings are preferred by Gypsy and Traveller communities due to better management and maintenance of provision and security. Ongoing monitoring of provision and vacant provisions should be undertaken by the local authority alongside discussions with different community groups, to ensure that any additional need that may arise is identified.
- 8.6 Closer working with local Gypsy, Roma Traveller and Traveling Showpeople communities is required to ensure that sites are in locations identified by those communities and not necessarily on sites allocated by local authorities in a local plan i.e. collaboratively identifying the right sites is better than identifying any other sites just to meet the numbers set out in this GTANA.

- 8.7 In terms of identifying broad locations for new permanent sites, there are a number of factors which could be considered including:

Costs

- How do land costs impact on feasibility i.e. is it affordable?
- Implementation of services – is it possible for the new site to connect to nearby? mains services e.g. electricity, gas, water or sewerage?
- Can good drainage be ensured on the new provision?

Social

- Does the proposed location of the new provision lie within an accessible distance of school catchment areas?
- Sustainability – is the proposed location close to existing bus routes?
- Proximity of social and leisure services – is the proposed location accessible to leisure facilities such as sports centres, cinemas etc. or welfare services such as health and social services etc?

Availability

- Who owns the land and are they willing to sell / rent?
- Is access easy or will easements across other land be needed both for residents and services/utilities?
- Are utilities close enough to service the provision at realistic prices?

Deliverability

- Does the proposed location meet existing general planning policy in terms of residential use, (for example in relation to Green Belt, flooding and the historic environment)?
- Can the owner sell the land easily and quickly?
- Can utilities connect to the proposed provision?
- Can highways connect to the proposed provision?

- 8.8 Considering the evidence gathered throughout the GTAA, it is likely that the key factors determining new provision are:

- The affordability of land suitable for the development of new sites and the cost of development
- The need to ensure that new provisions are within accessible travelling distance of social, welfare and cultural services
- The need to carefully consider the proximity of new provisions to existing provisions i.e. whether social tensions might arise if new provisions are located too close to existing provisions

- The sustainability of new provisions i.e. ensuring that they do not detrimentally impact on the local environment and do not place undue pressure on the local infrastructure
- 8.9 It is apparent from discussions with Gypsy, Traveller households undertaken as part of the household surveys that most households would prefer any new provision built to accommodate existing family members to be situated close to existing provision. However, households were less likely to state preferred locations for any new provision within the study area. Also, whilst households prefer easy access to main roads in order to facilitate travelling, new sites should not be situated too close to main arterial routes as to cause environmental issues such as noise pollution or poor air quality.
- 8.10 It is important that new provisions are accessible to amenities such as shops, schools and health facilities or where there are good transport links or within reasonable distance for households to access the necessary facilities and amenities. DLUHC (2023) guidance suggests that local planning authorities should strictly limit new Gypsy and Traveller site development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas do not dominate the nearest settled community and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. As stated in Chapter 2, the study area local authority Local Plan policies contain locational criteria to help determine suitable locations for the development of new sites or yards.
- 8.11 The DLUHC (2023) guidance states that when considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:
- a. effective use of previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land
 - b. sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness
 - c. promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d. not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community.

The size of new provision

- 8.12 Given that there can be management and maintenance issues regarding large sites, it is recommended that any future site and/or extension to existing sites does not

exceed 20 pitches. DCLG (2008)²⁵ guidance states that there is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs. However, they do suggest that as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.

8.13 Based on DCLG guidance, it can be determined that a pitch of approximately 325 square metres would take into account all minimum separation distance guidance between caravans and pitch boundaries as stipulated in guidance and safety regulations for caravan development. A pitch size of at least 500 square metres (0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the following on-pitch facilities:

- Hard standing for a touring caravan (enabling households to travel)
- Hard standing for a static caravan (including double static trailers)
- 2 car parking spaces
- 1 amenity block
- Hard standing for storage shed and drying
- Garden/amenity area

8.14 If granting permission on an open plan basis, permission should be given on a pitch-by-pitch equivalent basis to the above. For example, an existing pitch which has enough space to accommodate a chalet structure, 2 touring caravans and 1 – 2 static caravans along with 4 parking spaces, 2 blocks etc., could be counted as 2 pitches even if based on an open plan basis on one structured pitch. However, this would need to be recorded for future monitoring.

Transit provision

8.15 This assessment recommends that, as well as reopening the existing 15-pitch transit site, that the local authority adopts a negotiated stopping policy (see Appendix 1 for an example negotiated stopping place protocol). This is land temporarily used as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the agreed location for a few days. Amenities such as portaloos and showers

²⁵ Please note that this publication was withdrawn in September 2015.

