

FINAL

**LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER & RUTLAND  
GYPSIES' AND TRAVELLERS'  
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
(2006-16)**

**FINAL REPORT**

**PREPARED FOR**

**Blaby District Council  
Charnwood Borough Council  
Harborough District Council  
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council  
Melton Borough Council  
North West Leicestershire District Council  
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council  
Leicester City Council  
Rutland County Council  
Leicestershire County Council**

**BY**

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Pat Niner  
John Bloxsom

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## GLOSSARY

**Amenity unit** : Usually a small permanent building housing bath/shower, WC and sink. On **socially rented sites**, there is an amenity unit per **pitch**. On some private sites in the Study Area, amenity units have a toilet only.

**Authorised site** : An authorised site has planning permission for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site.

**Caravan** : Mobile living vehicle. Also referred to as a **trailer**.

**Chalet** : Term used by Gypsies and Travellers usually referring to a **mobile home** which resembles a bungalow.

**Day room** : Some **amenity units** have a larger area where residents can eat or relax; this is normally referred to as a day room.

**Family** : In this report, family is usually used to denote a group of related people who live and/or travel together. It is assumed to be the basic unit when assessing accommodation requirements.

**Family site** : A private caravan site owned and occupied by an (extended) family. Broadly equivalent to owner-occupation in mainstream housing.

**Gypsy** : (or English Gypsy) Member of one of the main groups of **Gypsies and Travellers** in Britain. Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origin back to migrations, probably from India, taking place at intervals since 1500. Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1989.

**Gypsy and Traveller** : In this report, the term used to include all ethnic **Gypsies and Irish Travellers**, plus other Travellers who adopt a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life. It does not include **Travelling Showpeople**.

**Irish Traveller** : Member of one of the main groups of **Gypsies and Travellers** in Britain. Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland and were recognised as an ethnic group in England in 2000.

**Mobile home** : Legally a **caravan**, but not normally capable of being moved by towing. May include residential mobile homes and static holiday caravans.

**New Traveller** : Term used here to refer to members of the settled community who have adopted a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle living in moveable dwellings. There are now second and third generation 'New' Travellers in England. Some New Travellers prefer the more neutral term 'Traveller'.

**Pitch** : Area of land on a Gypsy and Traveller caravan site developed for a single **family**. On **socially rented sites**, the area let to a licensee for stationing caravans and other vehicles.

**Private rented pitches** : In the Study Area, several privately owned Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites have pitches which are rented on a commercial basis to other **Gypsies and Travellers**. The actual **pitches** may not always be clearly defined physically.

**Residential site/pitch** : A site/pitch intended for long-stay use by residents. No maximum length of stay is set.

**Site** : An area of land laid out and used for **Gypsy and Traveller caravans**.

**Socially rented site** : A Gypsy and Traveller caravan site owned by a council or registered social landlord. In the Study Area, all socially rented sites are owned and managed by a local council.

**Tolerated** : An **unauthorised development** or **encampment** may be tolerated for a period of time during which no enforcement action is taken.

**Trailer** : Term commonly used for a caravan among Gypsies and Travellers. Showmen's trailers are different in design from trailers commonly used among Gypsies and Travellers commonly being bigger, including WC and bathing facilities, and having 'pull-outs' which increase internal space when stationary.

**Transit site/pitch** : A site/pitch intended for short-term use. The site is usually permanent, whilst its residents are temporary and a maximum period of stay is usually imposed.

**Travelling Showpeople** : People who move (or have moved) from place to place with living vehicles to provide travelling fairs or circuses and associated services. Most Travelling Showpeople are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.

**Unauthorised development** : A Gypsy and Traveller site established on Gypsy owned land without appropriate planning permission or site licence.

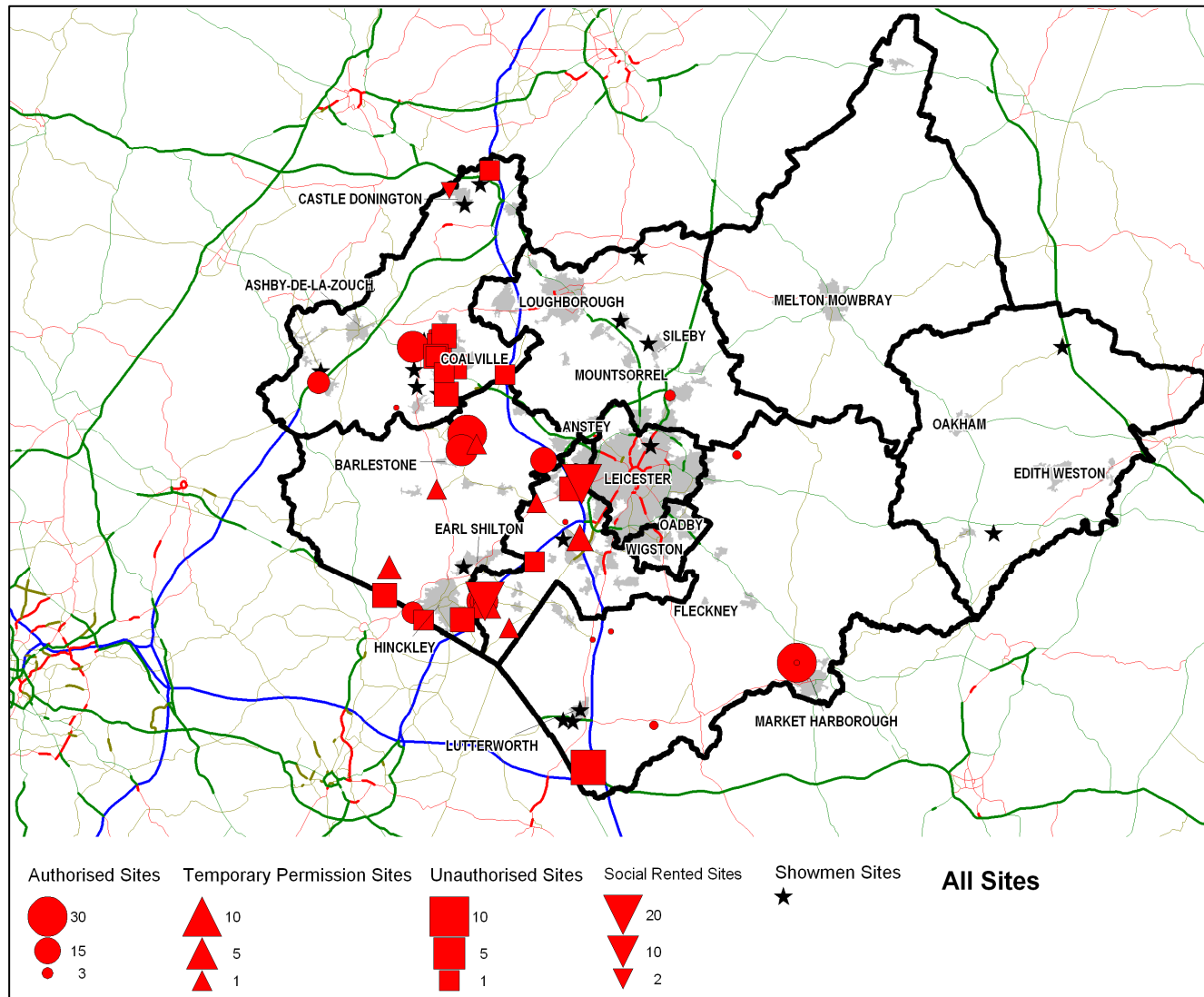
**Unauthorised encampment** : A piece of land where Gypsies and Travellers reside in vehicles or tents without permission. The land is not owned by those involved in the encampment. Unauthorised encampment normally involves trespass.

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

**Winter quarters** : Term sometimes used for a **site** occupied by Travelling Showpeople when not engaged in providing fairs or circuses. Originally occupied over the winter period when there are no fairs, Showpeople sites are now used much more flexibly and often involve year-round occupation.

**Yard** : Term used for a **pitch** or **site** occupied by Travelling Showpeople. Some sites in the Study Area comprise a number of clearly delimited yards owned or rented by different families. Gypsies and Travellers also use the term for a small **site** or a house with land which can accommodate trailers.

**Map 1 : Study Area Sites for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**







## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In early 2006 the Partner authorities (Leicestershire County, Leicester City, Rutland County, Blaby District, Charnwood Borough, Harborough District, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough, Melton Borough, North West Leicestershire District and Oadby & Wigston Borough) commissioned the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, with John Bloxsom of John Bloxsom Housing Services, to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Study Area of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. While there were a number of requirements, the main objectives of the Study were:

- To produce detailed information about local Gypsies and Travellers including demographic characteristics, current accommodation, employment, health and education, access to facilities and patterns of movement and mobility.
- To generate reliable estimates of future accommodation and housing-related support needs.
- To assess policies and comment on their relevance and to suggest future policies that can be incorporated into planning and housing strategies.

1.2 This report presents the findings from the research. For clarity, the report is divided into 17 chapters which fall broadly into 4 parts. The first part is background (Chapters 2 and 3). The second part (Chapters 4 to 10) presents the main findings of the survey relating to Gypsies and Travellers excluding Travelling Showpeople. The third part assesses future Gypsy and Traveller accommodation requirements 2006 to 2011 and 2011 to 2016 – for additional residential pitches (Chapter 11), transit accommodation (Chapter 12) and bricks and mortar housing (Chapter 13). Chapter 14 deals with Travelling Showpeople, including an assessment of requirements for additional accommodation provision. Chapter 15 deals with housing-related support for Gypsies and Travellers, including recommendations. Chapter 16 summarises existing planning, unauthorised encampment and housing policies towards Gypsies and Travellers and makes recommendations for their development. The final chapter (17) summarises assessments of future pitch requirements, and presents recommendations on site provision.

1.3 Separate supporting material is presented:

1. Annex of District Summaries
2. Technical Appendix including copies of questionnaires

### Definitions

1.4 There are many possible ways of defining the group '**Gypsies and Travellers**'. The statutory definition for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments required by the Housing Act 2004<sup>(1)</sup> is:

- (a) *persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and*
- (b) *all other persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including –*
- (i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and*
  - (ii) members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).*

The definition for land use planning purposes as set by ODPM Circular 01/2006<sup>(2)</sup> is narrower.

1.5 This research has broadly adopted the Housing Act definition. In particular, it has included Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) currently living in bricks and mortar accommodation as well as those currently living in caravans (widely defined) on sites and on the roadside. It has also included Travelling Showpeople in relation to their permanent base in the Study Area (sometimes referred to as winter quarters) rather than accommodation while travelling and running fairs and events.

1.6 The definition of '**need**' for accommodation for these groups is also difficult and sometimes contentious. Draft practice guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments<sup>(3)</sup> issued by ODPM in early 2006 refers to the distinctive accommodation requirements of some Gypsies and Travellers. For example:

- Suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units (caravan dwellers and housed)
- Caravan dwellers who have no authorised site on which to reside
- Caravan dwellers whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable
- Housed Gypsies and Travellers whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable – including unsuitability by virtue of a proven psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation

Households in these circumstances are 'in need' if they are unable to obtain their own accommodation either because of lack of availability or unaffordability.

1.7 This research has used a definition of need which encompasses all the circumstances described above. It is based on Gypsies' and Travellers' own perception of their need and the sort of accommodation they would look for to meet the need. While some may see this as a measure of 'aspiration' or 'demand' rather than 'need', we believe that this is justifiable for two different reasons:

- This is the approach taken in other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) of which we are aware. There is no method at present of reliably distinguishing 'need' from 'aspiration' for Gypsies and Travellers.

- More significantly, because of current national shortage of sites, frequent hostility to proposals for site provision and the need for new sites to gain planning permission, site requirements can only be met through conscious public policy actions. In this sense, all requirement is 'need'.

## Conventions

1.8 Three conventions are followed:

- Percentages in text and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. This means that they do not always sum to 100.
- 'Quotes' included from Gypsies and Travellers are sometimes in first and sometimes third person form because interviews were not recorded.
- References appear at the end of each chapter.

## References

- (1) Statutory Instrument 2006 No 3190, *The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006*
- (2) ODPM Circular 01/2006, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, 2 February 2006
- (3) Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments : Draft practice guidance*, ODPM, 2006

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued Draft Practice Guidance on *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* in February 2006. This Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about making an assessment and the issues they need to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive as to methods, but makes clear that some form of Gypsy and Traveller survey is appropriate and suggests possible topics for inclusion. The approach taken in the Study Area is compatible with the Guidance.

2.2 The research has drawn on three sources:

- secondary information
- a stakeholder consultation
- interview surveys with local Gypsies and Travellers

Each is described below.

### Secondary Information

2.3 The research team has drawn as appropriate on their wider experience and the relevant general literature on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues and policies. More specific sources of information used include:

- Records maintained and provided by Partner authorities. Information was provided on: private site details; social rented site resident characteristics and waiting lists; unauthorised encampments; and planning applications relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- Supporting People Strategies were reviewed and data analysed on the usage of housing-related support services by Travellers since 2003, as recorded by the Supporting People Client Records Office. This included published data and supplementary data commissioned from the SP Client Records Office.
- Local Plans, Core Strategy papers and other documents forming part of emerging Local Development Frameworks were reviewed. Any other relevant corporate and equalities strategies were also reviewed. Analysis was undertaken of Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies together with administrative material, such as waiting list application forms and allocation policies for local authority sites.
- The twice-yearly Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Counts compiled by local authorities and published by Communities and Local Government. While Count information can be criticised for its possible inaccuracies and the exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in housing, it represents the only nationally available time-series information on Gypsies and Traveller numbers and trends which can provide valuable contextual material.

## Partner and Stakeholder Consultation

2.4 Representatives of each of the 10 Partner authorities were interviewed in the period October-December 2006. The Partner interviews used a comprehensive questionnaire and took the form of half-day sessions at Partners' offices involving planning, environment health, licensing and enforcement, housing and homelessness officers and equalities staff. The topics covered included characteristics of the area and its Gypsy and Traveller population, relevant corporate policies, planning policy and applications, enforcement, future policy prospects within the new Local Development Framework system, management of unauthorised encampments, local authority site provision, housing policies and services, and housing-related support. A separate session took place in January 2007 with the Supporting People managers of the three Administering Authorities (Leicester City, Leicestershire County and Rutland).

2.5 A wide range of stakeholders were consulted in October 2006, including the main housing associations with stock in the area, advice agencies, equalities organisations, churches working with Gypsies and Travellers, interest groups, public bodies and specialist services working with Travellers in the health and education sectors. Stakeholders were sent a questionnaire which covered the services that they provided, their experience and perceptions of Gypsy and Traveller issues, and their views on housing services and housing-related support. There were 17 responses from the 40 organisations or services contacted (42%).

## Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers

2.6 The heart of the research was a series of structured interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area aimed at providing information about their characteristics, circumstances and needs.

## Sample Design

2.7 The principle behind **sample design** was to include interviews on as many sites as possible within an overall target of 200 interviews, split between different types of accommodation (see Table 2.1).

2.8 The approach to identifying interviewees was different according to the type of accommodation:

- The sample frame for socially rented and authorised private sites and sites established without planning permission (unauthorised developments) was a listing of all known sites provided by the City and County Traveller Liaison Officers. Attempts were made to achieve interviews at all listed locations except for a very small number where we were advised that there might be health and safety issues for interviewers or where the site owner had already indicated unwillingness to participate. Quotas were set for the number of interviews at each location related to the size of site. Repeat visits were

made to several locations in an attempt to achieve interviews during a fieldwork period during October and November 2006.

- Fieldwork for roadside encampments took place between mid-July and end-October 2006. During this period the research team was informed by the County and City TLOs of encampments in the Study Area and whenever possible an attempt was made to carry out interviews with new groups after risk assessment. During the period, records show there were about 40 unauthorised encampments, not necessarily by different groups. Interviewers attempted to survey people at 23 of these encampments and achieved interviews on 17. Interviews using the 'roadside' questionnaire were also carried out at 3 long-term encampments and with temporary visitors on 2 authorised sites.
- In identifying housed Gypsies and Travellers, the research team relied largely on introductions made by the County and City TLOs, and Traveller Health Visitors. Interviewees were selected to provide a range of family circumstances, and partly because of their willingness to participate. This sample cannot, therefore, be seen as necessarily truly representative of all Gypsies and Travellers living in housing since it will not include any not known to professionals working with Gypsies and Travellers locally.
- The sample of sites included in the survey for Travelling Showpeople was selected with the advice of the Traveller Education Service to represent a range of type and size of site, including 2 without planning permission for use as a Showman's site. Wherever possible the site owner or someone involved in the establishment of the site was interviewed. One interview was with an older 'retired' Show Person.

2.9 Overall, given the number of interviews achieved, we believe that the sample should provide a robust picture of characteristics and needs across the Study Area.

### **The Questionnaires**

2.10 The interviews with Gypsies and Travellers used individual questionnaires tailored for use with:

- people on authorised sites (socially rented and private)
- people on unauthorised developments
- roadside unauthorised encampments and other temporary stopping places
- bricks and mortar housing

The majority of questions were common to all versions of the questionnaire, but others were tailored to make most sense to the interviewee in relation to their accommodation circumstances. Some answers involved the interviewer ticking a box, others required them to write down the answer given. Copies of the questionnaires are available in Technical Appendix.

2.11 Sections in the questionnaires dealt with:

- views on general need for residential and transit sites and what facilities they should have.
- household details including age and gender, health, employment and ethnicity; there were specific questions about any household members (for example adult sons and daughters) who might need independent accommodation in the next 5 years.
- current accommodation including the number and adequacy of living units (on sites) or bedrooms (in houses); site facilities; satisfaction; access to services; and improvements wanted.
- recent accommodation history and questions about ever having lived in a house or on a site as appropriate to try to identify patterns of movement between different forms of accommodation.
- accommodation needs and aspirations including intentions to move and expressions of need for social rented housing or a place on a socially rented site; desire to develop a family site; and general preferences for accommodation of different types.
- recent travelling patterns and the types of temporary stopping places used, and preferences for different forms of stopping place.
- health, education and support needs including GP registration; school attendance and other training activities; need for support or advice on different potential problem areas; and experiences of and reactions to harassment.

Following consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, questions on income and benefits were excluded as likely to alienate interviewees and jeopardise the success of the survey.

2.12 The questionnaires worked reasonably well with three slight caveats:

- Some interviews, particularly on authorised sites, lasted rather too long and too much detail was sought.
- The questions about the need for different forms of housing-related support did not work very well, especially in interviews using community interviewers. Gypsies and Travellers are known to be reluctant to talk about personal matters or issues which closely relate to their personal circumstances or their family. This may be exacerbated by questions from other (non-related) members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- More generally, reluctance to divulge personal information led to some refusals to provide household details and especially details of employment. There was a lack of specificity in some answers to questions such as where sites should be developed or what plans/intentions respondents have for the future. In part such reticence may be related to cultural factors such as lesser weight given to long-term plans and a desire to protect the community from the probings of 'authority' which history has led Gypsies and Travellers to mistrust.



2.13 Despite these comments, the majority of the answers given and analysed here can be regarded as reliable and as providing a sound basis for policy development.

2.14 The approach taken for Travelling Showpeople was more qualitative, interviews were less structured and followed a topic guide rather than a questionnaire. This was a reflection of the more exploratory nature of research in this area where less is known about the issues facing Showpeople. In retrospect it proved a particularly good approach given the very varied circumstances of local Showpeople and the specificity of their needs.

### **Fieldwork and Interviewers**

2.15 **Interviewers** recruited from the Gypsy and Traveller community were employed in the research, initially to enable rapid response to roadside groups but ultimately on 7 of the larger authorised sites where CURS researchers experienced difficulties in achieving interviews. Overall, exactly half of the interviews achieved were carried out by community interviewers, all either on the roadside or authorised sites. Remaining interviews were carried out by 5 CURS researchers (all women).

2.16 3 community interviewers were employed. They were recruited having expressed interest through the County TLO (2 further community interviewers were initially recruited but were not employed for practical reasons). There was a full-day training session for community interviewers and CURS researchers, followed by one-to-one briefings prior to their first interviews. The high response achieved is undoubtedly due to the employment of community interviewers. A downside is rather poorer qualitative material collected in the course of the survey where answers were to be recorded verbatim.

2.17 Wherever possible researchers were introduced on site by the City or County TLO or other professionals working with Gypsies and Travellers. We recognise the time-consuming nature of this work for busy people and wish to record our thanks; the introductions proved invaluable.

### **Survey Response Rates**

2.18 Table 2.1 shows achieved interviews against the targets set for each type of accommodation. Most targets were achieved or exceeded except for unauthorised sites (established without planning permission). The target, in retrospect, was set unrealistically high here given the number and size of sites found to exist where it was deemed safe and reasonable to interview.

<b>Table 2.1 : Achieved Interviews by Target</b>			
<b>Type of accommodation</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>%</b>
Social rented sites	12	13	108
Private authorised sites	78	82	105
Unauthorised sites	15	5	33
Housed	30	29	97
Roadside	55	61	111
Showpeople	10	16	160
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>103</b>

2.19 Table 2.2 attempts to identify the sample response in relation to the total number of Gypsy and Traveller families (or pitches on sites) across the Study Area. As can be seen, more than half of all 'sites' are included in the sample, and just over a third of estimated pitch capacity. Three points are relevant in interpreting these figures:

- It is difficult to provide an estimate for 'pitch capacity' or number of families on many private sites. This is explained further in Chapter 4.
- Not all the pitches included in the table were occupied and thus potentially available for inclusion at the time of the survey.
- The apparently low response rate on unauthorised sites (without planning permission) is the result of a combination of advice not to visit some sites for security reasons, refusals, and absence of occupiers during the fieldwork period.

<b>Table 2.2 : Response Rate as a Proportion of the Estimated Population by Type of Site</b>						
Type of site	Number of sites/locations			Number of pitches/families		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Social sites	3	3	100	42	13	31
Private sites	27	20	74	210	82	39
Unauthorised sites	16	4	25	32	5	16
All 'sites'	46	27	59	284	100	35
Housed	NA	NA	NA	185+	29	c16
Showpeople	21	9	43	c150	16	c11

2.20 Table 2.3 (overleaf) shows response by local authority area. Most interviews were carried out in North West Leicestershire, Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby and the City of Leicester. The composition of sample by type of accommodation differs between authorities so that, for example, most interviews in Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth were on private sites, while most in North West Leicestershire were on roadside unauthorised encampments, and in the City were with housed Gypsies and Travellers. Both the numerical

distribution and the pattern of types of accommodation reflect the distribution of the local Gypsy and Traveller population at the time of the survey. It proved impossible to interview anyone in Oadby & Wigston because we were unaware of any identified Gypsies and Travellers in that area during the fieldwork period.

**Table 2.3 : Achieved Interviews by Type of Accommodation and Local Authority Area**

Type of accommodation	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leics	Oadby & Wigston	Leicester	Rutland
Social rented sites	7	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	-
Private sites	23	-	11	35	-	13	-	-	-
Unauthorised sites	1	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-
Housed	-	-	4	4	-	2	-	18	1
Roadside	3	4	5	3	3	35	-	6	2
Showpeople	-	4	4	-	-	3	-	2	3
Total	34	8	24	44	3	56	-	31	6

2.21 The gender mix of interviewees was:

Male	33	16%
Female	148	72%
Couples	23	11%
Not recorded	2	1%

Almost three-quarters of interviews were with women. The proportion is boosted particularly by interviews on roadside unauthorised encampments where 92% of interviewees were women. This is a reflection of men being absent during the day while working as well as the greater willingness of women to be interviewed (especially by other women).

2.22 Overall, we would conclude that response rates were adequate to ensure reliable findings, albeit with a bias towards the woman's view.

### 3. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY BACKGROUND

3.1 After a decade of virtual policy vacuum on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation matters (between 1994 and 2004), a new national policy approach has been developed with the overall objective that *'Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully'*<sup>(1)</sup>. The three elements in policy to achieve this are:

- Adequate provision for authorised sites to overcome a situation nationally where there are no authorised pitches to accommodate a quarter of Gypsy and Traveller caravans.
- Respect for the planning system and property rights, with effective enforcement action taken promptly against problem sites.
- Prompt and effective action to deal with the small minority who indulge in anti-social behaviour before they cause further harm to relationships between the Travelling and settled communities.

3.2 The leaflet from which these points are taken goes on to summarise the way the new system for site provision will work:

- The Housing Act 2004 will require local authorities to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in their areas as they do for the rest of their population.
- Local authorities must then develop a strategy which addresses the need arising from the accommodation assessment through public and/or private provision.
- The Regional Planning Body, on the basis of local authority assessed need, will determine how many pitches should be provided across the region and will specify in the Regional Spatial Strategy how many pitches should be provided in each local authority area ensuring that *'collectively local authorities make provision in a way which is equitable and meets assessed patterns of need'*<sup>(2)</sup>.
- Local planning authorities will be obliged to identify sites (not simply set planning criteria for sites) in their Development Plan Documents in line with the requirement identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Where there is clear need, the Secretary of State has the power to direct local planning authorities to identify sites in their Development Plan Documents if they fail to do so.
- Local authorities do not have to wait until the end of this planning process before providing more sites.

3.3 The main document setting out the detail of the new system is ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* issued in February 2006. It is clear that assessment of accommodation need is at the heart of the new system and, as noted above, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued Draft Practice Guidance on *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* in February 2006. This draft Guidance is being reviewed, but has not yet been issued in revised form.

3.4 New social rented Gypsy and Traveller sites are expected to contribute to site provision. Financial support is available through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants. Across England, up to £56 million is being made available over the years 2006/07 and 2007/08. In the East Midlands, a total of £6,216,000 has been agreed over the two years. In August 2006, an Order<sup>(3)</sup> came into force extending the permissible purposes of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to cover setting up and managing Gypsy and Traveller sites, and to receive grant to do so. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants.

3.5 At the end of January, revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople was issued for consultation<sup>(4)</sup>. This is to replace Circular 22/91 and essentially makes clear that the system described above for Gypsies and Travellers (needs assessment, pitch allocations in Regional Spatial Strategies and identification of specific locations for sites in Local Plan Documents) is also to apply to Travelling Showpeople. This is in recognition of the current shortage of sites for Travelling Showpeople and the failure of the existing planning system to provide sufficient sites.

3.6 On the enforcement side, a revised guide on managing unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers was issued in February 2006<sup>(5)</sup>. This is primarily focused on choosing and using the most appropriate powers, speeding the process and preventing further encampments (including through the provision of appropriate sites). The promised further parts of guidance on dealing with unauthorised development of land without planning permission and anti-social behaviour have not yet been issued.

3.7 The Housing Act 2004 makes clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is to be an element in local authority Housing Strategies. The 2006 Homelessness Code of Guidance<sup>(6)</sup> refers specifically to Gypsies and Travellers, reminding authorities of their duties. Authorities must give consideration to the needs and lifestyle of Gypsy and Traveller applicants when considering their application and how best to discharge a duty to secure suitable accommodation, in line with their obligations to act consistently with the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular the Article 8 right to respect for private life, family and the home (paragraph 16.38).

3.8 The background to Supporting People and funding for housing-related support for Gypsies and Travellers and others is described in Chapter 15.

3.9 The recent report by the Commission for Racial Equality<sup>(7)</sup> draws attention to the obligations that local authorities have under the Race Relations

(Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality and good race relations. Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic groups for the purposes of the legislation.

## Policy in the East Midlands Region

3.10 The *East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2004-2010* makes a single specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers. Under Policy 13 – *Ensuring that all Sub-regions Understand and Address the Needs and Aspirations of Diverse Sectors of their Communities*, the Strategy notes that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be considered – providing both permanent and temporary site provision for those who pass through local authority districts on a regular basis. This is under the heading of promoting sustainable and balanced communities by providing a framework for the delivery of housing to address the needs of diverse communities in local areas.

3.11 The *Draft East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy)* includes Policy 16 setting out Regional Priorities for Provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Local authorities and other relevant public bodies should work together across administrative boundaries to identify land for additional pitch provision based on clearly evidenced assessments of need. Local Development Frameworks should make provision for an Interim minimum additional pitch requirement set out in the Plan. Pitches provided may be made up of a combination of residential and transit pitches to reflect local need. The Interim figures will be superseded by pitch requirements derived from GTAAs when complete. The derivation of the Interim pitch requirements are provided in the Housing Policy Justification Paper, which makes clear that the base is the Caravan Counts supplemented and amended where necessary by information from local authorities, including Leicestershire County Council. Table 3.1 shows Interim pitch requirement for the Study Area is up to 65 pitches, including both permanent (residential) and temporary (transit) provision.

