

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

Telford & Wrekin Council

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About the Authors

The Sustainable Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) is a dedicated multi-disciplinary research and consultancy unit providing a range of services relating to housing and urban management to public and private sector clients. The Unit brings together researchers drawn from a range of disciplines including: social policy, housing management, urban geography, environmental management, psychology, social care and social work.

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This report is based on research undertaken by the study team and the analysis and comment thereafter do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the research commissioners, or any participating stakeholders and agencies. The authors take full responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions in the report.

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Glossary

The following terms are used in this report and or are used in conjunction with planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople accommodation. As such these terms may need some clarification. In the case of those terms which are related to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and culture, it is noted that a number of these terms are often contested and debated. It is not the intention of the authors to present these terms as absolute definitions: rather, the explanations provided are those the authors used in this assessment as their frames of reference.

Term	Explanation
Amenity block/shed	On most residential Gypsy/Travellers sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
Authorised social site	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Housing Provider.
Authorised private site	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches. They may also have either permanent or temporary planning permission.
Bricks and mortar	Permanent housing.
Caravan	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
Caravan Count	Bi-annual count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans conducted every January and July by local authorities published by the DCLG.
Chalet	In the absence of a specific definition, the term 'chalet' is used here to refer to single storey residential units which resemble mobile homes but can be dismantled.
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	The main government department responsible for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues.
Development Plan Documents (DPDs)	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)	The main document that identifies the accommodation requirements of Gypsies and Travellers.
Doubling-up	To share a pitch on an authorised site.
Green Belt	A policy or land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas.
Gypsy	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
Gypsies and Travellers (as used in this report)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Showpeople, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	National housing and regeneration agency. Has been responsible for administering the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant since 2009/10.
Local Plan/Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
Mobile home/Mobiles	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling or using a lorry.
Pitch/plot	Area of land on a site/development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch.
Pulling-up	To park a trailer/caravan.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	Previous planning approach across England. In July 2010 the government announced its decision to revoke RSSs.
Settled community/people	Reference to non-Travellers (those who live in houses).
Site	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers/chalets/vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
Static caravan	Larger caravan than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.
Stopping place	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
Suppressed/concealed households	Households, living within other 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 one.
Tourer/trailer	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan.
Transit site	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
Travelling Showpeople	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.
Unauthorised Development	This refers to a caravan/trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
Unauthorised Encampment	Residing in caravans/trailers on private/public land without the landowner's permission (for example, at the side of the road, on a car park or on a piece of undeveloped land).
Yard	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

Executive Summary

The study

1. The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty upon local authorities to produce assessments of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers. In 2008, a Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed to look at accommodation and needs across the respective authorities for the 2007 to 2017 period. The report presented an estimate of 34 additional pitches for Telford & Wrekin for that period, with 24 required between 2007 and 2012, and an additional 10 between 2011 and 2017. No specific figures were provided for transit provision, however, it was recommended that each authority should identify one or two stopping places that could be used to accommodate transit need. In response to the need identified above, Telford & Wrekin Council have opened a temporary 15 pitch transit site and have plans to redevelop an existing socially rented site to create an additional 12 pitches.
2. In March 2014, Telford & Wrekin Council commissioned the Sustainable Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. The primary purpose of this assessment is to provide an evidence base to inform the future development of planning policies through the Local Plan. This report presents the projection of the requirements for the period 2014 - 2031. This assessment was concerned with identifying need that arises and needs to be met within Telford & Wrekin. If neighbouring authorities identify need in Telford & Wrekin during the course of their own individual assessments, this would need to be discussed as a Duty to Cooperate issue.
3. The assessment was undertaken by conducting a review of the following data sources:
 - The previous assessment of need and information submitted through the earlier regional planning process;
 - The policy and guidance context;
 - The bi-annual Caravan Count;
 - Census 2011 data;
 - Information from the local authority with regards to pitch provision and supply;
 - Information from key stakeholders;
 - A survey of **76 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** currently residing or stopping in Telford & Wrekin, covering a range of accommodation types; and
 - Follow up qualitative interviews with **16 Gypsies and Travellers** living on site-based accommodation.
4. The fieldwork took place between May and July 2014. The base date used in this assessment is the 24 May 2014.

Local accommodation provision

5. There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across Telford & Wrekin. Using the best information available we estimate that there are at least 338 individuals or 104 households resident in the study area.
6. The population in Telford & Wrekin was found across the following accommodation types: socially rented sites (both residential and transit); private sites; Travelling Showpeople yards; and bricks and mortar accommodation. The study team were also aware of the occurrence of unauthorised encampments during the fieldwork period (and interviewed households on encampments).

Accommodation need and supply

7. There are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Research from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)¹ has indicated that around 6,000 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are immediately required to meet the current shortage of accommodation within England.
8. This study has taken a thorough assessment of the need arising from all accommodation types present at the time of the survey. As such this assessment of need should be regarded as a robust assessment of need upon which to base planning decisions going forward. Sites developed after 24 May 2014 contribute to the need requirements detailed in the table below:

Table A: Summary of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Residential Pitch Need (2014 - 2031)

	Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Need Total (No. of pitches)	Travelling Showpeople Pitch Need Total (No. of pitches)
Current authorised residential provision (pitches)	44	4
Residential need 2014 - 2018 (pitches)	4	0
Residential need 2019 - 2023 (pitches)	10	0
Residential need 2024 - 2028 (pitches)	10	0
Residential need 2029 - 2031 (pitches)	8	0
Residential need 2014 - 2031 (pitches)	32	0

¹ Brown, P. and Niner, P. (2009) *Assessing Local Housing Authorities' Progress in Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsy and Traveller Communities in England*, Research Report 13, London: EHRC.

9. With regards to transit provision, there is currently a temporary transit site in the study area with 15 pitches. Given that this transit site is only temporary - until October 2015 - there is a need for permanent transit provision in the study area. Data collected during the assessment suggests that there are an estimated 21 households requiring short stay accommodation over a calendar year. Based on a number of different scenarios (in terms of duration of stay and period of travel), it is suggested that a minimum of 11 transit pitches are required in the study area. However, while transit need could be met by the creation of 'hard' purpose-made pitches/sites, it is recommended that consideration is also given to the development of 'soft' transit pitches (that is, designated/temporary stopping places).
10. It is recommended that the assessment of accommodation need is reviewed in due course (circa 5 years) to reflect the most up to date guidance and evidence available.

1. Introduction

Background and Scope

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty upon local authorities to produce assessments of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers. In 2008, a Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed to look at accommodation and needs across the respective authorities for the 2007 to 2017 period.² The report presented an estimate of 34 additional pitches for Telford & Wrekin for that period, with 24 required between 2007 and 2012, and an additional 10 between 2011 and 2017. The need identified in that report was arising from concealed households/household formation, unauthorised encampments and movement between housing and sites. No specific figures were provided for transit provision although it was recommended that each authority should identify one or two stopping places that could be used to accommodate transit need.
- 1.2 Planning guidance contained within Circular 01/2006 indicated that the district level requirements identified in Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) were to be submitted to the Regional Planning Body (RPB) - in this case, the West Midlands Regional Assembly - and a 'strategic view' of need taken. The intention was that these figures, once agreed, would be incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which in turn would be adopted by each local authority's local planning framework. The adopted West Midlands RSS required that "development plans should ensure adequate provision is made for suitable sites to accommodate [G]ypsies and other [T]ravellers". This provision had to reflect demand shown by Caravan Count data and "any additional local information". The West Midlands RSS Interim Statement looked at the distribution of existing pitches and pitch requirements across the region and diverted some of the requirement from areas which already had large levels of provision to those with none or low levels.³ For Telford & Wrekin, the Interim Statement allocated 37 pitches to Telford & Wrekin during 2007 and 2017 - due to the reallocation of three pitches from South Staffordshire - with a need for 10 transit pitches in each area over the same period.
- 1.3 In July 2010 the Secretary of State announced the revocation of RSSs. Local authorities were advised to continue to develop local planning frameworks and, where these had already been adopted, use the adopted Development Plan Documents (DPDs) as the local planning framework. The West Midlands Regional Strategy was formally abolished on 20 May 2013 by Statutory Order 2013/933.
- 1.4 In March 2014, Telford & Wrekin Council commissioned the Sustainable Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. The primary purpose of this assessment is to

² Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) (2008) *Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment: Revised Final Report*, Birmingham: CURS.

³ West Midlands Regional Assembly (2010) *West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy: Phase Three Revision Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations*, March 2010.

provide an evidence base to inform the future development of planning policies through the Local Plan. This assessment analyses need as it currently stands (as of August 2014). It presents the projection of requirements for the following planning periods:

- 2014 – 2018: five years;
- 2019 – 2023: five years;
- 2024 – 2028: five years; and
- 2029 – 2031: three years.

This assessment was concerned with identifying need that arises and needs to be met within Telford & Wrekin. If neighbouring authorities identify need in Telford & Wrekin during the course of their own individual assessments, this would need to be discussed as a Duty to Cooperate issue.

Assessment Approach

1.5 The approach to this study involved bringing together various existing data sources with empirical research with the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities across Telford & Wrekin. Details about the methodology for the assessment can be found in Appendix One. The methodology entailed a review of the following data sources:

- Previous assessments of need and information submitted through the earlier regional planning process;
- The policy and guidance context;
- The bi-annual Caravan Count;
- Census 2011 data;
- Information from the local authority with regards to pitch provision and supply;
- Information from key stakeholders. Consultations (written and verbal) were undertaken in order to develop a clearer understanding about the context of provision and need within the area and to help inform the assessment of need. This information has been incorporated into this report in the appropriate places. Consultation was carried out with officers representing the following departments, roles and agencies: Telford & Wrekin Council (with representatives from children and family locality services, education, housing, planning, enforcement and site management); the Police; a home education provider; and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain. Furthermore, attempts were made to consult with neighbouring authorities in order to understand any cross boundary issues, if relevant;⁴
- A survey of **76 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** currently residing or stopping in Telford & Wrekin, covering a range of accommodation types; and

⁴ A representative of Shropshire Council took part in the consultation. Two other neighbouring authorities were approached during the assessment but did not take part.

- Follow up qualitative interviews with **16 Gypsies and Travellers** living on site-based accommodation.

1.6 Table 1.1 summarises the response to the survey by number of sites and estimated/known number of households across sites in Telford & Wrekin:

Table 1.1: Sample in Relation to Local Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Population

Type of Accommodation	No. of sites			No. of known occupied pitches/households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Interview Sample	%
Socially rented sites (residential)	2	2	100%	33	24	73%
Private authorised sites	5 ⁵	4	80%	10 ⁶	10	100%
Travelling Showpeople yards	2 ⁷	1	50%	4	4	100%
TOTAL TRAILER BASED POPULATION	9	7	78%	47	38	81%
Socially rented sites (transit)	1	1	100%	N/A	11	N/A
Bricks and mortar	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	23	N/A
Unauthorised encampments	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A

1.7 The key points to note from the methodological approach adopted is that:

- The survey represents 78% of the known residential sites/yards across the study area. The two sites/yards that were not included were unoccupied at the time of the survey;
- The survey reflects 81% of the known resident trailer based households and an estimated 50% of the population in bricks and mortar housing; and
- Due to the size of the sample it is reasonable to gross up findings from the survey to the total population of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Telford & Wrekin (see Chapter 11 for a description of how the survey findings have been translated into accommodation need).

⁵ There are five private sites in the study area yet only four of these were occupied at the time of the survey as the remaining site was still under construction.

⁶ There are 11 pitches in the study area. However, one was unoccupied as the household had moved into a house. On the same site, one of the residents was away travelling during the assessment period. On another site, information provided by the Council suggested it had permission for one park home but there were two households living on the site at the time of the assessment.

⁷ One of these yards was unoccupied at the time of the assessment. Information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that this was a storage rather than residential yard (see Chapter 8).

Structure of the Report

- 1.8 This report is intended to assist Telford & Wrekin Council in its formulation of planning policies for the provision of accommodation for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. It sets out the background and current policy context, identifies the estimated Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population and presents evidence of need arising within the study area. The report is structured as follows:

Table 1.2: Report Structure

Chapter 2	Looks at the past, present and emerging policy context in the area of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.
Chapter 3	Looks at the trends in caravan numbers evident from the bi-annual count of caravans and presents an estimate as to the size of the local Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population.
Chapter 4	Presents information on socially rented residential site provision based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as drawing upon the views of people obtained through the Gypsy and Traveller survey.
Chapter 5	Presents information on authorised private site provision based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as drawing upon the views of people obtained through the Gypsy and Traveller survey.
Chapter 6	Looks at the presence of unauthorised encampments in the study area based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as drawing upon the views of people obtained through the Gypsy and Traveller survey.
Chapter 7	Looks at the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as drawing upon the views of people obtained through the Gypsy and Traveller survey.
Chapter 8	Looks at transit provision in the study area, based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as the views of households stopping on the transit site.
Chapter 9	Looks at a range of issues including the movement intentions of the sample, the formation of new households and concealment of existing ones and the accommodation preferences of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population.
Chapter 10	Provides the numerical assessment of residential accommodation need for Telford & Wrekin Council.
Chapter 11	Provides an assessment of transit accommodation need for Telford & Wrekin Council.
Chapter 12	Looks at Travelling Showpeople specifically, based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and other key stakeholders, as well as drawing upon the views of Travelling Showpeople who were interviewed in the survey.
Chapter 13	Provides an overview of the additional qualitative interviews that were carried out with Gypsies and Travellers living in Telford & Wrekin.
Chapter 14	Provides some concluding comments in relation to the assessment.

- 1.9 The base date for this assessment is 24 May 2014. Provision made after this date will contribute to the need identified in this report.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 This chapter looks at the current policy context impacting on the assessment of need and the provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Current National Planning Policy

- 2.2 In March 2012 the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England. This Framework represents a core aspect of the Government's reforms to the planning system to make it less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth.
- 2.3 In tandem with the publication of the NPPF, the Government published a new policy on Gypsy and Travellers - *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*⁸ - and the two documents should be read in conjunction. They replaced Circulars 01/06 and 04/2007.
- 2.4 Paragraph 3 of the *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* states that the Government's overarching aim is to "ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community".
- 2.5 Further detail on this overarching aim is subsequently provided in Paragraph 4 of this policy which states that the Government's aims for Traveller sites are:
- *That local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;*
 - *To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;*
 - *To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;*
 - *That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;*
 - *To promote more private Traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those Travellers who cannot provide their own sites;*
 - *That plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;*
 - *For local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;*

⁸ DCLG (2012) *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, London: DCLG. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6078/2113371.pdf

- *To increase the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;*
- *To reduce tensions between settled and Traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;*
- *To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which Travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure; and*
- *For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.*

2.6 *Policy A: Using Evidence to Plan Positively and Manage Development* sets out that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should consider the following in developing the evidence base:

- *Pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and Traveller communities (including discussing Travellers' accommodation needs with Travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups);*
- *Co-operate with Travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and*
- *Use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions.*

2.7 *Policy B: Planning for Traveller Sites* states that LPAs should set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople to meet needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring planning authorities. Paragraph 9 in this policy states that LPAs, in producing their Local Plan, should:

- *Identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;*
- *Identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15;*
- *Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);*
- *Relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density; and*
- *Protect local amenity and environment.*

- 2.8 Paragraph 10 notes that criteria should be set out to guide land supply allocations where there is an identified need. It states that:

“Criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community”.

- 2.9 At the time of this assessment, the Government had proposed changes to planning policy and guidance. In a published consultation document, the Government has set out a number of changes with the stated aim of “ensuring fairness in the planning system; and strengthening protection of our sensitive areas and Green Belt”.⁹ Although the changes would apply to the settled community, the consultation document acknowledges that the proposals primarily relate to Gypsy and Traveller sites. Consultation on the proposed changes went beyond the timeframe of this assessment (ending in November 2014). Any change to policy as a result of this consultation may impact on the delivery against the need and issues identified in this report.

Regional Planning Policy

- 2.10 The Localism Act 2011 provided for the abolition of regional strategies. The written statement to Parliament made by Baroness Hanham CBE on 25 July 2012 stated that:

“The Localism Act 2011 provides for the abolition of regional strategies in a two-stage process. The first stage, to remove the regional planning framework and prevent further strategies from being created, took effect when the Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November. The second stage would be to abolish the existing regional strategies by secondary legislation.”¹⁰

- 2.11 The second stage, as it applied to the West Midlands Regional Strategy, was subject to strategic environmental assessment prior to formal abolition in May 2012. However, it has been made clear that the evidence base used to compile these strategies can still be used to inform the development of Local Plans as appropriate.¹¹ Specific guidance is provided in terms of Gypsy and Traveller needs, this states that:

“Local councils are best placed to assess the needs of Travellers. The abolition of Regional Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) have been undertaken by all local authorities and if local

⁹ DCLG (2014) *Consultation: Planning and Travellers*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-and-travellers-proposed-changes-to-planning-policy-and-guidance>

¹⁰ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/abolition-of-regional-strategies>

¹¹ DCLG Chief Planner (6 July 2010) *Chief Planning Officer Letter: Revocation of Regional Strategies*.

authorities decide to review the levels of provision these assessments will form a good starting point. However, local authorities are not bound by them. We will review relevant regulations and guidance on this matter in due course”.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.12 Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that an updated policy approach relating specifically to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was in preparation and would be published as part of the draft Local Plan in 2015. This assessment will therefore be a key evidence base to support the development of policy.

Defining Gypsies and Travellers

- 2.13 Defining the term Gypsies and Travellers is not straightforward. Different definitions are used for a variety of purposes. At a very broad level the term ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ is used by non-Gypsies and Travellers to encompass a variety of groups and individuals who have in common a tradition or practice of nomadism. More narrowly, both Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised minority ethnic groupings.

- 2.14 At the same time, Gypsies and Travellers have been defined for accommodation and planning purposes. The statutory definition of Gypsies and Travellers for the GTAA's required by the Housing Act 2004 is:

a) Persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan.

b) All other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:

a. 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; and

b. Members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

- 2.15 The current national planning policy - *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*¹² - contains a separate definition for planning purposes which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople:

“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”.

- 2.16 This definition focuses more narrowly upon people who either still travel or have ceased to do so as a result of specific issues and can as a consequence demonstrate specific land use requirements.

¹² See footnote 8.