(or access to alternative nearby facilities) and skips or wheelie bins should ideally be made available for the duration of the agreed period.

- 8.16 According to research undertaken on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2019), negotiated stopping is a balanced and humane approach to managing roadside camps. It is based on a mutual agreement between the local authority and Gypsy and Traveller families on matters such as waste disposal and basic temporary facilities. This can sometimes involve directing Gypsy and Traveller households away from contentious public spaces to more appropriate council land. The approach is proven to achieve significant savings in public spending and decreased social costs for Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 8.17 The GLA (2019) report cites a number of good practice examples including Hackney. The local authority has worked closely with the Gypsy and Traveller community and involved them in dialogue and negotiation. This has resulted in a consistent practice over many years of allowing stopping time and making provision of basic facilities. There have been many locations in the borough that were common stopping places, some used for short periods of time for families passing through or visiting relatives, others used for months and even a couple of years. The practice was also formalised to an extent through leniency agreements which specified arrangements between the local authority and the Traveller families – this is also incorporated in the council’s unauthorised encampment protocol.
- 8.18 The term ‘negotiated stopping’ is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. It was first developed by Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) and involves local authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to more suitable land (please see Appendix for an example negotiated stopping place protocol).
- 8.19 Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its occupants or local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, the transient households (and landowner if situated on privately owned land).
- 8.20 The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but may include Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise with the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. However, as Leeds GATE state, negotiated stopping is a locally agreed solution so may differ in different locations. For Negotiated Stopping to work it has to involve

local authorities negotiating with roadside Travellers. It will involve talking to and consulting roadside Travellers and working out solutions.

- 8.21 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved on to an appropriate alternative location. It is important for local authorities to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the local authority area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities. Also, local authorities should consider allowing households visiting family or friends who reside on permanent sites in the local authority area to temporarily reside on the site for an agreed amount of time.
- 8.22 Agreements could be made with households residing on sites and allowing visiting family and friends to stay for agreed periods of time. This would lead to fewer unauthorised encampments which adversely impact on the local community and allow households with stopover requirement to stay for an agreed period.

Summary

- 8.23 The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTAA (including any accommodation need calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities. This assessment identifies that there is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 42 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches (ethnic definition), and 34 pitches (PPTS 2023), 15 Travelling Showpeople plots and 40 boat dweller permanent moorings.
- 8.24 It is recommended that the authority reopens the existing transit sites and, alongside this, incorporate a policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments. Looking at the distances involved across the study area, anywhere within the Local Plan area would be acceptable in terms of locating new permanent sites and yards to meet the identified need.
- 8.25 It is recommended that the local planning authorities determine which of the accommodation needs figures in relation to Gypsies and Travellers they choose to prioritise in their Local Plans.
- 8.26 This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition accommodation needs figures i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed.

- 8.27 Alternatively, the local authorities may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and Ethnic' definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authority would first meet the need of 34 (20 within the first 5 years) as the obligation but accept the need of a further 8 (5 within the first 5 years) as potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls. It is recommended that the work interpretation of need should simply be used as a form of reference and comparison with other authorities who use this approach.
- 8.28 It is recommended that the local planning authorities consider the accommodation needs that might materialise over the plan period from households (Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and boat dwellers) not considered by this assessment. This could include households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separate to the need identified below and could be met through windfall applications.
- 8.29 Also, the council needs to work in collaboration with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, and Traveling Showpeople communities to identify suitable sites and yards. This collaboration involves actively engaging with these communities to understand their specific needs and preferences for locations. Additionally, the council should provide support to families and community groups in the process of acquiring these sites, including assistance with navigating legal and planning requirements. This may involve offering guidance on obtaining necessary permits, ensuring compliance with local regulations, and facilitating access to funding or resources. By working together, the council and the communities can ensure that these sites are developed effectively and brought into use in a way that meets the needs of the residents, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.
- 8.30 In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:
- In relation to the different community groups, it is recommended that the local authorities work closely with the families to determine how their accommodation need can best be met.
 - Also, for the local authorities to provide pre-planning application advice to households who have identified land to help determine if it is suitable to address accommodation need.
 - It is recommended that the local authorities review the planning of unauthorised developments and consider granting permanent status.