<b>Table 3.1 : Interim Pitch Requirements for the Study Area from the Draft East Midlands Plan</b>		
<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Caravans</b>	<b>Pitches</b>
Blaby	4-6	3-4
Charnwood	Up to 10	Up to 7
Harborough	6-12	4-8
Hinckley & Bosworth	8-13	6-9
Melton	Up to 9	Up to 6
North West Leicestershire	9-19	6-13
Oadby & Wigston	1	1
Leicester	10-15	7-10
Rutland	Up to 10	Up to 7
<b>Study Area</b>	<b>Up to 95</b>	<b>Up to 65</b>

## References

- (1) Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers : Guide to responsibilities and powers*, ODPM, 2006, page 5
- (2) *Ibid*, pages 7 & 8
- (3) The Social Landlords Order 2006 (Permissible Additional Purposes – England) relating to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites
- (4) Communities and Local Government, *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople*, 2007
- (5) Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Guide to effective use of enforcement powers : Part 1 : Unauthorised encampments*, ODPM, 2006
- (6) Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate, *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*, Communities and Local Government, 2006
- (7) Commission for Racial Equality, *Common Grounds: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers : Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales*, CRE, 2006

## 4. FINDINGS : SITE PROVISION

4.1 This chapter presents findings from the survey on site provision and the views of Gypsies and Travellers towards the sites they occupy. There are sections on social rented sites; private authorised sites and unauthorised developments without planning permission. The first section sets the context by looking at information from the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count.

### Caravan Numbers and Trends from the Caravan Count

4.2 The Caravan Count has been carried out each January and July since 1979. Coverage is, of course, limited to Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans. However, Count information is valuable as 'semi-official' and offering opportunities for time-series analysis. Counts are used here to show the current breakdown of caravans between the different types of accommodation in the Study Area as a whole and trends over time.

### The Current Pattern of Caravans by Type of Site

4.3 The Counts show that there were 379 caravans recorded in the Study Area in January 2006, and 331 in July 2006. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of caravans between different types of sites for the Study Area, the East Midlands Region and England for January 2006 (January figures normally provide a better base picture than July which can be affected by seasonal travelling). The table shows:

- 59% of caravans in the Study Area are on private sites. This is higher than the regional and national proportions. The proportion of caravans on socially rented sites is correspondingly lower.
- The proportion of caravans on unauthorised sites in the Study Area (20%) is broadly similar to the national average, and below the regional average. Slightly more caravans were on unauthorised developments (on Gypsies own land) than on unauthorised encampments (on other land)
- In the Study Area, more caravans on unauthorised sites are on 'tolerated' than on 'not tolerated' sites. This is not the case either regionally or nationally.

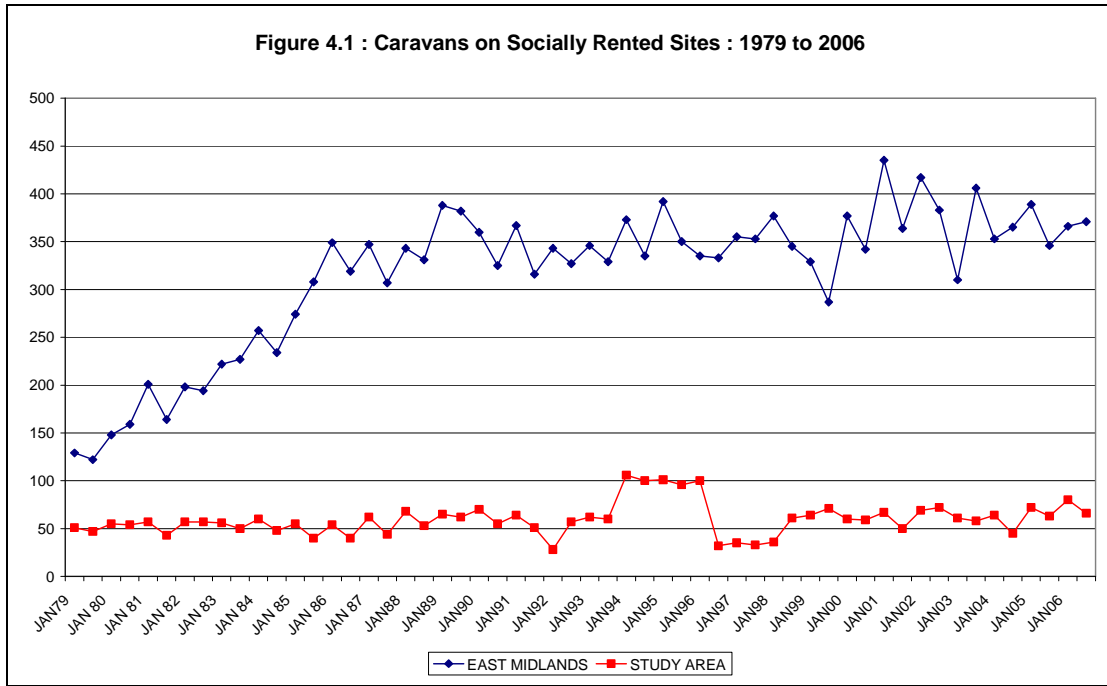
4.4 Caravan numbers in the Study Area were higher in January (379) than in July 2006 (331). Taken in conjunction with survey results, this suggests that the Study Area, with its relatively high proportion of private sites providing rented pitches, may be acting as an over-wintering base for Gypsies and Travellers who travel during the summer.



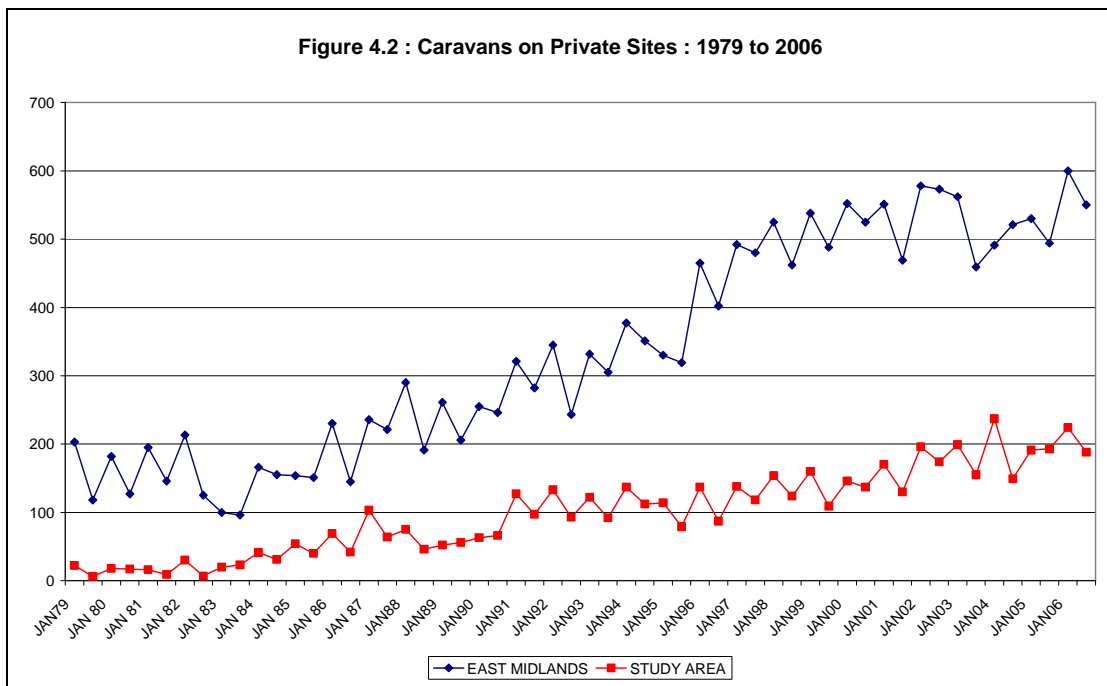
<b>Table 4.1 : Distribution of Caravans by Type of Site : January 2006</b>						
<b>Type of site</b>	<b>Study Area</b>		<b>East Midlands</b>		<b>England</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
(1) Socially rented site	80	21	366	29	6,636	42
(2) Private site	224	59	600	48	5,838	37
(3) Unauthorised – Gypsies' own land: tolerated	29	8	64	5	714	5
(4) Unauthorised – Gypsies' own land: not tolerated	10	3	99	8	1,440	9
(5) 'Unauthorised development' = (3)+(4)	39	10	163	13	2,154	14
(6) Unauthorised – other land: tolerated	28	7	80	6	438	3
(7) Unauthorised – other land: not tolerated	8	2	48	4	680	4
(8) 'Unauthorised encampment' = (6)+(7)	36	9	128	10	1,118	7
Total unauthorised = (5)+(8)	75	20	291	23	3,272	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15,746</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Counts, Communities and Local Government

4.5 Figure 4.1 shows the trends for caravans on socially rented (council) sites in the Study Area and the East Midlands Region. In the Study Area, the number of caravans on socially rented sites has fluctuated since 1979, but broadly rose to a peak in the mid 1990s, fell in the late 1990s and has since remained broadly stable at a level above that of 1979. There were 80 caravans counted in January 2006 compared with 51 in January 1997 – an increase of 57%. The regional trend has been much more strongly upwards over the period as a whole, suggesting that social site provision started relatively early in the Study Area.

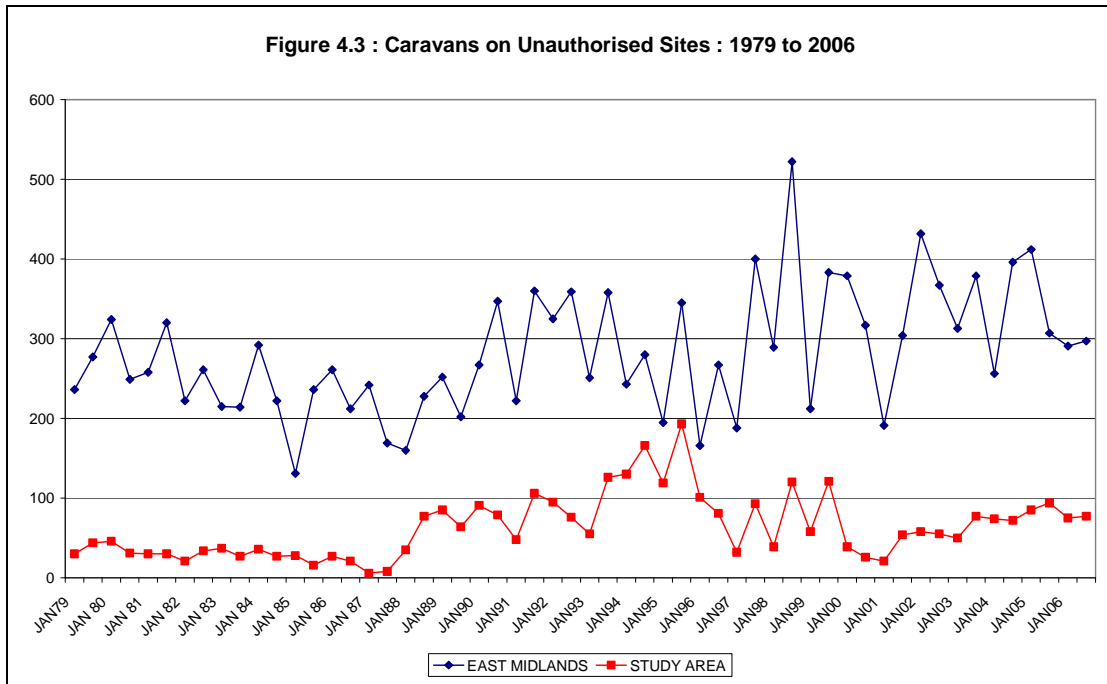


4.6 Figure 4.2 shows caravans on authorised private sites. In this case the trend, both for the Study Area and the Region is clearly upwards over the period. In the Study Area, the Count shows 224 caravans on private sites in January 2006 compared with only 22 in 1979, an increase of 918%.

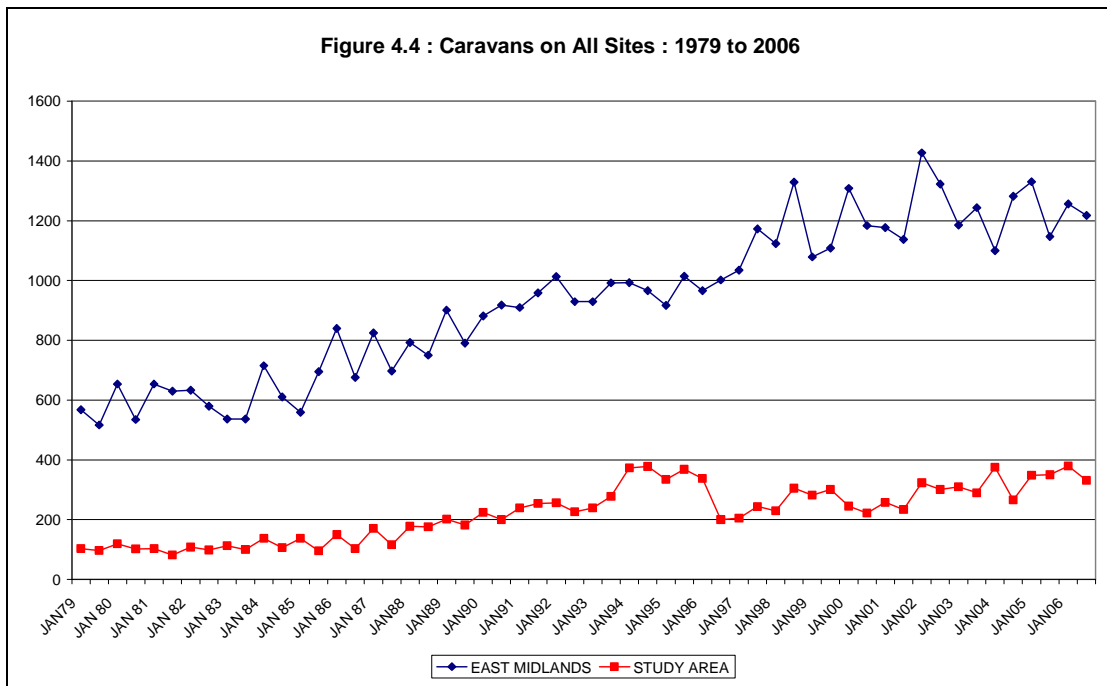


4.7 Figure 4.3 shows caravans on unauthorised sites (both unauthorised developments and encampments). The seasonal fluctuations are clearly marked, particularly at regional level. The longer term trends in the Study Area show a peak in the mid 1990s, followed by a decline and rise to a secondary peak in January 1999. The pattern in the 2000s seems to be one of gradual increase which may have slowed in the most recent years. The

Study Area total caravans in January 1997 was 30 compared with 77 in 2006, an increase of 157%.



4.8 The final graph (Figure 4.4) shows caravans on all types of site. The regional line shows a fairly constant upward trend over the period until the early 2000s when numbers appear to have stabilised or started to decline. In the Study Area, peak figures were reached in the mid 1990s (378 caravans in July 1994), fell and then resumed an upward trend to the present. In January 1979 there were 103 caravans, compared with 379 in January 2006, an increase of 268% (more than tripling).



4.9 Taken as a whole, the graphs indicate past growth in caravan numbers both at Study Area and regional levels with little to suggest that growth will not be continued in future. The main element in growth in the Study Area has been the increase in caravan numbers on private sites, and this shows no signs of diminishing.

### **Socially Rented Sites**

4.10 Socially rented (council) sites make a relatively low contribution to overall caravan numbers in the Study Area. There are 3 sites: Aston Firs (20 double pitches) and Hemington (1 double pitch) owned and managed by Leicestershire County Council, and Meynells Gorse (21 double pitches) owned and managed by Leicester City Council. The sites are shown on Map 1 on page vi above. All pitches are residential rather than for transit use. Hemington dates from 1968, Meynells Gorse from 1973 and Aston Firs from 1978. No site has been provided in the last 30 years despite several attempts to find suitable locations, especially for transit sites. Hemington is occupied by a single family and its future will be reviewed if/when that family moves.

4.11 Aston Firs and Meynells Gorse together accommodate just under 150 people (Table 4.2). There are combined waiting lists of 48 applicants (it is not possible to identify any double counting but this is likely to be small). About 5 pitches a year become available for re-letting and will be let through allocation policies which give priority to those in greatest need or who have waited longest. Site managers do not have discretion to vary offers for ethnicity or perceived 'compatibility' of the applicant in relation to existing site residents (although there is the possibility of excluding a potential applicant for Aston Firs on the grounds that they might '*adversely affect the continuing harmony of other residents at the site*'). Pitch allocations to families from different ethnic groups have led to tensions, and to vandalism and damage to pitches in the past at Aston Firs. Both sites require a deposit from newcomers. Residents are permitted up to 13 weeks absence in a year for travelling, and can have visitors with prior approval for short periods if there is space.

<b>Table 4.2 : Summary of Management Information : Aston Firs and Meynells Gorse</b>		
<b>Factor</b>	<b>Aston Firs</b>	<b>Meynells Gorse</b>
Number of pitches	20	21
Number of residents	54	89
- adults	40	54
- children	14	35
Waiting list	18	30
Pitch vacancies	1pa normal; 5 in 2006 exceptional	Av. 3.6pa 2001/02 to 2005/06
Rent/charges	Deposit bond £100 Licence fee £42.24 Supporting People £6.83 Water £8.56 Total £57.63 Council tax band A	Damage deposit £100 Licence fee £59.34 Water £5 Council tax band A
Allocation policy	Points scheme giving priority according to greatest need and waiting time	Points based on time on list and if on unauthorised sites in City or County (lower points)
Absence for travelling	Up to 13 weeks in any 12 months	Up to 13 weeks in any 12 months
Visitors	2 weeks by prior arrangement with signed temporary licence	Prior approval required, major family events (birth, death etc)
Rating – condition	Very good	'Reasonable' and well-tended. Capital investment since 1997
Rating – resident satisfaction	Mixed and variable	Very good, assessed annually; residents want more spent on repairs
Rating – complaints from neighbours	None	None unless vehicles block accesses
Management issues	Pitch allocation issues, family disputes, teenager behaviour, enforcement issues, arrears recovery, HB does not meet licence fee	'Doubling-up', horses, undesirable visitors, division English/Irish but no real conflict

### **Residents' Views of Socially Rented Sites from the Survey**

4.12 The survey involved 13 respondents spread across all 3 sites. It proved difficult to get site residents to agree to be interviewed, and it may be that the sample is slightly biased to those with critical views of their site (particularly

Meynells Gorse where the survey findings differ from the manager's assessment given in Table 4.2 above).

### Living Units and Living Space : Socially Rented Sites

- 4.13 12 respondents provided details of the number of caravans they had:
- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1 trailer/caravan                          | 5 respondents |
| 2 trailers/caravans                        | 3 respondents |
| 3 trailers/caravans                        | 1 respondent  |
| 1 mobile home/chalet + 1 trailer/caravan   | 2 respondents |
| 1 mobile home/chalet + 2 trailers/caravans | 1 respondent  |

The average number of living units was 1.75.

- 4.14 25% of respondents (3/12) said that this did not give them enough space for their family's needs. 2 said they needed more caravans and 1 that they needed both more and bigger caravans to meet their family's needs.

### The Plot: Facilities and Amenity Units : Socially Rented Sites

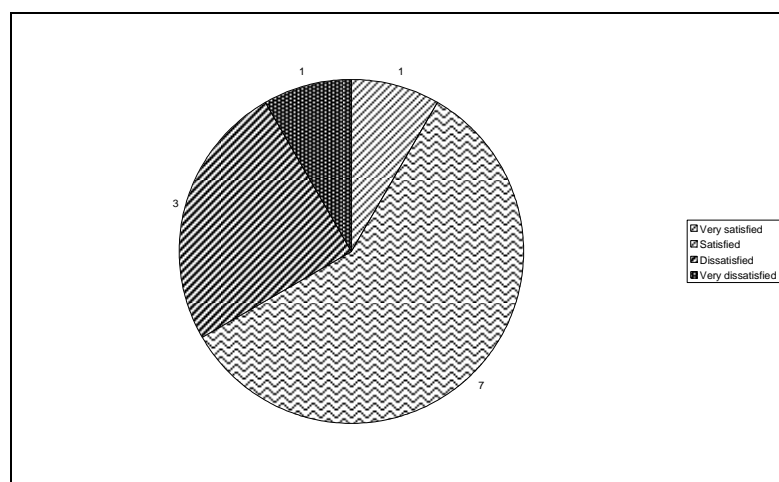
- 4.15 All respondents on socially rented sites had individual amenity blocks, most with bath as well as shower and WC. Two-thirds of respondents said that they had laundry and kitchen facilities in their amenity unit. The main criticism was over the size of the unit rather than missing amenities 43% (3/7) said it was too small for their family's needs.

- 4.16 58% of respondents (7/12) thought that their plot was too small for their family's needs. The main problem seems to be parking space which means it can be dangerous for children to play.

### The Site : Socially Rented Sites

- 4.17 Figure 4.5 shows satisfaction with the site overall. Dissatisfaction was particularly apparent on Meynells Gorse where an eviction had been carried out shortly before the interviews.

**Figure 4.5 : Resident Satisfaction with Socially Rented Sites**



4.18 Things identified as most liked about the site included:

- it is permanent
- the people on the site
- convenient location close to family and the motorway
- helpful site managers

Particular dislikes mentioned were to do with location (railway line and 'swamp'), conditions and design (*'it's horrible, like a prison with fences everywhere'*), and site safety (rats, broken glass and nowhere for children to play). 4 respondents had some concerns for their family's safety on site, referring especially to traffic, lack of lights and rubbish. Despite dissatisfaction expressed by some respondents, very few site improvements were suggested. One wanted space for children to play and one wanted to make the site *'greener and better maintained'*.

4.19 Responses to questions about site facilities can be summarised:

- 5 said there is nowhere for children to play safely; all would like such provision
- 11 said there were no work areas on the site, but only 1 would like work areas to be provided (Leicester City report that work areas are provided for each pitch at Meynells Gorse, but this seems not to be recognised by residents)
- 12 said that grazing areas were not provided; 3 said they would like them to be provided
- 6 said that Gypsies and Travellers can visit with trailers; most thought it should be possible to have visitors
- most respondents accessed shops, post office and health centre by car; many seemed uncertain about whether it is possible to use public transport

4.20 The majority of respondents thought their site about the right size (62%) and about right in occupancy (69%). No-one thought that their site should be extended.

4.21 Table 4.3 summarises answers rating the sites on various factors. As can be seen, site management gets the highest rating.

<b>Table 4.3 : Site Ratings on Factors : Socially Rented Sites</b>			
	State of repair	Way it is managed	Location
Good	4	6	5
Fair	7	4	6
Poor	2	1	2

Note : The figures represent number of respondents; totals differ because not all respondents gave ratings on all factors.

4.22 In summary, respondents were generally satisfied, but not enthusiastic, about their socially rented sites. The main issue was size of pitch and, to a

lesser extent, size of amenity unit. This suggests that future site design should allow more space to meet resident expectations.

## Private Sites

4.23 This section looks at private sites, including those currently without planning permission (unauthorised developments). It proved quite difficult to draw up a definitive list of private sites in the Study Area, with slightly different numbers being given by the County Traveller Sites and Liaison Officer (on a confidential basis) and district representatives in the county area. The discrepancy particularly affects small unauthorised developments and amounted to fewer than 10 pitches across the Study Area. Some 'unauthorised developments' comprise trailers at the rear of houses and caravans may not always be present. Their status depends on their occupancy (whether or not by the householder) and the length of time they are present. These represent a particular type of 'site' about which very little is known. We have tried to include known cases where trailers are fairly consistently present, and where the occupants are thought not to be members of the householder's immediate family. It is important to note that some unauthorised developments are 'tolerated' in practice if not formally.

4.24 It proved difficult to establish the pitch capacity of all private sites. The informality of unauthorised arrangements is one factor. More significant numerically, many of the sites offering rented pitches in the Study Area are not divided into formal pitches. A planning permission for 20 caravans could mean 20 families, 10 families each with 2 caravans or many other combinations. In making calculations of pitches/families on such sites we have used survey figures for the number of caravans per family, but must stress that arrangements can and will change over time.

4.25 Table 4.4 summarises our estimate of private sites and pitches/families in December 2006 by local authority and tenure. This shows an estimate of 210 pitches/families on authorised private sites across the Study Area and 32 on unauthorised developments. A small number of the authorised pitches are designated for transit rather than residential use (up to 30). Two of the sites included in Table 4.4 were not occupied at the time of the survey having received planning permission very recently. Together these factors reduce the number of authorised private residential pitches/families to about **180** across the Study Area. 180 is, therefore, the base figure used in need assessments in Chapter 11.



<b>Table 4.4 : Estimated Private Sites and Pitches by Status by Local Authority</b>																		
Status	Blaby		Charnwood		Harborough		Hinckley & Bosworth		Melton		North West Leicestershire		Oadby & Wigston		Leicester		Rutland	
	Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch			Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch	Site	Pitch
Full pp	5	45	-	-	7	38	4	77	-	-	4	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comments on tenure	Majority of pitches are rented				Largest site has owned and rented pitches		About two-thirds rented pitches				Mostly rented pitches							
Temp.pp	4	11	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unauthorised	2	3	1	3	1	7	4	6	-	-	8	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

pp = planning permission

Temp pp = temporary planning permission

4.26 Table 4.4 shows the very uneven nature of current private site provision with sites, authorised and unauthorised concentrated in Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby, North West Leicestershire and Harborough. This is also apparent in Map 1 (page vi) where the clustering of sites in the west of the Study Area is clear. The other important point is the prevalence of rented pitches among the private supply. While it is hard to be quite sure of the breakdown, based on survey findings we estimate that 67% (120/180) of the authorised residential pitches are rented and 33% (60/180) are owned by their occupier. This tenure split has significance for the sorts of families accommodated and their length of stay. While not formally designated for transit use, some private rented pitches may be performing a somewhat similar role. The Study has not collected information about how site owners allocated rented pitches, but the impression is that word of mouth and family networks are important.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Views of Private Sites**

4.27 87 interviews were carried out with people living on private sites across the Study Area. Of these, 19 (22%) owned an authorised pitch or site, 57 (66%) definitely rented their pitch and a further 6 (7%) were not classified but seem likely to rent. 6 of the 19 owners had only a temporary planning permission. In addition 5 interviews (6%) were carried out with owners on unauthorised development sites without planning permission. This section follows a similar order to the section on social rented sites above.

### **Living Units and Living Space : Private Sites**

4.28 The number of living units occupied on authorised sites was as follows:

- 34% of respondents had a single living unit, usually a single trailer or caravan rather than a chalet or mobile home
- 51% had 2 living units, usually 2 trailers or caravans but occasionally a chalet/mobile home plus 1 trailer
- 11% had 3 living units
- 4% had 4 or 5

The average number of living units was 1.9 per family. Of the total living units recorded, the great majority (88%) were trailers or caravans, 10% were chalets or mobile homes and 2% were houses or bungalows which were classed as 'site' accommodation when an integral part of the site.

4.29 Site/pitch owners had, on average, more living units than those on rented pitches (2.3 compared with 1.7), and they were more permanent (26% were either bricks and mortar or a chalet/mobile home compared with 6%). The average number of living units on unauthorised developments was 1.6.

4.30 About a quarter of respondents on authorised private sites said that their living units did not give enough space for family needs. Respondents with too little space needed, variously, a bigger plot, a day room, more or bigger caravans. On unauthorised developments, 4 out of 5 said that their living units gave sufficient space for their family's needs.

### The Plot: Facilities and Amenity Units : Private Sites

4.31 It proved difficult to establish exactly what basic facilities respondents had on some sites, especially those with rented pitches. It is, however, clear that any image, established by socially rented sites, of pitches with amenity units provided for each household does not apply on authorised private sites across the Study Area.

4.32 Table 4.5 pieces together information from several questions in the interview to establish access to basic facilities. Most seriously, 1 respondent had no mains electricity and 5 said they had no water supply provided just for themselves and their family. Many 'amenity blocks' included a toilet only and not a bath or shower. Toilets available were sometimes portaloos rather than WCs. Service provision was higher on owned sites/pitches than on rented pitches, but still not universal. In a small number of instances, respondents were using facilities provided in a bungalow or chalet/mobile home.