- 2.17 A separate definition of Travelling Showpeople is provided within the planning policy:

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 or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

- 2.18 The current planning policy - *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* - uses the term 'Traveller' to refer to both Gypsy and Traveller communities and populations of Travelling Showpeople. This has been used as it is recognised that this definition is "more pragmatic and wider and enables local planning authorities to understand the possible future accommodation needs of this group and plan strategically to meet those needs".¹³

Housing and Accommodation Need

- 2.19 Crucially, for Gypsies and Travellers, the definition of housing need is varied slightly to acknowledge the different contexts in which members of these communities live. The general definition of housing need is "households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance", with housing demand defined as "the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent".¹⁴
- 2.20 In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance on producing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments¹⁵ refers to distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing. For caravan dwelling households, need may take the form of:¹⁶
- Those who have no authorised site on which to reside;
 - Those whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation; and
 - Those who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.

¹³ DCLG (2011) *Planning for Traveller Sites: Consultation Paper*, London: HMSO. Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1886164.pdf>

¹⁴ ODPM (2006) *Definition of the Term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the Purposes of the Housing Act 2004: Consultation Paper*, London: HMSO.

¹⁵ DCLG GTAA guidance has been used in developing the methodology but variations to the approach are made to take account of local circumstances where considered appropriate.

¹⁶ DCLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments: Guidance*, London: HMSO.

- 2.21 In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households, need may take the form of:
- Those whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable (including unsuitability by virtue of psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation).
- 2.22 The needs presented in this report reflect both the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as used in the Housing Act 2004, which gives an overall strategic level of accommodation need, and the new planning policy which indicates the proportion of site-based need for operational purposes. It should also be noted that steps have been taken within this report to analyse need in the context of local and historic demand.
- 2.23 Housing need is assessed at the level of a single family unit or household (broadly a group of people who regularly live and eat together). On Gypsy and Traveller sites, this is assumed to equate to a 'pitch'; in housing, to a separate dwelling.

Defining a Pitch

- 2.24 There is no set definition for what constitutes a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople residential pitch (or plot for Travelling Showpeople). In the same way as in the settled community, Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople require various accommodation sizes, depending on the number of family members.
- 2.25 The convention used in this report is that a pitch is the place on a Gypsy and Traveller site accommodating a single family/household. The number of caravans that a household uses can be a single unit - trailer, touring caravan, static, chalet, for example - or more. In order to ensure comparability across accommodation types it is important to determine a convention when translating caravan numbers into pitches/households. Following the convention used in the last round of GTAA's, as well as current GTAA updates, and an approach advocated by DCLG guidance, this study uses a 1.7 caravan to pitch ratio.

Conventions

- 2.26 Two conventions are followed in this report:
- Percentages in text and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number and this means that they do not always sum to exactly 100; and
 - 'Quotes' included from Gypsies and Travellers are distinguished by being in italic type and usually inset.

3. Baseline Information on the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Population

- 3.1 This chapter looks at the Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans in order to present what is known about Gypsies and Travellers within the Telford & Wrekin area. The Caravan Count is a dataset collected bi-annually for all local authorities in England and follows a method prescribed by Central Government. It serves as a baseline for the purposes of this assessment. This chapter also presents information on the estimated size of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in the study area.

Caravan Numbers and Trends from the Caravan Count

- 3.2 The bi-annual Caravan Count provides a snapshot of the local context in terms of the scale and distribution of caravan numbers across the study area. Indeed, in the absence of other datasets it is virtually the only source of information on Gypsy and Traveller caravan data. However, there are well documented issues with the robustness of the count.¹⁷ Such issues include: the 'snapshot' nature of the data; the inclusion of caravans and not households; the exclusion of Travelling Showpeople;¹⁸ and the exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation. The analysis contained in this report, which is based on information supplied by the local authority, key stakeholders and a survey of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households, therefore represents a more robust assessment of the current situation than would be the case if only the Caravan Count were used.
- 3.3 Using the information from the Caravan Count from January 2006 to the latest published count of July 2014, Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 below provides the distribution of caravan numbers for Telford & Wrekin since January 2006. Data from the Caravan Count indicates the following:
- The largest numbers of caravans are recorded on socially rented sites. There are regular peaks and troughs in caravans on socially rented sites, but the overall trend shows that these numbers have decreased. Consultation with Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that the decrease was due to a short term reduction in capacity at one of the socially rented sites ahead of the planned redevelopment and expansion of the site (see Chapter 4);
 - The overall trend in terms of private sites suggests that these numbers have increased since January 2006. There was a fairly large increase between July 2009 and January 2010, with the figure doubling from five to 10 caravans yet this figure has remained fairly steady since;

¹⁷ Niner, P. (2002) *Review of the ODPM Caravan Count*, London: ODPM.

¹⁸ The January 2011 Count included a count of Travelling Showpeople caravans for the first time.

- Unauthorised encampments appear to be a regular feature in the data. On the whole the number of unauthorised encampments has increased since January 2006. In both July 2010 and July 2011, however, this figure reduced to zero, but has since increased with a large number of caravans (38) being counted in July 2013; and
- Caravan Count data for Travelling Showpeople for January 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 shows a zero count for all of these time periods.

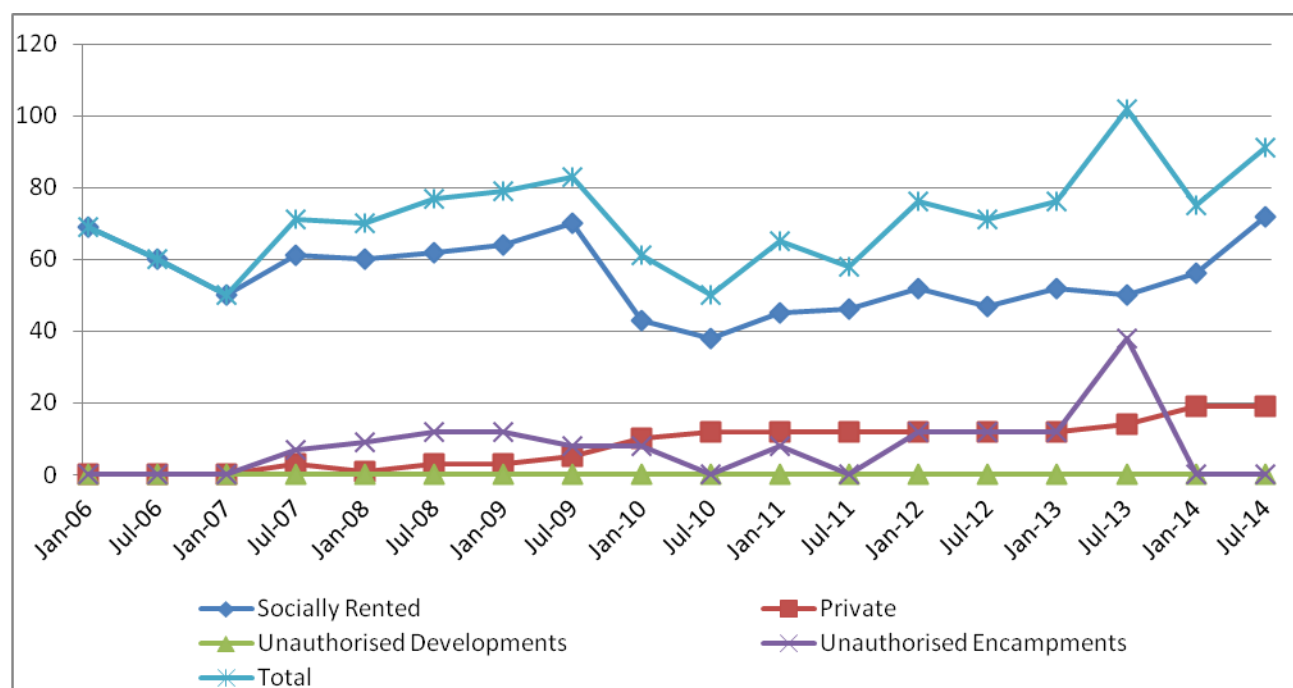
Table 3.1: Caravan Numbers Across Accommodation Types within Telford & Wrekin 2006-2014

Count	Authorised sites (with planning permission)				Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)				Total
	Socially rented	Private			Unauthorised developments		Unauthorised encampments		
		Temporary permission	Permanent permission	All private	'Tolerated'	'Not tolerated'	'Tolerated'	'Not tolerated'	
July 2014	72 ¹⁹	0	19	19	0	0	0	0	91
Jan 2014	56	0	19	19	0	0	0	0	75
July 2013	50	0	14	14	0	0	0	38	102
Jan 2013	52	2	10	12	0	0	0	12	76
July 2012	47	0	12	12	0	0	0	12	71
Jan 2012	52	2	10	12	0	0	0	12	76
Jul 2011	46	2	10	12	0	0	0	0	58
Jan 2011	45	2	10	12	0	0	0	8	65
Jul 2010	38	2	10	12	0	0	0	0	50
Jan 2010	43	0	10	10	0	0	0	8	61
Jul 2009	70	-	-	5	0	0	0	8	83
Jan 2009	64	-	-	3	0	0	0	12	79
Jul 2008	62	-	-	3	0	0	0	12	77
Jan 2008	60	-	-	1	0	0	0	9	70
Jul 2007	61	-	-	3	0	0	0	7	71
Jan 2007	50	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	50
Jul 2006	60	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	60
Jan 2006	69	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	69

Source: DCLG

¹⁹ This includes 21 caravans that were recorded on the new transit site in Telford & Wrekin. This was the first time this site had been included in the count.

Figure 3.1: Caravan Numbers Across Accommodation Types within Telford & Wrekin 2006-2014



The Size of the Local Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Community

- 3.4 For Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, one of the most difficult issues is providing accurate information on the size of the population. As a result, we have used our survey findings, together with information provided by the local authority and key stakeholders in order to provide a best estimate as to the size of the population at the time of the assessment.
- 3.5 Table 3.2 presents the estimation of the size of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Telford & Wrekin. Using the best information available it is estimated that there are at least **338 individuals or 104 households**:²⁰

²⁰ The 2011 Census reported 166 individuals in Telford & Wrekin who ascribe as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, but this is likely to be lower than the actual figure due to lack of engagement with the Census and under reporting of ethnic status. Our sample for this research exceeded this figure and we know that we were unable to achieve a 100% census of the population in this study. Furthermore, stakeholder consultation with an education provider indicated that they currently worked with around 30-40 families (approximately 100 children). Whilst this figure obviously only relates to those engaged with one particular service, it does suggest that there is a substantive population in the study area.

Table 3.2: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Telford & Wrekin

Type of accommodation	Families/households (based on 1 pitch/house = 1 household)	Individuals	Derivation
Socially rented residential sites	33	92	Based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council.
Private sites	11	32	Based on the number of occupied pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (2.9).
Bricks and mortar housing	46	170	Number of families estimated to live in the area multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.7).
Travelling Showpeople	4	10	Based on information from the survey.
Transit site residents ²¹	10	34	Based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council.
Total	104	338	

3.6 In order to provide more specific information on the local Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population, the remaining chapters draw upon the information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council, the views of stakeholders, as well as information obtained through a survey of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households.

²¹ It is not common practice to include transit site residents as part of the baseline residential population given that transit sites are designed to accommodate temporary visitors. However, information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that there were 10 households stopping on the transit site who had been stopping in the area for four years. It was envisaged that these households would be relocated to the new pitches that were being developed on one of the socially rented sites in the study area (see Chapter 4).

4. Socially Rented Residential Sites

- 4.1 This chapter provides a discussion of socially rented residential provision across the study area, drawing on information provided by the Council and other key stakeholders as well as the survey of households living on socially rented sites.
- 4.2 There are two socially rented residential sites in Telford & Wrekin: Lodge Road Caravan Site and Ketley Brook Caravan Site. Both sites were managed by the Council's Cohesion Services. Boxes 4.1 and 4.2 below provide further details about each of these sites:

Box 4.1: Lodge Road Caravan Site, Donnington

This site currently has a total of 13 residential pitches. At the time of this study all 13 were occupied. The Council indicated that the site had decreased by three pitches over the last five years. However, the site had been the subject of a successful bid for a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant which will be used to refurbish the site and increase the number of pitches to 25 (supplying 12 additional pitches in 2015). The Council indicated that refurbishment of utility blocks has already taken place, as well as the creation of offices/meeting facilities to enable on-site visits in relation to health and education for example.

Licensees are permitted to be absent for a period of eight weeks for travelling subject to payment of full rent/licence fee. Visitors are permitted on the site but this is subject to health and safety regulations and is time limited to two weeks at any one time. The weekly rent is £50 with all/almost all residents (over 90%) receiving housing benefit payments towards this. A damage deposit of £200 is required at the start of a licence.

There is a formal waiting list for the site. This list covers both sites in the area. At the time of the assessment there were 17 applicants on the waiting list. This is a waiting list that is held for both of the socially rented sites in the area.²² The Council indicated that this number had increased over the last two to three years. There is a formal policy for allocating pitches. The three main factors taken into consideration when allocating a pitch were, in order of importance: (1) local residence/local connection; (2) medical/special health needs; and (3) family or personal compatibility.

Information from the Council indicates that there are currently 29 people living on the site: 15 adults; four children under the age of five; four children aged five to 11; and six children aged 12 to 16. In terms of ethnic groups, the residents were reported to be English and Scottish Gypsies/Travellers.

²² Please note that this waiting list is not used in the calculation of residential accommodation need in Chapter 10 of this report. This was in order to avoid any potential double counting from our survey of residents, but also due to the reliability of the data on the waiting list. Information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council, for example, suggested that the list included people who were also on waiting lists in other local authority areas. Furthermore, the Council stated that people did not remove themselves from the list if they found alternative accommodation.

The Council reported 100% occupancy for most of the year during 2013. Almost all residents - over 90% - have lived on the site longer term (five years or over). No pitches had been vacated in the last three years. Each pitch has an amenity unit which has a bath and shower, space/provision for cooking, and space/provision for laundry facilities. As highlighted above, there is also a site office and meeting room.

It was indicated that there have been a dispute between residents and vandalism on the site over the last twelve months. It was suggested that the Police had resolved the dispute issue, while the vandalism had been repaired without identification of any offender(s).

The Council signalled that no households were currently 'doubled up' on the site (i.e. ideally requiring their own separate accommodation).

Box 4.2: Ketley Brook Caravan Site, Lawley

This site currently has a total of 20 residential pitches. At the time of this study all 20 were occupied. The Council stated that there had been no change in the number of pitches over the last five years. The site had not been the subject of a bid for a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant and there was no intention to apply for one for this site. However, the Council indicated that a refurbishment of utility blocks had taken place, as well as the creation of offices/meeting facilities to enable on-site visits in relation to health and education for example.

Licensees are permitted to be absent for a period of eight weeks for travelling subject to payment of full rent/licence fee. Visitors are permitted on the site yet this is subject to health and safety regulations and is time limited to two weeks at any one time. The weekly rent is £55 with most residents (between 60% - 90%) receiving housing benefit payments towards this. A damage deposit of £200 is required at the start of a licence.

There is a formal waiting list for the site. As above, this list covers both sites in the area and at the time of the assessment there were 17 applicants on the waiting list. The Council indicated that this number had increased over the last two to three years. There is a formal policy for allocating pitches. The three main factors taken into consideration when allocating a pitch were, in order of importance: (1) local residence/local connection; (2) medical/special health needs; and (3) family or personal compatibility.

Information from the Council suggests that there are currently 63 people living on the site: 33 adults; 12 children under the age of five; seven children aged five to 11; and 11 children aged 12 to 16. In terms of ethnic groups, the residents were reported to be English Gypsy/Traveller.

The Council reported 100% occupancy for most of the year during 2013. Over 90% of residents have lived on the site longer term (five years or over). Three pitches had been vacated and re-let²³ in the last three years. Each pitch has an amenity unit which has a bath

²³ Please note that this vacancy/re-let data is not used in the calculation of residential accommodation need in Chapter 10 of this report. It has been argued elsewhere that assessments that look at pitch vacancy rates and also at likely movement to houses or out of the area (net flows) could over-state likely vacancies and under-estimate pitch requirements (see CURS, SHUSU and CRESR (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews*

and shower, toilet with direct entrance from outside, space/provision for cooking and space/provision for laundry facilities. As highlighted above, there is also a site office and meeting room, as well as a children's play area.

It was indicated that there had been instances of disputes between residents on the site over the last twelve months and that the Police had resolved this issue.

The Council stated that no households were currently 'doubled up' on the site (i.e. ideally requiring their own separate accommodation).

Survey Findings: Socially Rented Residential Sites

4.3 A total of 24 people were interviewed across the two socially rented sites over the study period. The residents were Romany Gypsies, with the exception of one person who stated that they were Welsh Gypsy. The respondents ranged in age from 17 – 24 to 60 – 74. Just over a third of the sample (38%) were over the age of 50. Household size ranged from one to six. There were 69 people across the 24 households; an average of 2.9 people per household. Half of the households (12) indicated that they had children. Amongst the households there were 24 children; two children per household.

Views on Size and Facilities

4.4 The majority of respondents (62%) had a single caravan, with the remaining respondents stating that they had two caravans. Two people indicated that their caravan was rented rather than owned. These were rented from Telford & Wrekin Council. The average number of caravans to households was 1.4. In addition to caravans, 18 people stated that they also had other vehicles (nine with one vehicle, eight with two, and one with three other vehicles). Just under two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported that they had enough space: six households indicated that they did not have enough space; four stated that they needed a larger pitch; and five that they needed a larger site. Five of the six stated that they needed more bedrooms, with one noting that they needed a larger caravan. A further reason cited for a lack of space related to the need for a larger shed (two respondents), with one person indicating that this would be used as a living space. As can be seen, from the comments below, people were mainly concerned about not having enough room for caravans but also other vehicles:

on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies, available at: <http://www.theshowmensguild.com/downloads/321445.pdf>. Furthermore, the Examination in Public (EiP) for the South East England Regional Assembly/Partnership Board (SEERA/SEEPB) Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) provides a detailed explanation on why assumptions of supply from turnover or assumed vacancy rates should be discounted (see paragraphs 2.41 to 2.50 of the EiP report at: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Resources/C/0/%7BC036EBA7-6EFA-4803-8524-F392120F6391%7D/Documents/Single%20Issues%20Panel%20report.pdf>). More specifically, it highlights the difference between 'turnover' and 'net vacancy': the latter being that which would result in a net gain in overall supply. The EiP report concludes that "death of a sole occupier" is the only certain source of net supply (see paragraph 2.49).