8.31 As well as quantifying accommodation need, the study also makes recommendations on other key issues including:

Planning policy:

- To reopen the currently unused 15-pitch transit site.
- To consider how the accommodation needs can be met by expanding existing provision and/or providing new sites, or yards.
- To consider alternative options for developing new sites, and yards such as developing them on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use.
- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the different community groups.
- The council need to work in collaboration with Gypsy, Roma Traveller and Traveling Showpeople communities to identify sites and yards and assist families and community groups to acquire and bring sites forward for occupation.
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authorities, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Showmen's Guild (local and national)), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- To consider safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller sites and Showpeople yards with permanent planning permission for their current use unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed to meet identified need.
- Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.
- To liaise with owners of the sites to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

- Housing organisations need to consider the type of housing allocated to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar in order to minimise the psychological aversion and feelings of isolation.
- Better communication and protocols with Gypsy, Roma Traveller and Traveling Showpeople communities in conjunction with planning colleagues to identify sites and yards and assist in identifying affordable ways to bring them forward.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work with the different community groups, and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- In liaison with relevant enforcement agencies including the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities can change. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Appendix 1: Example negotiated stopping place protocol

This agreement is between [Local Authority] and [named head of family]

This agreement relates to the time limited toleration of your encampment on [Local Authority] owned land adjacent to xxxx. The land is shown on the appending map.

The Council is currently willing to tolerate your encampment on the site for a short period of time until xxxx. The Council recognises its legal obligations to carry out needs assessment prior to initiating legal action to recover possession of land.

[Local Authority] reserves the right to terminate this agreement, and to seek to recover possession of the land through court proceedings, at an earlier date if the terms set out below in this agreement are breached.

I, and my family agree to adhere to the following terms:

1. You will be asked to park your caravan and vehicles in a designated place on the site. This is to prevent further caravans joining the encampment. Your family must stay within the boundaries of the site.
2. You will be issued with a toilet. This is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.
3. You will be issued with a bin for all your domestic waste. You are responsible for keeping the area around your caravan clean and tidy. The bin is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.
4. All dogs must be kept under control and tied up. Dogs must be tied up on a lead or in a kennel during the night or when you leave the site for any period of time. The dog wardens will visit this site if loose dogs are reported.
5. No fires larger than a small cooking fire are to be lit, absolutely no burning of commercial or domestic waste is allowed.
6. The nearest Household Waste for larger items is at Trade waste can be disposed at
7. Environmental enforcement officers will monitor the site and take action against any activity likely to cause environmental harm, inconvenience or distress to surrounding occupants such as fly-tipping, excessive noise or use of quad bikes.
8. Give consideration to other people within the local vicinity in terms of noise nuisance and the parking of vehicles.
9. Not to engage in any anti-social behaviour, disorder or fly tipping on or near this site. Horses will not be tolerated on the site and the presence of horses may be regarded as 'anti social behaviour' for the purposes of this agreement. Any traps owned by families are not to be used in or around the immediate area.
10. This agreement has been negotiated between [Local Authority] and Gypsy/Traveller people in the [local] area. You are encouraged to cooperate with the Local Authority to make the agreement work by discussing any incidents, concerns or suggestions that may affect the agreement with local authority officers when they visit weekly. You can also telephone the council [phone number], [police liaison officer] or speak to staff at [Third party advocacy where available] if you want them to raise issues on your behalf.

I understand the above points which have been explained to me, and I agree.

Signed.....date.....

Signed.....date.....(local authority)

Bibliography

Birmingham Development Plan 2031 (adopted January 2017)

Brown, Philip, *Advice for Babergh District Council on household formation relating to Gypsy and Traveller pitches*, Sustainable Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU), University of Salford, October 2015.

Canal & River Trust, *Planning for waterways in Neighbourhood Plans – what your local waterway can do for your community*, 2017.

Cemlyn, Sarah, Greenfields, Margaret, Burnett, Sally, Matthews, Zoe and Whitwell, Chris (2009) *Inequalities Experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities: A Review*, Equality and Human Rights Commission, London.

Commission for Racial Equality, *Common Ground Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers* - Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales, (Summary), May 2006.

Court of Appeal, Smith vs Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Case no. CA-2021-001741, 31 October 2022.

Cullen, Sue, Hayes, Paul and Hughes, Liz (2008), *Good practice guide: working with housed Gypsies and Travellers*, Shelter, London.

DCLG, *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople*, January 2007.

DCLG, *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments*, October 2007.

DCLG, 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', August 2015.

DLUHC 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', December 2023.

DCLG, *Draft Guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs (Caravans and Houseboats)* March 2016.

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), *July 2023 Traveller Caravan Count*, November 2023.