Table 4.5 : Access to Basic Facilities on Authorised Private Sites				
		Exclusive to family	Shared access	No access
Water supply	%	94	6	
Mains electricity	%	99	-	1
Domestic rubbish collection	%	98	-	2
Amenity unit/toilet block	%	51	49	
Bath	%	18	1	81
Shower	%	26	28	45
Toilet	%	58	38	4

Base = 82 interviews

4.33 For some respondents, purely in terms of amenity provision, living on a private site was little different from being on the roadside.

*There is no amenity block for their own use. To go to the toilet and have a shower they have to go to the local sports centre. The respondent mentioned that generally they tend to go to the toilet outside the caravan and the young children are constantly having infections because of this. Cooking facilities, heating and space for eating and sitting are all in the van.*

*The respondent goes to the local leisure centre for a shower and use the laundrette to wash clothes.*

4.34 Despite having to resort to such arrangements, only 20% of those without their own amenity unit/toilet block were dissatisfied with provision. Where respondents had their own amenity unit, most thought some facilities were missing – most commonly a bath and/or shower. A small number of respondents wanted a day room or more space generally. About a third of

respondents with an amenity unit/toilet block said that it did not give them enough space for their family's needs.

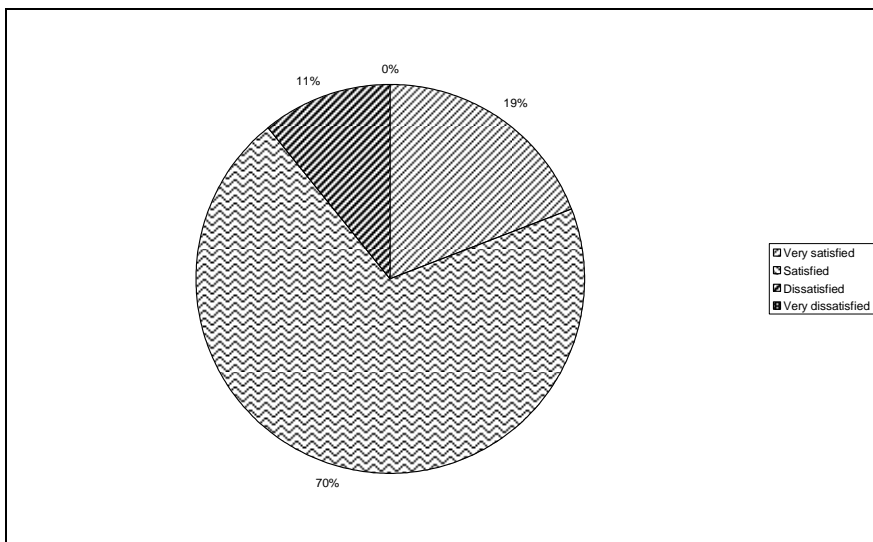
4.35 Amenity provision was better on unauthorised developments where all had water and mains electricity, 4 out of 5 had their own amenity unit and all had exclusive access to a toilet and a shower. Domestic rubbish collection was a problem for 2 respondents who had to take their refuse to a tip. 4 out of 5 were satisfied with amenity provision – one said it needed upgrading.

4.36 Overall, 19% of respondents on authorised private sites thought that their plot was too small for their family's needs (a third of owners). Generally respondents just wanted more space so that caravans could be further apart.

### View on the Site : Private Sites

4.37 Figure 4.6 shows satisfaction with site overall for respondents on authorised private sites. Satisfaction was above average among site/pitch owners. Comparison with Figure 4.5 shows generally higher levels of satisfaction on private sites than on socially rented sites despite the objectively higher amenity provision on the latter. This may indicate different expectations, perhaps because some families on private rented pitches expect to move on quite quickly.

**Figure 4.6 : Resident Satisfaction with Authorised Private Sites**



4.38 Likes and dislikes expressed illustrate private site features, but also say something about expectations and experiences elsewhere. The boxed quotations (Box 4.1) show some of the main points expressed. By far the biggest thing liked about their site was to do with the people there – either that they were generally 'nice and friendly', or included family and friends, or were mostly Christians. Other factors mentioned as likes by more than one respondent were, in order of frequency of mention:

The site is safe, including there are no 'rough' people  
 The site is quiet and peaceful  
 It's somewhere to stop  
 Privacy  
 It's my own  
 Convenient for town  
 Access to good schools  
 Not too close to town  
 The landlord is nice

4.39 The largest single group of respondents disliked nothing about their site. By far the biggest specific dislike was absence of showers and having to share toilets. Other dislikes included:

Site is too small/crowded  
 Lack of hard-standing  
 Too isolated/shops too far away  
 Site is dirty  
 Nowhere safe for children to play  
 Racism from villagers

**Box 4.1 : Examples of Things Gypsies and Travellers Liked and Disliked about Private Sites**

**Likes:**

*The children can go out and play and be safe. They mix with other Travellers for culture and family. We can go away in the summer and we won't be vandalised.*

*It is close to Coalville town and they have very good neighbours – they are used to Gypsies living in the area and so are tolerant.*

*The respondent knows people on the site and she knows the owners would not let anyone 'rough' onto the site.*

*It is my land, I own it, so we are not squatting on anyone else's. It is quiet and peaceful.*

**Dislikes**

*Very dirty, not hygienic. No toilets for the number of people on the site. Plots are too small. Nowhere for the kids to play.*

*Racism from the people in the village.*

4.40 1 respondent in 10 on authorised sites had concerns about their family's health on the site (none had such concerns on unauthorised developments). Only one such concern was to do with physical conditions – in this instance bad toilets affecting health. All the others were to do with people, either other site residents or trouble from neighbours. Some comments were related to one site where there had been a major incident involving guns shortly before

the fieldwork. One form of social concern is summed up in the following:

*As the site is mixed with different families and there are a lot of strangers coming and going on the site.*

4.41 Responses to questions about site facilities can be summarised:

- 42% said that there was nowhere on site where children can play safely, and 90% would like such space (better on unauthorised developments where 4 out of 5 said their was safe play space)
- 92% said there were no work areas on the site, but only 8% of these would like work areas to be provided (work areas available on 2 out of 5 unauthorised developments)
- 80% said that grazing areas were not provided; 18% of these said they would like them to be provided (4 out of 5 respondents on unauthorised sites said there were grazing areas)
- 69% said that it was possible for Gypsies and Travellers to visit them with trailers, if there was room at the time. Where visiting was possible, most respondents were happy about it; where it was not allowed/possible, most, but not all, would like to be able to have visitors
- Respondents normally accessed shops, post office and health centre by car, although around 1 in 8 normally walked (2 in 5 on unauthorised sites); very few appear to regularly use public transport although taxis were mentioned occasionally

4.42 The majority of respondents (83%) thought that their site was about the right size, and 85% thought the site was about right in occupancy.

Respondents were fairly evenly split between those who thought that the site should be extended (49%) and those who thought that it should not (51%).

Almost two-thirds of owners would like to extend their site to provide additional pitches. Reasons for advocating expansion were that it would provide 'more company' and that there was a general need for more pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on the roadside or newly forming families.

Reasons for arguing against expansion were that the site was big enough now; one noted: 'you don't know who will move on to the site'.

4.43 Table 4.6 summarises answers rating the sites on various factors.

Ratings are generally favourable, with a small minority rating their site as poor on any of the factors. State of repair gets the lowest ratings. These ratings are consistently higher than those given to socially rented sites (Table 4.3).

<b>Table 4.6 : Site Ratings on Factors : Authorised Private Sites</b>			
	State of repair	Way it is managed	Location
Sample number	76	62	79
	%	%	%
Good	61	73	68
Fair	33	23	27
Poor	7	5	5

4.44 Suggested improvements to sites, in order of importance were:

- better provision of toilet and bathing amenities (more said that they would like their own facilities than wanted bigger/better/ more shared facilities)
- the site should be bigger (to accommodate more trailers, or too have more space for current residents)
- better hard-standings and/or road surfaces
- a safe play area for children
- better repairs and/or a clean up of the site

#### **Private Sites - Comments**

4.45 A particular feature of private site provision in the Study Area is the high proportion of rented pitches. This affects the role sites play and, as will be shown in Chapters 7 and 8, affects demographic characteristics and mobility of residents. Amenity provision on many sites is objectively poor, but residents are generally content. Social advantages – reflected in ‘the people’ as the main thing liked – outweigh any physical disadvantages for most residents. Satisfaction and ratings are higher on private than on socially rented sites. There are, however, ways in which sites could be improved especially through the provision of more/better toilet and bathing amenities.

## 5. FINDINGS : GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN HOUSING

5.1 It is not known precisely how many Gypsies and Travellers live in bricks and mortar housing in the Study Area. The Census does not identify Gypsies and Travellers, and they are not distinguished in social landlords' ethnic records and monitoring. The best estimate, bringing together information from local authorities and health authorities, is that at least 185 families live in housing of all tenures, but this could be a significant under-estimate. The authorities with most housed Gypsies and Travellers are thought to be Leicester, North West Leicestershire, Harborough and Hinckley & Bosworth. There are likely to be Gypsies and Travellers in most or all authorities in small numbers, including in the private sector.

### Perceptions of Housing

5.2 In all, 29 interviews were carried out with people living in houses not closely associated with caravan sites. Tenure was:

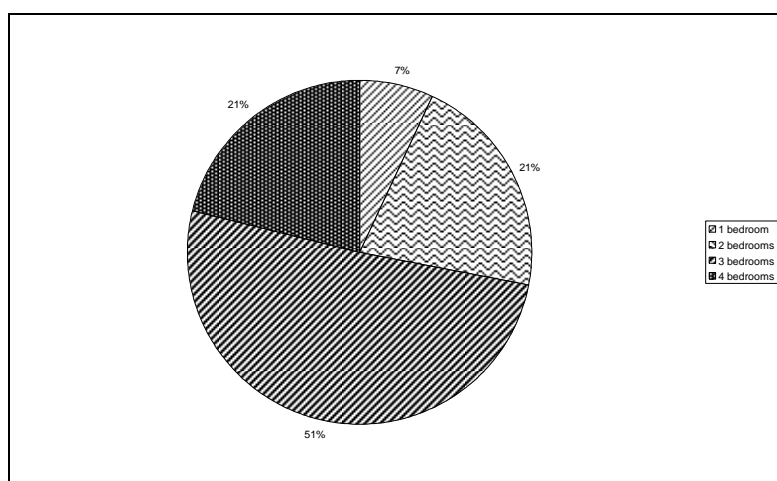
Owner-occupier :	7 (24%)
Council tenant :	16 (55%)
Housing association tenant :	5 (17%)
Private tenant :	1 (3%)

These numbers are too small to allow reliable disaggregation by tenure.

### The Bricks and Mortar Dwelling

5.3 Figure 5.1 shows the number of bedrooms respondents had. Almost three-quarters had 3 or more.

**Figure 5.1 : Number of Bedrooms : Housed Gypsies and Travellers**



5.4 Comparing household size with number of bedrooms shows that only 1 family (10 people in a 3 bedroom house) had an occupancy rate of more than 2 people per bedroom – this crude measure makes no allowance for gender and age. 28% of respondents said that they did not have enough bedrooms

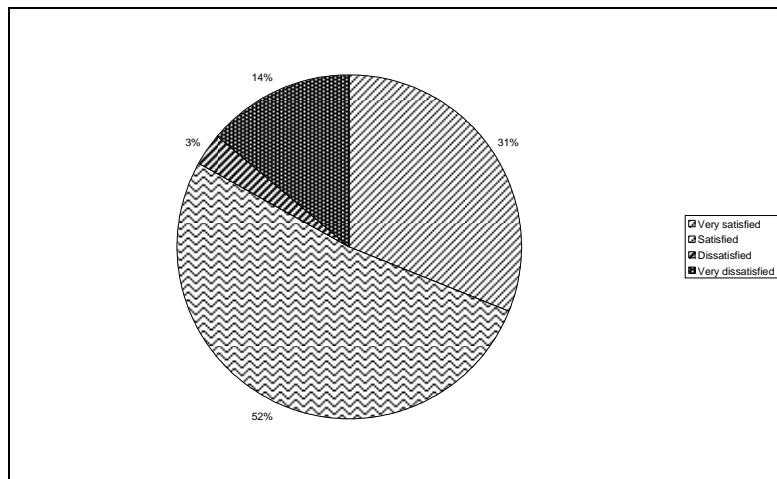


for their family's needs. At least 2 families also had trailers parked at their home; in one case this was regularly used as a bedroom and in another it was used by all members of the family when they are *'fed up of being inside the house'*. When asked what improvement they would like, 5 respondents said that they would like the house to be bigger, and 2 specifically referred to wanting to be able to park a trailer to use for sleeping.

5.5 90% of respondents were living in a house, and 10% in a bungalow. No-one was living in a flat or maisonette. No specific questions were asked about house design, but when asked about desired improvements, some wanted bigger windows or more windows (perhaps to reduce the claustrophobia of living in bricks and mortar).

5.6 Satisfaction levels with the house/bungalow overall were high – indeed in terms of the proportion saying they were very satisfied, levels were higher than expressed for either socially rented or private sites.

**Figure 5.2 : Satisfaction with House or Bungalow**



5.7 Table 5.1 shows ratings of the home on various factors. Location scores highest. A significant minority rated the way their home was managed as poor (all council tenants). While not specifically asked why, one volunteered comments about the state of the home and getting anything done about it, and another reported problems over getting permission to park a trailer.

<b>Table 5.1 : Ratings of the House/Bungalow on Factors</b>			
	State of repair	Way it is managed	Location
Sample number	29	22	29
	%	%	%
Good	62	64	76
Fair	24	14	21
Poor	14	23	3

5.8 A third of respondents said that it was possible for Gypsies and Travellers with trailers to visit them. Respondents fell into 3 roughly equal categories:

those who said that visits were possible, but would be a problem if extended either because of planning constraints or neighbour complaints; those who were quite happy that visitors were not allowed; and those who would like visitors to be allowed. The quotation below shows how restrictions on visitors can lead to unauthorised encampments:

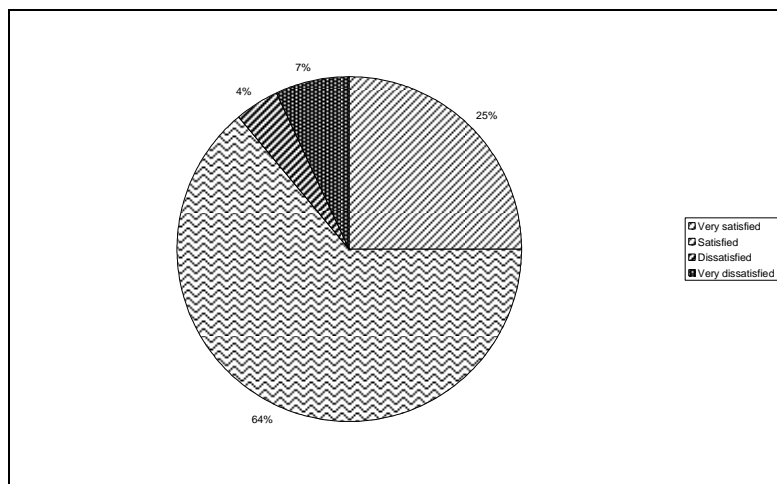
*Not being able to have friends and family visit with trailers is a problem. As they have nowhere to stay they end up on illegal sites. It would be good to be able to have them visit for short periods of time.*

### The Estate/Area : Housed Gypsies and Travellers

5.9 The majority of respondents rated their home well in terms of its location (Table 5.1). It is clear that Gypsies and Travellers in housing are much more likely than those on sites to access shops, health services and post office either on foot or by bus. More walked or went by bus to such services than drove, and at least half said that they were accessible by public transport from where they lived. In this sense, housing proves more 'sustainable' than site accommodation.

5.10 Satisfaction with the estate/ neighbourhood was also high, with only about 1 in 10 expressing dissatisfaction.

**Figure 5.3 : Satisfaction with the Estate/Neighbourhood : Housed Gypsies and Travellers**



5.11 Most (58%) said there was somewhere for children to play safely. A third had some concerns for their family's safety; 3 people referred to traffic problems and dangerous roads, 3 felt they could not let their children out in the estate for fear of their '*mixing in the wrong circles*'.

5.12 Most of the things liked and disliked about living here were to do with the area rather than the house itself. Amongst their likes, respondents mentioned access to schools and shops or the countryside, and '*peace and quiet*'. Neighbours were also important and the fact that the respondent was

accepted. Some (but not all) liked having family or other Travellers close by. Some just liked not having to keep moving and appreciated the facilities a house provides. Most dislikes tended to be the obverse of the likes – bad neighbours or a ‘rough’ rather than a quiet area. Some contrasted living in a house adversely to the community feeling of a site, and some just missed travelling. Overall, more people identified things liked than disliked about their home. Box 5.1 gives a flavour of the often conflicting views expressed. Overall, several interviewees appear ambivalent about living in bricks and mortar although satisfaction rates are generally high.

**Box 5.1 : Examples of Things Liked and Disliked about their Home :  
Gypsies and Travellers Living in Housing**

**Likes:**

*I have been here a while so I'm known now and the people are OK. It's near the bus routes so I can get anywhere.*

*Good neighbours, close to family and close to amenities.*

*It's private. Sites are too much trouble. We want to be on our own here. School and shops are here. No other Gypsies or Travellers as neighbours to give me a bad reputation.*

*Peace and quiet - living in harmony.*

*Respondent now accepts that she has to be in a house. She has nowhere else to go, there are no sites, so she just puts up with it.*

*The house means stability and baths! Schooling. It is much easier for regular doctor and dentists.*

**Dislikes:**

*Anti-Traveller people on this road. They call us 'dirty gypo's'. We have agro with people.*

*The estate is rough and there is a lot of anti-social behaviour.*

*It is lonely. I want to look through a window and see my friends and family like when I was on the site.*

*Miss the travelling life, the caravans etc.*

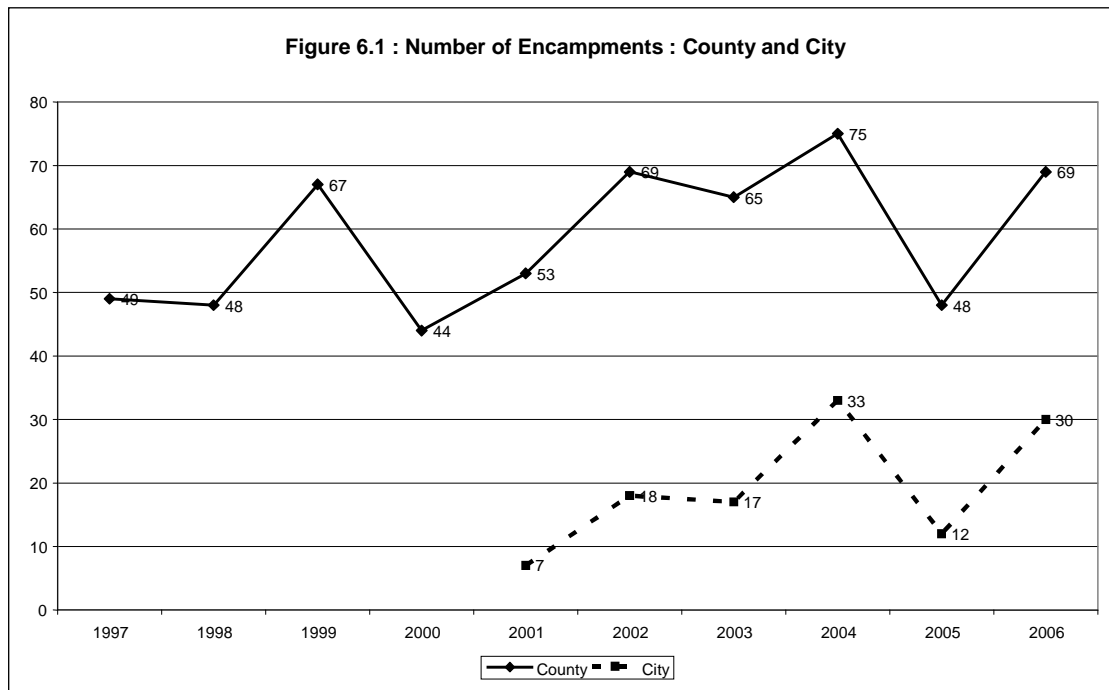
## 6. FINDINGS : 'ROADSIDE' UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

6.1 Information on roadside encampments comes from records kept by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council as well as from survey interviews. This section looks first at numbers and trends in encampments from records and then at survey findings on the actual experience of living on unauthorised encampments.

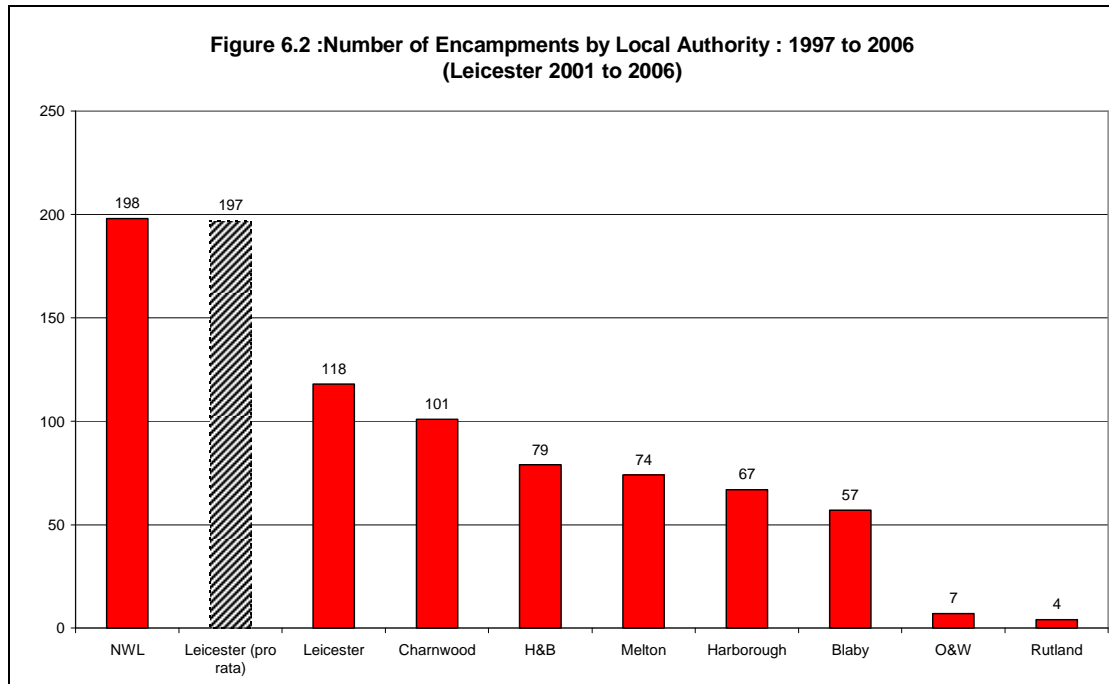
### Unauthorised Encampments : Numbers and Trends

6.2 Information has been provided by the County Council and Leicester City Council on encampments since 1997 (County) and 2001 (City). Information includes date and duration of encampment, location, land ownership, number of caravans and ethnicity of those involved. Not all details are available for all cases. The analysis below looks at each of these aspects with the objective of informing an analysis of need for transit accommodation in the Study Area. The County data include some, but not all, unauthorised encampments in Rutland over the period. Rutland are unable to provide comparable details although more detailed information on recent Caravan Count returns has been provided.

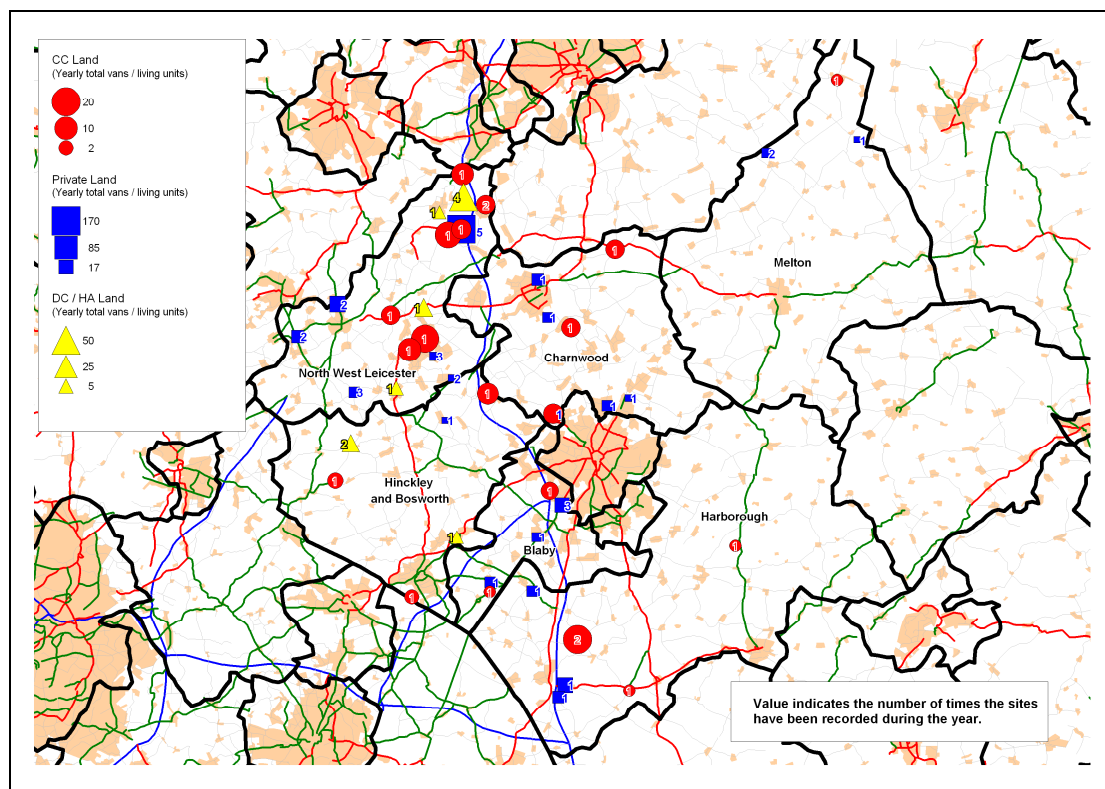
6.3 A total of 587 encampments were recorded in the County area and Rutland between 1997 and 2006, with a further 118 in the City since 2001. Trends over time are shown in Figure 6.1. It shows a generally upward trend in encampments each year, but with a sharp fall in both County and City in 2005 (to 60) with figures for 2006 (at 99) not quite back to 2004 levels (108).



6.4 The **location of encampments** across the Study Area is far from even. Figure 6.2 shows encampment numbers by local authority area. The Leicester figure is for 2001 onwards only (compared to 1997 onwards for other areas). The shaded column shows Leicester figures for the whole longer period assuming a similar annual average as for the shorter period for which data are available for the City.



6.5 The main areas experiencing encampments are North West Leicestershire and the City. North West Leicestershire had almost twice as many encampments over the period as the next nearest district (Charnwood). Oadby & Wigston and Rutland had very few, sporadic encampments. More detailed locations of encampments in 2006 in the County area are shown in Map 2 (overleaf). Encampments mapped were short-term and the map excludes long-standing encampments in Harborough, North West Leicestershire and Rutland. Important clusters of transient encampments can be seen around Donington and Coalville in the north and on the western fringes of Leicester. The latter, with its southerly extension appears to be related to the M1. Adding in 30 encampments experienced in the City in 2006 would clearly reinforce Leicester's significance as focus for unauthorised encampments.