"We don't have much room on the plots with two trailers, one van and one car"

"Not enough space for vehicles"

- 4.5 However, one respondent also commented that they needed additional space but also a slightly different type of accommodation incorporating wash facilities due to their health: *"I would like a static or chalet with a toilet and wash facilities because I have health problems and this would make life easier"*

Accommodating Visitors on their Current Site

- 4.6 Just three respondents reported that they have visitors to stay with them on a short term basis. These respondents made reference to family coming to visit (primarily children). It was indicated that their visitors usually stayed a couple of weeks but that it was not a regular occurrence. All respondents stated that their visitors brought their own trailer.
- 4.7 The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that hosting visitors was not a problem on the site. Five people indicated that hosting visitors was a problem. One said that it was due to the fact that pitches were not big enough to accommodate visitors, while three stated that they were not allowed to have visitors pull on to the site (the remaining respondent did not provide a reason).

Views on Site Management

- 4.8 All respondents stated that their site was managed by the Council. Half of respondents rated the site management as either good or very good, with 25% rating it as poor or very poor. The remaining respondents were ambivalent - that is, that the site management was deemed neither good nor poor - with the exception of three people who stated that they did not have enough contact with the Council to express an opinion regarding the quality of site management. The reasons expressed for the positive and negative opinions revealed contradictory views: for example, there were positive comments about the speed at which problems were responded to, while at the same time there were negative comments indicating that people were unhappy about how long things took to be resolved. This, however, may be explained by individual respondent's personal experiences but may also relate to the specific site they were living on, with residents on Lodge Road more likely to have negative views (see findings from the qualitative consultation in Chapter 13 for further discussion of comparisons between sites). Some respondents stated that they were generally left to themselves, but that when something was asked of the Gypsy and Traveller Officer, they were quick to respond to problems. However, other people said that repairs took too long to complete and that there was an issue with rubbish on the site that was not addressed. These differing opinions can be seen in the quotes below:

"He (the Gypsy and Traveller Officer) is very good and he comes if we need help with anything"

"They are very polite to us and when we need any repairs doing, it's always done quickly"

"They are good at the repairs, but let some of the people on here put rubbish everywhere and don't ask them to clean it up"

"They don't do anything to the site. They don't care about people on here. They make false promises"

"They're too slow at doing repairs and have their favourites who they'll do everything as quick as possible for"

- 4.9 Pest control and general cleaning and maintenance of the sites were the most frequently mentioned issues that people felt needed improvement. As above, some respondents stated that more space was needed but also that some of the sheds needed to be rebuilt. One respondent also said that the Council needed to be more vigilant with regards to who they allowed to move onto the site.

Reasons for Moving to Site and for Staying in Local Authority Area

- 4.10 When asked why they had come to live on their current site, people gave two main reasons: to be near family (58%) or being born/raised there (38%). When asked whether they were permanent residents or just visiting the local authority area, 23 respondents - that is 96% - claimed they were permanent residents, with one stating that they were visiting.
- 4.11 When asked why they stayed in their particular local authority area people gave a variety of reasons. The majority of respondents (63%) stated that it was because they were born/raised in that area. All respondents indicated that they had family and friends living in the area, with one respondent visiting family at the time of being interviewed. With regards to the other reasons for being in this area, people made reference to health reasons; caring for family members; children's education; availability of work; and a lack of other sites.

Length of Time in the Area and on the Site

- 4.12 With the exception of the respondent who stated that they were on the site visiting family and friends, all respondents indicated that they had lived in the area for more than ten years.
- 4.13 With regards to the length of time on their current site, 20 respondents - 83% of those interviewed - had lived there for ten years or more. Two people had lived on the site for five to 10 years, one for three to five years, and the respondent visiting family and friends had been on the site for between one to three months. The respondent visiting family and friends indicated that they had a base outside the study area. No other respondent had a base elsewhere.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 4.14 Three respondents reported having lived in a house at some point during their life; two had lived in socially rented accommodation while one had owned their own house. All three had lived in houses outside the study area. When asked why they had moved into a house, one respondent stated that it was due to a lack of sites and having nowhere else to go; one had moved with their family; and the other had been born in the house. With regards to how they rated their experience of living in a house, two respondents stated it was very poor and one was ambivalent (i.e. neither good nor poor). These ratings related to generally not liking houses or feeling isolated. One respondent went so far as to say that it felt like '*being in a prison*' and that the experience had caused them to become depressed. Another said that they had enjoyed living in the house when they were younger, but had wanted to travel more when they got older. Their family had then used the house as a winter base and travelled the rest of the year. When asked why they left the house, one person said that it was for health reasons (depression); one had left the house when they had got married; and the other had left because their parents had moved to be closer to other Gypsies and Travellers.

Travelling Experiences

- 4.15 With regards to travelling experiences, 14 respondents (58%) indicated that they did not travel. This was primarily due to health reasons, old age or children's education and these respondents had not travelled in the last two to 10 years, with one respondent stating that they had never moved off the site. Nine respondents stated that they travelled a few times a year, and one travelled every month. Nine of these had travelled in the last 12 months. The most common reasons for travel were to visit fairs (for example, Appleby and Stow), and to visit friends and family. Respondents also stated that they travelled for work reasons, to attend family and community events and to go on holiday. The following destinations were mentioned as places that people visited: Leeds, Wales, and Scotland. All respondents stated that they travelled with one caravan; three also travelled with other equipment.
- 4.16 With regards to where people stayed while travelling, those who attended the fairs stayed at designated fair sites. Following fair sites, people made reference to staying with friends/relatives on private sites and staying on caravan parks. Two respondents indicated that they stopped at the roadside while travelling.

Site Needs Relating to Work

- 4.17 The respondents - or members of their household - were primarily self-employed, with only three people indicating that they were employed by someone else. Seven respondents reported that they or someone within their household was unemployed. None of the respondents indicated that they had site needs relating to their work.

- 4.18 With regards to where people worked, the majority worked in Telford & Wrekin (nine respondents), and four stated that they worked in the West Midlands in general. The most common type of work undertaken by respondents was some form of trade (such as roofing, gardening, cleaning, and painting and decorating). One respondent stated that they bought and sold cars, and two said that they did anything they could to earn money (but did not elaborate on what this involved).
- 4.19 Three respondents stated that they, or members of their family, had experienced problems accessing employment. The most common problem faced related to discrimination:

"I used to go hawking...so everyone knew I was a Gypsy"

"We're harassed for our address"

"If they know we're Gypsies, they won't give us work...if they find out we're Gypsies, we've been told to stop working...It has happened more since My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding started on television. People think it's true to life and that we're all rich and live off the Government. This couldn't be further from the truth".

Access to Services

- 4.20 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. The majority of respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services, where relevant, with the exception of one person who felt they did not have sufficient access to a health visitor, and one who stated that they did not have sufficient access to training services, careers advice or Jobcentre Plus. Four respondents indicated that they, or members of their family, had tried to access higher education. One of these respondents indicated that this had been difficult due to a lack of schooling but also financial barriers.
- 4.21 Table 4.1 below shows the services that had been accessed in the last 12 months. As can be seen, GPs and dentists were the most commonly accessed services:

Table 4.1: Services Used in the Last 12 Months

Services	No	%
GP	14	58
Dentist	11	46
Public transport	5	21
A&E	4	17
Health visitor	1	4
School services	1	4

- 4.22 Respondents were also asked about health problems that they, or people living with them, had. A total of five people were identified as having mobility problems, five with a visual impairment, two with a hearing impairment, and one with mental health problems. The health problems identified included: arthritis; heart problems; asthma; skin problems; and osteoporosis. In general respondents did not identify specific alterations that needed making to their accommodation or the site to alleviate particular health problems. However, one respondent with mobility problems stated that walking on the grass was difficult at times and that concrete slabs would make it easier, while another said that having a separate chalet with a toilet and shower, or having a bigger shed with room for a small bed, would improve their situation.
- 4.23 When asked if there were any other issues that they required help with, three respondents stated that they needed help completing forms due to their literacy levels. Other respondents had experienced the same problem, but said that they were able to ask family members or the Gypsy and Traveller Officer for assistance, if required. However, one respondent stated that they would like the option of being able to ask a woman to help them with certain forms, as some of the questions were of a personal nature and they were sometimes too embarrassed to ask the male Gypsy and Traveller Officer for help. Consultation with Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that, in order to address this issue, a female Officer was available if required.
- 4.24 While very few people suggested using, or requiring, education and training services, education stakeholders suggested that they had been engaging with families on the sites and that progress had been made in relation to school attendance, but also in terms of increasing the number of younger people who were interested in, or taking up, further education and apprenticeship schemes. Reference was made to some of the young people now attending hair and beauty courses, and taking up plumbing, brick laying and electrician apprenticeships.

5. Private Residential Sites

- 5.1 This chapter provides a discussion on private residential sites across the study area, drawing on information provided by the Council and other key stakeholders, and the survey with households living on private sites.
- 5.2 Table 5.1 below provides a brief overview of authorised private residential sites in Telford & Wrekin:

Table 5.1: Overview of Private Authorised Sites in Telford & Wrekin

Site Name	Location	Number of pitches	Planning Consent
Finney's Caravan Site	Edgmond, Telford	6	Permanent
Finney's Caravan Site	Marsh Green, Telford	3	Permanent
Lee's Caravan Site	Marsh Green, Telford	1	Permanent
Jordan's Yard	Hadley	1	Permanent
Whyte's Caravan Site	Woodcote	4 (<i>currently under construction</i>)	Permanent

- 5.3 The Council indicated that the number of authorised private sites had increased over the last five years. There was no information available as to whether the number was likely to increase over the next five years. They highlighted the following good practice in relation to engagement with Gypsies and Travellers around planning issues:

"Explanation of planning requirements, assistance in completion of paperwork including signposting to relevant bodies. Constant exchange of dialogue by all parties involved, including applicant and the local authority".

- 5.4 The Council indicated that they had not experienced the unauthorised development of any private sites over the last five years. They did not know if any unauthorised developments were likely to occur over the next five years.

Survey Findings: Private Residential Sites

- 5.5 A total of ten people were interviewed across four private sites in the study area. All respondents indicated that they were Romany Gypsies and all stated that they owned their pitch, with the exception of two respondents who were just visiting family on the site. The respondents ranged in age from 17-24 to 75-84. Household size ranged from one to seven. There were 29 people across the 10 households; an average of 2.9 people per household. Four households (40%) indicated that they had children. Amongst those households there were 10 children; 2.5 children per household.

Views on Size and Facilities

- 5.6 The sample was divided equally between those who had a single caravan and those who had two caravans. The average number of caravans to households was 1.5. In terms of other vehicles, three respondents indicated that they had one other vehicle, and five respondents had two other vehicles. All respondents reported that they had enough space on their current site.

Accommodating Visitors on their Current Site

- 5.7 Five respondents reported that they have visitors to stay with them on a short term basis. These respondents made reference to family coming to visit (primarily siblings and their children, parents, grandchildren, aunts/uncles and cousins). It was indicated that their visitors came at various times during the year; however, summer and Christmas were common periods for visitors. All of these respondents indicated that visitors brought their own trailer and stayed on the site. None of the respondents indicated that hosting visitors was a problem on their current site.

Views on Site Management

- 5.8 All of the respondents indicated that the site was managed by the respondents themselves or by family members and that they were completely satisfied with the way the site had developed. None of the respondents stated that improvements needed to be made. One of the visiting respondents rated the site as being very good, saying that it was a nice place to spend a fortnight with their family.
- 5.9 Respondents also stated that they were generally very well settled both within the site and in the wider community, and that they had good relations with their neighbours.

"It's a lovely peaceful village. It's always kept in immaculate condition"

"It's nice and peaceful and we are good friends with the people in the village. It's our home".

Reasons for Moving to Site and for Staying in Local Authority Area

- 5.10 The majority of the respondents (86%) were permanent residents of Telford & Wrekin. As highlighted above, two respondents indicated that they were visiting at the time of being interviewed. When asked why they had come to live on their current site, the most common reason among permanent residents was because the land was available to buy (70%). The remaining permanent residents stated that they had family in the area (30%).
- 5.11 When asked why they stayed in their particular local authority area, all respondents stated that they had been born and had family in the area. A large number of the permanent residents also reported that the availability of work played a role in their decision to live in the area. Furthermore, half of the respondents also stated that they were living in the area for health reasons, with three indicating that they were

looking after family members. Three respondents also said that their children's education was one of the reasons for living in the area.

Length of Time in the Area and on the Site

- 5.12 All of the permanent residents had lived in their local authority area for ten years or more, with the remaining visiting respondents living in the area less than six months.
- 5.13 With regards to length of time on their current site, five respondents had lived there for 10 years or more (50%), and three had been there for between five and 10 years (30%). The remaining respondents were those who were visiting the area, so had been on the sites for less than six months. None of the permanent residents stated that they had a base elsewhere. The respondents who were visiting at the time of being interviewed indicated that their permanent bases were private sites outside the study area.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 5.14 In terms of previous accommodation prior to living on their current site, respondents had lived on a range of accommodation types including private sites, unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, council sites and transit sites. The two respondents visiting the site stated that their previous accommodation was on private sites outside the study area. None of the respondents had previously lived in a house.

Travelling Experiences

- 5.15 With regards to travelling experiences, two respondents (20%) indicated that they did not travel. One respondent stated that this was due to health reasons, and the other due to old age. With regards to the remaining eight respondents, six stated that they travelled a few times a year, one travelled once a year and one travelled every week or so. Of these eight respondents, five had travelled in the last 12 months. When asked why they had travelled, responses included for holidays, for work, for fairs, to visit friends/relatives, and to attend community events. Respondents stated that they travelled with one caravan, and three respondents also travelled with equipment.
- 5.16 With regards to where people stayed while travelling, those who attended the fairs stayed at designated fair sites. Following fair sites, people made reference to staying with friends/relatives on private and council sites and staying on caravan parks.

Site Needs Relating to Work

- 5.17 The households were primarily self-employed, with four households indicating that they, or someone within their household, was retired. One respondent also indicated that they were unemployed and not currently looking for work. One respondent did not want to say what they did for work. The other respondents stated that they generally did anything they could for work. None of the respondents indicated that they had any current or future site needs relating to their work.

5.18 With regards to where people worked, five stated that they primarily worked around Telford & Wrekin. One respondent stated that they worked in the local area, the West Midlands, and throughout the UK.

5.19 One respondent stated that they, or members of their family, had experienced problems accessing employment. This related to an experience of discrimination:

“A woman rang to do her driveway years ago. Then when I got there she said she didn’t want Gypsies working for her”.

Access to Services

5.20 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. Where applicable all of the respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services. None of the respondents stated that they, or members of their family, had tried to access higher education. When asked why they had not, they stated that they were not interested.

5.21 Table 5.2 below shows the services that had been accessed in the last 12 months. As can be seen, GPs and dentists were the most commonly accessed services.

Table 5.2: Services Used in the Last 12 Months

Services	No	%
GP	5	50
Dentist	4	40
Health visitor	2	20
Immunisation services	1	10
School services	1	10

5.22 Respondents were also asked about health problems that they, or people living with them, had. A total of four people were identified as having a visual impairment and two with a hearing impairment. One respondent also stated that they had arthritis. None of the respondents stated that the site needed to be improved to help alleviate their health problems.

5.23 When asked if there were any other issues that they required help with, none of the respondents reported any problems.

6. Unauthorised Encampments

- 6.1 This chapter provides a discussion on unauthorised encampments across Telford & Wrekin, drawing on information provided by the Council and other key stakeholders, and the survey with households stopping on unauthorised encampments.
- 6.2 The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments is often a significant issue that impacts upon local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. Nationally the worst living conditions are commonly experienced by Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments who do not have easy access to water or toilet facilities and have difficulties in accessing education and health services (see survey analysis below for examples of this).
- 6.3 The Council indicated that it is party to a Joint Working Protocol with the Police in relation to managing unauthorised encampments. It was indicated that an officer from within the Council and the Police make first contact with new encampments. The Council highlighted the following good practice in relation to managing unauthorised encampments:

“We build a good rapport with groups and advise them of our procedures and timescales. We only use Part 55²⁴ in most cases (occasionally Police will use section 61²⁵). We will collect bagged waste from an agreed point and will supply bags if needed. We use the same procedure with all groups in order to be consistent (i.e. we always serve a Notice to Quit as soon as we are aware of the group on our land)”.

- 6.4 As seen in Chapter 3, unauthorised encampments have been a regular feature of the Caravan Count. Stakeholder consultation suggested that unauthorised encampments have often been an area of tension in the study area, particular in relation to the business community. Consultation with Shropshire Council suggested that some of the households residing on unauthorised encampments moved between the two boroughs.
- 6.5 The Council indicated that they kept a log of unauthorised encampments that occurred on Council-owned land. Table 6.1 below provides an overview of the data provided by the Council:

²⁴ Part 55 Civil Procedures Rules is used by the landowner to regain possession of the land. It requires civil court procedure. It does not provide sanctions if trespassers return to the land (for further information see: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7837/143582.pdf).

²⁵ Section 61 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is used by the Police to remove individuals and/or their vehicles from any land (except the highway). Possession is enforced by the Police with no involvement of the courts. It provides criminal sanctions if trespassers return to the location within three months (for further information see: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7837/143582.pdf).

Table 6.1: Unauthorised Encampments in Telford & Wrekin (2010-2013)

Year	Total no. of unauthorised encampments (UEs)	No. of caravans (range)	No. of caravans (average per UE)	Duration (range)	Duration (average number of days)	Time of year
2010	20	1 – 16	4	No information	No information	January – October
2011	29	1 – 20	6	1 – 16 days	7	February – December
2012	48	1 – 18	8	1 – 40 days	9	January – December
2013	101	1 – 20	6	1 – 67 days	10	January – December
2014 (Jan – Aug)	22	1 - 12	6	1 – 13 days	7	January – August (data provided up to time of assessment)

6.6 There are several points emerging from this data:

- The total number of encampments over 2010 to 2013 has increased by a factor of five (from 20 encampments to 101 encampments). However, it should be noted that the encampments in the Years 2010-2012 only recorded those families who were staying on publicly owned land (i.e. the data excluded those on private land). However, it was asserted by the Council that those families on private land would be equal to the number of families recorded on public land. From 2013 onwards, encampments were recorded on both public and private land (this data is shaded in Table 6.1 above). Taking this into account the number of encampments between 2010 and 2013 can be seen to have increased by around 150%;
- The number of caravans involved in encampments has remained broadly similar over 2011 – 2013;
- The length of time that caravans have remained on a particular parcel of land has been variable. The 2013 data records one encampment remaining in the area for over two months. However, this was skewed by a minority of long-stay encampments. The average number of days encampments remain on one piece of land has been between 7 – 10 days;
- There are encampments recorded throughout the year, not just during the summer. However, the Council indicated that encampments were more common during the summer; and
- Data provided for January to August 2014 indicated that, up to the point of this assessment, the number of unauthorised encampments had decreased. For example, up to mid-August there had been 22 encampments; however, by mid-August 2013 there had been 62 encampments. Consultation with stakeholders suggested that this reduction was a result of the new transit site which had opened in 2013 (see below and Chapter 8).