House of Commons Library, *Gypsies and Travellers: Planning Provisions*, Briefing Paper 07005, 4 January 2016.

Liegeois, J. P. (1994) *Romas, Gypsies and Travellers*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Niner, Pat (2003), *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM.

Niner, PM (2004) 'Accommodating Nomadism? An Examination of Accommodation Options for Gypsies and Travellers in England', *Housing Studies*, Carfax Publishing.

Niner, Pat, *Counting Gypsies & Travellers: A Review of the Gypsy Caravan Count System*, ODPM, February 2004 located at [Website link for document](#)

ONS 2021 *Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group* located at: [Website address for link](#)

Ryder, A, Acton, T, Cemlyn, S, Cleemput, P, Greenfields, M, Richardson, J and Smith, D. (2011) *A Big or Divided Society? Final Recommendations and Report of the Panel Review into the Impact of the Localism Bill and Coalition Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers*. London: Travellers Aid Trust.

Glossary

Amenity block

A small permanent building on a pitch with bath/shower, WC, sink and (in some larger ones) space to eat and relax. Also known as an amenity shed or amenity block.

Authorised site

A site with planning permission for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site. It can be privately owned (often by a Gypsy or Traveller), leased or socially rented (owned by a council or registered provider).

Average

The term 'average' when used in this report is taken to be a mean value unless otherwise stated.

Barge Travellers and boat dwellers

As defined by the National Barge Travellers Association (NBTA):

“Someone who lives aboard a vessel (which may or may not be capable of navigation), that the vessel is used as the main or only residence and where that vessel is either (i) moored in one location for more than 28 days in a year (but may occasionally or periodically leave its mooring); or (ii) has no permanent mooring and navigates in accordance with the statutes appropriate to the navigation such as inter alia s.17(3)(c)(ii) of the British Waterways Act 1995 or s.79 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932”.

The NBTA also distinguish between 'Bargee Travellers' and 'boat dwellers'. 'Bargee Travellers' are people whose main or only home is a boat without year-round access to a permanent mooring. 'Boat dwellers' are considered by the NBTA to be people whose main or only home is a boat and who have year-round access to a permanent mooring, whether or not that mooring has planning consent for residential use.

Bedroom standard

The bedroom standard is based on that which was used by the General Household Survey to determine the number of bedrooms required by families. For this study, a modified version of the bedroom standard was applied to Gypsies and Travellers residing on sites to take into account that caravans or mobile homes may contain both bedroom and residing spaces used for sleeping. The number of spaces for each accommodation unit is divided by two to provide an equivalent number of bedrooms. Accommodation needs were then determined by comparing the number (and age) of family members with the number of bedroom spaces available.

Bricks and mortar accommodation

Permanent housing of the settled community, as distinguished from sites.

Caravan

Defined by Section 29 (1) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960:

"... any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted."

Concealed household

A household or family unit that currently lives within another household or family unit but has a preference to live independently and is unable to access appropriate accommodation (on sites or in housing).

Doubling up

More than one family unit sharing a single pitch.

Emergency stopping places

Emergency stopping places are pieces of land in temporary use as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the site for a few days.

Family Owner Occupied Gypsy Site

Family sites are seen as the ideal by many Gypsies and Travellers in England. They are also often seen as unattainable. There are two major obstacles: money/affordability and getting the necessary planning permission and site licence. While the former is clearly a real barrier to many less well-off Gypsies and Travellers, getting planning permission for use of land as a Gypsy caravan site (and a 'site' in this context could be a single caravan) is currently a major constraint on realising aspirations among those who could afford to buy and develop a family site.

Family unit

The definition of 'family unit' is used flexibly. The survey assumes that a pitch is occupied by a single household or family unit although it acknowledges that this may also include e.g. extended family members or hidden households.

Gypsy

Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. In this report it is used to describe English (Romany) Gypsies, Scottish Travellers and Welsh Travellers. English Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1988.

Gypsy and Traveller

The DLUHC's December 2023 definition of Gypsies and Travellers²⁶, is set out below:

For the purposes of this planning policy "gypsies and travellers" means:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

In determining whether persons are "gypsies and travellers" for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

²⁶ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>.

- a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life*
- b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life*
- c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.*

Hidden Household

A household not officially registered as occupying a site/yard or pitch/plot who may or may not require separate accommodation.

Household

The definition of 'household' is used flexibly. The survey assumes that a pitch is occupied by a single household or family unit although it acknowledges that this may also include e.g. extended family members or hidden households.

Irish Traveller

Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. Distinct from Gypsies but sharing a nomadic tradition, Irish Travellers were recognised as an ethnic group in England in 2000.