**Map 2 : Location of Unauthorised Encampments in County Area : 2006**

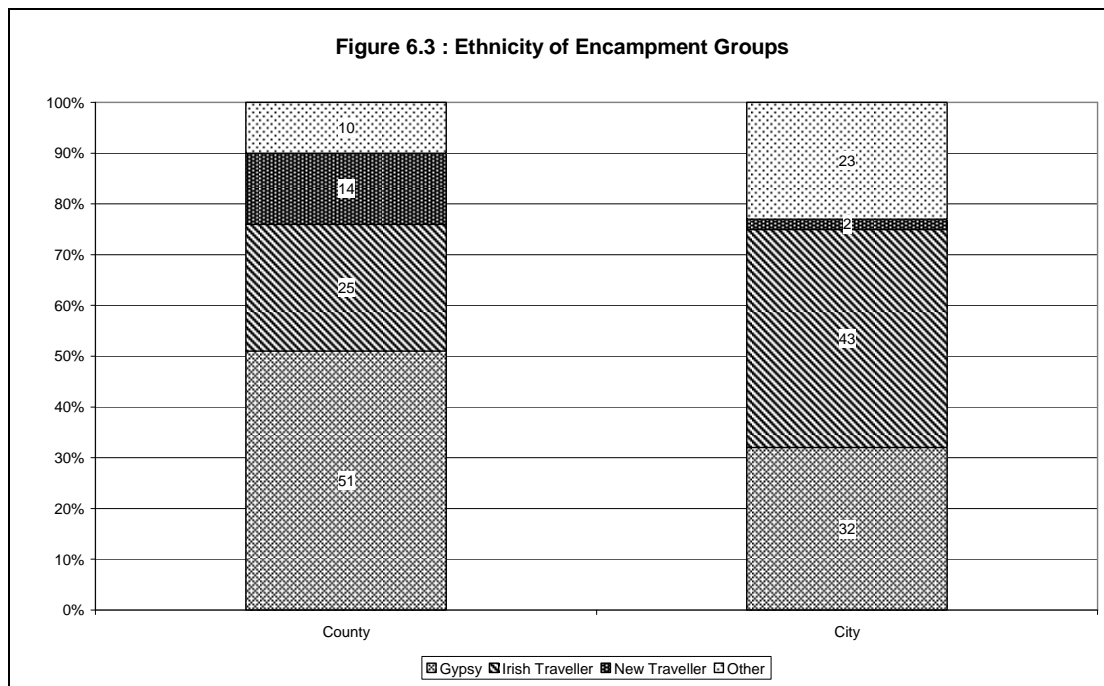
6.6 Map 2 distinguishes 2006 encampments by **land ownership**. CC is County Council; DC/HA land is either owned by a District Council or the Highways Agency. Between 2001 and 2006 across the Study Area as a whole, 69% of encampments were on public land and 31% on private land. The proportion on private land was higher in the County than the City, and appeared to be rising over time.

6.7 **Duration of encampment** is partly a function of how long Gypsies and Travellers want to stay in an area and partly the speed with which enforcement action is taken, which in turn depends on the nature of the area encamped and the behaviour of the group involved. The average duration of encampments in the County area and Rutland between 1997 and 2006 was 6.6 weeks; in the City between 2001 and 2006 it was 6.1 weeks excluding 3 extremely long-standing encampments. The average duration of encampments has decreased over time since 1997.

6.8 Table 6.1 summarises details of **encampment size**, including average size, largest and smallest encampments. The *Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland* (see paragraph 16.21) refers to the possibility of tolerating encampments by groups with up to 6 caravans. The table indicates that the majority of encampments were of this size in both the County and the City. There has been no clear trend in encampment size over time.

<b>Table 6.1 : Summary of Encampment Sizes : County and City Areas</b>		
	Leicestershire 1997-2006	Leicester City 2001-2006
Average encampment size	6.7 caravans	5.1 caravans
Largest encampment	100 caravans	20 caravans
Smallest encampment	1 caravan	1 caravan
% of encampments with up to 6 caravans	69%	75%

6.9 Ethnicity of groups involved in encampments are significantly different between the County area and the City. As Figure 6.3 shows, around half of groups were classed as English or Gypsies in the County compared with a third in the City. Irish groups are relatively more frequent in the City than the County (43% and 25% respectively). New Travellers are more common in the County than the City, although their numbers have diminished significantly since around 2000. The 'other' group comprises Scottish Travellers and occasional groups from overseas, but most significantly mixed groups, usually of English and Irish, which are a feature particularly of the City, but which were also observed in the County area in 2006.



6.10 In the County area, districts differed in the ethnic profile of their encampments. This is shown in tabular form in Table 6.2 where features of the districts experiencing significant numbers of encampments are expressed in terms of difference from the County average.

<b>Table 6.2 : Unauthorised Encampments : Ethnic Characteristics by District</b>	
Blaby	No New Travellers; other groups therefore higher than average
Charnwood	Above average New Travellers and 'Other' (mainly Scottish Travellers)
Harborough	Above average Irish Travellers
Hinckley & Bosworth	Above average English/Gypsies
Melton	Above average New Travellers
North West Leicestershire	Above average Irish Travellers and 'Other' (mainly mixed English/Irish groups)
Leicester	Above average Irish Travellers and 'Other' (mainly mixed English/Irish groups)

6.11 Overall, this analysis of records of unauthorised encampments suggests, purely on a trend basis, that encampments are likely to continue at least around 2006 rates. Clustering of encampments indicate possible areas of search for transit provision. Most groups are small, but in most areas are of differing ethnicity, perhaps indicating that a number of smaller sites might meet requirements better than a single larger site even in one general locality. While average stays are short at present, it is not clear to what extent this is a consequence of enforcement rather than choice, or what the effect of formal provision with fixed maximum stays might be.

### **Living on Unauthorised Encampments : Gypsy and Traveller Views**

6.12 61 interviews were carried out with people on 'roadside' encampments or, in 2 cases, on an authorised site as a temporary visitor. Questions were asked about numbers of caravans and about the stopping place and access to services.

#### **Number of Caravans : Unauthorised Encampments**

6.13 The number of caravans per family on the roadside was:

1 caravan	39%
2 caravans	41%
3 caravans	15%
4 caravans	5%

The average number was 1.9 caravans per family.

6.14 Looked at 'objectively' many families would seem to be overcrowded. Among the 'permanent' Travellers (those with no base elsewhere), 55% had more than 2 people per caravan, and 27% had more than 3 people per caravan. Families of 10 and 12 were living in 2 caravans. This is, however, at variance with perceptions. Only 28% said the number of caravans did not give enough space for their family's needs – and this did not include the large

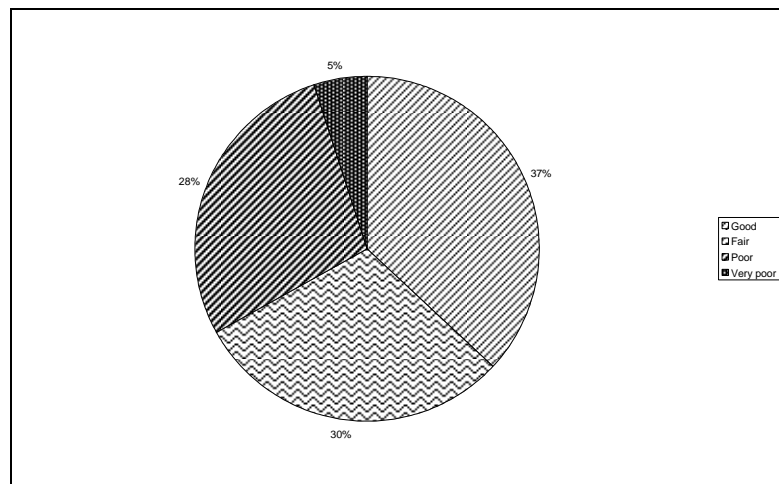


families noted above. Those who said that they had insufficient space generally said that they needed both more and larger caravans.

### Stopping Places

6.15 Figure 6.4 shows how respondents rated their current location as a place to stop. Over two-thirds thought it either good or fair. 39% had some concerns about their family's safety on the stopping place. Proximity to main roads and traffic were by far the most significant concerns.

**Figure 6.4 : Rating of Roadside Stopping Places**



6.16 The survey tried to get a picture of how people on the roadside managed for basic amenities and services. 2 respondents (3%) were staying on an authorised site and had access to electricity, water and shared toilets there. For the others:

- **Water** : mainly from garages/service stations, secondarily from family or friends, or *'anywhere we can'*
- **Electricity** : mainly from a generator; 10% had no electricity and 13% had solar panels, sometimes complementary to a generator
- **Toilets** : fairly even split between public toilets and shops/garages, with 21% saying nowhere
- **Bath/shower** : mainly leisure centre (54%), followed by none (23%), motorway service station (12%) and within the caravan (8%)
- **Rubbish disposal** : 10% seem to have had rubbish collected while the rest disposed of it themselves or left it

Around 6 in 10 said that their access to services was satisfactory (or at least 'OK'). Often the answer was prefaced by comments about it being what they were used to.

6.17 These fairly bald statistics conceal some realities of life on the roadside, and respondents' reactions. Box 6.1 gives two specific examples.

<b>Box 6.1 : Examples of Basic Service Provision on the Roadside</b>
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**Water:** garage if they will let them. Not satisfactory as they can never carry enough. It's a struggle.

**Electricity:** generator; expensive and packs in quickly.

**Toilets:** none. Use the fields. Not satisfactory.

**Bath/shower:** no facilities. If can get into swimming pool will use there. Not satisfactory.

**Rubbish:** no dustbins; nowhere to put it. Burn it. Not satisfactory.

**Water:** mum and dad's house about 12 miles away, or local garages. Fill up storage containers once or twice a week.

**Electricity:** generator. That's OK.

**Toilets:** service station. That's OK.

**Bath/shower:** service station. That's OK.

**Rubbish:** use the tip at Shepshed once a week. OK as they're friendly there. Can't go in van though as need permit, so use car.

6.18 When asked how they accessed shops, health centre/GP and a post office the great majority said that they used a car or were taken by someone else in a car. Almost a fifth said they walked to shops; no-one claimed to use a bus. People seemed unsure whether it was possible to get to these services by public transport, but around 40% said that it definitely was not and most of the remainder did not know. Access to primary and secondary schools was normally irrelevant to interviewees (either having no school-age children, or children not in school or interviewed during school holidays). Where children were attending school, almost all were driven there.

6.19 The picture revealed from these interviews is one of objectively poor conditions and access to basic services apparently being accepted as 'normal' and what is expected from roadside encampment. Locations used normally require access to shops and other services by car and this again seems to be accepted as normal.

## 7. FINDINGS : CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCAL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POPULATION

7.1 This chapter describes the main demographic characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area drawing on survey information.

### The Size of the Local Population

7.2 This most basic question is one of the hardest to answer. There is no simple source of information to draw upon. The Caravan Count only applies to Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans. Our best estimate of the Study Area Gypsy and Traveller population, not including families on transient unauthorised encampments, is summarised in Table 7.1 which also gives the derivation of the estimates.

<b>Table 7.1 : Estimated Study Area Gypsy and Traveller Population</b>		
Type of accommodation	Estimate	Derivation
Socially rented sites	150	Actual number from records, rounded
Private sites	680	Estimated number of pitches/families (210) multiplied by average household size from the survey
Unauthorised developments	155	Number of pitches/families (32) multiplied by average household size from the survey
Housing	775	Minimum number of families (185) multiplied by average household size from the survey
Long-term unauthorised encampments	55	Encampments which have been 'tolerated' for several years; survey information
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,815</b>	

7.3 We estimate that there are at least 1,815 Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area, with the estimate for housed Gypsies and Travellers possibly being an under-estimate.

### Household Size and Other Characteristics

7.4 The survey attempted to collect information about what would – in the settled community and mainstream needs assessments – be referred to as 'households', that is a group of people or a family who live together and normally share house-keeping and eat together. This concept does not always transfer well to Gypsy and Traveller communities where extended families are sometimes important and where it is common for older unmarried children to have their own caravans as bedrooms alongside the main trailer. It is clear from survey answers that a few respondents have defined their 'family' quite widely. 12 respondents (6 on authorised sites and 6 on roadside encampments) refused to provide any details (6%).

## Household Size

7.5 The average household size across the whole sample is 4.0 persons. The average conceals a wide spread of sizes as shown in Table 7.2. The table shows household size by current accommodation, and summarises 'average' household composition in terms of the number of adults, children (up to 16) and young adults (over 16 but living within another household).

<b>Table 7.2 : Household Size by Type of Accommodation</b>				
Number of people	Authorised sites	Housing	Roadside	Total <sup>(1)</sup>
Sample number	89	29	55	178
	%	%	%	%
One person	9	10	7	8
Two people	20	7	9	15
Three people	22	34	15	21
Four people	26	7	24	21
Five people	9	14	15	12
Six people	7	14	9	10
Seven people	4	7	15	8
Eight or more	2	7	7	5
<b>Average numbers:</b>				
All people	3.6	4.2	4.6	4.0
Adults (over 16)	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.6
Children (0-16)	0.9	1.8	1.5	1.3
Young adults (16+) not heading family	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9

(1) Includes 5 interviews on unauthorised developments

7.6 Household size is smallest on authorised sites, then in housing, and is largest of all among roadside families (in some cases, extended families travelling together may have counted all family members). Average household size on owned sites/pitches is significantly larger (at 4.9) than on social or private rented pitches (both 3.2 persons).

## Household Type

7.7 Table 7.3 shows household type by type of accommodation. Families are classified as follows:

Single person	1 adult
Couple	2 adults, no children or young adults
Young family	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more aged up to 16; no young adults
Older family	All adult family with 1 or more classed as 'young adults'
Mixed family	Family with children up to 16 and young adults
Other	3 or more adults, none classed a young adults

<b>Table 7.3 : Household Type by Type of Accommodation</b>				
Household type	Authorised sites	Housing	Roadside	Total
Sample number	88	29	53	170
	%	%	%	%
Single	9	7	8	8
Couple	15	3	8	11
Young family	27	28	36	30
Older family	30	28	21	26
Mixed family	18	28	26	22
Other	1	7	2	2

7.8 Table 7.3 shows that the profile of households varies with current accommodation:

- Authorised sites accommodate relatively higher proportions of couples and older families
- Housing accommodates relatively higher proportions of mixed families with both younger and older 'children'
- Roadside groups include relatively higher proportions of young families

Bearing in mind potential issues with education, it is interesting that a higher proportion of roadside families include children (62%) than families on sites or in housing.

7.9 This pattern of family type is particularly significant because of the number of young adults not yet heading a household who can expect to form a new family in the near future.

7.10 Respondents (excluding those on the roadside) were asked whether there was anyone not currently with them who lived with them for part of the year. 13 interviewees (8% of respondents) said that there was. In most instances these were members of the close family – sons, daughters, grandchildren, mothers – coming to stay for a short period, sometimes on a regular basis.

7.11 The survey also asked whether there was anyone who would, given the choice, like to live with them but who is not able to. 19 (11% of respondents) said that there was someone who, by choice, would live with them. Descriptions of the circumstances illustrate that some families are living apart because of lack of space and planning permissions limiting the number of caravans on a site. The 'missing' family members were sometimes in housing or on the roadside and/or far away. The following description of the circumstances of one family owning a site is not untypical:

*Mum and dad live in a house in Coalville, they want to move to the site for health reasons, but son and daughter both want own vans and we just don't have permission for more vans on the site. The daughter getting married wants a chalet on the site.*

## Local Connection and Family Links

7.12 Family links are known to be very important to Gypsies and Travellers. The majority of respondents on sites and in houses said that they had relatives living locally:

- 84% of respondents on authorised sites had relatives in the area, either on the same site or elsewhere
- 67% of respondents on authorised sites had relatives living on the same site
- 73% of respondents on authorised sites had relations in the area not on the same site, across all forms of accommodation including housing
- 93% of housed respondents had family locally, mostly in housing or on socially rented sites

Thus the great majority of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing can be seen clearly to 'belong' to the Study Area, potentially forming informal family support and caring networks.

7.13 51% of respondents on the roadside also had relatives living in the area (more commonly on social rented sites). While links were not explicitly established between the presence of relatives and reasons for visiting the Study Area, it is reasonable to assume that any Gypsy and Traveller population will generate visitors who, in the absence of transit accommodation, will stop on unauthorised encampments.

7.14 Comments given in the course of some interviews illustrate the wide scatter of some Gypsy and Traveller families. For example, one woman has sons in Desborough, Peterborough, Cambridge and Chesterfield and a daughter in Evesham. Another has married daughters in Brig (Lincolnshire), Cirencester (Gloucestershire) and Staines. If presence of family members is a reason for choosing where to live, some Gypsies and Travellers will have wide-ranging choices – options may not be between Coalville and Leicester for example, but between Coalville and Bristol, or Leicester and London.

## Ethnicity

7.15 Respondents were offered a number of ethnic categories and asked how they thought of themselves in this respect. Only 2 respondents failed to answer. Answers, sometimes after comment on the appropriateness of the categories, were:

Romany/Gypsy	57%
Traveller	9%
English Traveller	11%
Irish Traveller	20%
New Traveller	3%

Romany/Gypsy is the largest ethnic grouping, followed by Irish Traveller. Thus 77% self-identified within an ethnic group recognised for race relations legislation. A fifth of respondents preferred a fairly neutral term, either Traveller or English Traveller. Only 3% self-identified as a New Traveller; researchers would have classified others as New Travellers but they preferred to be known as 'Travellers' or 'English Travellers'.

## 8. FINDINGS : MOBILITY – HOUSING HISTORIES, MOVEMENT INTENTIONS AND TRAVELLING

8.1 The survey attempted to build up a picture of mobility among local Gypsies and Travellers in the sense of both moving ‘home’ and travelling. In the context of a population group with nomadic traditions and lifestyles this is sometimes an artificial distinction. For example, a woman had moved over the previous year between the sites in different parts of England where two married daughters lived, then come to the site where she was interviewed in the Study Area. Is this moving home or travelling? Mobility, both past and future, is a factor which must be built into needs assessments, especially between different types of accommodation.

8.2 The first section concentrates on housing histories, the second on future movement intentions and the third on travelling.

### Housing History

8.3 Slightly different questions about housing histories were asked of people in different current circumstances, and the findings are presented in separate sub-sections for families on authorised sites, in housing and on the roadside. The brief accounts of housing histories in Box 8.1 illustrate some of the stories given. The predominance of accounts given by housed Gypsies and Travellers reflects their greater willingness to share details of their life.

#### Housing History : Authorised Sites

8.4 A significant proportion of Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised sites in the Study Area had housing histories demonstrating considerable mobility. Length of time at their present site was:

Less than 6 months	23%
6-12 months	20%
1-5 years	32%
Over 5 years	26%

More than half (54%) of those on rented pitches on private sites had been there less than 1 year.

8.5 Previous accommodation, in order of significance, was:

A private residential site	38%
Roadside	22%
A pitch on a family-owned site	13%
A local authority residential site	9%
A transit site	6%
A house or flat	4%
Other	8%

8.6 Family-owned sites previously lived on did not necessarily have planning permission, and may have been subject to enforcement action (2 respondents noted having been at Bulkington, in Nuneaton & Bedworth, where a major,

high profile eviction took place in 2004). This illustrates the fact that enforcement action outside an area can have an impact elsewhere. Answers also reveal considerable mobility between places on private sites.

### **Box 8.1 : Some Example Housing Histories : Gypsies and Travellers**

#### **Respondents on authorised site**

*Was born on the site 16 years ago, never been travelling.*

*The respondent wanted a change and was passing through the area and so decided to stay. They found out about the actual site through somebody they already knew on there.*

*The respondent is unsure why she left her previous accommodation but she came to the area for work. She found out about the site through her family and she picked it as it was the only one with space for her.*

#### **Housed Gypsies and Travellers**

*Respondent was originally on the Birchall Estate in Walsall, then the Blakenhall Estate for 7 months. The family left due to an argument/family feud. They then became homeless and came to Market Harborough as that was where cousins and other family were. They went to the council and to a hostel. They were in a family hostel for 4 months and had a priority card due to the husband's illness. They moved into this address 12 months ago.*

*Respondent was on Meynells Gorse herself from age 6 to 18. Then her parents bought a house, respondent got married and rented a plot with family from age 19 to 26. There were problems on the site due to young children and behaviour, so she went on the roadside. She had her first house after a while but lasted 6 weeks as couldn't have the trailer there. Then she had a corner council house for a year in New Parks until 1995, but she slept in the trailer not the house. She then went on the roadside again, then a council house, then a housing association house for 2.5 years, and then this house for the last 4 years. Issues around putting a van and horse box nearby.*

*Immediately before this house, family were in caravan in Leicester for 1 week. Before that, house in Edinburgh for 7 years, Glasgow 13 years in a caravan, and Ireland with a caravan.*

8.7 53 respondents (out of a potential total of 88) provided specific details of where their previous accommodation had been. Their answers show a wide spread of previous locations through Britain; only about a third had previously been in the Study Area.

8.8 The most frequently mentioned reason for leaving previous accommodation was that the respondent just did not like it any more. This



could include not liking the people, a site warden, or finding the site dirty. The next most common reason was a desire to settle from the roadside.

8.9 By far the most frequently mentioned reason for coming to the area was to be near family. Work was also important and the desire to have '*something different*'. Reasons for choosing the precise site included the fact that it had a place available, and that it was seen as safe and clean. The presence of Christians and a Church was also mentioned. Information about the site came through word of mouth from relatives and friends. These points illustrate the ways in which Gypsies and Travellers in an area can attract others by providing information.

8.10 About two-thirds of respondents saw coming to their current site as a matter of choice rather than lack of opportunity (23%). 12% gave no answer to this question. Those saying there was no alternative (22 in all) were asked what they had been ideally looking for. Several answers were unspecific, but 4 respondents had been looking for land to buy for their own site, 3 for a 'better' site with larger plots and/or better amenities, and 2 would have ideally liked a council site. There were comments to the effect that their ideal either did not exist or was not available in the Study Area.

8.11 Movement between houses and sites is important in accommodation needs assessments. Only 20% of respondents (17 in all) living on authorised sites said that they had ever lived in a house or flat; only 13% of those on rented pitches on private sites had ever lived in a house or flat. Most who had lived in a house had either been born there or had moved there with parents; very few had themselves moved to a house for positive reasons.

8.12 59% of those who had lived in a house said that they had experienced some problem while there. Racism, racist abuse and loneliness were the main problems mentioned. 2 respondents said that they had felt '*caged*' or '*closed in*' in a house. These problems contributed to the decision to leave the house. Other reasons involved family events, for example getting married, or moving after the death of a spouse.

### **Housing History : Families in Housing**

8.13 In contrast to those on authorised sites, all the housed Gypsies and Travellers who said where they had been living immediately before moving to their current address (25 in all) had been in the Study Area. Length of time at their current home was:

Under 1 year	10%
1-5 years	48%
Over 5 years	41%

8.14 Previous accommodation was as follows:

A house or flat	38%
Roadside	24%
Local authority residential site	14%
Private site	10%

Family-owned site	3%
Other	10%

8.15 Respondents mentioned a variety of reasons for moving to their current house. The need to settle from the roadside, eviction from a previous house or site, harassment from site or settled neighbours, and very poor conditions in their previous accommodation were all mentioned to much the same extent. Health reasons were also referred to. Family links and the desire to be near a site were mentioned as reasons for coming to the house or area. While most respondents on sites had heard about their site through word of mouth from family and friends, those moving to houses were more likely to have been in contact with professionals (liaison officers, health workers).

8.16 In contrast to those on authorised sites, the majority of respondents (59%) said that they had moved to their current house because of a lack of options rather than by choice (38%). Where respondents said they had no choice, they had usually been looking for a place on a good site with facilities.

8.17 The majority (71%) of housed respondents had had experience of living on a site (39% on a local authority site, 25% on a private site and 7% on both). The most frequently mentioned site was Meynells Gorse (because of the preponderance of housed interviews in Leicester), but other sites in the Study Area were also mentioned. Other sites lived on included Justin Park in Northamptonshire, and sites in Bedford, Mansfield, Manchester and Dublin.

8.18 Of those with experience of living on a site (20 respondents), just half said that they had experienced some problem there. Most of the problems described were to do with tensions and conflict between site residents when *'the wrong people'* had moved on – some explicitly referred to tensions between English and Irish Travellers in this context. Problems with other site residents were given as the reason for leaving a site, as also were eviction (in 2 instances because the site was closing) and health reasons.

### **Housing History : Families on the Roadside**

8.19 46% of roadside respondents had lived in a house at some time. Most had been there with parents as a child. Having nowhere else to go was the next most frequent reason, closely followed by comfort – one referred to it being easier to be in a house in winter for a family with a lot of children. A few respondents noted specific events like getting married or the death of a family member as the reason for moving to a house. One wanted something different, and another thought *'it would be nice'*.

8.20 About a third who had lived in a house had experienced problems there. These problems included living on rough estates with crime and drugs around; abuse and harassment from neighbours; and general dislike for living in a house – with references to loneliness and feeling closed in by *'four walls'*. 3 respondents said they had been unable to cope financially in a house with debts, electricity bills and so on. In terms of reasons for leaving the house, general dislike of living in a house, feeling enclosed etc was more frequently

mentioned. The desire to get away from crime and drugs in the area was also important.

8.21 Just over half of roadside respondents had lived on a permanent site at some time (24% on a council site, 22% on a private site and 7% on both). When asked why they had moved to a site, the desire for *'something different'* was most frequently mentioned. Getting children into school was important, as were health reasons including pregnancy. Getting off the roadside and having nowhere else to go at the time were also mentioned.

8.22 26% of those who had lived on a site had experienced problems there. In order of frequency of mention, these problems were to do with other site residents, roughness, children fighting, drugs, poor site conditions and lack of facilities, and expense. These contributed to reasons for leaving the site, but simply the desire to move on, to have something different or to move *'because it was summer'* were numerically much more significant. Most respondents had left their permanent site in response to the desire to move on rather than for negative reasons to do with the site itself.

8.23 31% had lived at some time on family-owned land (not necessarily with planning permission). Reasons given for leaving family-owned land included having to leave because of planning enforcement, because a family member sold the land and other more personal reasons (getting married, the site being too small).

8.24 These answers show that families interviewed on the roadside often had a range of experience of living in other forms of more permanent accommodation. A minority had experienced problems while in a house or on a site, but desire to move on, to experience something different, proved much more important. While some GTAAs conclude that Gypsies and Travellers are virtually 'settled' this is much less apparent in the Study Area.

## Future Movement Intentions

8.25 Unfortunately, answers to questions about future movement intentions were often vague, especially among those on authorised sites. Table 8.1 shows movement intentions for authorised sites and housing.

<b>Table 8.1 : Movement Intentions within 5 Years</b>		
	Authorised sites	Housing
Sample number	91	29
	%	%
Want to move	23	24
Do not want to move	23	59
Undecided	54	17

8.26 The main reasons given for wanting to move from authorised sites, in order of frequency of mention, were:

- Comments to the effect that, certainly within 5 years, the respondent would *'feel like a change'*.

- Reasons linked to wanting a place on a better or more secure site; for some this meant getting their own site or land.

Only 7 housed respondents positively wanted to move, and they gave a variety of reasons, including desire to get to a place on a site (mentioned by 3).

## Travelling

8.27 A sequence of questions was included in all questionnaires about travelling. One of the objectives of the research was to identify geographical travelling patterns. This proved impossible because large numbers of interviewees proved unwilling or unable to say where they had travelled from or were intending travelling to. Because of their different lifestyles, it is convenient to present the findings for respondents in permanent accommodation (sites and houses) separately from roadside interviews.

### Travelling by People in Permanent Accommodation

8.28 48% of respondents in permanent accommodation said that they had not travelled (travelled and lived in a caravan or trailer away from this site/house) in the last 12 months. The percentage **not** travelling in the last 12 months varied sharply by type of accommodation:

Social rented site	71%
Rented house	64%
Owned site/pitch	53%
Owner-occupied house	43%
Rented private pitch	38%
Unauthorised site without planning permission	0%

8.29 About a third (37%) of respondents said that they had travelled less over the past few years. Reasons given for the change included old age and poor health, desire for uninterrupted schooling for the children and inability to find places to stop. This last was felt to have got worse in recent years. Some now had other ties preventing them from travelling as they used to. Some no longer had a caravan to travel in.

8.30 59 respondents had travelled in the year. Most of these had been away for less than 3 months, although about 1 in 10 had been away for 6 months or more and a few spent most of the year travelling. Most who travelled had made several trips, with an average of about 3.5 in the year. Travelling for respondents with permanent accommodation is now largely, although not exclusively, a summer activity. It is often a social event in that more than half normally travel either with other family members (beyond their immediate family) or other families.

8.31 This is also clear from the reasons given for travelling. Visiting family and friends was important. Visiting events – fairs, horse fairs and Christian Conventions and Missions – was also given by many as the reasons for travelling, and these involve meeting other Gypsies and Travellers. A minority specifically mentioned travelling for work, but for the majority travelling is a

holiday. Linking all these aspects, and mentioned most frequently, was some form of words indicating that this is the culture and way of life to be kept alive and shown to children.