6.7 Further information provided by the Council suggested that most encampments were 'in transit' - that is, passing through or visiting the area - with some encampments involving horses. The Council suggested that it was mainly the same families over the years as well as some groups that are visiting family who live in the area.

Consultation with Shropshire Council reiterated the suggestion that the same families were often present, stating that these families appeared to move between the two authorities. It was suggested that the locations have changed over the years with people encamping on previously unused land, but also moving closer to residential areas. This may have been a result of business on the industrial estate putting more preventative measures in place. The number and size of encampments was reported to have increased over the last five years. However, at the time of the assessment, the Council had just opened a 15 pitch transit site (see Chapter 8 for further discussion). Consultation with a number of stakeholders suggested that this provision had reduced the number and duration of encampments that were occurring in the study area, given that the Police were now able to use Section 62A²⁶ in order to direct people to the transit site or leave the area. One stakeholder suggested that:

“Word is getting round the community I think, as they think they're going to get moved on in Telford if they park on the side of the road, or by housing, or in a business park, or industrial estate. We're now getting less illegal encampments”.

Survey Findings: Unauthorised Encampments

- 6.8 A total of four people were interviewed on one unauthorised encampment that occurred during the study period. With regards to ethnicity, all four respondents were Romany Gypsies.
- 6.9 The respondents ranged in age from 17-24 to 50-59, with the majority being aged 17-24. Household size ranged from two to five. There were 13 people across the four households; an average of 3.3 people per household. A total of three households indicated that they had children. Amongst the households there were five children; 1.7 children per household.

Views on Size and Facilities

- 6.10 All respondents indicated that they had a single caravan. Three respondents also indicated that they had one other vehicle. One reported that they did not have enough space. When asked to elaborate, they indicated that they needed a larger caravan in order to have more bedrooms. They stated that they *“would like to have a chalet but there is no site to move on to”*.

Reasons for Moving to the Encampment and the Local Authority Area

- 6.11 When asked why they were stopping on their current encampment, two respondents stated that they had been evicted from their last accommodation and two others said that it was due to a lack of sites.

²⁶ Section 62A Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 enables the Police to remove trespassers and their vehicles from land where a suitable pitch is available on a relevant caravan site in the local authority area (for example, where a transit site is available). As with Section 61, return within three months carries criminal sanctions (for further information, see: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7837/143582.pdf).

- 6.12 When asked why they were in the area, two respondents stated that they have family in the area and two indicated that they were born/raised in the area.

Length of Time in the Area and on the Encampment

- 6.13 When asked how long they had been in the area, two respondents indicated that they had been in the area for 10 years or more,²⁷ one had been in the area for between five and 10 years, and one said that they did not know. Three respondents stated that they were permanent residents in the area; one did not know if they were visitors or permanent.
- 6.14 With regards to length of time on their current encampment, all respondents had been there for less than a week. None of the respondents indicated that they had a base elsewhere.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 6.15 With regards to the type of accommodation respondents had before their current encampment, all four respondents said that they had been stopping on another encampment. Two respondents indicated that this had been in Telford, while two had been on an encampment outside the study area. One of the respondents had previously lived in socially rented housing, although they did not state where. They indicated that they had moved into the house as their father had had health problems. They rated the experience as very poor:

"We didn't like being on our own with none of our people near us. I think if Travellers go into a house, they forget their way of life".

Travelling Experiences

- 6.16 With regards to travelling experiences, all of the respondents indicated that they travel or move every week or so. When asked where they tended to go, two stated that they travelled around the Telford & Wrekin local area, and two stated that they travelled around Yorkshire.
- 6.17 With regards to where people stayed while travelling, one respondent attended the fairs and stayed at designated fair sites. Following fair sites, people made reference to staying with family on private sites, roadsides, farmers' fields, and caravan parks. The most cited reason for travel was work. Three of the respondents said that they travelled with one caravan, and one also said that they travelled with one piece of equipment. There was no information on the nature of this equipment but it was assumed to be work related.

²⁷ However, information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council suggested that none of the people who were stopping on unauthorised encampments at the time of the assessment had been in the local authority area for longer than four years.

Site Needs Relating to Work

- 6.18 The households were primarily self-employed. Three respondents stated that they did house maintenance work, and the fourth said that they did anything they could. None of the respondents indicated that they had any current or future site needs relating to their work.
- 6.19 With regards to where people worked, all respondents were working within Telford & Wrekin, with two also working in other places within the West Midlands. None of them said that they had experienced problems accessing work, although one stated that they did not tell people they were Gypsies when they were working.

Access to Services

- 6.20 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. The majority of respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services, where relevant. However, one respondent did not feel that they had sufficient access to schools, training, careers advice, Jobcentre Plus, and public transport. Two also stated that their lack of permanent address made it difficult to access GP services and that they had to use A&E as their primary health service:

"There are no sites to pull on here so we can't get an address. We use A&E if the kids are sick"

"We have to cancel appointments sometimes because we are being moved on. I have missed appointments and had no time to cancel".

- 6.21 When asked if they had used these services in the previous twelve months, two stated that they had accessed GP services, one a health visitor, and one a dentist.
- 6.22 None of the respondents reported that they, or any member of their household, had any health problems.
- 6.23 None of the respondents reported that they, or any member of their household, had tried to access further or higher education.
- 6.24 When asked if there were any other issues that they required help with, one respondent stated that the main issue for them was finding a permanent place to live, while a second respondent made reference to needing help filling in forms:

"It would be nice if someone would help with the forms and I think when the Council go round to Travellers on roadsides they should take a waiting list with them so we know we are getting the right form".

7. Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

7.1 The precise number of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within bricks and mortar accommodation within Telford & Wrekin is unknown. The Commission for Racial Equality's 2006 report - *Common Ground: Equality, Good Race Relations and Sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*²⁸ - suggested that the housed population could be around three times the number of trailer-based populations. Evidence from GTAA's elsewhere suggests there is movement between housing and sites. As such, the consideration of need within households living in bricks and mortar housing should form part of the consideration of strategic policies and working practices of local authorities. This chapter provides a discussion on Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation in Telford & Wrekin, drawing on information provided by the Council and other key stakeholders, and the survey with households living in bricks and mortar.

7.2 Telford & Wrekin Council provided the following information in relation to Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar:

- Gypsies and Travellers are referred to in the current housing strategy;
- Gypsies and Travellers are also referred to in the current homelessness strategy. However, the number of homelessness applications from Gypsies and Travellers over the last 12 months was unknown as this was only recently added as a recorded category on applications;
- Gypsies and Travellers are identified in ethnic records and monitoring of social housing applications and/or allocations. At the time of the assessment, the number of Gypsies and Travellers registered for social housing is six; however, the data indicates that two of these were 'Gypsy Roma', which suggests that they were Central and Eastern European Roma rather than UK Gypsies and Travellers, who are the focus of this assessment. The Council estimated that between 10 and 50 families live in socially rented housing in Telford & Wrekin;
- There was no information as to whether the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social housing had changed over the last five years or whether there would be an increase in Gypsies and Travellers moving into social housing over the next five years;
- The Council indicated that, in their experience, Gypsies and Travellers moved into housing for the following reasons: being unable to get a place on a site; for children's schooling; housing being more comfortable for small children; and families no longer travelling; and
- There was no information in relation to Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing.

²⁸ Available at: https://www.lancsnrgfl.ac.uk/projects/ema/download/file/commonground_report.pdf

Estimating the Size of Gypsy and Traveller Population in Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

- 7.3 None of the stakeholders that were consulted, nor members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities in the area, were able to accurately estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar accommodation. However, one stakeholder who provided educational support suggested that families tended to be concentrated in particular, lower costs, housing areas.
- 7.4 Accurately estimating the size of the population in housing is challenging. The 2011 Census indicates that there are 166 Gypsy/Traveller individuals within Telford & Wrekin. However, the ability of the Census to accurately enumerate the Gypsy and Traveller population has been questioned by some Gypsy and Traveller groups.²⁹ For instance, our sample for this research exceeded this figure and we know that we were unable to achieve a 100% census of the population in this study. It is worth noting that there was a finding from a national analysis of the 2011 Census that there were a higher proportion of Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks and mortar (42,453) than in caravans or other temporary structures (13,437).
- 7.5 In the absence of accurate data or information, as a pragmatic working assumption to enable pitch requirements to be determined, the study team therefore believes it is reasonable to assume that the sample interviewed for this study constitutes around a half of the total housed population. Based on a sample of 23 households living in bricks and mortar properties, our best estimate at this time is that the bricks and mortar population equates to 46 households. This is consistent with assumptions that have been made in GTAAs carried out in other local authority areas. A more accurate estimation of the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in houses will be possible when Gypsies and Travellers feel able to disclose their ethnic group in monitoring forms and when monitoring forms consistently allow for the ethnic groups as options.

Survey Findings: Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

- 7.6 As highlighted previously, a total of 23 people were interviewed in bricks and mortar accommodation across Telford & Wrekin. Of these respondents 11 (48%) were living in socially rented accommodation; 10 (43%) were owner occupiers; and two (9%) were living in private rented accommodation.
- 7.7 The majority of respondents were Romany Gypsies (78%), with four respondents stating that they were Irish Traveller (17%) and one respondent (4%) stating that they were a Travelling Showperson.

²⁹ Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (2013) *Gypsy and Traveller Population in England and The 2011 Census*, London: Irish Traveller Movement in Britain. Available at: <http://irishtraveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Gypsy-and-Traveller-population-in-England-policy-report.pdf>

- 7.8 The respondents ranged in age from 17-24 to 75-84, with the majority aged 25-49. Household size ranged from one to six. There were 84 people across the 23 households; an average of 3.7 people per household. A total of 15 households (65%) indicated that they had children. Amongst the households there were 36 children; 2.4 children per household.

Views on Size and Facilities

- 7.9 59% of respondents (13) were living in three bedroom properties, with 41% (9) in two bedroom houses. Seven respondents stated that they also had a caravan or trailer, which they used for travelling, and 16 people also had other vehicles. Two respondents reported that they did not have enough space at their current accommodation. In both cases this related to needing more outside space for trailers.
- 7.10 When asked how they rated their overall experience of living in bricks and mortar accommodation, 19 respondents (83%) indicated that it was good or very good. The good or very good responses related to the convenience of having all the facilities you need in one place, as well as issues such as having good neighbours and proximity to friends and family. The remaining four (17%) were ambivalent (i.e. neither good nor poor). The ambivalent responses related to a feeling that houses were not meant for Gypsies and Travellers. While some noted that being settled in their current accommodation had helped their children to get places at school, there were concerns about children losing their culture by living in a house.

Accommodating Visitors at their Home

- 7.11 Six respondents reported that they have visitors to stay with them on a short term basis. This was primarily immediate family, all staying for a few weeks. Of these respondents, five indicated that their visitors stayed in the respondents' trailers and one in their own trailer when they visited, rather than stopping in the house.
- 7.12 Two respondents indicated that hosting visitors was a problem and this related to having no room for trailers outside their house.

Reasons for Moving to a House and for Staying in the Local Authority Area

- 7.13 Table 7.1 below shows the main reason for moving to their current home. As can be seen, the most common reason was a lack of sites (31%), followed by moving to be near family (27%) and health reasons (13%):

Table 7.1: Main Reason for Moving to a House

Reason	No	%
Lack of sites	7	31
To be near family/friends	6	27
Own/family member health	3	13
Overcrowded previous accommodation	1	4
Vacancy	1	4
Available to buy	1	4
Family problems	1	4
Tired of being moved on	1	4
Other (not stated)	2	9
Total	23	100

- 7.14 When asked why they stayed in Telford & Wrekin, the majority of respondents stated that it was because they were born/raised in that area (61%) or had family living in the area (30%). The remaining respondents made reference to children's education.

Length of Time in the Area and in the House

- 7.15 The majority of respondents (21/91%) had lived in Telford & Wrekin, and in their current accommodation, for ten years or more, with one respondent living in the area for between five and 10 years. The majority of respondents (21/91%) stated that they were permanent residents in Telford & Wrekin (the remaining two respondents did not know or did not provide a response).

- 7.16 None of the respondents indicated that they had a base elsewhere.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 7.17 Having lived in their current accommodation for more than 10 years, the majority of respondents did not indicate where their previous accommodation had been. However, one respondent stated that they had previously lived on a Travelling Showpeople's yard in the area.

Travelling Experiences

- 7.18 With regards to travelling experiences, 16 respondents (70%) indicated that they did not travel. This was primarily due to their own or a family member's health, children's education, or not having a trailer. These respondents had not travelled in the last two to ten years. As highlighted above, a total of 7 respondents (30%) still had a caravan; all of these respondents had a single caravan. They stated that they travelled a few times a year (one did not provide any information); five of these had travelled in the last 12 months. When asked where they tended to go, the respondents made reference to a range of places, including Appleby and Stow fairs, and Essex and Blackpool.
- 7.19 With regards to where people stayed while travelling, people made reference to using the following accommodation (in order of frequency): designated fair sites, roadside; with friends; and caravan parks.

Needs Relating to Work

- 7.20 The households were primarily self-employed. However a number of respondents also indicated they, or someone within their household, was employed by someone else (this was more likely than with the respondents on the site based accommodation). Two respondents were retired, and one indicated that they or someone within their household was unemployed and looking for work. None of the respondents indicated that they had current space needs relating to their work.
- 7.21 With regards to where people worked, the majority of respondents worked within Telford & Wrekin. Smaller numbers referred to working in other parts of the West Midlands (Birmingham and Stafford). Two respondents indicated that they worked outside the study area (working in Kent or “all over”). Three respondents indicated that they worked in other areas of the UK, but did not specify where. None of the respondents indicated that they had experienced any problems accessing work.

Access to Services

- 7.22 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. The majority of respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services, where relevant, with the exception of one respondent who said that they did not have access to maternity care, immunisations, schools, and jobs and training services. None of the respondents indicated that someone within their household was in further or higher education. However, none of the respondents indicated that they had difficulty accessing services.
- 7.23 Table 7.2 below shows the services that had been accessed in the last 12 months. As can be seen, GPs, dentists and school services were most commonly accessed. The data also suggests higher levels of service use than those living on site-based accommodation. Indeed, with regards to education, stakeholder consultation suggested that Gypsies and Travellers who were living in bricks and mortar were more likely to have children attending high school. It was suggested that this was because there was “less pressure” from other community members than when people were living on site based accommodation. An education stakeholder made the following comments:

“...attendance at secondary school is very poor. The ones that do go are housed, so that they don't get the pressure. There's a lot of pressure when they live together. On the two official sites we've got none at all in secondary school, because there's too much pressure not to go...the families that want to do secondary school are housed”.

Table 7.2: Services Used in the Last 12 Months

Services	No	%
GP	21	91
Dentist	14	61
School services	10	43
Health visitor	4	17
A&E	1	4
Maternity care	1	4
Jobcentre Plus	1	4

- 7.24 Respondents were also asked about health problems that they, or people living with them, had. Two respondents stated that they, or a member of their household, had mobility problems; three had a visual impairment; one had learning difficulties; and one stated that they occasionally suffered from depression.
- 7.25 When asked if there were any other issues that they required help with, a small number of respondents indicated that they had problems completing forms, but said that they asked a family member for assistance when it was needed.

8. Transit Accommodation

- 8.1 Although to a certain extent nomadism and travelling are currently restricted by a lack of sites nationally, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. This chapter provides a discussion on Gypsies and Travellers on transit sites, drawing on information provided by the Council and other key stakeholders, and the survey with households stopping on transit provision in the study area.
- 8.2 There was one transit site in the study area at the time of the assessment (Symmonds Yard Transit Site). It has temporary planning consent until October 2015. Box 8.1 below provides further details about this site:

Box 8.1: Symmonds Yard Transit Site

This site provides transit accommodation on 15 pitches. The site is managed by Telford & Wrekin Council. They stated that there is no waiting list for the site and no formal allocation policy; however, the Council noted the following:

“As a transit site, it is open to anyone providing they are able to pay the deposit and rent in advance. We have had four instances of Travellers on unauthorised encampments who have chosen to leave the borough rather than move on to the transit site”.

While there was no formal allocation policy, the Council indicated that the following factors were taken into account when allocating a pitch: family or personal compatibility; previous known behaviour/references; and ability to pay.

The weekly rent is £45 for a single pitch and £85 for a double pitch. The site has a communal amenity unit, with toilets and space/provision for laundry. A £250 damage deposit is required at the start of the licence. The Council suggested that, so far, almost all of the people using the site were receiving housing benefit towards this fee.

The Council described the quality of the general surroundings and environment of the site, and the site’s location in terms of access to schools and shops, as very good. The physical condition and maintenance of the site was described as average. It was indicated that there had been one dispute between residents since the site had opened. This was described as a dispute between extended family, where the Police had been called.

Survey Findings: Transit Accommodation

- 8.3 Eleven people were interviewed on Symmonds Yard Transit Site over the study period. 82% of respondents (9) were Irish Traveller, with one respondent stating they were a Romany Gypsy and one respondent who did not provide this information. The respondents were aged 17-24 (two respondents), 25-39 (seven respondents) and 50-59 (two respondents). Household size ranged from two to six. There were 44 people across the 11 households: an average of 4 people per household. Nine of the households indicated that they had children. Amongst the households there were 22 children: 2.4 children per household.

Views on Size and Facilities

- 8.4 Nine of the respondents indicated that they had a single caravan, with two stating that they had two caravans. The average number of caravans to households was 1.2. Four respondents indicated that they had one other vehicle, and six stated that they had two. One respondent reported that they did not have enough space. When asked to elaborate, they said that they needed a second trailer, but that this was something that they would do if they got a permanent pitch on a site.

Views on Site Management

- 8.5 The respondents stated that the site was managed by the Council. One respondent rated the management as good, and one as poor. The remaining respondents were ambivalent - that is was neither good nor poor - or stated that they did not know. The majority of respondents elaborated by stating that they did not see, or deal with, the Council. One respondent said that there was a need for more toilets on the site and that the electricity should be left on permanently.