Local Authority Sites

The majority of local authority sites are designed for permanent residential use.

Local Development Documents (LDD)

These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

Negotiated Stopping

The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent 'built' transit sites but negotiated arrangements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The arrangement is between the local authority and the (temporary) residents.

Net need

The difference between need and the expected supply of available pitches (e.g. from the re-letting of existing socially rented pitches or from new sites being built).

New Traveller (formerly 'New Age Traveller')

Member of the settled community who has chosen a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle. The first wave of New Travellers began in the 1970s and were associated with youth culture and 'new age' ideals. They now comprise a diverse range of people who seek an alternative lifestyle for differing reasons including personal or political convictions. Economic activities include making hand-made goods that are sold at fairs.

Newly forming families

Families residing as part of another family unit of which they are neither the head nor the partner of the head and who need to live in their own separate accommodation, and/or are intending to move to separate accommodation, rather than continuing to live with their 'host' family unit.

Overcrowding

An overcrowded dwelling is one which is below the bedroom standard. (See 'Bedroom Standard' above).

Permanent residential site

A site intended for long-stay use by residents. It has no maximum length of stay but often constraints on travelling away from the site.

Pitch

Area on a site developed for a family unit to live. On socially rented sites, the area let to a tenant for stationing caravans and other vehicles.

Primary data

Information that is collected from a bespoke data collection exercise (e.g., surveys, focus groups or interviews) and analysed to produce a new set of findings.

Private rented pitches

Pitches on sites which are rented on a commercial basis to other Gypsies and Travellers. The actual pitches tend to be less clearly defined than on socially rented sites.

Psychological aversion

Whilst not a medical condition this is a term that is accepted as part of accommodation assessments in encapsulating a range of factors that demonstrate an aversion to residing in bricks and mortar accommodation (see DCLG October 2007). The factors concerned can include: feelings of depression, stress, sensory deprivation, feeling trapped, feeling cut off from social contact, a sense of dislocation with the past, feelings of claustrophobia. Proven psychological aversion to residing in bricks and mortar accommodation is one factor used to determine accommodation need.

Secondary data

Existing information that someone else has collected. Data from administrative systems and some research projects are made available for others to summarise and analyse for their own purposes (e.g. Traveller Caravan Count).

Settled community

Used to refer to non-Gypsies and Travellers who live in housing.

Site

An area of land laid out and/or used for Gypsy and Traveller caravans for residential occupation, which can be authorised (have planning permission) or unauthorised. Sites can be self-owned by a Gypsy and Traveller resident or rented from a private or social landlord. Sites vary in type and size and can range from one-caravan private family sites on Gypsies' and Travellers' own land, through to large local authority sites. Authorised private sites (those with planning permission) can be small, family-run, or larger, privately-owned rented sites.

Socially rented site

A Gypsy and Traveller site owned by a council or private Registered Provider. Similar to social rented houses, rents are subsidised and offered at below private market levels.

Tolerated

An unauthorised development or encampment may be tolerated by the local authority meaning that no enforcement action is currently, or likely to be, being taken.

Transit site/pitch

This is the authorised encampment option for Gypsies and Travellers travelling in their caravans and in need of temporary accommodation while away from 'home'. Transit sites are sometimes used on a more long-term basis by families unable to find suitable permanent accommodation

Travelling Showpeople

People who organise circuses and fairgrounds and who live on yards when not travelling between locations. Most Travelling Showpeople are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.

Travelling Showpeople Plot

Area on a yard for Travelling Showpeople to live. As well as dwelling units, Travelling Showpeople often keep their commercial equipment on a plot.

Travelling Showpeople Yard

An area of land laid out and/or used for Travelling Showpeople for residential occupation, which can be authorised (have planning permission) or unauthorised. Yards can be self-owned by a Travelling Showpeople resident or rented from a private or social landlord. Some yards

are leased or rented from the Showmen's Guild. They can vary in type and size although they need to consider the need for residents to store and maintain fairground equipment.

Unauthorised development

Unauthorised developments include situations where the land is owned by the occupier, or the occupier has the consent of the owner (e.g. is tolerated /no trespass has occurred), but where relevant planning permission has not been granted.

Unauthorised encampment

Unauthorised encampments include situations where the land is not owned by the occupier, the land is being occupied without the owner's consent, and as such a trespass has occurred. An encampment can include one or more vehicles, caravans or trailers.

Unauthorised site

Land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers without the appropriate planning or other permissions. The term includes both unauthorised development and unauthorised encampment.