*It's bred into us. Traditional. 'A Gypsy without a horse, caravan, chickens and a dog is finished'.*

*Cultural reasons – keep an understanding of the way of life for the children*

8.32 Types of stopping place used in the past twelve months, in order to frequency of mention, were:

Farmers' field	52%
Fields provided at fairs	52%
Caravan sites owned by a Gypsy or Traveller	33%
Roadside stopping places on council land	33%
Roadside stopping places on private land	26%
Other caravan sites	15%
Permanent caravan sites owned by councils	9%
Transit sites owned by a council	5%
Other	12%

8.33 Most respondents had had permission to stay on the stopping places used at least some of the time. However, travelling from the Study Area must contribute to roadside encampments elsewhere. Council owned transit sites are currently unimportant – not surprising since there are so few nationally. A few respondents commented on the use of touring caravan sites and the stratagems which have to be used to gain acceptance there:

*I've had problems in the past and have not been allowed on sites with the traditional trailer. Now I know to plan and book Caravan Club sites in advance, not take dogs or pull the trailer with a commercial vehicle.*

Others said that they rented static caravans on site or camped to avoid problems.

8.34 43% of respondents who had travelled said it had been easy to find places to stop, but only 33% said it had been easy to stay as long as they wanted. 15 respondents, about a quarter of those who had travelled, had been forced to leave a stopping place while travelling last year. This had rarely involved actual eviction although for some it had. Some answers given referred to traumatic evictions from years ago, illustrating the impact such events have.

8.35 All respondents on sites or in houses were asked to describe how they would like to travel in the future. Answers could be classed into three broad categories:

- Do not want to travel in future – about 33%
- Happy with short breaks – about 25%
- Want to travel for several months at a time – about 40%

A significant proportion of Gypsies and Travellers in permanent accommodation thus want to maintain a lifestyle which involves travelling.

### **Travelling by Roadside Respondents**

8.36 By definition, most of those interviewed on the roadside in the Study Area are active Travellers to some degree. The exceptions are the few on long-standing encampments, several of whom said they had travelled very little in the previous year.

8.37 Most of those interviewed might be regarded as 'permanent' Travellers in the sense that they said that they had no base elsewhere:

No other accommodation	59%
Other accommodation	38%
No answer	3%

22 respondents gave details of their other accommodation:

Place on a site	82%
House	9%
Other	9%

Locations for the other accommodation were Leicester (2), Nottingham (2), London (2), and 1 each for Leeds, Darlington, Gloucester, Bristol, Exeter and Spain. The Study Area thus attracts Travellers from across England.

### **General Travelling Behaviour: Roadside Respondents**

8.38 Frequency of travelling was as follows:

Throughout the year	43%
6-10 months	20%
3-6 months	20%
Less than 3 months	17%

Those travelling less than the full year most commonly travelled in summer and autumn.

8.39 For 77% this frequency of travelling was 'normal'. As with Gypsies and Travellers with permanent accommodation, any change was usually towards travelling less either for personal reasons (health, pregnancy) or because finding places to stop is now more difficult.

8.40 57% of roadside Travellers said that they usually travelled with other families and 21% with members of their own wider family. This tendency to travel with non-related families chimes with the fact that 38% of the roadside interviews were carried out at a stopping place where there were both Gypsy and Irish Traveller families.

8.41 Reasons given for travelling by those interviewed on the roadside were very similar to those given by Gypsies and Travellers with permanent accommodation in the Study Area. Most revolved around way of life, visiting friends and relations, and visiting Missions (several interviewees were in the area after a big Born Again Christian Mission held at Botcheston during the

fieldwork period; there was a big unauthorised encampment at Donington Park before and after the event).

8.42 Those interviewed on the roadside were more likely than those who had travelled from permanent accommodation in the Study Area to have used roadside stopping places and farmers' fields in the past 12 months:

Roadside stopping places on council land	78%
Farmers' field	62%
Roadside stopping places on private land	60%
Fields provided at fairs	52%
Caravan sites owned by a Gypsy or Traveller	43%
Other caravan sites	17%
Permanent caravan sites owned by councils	13%
Transit sites owned by a council	12%
Other	8%

Respondents did not always have permission to stop where they did (28% no permission, 66% sometimes yes, sometimes no).

8.43 Only 14% said that it had been easy to find places to stop, and only 9% that it had been easy to stay as long as they wanted. 59% had been forced to leave a stopping place while travelling in the past year. Some just said that they had had to leave. A number referred to councils and/or police making them move. A few referred to less formal and apparently illegitimate evictions:

*Young boys were threatening to set the caravans on fire so the respondent had to move on late at night.*

*Bailiffs came out and beat up son. Evicted when on council or private land.*

*Farmers won't let you out of their fields – spray with muck, drive tractors through vans. Had petrol bombs thrown at them. Police and council enforced movement. Had no choice.*

8.44 Roadside respondents were asked whether they would prefer to travel throughout the year or would prefer to spend more time in one place:

Spend more time in one place	59%
Travel throughout year	23%
Don't know/no answer	18%

This suggests a desire for greater 'settlement', however the great majority of those who would prefer to spend longer in one place also wanted to travel for a period in the year. Most said their ideal was to travel for 2 to 6 months over the summer period. Motivation was normally described as 'way of life' or 'something different', although some would travel for work. This ideal pattern of travelling implies a need for sites or other bases for the winter and somewhere to stop (which might be the same sites but on a different basis) while travelling in summer. The majority of those interviewed on the roadside, want to retain a lifestyle which involves travelling.

## Travelling and the Current Stopping Place

8.45 Almost a quarter (23%) of roadside respondents had been in the Study Area for a year or over, not necessarily on the stopping place where they were interviewed. However, most (56%) had been in the Area for less than a month. When asked how long they expected to remain in the area, the majority (56%) either said that they did not know or gave no answer. Other answers ranged from a week to 'as long as possible'. The main reasons for being in the area were:

- Passing through/travelling around
- Visiting family or friends
- Work
- Attending a Mission

8.46 Only about a third of respondents said where they would be going when they left their current stopping place. Of the 15 who gave a specific answer, 4 were going 'back home' to accommodation they had elsewhere; 5 were intending to stay somewhere in the Study Area. Other destinations included around the Midlands, Manchester, Norwich, Lincolnshire and Europe. The difficulties of classifying answers is illustrated by the following:

*Melton, Cornwall or Scotland*

Only 5% definitely said they would not want to stop in the area again.

8.47 These answers suggest that the Study Area will continue to be visited by Gypsies and Travellers, and to be subject to unauthorised encampment in the absence of more formal transit provision.



## 9. FINDINGS : EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND DISCRIMINATION

9.1 While primarily concerned with accommodation issues, the survey also included questions about other aspects of Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle which are important to a holistic approach to policy involving wider service delivery and social cohesion.

### Employment

9.2 Traditionally, work was one of the factors underlying a nomadic lifestyle among Gypsies and Travellers, and it is still the reason for travelling for a minority visiting the Study Area. Work also affects earnings and income, and there are links with education.

9.3 Overall, 72% of respondents said that someone in their family worked. This was related to current accommodation:

Private sites	79%
Roadside	78%
Socially rented sites	62%
Housing	41%

These answers show high levels of economic activity. Social sites and social housing tenancies are, to a greater extent than private provision, catering for those not in employment, including older retired households.

9.4 Respondents were more reluctant to give details of the nature of work. However, it is clear that the great majority of people were in work on a self-employed basis, working for as much of the year as job opportunities were available. Many of the men were reported to be working in now 'traditional' Gypsy and Traveller activities including most frequently:

- Garden and tree work
- House repairs and maintenance
- 'Whatever he can get'*
- PVC, fascias, windows and guttering
- Tarmac and block paving
- Dealing, including horses

9.5 A few men, and larger numbers of women, were employed rather than self-employed (*'men are self-employed and women are employed'* was a general answer given by more than one family). Cleaning and factory work were the commonest form of employed work. Other jobs included bakers, a bar manager, a hotel receptionist, a car sprayer and a shop fitter. The only quasi-professional occupation mentioned was a woman working as a physiotherapist.

9.6 There was a distinct difference between employment patterns of Gypsies and Travellers in housing, and those on sites or the roadside, with the former significantly more likely to be employed rather than self-employed.

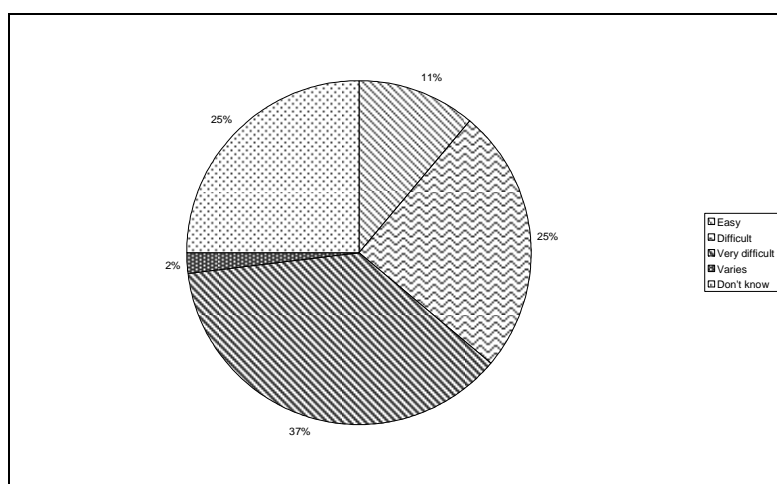
9.7 A quarter of respondents said that there was someone in their household who would like to work, but did not do so at present. Almost all of those who wanted to work were women – female respondents or daughters. The impression from the answers is that men who want to work **are** working unless there are exceptional circumstances such as ill health or recovering from an accident. Two answers pointed to cultural reasons for this lack of employment among women:

*In our community Gypsy women are the housewife and so on, so I can't work. Men are racist against their own women. Girl aged 16*

*Daughter wants to work but her dad won't let her.*

9.8 Respondents were asked how easy it is for a Gypsy or Traveller to find work 'around here'. Figure 9.1 shows the answers and illustrates perceived difficulties.

**Figure 9.1 : How Easy is it for a Gypsy or a Traveller to Find Work around Here?**



9.9 A question about the main barriers to getting employment generated a great deal of heartfelt comment. Only 3 respondents mentioned market factors specifically, saying people had too little money or that immigrant workers were taking jobs. Rather, three inter-related themes were powerfully expressed:

- Racism and prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers among would-be employers
- Lack of basic literacy skills among many Gypsies and Travellers
- Tendency to stereotype from the bad image generated by the media

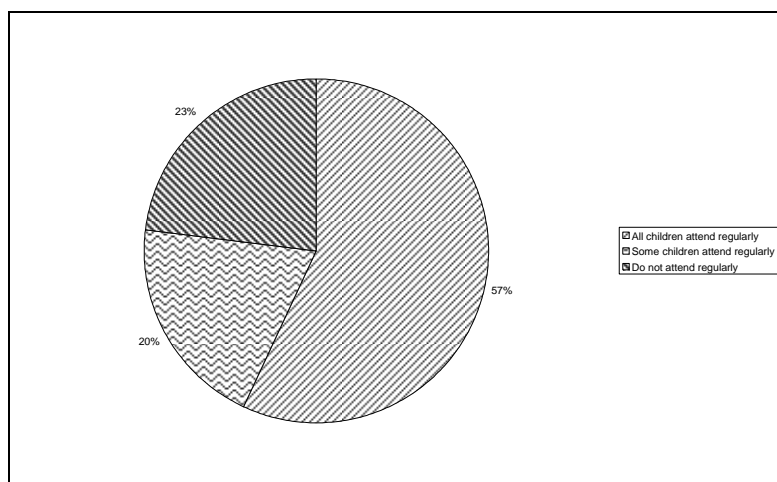
These linked, via programmes such as Rogue Trader, into unwillingness to give jobs to Gypsies and Travellers, and hostility to door-knocking and cold calling to get work. A few people referred to difficulties around addresses – either not having one which means employers will not take you on, or having a stigmatised address (site) which some saw as being black-listed.

## Education Issues

9.10 Gypsies and Travellers have relatively low educational attainment, measured by test and exam results, and this – as noted above – is recognised to disadvantage Gypsies and Travellers in the mainstream labour market. School attendance, especially at secondary level, is a particular issue

9.11 Across the sample, 44% of respondents said that there were school age children in their family. They were asked questions about school attendance. Figure 9.2 shows that the majority said that all children attended regularly. School attendance was highest among housed respondents, and lowest, as might be expected, among those on the roadside where only 23% said that all their children attended school regularly. It is obviously easier for children to attend school from houses than the roadside; it may also be that those placing a higher premium on schooling have moved to housing. Few reasons were given to explain non-attendance.

**Figure 9.2 : School Attendance**



9.12 Across the sample, 51% of respondents with school aged children said that their children would **not** continue in school until they are 16. Those in housing were less likely than others to say this. By far the most common reason given for not keeping children in school until 16 was to do with culture – ‘it’s not our way’. Some argued it was not ‘safe’ for older children to stay in school, and some were clear that school did not teach useful skills or Gypsy and Traveller culture.

*Boys will work as soon as possible with their dad. The big school teaches the girls too many things they just don’t need to know, so they will stay at home with mum and learn how to clean, cook etc.*

9.13 Some respondents said that their children might stay in school if they were more settled. A few said that their children might continue in school until they were 16 ‘if they wanted to’. However, the following quotation suggests this might not always be straightforward because of peer pressure. It also

illustrates the apparent role of Gypsy and Traveller men in deterring long-term schooling.

*If the respondent's husband was around then the children would not be going to school until they are 16. Girls normally leave school to work at home and they will often be bullied by other Traveller children if they are still attending school in their teens.*

9.14 9% of all respondents said that an adult or teenager in their family took part in college training or courses at present. Again the proportion was higher (21%) among housed Gypsies and Travellers than those on authorised sites (7%) or the roadside (5%). The main courses mentioned were not specifically for Travellers and included brick-laying for men and hair-dressing and beauty therapy for women. Others mentioned were to do with computers/internet. Some were participating in a course specifically designed for Gypsies and Travellers for driving test theory and learning to read and write.

9.15 21% of respondents said that they would like to take part in training or education. The proportion among housed respondents was again higher at 41% than among those on the roadside (18%) and authorised sites (14%). Many of the respondents identified their desire to increase basic skills including being able to read and write. Other desired skills included dress-making, nursing and care, computers, administrative and business management training, beauty training and hair-dressing, equestrian and animal care. For many of the women interviewed the main constraint was lack of time because they were caring for their family full-time. There was some preference for courses designed specially for Travellers, and bringing such courses to sites as ways of increasing participation. A small minority expressed hostility to the idea of further education.

9.16 This analysis suggests that both attitudes towards, and participation in, education differs particularly between housed Gypsies and Travellers and others. While school attendance is lowest among roadside families, attitudes towards schooling seem very similar between interviewees on authorised sites and on the roadside. Provision of sites alone is not likely, therefore, to change 'traditional' views of schooling.

## Health Issues

9.17 Gypsies and Travellers are known from national surveys to have poorer health and lower life expectancy than the settled community as a whole, and issues are often reported about accessing health services, especially when travelling and without a fixed address.

9.18 The survey asked whether anyone in the family living with the respondent had a disability or long-term illness. Reported incidence was as follows:

All respondents	20%
Authorised sites	16%
Housing	38%

Roadside 16%

This suggests that health problems may be one reason for moving into bricks and mortar. A further factor is that interviews with housed Gypsies and Travellers were all carried out by CURS researchers, while community interviewers were involved in roadside and sites interviews. Some respondents may have under-stated health problems to community interviewers.

9.19 A very wide range of forms of ill health were reported, both physical and mental. Problems reported by more than one respondent included:

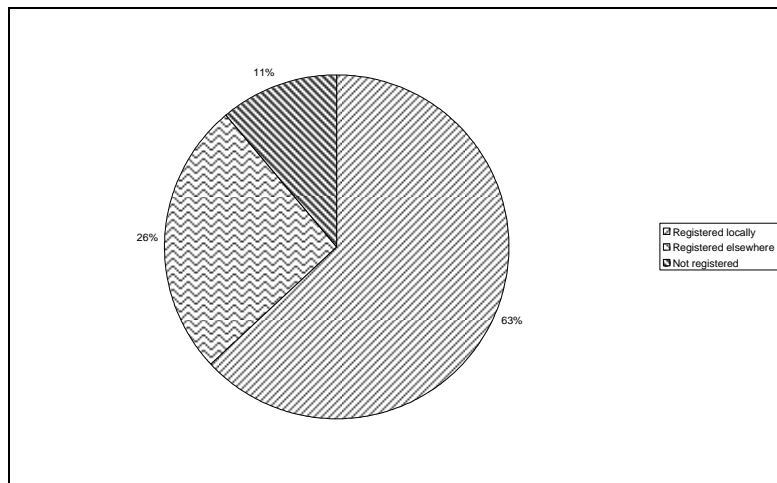
- Heart problems and angina
- Stroke
- Back problems
- Asthma (especially among children on the roadside)
- Kidney problems (in one case requiring dialysis)
- Rheumatism and arthritis
- Cerebral palsy
- Epilepsy
- Alzheimer's/dementia

Some families in housing reported several severe conditions.

9.20 Only 9 respondents overall (5%) said that the health needs required special or adapted accommodation: 4 were on authorised sites, 3 in houses and 2 on the roadside. Answers were usually not sufficiently explicit to identify what adaptations were needed. One of the most serious health problems related to a roadside family where the female respondent had suffered 3 strokes and has asthma and epilepsy; her son has asthma and her grandchildren have asthma and kidney problems. Her request for an 'adaptation' was a site with water.

9.21 Questions were included about whether the respondent provided support for anyone not living with them, or whether anyone in their immediate family received support from anyone else not living with them (other than a doctor or professional). Only 8 respondents overall (4%) said that they provided support, and only 7 (4%) said that they received support. The main pattern of caring appeared to be between generations, with daughters or daughters-in-law caring for elderly parents.

9.22 Respondents were asked if they were registered with a GP locally or elsewhere (Figure 9.3). All housed respondents were registered. Proportions not registered on authorised sites and the roadside were similar (13% and 15% respectively). Only 2 roadside respondents had tried to register temporarily with a GP in the Study Area.

**Figure 9.3 Registration with General Practitioners**

9.23 In all, 17% of respondents said that they had experienced a problem in getting health care for themselves or their family in the area over the last 2 years. One significant problem area identified was getting access to NHS dental care, which some respondents acknowledged was the same for everybody. Issues more specific to Gypsies and Travellers were to do with registering with a doctor in a new area or while on the roadside. Some emphasised the importance of having a 'care-of address'. Some attributed difficulties in registering to racism. Not necessarily being able to register with the nearest GP led to problems of distance when visiting a doctor or getting a home visit. Once registered, some said they had problems getting appointments. Looking at comments made as a whole, the impression emerges that some doctors in the Study Area are receptive to Gypsies and Travellers, and are seen by them as being very good, while others are seen as much more problematic. The following examples illustrate some of the concerns expressed:

*When you are not registered because you have no fixed abode, it is very difficult to get access to any kind of health care.*

*Before the doctor at Ratby – we couldn't get a doctor. Lynne and Jenny the health visitors helped us.*

9.24 Suggested improvements to health services locally reflected the concerns and problems experienced. The two main areas suggested for improvement were making it easier to access health services without a fixed address and to register with a doctor, and to have a service which was sensitive to Gypsy and Traveller culture and treated everyone with respect:

*The interviewee felt that health services were inappropriate to needs – the problem of only being able to temporarily register at a local GP needs addressing. It is difficult to access your personal medical records. It should be made easier to access healthcare even though you are registered elsewhere.*

*Make people more aware of our traditions – not to be judgemental.*

It is clear from answers given that Traveller Health Visitors (always mentioned by name) had helped several respondents in many ways and that their help was greatly appreciated.

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

9.25 An important factor underlying social exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers is prejudice and discrimination against them by members of the settled community. Tackling this is key to achieving greater community cohesion.

9.26 A significant minority of respondents said that they had experienced harassment or discrimination from neighbours or other members of the settled community in the area:

All respondents	32%
Authorised sites	24%
Housing	62%
Roadside	31%

It is particularly concerning that levels are so high amongst housed Gypsies and Travellers.

9.27 Accounts of harassment and discrimination were all underlain by an acknowledgement that Gypsies and Travellers are generally not liked in the wider community, and that manifestations of this are 'normal'. One man put this perception in strong terms:

*Gypsies are the most hated people in the world. If people had a choice between Bin Laden and Gypsies, they would often prefer Bin Laden. They accuse Gypsies of crime and not paying taxes. Gypsies get the blame for everything.*

9.28 Harassment reported was normally name calling and verbal abuse. Some reported children being subject to racist bullying in school. Some said they had had stones or other things thrown at their trailers or their windows in houses. One or two reported much more serious incidents involving violence, injury and arson. Comments suggest little confidence in the police to protect their interests if called, and in a few examples the complaint was of harassment by the police. Examples of discrimination included not being served in pubs or shops or being '*looked at in a funny way*'. The examples in the Box 9.1 illustrate these points and the fact that things can get better as people get to know each other.

**Box 9.1 : Examples of Harassment and Discrimination from Gypsy and Traveller Interviews**

*People are rude to her if she visits public places like pubs, discos, restaurants.*

*Stone throwing and name calling*

*In the village at the shops, for example, the hairdressers: they said they had no appointments to my face, but when I phoned them for an appointment a few minutes later they said to come in later, they had spaces. It was discriminatory.*

*Since they've got to know us there haven't been any problems. People changed their minds, now we are good friends, seen as good in the community, we are integrated, and no serious problems.*

9.29 Some respondents said that they had not, or would not, go to anyone if they experienced harassment or discrimination on the grounds that it would not be effective. Some had gone to the police with differing results, including some rapid and effective responses in more serious incidents.

9.30 The overall flavour of answers to these questions was a near acceptance of the way the world is in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, with exceptions and good treatment being commented on almost with surprise. A particularly telling comment was made by a housed Gypsy Traveller:

*We must deny our culture to get on at all costs.*



## 10. FINDINGS : PERCEPTIONS OF NEED AND ACCOMMODATION PREFERENCES

10.1 If future accommodation provision is to be sustainable, it is important that it meets perceived needs of local Gypsies and Travellers and is, as far as possible, in line with their aspirations to ensure future acceptability. At different points in the survey interview, questions were asked about accommodation needs and aspirations. Questions dealt with the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in general for permanent and transit accommodation, and what sort of sites would best meet them. Other questions were specific to the needs of the respondent's own family. Finally, there were questions about respondents' accommodation ideals, again for permanent and transit accommodation. Each is considered in turn.

### Perceptions of General Accommodation Needs in the Study Area: Permanent Sites

10.2 Respondents on authorised and unauthorised sites and in housing were asked whether more permanent caravan sites are needed for Gypsies and Travellers in Leicestershire and Rutland, where people can stay as long as they want to. 90% of respondents said that sites are needed, and only 4% said they were not (6% did not know).

10.3 When asked where permanent sites should be provided, most respondents said anywhere or everywhere, or wherever people want them – one respondent said that *'they should be scattered, like housing developments'*. More specific answers divided between:

- **Specific locations** : 3 locations were mentioned by more than one respondent: Leicester City (9), Market Harborough (5) and Coalville (3). Other places mentioned by a single respondent were in Hinckley & Bosworth (3), North West Leicestershire (2) and Melton (1). Generally respondents named their own local areas where they were aware of site shortage or had heard that sites had been turned down.
- **General locational criteria** : most said that sites should be on the outskirts of towns or villages or in the countryside; this appears to reflect a positive desire for open space and the country, but also a recognition of the fact that villagers and townspeople do not want sites near them and are perceived as racist. Other mentions included access to services and good environment. The following quotation encapsulates many respondents' comments: *Not in the middle of towns, but on outskirts of anywhere. Not a million miles away from towns either. But not on tips, sewerage works.*

10.4 Questions about who should provide permanent sites and the number of pitches they should have revealed a variety of opinion. Roughly equal numbers of respondents thought that sites should be provided by councils, Gypsies and Travellers to rent to others, and Gypsies and Travellers for

themselves and their families – many saying yes to all options. A further quarter said that it did not matter who provided the sites.

10.5 On site size, roughly equal numbers thought sites should have 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and over 20 pitches. Only 2% favoured sites with fewer than 5 pitches – very small sites were said to lead to loneliness. While a fifth of respondents favoured sites with more than 20 pitches, the consensus was to the effect that large sites were hard to manage and would get 'messy'.

10.6 Several respondents noted that sites of all types and sizes are needed. This chimes with the 'everywhere' opinions on location as suggesting a variety of provision is required.

### **Perceptions of General Accommodation Needs in the Study Area: Transit Sites**

10.7 Perceptions of need for transit site provision in the Study Area were less overwhelming than need for permanent accommodation. A few respondents had never heard of transit sites. Overall (including roadside interviewees), 66% of respondents thought that there is a need for transit sites in Leicestershire and Rutland where Gypsies and Travellers can stay for short periods; 14% thought that there was no need and 21% did not know. Doubts seemed to be around the value of transit sites themselves. Some of these doubts are illustrated below:

*No need for transit sites as they wouldn't work. Travellers would just abuse them and dump rubbish.*

*More need for permanent plots not transit. If prioritise money then should be on permanent sites.*

10.8 However, the majority thought that transit sites were needed:

*Transit sites would be useful as it means that Travellers who need to move around and stop for short periods of time in certain places for work purposes will have somewhere to go.*

10.9 Most respondents were not specific about where transit sites should be provided and thought sites were needed everywhere. Actual locations suggested by more than one respondent were:

Leicester (11)

Coalville (7)

Measham (2) (a private transit site has recently received planning permission at Measham)

Most thought that sites should be located on the edges of settlements, some arguing for village locations and some for towns.

10.10 Table 10.1 summarises some of the answers about transit site design and management. It reveals mixed views and sometimes quite sharp differences of opinion.

<b>Table 10.1 : Views on Transit Site Design and Management</b>	
<b>Facilities</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority favour hardstandings, water, electricity and refuse disposal</li> <li>• 80% in favour of individual WCs and showers</li> <li>• 20% in favour of shared facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Size</b>	
	Majority view between 11 and 20 caravans
<b>Who should provide?</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% local council</li> <li>• 22% Gypsies and Travellers</li> <li>• 38% 'it doesn't matter'</li> </ul>
<b>Resident site manager?</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% resident site manager</li> <li>• 25% someone who visits each day</li> <li>• 25% 'it doesn't matter'</li> </ul>
<b>A Gypsy Traveller manager?</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41% Gypsy or Traveller</li> <li>• 26% someone else</li> <li>• 32% 'it doesn't matter'</li> </ul>

10.11 The consensus was that transit sites in the Study Area, if provided, would be well used by Gypsies and Travellers, both those currently without a base (who might spend winter there) and others while travelling during summer. 69% of those interviewed on all types of site or in housing said their family or friends might be interested in using transit sites in the Study Area, if they were well managed. Only 5% of those interviewed on the roadside would definitely not use transit sites in the Leicestershire and Rutland area if they were to be provided. Fear of who else might be on the site was the main deterrent. A few respondents would not use sites because they do not like *'being told what to do'* or the loss of freedom incurred when people *'know who you are and where you are'*. Most would want to stay on transit sites provided for as long as possible with a few opting for shorter periods up to 3 months.

10.12 More generally, 43% of people interviewed on sites or in housing, and 52% interviewed on the roadside said that they would use transit sites if a network was to be developed. These findings suggest that transit sites locally and nationally would be used if well managed. Controlling access to ensure families with compatible lifestyles is probably the most important management factor. Mixed council and private provision by Gypsies and Travellers might cater for different tastes.

### **Family Accommodation Needs : Newly Forming Households**

10.13 One of the obvious elements of accommodation need comes from the formation of new families and households. All interviewees were asked whether there was anyone in their family (for example sons or daughters) who is likely to want their own independent accommodation in the next 5 years. Overall, just 50% said that there was, 46% said that there was not and 4% did

not know. The proportions were slightly higher among those living in housing. These are high proportions, but not surprising in view of the numbers of older 'children' noted in Table 7.3. There are three points to note:

- Sometimes respondents may have meant that sons or daughters will need separate caravans for sleeping, not entirely separate accommodation. It is not always possible to identify this. For some on sites this represents a need if current plots are not big enough to accommodate another caravan.
- Much of the potential 'need' identified was prefaced by a comment such as *'if he marries . . .'* A pattern emerged where older children first have separate trailers as their own space within the close family group, but then need independent accommodation for *'privacy'* when they marry. Not all the need may materialise in practice, and insofar as marriages involve other Gypsies and Travellers from within the Study Area, two apparent 'needs' would combine into one.
- The need may not always be for accommodation in the Study Area. While interviewers probed for whether the independent accommodation was likely to be needed in Leicestershire and Rutland, respondents often did not say and may simply not have known.