Reasons for Stopping on the Site and in the Local Authority Area

- 8.6 When asked why they were stopping on their current site, five respondents (45%) stated that it was because of a lack of sites; five (45%) stated that they had wanted to be near family and friends; and one (9%) indicated that they were evicted from their previous accommodation.
- 8.7 When asked why they were in Telford & Wrekin, nine respondents (82%) stated that they had family in the area and one respondent (9%) stated that they were born/raised in the area (the remaining respondent did not provide a reason).

Length of Time in the Area

- 8.8 When asked how long they had been in Telford & Wrekin, 82% of respondents (9) indicated that they had been there for 10 years or more.³⁰ The remaining respondents said that they did not know. Eight respondents stated that they were permanent residents in the area, and the remaining three did not know.

³⁰ However, information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council suggested that none of the people who were stopping on the transit site at the time of the assessment had been in the local authority area for longer than four years.

- 8.9 One respondent indicated that they had a base elsewhere. This was a private site outside the study area.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 8.10 With regards to the type of accommodation respondents had immediately prior to moving onto the transit site, seven respondents had been stopping on unauthorised encampments (the majority in Telford, although a small number made reference to encampments outside the study area); three respondents had been on private sites (but did not specify where); and one had been in a house (outside the study area).
- 8.11 Three respondents reported having lived in a house at some point during their life. Two respondents indicated that they had moved there with their family, and one had lived in a house due to a lack of sites. When asked to rate their experience of living in a house, one rated the experience as good and one as poor (the remaining respondent did not provide a rating). The positive response related to being able to provide better conditions for their children; however, they added that they did not like having to drive to visit family who were located in a different area to the house. The negative response related to being located far away from family and friends, but also a lack of space for the respondent's trailer and lorry.

Travelling Experiences

- 8.12 With regards to travelling experiences, eight respondents indicated that they travelled a few times a year; two respondents travelled or moved every month; and one respondent stated that they never travel. This respondent indicated that they were waiting for a new site to open. Nine respondents had travelled in the last 12 months. When asked where they tended to go, respondents stated that they tended to travel outside the area (for example, Stow and Appleby fairs, Cambridge, Essex, Doncaster, Lincolnshire, Dorset and Wales). Some also identified destinations in the West Midlands, such as Birmingham and Dudley.
- 8.13 With regards to where people stayed while travelling, respondents made reference to staying at the roadside, caravan parks, with family/friends, staying on transit sites, farmers' fields and designated fair sites.

Site Needs Relating to Work

- 8.14 The households were all self-employed. None of the respondents indicated that they had current or future site needs relating to their work. With regards to where people worked, seven respondents were working within Telford & Wrekin, and two indicated that they were working within the West Midlands area. One respondent also indicated that they also worked outside the study area ("*all over*"). None of the respondents indicated having experienced problems accessing work.

Access to Services

- 8.15 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. All respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services, where relevant.
- 8.16 When asked if they had used these services in the previous twelve months, four respondents had accessed a GP; three had visited a dentist; two had used A&E; and one had used immunisation services. One respondent stated that a member of their household had, at some point, accessed further or higher education and they had not experienced any problems with access.
- 8.17 Respondents were also asked about health problems that they, or people living with them, had. One respondent indicated that they, or a member of their household, had high blood pressure. No other health problems were identified by the respondents.
- 8.18 When asked if there were any other issues that they required help with, two respondents stated that they could not read or write and so required help when completing forms. No other issues were identified.

9. Future Needs, Accommodation Affordability and Views on Site Facilities

9.1 This chapter looks at a range of issues including the movement and accommodation intentions of the sample and the formation of new households. These factors are key drivers in the assessment of accommodation need within Telford & Wrekin. The findings from the survey are presented here and how this then translates into accommodation need is discussed in Chapter 10 (and Chapter 12 for Travelling Showpeople). The chapter also explores responses in relation to accommodation affordability and views on what facilities should be provided on permanent and transit sites.

Movement Needs

9.2 Table 9.1 below shows the movement needs of the households interviewed in Telford & Wrekin. As can be seen, the majority of respondents (87%) indicated that they had no plans to move or were going to stay in their current accommodation indefinitely:³¹

Table 9.1: Movement Needs

	All		Socially rented sites		Private sites		Bricks and mortar		Unauthorised encampments		Transit site		Travelling Showpeople	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Need to move in the next 2 – 4 weeks	1	1	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Need to move in next 12 months	3	4	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	2	18	-	-
Going to stay indefinitely	12	16	4	17	4	40	2	9	-	-	-	-	2	50
I have no plans to move	53	71	19	79	4	40	20	87	-	-	8	73	2	50
Stay as long as we can/until we have to move	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	100	-	-	-	-
Going home shortly – visiting relatives	2	3	-	-	2	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	-	-
Total	75	100	24	100	10	100	23	100	3	100	11	100	4	100

Note: excludes one missing case from the unauthorised encampment sample

³¹ In the survey, respondents who selected that they were 'going to stay indefinitely' were indicating more certain plans to stay in their accommodation. The option of 'no plans to move' was provided for those who had no immediate plans to move, but were aware that plans may change in the future.

9.3 One respondent indicated that they needed to move in the next two to four weeks. This respondent was currently on one of the socially rented sites. They indicated that they did not intend staying in Telford & Wrekin as they needed to move outside of the area to be near their family, but also for work opportunities. They stated that they were going to live on a private site and that there was accommodation available for them to move to.

9.4 Three respondents indicated that they needed to move in the next 12 months. The following provides information about these households:

HH1: They were currently stopping on the transit site. They indicated that they had been in the Telford & Wrekin area off and on for around three to five years, primarily stopping on unauthorised encampments. However, they also stated that members of their family have a private site outside the study area that they are able to use as a winter base. They explained that they had moved onto the transit site because their family were on that site, with family living in the area being the main reason for stopping in Telford & Wrekin. Immediately prior to the transit site they had been on an unauthorised encampment outside the study area. They indicated that they intended stopping in Telford & Wrekin, and stated that they needed socially rented site based accommodation. They claimed that they were currently waiting for the new pitches that were being developed in the study area (see Chapter 4).

HH2: They were currently stopping on the transit site. They had been in the Telford & Wrekin area off and on for over 10 years, primarily stopping on unauthorised encampments. They did not have a base elsewhere. They stated that they had moved onto the transit site because their family were on that site. Immediately prior to the transit site they had been on an unauthorised encampment outside the study area. They indicated that they intended stopping in Telford & Wrekin, and needed to be in this area because of their family. They stated that they needed socially rented site based accommodation and indicated that they were currently waiting for the new pitches that were being developed in the study area.

HH3: They were currently living in a private rented house. They indicated that they had been in the Telford & Wrekin area off and on between five and 10 years, and had family in this area. Immediately prior to living in a house they had been stopping on a transit site outside the study area (in a neighbouring authority). They stated that they intended stopping in Telford & Wrekin, and needed their own site with planning permission. They claimed they had not moved into a house in this area as they were looking for land to buy, but were not aware of any available as yet.

9.5 Three respondents – on unauthorised encampments – indicated that they would stay as long as they could or until they were moved on. All three were stopping on the same encampment at the time of the assessment. One of the respondents did not know whether they would stay in the study area or what their future accommodation needs were as “it’s up to my husband where we go”. The following provides information about the other two households:

HH1: *They indicated that they were born/raised in Telford & Wrekin and had been living in the area for 10 years or more. They stated that they primarily stopped on unauthorised encampments and did not have a base elsewhere. They had moved onto this encampment as it was the only place they could find. Immediately prior to this encampment they had been at another encampment in the study area. They indicated that they intended stopping in Telford & Wrekin, and stated that they needed socially rented site based accommodation or anywhere else that they would be allowed to stop. They were not currently aware of any accommodation available for them to move to.*

HH2: *They have been in Telford & Wrekin off and on for over 20 years as they have family in the area. They indicated that they primarily stopped on unauthorised encampments as they travelled most of the year and did not have a base elsewhere. They stated that they had moved onto this encampment due to a lack of sites. Immediately prior to this encampment they had been at another encampment outside the study area. They intended stopping in Telford & Wrekin, and stated that they needed socially rented site based accommodation. They were not currently aware of any accommodation available for them to move to.*

- 9.6 Two respondents – both currently stopping on private sites – indicated that they would be moving from the area soon. Both of these respondents had permanent bases outside the study area and were currently in Telford & Wrekin to visit family members.
- 9.7 One respondent indicated that they were not sure about their movement intentions. They were currently stopping on the transit site and indicated that it was the first time they had been in the area, although their parents used to stop in the area for many years. Immediately prior to the transit site they had been living in their parent's house outside the study area, but had left the house once they had got married. While they indicated that they did not know what they were going to do, they stated that the Council had made them aware that there would be new pitches in the area and that they could have one of them. However, they were unsure as to what was happening with these new pitches.

Household Formation

- 9.8 With regards to household formation, the survey aimed to identify any immediate need arising from family members who currently required their own separate accommodation, as well as those who would need separate accommodation over the next five years. Three respondents indicated that there was someone within their household in **immediate** need of their own accommodation. The following provides information about these households:

HH1: *Currently living on a socially rented site. They indicated that they had two daughters aged 10 and 12 who needed their own trailer to sleep in. They claimed that their daughters needed to be accommodated on the same pitch as them, but that there was not enough room for them to accommodate them on their current pitch.*

HH2: *Currently living on a socially rented site. They indicated that they had a 15 year old son who needed his own trailer to sleep in. They stated that he needed to be accommodated on the same pitch as them, but that there was not enough room for them to accommodate him on their current pitch.*

HH3: *Currently living on a socially rented site. They indicated that they had two sons aged 19 and 20 who both needed their own separate pitch as there was no room to accommodate them on their current pitch.*

- 9.9 Three respondents indicated that there was someone within their household in need of their own accommodation **over the next five years**. The following provides information about these households:

HH1: *Currently living in a socially rented house. They indicated that they had an 18 year old son who was getting married next year. They were not sure of his accommodation needs but that given his girlfriend was from outside the area, he may move to where her family is from or may move to a private site in Telford which was owned by their family.*

HH2: *Currently living on a socially rented site. They indicated that they had an 18 year old daughter and stated that if she was not married she would require her own trailer to sleep in. Their daughter would need to be accommodated on the same pitch as them, but they did not know if there was enough room for them to accommodate her on their current pitch.*

HH3: *Currently living on a socially rented site. This was the same HH3 as in Paragraph 9.8 above. In addition to two sons in immediate need of accommodation, they also indicated that they had a daughter (currently aged 17-24) who would require her own accommodation over the next five years. They stated that there was no room to accommodate her on their current pitch.*

- 9.10 Across the sample in Telford & Wrekin there were 38 children aged 11-16 at the time of the study. As highlighted above, only six households expressed an immediate or future need for accommodation resulting from seven children becoming adults and therefore needing to move out of the family home. This is most likely due to respondents simply not knowing if and when their teenage children will marry, and subsequently need their own separate accommodation in the next five years. However, these young people will be aged 16-21 in five years' time. It is likely that a proportion of these 38 children will need their own independent accommodation, and a proportion of these will choose to remain within Telford & Wrekin.

Accommodation Affordability

- 9.11 In order to explore issues of accommodation affordability we asked respondents if they could afford to purchase any of the following: a pitch on a private site with planning permission and land with planning permission to be developed into a site. None of the respondents indicated that they could afford to purchase either a pitch or land. Five respondents - three living in bricks and mortar accommodation and two living on a socially rented site - indicated that they could afford to purchase a pitch or some land. Six respondents indicated that they already owned a piece of land (three of these respondents were living on socially rented sites, the remainder were living on an existing privately owned piece of land (i.e. private site, for example), but did not provide any further details on where this land was or what it was used for. The remaining respondents said they could not afford to purchase land or a pitch.
- 9.12 It is worth noting that obtaining empirical evidence on the economic circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers is very difficult. A diversity of socio-economic situations are present amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities, from the moderately wealthy to very poor families. A number of families will always be able to afford to purchase or rent pitches at market rates. However, in line with the rest of society, other sections of the communities will be excluded from accommodation provided at market rates and will require additional support to access safe and secure accommodation in line with their cultural needs.

Views on Site Facilities

- 9.13 The assessment also explored people's overall views on sites in terms of what the ideal size should be and what facilities should be provided (on both permanent and transit sites). With regards to the ideal size for a site, the preference across the sample appeared to be around 15 pitches per site with a general agreement that there should be no more than 20 pitches per site. One of the main concerns that respondents had was that each pitch had adequate space to accommodate a couple of trailers and vehicles. It was also stated that pitches should not be placed too close together so as to allow space for visitors to pull on for a short period of time, if required.
- 9.14 With regards to facilities that should be provided on permanent sites, respondents were provided with a list of facilities from which they could select all that they felt were relevant. Table 9.1 below provides details of the responses. As can be seen, the facilities that were selected most frequently were amenity units, directly metered electricity and children's play areas:

Table 9.1: What Facilities Do You Think Need to be Provided on Permanent Sites?

Facilities	No	%
Amenity units (with toilet, bath/shower, heating and provision for cooking/laundry)	72	96
Directly metered electricity	65	87
Children's play area	60	80
Provision for dogs	45	60
Directly metered gas	38	51
Directly metered water	31	41
Site office	29	39
Meeting room	23	31
Stabling for horses	21	28
Designated work area(s)	12	16
Animal grazing area(s)	6	8

9.15 Respondents also made reference to other considerations that did not feature on the list. One of the main factors that people discussed was the size of the pitches, which they feel should be larger than currently provided (specifically those on the socially rented sites). The issue of utilities was also raised, with people stating that there should be cheaper options made available in terms of gas, which they also believed should be sold on site (again on the socially rented sites, see Chapter 13 for further discussion of the issue of utilities). Finally, cleanliness is another issue that was highlighted, with individuals stating how there should be regular checks in terms of site condition and how individuals making a mess should be reprimanded for doing so.

9.16 With regards to facilities that should be provided on transit sites, as above, respondents were provided with a list of facilities from which they could select all that they felt were relevant. Table 9.2 below provides details of the responses. As can be seen, the top three facilities that were selected were the same as those selected for permanent sites: amenity units; access to electricity; and a children's play area:

Table 9.2: What Facilities do you Think Need to be Provided on Transit Sites?

Facilities	No	%
Amenity units (with toilet, shower, heating)	70	93
Access to electricity	70	93
Children's play area	52	69
Site office	45	60
Meeting room	31	41
Provision for dogs	29	39
Designated work area(s)	10	13
Animal grazing area(s)	9	12
Stabling for horses	8	11

9.17 As above, respondents also made reference to other considerations that did not feature on the list. In terms of other considerations, the main concerns were regarding waste management on the site. Some commented that a transit site should not be made too large, as this would lead to rubbish piling up. Another suggestion was that rather than a single waste area, each pitch should have its own, smaller bin to ensure people are more considerate of other residents.

10. An Assessment of Accommodation Need

- 10.1 Irrespective of change in planning policy targeted at resolving Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Research from 2010 published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) indicated that around 6,000 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are immediately required nationally to meet the current shortage of accommodation within England.³² That need has not yet been met.

A Note on the Assessment of Accommodation Need

- 10.2 Despite all local authorities across England completing a first round of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAAs) over the 2006-2009 period, the methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. The model drawn upon here is derived from a number of sources including:
- The Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments;³³
 - Guidance and experience of benchmarking the robustness of GTAAAs;³⁴ and
 - The DCLG document *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* which was released in March 2012.³⁵
- 10.3 This assessment draws upon empirical primary research within Telford & Wrekin as opposed to developing projections based upon trends within the Caravan Count. Through a process of triangulation, official records are brought together with a comprehensive survey of households to develop a robust assessment of need.
- 10.4 This study has taken a thorough assessment of the pitch needs arising from all accommodation types present at the time of the survey. As such, this assessment of need is regarded as a robust assessment of need, upon which to inform the development of planning policy and future planning decisions.

³² Brown, P. and Niner, P. (2009) *Assessing Local Housing Authorities' Progress in Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsy and Traveller Communities in England*, London: EHRC.

³³ DCLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments: Guidance*, London: HMSO.

³⁴ CURS, SHUSU and CRESR (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies*, London: DCLG. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf

³⁵ DCLG (2012) *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, London: DCLG. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6078/2113371.pdf

- 10.5 Accommodation need has been considered in this assessment by carefully exploring the following factors:

Current Residential Supply

- Socially rented pitches; and
- Private authorised pitches.

Residential Need 2014 – 2018

- Temporary planning permissions, which will end over the assessment period;
- Household formation;
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments;
- Movement over the assessment period between sites and housing and vice versa;
- Whether the closure of any existing sites is planned;
- Potential need for residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments and transit sites;
- Movement between areas; and
- Overcrowding of sites.

Additional Supply 2014 – 2018

- 10.6 The requirements are presented in summary form in Table 10.1 below. This table details the overall accommodation and pitch needs, up to 2031, for Gypsies and Travellers resident in Telford & Wrekin. Each element is explained in greater detail below. **All figures relate to pitches not sites:**

Table 10.1: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Pitch Need (2014 -2031)

	Element of Supply and Need	Accommodation Need/Supply Total (households)
	Current Residential Supply	
1	Socially rented pitches	33
2	Private authorised pitches	11
3	Total Authorised Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	44
4	End of temporary planning permissions	0
5	Household formation	9
6	Unauthorised developments	0
7	Net movement from housing to sites/sites to housing	2
8	Closure of sites	0
9	Short-stay households/unauthorised encampments	16
10	Movement between areas	-1
11	Residential pitch need (2014 – 2018)	26
12	Supply (2014 – 2018)	22
13	Residential pitch need (2014 – 2018)	4
14	Residential pitch need (2019 – 2023)	10
15	Residential pitch need (2024 – 2028)	10
16	Residential pitch need (2029 – 2031)	8
17	Total Residential pitch need (2014 – 2031)	32

Note: For pragmatic reasons these figures have been rounded to the nearest whole pitch.

Explanation of the Need Requirement Elements

Current Residential Supply:

Row 1: The number of pitches on residential socially rented sites based on information provided by the Council. At the time of the assessment this was reported to be 33 pitches.

Row 2: The number of pitches on residential private authorised sites based on information provided by the Council. At the time of the assessment this was reported to be 11 pitches.

Row 3: The total number of residential authorised pitches within Telford & Wrekin. This was reported to be 44.

Residential pitch need 2012 – 2016:

Row 4: The number of pitches which have temporary planning permission due to expire within the assessment period. This was reported to be nil.