10.14 Table 10.2 summarises need for independent accommodation over the next 5 years. The shaded figures in final column are taken forward into the assessment of requirements for residential pitches in Chapter 11.

<b>Table 10.2 : Individuals Likely to Need Independent Accommodation in the Next 5 Years</b>		
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Number of individuals</b>	<b>As % of sample</b>
Authorised sites	46	48%
Housing	23	79%
Roadside	33	62%
Total	102	54%

10.15 Not everyone indicated what sort of accommodation these potential new households would want or where they would want to live. Of those who did provide answers, 91% on authorised sites (based on 38 answers) and 69% in housing (based on 16 answers) said that it was likely to be a trailer on some form of site rather than a house. Among roadside respondents (based on 21 answers) only 1 indicated that the new household might look for a house and the rest wanted trailers. A minority said where the new independent households might look for accommodation, but where an answer was given 18 out of 20 (90%) referred to somewhere in the Study Area, usually close to their existing location if not on the same site. Assumptions taken forward to Chapter 11 on residential pitch requirements are:

- **91% of new households from authorised sites will need a pitch for a trailer**
- **69% of new households from housing will need a pitch for a trailer**

- **90% of new households will need to stay in the Study Area**

10.16 Most respondents anticipated that accommodation would be hard to find for newly forming households. The examples below illustrate this.

*Daughter will put her caravan in the yard as well. The son tried to get on at Greenacres and Hinckley and at Justin Park but there is no room. Tried Desborough and Meynells Gorse, plus Nuneaton and Bulkington. They are all full, so he had to stay here. The kids would rather stop here or near here. It is very difficult to find land or sites.*

*18 year old daughter will want separate home when married, 21 year old has already moved out and is married in a council flat nearby – but they want to buy a house. The two sons are adamant they will not go into a house, they will buy land and take mum with them when they are old enough.*

### **Accommodation Needs from Desires to Move**

10.17 This section looks at needs of existing households who want to move home. Respondents were asked questions about their interest in moving to different forms of accommodation in the Study Area. Table 10.3 (overleaf) summarises findings for places on permanent sites expressed by people currently living in housing and on the roadside. As can be seen, level of interest in site places is significant, although interest is rarely translated into applications. Assumptions carried forward to calculations of pitch requirements in Chapter 11 are:

- **41% of those in housing want a pitch in the Study Area**
- **30% of roadside respondents want a pitch in the Study Area**

10.18 Reasons given for wanting (and not wanting) to move to a site illustrate some of the cultural values and personal considerations involved in choice of accommodation. People in housing who did not want to move to a site cited ill health or, in one woman's words: *'I'm too used to home comforts now – washing machine and baths'*. Housed Gypsies and Travellers who did want to move to a site all referred to getting back to their community. The following examples are typical of answers given:

*On a site you take more care of yourself because there are other people around. More of a community. It can be lonely in a house and very quiet. You can feel alone.*

*Don't want the children to be alienated like we were.*

10.19 Some on the roadside were not interested in a site at all:

*Don't want to go on a site – too many people know your business.*

*You can't choose who you live with. Will swap one bad thing with another.*

*Respondent is happy on roadside. Freedom. Not pinned down to one place.*

10.20 Comfort and being fed up with life on the roadside were mentioned as reasons for expressing interest in a place on a site locally. Some said that they liked the area. One response nicely sums up the problem of interpreting answers to general questions as reliable indicators of future behaviour:

*The respondent said this would depend on where the site is and who they are put next to.*

<b>Table 10.3 : Summary of Interest in Site Accommodation in the Study Area</b>	
<b>Interest in a place on a permanent site</b>	
In housing	12 respondents interested ( <b>41%</b> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 interested in a council site; rest not specific</li> <li>• 9 prefer to share with up to 10 families, 1 with 20+</li> <li>• 3 specified Leicester, rest not specific</li> </ul>
On roadside	18 respondents interested ( <b>30%</b> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 interested in council site; 4 in site owned by Traveller</li> <li>• 6 would share with 20+ families, 2 with 11 to 20, 7 with up to 10</li> <li>• 4 specified Leicester, 1 Measham, rest not specific</li> </ul>
<b>On waiting list for a site place</b>	
Authorised site	2 respondents on waiting list (not specific which)
Unauthorised site	No respondent on waiting list
Housing	2 respondents on waiting list (1 specified Meynells Gorse, 1 specified Aston Firs)
Roadside	4 respondents on waiting list (1 for Meynells Gorse, others appear not to be in Study Area)

10.21 Table 10.4 (overleaf) summarises findings on interest expressed in permanent housing in the Study Area by people currently on sites and on the roadside. Levels of expressed interest are lower than for sites, and still more rarely carried forward into applications. Assumptions carried forward to calculations of residential pitch requirements in Chapter 11 are:

- **7% of those on an authorised site are interested in housing**

Other assumptions relating to need for housing are:

- **24% of those in housing would be interested in moving to another house**
- **15% of roadside respondents would be interested in a house in the Study Area**

<b>Table 10.4 : Summary of Interest in Housing in the Study Area</b>	
<b>Interested in bricks and mortar housing in the Study Area</b>	
Authorised site	7 respondents interested ( <b>7%</b> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 interested in a council house</li> <li>• 2 interested in owner-occupation</li> <li>• 1 interested in 'other'</li>   <li>• 2 interested in a bungalow</li> <li>• 5 interested in a house</li>   <li>• 3 specified Market Harborough, 1 Hinckley &amp; Bosworth</li> </ul>
Unauthorised site	0 respondents interested
Housing	7 interested in moving to another house/bungalow ( <b>24%</b> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 interested in council house</li>   <li>• 2 interested in a bungalow</li> <li>• 4 interested in a house</li> <li>• 1 'doesn't matter'</li> </ul>
Roadside	9 respondents interested ( <b>15%</b> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 interested in a council house</li> <li>• 6 interested in owner-occupation</li> <li>• 5 'doesn't matter' or don't know'</li>   <li>• 5 interested in a bungalow</li> <li>• 7 interested in a house</li> <li>• 1 'other'</li> <li>• 2 don't know</li>   <li>• 1 near Leicester, 1 Measham/Castle Donnington area; rest not specific</li> </ul>
<b>On waiting list for a house</b>	
Authorised site	2 on waiting list (which list not specified)
Unauthorised site	0 on waiting list
Housed	4 on waiting list (3 for Leicester; 1 for Harborough)
Roadside	2 on waiting list (1 Rutland; 1 not specified)

10.22 Very few entirely positive reasons for moving to a house emerged from survey answers. Some were to do with comfort and facilities, but most made it clear that the respondent might consider a house, but it would be distinctly a second choice to a site:

*The interviewee stated that she would be interested in moving into a house as long as it was in the right location. However, this would be second choice after getting onto a permanent site.*

10.23 Many respondents gave reasons for not being interested in moving to a house. Most simply said that they did not want a house or did not like houses (probably not on the basis of direct experience since so few had actually ever lived in a house). Many gave cultural reasons summed up as *'Travellers live in trailers'*. Specific aspects of house-dwelling mentioned were: fear of houses, not feeling safe, being lonely, not having other Gypsies and Travellers around and feeling *'caged in'*. The following quotation sums up some of these potentially conflicting factors:

*Thought about a house when children were young, but they dissuaded her. Would have liked to live in a house in winter and travel in summer. Now it would be lonely so not interested.*

### **Accommodation Ideals : Permanent Accommodation**

10.24 This section looks at more aspirational matters which may give an indication of the direction in which policies for sustainable accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers should go.

10.25 Respondents on sites and in housing were asked to say which of 7 different sorts of accommodation that Gypsies and Travellers live in they found the most and the least attractive (Table 10.5).

10.26 Family site ownership is clearly the most attractive option with 72% finding it the most and only 2% the least attractive option. Other private site options are more attractive to respondents than council sites. Sites are more attractive than any bricks and mortar option.

<b>Table 10.5 : Most and Least Attractive Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers : Respondents with Permanent Accommodation</b>		
	Most attractive	Least attractive
Sample number	124	120
	%	%
A private Gypsy caravan site owned by you and your family	72	2
A plot on a site where individual families own their plots	32	23
A site owned by the local council	10	52
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller (not close family)	40	21
A house or bungalow rented from the local council	8	55
A house or bungalow that you own yourself	15	39
Group housing – a small development of houses or bungalows let only to Gypsies and Travellers	12	52



## Developing a Family Site

10.27 Respondents on authorised sites (other than pitch/site owners), in houses and on the roadside were asked whether they would like to develop a site of their own. Overall, 52% said that they would. This conceals differences according to current accommodation:

Authorised sites (rented pitches)	35%
Housing	55%
Roadside	71%

It is not clear why such a relatively low proportion of respondents on rented pitches on authorised sites wanted to develop their own sites. It may be that they were taking a more realistic viewpoint than respondents in housing or the roadside. Comments offered suggest that some felt they were too old to develop their own site, and some did not want the responsibility.

10.28 Most of those who would like to develop their own site would do so with their immediate family only (52%) or immediate family and other family members (29%); only 19% would like to develop a site with other people. A few specifically commented that they would need to have total control over who came onto the site.

10.29 68 respondents said **where** they would like to develop a site of their own:

- 16% said '*anywhere*' or anywhere they could get permission
- 16% wanted to develop outside the Study Area
- 44% wanted to develop in the Study Area, especially near where they were living, and around Leicester and Coalville
- 25% gave locational criteria, with country locations greatly exceeding urban areas.

10.30 73 respondents gave an indication of the number of pitches they would want to provide on their site:

Up to 5 pitches	22%
6-10 pitches	42%
11-20 pitches	25%
Over 20 pitches	11%

There is obviously a distinction here between those seeking to provide for their families only and those seeking to develop a more commercial site.

10.31 The majority (82%) would like to provide space to accommodate visitors on the site. Not wanting space for visitors seemed linked to fears of unknown Gypsies and Travellers coming and causing trouble.

10.32 Immediate prospects for realising these ambitions seem slight – indeed some respondents acknowledged that developing their own site was a dream.

- 16% of respondents thought that they could afford to buy land
- 7% thought that they would get planning permission
- 82% would like help in finding land

Help would obviously have to involve getting planning permission as well as finding land. As one respondent remarked: *'Finding land is easy, but the difficulty is getting it passed'*.

### **Accommodation Ideals : Transit Accommodation and Stopping Places**

10.33 Respondents on the roadside were asked which sorts of stopping places they most liked to use. The majority expressed no preferences. Among those expressing a preference, more said they preferred informal stopping places (especially green fields with space for the children to play) to more formal 'sites' of one sort or another. It may be that while most roadside interviewees would, as noted above (paragraph 10.12), use transit sites if they were provided, their ideal stopping places are less formal.

10.34 In the interviews with people on sites and in housing, a more structured question was asked about most and least attractive stopping places. Answers are summarised in Table 10.6. Stopping with family and friends on their site or at their house proved most attractive, arguing for flexibility in allowing Gypsies and Travellers to have visitors in caravans as an informal means of accommodating transient needs. Holiday caravan sites are also relatively attractive. Roadside stopping places are rarely attractive, and head the list of the least attractive stopping places.

<b>Table 10.6 : Most and Least Attractive Stopping Places while Travelling : Respondents with Permanent Accommodation</b>		
	Most attractive	Least attractive
Sample number	115	109
	%	%
Stopping with family and friends on their site or at their house	70	3
Formal transit sites provided by councils for Gypsies and Travellers	18	44
Less formal stopping places provided by councils for Gypsies and Travellers	8	41
Transit pitches for rent provided by a Gypsy or Traveller	26	23
Holiday caravan sites open to everyone	44	15
Farmers' fields	17	46
Roadside or informal stopping places you find yourself	9	83

10.35 Again, while many respondents said that they would use formal transit sites if they were provided, they do not emerge as very attractive in this more abstract weighing of alternatives. Transit sites provided by Gypsies and Travellers are more attractive than those provided by councils; less formal stopping places provided by Councils are still less attractive.

## 11. ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL PITCHES

11.1 'Models' for assessing requirements for additional residential pitches have developed significantly over the past 2 to 3 years with the production of GTAAs in various parts of the country and the publication in early 2006 of the ODPM's Draft practice guidance on *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments*. This guidance is not prescriptive but provides a framework for the approach to be taken. The Study Area estimates are consistent with this.

### Approach and Assumptions

11.2 The model used for calculating requirements for residential pitches for the **period 2006 to 2011** is based on **family units** which are equated with **pitches**. Many pitches will accommodate more than one caravan for the family's use. The model takes account of:

- supply of pitches at December 2006
- net movement flows between housing and site pitches 2006-2011
- unauthorised development of sites without planning permission at December 2006
- need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments 2006-2011
- temporary planning permissions which will end 2006-2011
- new family formation 2006-2011
- unused pitches brought into use 2006-2011
- planning applications pending at December 2006
- known planned site developments in December 2006
- vacancies occurring on social rented sites 2006-2011

11.3 The example given on page 22 of the ODPM guidance also has an entry for 'new households likely to arrive from elsewhere'. Given the nature of the Study Area site provision, and especially the number of rented pitches, a significant number of 'new households' are likely to arrive from elsewhere. However, this would be balanced by vacancies occurring on such sites by people moving on. For simplicity, both elements (new households from elsewhere and private site vacancies) are omitted.

11.4 There are three main sources of information used in operationalising the model:

- baseline information on current accommodation provision expressed as numbers of pitches for sites and families for housing.
- findings from the survey which are expressed in percentages and grossed up to the whole population.
- assumptions made in interpreting these findings as they translate into realistic estimates of pitch requirements. These assumptions come from practice in other GTAAs, the researcher's professional views and, most importantly, the experiences of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers working with communities in the Study Area.

11.5 The model is used to estimate pitch requirements for the Study Area as a whole (Table 11.1) and for the constituent local planning authorities (Table 11.2).

11.6 A different approach is taken to making estimates for the period 2011 to 2016. Given the changes which might take place in Gypsy and Traveller household characteristics and lifestyle, especially if sites are provided at a more rapid rate than in the past, it seems unwise to seek to make assumptions for each element in the model. Instead a simple estimate of family growth rate from natural increase is applied. Again the same approach is used at Study Area and local planning authority level (Table 11.3).

11.7 Both the model and family growth estimates calculate requirements on a **'need where it arises'** basis. This is important at local planning authority level. Since the current distribution of population is not even, need arising is also not even. The estimates tend inevitably to reinforce existing settlement patterns. These figures provide a baseline on which decisions can be made about **'need where it should be met'** which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations including equity, choice and sustainability.

### **Requirements for Additional Residential Pitches 2006-2011 : Study Area**

11.8 Table 11.1 (overleaf) sets out the Study Area calculations for requirements for additional residential pitches 2006 to 2011. The derivation of each row is described below.

<b>Table 11.1 : Calculation of Pitch Residential Requirements 2006-2011</b>	
<b>Element in the calculation:</b>	<b>Pitches/families</b>
<b>Current residential supply</b>	
1. Socially rented pitches December 2006	42
2. Private sites December 2006	180
3. Total pitches/households December 2006	222
<b>Need in December 2006 and arising 2006-2011</b>	
4. Net movement from housing to sites 2006-2011	3
5. Unauthorised development December 2006	32
6. Unauthorised encampment 2006-2011	52
7. End of temporary planning permissions 2006-2011	15
8. New household formation 2006-2011	61
<b>9. Additional need 2006-2011</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Additional supply 2006-2011</b>	
10. Pitches unused at December 2006 coming into use	6
11. Planning applications pending December 2006	0
12. New sites planned December 2006	0
13. Vacancies on socially rented sites 2006-2011	25
<b>14. Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>15. Requirement for extra pitches 2006-2011</b>	<b>132</b>

#### **Derivations of entries in Table 11.1:**

**Row 1 :** The number of pitches on socially rented sites from local authority information.

**Row 2 :** The estimated number of residential pitches in use on private authorised sites. This is an estimate because some private pitches are not clearly split into pitches and the number of families accommodated will change over time. Survey findings on number of caravans per family have been used to translate caravan capacity to 'pitches'.

**Row 3 :** Sum of Rows 1 and 2.

**Row 4 :** This net figures requires estimates of flows from sites to houses, and from houses to sites 2006-2011.

#### **Sites to houses:**

**Survey :** 7% of respondents on authorised sites expressed interest in moving to a house in the Study Area

**Assumption :** All need to move to a house

**Calculation :** 7% grossed to population = 7% of 222 = 15.5 families

**Houses to sites:**

**Survey** : 41% of respondents in housing expressed an interest in a site place in the Study Area

**Assumption** : 41% is unrealistic because:

- the sample may be biased to the less settled Gypsies and Travellers in housing who have kept in touch with professionals. Simply grossing up to the total population would over-state need
- expressed levels of satisfaction with housing were high and firm movement intentions relatively low
- experience suggests that particularly attractive site provision would be required to encourage some Gypsies and Travellers to actually move from housing

Bearing these points in mind, we assume that 10% of Gypsies and Travellers in housing need site accommodation

**Calculation** : 10% of housed population = 10% of 185 = 18.5 families/pitches

The net figure in Row 4 is 18.5 minus 15.5 = a net requirement for 3 pitches

**Row 5** : The estimated number of pitches/families on unauthorised developments December 2006 from information provided by county and district personnel. 100% assumed to be in need = 32.

If authorities continue to tolerate or regularise these developments, this would count towards additional pitch provision.

**Row 6** : This factor takes account of families involved in unauthorised encampment who need a residential pitch in the Study Area. More transient need from unauthorised encampment is considered in Chapter 12. The calculation here requires estimates of the number of families involved in unauthorised encampment, and of how many of these need a residential pitch in the Study Area.

**Families involved in unauthorised encampment:**

**Basic information** : Records show an average of 86 encampments a year between 2001 and 2006 across the Study Area

**Assumptions** :

- 80% of these involve new groups, as opposed to groups moving between locations in the Study Area (from experience of officers who visit encampments)
- 3 families on average in each encampments. The average encampment size was 6 caravans and the survey showed an average of around 2 caravans per family

**Calculation** : 80% of average encampments times average encampment size = 80% of 86 times 3 = 206 families

**Need for residential pitches**

**Survey** : 30% of roadside respondents were interested in moving to a residential pitch in the Study Area

**Assumptions** :

- 30% is likely to be a little high because of over-claiming and likelihood of interest in other areas outside the Study Area. 25% assumed to need a residential pitch on the advice of officers who visit encampments
- this is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families which will create need each year. This follows usual practice in GTAA's

**Calculation** : 25% of families involved on unauthorised encampment = 25% of 206 = 52 families/pitches

**Row 7** : The number of pitches affected by temporary planning permissions ending between 2006 and 2011. Assumes all count towards need. Renewing these permissions or making them permanent would count towards additional pitch provision.

**Row 8** : The estimate for new household formation requires estimates of:

- the number of new households likely to form
  - the proportion of these who will need a pitch in the Study Area
- Because there are demographic differences between sites and houses, the calculations are made separately.

**New households forming on sites**

**Survey** : the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years was equivalent to 48% of respondents

**Assumptions** : treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will over-state need:

- there will probably be some inter-marriage of individuals
- there may be some over-claiming

Assume that requirements will be equivalent to 40% of individuals likely to require their own accommodation on the basis of what seems reasonable and practically likely

**Calculation** : 40% of 48% grossed to total population on sites = 40% of 48% of 222 = 43 families/pitches

**Pitch requirement from new households formed on sites**

**Survey** : 91% of individuals requiring their own accommodation need a trailer and pitch

90% of individuals requiring their own accommodation want to stay in the Study Area

**Assumptions** : Survey finding to be accepted as realistic

**Calculation** : base is 43 new families (see above) times 91% times 90% = 90% of 91% of 43 = 35 families/pitches

**New households forming in housing**

**Survey** : the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years was equivalent to 79% of respondents

**Assumptions** : treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will over-state need:

- there will probably be some inter-marriage of individuals
- there may be some over-claiming

Assume that requirements will be equivalent to 40% of individuals likely to require their own accommodation on the basis of what seems reasonable and practically likely

**Calculation** : 40% of 79% grossed to total population in housing = 40% of 79% of 185 = 58 families/pitches

**Pitch requirement from new households formed in housing**

**Survey** : 69% of individuals requiring their own accommodation need a trailer and pitch

90% of individuals requiring their own accommodation want to stay in the Study Area

**Assumptions** :

- 69% is unrealistically high as a proportion of new households from housing who will actually require site provision. 50% assumed on the basis of experience and a realistic assessment by those who work with Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area
- survey findings for 90% remaining in the Study Area accepted

**Calculation** : base is 58 new families (see above) times 50% times 90%= 90% of 50% of 58 = 26 families/pitches

Row 8 total = sum of new families/pitches required by new households from sites and from houses = 35+26 = 61 families/pitches

**Row 9** : Sum of Rows 4, 5, 6,7 and 8

**Row 10** : 1 residential site (6 pitches) had planning permission but had not been developed in December 2006

**Row 11** : While there were planning applications on sites not determined at December 2006, zero is assumed because their likely success is unknown. If these permissions are granted, they can be counted against additional pitch requirements

**Row 12** : Assumed zero. There were no plans for new socially rented residential sites in December 2006

**Row 13** : Vacancies on socially rented sites are estimated on the basis of an average of 5 pitches being relet in each recent year. 5 times 5 = 25

**Row 14** : Sum of Rows 10, 11, 12 and 13

**Row 15** : Row 9 minus Row 14



11.9 The total calculated need for additional residential pitches across the Study Area between 2006 and 2011 is 132 pitches, equivalent to 59% of current authorised pitch provision.

11.10 A recent Communities and Local Government report providing support for Regional Planning Bodies in preparing Regional Spatial Strategies<sup>(1)</sup> suggests a formula based on Caravan Count information which estimates additional residential pitch requirements over a 5 year period. Applying this formula in the Study Area exactly as advocated gives an additional residential pitch requirement of 95 pitches 2006-2011. Introducing actual pitch numbers into the formula (rather than pitches imputed from Count caravan numbers) gives a requirement of 121 additional residential pitches. The total reached in Table 11.1 is slightly higher than this. This can be explained:

- The Study Area has particularly high proportions of mature families including older children not yet forming independent households which fuels family formation.
- The Study Area has unusually high levels of unauthorised encampment which contributes to residential pitch need as well as to transit site needs.
- The needs, including second generation needs, of families in housing have been fully taken into account in the Study Area model.

### **Requirements for Additional Residential Pitches 2006-2011 : Local Authorities**

11.11 Table 11.2 applies the model described above at local planning authority level. This shows both the requirement at local level and how the different elements in the model contribute to the total (summarised later in Table 11.4). Additional baseline information is included on:

- Housing – this is rounded to the nearest 5 with a minimum of 5 assumed where there is any evidence of a small housed population.
- Annual average number of unauthorised encampments 2001-2006

Two further points of clarification are:

- The figure for current supply of private residential pitches in Table 11.2 does not directly match the private pitch estimate in Table 4.4 above because transit pitches and pitches not yet developed are excluded.
- Because the Study Area estimates are rather more reliable than those for the constituent districts, district estimates for each element are always controlled to the Study Area total. A degree of adjustment is needed to achieve this. (This also applies to the calculations for the period 2011-2016 in Table 11.3).

<b>Table 11.2 : Additional Residential Pitch Requirements 2006-2011</b>										
Element	Study Area	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Leicester City	Rutland
<b>Additional baseline information</b>										
Housed	185	5	5	15	15	5	15	-	120	5
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006	86	6	7	9	10	8	21	1	20	4
<b>Current residential pitch supply</b>										
Socially rented pitches	42	20	-	-	-	-	1	-	21	-
Private pitches	180	50	-	38	69	-	23	-	-	-
Total pitches	222	70	-	38	69	-	24	-	21	-
<b>Need in December 2006 and arising 2006-2011</b>										
Net movement sites/houses	+3	-4	+0.5	-1	-3	+0.5	-	-	+10	-
Unauthorised development	32	3	3	7	6	-	13	-	-	-
Unauthorised encampment	52	3	4.5	5	6	4.5	14	1	12	2
Temporary planning permissions	15	11	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
New household formation	61	12	1	8	13	1	5	-	20	-
<b>Additional need 2006-2011</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Table 11.2 : Additional Residential Pitch Requirements 2006-2011 (Continued)</b>										
Element	Study Area	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Leicester City	Rutland
<b>Additional supply 2006-2011</b>										
Unused pitches	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planning applications pending	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New sites planned	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacancies on socially rented sites	25	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	-
<b>Additional supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>18</b>	-
<b>Requirements 2006-2011</b>										
<b>Requirements 2006-2011</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>

### **Additional Residential Pitch Requirements 2011-2016**

11.12 Estimating need over the first 5 years requires many assumptions, but there is survey information and current professional experience to draw on. Estimating requirements between 2011 and 2016 is much more problematic because so much could change in terms of Gypsy and Traveller demographics, lifestyle and accommodation preferences. This is likely to impact particularly on areas such as the Study Area with high proportions of rented pitches on private sites where change might be felt especially rapidly. For this reason, a less sophisticated approach, relying simply on estimated household growth, is adopted.

11.13 The results of the calculations are in Table 11.3 for the Study Area and individual local planning authorities. The assumptions made are:

- The baseline position:
  - for pitches it is assumed to be the 2006 pitch provision plus requirements 2006-2011 from Table 11.2.
  - for houses, it is assumed to be static from 2006 at 185 across the Study Area and distributed between districts as in 2006.
- Assumed rate of household growth: This is assumed to be 3% per annum compound. This figure is quoted by the Communities and Local Government report <sup>(1)</sup>, and seems appropriate given the ethnic composition of the Study Area which includes a mix of Gypsies, Irish Travellers and (small numbers of) New Travellers.
- What proportion of household increase needs pitches:
  - 100% of growth on sites is assumed to need pitches
  - 50% of growth from families in housing is assumed to need pitches

11.14 The total requirement for the Study Area is 71 residential pitches, significantly below the requirement 2006-2011. This is because there is an element of backlog in the earlier period. It is implicitly assumed that there will be no unauthorised developments in 2011, and that unauthorised encampments will not generate further need during this period. Both assumptions pre-suppose that site development in the period 2006-2011 will successfully meet the estimated requirements both in the Study Area and nationally.

<b>Table 11.3 : Additional Residential Pitch Requirements 2011-2016</b>										
Element	Study Area	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Leicester City	Rutland
<b>Baseline information</b>										
Housed	185	5	5	15	15	5	15	-	120	5
Pitches 2006	222	70	-	38	69	-	24	-	21	-
Pitches added 2006-2011	132	13	9	19	26	6	32	1	24	2
Total pitches 2011	354	83	9	57	95	6	56	1	45	2
<b>Additional households formed 2011-2016</b>										
From housed families	29	1	1	2	2	1	2	-	19	1
From families on sites	56	12	1	10	15	1	10	-	7	-
<b>Pitch requirements 2011-2016</b>										
From housed families (50%)	15	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	8	1
From families on sites	56	12	1	10	15	1	10	-	7	-
<b>Total requirement 2011-2016</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>

11.15 Table 11.4 brings together the estimates and summarises requirements. It must be stressed once more that this is an estimate of ‘**need where it arises**’ and not necessarily of ‘need where it should be met’.

<b>Table 11.4 : Summary of Residential Pitch Requirements</b>		
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Blaby	13	13
Charnwood	9	2
Harborough	19	11
Hinckley & Bosworth	26	16
Melton	6	2
North West Leicestershire	32	11
Oadby & Wigston	1	-
Leicester City	24	15
Rutland	2	1
<b>Study Area</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>71</b>

11.16 The Communities and Local Government report<sup>(1)</sup> referred to used rules of thumb to convert pitch requirements to indications of the possible number of sites involved and the amount of land required.

- The average site size used was 10 or 15 pitches. This would mean, across the Study Area, an additional 9 to 13 sites.
- A relatively generous pitch size of 200 square metres was assumed to take account of rising aspirations, additional mobile homes and/or trailers for a family, and the possibility of using larger pitches flexibly to accommodate visitors and thus reduce need for formal transit sites. A density of around 50 pitches per hectare results. Across the Study Area this suggests a minimum land requirement of about 4 hectares to 2016 (with additional space probably required for services and access arrangements).