Row 5: This details the number of households occupying existing accommodation who require separate accommodation within Telford & Wrekin **immediately or within the next five years.**

Pitch requirements from immediate household formation

Findings:

- Within the survey of households, three respondents reported having children living with them who were in need of their own separate accommodation (see Chapter 9, Paragraph 9.8 for further details about these households);
- At the time of the assessment all three respondents were living on a socially rented site;
- Across these three respondents the need to accommodate immediate household formation accounted for **four households** who required their own separate accommodation. This equates to 17% of the sample in socially rented provision;
- Two of these households wanted their children to be accommodated on the same pitch as them in a separate trailer but they indicated that there wasn't enough room on their current pitch;
- The remaining household had two grown up sons who required their own separate pitches; and
- Follow up consultation with socially rented residents suggested that if growing families could not be accommodated on the existing sites, they were likely to move to the roadside as opposed to moving into bricks and mortar accommodation (see Chapter 13, Paragraph 13.18).

Assumptions:

- Survey findings are thought to be reflective of the needs within the area;
- It is reasonable to assume that two of these households require larger pitches in order to support the family to live together. The Council confirmed that there are no larger pitches available for the households to move to therefore new provision would be required to accommodate these larger households. The movement of these households to new larger pitches would free up space on the socially rented site for other households in need. There will therefore be equivalent vacancies arising on the site currently accommodated; and
- The two remaining households should be considered additional provision.

Calculation: 17% of the socially rented sample (24), grossed up to the total population on socially rented sites (33) = **6 households**. Note: a three pitch supply figure is carried forward to Row 12 as half of the households require movement to new larger pitches; thus freeing up three pitches for other households (as highlighted above).

Pitch requirements from new households forming over the next five years

Findings:

- Within the survey of households, three respondents reported having independent households living with them which were in need of their own separate accommodation over the next five years (see Chapter 9, Paragraph 9.9 for further details about these households);
- At the time of the assessment two respondents were living on a socially rented site and one was in a socially rented house. Each household had one child that would require their own separate accommodation;
- The household currently living in a house did not know their child's accommodation needs but they indicated that should they need site based accommodation they could be accommodated outside the study area or on an existing private site within the study area; and
- The remaining two households on a socially rented site wanted their children to be accommodated on the same pitch as them in a separate trailer. One respondent indicated that there was not enough room to accommodate them on their current pitch, while the other did not know if there was enough room.

Assumptions:

- Survey findings are thought to be reflective of the needs within the area;
- Based on the information provided in Chapter 9, the household arising from bricks and mortar accommodation is not considered as having an accommodation need; and
- It is reasonable to assume that the two of these households on the socially rented site require larger pitches in order to support the family to live together. The Council confirmed that there are no larger pitches available for the households to move to therefore new provision would be required to accommodate these larger households. The movement of these households to new larger pitches would free up space on the socially rented site for other households in need. There will therefore be equivalent vacancies arising on the site currently accommodated.

Calculation: Two households represents 8% of the socially rented sample (24), grossed up to the total population on socially rented sites (33) = **3 households**.
Note: a three pitch supply figure is carried forward to Row 12 as the households require movement to new larger pitches; thus freeing up three pitches for other households (as highlighted above).

Row 6: This is the level of need arising from current unauthorised developments. There were no unauthorised developments in the study area at the time of the assessment.

Row 7: This is the estimation of the flow from sites to houses and vice versa.

Movement between housing and sites

Movement from sites to housing: the survey suggested no movement from sites to housing.

Movement from housing to sites: one respondent (4% of the bricks and mortar sample) needed to move from bricks and mortar in the next 12 months. They had moved into a house while they were looking for land to buy to develop their own site in the study area (see Chapter 9, Paragraph 9.4, HH3). It is assumed that the survey findings are reflective of the needs within the area.

Calculation: 4% of the bricks and mortar sample (23), grossed up to the estimated population in bricks and mortar accommodation (46) = **2 households**.

Row 8: Plans to close existing sites, which have been calculated within the supply of site accommodation, will ultimately displace a number of Gypsies and Travellers resulting in an increase in housing need. There are no sites that are due to close in Telford & Wrekin.

Row 9: This provides an estimation of the need arising from households on unauthorised encampments and transit sites that require a residential pitch in the study area. This uses a combination of the detailed information gathered by the local authority together with the information obtained through the survey of households. The boxes below divide this element into those who are accommodated on unauthorised encampments and those who are currently accommodated on the transit site in the area.

Households involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings:

- Taking the most recent full calendar year as our base – as it includes encampments on both public and private land – 101 encampments occurred across the study area in 2013;
- The data showed an average of 6 caravans per encampment over the 2013 period. This combines to produce 606 caravans in the study area over the 2013 calendar year. However, not all these caravans will be 'unique' due to the same families/households occupying multiple sites over this period;
- Using the Traveller ID provided in the data, the data was rationalised into 22 family groupings which accounted for the 101 encampments/606 caravans;
- Based on the data provided, the 606 caravans divided by 22 family groupings equates to 28 'unique' caravans in the study area; and
- The survey showed a ratio of 1 caravan per household.

Assumptions:

- The family groupings included a number of incomplete IDs (12 in total) where these were categorised into 'unknown'. Some of these may be duplicates of the above groups but the extent of this is currently unknown.

Calculation: There are **28 households** involved in unauthorised encampments in the study area based on a 1:1 ratio of caravans per households.

Need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments:**Finding:**

Of the four households interviewed on unauthorised encampments, the findings indicate that two (50%) were looking for a residential pitch in the study area. It must be noted that this is based on a very small sample size and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments. Information provided by the Council suggested that the majority of encampments were not looking for residential accommodation, with people primarily being 'in transit'.

Assumptions:

- Across the whole population of unauthorised encampments to the area some will not require residential accommodation, and instead require some form of short-stay provision as they are visiting the area temporarily;
- 50% is likely to be high because of the small sample size this is drawn from, possible over-claiming, likelihood of interest in other areas outside of the study area, and from what seems reasonable from experience of GTAAs elsewhere. Furthermore, as above, information provided by the Council suggested that the majority of need arising from encampments was transit rather than residential;
- A pragmatic approach to working with the different information provided (i.e. the Council views and the Gypsy and Traveller survey figure of 50%) is to assume that need for residential pitches will be the equivalent to 20% of unauthorised encampments (one in every five). This is consistent with the approach taken in other GTAAs; and
- This is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families each year. Other households on unauthorised encampments should be incorporated into other GTAAs.

Calculation: 20% of households involved in unauthorised encampments = 20% of 28 = **6 households**.

Need for residential pitches from transit site occupants

Findings:

The transit site has provision for 15 pitches. Eleven households were interviewed on this site during the course of this study. Two of these households expressed a need for socially rented permanent residential accommodation in the study area with a further eight indicating that they had 'no plans to move' (see Chapter 9). Information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council indicated that there were 10 households on the transit site who were permanent residents of the area for the last four years. The Council indicated that it was envisaged that these households would be relocated to the new pitches that were going to be developed on one of the socially rented sites (see Chapter 4).

Assumptions:

- Assume that 10 households currently residing on the transit site require residential accommodation, as indicated by the Council; and
- This is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families each year.

Calculation: Need for residential accommodation from households on the transit site = **10 households**.

The combined need for permanent residential accommodation from unauthorised encampments and transit site occupants = **16 pitches**

Row 10: This is the level of movement of households between areas. The assessment found that one household – currently living on a socially rented site – was in the process of moving to a private site outside the study area (see Chapter 9, Paragraph 9.3). Grossed up to the population on socially rented sites equates to **one household** who is expected to leave the area.

Row 11: This is the total gross residential need for pitches arising in the study area between 2014-2018. This was found to be 26 pitches.

Row 12: This includes the supply of pitches from all authorised sites. The Council indicated that one of the socially rented sites was currently undergoing refurbishment, which included the development of 12 additional pitches.³⁶ There is also a private site that is currently being developed which accommodated four pitches (see Chapter 5). The other supply factor is the pitches arising from those households who need to leave existing pitches in order to move to larger pitches which should be developed (see information above in relation to Row 5). No other supply factors have been taken into account as they are extremely difficult to predict. As highlighted in Chapter 4, while Telford & Wrekin Council provided some data on

³⁶ Please note that the inclusion of these 12 pitches is contingent on the refurbishment project proceeding as planned. Any alteration to this refurbishment plan will impact on the supply figure and subsequently the overall requirement calculation.

pitch turnover on the socially rented sites, this data is not used in the calculation of residential accommodation need. This relates to the difference between pitch 'turnover' (a change in tenant or occupier) and 'net vacancy' (which would result in a net gain in overall supply). It has been argued in relation to previous assessments that most turnover does not result in a net vacancy, with 'death of a sole occupier' being identified as the only certain source of net supply.³⁷

Row 13: This is the total net requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2014–2018. Taking into account the supply factors, this has been found to be four pitches.

Permanent Residential Accommodation Need Over 2019-2023, 2024-2028 and 2029-2031

- 10.7 The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements until the current lack of pitch-based accommodation has been addressed at a national level. There is no means of knowing how Gypsies and Travellers will decide to live in the next decade.
- 10.8 There are complex factors involved underpinning the determination of the proportion of households who will form in the future. In order to tackle the complexity of issues that may well occur over the next decade, it is established practice in assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs to apply an assumed rate of household growth. As applied in similar studies a standard 3% per annum compound rate of household growth is used.³⁸ This figure is then applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2018, minus an assumed ratio of 1:0.75 used to account for any potential pitch sharing.³⁹ All household growth is assumed to require site-based accommodation.
- 10.9 The supply of pitches over the 2019 - 2031 period has been considered, but has been assumed to be nil. This assumption is consistent with more recent GTAA's. As highlighted in the explanation for Row 12 above, supply factors are extremely difficult to predict.

Row 14: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2019-2023.

Row 15: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2024-2028.

Row 16: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2029-2031.

³⁷ See paragraphs 2.41 – 2.50 of the Examination in Public (EiP) for the South East England Regional Assembly/Partnership Board (SEERA/SEEPB) Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for a detailed explanation on why assumptions of supply from turnover or assumed vacancy rates should be discounted (<http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Resources/C/0/%7BC036EBA7-6EFA-4803-8524-F392120F6391%7D/Documents/Single%20Issues%20Panel%20report.pdf>).

³⁸ See CURS, SHUSU and CRESR (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies*. Available at: <http://www.theshowmensguild.com/downloads/321445.pdf>.

³⁹ A pitch sharing rate of 1:0.75 was recommended for use in the South East Examination in Public Panel Report.

Row 17: This is the total overall requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2014-2031.

Summary

10.10 Analysis of data has shown that accommodation need will arise from the following factors:

- Concealed households;
- New household formation;
- Movement from housing to sites; and
- Households currently occupying unauthorised encampments and transit site pitches.

This analysis has shown that for Telford & Wrekin there is an accommodation need for **32 households** over the 2014-2031 period in addition to the supply factors that have been taken into account. These figures incorporate a household growth rate of 3% per year compound, as applied to all current households in the area and all future households that should be accommodated on pitches by 2018 to estimate future household accommodation need.

11. An Assessment of Transit Need

- 11.1 As highlighted in Chapter 8, although to a certain extent nomadism and travelling are currently restricted by a lack of sites nationally, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. This chapter looks at the need for transit provision in the study area.

Transit Provision in Telford & Wrekin

- 11.2 National policy is clear that there should be provision in order for Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately.
- 11.3 Within Telford & Wrekin, formal provision for short stay households is currently made available on the Symmonds Yard Transit Site. This site accommodates a total of 15 pitches. The site has temporary planning permission until October 2015. Further details about this site, as well as responses from households who were residing on it, can be found in Chapter 8.

Transit Need in Telford & Wrekin

- 11.4 Quantifying the need arising for transit provision is often regarded as particularly challenging element of producing GTAAs. A lack of definitive and comprehensive data hinders this process enormously. There are several elements which need to be considered when assessing need for transit provision, including:
- the levels of occupancy on existing transit provision;
 - the levels of unauthorised encampments in an area (often used as a direct proxy for understanding the level of need for short-stay accommodation);
 - the views of stakeholders working in the study area; and
 - the expressed needs of Gypsies and Travellers in response to the survey.
- 11.5 Each of these factors is discussed below.

Levels of Occupancy on Existing Transit Provision

The Symmonds Yard Transit Site has recently been established and the levels of occupancy are not yet clear. At the time of this assessment there were 10 households residing on the site. All of these were thought to require permanent residential pitches in the study area (see Chapter 10).

Levels of Unauthorised Encampments in an Area

The Caravan Count shows that caravans have featured on unauthorised encampments in the study area over a number of years (see Chapter Three). Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous chapter, the Council provided data which indicated that over the 2013 calendar year there had been 101 unauthorised encampments, with an average of 6 caravans per encampment (606 caravans in the study area over the 2013 calendar year). However, not all these caravans will be 'unique' due to the same families/households occupying multiple sites over this period and using the Traveller ID provided in the data, the data was rationalised into 22 family groupings which accounted for all the encampments/caravans. This equates to 28 'unique' caravans in the study area. The family groupings included a number of incomplete IDs - 12 in total - where these were categorised into 'unknown'. Some of these may be duplicates of the above groups but the extent of this is currently unknown. The Gypsy and Traveller survey showed a ratio of 1 caravan per household. It is assumed that there are 28 households involved in unauthorised encampments in the study area based on a 1:1 ratio of caravans per households.

Views of Stakeholders Working in the Study Area

Consultation with the Council and other stakeholders suggests that there is a need for continued (permanent) transit provision in the study area and the formal transit site was reported to be working and have consistent use. The 2008 Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) also indicated a need for transit provision in the area. Stakeholder consultation suggested that the opening of the transit site had led to a decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments in the study area. It was also stated that while this site was currently temporary, the Council were looking at ensuring there was permanent transit provision in the study area.

Expressed Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Response to the Survey

Of those who took part in the survey on the Symmonds Yard Transit Site, when asked about their future accommodation needs, eight people had no plans to move, two reported that they needed permanent residential accommodation and one household did not know their future needs. Four households were interviewed on unauthorised encampments. Of these, two reported a need for permanent residential accommodation in Telford & Wrekin, while the remaining two households did not provide definitive responses on their needs.

- 11.6 In order to offer quantification for the need for transit provision, the presence of unauthorised encampments is used as an indicative proxy. As such the methodology for calculating the need for transit provision is similar to that for calculating the need for residential provision from unauthorised encampments in Telford & Wrekin (see Chapter 10, explanation for Row 9).

Households involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings:

- Taking the most recent full calendar year as our base – as it includes encampments on both public and private land – 101 encampments occurred across the study area in 2013;
- The survey showed an average of 6 caravans per encampment over the 2013 period. This combines to produce 606 caravans in the study area over the 2013 calendar year. However, not all these caravans will be ‘unique’ due to the same families/households occupying multiple sites over this period;
- Using the Traveller ID provided in the data, the data was rationalised into 22 family groupings which accounted for the 101 encampments/606 caravans;
- Based on the data provided, the 606 caravans divided by 22 family groupings equates to 28 ‘unique’ caravans in the study area; and
- The survey showed a ratio of 1 caravan per household.

Assumptions:

- The family groupings included a number of incomplete IDs (12 in total) where these were categorised into ‘unknown’. Some of these may be duplicates of the above groups but the extent of this is currently unknown.

Calculation: There are **28 households** involved in unauthorised encampments in the study area based on a 1:1 ratio of caravans per households.

Need for transit pitches from unauthorised encampments:

Finding:

Of the four households interviewed on unauthorised encampments, the findings indicate that two (50%) were looking for a residential pitch in the study area. It must be noted that this is based on a very small sample and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments. Information provided by the Council suggested that the majority of encampments were not looking for residential accommodation, with people primarily being ‘in transit’.

Assumptions:

- Across the whole population of short-stay visitors to the area, some will not require residential accommodation and instead require some form of short-stay provision;
- 50% residential need is likely to be high because of the small sample size this is drawn from, possible over-claiming, likelihood of interest in other areas outside of the study area, and from what seems reasonable from

experience of GTAA's elsewhere. Furthermore, as above, information provided by the Council suggested that the majority of need arising from encampments was transit rather than residential; and

- A pragmatic approach to working with the different information provided - the local authority views and the Gypsy and Traveller survey figure of 50% - is to assume that need for residential pitches will be the equivalent to 20% of unauthorised encampments. This is consistent with the approach taken in other GTAA's. Therefore the need for transit provision will be 80% of unauthorised encampments.

Calculation: 80% of households involved in unauthorised encampments = 80% of 28 = **21 households**.

- 11.7 This indicates that the study area can expect to see an estimated 21 households requiring short-stay accommodation during one calendar year. As highlighted above, requirements for the provision of transit accommodation are difficult to quantify. We therefore offer four scenarios to illustrate potential transit requirements.

Scenario 1: The 21 households travel to Telford & Wrekin over a full calendar year (i.e. 12 months) and stay for 12 weeks. This equates to 5.25 households requiring transit provision every quarter. In order to accommodate 5.25 households there would be a requirement of six transit pitches (this would accommodate 24 households over the period).

Scenario 2: The 21 households travel to Telford & Wrekin over a full calendar year (i.e. 12 months) and stay for four weeks. This equates to 1.75 households requiring transit provision for each month. In order to accommodate 1.75 households per month there would be a requirement of two transit pitches (this would accommodate 24 households over the period).

Scenario 3: The 21 households travel to Telford & Wrekin over the summer period (i.e. six months) and stay for 12 weeks. This equates to 10.5 households requiring transit provision for each three month period of those six months. In order to accommodate 10.5 households there would be a requirement of 11 transit pitches (this would accommodate 22 households over the period).

Scenario 4: The 21 households travel to Telford & Wrekin over the summer period (i.e. six months) and stay for four weeks. This equates to 3.5 households requiring transit provision every four weeks during those six months. In order to accommodate 3.5 households there would be a requirement of four transit pitches (this would accommodate 24 households over the period).

- 11.8 The scenarios outlined above suggest that transit need could fall within a range of two to 11 pitches. However, it needs to be recognised that, while we offer these scenarios, in reality length of stay and the time of year that people will travel are unpredictable. These scenarios are also conservative as they *do not* account for more

than one encampment being in the area at the same time. Furthermore, in order for Telford & Wrekin to be able to utilise Section 62A - which was indicated as being part of their current approach to the management of unauthorised encampments (see Chapter 6, Paragraph 6.7) - there would need to be sufficient capacity on any existing transit provision. As such, we would suggest that the upper figure of this range (11 pitches) should be used as a conservative estimate of transit need. However, in order to ensure that the level of provision across the area is sustainable, the use of the existing *temporary* transit site needs to be monitored and remain under constant review for the remainder of its use (i.e. until October 2015).

11.9 There are a number of issues for Telford & Wrekin Council to consider with regards to future transit provision:

- The existing transit site only has *temporary* permission until October 2015. As such, there is a need to look at providing *permanent* transit facilities within the study area;
- While 11 transit pitches appears sufficient to address transit need in the study area, there is a need to consider how to respond for any larger encampments that may occur (for example, data provided by the Council suggested that, on occasion there were encampments of up to 20 caravans);
- The provision of a single transit site does not necessarily always allow for more than one encampment in the area at the same time, particularly if there are issues around mixing of different groups (family and ethnic); and
- The needs of the travelling groups often combines a mixture of motivations (i.e. work, family and holiday). A single transit site may not meet these differing requirements, particularly if families also bring horses (which sometimes occurred with some encampments, see Chapter 6). As such, consideration should be given to providing transit accommodation over two separate sites, whether formal or informal (see below).

11.10 Although transit need could be met by the creation of 'hard' purpose-made pitches/sites, it is also recommended that consideration is given to the need for the development of such 'hard' pitches along with the possibility of 'soft' transit pitches (i.e. designated/temporary stopping places). For example, we are aware of a local authority that has utilised 'accepted encampments' in designated areas, providing refuse collection and toilets on these encampments. While there were no formal licensing arrangements, residents were expected to follow a particular code of conduct while stopping on the designated area. Such 'softer' options would provide Gypsies and Travellers with somewhere authorised and more secure to stop whilst creating a minimal environmental impact. Such stopping places are sometimes favoured by Gypsy and Traveller households.

11.10 Finally, this assessment would support the approach of creating a network of transit provision across the wider region to accommodate short term accommodation requirements. This would require joint-working with neighbouring authorities and should be discussed as a Duty to Cooperate subject.

12. Travelling Showpeople

- 12.1 Planning policy relating to Travelling Showpeople was set out in Circular 04/07 and required the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople to be included in the assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. This was superseded by the NPPF and *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (see Chapter 2). Within the new planning policy it is clear that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople should be included within the assessments of accommodation need for 'Travellers'.
- 12.2 There were two Travelling Showpeople's yards in the study area at the time of the assessment: Mitchell's Yard/Haybridge Road (Hadley) and Fairview (Wellington). Information provided by the Council suggested that there had been changes to the planning permission on Mitchell's Yard/Haybridge Road over the last 10-15 years, with the removal of the personal occupancy restriction on the yard. However, there was no information in relation to the number of pitches on the yard. At the time of the assessment there were four households residing on the yard; these residents told the Community Interviewers that they would very shortly be moving off to start their summer season. The information provided by the Council – but also by the Community Interviewers – indicates that a portion of this yard (called Jordan's Yard) had been sold to a family member (who was a Gypsy-Traveller) and this site had been given retrospective permission for a mobile park home. Jordan's Yard has been included in the discussion of private sites in the study area (see Chapter 5).
- 12.3 With regards to Fairview, information provided by the Council indicates that this is a storage yard and therefore not residential. There were no households on the yard at the time of the assessment and the Travelling Showpeople on Mitchell's Yard indicated that the owners of Fairview had already left to start their summer season. It was unclear as to whether the owners of this yard ever used it for residential purposes. Consultation with the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain also indicated an awareness of two yards; however, they were not aware of any specific accommodation need in the study area.
- 12.4 The Council stated that they had not experienced any unauthorised development of Travelling Showpeople sites since 2006 and had not had to take enforcement action in relation to Travelling Showpeople sites. They did not expect there to be an increase in sites for Travelling Showpeople over the next five years.

Survey Findings: Travelling Showpeople

- 12.5 A total of four people were interviewed on one Travelling Showpeople's yard in the study area. All four respondents stated that they owned their pitch. The respondents were aged 17-24, 25-39, 40-49 and 60-74. Household size ranged from one to three. There were ten people across the four households; an average of 2.5 people per household. Two households indicated that they had children, each with one child.

Views on Size and Facilities

- 12.6 Three households had a single caravan and one had two. The average number of caravans to households was 1.3. A total of three caravans were used as sleeping and living spaces, and the remaining two for travelling. In terms of other vehicles, one respondent had two other vehicles, one had three, and two had five. All respondents reported that they had enough space in their current accommodation.

Accommodating Visitors on their Current Yard

- 12.7 Two of the respondents reported that they have visitors to stay with them on a short term basis. Visitors were primarily family members who pulled on to the yard with their own trailer. None of the respondents indicated that hosting visitors was a problem on the yard.

Reasons for Moving to the Yard and for Staying in the Local Authority Area

- 12.8 When asked why they had come to live on their current yard, two respondents stated that the land was available to buy and two stated it was convenient.
- 12.9 When asked why they stayed in their particular local authority area, one respondent said it was because they had family in the area, and three said that it was convenient.

Length of Time in the Area and on the Yard

- 12.10 All four respondents indicated that they had lived in Telford & Wrekin and on the yard for 10 years or more. Three respondents stated that they were permanent residents in their local authority area, and one did not know. None of the respondents had a base elsewhere.

Previous Accommodation Experiences

- 12.11 Given the length of time on their current site, none of the respondents reported where they had lived previously. None of the respondents had ever lived in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Travelling Experiences

- 12.12 With regards to travelling experiences, two respondents travelled a few times a year and two travelled every week.
- 12.13 They identified other parts of the West Midlands (Birmingham and Dudley) and the rest of the UK (for example, Stockport and Stow) as main destinations. Given the nature of their work, all respondents travelled with equipment: two with five pieces of equipment, and two with eight. They all indicated that they only stayed on other Showpeople's yards when they travelled.

Site Needs Relating to Work

- 12.14 The households were all self-employed and indicated that they worked within the West Midlands area and other parts of the UK. None of the respondents indicated that they had any current or future site needs relating to their work.
- 12.15 None of the respondents indicated having experienced any problems accessing employment.

Access to Services

- 12.16 The respondents were asked if they had access to the following services: GP/health centre; health visitor; maternity care; A&E; immunisation (for babies and children); dentist; education or local school services; training services; careers advice; Jobcentre Plus; and public transport. Respondents could state if the service was not relevant to them. All respondents stated that they had sufficient access to all of these services, where relevant.
- 12.17 When asked if they had used these services in the previous twelve months, two respondents had seen a GP, one a health visitor, one had been to A&E, one had visited a dentist and one had accessed school services. None of the respondents, nor their family members, had tried to access further or higher education.
- 12.18 Respondents were also asked about health problems that they, or people living with them, had. One person on the site had mobility problems and a hearing impairment, although they did not state that the site needed to be adapted for them. There were no other needs issues identified by the respondents.

Assessment of Accommodation Need for Travelling Showpeople

- 12.19 Table 12.1 below contains the requirements for net additional pitches that need to be developed to meet the measured need of Travelling Showpeople in the study area. Accommodation need has been considered in this assessment by carefully exploring the following factors:

Current residential supply

- Socially rented pitches; and
- Private authorised pitches.

Residential need 2014–2019

- Temporary planning permissions, which will end over the assessment period;
- Household formation;
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments;
- Whether the closure of any existing sites is planned; and
- Movement between areas.

Additional supply 2014–2019

Table 12.1: Summary of Travelling Showpeople Accommodation and Pitch Need (2014-2031)

	Element of supply and need	Accommodation Need/Supply Total (households)
	Current residential supply	
1	Socially rented pitches	0
2	Private authorised pitches	4
3	Total authorised pitches	4
	Residential pitch need 2014 - 2018	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	0
5	Household formation	0
6	Unauthorised developments	0
7	Closure of sites	0
8	Movement between areas	0
9	Residential pitch need (2014 – 2018)	0
10	Supply (2014 - 2018)	0
11	Residential pitch need (2014 - 2018)	0
12	Residential pitch need (2019 – 2023)	0
13	Residential pitch need (2024 – 2028)	0
14	Residential pitch need (2029 – 2031)	0
15	Total Residential pitch need (2014–2031)	0

Explanation of the need requirement elements

Current residential supply

Row 1: The number of pitches on socially rented yards based on information provided by the Council. This was reported to be nil.

Row 2: The number of pitches on private authorised yards. As highlighted above, while the Council indicated that one yard had residential permission, there was no information on how many pitches this related to. There were four households on the yard at the time of the assessment. It is therefore reasonable to assume that there are four pitches.

Row 3: The total number of authorised pitches within the study area.

Residential pitch need 2014–2018

Row 4: The number of pitches which have temporary planning permission due to expire within the assessment period. This was reported to be nil.

Row 5: The number of households occupying existing accommodation who require independent accommodation within the study area **immediately or over the next five years**. This was reported to be nil.

Row 6: This is the level of need arising from current unauthorised developments. This was reported to be nil.

Row 7: It is the understanding of the project team that there was no intention to close the residential site.

Row 8: This is the level of movement of households between areas. The assessment found no evidence to suggest that there is movement between areas.

Row 9: This is the total gross residential need for pitches arising in the study area between 2014-2018

Row 10: This is the supply of pitches. It is the understanding of the project team that there is no additional supply of pitches.

Row 11: This is the total net requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2014–2018.

Row 12: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2019-2023.

Row 13: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2024-2028.

Row 14: This is the total requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2029-2031.

Row 15: This is the total overall requirement for pitches in the study area over the period 2014-2031.

Summary

12.20 Analysis of data has shown a nil accommodation need for Travelling Showpeople over the assessment period. While the assessment has suggested a nil need for additional yard-based accommodation for Travelling Showpeople households, it should be noted that Travelling Showpeople remain distinct from Gypsies and Travellers and future work may be needed to understand the situation on the two yards in the study area. As highlighted above, an assumption has been made in relation to the number of households/pitches on the residential yard. Furthermore, while the Council felt that the second yard was for storage only, this could not be corroborated during the fieldwork period as the owners were travelling.

13. Qualitative Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers

- 13.1 In addition to the survey data, the assessment also included some follow up qualitative consultation with Gypsies and Travellers in the study area. The aim of this consultation was to provide an opportunity to explore a number of key issues in greater detail. More specifically, the consultation focused on exploring people's views on: their current accommodation and site management; the aspirations of younger Gypsies and Travellers in terms of accommodation; experiences of the planning system; and community relations.
- 13.2 A total of 16 Gypsies and Travellers took part in this additional consultation: 13 participants were currently living on the two socially rented sites in the study area, and three were living on a private site in the study area. The consultation took the form of two focus groups, one for each of the two types of site. The participants were recruited with the assistance of the site warden and the Community Interviewers. The consultation was carried out by a University team member. The participants were all female and each focus group last around one hour.
- 13.3 The following provides an overview of the key issues that were raised during the focus groups.

Views on Current Accommodation

- 13.4 The participants across the two focus groups were all long standing residents of their current accommodation - that is, living there for more than ten years - with a number of the socially rented site residents explaining that they had lived there for the duration of their site's existence. People talked about living there because they liked the area and because it was quiet. However, there was also a view - particularly on the socially rented sites - that it was better to stay on a site where they all get on together. The respondents on the socially rented sites highlighted that most families on the sites are related in some way. The discussions highlighted that people considered the sites as their home and planned to remain there.
- 13.5 With regards to the socially rented sites, there were some concerns raised over specific issues. Firstly, a significant number of participants – and a significant proportion of the discussion – was around the issue of utilities. The main concern was that currently electricity is obtained by means of a card operated meter. There was a belief that residents did not get all of the value they were entitled to from the credit on the cards, as one person stated:

"I believe it's only half the money. We're giving a fiver and we only having £2.50 of electric, I believe".

Two older residents were also aware that pensioners were entitled to the winter fuel allowance, but stated that they could not get this allowance because they *did* not get electricity directly from the Midlands Electricity Board (MEB); rather the Council buys electricity from the MEB and sells it on to the residents:

"For the past three years now, I've chucked that letter in the dustbin because [site warden] says we're not eligible to have it"

"It is heart-breaking when you get a £200...a letter saying 'here, just take this to your MEB and they'll give you £200 worth of electric'... And you just put it in the bin, give it to [site warden], 'oh no, you can't have it'".

One of these older residents compared her usage to that of her daughter who was paying much less and living in a house with children:

"The council buys it from the MEB and then sells it on and believe it or not we're put out as much as £40 a week in electric. My daughter's got a house, everything's electric and she only uses £20 a week. And she's got five children".

Furthermore, there were concerns that when the cards are inserted, an 'emergency amount' was automatically deducted, but that even if this amount was not used, it was still deducted from subsequent cards. Overall, people felt that this system placed site residents at a disadvantage to people living in houses, not just because of cost, but also because they had to travel to pick up the cards in the first place.

- 13.6 In addition to issues with the use of electricity cards, there was also a discussion around the problems surrounding the use of bottled gas. The residents purchased their own bottled gas and, as before, there was a view that this was expensive, particularly during the winter where it was suggested that it could cost around £50 per week. One resident made reference to wanting to buy bigger tanks, which were more cost effective, but not being allowed to:

"You can get a big tank and it's loads cheaper than the bottles...We're not allowed to have them".

It was also highlighted that during the winter it was sometimes difficult to get off one of the sites, and if you did not have transport - or support - it became very difficult to go out and purchase the gas bottles, as one person stated:

"If you haven't got a car then you can't do it, because it's big bottles"

"You see this road here? It's not so bad at the top, but this road here, if it's bad; if it's snowy, or icy, you can't even get a motor up there! So, you'd have to freeze to death before you could get out to get a bottle of gas".

The difficulty of getting off the site during winter related to icy conditions: this was seen to create difficulties in taking children to school, but also speculation about whether ambulances would be able to come onto the site if required. As one person suggested:

"Yeah, but when it's snowing and when it's icy, if you was dying, you couldn't get off. You'd have to call an ambulance and an ambulance won't even come down when it's snowy and icy".

- 13.7 Secondly, people made reference to requiring more space. This related to the size of the pitches: this issue has been raised in the survey as impacting on the ability to accommodate household formation. In the focus group discussion people made reference to needing more space to accommodate larger utility blocks. It was stated that the existing blocks were not big enough, making it difficult to carry out tasks such as washing children and cooking. However, the issue of utilities was raised again, with suggestions that having larger blocks would mean that they could be multi-purpose (e.g. cooking, children's play area, washing zones, for example). It was felt that people would then only need to heat this one room rather than trying to heat a number of locations that are serving those different functions (e.g. block, caravans, etc.). Indeed, some participants made reference to sites they were aware of outside the study area that had "day houses", where people had the option to choose bottled gas or "house gas". In discussions, people described the facilities on these sites as "like a palace", as the following comment illustrates:

"They've got brand new blocks, showers, different departments for your washing machine, different apartments for your sink and everything...that's like a palace".

- 13.8 Thirdly, comparisons were made, not just in relation to Telford sites and those outside the study area, but also between the two Telford socially rented sites. Participants talked about the refurbishment that would be taking place on Lodge Road. However, it was felt that there were different standards between the two sites, with Lodge Road perceived to have inferior conditions. This included queries as to why residents on Ketley Brook were allowed to have mobile homes/chalets, but those on Lodge Road were not. The following are some of the comments made in relation to the two sites:

"There's a lot of different things on this site that they're not allowed to have on their site"

"Everyone on here's allowed mobiles, but on the other site you're not"

"It's ridiculous on that site, do you know what I mean? It's like a tip! It's like you're driving into a tip".

There also appeared to be a general view that they were expected to accept poorer conditions because they were Gypsies/Travellers, with some participants talking about physical and mental health problems that they felt were a result of the environment (for example, the proximity to electricity pylons).

- 13.9 Finally, there was a discussion about the consultation and assessment itself. One participant explained that they had taken part in the accommodation assessment eight years ago, but that they were still no better off:

"We did these surveys about eight years ago and exactly what you're asking now. It was the same questions and here we are, eight years further down the line and we're no better off".

Participants felt that because the sites were dealt with under the *housing* section of the Council, there was a lack of understanding of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. It was also felt that the Council could save money by investing in better facilities, which would save them on multiple repairs. Indeed, there was a view that money was sometimes wasted without overall improvements being made:

"It's costing them a lot of money to do little things when they'd be better off just scrapping them all together and then doing it properly".

- 13.10 While there appear to be relatively negative comments made in relation to the sites, there was praise for the site warden, and the support they offered. This related specifically to the assistance that was provided when residents received letters and required support with responding to these. As one participant stated:

"If we've got a letter from the council or anything, [the warden] sorts it out for us...[Interviewer: Hypothetically, if [the warden] wasn't here...]We wouldn't know what to do".

- 13.11 With regards to the private site, this was a family owned site and life on the site was described as "*good living*":

"It's good. It's got proper showers and toilets"

"This is good living this is".

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the participants felt that private sites were better than Council sites with suggestions that because they were family-run they were better maintained. Interestingly, this view was also reiterated in the stakeholder consultation, with one stakeholder likening the difference between private and Council sites to the difference between owner occupied housing and Council estates.

- 13.12 While the family aspect of the site was important, the private site residents talked about the presence of a particular GP surgery as one of the more important motives for staying on the site. There was agreement from the respondents that "*she [their GP] understands us*". All three had the same doctor, and talked about her being aware of their heritage, and this was felt to be a positive factor in their relationship with the GP but also their feelings about the site and the local area. Indeed, all three participants declared they would travel back to this GP, no matter where they were residing at the time (e.g. if they were travelling, for example).

Experiences of the Planning System

- 13.13 The participants across the two focus groups were asked about their experiences of the planning system. The experiences that people referred to were largely negative. With regards to the participants on the socially rented sites, very few people had direct experience of the planning system, with the majority of people saying that it was not relevant to them. One person talked about the experience of a family member who had purchased a piece of land on green belt with the intention of

accommodating several family members. They felt that their relative had “*done everything right*”, but the site remained without planning permission:

“My [family member] bought it years ago. He tried to get it passed. It went through all the courts, he did everything right. He done everything they said; he put the toilets on there, he done everything... and then they turned round and said no, he couldn’t do it. It’s still not passed. He spent loads of money on it. He worked black and blue, day in, day out on it and they dug all the road up that [he had] put down...”

One participant talked of their own, particularly negative, personal experience of buying a piece of land which they still owned:

“When we bought our land it had just come out, a new rule, that if the Gypsies... because the council couldn’t afford to make sites for the Gypsies, if the Gypsies bought their own land, they’d pass it. So, we spent everything we had to buy this piece of land and as soon as we bought it they revoked it. So now we’re stuck with a piece of land with our life savings on it and we were being charged £500 a day, with an injunction, to get off... I had four children, me and my husband; they stuck us in a house where you couldn’t swing a cat”.