These rules of thumb can be refined when the Communities and Local Government Gypsy & Traveller Unit publishes its promised site design guidance.

### **Other Indications of Residential Site Need**

11.17 The analysis so far has been entirely to do with numbers. More qualitative information about needs also emerged from the survey:

- About a third of survey respondents on authorised sites said that they did not have enough space for their family’s needs either on their pitch or in the living units they had. This was particularly common on owned sites/pitches and socially rented sites. Some flexibility in allowing the expansion of owner-occupied sites might help here. Larger pitches, or

more variety in pitch size, is a valid criterion for good site design for sustainable provision in the future.

- The survey has drawn attention to the poor conditions and limited facilities on some private sites, especially those offering rented pitches. While many respondents were uncritical of provision, a significant number would have liked better facilities including individual amenity units with WCs and showers for each family's use.
- Overall, a fifth of survey respondents had some long-term health problem or disability, although many fewer said that any adaptation to their accommodation was needed as a result. In the longer term, it is likely that there will be more older Gypsies and Travellers in the population and health and mobility concerns may increase.

11.18 In terms of **tenure**, interviews with Gypsies and Travellers revealed expressed preferences for private site provision and, in aspirational terms, for owner-occupied family sites, with over half of respondents on non-owned sites/pitches and in houses saying that they would like to develop their own site, usually with other family members. It is clear that family sites would best meet aspirations, but there are severe affordability problems as well as planning constraints on such aspirations being realised.

11.19 Because of affordability issues there is likely to be a continuing role for socially rented sites in the Study Area, even though a pitch on such a site was the most attractive accommodation option for only 10% of respondents. Existing sites have waiting lists which could not easily be met. Residents were clear that existing socially rented sites should not be extended – indeed there are also physical constraints on expansion.

11.20 A strong message from the survey is the need for variety in site provision in the future. This applies to tenure and to site size. Given the ethnic and family variety evident in the Study Area, provision in the form of a number of sites is likely to be appropriate, rather than a single large site to meet an entire requirement in one go. Sites which seek to mix ethnic and family groups indiscriminately will not be sustainable in the long run.

11.21 The survey gave some indications of broad **locational criteria** for sites:

- Most respondent preferred locations on the 'edge' of settlements where they could both have access to open countryside and distance themselves a little from potentially hostile settled neighbours.
- The great majority of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed on sites (or the roadside) drove to shops and health centres. This was apparently accepted as normal and very few used public transport. While not matching planning guidelines to minimise use of private vehicles or to foster community cohesion, it may be appropriate to accept willingness to drive to facilities when considering site locations if locations nearer to

services prove too hard to find or very contentious. Most respondents did not, however, want to be totally isolated, and remote locations are not acceptable.

- Respondents were very critical of the environment of some existing sites (not necessarily in the Study Area), unacceptably close to tips, motorways, sewage works or industrial land. Similar environmental criteria should be applied to Gypsy and Traveller sites as any other residential use.

## **References**

Communities and Local Government, *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*, 2007



## 12. ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSIT ACCOMMODATION

12.1 National policy is clear that there should be provision to facilitate the lifestyle and cultural tradition of travelling among Gypsy and Traveller communities. Transit or stopping place sites are needed to address this need and to minimise the disruption travelling can otherwise cause through unauthorised encampments.

12.2 There is clear evidence of need for transit accommodation in the Study Area:

- Caravan Count information and County and City Council records show continuing significant levels of unauthorised encampment within the Study Area and little sign of a decline.
- Many survey respondents are firmly committed to continuing a lifestyle which involves travelling for at least a few months a year.
- The great majority of survey respondents said that transit sites should be provided and thought that they would be well used.

### A Numerical Assessment of Need

12.3 In assessing requirements for transit accommodation basic information is taken from the Caravan Count. This approach is adopted because local authority records of unauthorised encampments (analyses in Chapter 6) do not easily show how many caravans there were in the Study Area on any particular day. The Count provides such a snapshot for dates in January and July each year, and thus gives an idea of the caravan capacity to be accommodated.

Calculating **transit requirements 2006-2011** requires assumptions on:

- The period over which Count figures should be considered – 2001 to 2006 is used.
- How caravan capacity requirement should relate to the Count figures – the average number of caravans at Count dates 2001-2006 was 43, the maximum was 59. A required Study Area capacity of 50 is assumed as lying between these extremes.
- What allowance should be made for vacancies to take account of the need for excess capacity for sites to function effectively and to allow for periodic site cleaning and repair. The required caravan capacity is doubled to allow for vacancies (100 caravan spaces across the Study Area). This will permit some flexibility to accommodate unexpected peaks.

12.4 Following the assumptions set out above gives a caravan capacity requirement of 100 transit spaces, including an allowance for vacancies and periodic site closures for 2006-2011. It is estimated that no further places will be needed 2011-2016 as the extent of travelling is unlikely to rise further in the future. This assumption should be kept under review.

12.5 Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers proved relatively unhelpful in determining where sites should be located. The distribution in Table 12.1 is entirely according to the pattern of encampments over the period 2001 to 2006.

<b>Table 12.1 : Estimated Requirements for Caravan Capacity on Transit Sites</b>			
Authority	2006-2011		2011-2016
	Sites	Caravan capacity	
Blaby	1	Up to 10	-
Charnwood	1	Up to 10	-
Harborough	1	Up to 10	-
Hinckley & Bosworth	1	Up to 10	-
Melton	1	Up to 10	-
North West Leicestershire <sup>(1)</sup>	2	Up to 20	-
Oadby & Wigston	-	-	-
Leicester	2	Up to 20	-
Rutland <sup>(2)</sup>	1	Up to 10	-
Study Area	10	100	-

<sup>(1)</sup> A private transit site at Measham had been granted planning permission but had not been developed in December 2006; it should count towards the calculated requirement for North West Leicestershire.

<sup>(2)</sup> Count figures for Rutland show an average of 10 caravans in the period 2001-2006.

12.6 The transit requirement is for 10 sites across the Study Area. The 100 caravan capacity translates roughly to 50 pitches/families (the survey showed roadside interviewees had, on average, just under 2 caravans per family). Using the pitch size assumptions used for residential sites in paragraph 11.16 above indicates a minimum land requirement of about 1 hectare across the Study Area (with additional requirements for services and access).

### **Other Indications of Transit Need**

12.7 Other less quantifiable indications of need for transit accommodation emerged from the interviews with Gypsies and Travellers:

- The majority favoured sites with more than minimal **service provision**. Most wanted hard-standings and individually provided amenity blocks with WCs and showers as well as mains water, electricity and refuse disposal. If shared facilities are provided, firm management will be required to ensure their proper use, cleaning and maintenance.
- The current pattern of unauthorised encampment is largely urban, apparently influenced by the presence of surfaced open spaces on supermarket car parks and industrial estates. Survey respondents favoured **locations** on the edge of settlements – towns or villages – for

transit sites. Good road access, including from motorways, will be important.

- There is scope – from the variety of preferences expressed – for **development and management** of transit sites both by local authorities or registered social landlords and the private sector.
- **Permitted stays** of up to 3 months would apparently accommodate most transient groups currently visiting the Study Area, and would enable police to use enhanced enforcement powers under s62A-E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. At present, for a site to be deemed ‘suitable’ for the exercise of these powers, it has to be within the local authority where the encampment takes place (county, Leicester or Rutland). Some flexibility in permitted stay might be appropriate to cater for people who want to over-winter.
- While many survey respondents said that they or their relatives might use transit sites in the Study Area if provided, formal sites did not figure high among more abstract preferences for places to stop while travelling. Preferences were for less formal provision such as the roadside and fields (especially favoured by roadside interviewees) or staying with family and friends (especially favoured by those with permanent site places or houses). This suggests that transit sites must earn **respect and trust** to attract groups in order to minimise continuing unauthorised encampment. Quality of provision is important here, as is management to prevent anti-social behaviour which would deter ‘respectable’ Gypsies and Travellers from using sites.

## 13. ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING

13.1 At least 45% of the Study Area's Gypsy and Traveller population live in bricks and mortar housing, predominantly in the social rented sector, but also in owner-occupation and private tenancies. This chapter seeks to give an indication of the likely scale of need for housing using a similar model to that used to estimate residential pitch requirements.

### A Numerical Assessment of Need

13.2 During the Partner consultation process, local housing authority representatives were asked about numbers of Gypsies and Travellers applying for and being allocated social rented housing in recent years. In the absence of ethnic monitoring, no-one was able to provide comprehensive information, and answers largely depended on awareness of individual families. Local records cannot provide a basis for estimating need.

13.3 Table 13.1 (overleaf) shows the results of an assessment of requirements for housing based on survey findings, and following similar calculations to those used in Table 11.1 above in estimating residential pitch requirements. In many instances the same figures are used, with housing need assumed to equate with the estimated of families **not** requiring residential pitches. The full derivation is not repeated, but references are made to the relevant rows in Table 11.1. The requirement 2006-2011 is **57 families** with a further **15 families** generated by family increase in the housed population between 2011 and 2016 (a figure which looks particularly low and which should be reviewed and monitored).

13.4 In the first 5 year period, this means that some 11-12 families will require housing each year across the Study Area.

13.5 The current distribution of Gypsies and Travellers in housing across the Study Area is very uneven with a concentration in Leicester City. It follows that, on a pro rata basis, the 2006-2011 distribution of need for housing 'where it arises' is also uneven:

Blaby	2
Charnwood	2
Harborough	5
Hinckley & Bosworth	5
Melton	2
North West Leicestershire	5
Oadby & Wigston	-
Leicester	34
Rutland	2
Study Area	57

<b>Table 13.1 : Estimate of Requirement for Housing 2006-2016</b>		
<b>Baseline population in housing</b>		<b>185 families</b>
<b>Requirement 2006-2011 from:</b>		
Net movement between sites and houses 2006-2011		-3 (3 houses released)
	<i>Same calculation as in Row 4 Table 11.1</i>	
Unauthorised development at December 2006		-
	<i>Assume zero – all accommodated on sites</i>	
Unauthorised encampment 2006-2011		31
	<i>Calculation as in Row 6 Table 11.1, assuming 15% of families on encampments interested in a house in the Study Area</i>	
End of temporary planning permissions 2006-2011		-
	<i>Assume zero – all accommodated on sites</i>	
New household formation 2006-2011		29
	<i>Basic assumptions of household formation as in Row 8 Table 11.1. Then:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>assume 9% of households formed on sites need a house and 90% in Study Area</i></li> <li>• <i>assume 50% of households formed in housing need a house and 90% in Study Area</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Estimated requirement for housing 2006-2011</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>Estimated requirement for housing 2011-2016</b>		
		<b>15</b>
	<i>Assume 50% of new families formed applying 3%pa growth rate to baseline population in housing as in Table 11.3</i>	

## Other Indications of Need in Relation to Housing

13.6 The survey provided other, more qualitative, aspects of need in relation to housing:

- A minority of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed aspired to bricks and mortar rather than site accommodation – as indicated by the most attractive accommodation options. Almost twice as many opted for owner-occupied as for social rented housing. However, while questions were not asked about income and affordability, it is likely that a very small proportion will actually be able to meet their needs in the market.
- Several housed Gypsies and Travellers – in all tenures – had trailers as well as the house and sometimes used them as extra accommodation. Visitors may also have trailers. Such desires to retain cultural and

lifestyle patterns, especially in high density estates, can lead to tensions with neighbours. Wherever possible allocation policies should take account of such considerations in a sensitive manner.

- A minority of interviewees on private sites and on the roadside had any first-hand experience of living in a house. If circumstances change and they need to move to a house for health or other reasons, it is likely that some initial support will be required to help the transition to an unfamiliar pattern of living and house-keeping. This links directly to requirements for housing-related support (see Chapter 15).
- Comments from housing officers in Partner authorities sometimes indicated that Gypsies and Travellers (in small numbers) applied for housing as homeless or on the register, but then withdrew when it became apparent that re-housing would not be immediate. This may be inevitable given supply and demand factors and equity, but again, a link to support might mean needs do not go undetected and unmet.

## 14. TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

14.1 Travelling Showpeople and Circus People are included in the definition of Gypsies and Travellers for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004<sup>(1)</sup> and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. A draft Circular<sup>(2)</sup> on planning for Travelling Showpeople now out to consultation makes clear that Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans must consider the needs of Travelling Showpeople and identify land to meet their needs in the same way as for other Gypsy and Traveller groups. While there are some superficial similarities between Travelling Showpeople and other Gypsies and Travellers, there are also significant differences – indeed Showpeople are keen themselves to highlight the differences. It is thus appropriate to consider the needs of Showpeople separately.

14.2 There are 20 Travelling Showpeople sites/yards in the Study Area and 1 for Circus People in Rutland (see Map 1 on page vi). Not all 20 sites have planning permission and enforcement action was in progress against unauthorised development of 2 sites in December 2006. 16 relatively informal interviews were carried out with Showpeople (involving 23 people) at 9 locations including the 2 unauthorised sites. 3 representatives of the Midlands Section of the Showmen's Guild were interviewed. It proved impossible to interview anyone from the Circus People yard as they were overseas during the fieldwork. Drawing on these interviews this chapter looks first at Showpeople and their business, then at sites/yards and accommodation, and finally at accommodation needs.

### Travelling Showpeople

14.3 Travelling Showpeople are a group defined by their distinctive occupation – travelling around the country to provide fairs, rides and amusements with associated catering and other stalls for short periods of time. Most interviewees owned rides, stalls and other equipment and some were also engaged in associated activities. For example, one acted as a 'lessee' who takes a contract from a council for a site and then is responsible for providing the fair, one man built rides, others were involved in accredited safety testing for equipment.

14.4 Another clear characteristic of Showpeople is the 'dynastic' nature of their occupation. Many interviewees could trace their family history back through generations of Showpeople, and several were descended from founder members of the Showmen's Guild at the end of the nineteenth century. They spoke of a tight-knit community with a distinctive culture, where everyone knows everyone else. Travelling Showpeople are said to '*keep themselves to themselves*'. One interviewee said '*Living in our own community is our way of life*'. This was seen as both a strength and a weakness since it means that members of the settled community know little about Showpeople, their lifestyle or their needs, and may not distinguish them from Gypsies and Travellers. Interviewees felt that they were subject to prejudice from the settled community, and that was at least partly due to being lumped together with Gypsies and Travellers.

14.5 There are some important points from this general context with direct implications for accommodation needs:

- Showpeople are modern business-people operating in a traditional occupation. This is reflected in the way they address accommodation issues as well as in other aspects of their lives such as attitudes to education. As business-people they are used to dealing with experts, raising finance and so on. Most interviewees stressed that, on accommodation needs, they were not asking for anything to be done 'for them', but simply to be enabled to provide for themselves.
- Showpeople need to travel with their equipment and store it when not in use. Equipment is getting more sophisticated and rides are getting bigger. Rides are now mostly trailer-mounted requiring tow-vehicles. The increasingly rigorous health and safety requirements mean that rides have to be set up for maintenance and testing in winter. Requirements imposed by councils have increased the infrastructure necessary for providing a fair, meaning that some Showpeople have to store temporary fencing or tracking to protect ground in wet weather. All this increases the amount of space needed to operate efficiently and thus the desirable size of yard which will act as both family living quarters and equipment store, testing area and so on.
- The pattern of work over the year is said to be changing. At one time the 'season' ran from Easter to Bonfire Night approximately and Showpeople traditionally would be on the road during this period and in winter quarters over winter. Now there are Christmas fairs and 'switch-ons' – short events requiring set-up and departure in a single day – which lengthen the season. Partly because of fears of anti-social behaviour and safety, partly because traditional fair sites are being lost to development or regeneration, interviewees noted that they had lost bookings over the year and could have gaps in engagements in addition to any created by adverse weather. Thus the season is longer and perhaps less continuous than previously. Showpeople need somewhere to go with their equipment during gaps in engagements (equipment cannot be left unattended because of insurance conditions) and there are attractions in being able to return 'home' for short periods when necessary.
- Some women and older children like to be able to take temporary jobs during the winter. Sites/yards located where such temporary jobs are available are an advantage.
- Family businesses are important. Interviewees noted that most children seem to stay in the business. Older sons and daughters have their own rides and stalls. This reinforces the importance of extended family among Showpeople. Unmarried sons and daughters have their own trailers but remain part of the 'household'. On marriage it is usual for sons to bring their new family to their parents' yard, while daughters go



to their new husbands' yards. Older family members, traditionally, are cared for and supported by their family when they no longer actively travel. Sites/yards are wanted which can accommodate extended families where some will be resident throughout the year, others coming and going. It is very important, culturally, to keep families together.

14.6 This was not a quantitative survey, and interviewees were selected to illustrate a range of circumstances rather than a representative sample. The examples in Box 14.1 show different types of families and employment patterns.

**Box 14.1 : Some Travelling Showpeople Families in the Study Area**

1. Man and wife, plus children aged 10, 6 and 2. On family yard with his father and mother in a chalet (semi-retired), 2 brothers each of whom have a wife and 2 children, and his aunt and her sister who acts as her carer with the sister's 2 children (do not travel). The brothers travel during a season from St Valentines Day (King's Lynn) to November.
2. Man and wife, plus daughters aged 5 and 2. On a rented pitch, but has his mother and father in a chalet nearby and his sister and her husband next door. The family is sited throughout the year to ensure the daughters get as much education as possible. He goes to local fairs and shows and tries to get back to base as much as possible.
3. Man and wife, plus son aged 17 and daughters aged 13, 7 and 4. Travels extensively from Stamford fair through London and the East Midlands.
4. Man and wife, plus daughters aged 23 and 7, and sons aged 21 and 12. On family yard with father and mother living in an adjoining house, his 2 brothers and their wives who have 4 and 2 children.
5. Man and wife, plus daughter aged 18 and sons aged 16, 11 and 9. Comes from Gloucester and has family around that area. Travels Easter to November around South Wales, West of England and the West Midlands.
6. Widow who lives alone. Has not travelled since the death of her husband. She is on a rented pitch and has her daughter and her husband plus 1 child next door.

14.7 Most of the families interviewed had been in and around the Study Area for at least 20 years. Of those moving to the Study Area more recently, one had previously been in the South West, and one in Nottinghamshire. The possibility of getting accommodation seems to have been an important motive in coming to the Study Area.

14.8 Looking at why interviewees (or their parents) had moved to the site/yard where they were interviewed reveals three themes:

- Some described having previously lived on town centre yards which had been lost to redevelopment. This pattern of outward movement was often remarked as town centre land values and conceptions of 'appropriate' land-uses displace yards.
- Some had been living on family yards or renting from other families and had had to leave when other closer family members needed the space. *'Families get bigger, land doesn't.'*
- Some had been living on rented plots and had the opportunity of buying their own yard. *'It's yours for ever.'* *'We wanted the security for our children.'*

14.9 In terms of future plans and movement intentions, 8 of the 16 interviewees did not intend to move in the near future. 3 of these had moved to a recently opened new site shortly before the interviews. 2 interviewees on an unauthorised site did not want to move, but their future depended entirely on the outcome of the planning process. The remaining 6 interviewees were all looking for land for a yard of their own (see below).

## Sites and Accommodation

14.10 Travelling Showpeople sites differ widely in size, facilities and location. Among those visited, three general 'types' emerged:

- There were 3 sites, all developed in the last 10 years or so, comprising individually owned 'yards' of about 100x100 feet off an internal access road. Plots are provided on such sites with hardcore, electricity, water and sewage connections and basic fencing. Yard owners pay a sum for overall site management and maintenance. Arrangements within the yard are then up to the individual owner and vary enormously. Each yard contains both residential accommodation and equipment storage and maintenance facilities. This is the format favoured by the Showmen's Guild, although they now work on 100x150 feet modules and say that 150x200 feet would better meet the needs of an 'average' family given the increasing need for space referred to above. On the sites visited some yards were rented, either by the site developer or individual owners – for example one interviewee also owned, and rented out, the yard next to her own and saw this as giving potential for expansion when her children got older. 2 of these sites are located in rural areas and some distance from the nearest village. One interviewee felt this isolation since she did not drive, but others were more likely to praise the privacy and quietness. The remaining site of this type is in an ideal location on a town by-pass with direct access off a roundabout; shops, schools and services are within walking distance.
- There were 2 sites offering rented pitches; one was leased from the local council and managed by the Showmen's Guild. The arrangements here tended to be less formal. Living and working areas were

segregated. 'Pitches' tended to be quite informal with little clear demarcation between one and another. Services are provided to each pitch. On the Showmen's Guild site permanent residents, mostly retired Showpeople, were located around two sides of the site so they would not be disturbed by comings and goings of more temporary tenants. The central area had hook-up points for Showpeople over-wintering. This area could be available in summer for Showpeople rained off an event or otherwise needing short-term emergency space. This site is managed by a Site Steward. The private site is managed by the owner who lives in a brick and mortar bungalow. Both such sites are within urban areas, one quite surrounded and the other on the edge.

- There were 2 'sites' which are single (extended) family yards. These yards combined living and working facilities, with some flexibility of arrangements for privacy and most efficient functioning. These are the sites most subject to pressure on space from family growth and one was crowded despite some equipment being stored elsewhere (not seen as ideal). The crowding was such that it impaired the efficient working of the site; the owner is looking for land to re-locate. Both these yards are surrounded by other development, although one was initially on the edge of a village. There is no scope for on-site expansion.

14.11 Facilities were much less developed on one unauthorised site where there was one supply of water which has to be shared between families, and electricity. For the first 3 months on site there was no water supply, and for the first 12 months electricity came from a generator. Sewage is tanked and emptied regularly. The council do not collect refuse. Obviously this is a temporary state of affairs, and the owners had sought planning permission to develop a high quality site.

14.12 It is clear from the interviews that different families prefer different sorts of sites/yards. The interviewees on one unauthorised development are seeking to develop a 15 yard site, mostly for family members. The interviewee on the other unauthorised site is looking for land to develop as a family yard. There is a recognition that rented pitches are needed as well as owner-occupied yards, although it is clear that most interviewees preferred to own for their greater security and this is seen as the usual 'ideal' by the Showmen's Guild.

### **Living Accommodation**

14.13 Most interviewees were living in some form of Showmen's trailer. These are large wheeled trailers designed to be towed by a lorry. Some include 'pull-outs' which provide more space and create an interesting shape and internal design. Where interviewees were living in Showmen's trailers they all had a bath or shower. Most also had, and used, an internal WC – others had a separate outside WC and 2 had chemical toilets. On one family yard, there was a laundry block and a toilet block. 2 interviewees on yards within a wider site had large park homes, and a site owner who rented pitches

lived in a bungalow on the site. Where there were older children in the family, it was usual for them to have their own trailers or touring caravans as bedrooms, but to eat with the family. The retired Showperson had a small residential mobile home with WC and shower.

14.14 Living accommodation is linked to employment pattern and site security. Thus families who travel throughout the summer have Showmen's trailers which they take with them and live in while working. Families who work more locally or for short spells only may have a 'chalet' and use a touring caravan while away. However, leaving a chalet is only safe if there are people around to look after it either on the yard or site. More than one interviewee specifically mentioned being able to have a chalet as an added advantage of owning their own yard; chalets give more space and bedrooms than trailers. Some, but by no means all, ideally would like a bricks and mortar house or bungalow on their yard and the Showmen's Guild argue that this should be permitted by planning authorities on the grounds that chalets can cost more than bricks and mortar, are harder to finance and do not appreciate in value. Some interviewees, however, expressed a reluctance to live in bricks and mortar similar to that often expressed by other Gypsy and Traveller groups.

14.15 Thus living accommodation for Showpeople tends to be good quality and to have all the basic facilities. For a family, space is needed to accommodate several units, which themselves are likely to be bigger over time.

### **Developing Sites**

14.16 5 of the interviewees had direct experience of the process of developing their site and negotiating planning permission (not always successfully) and others were actively looking for land to develop. The following points emerged about the process:

- The Showpeople who were seeking to develop sites were doing so in a highly professional manner, with specialist consultants. They were themselves very aware of, and familiar with, planning requirements and the processes involved (and referred to the draft circular which had not been issued at the time of the interviewees). They were keen to do everything properly, and when they felt forced to move onto land without planning permission it was simply because they had nowhere else to go. Both the interviewees on unauthorised developments had believed that their site *'ticked all the boxes'* but had been refused or told they stood no chance of getting permission.
- Those looking for land were similarly doing it in a comprehensive and professional way, contacting local agents and local councils, and bearing in mind likely planning criteria in their search instructions. Their areas of search were extensive covering several local authorities.
- They concluded that finding suitable land is virtually impossible, and most said that they had received very little help from local authorities,

which were unable to point to land which might be suitable for development. Some reported having been given advice to look at industrial land which they thought would be inappropriate for residential use and unaffordable at industrial values. Land zoned for residential use would be even more prohibitively expensive given the number of dwellings that could be built on the amount needed for even a single family yard.

- The impression given is that local authorities differ, and that some seem more helpful and sympathetic to Showpeople than others. Some difficulties were attributed to lack of awareness of, and familiarity with, Travelling Showpeople on the part of many planners, and anticipated hostility on the part of potential settled neighbours (hostility which was said to largely disappear when a site was established and Showpeople became personally familiar). Some felt that the lack of really attractive, successful yards to take people to see as examples of what can be achieved is a problem. These perceptions may tend to reinforce clustering of sites/yards in areas where local councils are felt to be sympathetic and local communities accepting of Showpeople. This appears to be the case in Lutterworth (Harborough).

14.17 Set against these largely negative views is the fact that 3 of the sites visited had been granted planning permission recently in Charnwood, Harborough and Rutland. In each case, interviewees stressed the need for patience and persistence to overcome objections and to amend proposals to be acceptable. The process is time-consuming and can be expensive. While accepting that there are real difficulties in finding suitable land for such an extensive land-use, there was a universal view that the main problem is hostility to the idea of a yard being developed in a neighbourhood. Some interviewees took the view that the difficulties of the process were designed to force Showpeople into housing:

*The settled community say we should live in a house and travel for work, but they don't take their kids, dogs and grandparents with them like we do. For Showmen it is a way of life, not a job.*

## **Travelling Showpeoples' Accommodation Needs in the Study Area**

14.18 Paragraph 8 of the *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople* (2007) says that a new circular is necessary because evidence shows that the advice set out in Circular 22/91 has failed to deliver adequate sites for Travelling Showpeople. One intention of the draft circular is to increase the number of Travelling Showpeople's sites in appropriate locations with planning permission in order to address current under-provision over the next 3-5 years. Thus the Communities and Local Government department is convinced of the need for further provision nationally.

14.19 Evidence from the Showmen's Guild (to which most Showpeople belong) has contributed to the national recognition of need. The Midland Section covers parts of the East and West Midlands including the Study Area. It has a membership of 383 and estimates that this represents a population of at least 1,570. It is aware of 42 sites across the region and estimates overcrowding on at least 59 yards (as noted some sites have several yards). They estimate existing need, across their region, as at least 61 families or c250 people, around 16% of the estimated population.

14.20 Looking at the age profile of member families they find that 13% of the population is currently aged between 16 and 24 (203 people). They then apply a factor of 45% to the age group as an indication of likely family formation over the next 10 years, and estimated mortality rates to those aged 65 and over which might free places in sites and yards. They conclude that at least 65 additional families will need accommodation (17% of the population).

14.21 Adding present need from overcrowding and projected family increase results in at least **126 families (516 people)** in need of additional accommodation over the next 10 years. They calculate that this means a land requirement of just under 28 hectares using their assumed yard of at least 100x150 feet, plus need for site roads and so on.

14.22 The Midland Section representatives felt unable to apportion their regional requirement geographically and to say what proportion might be attributable to the Study Area. Based on the distribution of known sites across the Midlands Section area, it is reasonable to assume that Leicestershire might account for a quarter of the estimated need. This would mean a need to accommodate just over **30 families over the next 10 years**. Even the limited visits and interviews carried out in the current study suggests that this would be a very modest estimate.

14.23 Interviewees were unanimous in saying that more sites/yards are needed both nationally and locally. The sorts of evidence they put forward were:

- The existence of unauthorised developments where sites have been developed without planning permission. If occupiers are forced to leave they have nowhere else to go.
- Overcrowding on existing sites/yards which leads to poor living conditions and inefficiencies of operation.
- Some Showpeople stay out on the road throughout the year, even when trade is poor, because they have nowhere to go.
- Hidden away 'encampments' by Showpeople with nowhere else to go.
- The extent to which places on newly developed sites are over-subscribed if advertised through the World's Fair (trade journal) or

simply through the grapevine when it becomes known that a site is being developed.