In both cases outlined above, it was not clear if the land was within, or outside, Telford & Wrekin.

- 13.14 With regards to the participants on the private site, people had more experiences of the planning system. Again, these were often family members’ experiences rather than their own. These were largely talked about in relation to the perceived discrimination people experienced because they were Gypsies/Travellers. The examples given all related to land outside the study area. One participant made reference to a family member who had sought planning permission for a five plot site on green belt in the Midlands, with a day house. They had received temporary planning permission for five years for this site; however, they stated that this didn’t come without a fight (including a High Court hearing). This battle was largely attributed to a local councillor living nearby who had opposed the development:

“They had to go to the High Court in London, twice I think before they passed it... but it was all because where the plots end, they’ve got like a field where there’re not allowed to put anything and there the Council man lives, and he absolutely hates them...They burnt some rubbish; not a heap of rubbish, just some boxes and things in a diesel drum to keep it all contained... and because the smoke was coming he went for the fire brigade straight away...That’s how he is”.

This same family member had also bought land in Lincolnshire, but ended up having to sell it after it was subject to an injunction, although it was stated that a house was later built on the land by a non-Traveller.

"As soon as we put the letter box on, an injunction got put on [the site] straight away... We had moved nothing onto it, just put a letter box on it... It must have been the locals round there who thought 'oh, Gypsies are going to come'. Now, it's been passed and it's got a house on it".

The same participant said that they themselves had bought a piece of land in the South West of England with several other people (accommodating around ten plots). However, an injunction was placed on this as well:

"We did buy a field. We still own a piece of it ...And as soon as they knew Travellers had bought it, they put an injunction on it straight away – you couldn't put one wheel on it".

Community Relations

- 13.15 The qualitative consultation also wanted to explore views on community relations with members of the settled community (i.e. non-Gypsies/Travellers). With regards to the socially rented site, there appeared to be very little contact with non-Gypsies/Travellers, with the exception of contact at primary schools. Their relationships were primarily with people on the site or with other Gypsies and Travellers living on other sites. Indeed, one respondent stated:

"we don't see [non Travellers] – apart from when they come and dump their rubbish at the top – a lot of people don't know we're here".

The issue of fly tipping was interesting, as it was felt that people from off the site would come on and leave their rubbish, knowing that Gypsies and Travellers were often blamed for fly tipping.

- 13.16 Again, the perception that there was unequal treatment for Gypsies and Travellers was raised in the discussions. For example, a couple of participants stated that they had complained to the Police and called out Environmental Health when there was repeated noise and disturbance from events at a property near to the site. However, it was felt this had not been adequately addressed and that if such noise had been made by residents of the site it would have resulted in Police action very quickly. The following is a discussion that three participants had about the issue:

Participant 1: If it was us, the police would be down here within five minutes. But, because it's a house up there...

Participant 2: ...and no matter how many times I called out the environmental people they never come down. And I'm telling you; you can hear it in Telford!

Participant 2: If it had been one of us playing that music from 5 o'clock in the afternoon till 6 o'clock the very next morning, we'd have been all shut down.

- 13.17 There appeared to be slightly more positive views on community relations from the participants who were living on the private site. While they had examples of exclusion based on being a Gypsy/Traveller, they felt that personal relations were

important. Indeed, they described the relationship between themselves and their non-Traveller neighbours as good and talked about daily acknowledgment from non-Travellers in the area:

"I think first of all they was a bit wary but they've realised that we're nice and that and now they're nice to us"

"I do think that if you respect them, they respect you better like".

Indeed, some talked about friendships with non-Travellers, who they visited for meals, but also socialising in pubs and bingo at the village hall, for example. The site residents appeared to be part of the community in which they were living, with discussion about receiving the local newsletter, as well as the local Elected Member visiting the site to tell them about upcoming work that was taking place in the area, with one participant stating: *"You wouldn't get that on a council site"*. They felt that it all depended on mutual respect, but acknowledged that not all Gypsies and Travellers want contact with non-Travellers.

Accommodating the Next Generation

- 13.18 Finally, the focus groups wanted to explore views on how the younger generation may need to be accommodated, but also whether or not people felt that life had changed across the generations. The socially rented respondents focused more on prospects for children, with a generally pessimistic view. It was stated that access to the site is based on a points system, and that newlyweds without children would not have points. This was posed rhetorically by interviewees *"When our children get married, where are they going to go?"*. Interestingly, it was felt that most would go and stop at the roadside - unauthorised encampments - rather than have to move into bricks and mortar accommodation. Again, the conversation returned to the size of the pitches, as one person stated: *"All we need is plots so that your family can go on, or a plot big enough so that you can have your children on when they get married"*. People were concerned about what their children would do in five or ten years' time. One person stated that if they could arrange their own places to live, on big enough pieces of land they could keep their families together, but felt that this was never allowed to happen. They referred to it as a *"never ending story"*:

"We all believe to keep our family round us and everything like that, but there's just nowhere to go...But say they gave you a piece of land, or let you do your own, but they won't...It's just a never ending story".

- 13.19 With regards to the discussion on the private site, there was less focus on accommodating the younger generation as it was felt that the existing site could do that. People compared their living arrangements with that of their parents, indicating that the main difference was that their parents' generation travelled more and often stopped at the roadside. In terms of general quality of life, there was agreement that life had improved since their parents' generation. However, it was felt that living arrangements had not really changed over the last ten years, with them living on private sites and travelling between different sites to visit friends and family.

14. Conclusions

- 14.1 This final chapter contains some concluding comments in relation to the assessment in Telford & Wrekin. There were a number of different types of provision in the study area, with the Council providing two long standing socially rented sites. Furthermore, an additional 12 socially rented pitches were planned; however, this assessment identified the need for an additional four residential pitches over the 2014-2018 period. As highlighted previously, this assessment was concerned with identifying need that arises and needs to be met *within* Telford & Wrekin. If neighbouring authorities identify need in Telford & Wrekin during the course of their own individual assessments, this would need to be discussed as a Duty to Cooperate issue.
- 14.2 While need arising from future household formation appeared to be small, this should be monitored as there were a number of older children across the sample, who will be of an age for household formation in the next period. Furthermore, there were concerns from residents on the socially rented sites as to how their children would be accommodated in the future. As such, any future pitches need to be developed with sustainability in mind. More specifically, they need to be a sufficient size to accommodate growing families who require additional trailers for their children.
- 14.3 There appears to be a nil need from Travelling Showpeople households. However, it should be noted that Travelling Showpeople remain distinct from Gypsies and Travellers and further work may need to be undertaken to accurately understand their accommodation needs, particularly as there was limited information available in relation to the situation on the two Travelling Showpeople's yards in the study area.
- 14.4 Although the pitch requirements over the 2014-2018 period is based on the best information available at the time of the study, pitch requirements for the 2019-2031 are based on household growth figures: that is, applying a standard 3% per annum compound rate of household growth to the need identified for 2014-2018 (see Chapter 10). It is therefore recommended that this assessment of accommodation need is reviewed in due course (circa 5 years) to reflect the most up to date guidance and evidence available.
- 14.5 The long term accommodation needs arising from Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks and mortar accommodation continue to be largely unknown. Although this assessment has successfully included a large proportion of this group, more work needs to take place around estimating the size of the bricks and mortar population and monitoring their accommodation needs.
- 14.6 Requirements for the provision of transit accommodation are difficult to quantify. However, it is apparent from the current provision of a *temporary* transit site that there is a need for some form of *permanent* transit provision within the study area. Based on calculations across a range of scenarios - in terms of duration of stay and period of travel - a conservative estimate suggests a requirement of a minimum of 11 transit pitches in the study area. As highlighted in Chapter 11, consideration should be given to developing transit provision across a couple of sites - whether formal or

informal - rather than a single transit site. Furthermore, this assessment would support a network of transit facilities (again, either formal or informal) working in collaboration with neighbouring authorities. In order to 'future-proof' for transit need arising from those visiting family or friends who live on existing sites in the area, consideration should be given to ensuring the provision of short-stay pitches is embedded within the permission granted for residential pitch accommodation. Continual monitoring is needed to review travelling patterns and the incidence of transient unauthorised encampments, and to assess provision and requirements. Furthermore, careful consideration is needed with regards to the location of transit sites, particularly as it is generally accepted that mixing transit and residential provision on socially rented sites is not a practical option (unless the transit provision is specifically for friends and family of site residents, as suggested above).⁴⁰

- 14.7 As highlighted in Chapter 9, it is very difficult to obtain empirical data on the economic circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers. As such, it is difficult to draw conclusions in relation to the tenure of identified need. However, from the assessment, it appears that a large proportion of need related to socially rented accommodation (see Chapter 9), with a smaller number of households who had purchased land or had (negative) experiences of trying to develop their own private site (see Chapter 13). Future pitch development should therefore consider this diversity of socio-economic circumstances.
- 14.8 While this assessment included consultation with neighbouring authorities, identifying need within Telford & Wrekin arising from households currently residing outside the study area was outside the scope of this assessment given its single authority focus. As neighbouring authorities complete their own needs assessments for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, there may be a need to consider whether there are additional residential or transit requirements to be met within Telford & Wrekin. This would require joint-working with neighbouring authorities and should be discussed as a Duty to Cooperate subject. Indeed, consultation with Shropshire Council suggested that households residing on unauthorised encampments sometimes moved between the two boroughs. They indicated that they already worked in collaboration with Telford & Wrekin Council, but suggested that there was scope to work more closely to minimise cross-border issues.
- 14.9 Consideration needs to be given to the findings that emerged from the qualitative consultation with both Gypsies and Travellers and key stakeholders. More specifically, there are issues in relation to the affordability of utilities on sites, the lack of space and conditions on existing sites, and engagement with education, most of which related to the socially rented sites. However, on both private and socially rented sites people made reference to negative experiences of the planning system, suggesting a potential need for more understanding or explanation of the process.

⁴⁰ See, for example, ODPM (2004) *Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Thirteenth Report of the Session 2003-04*, available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/633/633.pdf>; South Gloucestershire Council (2008) *Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document: Issues and Options for Consultation*, available at: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/pte080297.pdf>

14.10 Although the assessment identified a relatively small level of need arising in the short term (four pitches 2014-2018); there is a need to identify additional provision for the longer term (2019-2031). This need should be considered through the site allocation process, in particular:

- Specific sites, or broad locations for growth, should be identified for the years 6-10 and ideally for the years 11-15, in line with the NPPF;
- Criteria should be developed against which suitability, availability and deliverability of potential sites and broad locations should be assessed; and
- The need for sites should address the spatial variation in need across the district and be considered within the context of the wider area, and in collaboration with neighbouring authorities and any unmet need either within Telford & Wrekin itself or within its neighbouring authorities.

Ensuring this process progresses will be important to not only meet the requirements of the 2004 Housing Act and national planning policy, but also to avoid unintended consequences, such as a potential increase in unauthorised encampments or households having no option but to move into bricks and mortar accommodation.

14.11 Finally, it is imperative that progress is made in addressing the needs identified in this assessment. If no or little progress is made in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers it is likely that this would result in:

- A continuation, and possible increase, in suppressed need from people living in bricks and mortar accommodation;
- A continuation, and possible increase, in the number of encampments; and
- The possible occurrence of unauthorised developments. It is likely that these would stimulate long processes of enforcement, appeals and inquiries. This could also lead to development of sites in inappropriate areas, without the necessary planning considerations.

14.12 The implications of the issues raised above are that:

- New households which are forming will not be able to locate in appropriate accommodation. As highlighted above, this could result in new households resorting to stopping on unauthorised encampments or being forced to take up bricks and mortar accommodation;
- The legal and other costs of accommodating or removing unauthorised sites will continue and may increase;
- There may be greater conflict between the settled and Gypsy and Traveller populations as a result of unauthorised development in inappropriate areas; and
- The Councils fail to meet the requirements of both the Housing Act 2004 and national planning policy, which outline the requirement for plans to be developed in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

14.13 Engaging with a broad array of partners will be essential in order to move Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation provision forward. Effective partnership working should be developed with:

- Internal staff and departments within the local authority to ensure a joined-up approach;
- Elected Members;
- Neighbouring local authorities;
- Homes and Communities Agency;
- Key stakeholders including health, education and training, the Police and residential social landlords;
- Gypsies and Travellers (including the Showmen's Guild); and,
- The general public more widely.

Only via effective partnership working can the accommodation needs identified here be addressed and have the best opportunity for long-term success.

14.14 Addressing the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is the shortest and quickest route to helping to ensure positive outcomes for members of this population. Research has shown that a lack of suitable accommodation and poor conditions is related to poor education and health as well as being at the root of ill feeling between the non-Traveller community and Gypsies and Travellers. In addition, addressing accommodation need will, in the short and long-term, reduce the costs of maintaining the process that surrounds unauthorised encampments and developments. Permanent solutions will offer the best chance for positive outcomes for all concerned and create a platform where greater engagement and cohesion can be fostered and developed.

Appendix 1: Assessment Methods

Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the ODPM (now DCLG) in February 2006 with final guidance made available in October 2007. Specialised guidance and assessments were felt to be required as many local authority housing needs assessments were previously failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about conducting an assessment and issues to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive in terms of methods but suggests that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments integrate a wide variety of evidence such as existing secondary information, views of selected stakeholders and the views of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

It is noted that the document *Planning for Traveller Sites* (DCLG, 2012) has removed the need for dedicated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAAs) from any new guidance. It states:

While the Government is keen that planning policy highlights the importance of ensuring that targets are based on robust evidence, it does not consider it necessary to prescribe to local planning authorities the type and volume of evidence required, especially as their conclusions will be tested through the process of consultation and Examination in Public of local plans. This also accords with the Government's "streamlining" objectives by removing policy that is already adequately covered by legislation. The proposed policy states that local planning authorities set their own evidence-based targets for the provision of pitches/plots. The policy does not dictate what targets local planning authorities should adopt. This is a matter for local planning authorities to decide themselves depending on the circumstances in their particular area.

However, in the absence of alternative methodologies for assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers we have adopted a modified survey of the sort used in the first round of GTAAAs. This assessment was undertaken in three distinct stages. Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

- Stage One: Collation and review of existing secondary information;
- Stage Two: Consultation with key stakeholders; and
- Stage three: Consultation with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Stage One: Collation and Review of Existing Secondary Information

This first stage comprised a review of the available literature and secondary sources available in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. More specifically this included the collection, review and synthesis of:

- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans;
- Records and data maintained and provided by the local authority;
- The previous GTAA; and
- Census 2011.

Stage Two: Consultation with Key Stakeholders

The analysis and review of existing information was supported by engagement and consultation with a number of key stakeholders. This consultation took the form of telephone interviews, which were tailored to the role of the individual. The aim of these interviews was to provide clarification on issues arising from existing data and provide an understanding of the context of current accommodation provision as well as any other service issues, where relevant. Consultation was carried out with officers representing the following departments, roles and agencies: Telford & Wrekin Council (with representatives from children and family locality services, education, housing, planning, enforcement and site management); the Police; a home education provider; and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain. Furthermore, in order to explore potential cross boundary issues, if relevant, efforts were made (via telephone and email) to invite some neighbouring authorities to take part in the consultation. A representative from Shropshire Council provided input into this assessment. Two other neighbouring authorities were invited but did not take part.

Stage Three: Consultation with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

One of the most important aspects of the assessment was consulting with local Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Survey of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The main method of consultation was via a comprehensive survey of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households residing in the study area. The survey took place during May and June 2014. These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey is discussed below under three sections: questionnaire design; fieldwork and interviewers; and sampling strategy and response rates.

Questionnaire Design: The interviews utilised a structured questionnaire whereby questions were routed according to the appropriate accommodation type. The questions were a mixture of tick-box answers and open-ended questions. This mixed approach enabled us to gather quantifiable information, but also allowed for contextualisation and qualification by the more narrative responses. The survey contained the following sections:

- Current accommodation;
- Local and historic connection;
- Travelling;
- Previous housing experiences;
- Household details;
- Local services; and
- Future accommodation.

Fieldwork and Interviewers: The involvement of Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers was of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the local Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population. In total, two members of the Gypsy and

Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers. These interviewers have worked with the University of Salford team on GTAA's since 2006. They are of Romany Gypsy background and live outside the study area. One of these interviewers had worked on the previous GTAA in Telford & Wrekin so was familiar with the study area. The Community Interviewers were briefed on the assessment and the questionnaire prior to commencing fieldwork, and provided with support from the core study team members during their interviewing activity. Each questionnaire which was returned to us was subject to quality control and appropriate feedback was given to the interviewers. By taking this approach we found we were able to access a range of people that would not otherwise have been included in the assessment, such as 'hidden' members of the community (e.g. people living in bricks and mortar housing), and those people who were uncomfortable talking to non-Travellers.

Sampling and Response Rates: Sampling Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households for GTAA's is always problematic given the absence of accurate information concerning the size and location of the communities. As such the sampling technique for the assessment was purposive rather than purely random. The sampling strategy for the assessment differed depending upon the particular accommodation type currently inhabited by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the study area. The strategy adopted was as follows:

- Telford & Wrekin Council provided information on authorised provision (both residential and transit) in the study area. The Community Interviewers were asked to interview every separate household stopping on these sites during the fieldwork period;
- For households on unauthorised encampments, officers from the Council were asked to inform the fieldwork team when and where encampments occurred during the fieldwork period. The Community Interviewers visited these encampments; and
- As the population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing is relatively hidden from official records, there was no sample frame from which to identify people. Therefore, in order to engage with housed Gypsies and Travellers, the Community Interviewers relied on three main methods: (1) contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had already been interviewed as part of the assessment (i.e. on site-based accommodation); (2) contacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team; and (3) snowball sampling where one respondent in housing recommended engaging with similar households.

A total of **76 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households** were involved in the assessment. Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable information from accommodation types within the study area.

Follow up Qualitative Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers

In addition to the survey data, the assessment also included follow up qualitative consultation with Gypsies and Travellers. The aim of this consultation was to provide an opportunity to explore a number of key issues in greater detail. More specifically, the consultation focused on exploring people's views on: their current accommodation and site

management; the aspirations of younger Gypsies and Travellers in terms of accommodation; experiences of the planning system; and community relations.

A total of **16 Gypsies and Travellers** took part in this additional consultation: 13 participants were currently living on the two socially rented sites in the study area, and three were living on a private site in the study area. The consultation took the form of two focus groups; one for each of the two types of site. The participants were recruited with the assistance of the site warden and the Community Interviewers. The consultation was carried out by a University team member in July 2014. The participants were all female and each focus group last around one hour. The participants all received a £20 shopping voucher as a thank you for their time.