- The very high rents being charged by people with plots who take advantage of shortage. One interviewee reported being unable to *'live properly'* while paying £100 a week which they were being charged on a yard owned by a retired Showman in Nottinghamshire.
- General awareness, for example *'every Showman I meet knows someone in need'*.

14.24 Need was apparent among those interviewed:

- Unauthorized developments subject to enforcement action accommodated a single family and 5 inter-related families.
- One family yard is severely overcrowded affecting 5 'nuclear' families; the occupants are looking to re-locate and the present site, given its location and surrounding land-uses, is unlikely to be available for Showpeople.
- One site is becoming difficult to use because of its road access, more development and traffic along the access road, and larger vehicles; the owner is looking to re-locate and the present site would have similar problems for any other Showpeople's use.
- There were a total of 12 unmarried 'children' over 16, 9 of whom are sons who would be expected to find the family home. There was not necessarily room on the existing pitch/yard to accommodate separate new households.

14.25 Assumptions made in estimating requirements across the Study Area on the basis of these findings are set out in the box. The resulting estimate is for:

**2006-2011 – 45 families : 25 because of re-location from unauthorised developments and unsuitable sites; 20 from family increase**  
**2011-2016 – 20 families : family increase**

**Showpeople site/yard re-location needs**

Assumes that all such need in the Study Area was identified in the interviews:

- All unauthorised development families displaced = 6 nuclear families (point i. in paragraph 14.24)
- All families on sites requiring re-location because of crowding or unsuitable access = 19 nuclear families (points ii. and iii. in paragraph 14.24)

Assumes this need is urgent and should be met 2006-2011

**Showpeople requirements from family increase**

**Interview findings:** 12 unmarried 'children' over 16 in families interviewed of whom 9 were sons who would be expected to find the family home

**Assumptions:**

- 1 in 9 Showpeople families were interviewed
- Grossing up suggests about 80 new families will form 2006-2016 (9 times 9)
- 50% of these new families will not find accommodation on existing sites or yards = 40 new families in need
- Family increase will be evenly split between 2006-2011 and 2011-2016

14.26 Table 14.1 shows the distribution of the estimated need between local authorities purely on a '**need where it arises**' basis. Family increase has been split between authorities pro rata to the present distribution of Showpeople.

**Table 14.1 : Estimated Requirement for Additional Pitches for Travelling Showpeople**

LPA	2006-2011	2011-2016
Blaby	1	2
Charnwood	4	5
Harborough	24	5
Hinckley & Bosworth	2	1
Melton	-	-
NW Leicestershire	8	2
Oadby & Wigston	-	-
Leicester	3	2
Rutland	3	3
Study Area	45	20

14.27 The distribution of requirements between districts would in practice be unlikely to be met in this way. Requirements of under 3 pitches are unlikely to be practicable unless as an extension of an existing site. Sustainable and efficient sites are likely to have 10+ pitches/or yards when developed for unrelated occupiers, and even extended family yards seem likely to require potential accommodation for 3 or more 'nuclear' families.

14.28 Locational criteria for a multi-yard site include:

- Up to 5 hectares of relatively level and well drained land.
- Good access to the main road and motorway system.
- An edge, or near-settlement site rather than on actually within an existing settlement.
- Affordable land, ie not inflated by prime residential or industrial development values.
- Shops and schools within reasonable distance, perhaps up to 2 miles.
- Environment suitable for residential purposes and bringing up children.

A single (extended) family yard would require a smaller site, but other criteria would be similar.



## References

- (1) Statutory Instrument 2006 No 3190, *The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006*
- (2) Communities and Local Government, *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople*, 2007

## **15. GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT**

### **Introduction**

15.1 Housing support needs and services relevant to Gypsies and Travellers include Housing Related Support Services (HRSS), as defined for the purposes of the Supporting People (SP) programme, and support provided by Gypsy Liaison Officers and other specialist workers. SP states that housing-related support helps develop and sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in their accommodation. Beyond SP there are specialist services which provide wide-ranging support to Gypsies and Travellers and assist them to access mainstream services. Supporting People funds the provision of HRSS at the County Council's site at Aston Firs, where there are 20 family pitches; this is the only SP service in the Study Area specifically funded to work with Gypsies and Travellers. In addition there are some housed Gypsies and Travellers who are provided with floating or outreach support through generic services. The brief for this study sought to establish the need for HRSS and review how these needs should best be met. The data available and conclusions drawn are set out here. Recommendations are made at various points in the chapter.

### **Supporting People Strategies**

15.2 The Leicestershire SP Strategy links provision of further support to the prospects of additional sites. The strategy identifies the need for HRSS to Gypsies and Travellers to link into other services, for example support services dealing with drug and alcohol problems, mental health problems, adult literacy and school attendance. The Strategy states that progress with regard to the provision of a new site or sites in the County is likely to take a few years and so the position will be reviewed on a regular basis.

15.3 The Rutland SP Strategy makes similar statements to the Leicestershire Strategy and refers to joint discussion of proposals for the provision of transit sites and stopping places. The Rutland Action Plan includes reviewing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with neighbouring authorities, reviewing services for those living in bricks and mortar housing and looking at the case for generic support services.

15.4 The Leicester City SP Strategy states Gypsies and Travellers are able to access generic floating support but notes that they may be reluctant to do so. It describes the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer as being overstretched and notes that the majority of families worked with are housed Gypsies and Travellers. Based on an evaluation of this officer's work the strategy suggests that there is a need for 800 hours of HRSS per year in the City, which it anticipates would provide 1.5 hours of support per week to 50 families.

15.5 A joint meeting was held for this study with the 3 SP Managers to outline the nature of the GTAA and provide feedback on Partner and stakeholder responses on HRSS. All SP teams agreed that there was a need for HRSS for some Gypsies and Travellers. The City Council has taken the view that there is a need to establish a specialist floating support service for Gypsies and Travellers, to be delivered by reconfiguration of an existing service rather than tendering a new service. Leicestershire County has reviewed its provision at Aston Firs, which was found to be satisfactory, but recognised that gaps may exist elsewhere in the county. Both authorities take the view that HRSS needs to be co-ordinated closely with the work of specialist Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers.

### Usage of Existing Housing-Related Support Services

15.6 HRSS at the County Council's Aston Firs site is funded from Supporting People whilst similar support provided through the Warden at the City Council's Meynells Gorse site is not SP funded. Evidence of the use of HRSS can be found in SP client records which identify *new* service users described as Travellers (as set out in Table 15.1). It should be noted that this data has limitations since the description of *Traveller* is made by service providers rather than service users themselves; no data has been recorded for Aston Firs; and hostels in the Study Area may well be recording admissions as *Travellers* amongst those who are rough sleepers and are not from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds.

Administering Authority	Aged 16-24		Aged 25-39		Aged 40-59		Aged 60+		All	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Leicester	4	8	10	8	8	9	4	0	26	25
Leicestershire	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	2
Rutland	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: SP Client Records Office

15.7 Table 15.1 shows there were 58 new HRSS clients recorded as being Travellers in the period April 2003 to September 2006. We **recommend** that SP Teams give SP providers guidance to avoid possible misrecording of hostel admissions of rough sleepers as Travellers. We note that there are 14 recorded instances of Traveller families receiving floating or outreach support and that the majority were women with children. Consequently we **recommend** that HRSS for adult service users who are parents should be co-ordinated with relevant services working with children of these families.

### Evidence of Support Needs from Gypsy & Traveller Interviews

15.8 The interviews with Gypsies and Travellers undertaken for this study asked a number of questions intended to show whether there is a need for

support and, if so, of what kind. 110 respondents (59% of the Gypsy and Traveller sample, not including Travelling Showpeople) said that they had experienced a need for such help or thought that, in the situations described in Table 15.2, they would need help.

<b>Table 15.2 : Gypsies and Travellers Saying They had Needed or would Need Help</b>				
Category	Living on sites <sup>(1)</sup> (55/96 respondents said they had needed or would need help)	Housed Travellers (26/29 respondents said they had needed or would need help)	Roadside (29/61 respondents said they had needed or would need help)	Total (110/186 respondents said they had needed or would need help)
<b>Consisting of help with the following</b>				
Form filling and dealing with authority	39	21	22	82
Housing options	39	24	12	75
Housing Benefits and other benefits	35	20	9	64
Domestic violence	11	14	6	31
Drugs/alcohol	9	13	6	27

<sup>(1)</sup> Both authorised sites and unauthorised developments

15.9 The HRSS activities with most positive responses were form filling and dealing with authority generally, housing options, and housing benefits and other benefits. Respondents were free to indicate as many of these categories of help as they wished. Of the 110 indicating that they had needed or would need help in the circumstances described, 74 stated that this was in relation to 2 or more of these needs (Table 15.3). When added together this produces a total of 280 mentions of problems requiring help from amongst the 110 concerned, that is with an average of 2.5 separate needs being mentioned by those who had needed or would need help.

<b>Table 15.3 : Frequency of the Need for Help Identified by Gypsies and Travellers</b>				
Frequency of types of need identified	Living on sites <sup>(1)</sup>	Housed Travellers	Roadside	Total
Sample number	96	29	61	186
0	41	3	32	76
1	15	4	17	36
2	16	2	5	23
3	16	6	3	25
4	2	4	1	7
5	6	10	3	19

<sup>(1)</sup> Both authorised sites and unauthorised developments

15.10 In addition to the support needs in Table 5.2, there was a strong demand for legal assistance and support in securing planning permission as set out in Table 15.4. Neither of these needs/types of assistance falls within the SP definition of HRSS but they are clearly relevant to the ability of Gypsies and Travellers to obtain and retain a place in which to live in their caravans.

<b>Table 15.4 : Other Support Needs Identified by Gypsies and Travellers</b>				
Category	Living on sites <sup>(1)</sup>	Housed Travellers	Roadside	Total
Sample number	96	29	61	186
<b><i>Consisting of help with the following</i></b>				
Planning permission	43	17	25	85
Legal advice	28	19	23	70

(1) Both authorised sites and unauthorised developments

15.11 Overall, housed Gypsies and Travellers were significantly more likely than others to say that they would need help with all activities. This may indicate a greater recognition of these needs amongst housed Gypsies and Travellers and/or a greater willingness to admit to having such needs (which could in turn be related to differences related to the conduct of these interviews by CURS researchers rather than community interviewers).

15.12 Respondents who said that they would need help were asked who they might go to. Specific mentions were made of the local authority, the Gypsy Council, CAB, family members, the Widening Participation Project, Health Visitors, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers, DSS, Site Wardens, Gypsy Liaison Officers, housing officers, Health Visitors, solicitors and Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR). There were frequent mentions of named workers who had a dedicated role in relation to Gypsies and Travellers indicating that such workers are well known, and indeed workers were almost universally referred to by their first names rather than their job title or organisation. This includes those offering assistance which may be outside their direct remit but which may reduce demand which might otherwise arise for HRSS.

## **Need for HRSS**

15.13 The Study Partners sought estimates of the need for HRSS as defined for the purposes of Supporting People. These are set out in Table 15.5 for the SP Administering Authorities. The methodology used is to apply the 59% of all respondents who indicated that they had needed or would need help with HRSS to the estimated adult Gypsy and Traveller population. Responses relating to planning permission and legal advice are omitted from this analysis on the basis of not being eligible for SP funding.

<b>Table 15.5 : Survey Responses on HRSS Applied to Estimated Populations</b>				
	Estimated adult population	Grossed up for estimated adult population	Those in actual need (assume 50% reduction of grossed up figure)	Those seeking HRSS (assume 50% reduction of those in actual need)
Leicestershire County	790	467	234	117
Leicester City	455	269	135	67
Rutland	55	33	16	8
All	1,300	769	384	192

15.14 Column 2 shows the effect of grossing up the responses from the interviewees to the estimated adult population of Gypsies and Travellers (column 1). Column 3 shows the result assuming that 50% of 'grossed up' responses reflects actual need. Column 4 shows the result if it is further assumed that 50% of those assumed to be in actual need require HRSS. The assumptions in columns 3 and 4 should be treated with caution since they are working assumptions for the purposes of the calculation set out in Table 15.5 rather than being derived from survey-based evidence. In practice the need for HRSS services, that is those defined for the purposes of Supporting People, will reflect a variety of factors including:

- The profile of the population in an area (for example reflecting apparently greater relative need for support amongst housed Travellers)
- The extent to which those in need recognise that need
- The extent to which assistance is sought when in need
- The extent to which assistance is sought from SP service providers
- The extent to which those seeking HRSS are assessed as being eligible and in need of such services.

## **Partner and Stakeholder Consultation on HRSS**

15.15 Each Partner to the GTAA and a range of stakeholders were asked for information and comments on HRSS for Gypsies and Travellers. There were 21 respondents, of whom 15 provided information and comments on HRSS. These comprised 8 Partners and 7 stakeholders who provide services including advice, education and support. Amongst the respondents to the questions on HRSS, 11 stated unambiguously that there was a need for such support for some Gypsies and Travellers and a further 2 said that there was a potential need dependent on circumstances. No respondents said that there was no need for HRSS for Gypsies and Travellers. When asked if HRSS available to Gypsies and Travellers was satisfactory 8 respondents said no, 2 said yes and a further 2 said that they did not know. All the respondents felt that the need was for either floating support or a combination of floating support and accommodation-based support; no respondents favoured the provision of accommodation-based support only.

15.16 The Partners and stakeholders identified assistance which they believed constitutes HRSS relevant to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. These include a wide range of needs which are covered by Supporting People and needs of particular relevance to the Gypsy and Traveller community such as dealing with issues arising from discrimination from local residents and harassment. This study has analysed responses from Partners and stakeholders to seek to address specific questions on HRSS raised within the Study Brief as follows:

- The type of bodies which attracted most support as the preferred service provider of HRSS to Gypsies and Travellers were partnerships and Gypsy and Traveller Groups.
- There was an emphasis on the need for the service provider to be trusted by Gypsies and Travellers but no consensus as to whether any particular type of organisation was best placed to secure this trust.
- There was demand for HRSS to be available both as a 'one-off' service, for example when Gypsies and Travellers move to an area or into permanent accommodation, and on a continuing basis when required.
- The majority of respondent Partners and stakeholders felt that HRSS for Gypsies and Travellers needed to be available for more than 2 years.
- No clear consensus emerged on the numbers of hours per week that HRSS should be provided. Leicester City estimated that 1.5 hours per week is required and Leicestershire County Council referred to the level of support given at Aston Firs as equivalent to 1 hour 12 minutes per family per week. Other respondents gave a wide range of estimates of the amount of HRSS required per family from less than 1 hour to as much as 10 hours per week.

## Conclusions

15.17 The evidence gathered on the support needs of Gypsies and Travellers indicates the need for assistance with accessing a wide range of services, tackling social exclusion and overcoming some of the effects of transience. More narrowly, there is a need for housing-related support as defined for the purposes of the Supporting People programme. Our conclusions are:

- Housing-related support needs can best be met on a floating basis, which could complement site-based support.
- In the City, beyond Meynells Gorse, the need which is most evident is amongst housed Travellers in social housing and hostels.
- In the County, beyond Aston Firs, the need is mostly amongst Travellers on private sites, both authorised and unauthorised.
- Those on private sites may be less likely to recognise or admit to these needs, suggesting that a service will need to be developed gradually and grow as it becomes known and trusted.

- Staff employed in statutory bodies who work with Gypsy and Traveller communities have a position of trust and any HRSS provided needs to have strong links to these staff.
- The way in which this linkage might best be achieved should be a material consideration in deciding how HRSS should be configured.
- The training, knowledge and skills of staff known to, and trusted by, the Gypsy and Traveller community are critical, rather than the particular identity of the body which employs these personnel.
- Particular challenges arise when key personnel working with the Gypsy and Traveller community change, making it essential that planned succession strategies are in place.
- Development of a centre of expertise could bring together relevant services in different sectors and provide support to other services which find themselves working with Gypsies and Travellers.
- Housing-related support should be available both in instances where the need is time-limited and where need appears to be continuing.
- The work of housing support workers, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers and other specialists needs to be co-ordinated in order to ensure that there is a continuity of support where this is required.
- Provision needs to be flexible to offer support when it is needed urgently, with scope to withdraw it on a phased basis or to continue its provision on a continuing basis as required.
- Housing-related support needs should be met where these needs arise. This could be achieved through joint commissioning across the GTAA study area, including the three SP authorities reviewing their plans and considering cross-boundary provision.



## 16. LOCAL POLICIES

16.1 The study brief referred to an assessment of local policies and comments on their relevance in relation to the study's findings. It also referred to suggestions for future policies which might be incorporated into new Local Development Frameworks to cover the period to 2016. This section deals with policies towards planning, unauthorised encampment and housing. It includes suggestions and recommendations.

### Planning Applications and Decisions

16.2 As shown in Figure 4.2 there has been a steady increase since 1979 in the number of caravans on authorised private sites. This has been achieved through the grant of planning permissions across the Study Area. The number of planning applications is sometimes taken as an indicator of need/demand for site provision. Information was collected on planning applications since 2001 concerning Gypsy and Traveller sites to show the pattern of approvals and refusals. Table 16.1 summarises this; some of the applications relate to the same piece of land. In Harborough and North West Leicestershire some of the applications are from Travelling Showpeople.

<b>Table 16.1 : Summary of Planning Applications Involving Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision and Decisions since 2001</b>			
Local authority	Applications	Permissions granted	Other
Blaby	17	13 approved including 7 on appeal	10 refusals including 7 subsequently granted on appeal; 1 application pending
Charnwood	Nil	Nil	Nil
Harborough	10	4 allowed on appeal	6 refused; 5 withdrawn
Hinckley & Bosworth	11	4 including 1 temporary	5 refused; 1 withdrawn; 2 pending
Melton	Nil	Nil	Nil
North West Leicestershire	9	1 granted; 1 amended on existing site; 1 temporary made permanent	5 refused; 1 withdrawn; 1 court case pending
Oadby & Wigston	Nil	Nil	Nil
Leicester	1	Nil	1 Application pending
Rutland	Nil	Nil	Nil

16.3 There were no applications in 5 of the 9 Study Area local planning authorities. Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth have granted most permissions. A crude success rate for applications across the Study Area is around 50% including amendments to existing permissions and applications granted on appeal. The appeal system is important in boosting success rates, implying that some authorities have been unreasonable in refusing applications.

Without significant modifications to current local planning policies and their application, planning inspectors and the Secretary of State, who will now have regard to Circular 01/2006, may allow more appeals where need is proven.

16.4 Where detailed histories were available to the researchers, it was clear that there were instances of multiple applications being made before a site became authorised and that there was also, arguably because of the level of initial refusals, a tendency for land to be acquired and developed without authorisation and for consent to be sought retrospectively. This pattern is reflected in the findings from the interviews conducted for this study as discussed below.

### **Private Site Development: The Views of Gypsies and Travellers**

16.5 Respondents on all private sites were asked if the site was already established when they moved there or if they had been involved with establishing the site. In all, 16 (out of 82 respondents) said that they had been involved in the site's establishment, and all gave some details of what had been involved. The sites referred to have different planning status – some have full permission, some have temporary and some no planning permission at all.

16.6 While there were some exceptions, the most common pattern was to buy the land (not noted to be a problem), move on and apply for retrospective planning permission – which was often problematic. Several respondents used a planning consultant to help them get permission. The following examples illustrate this process:

*The land was available and was private and cheap so they decided to buy it. They developed the site themselves and used a planning consultant. It was very difficult to get the Council to pass it and then they put on lots of conditions that seemed unreasonable. It is hard to get anything done on the site.*

*The official way to set up a site doesn't work. Bought land, pulled on and then tried for planning permission. Found site by word of mouth. We liked the area, and it fitted our criteria. It is outside a village, near doctors/shops, has good access, fencing and so on. It is enclosed, secluded and not visible. We were aware of the criteria needed for planning permission in the first place.*

16.7 Generally, getting planning permission was perceived – and experienced – as a severe problem. One respondent put forward the theory that one particular site caused so many problems to their local council that it deterred them from granting permission for any others. This was felt to be very unfair.

## Planning Policies

16.8 Current planning policies in relation to which applications are currently being considered are summarised in the Table 16.2 below.

<b>Table 16.2 : Existing Criteria in Planning Policies for Gypsies and Travellers</b>										
	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Leicestershire	Leicester City	Rutland
Access to established Traveller routes										✓
Arrangements for servicing			✓	✓			✓			✓
Adequate separation from dwellings							✓		✓	
Area is frequented by Gypsies								✓	✓	
Avoids visual impact on countryside	✓			✓						
Can be assimilated into surroundings								✓		
Demonstration of need		✓	✓			✓		✓		
Is on outskirts of existing settlement	✓									
No conflict with other Plan policies	✓	✓		✓						
No detrimental effect on environment or local amenities			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Not on green wedge, separation area, attractive or special designated area	✓					✓				
Site is already naturally screened	✓									
Reasonable proximity to community services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Safe vehicle access and highway connections	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Site is physically suited to the purpose										✓
Separate business and residential areas		✓								
Site can be screened		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Size appropriate to proper management									✓	
Sympathetic to character of location		✓								
Well related to an existing settlement						✓				
Additional criteria in relation to Travelling Showpeople's sites										
Business uses not to harm local amenity		✓								
Must belong to the Showmen's Guild							✓			

16.9 The policies summarised above are all criteria-based policies against which applications are currently judged. They pre-date the guidance given in Circular 01/2006 which explicitly requires that criteria be fair, reasonable, realistic and effective in delivering sites. The Partners have sought comments on current policies.

16.10 In general the more criteria that there are, the less the likelihood that an application will succeed. CLG guidance suggests that criteria should not be over-long. Some current local criteria, if applied absolutely, would appear to preclude most applications – for example, requirements that there be no visual impact, that the site be assimilated into its surroundings, that the site be already naturally screened and that there be no detrimental effect on the environment or local amenities. In practice, as much turns on what is deemed ‘reasonable’ or ‘detrimental’ as on the criteria themselves. We note that the Structure Plan policy is less detailed and consider that policies of this nature could be a useful model for local planning policies.

16.11 Annex C of Circular 01/2006 gives examples of good practice criteria including:

- vehicular access from the public highway
- provision for parking, turning and servicing on site
- road safety of occupants and visitors
- soft landscaping and planting which helps sites to blend into their surroundings
- safe and convenient access to the road network

16.12 Further guidance is given in the Circular on criteria which CLG regards as unacceptable. It states that it is not uncommon currently for criteria to be so restrictive and extensive that, in practice, it is impossible or virtually impossible for an application to comply with them. Unacceptable examples cited by CLG include requirements to:

- remove caravans when they are temporarily not in use
- adhere to a blanket policy for the maximum number of caravans on any site
- establish a local connection
- not have an impact on any area with natural or wildlife interest
- not to encroach into the countryside

16.13 Local planning authorities must have regard to this guidance in setting out their policy to deal with applications arising from unexpected demand. Need that can be anticipated should, however, now be planned for through a Core Strategy for each authority setting out criteria that will be used to allocate Gypsy and Traveller sites and a Development Plan Document which allocates land for this purpose. The Circular requires that there is a realistic prospect that allocated sites will be made available for that purpose, an explanation provided in the DPD of how this will be achieved and a timescale for provision. The following section contains recommendations on the criteria that should be applied to identifying site locations.

### **Local Development Frameworks**

16.14 In making suggestions for future policies that could be incorporated into Local Development Framework documents within the Study Area, we note that many Gypsies and Travellers express a desire to live on the edge of settlements, in order to be near the countryside and to achieve some

separation from the settled community to reduce the potential for conflict and preserve cultural identity. Taking into account Circular 01/2006 we would suggest the application of five basic planning principles: sustainability, equity and choice, social inclusion, environmental protection, and the need for flexibility of provision.

**16.15 Sustainability** : Any land which is considered suitable for residential purposes may in principle also be considered suitable for development as a Gypsy and Traveller site. Sites, however, should meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and take into account their location preferences. It would clearly be superfluous to arbitrarily allocate sites that are unlikely to be developed or used as a consequence of failure to take account of need and location preferences. This would be likely to result in continued unauthorised development and encampment elsewhere. Good practice suggests consideration of the GTAA evidence and identification of, and consultation with, local Gypsies and Travellers on DPD proposals. We do not consider that there are overall constraints in any authority in the Study Area sufficient to prevent site development. Site locations should reflect a range of types of land and should avoid poor quality environments, such as land adjacent to sewage works and refuse tips.

**16.16 Equity and choice** : Sites should provide a range of choices to Gypsies and Travellers which reflects the diversity of people with very different cultures who share a preference for living in caravans. Local Planning Authorities should seek to meet need through the allocation of differing types of sites, including varying sizes, locations and tenures. If a shortfall in provision is to be met, allocations should take into account the preferences of distinct Gypsy and Traveller groups both in terms of where they wish to live and with whom they wish to live. This includes recognition of possible distinctions between Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Showpeople and other groups. It is also important to note that, given expressed preferences for ownership, any requirements arising from unauthorised development are not likely to be met by social rented residential or transit provision.

**16.17 Social inclusion** : Sites should be in locations which provide access to employment opportunities, access to road networks, and access to local health and education services. This access does not, however, need to be very close as Gypsies and Travellers are often prepared to travel a few miles to shops and schools if other requirements are met by a site location. Sites on the outskirts of built-up areas may be appropriate and we agree with the Circular that locations in or near existing settlements should be considered first. Rural or semi-rural sites may also be appropriate and we would suggest that in considering these it would be unrealistic for local authorities to only seek sites that are accessible by public transport.

**16.18 Environmental protection** : Sites should not be rejected on the basis of blanket policies that they are in areas of national designation or areas of local landscape or local nature conservation. The Local Planning Authority should alternatively consider if, in these instances, the objectives of the

designation would be compromised by the development and the extent to which any adverse impact can be sufficiently mitigated through landscaping. Development of the highest quality and most versatile agricultural land may be inappropriate. Development in countryside on the edge of a rural settlement may, however, be suitable if it is of a size that is appropriate to the scale of the nearest settled community when considered individually and taken together with any other nearby sites.

**16.19 Flexibility** : Site allocations need to be applied flexibly in order to respond to unanticipated changes in demographic trends and travelling patterns. This reflects both the fluid nature of Gypsy and Traveller communities and the uncertain impact of the allocation of land in DPDs and any provision that may be established thereafter. It is essential that regard is had to the intentions of landowners if the allocation of land is to subsequently result in provision. This should include consideration of the potential to expand existing sites to accommodate family growth and extended families, and to provide space on pitches large enough to accommodate visitors in order to relieve one source of unauthorised encampment.

**16.20 Recommendations for LDF policies** : Based on our analysis and the guidelines above we **recommend** that planning policies should address:

- 1) Sites will be considered outside, within and on the boundary of existing settlements
- 2) Sites will have safe highway access but need not necessarily have a safe pedestrian route or public transport to a local area centre
- 3) Sites will be considered for any locations considered suitable for residential housing
- 4) Sites will be considered on land lacking the necessary infrastructure but where it is feasible and viable for it to be established
- 5) Sites will be within reach of local services but these need not necessarily be within the settlement where the site concerned is located
- 6) Consideration will be given to otherwise suitable sites where potential risks and hazards are present, for example flooding, if appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures can be taken
- 7) Consideration will be given to land in designated areas of protection from development if reasonable steps can be taken to alleviate or mitigate any adverse impact
- 8) Sites will be appropriate to the scale of the nearest settlement, its local services and infrastructure and impact on neighbouring uses having taken into account measures that can alleviate or mitigate adverse impacts
- 9) Consideration will be given to sites where significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality can be alleviated or mitigated through sensitive screening
- 10) All proposals will be considered on their merits in relation to these criteria and without a blanket policy restricting the size of sites

- 11) Mixed residential and business uses will be permitted where this can be achieved safely and any adverse impacts alleviated or mitigated
- 12) Planning permission will be considered for stables on a Gypsy and Traveller site
- 13) Sites should be made available through the use or disposal of local authority, other public sector or privately owned land
- 14) If sufficient suitable land is not made available, consideration will be given to exercising Compulsory Purchase Powers to secure new sites
- 15) The Council will, in co-operation with other authorities, establish transit site provision
- 16) The Council will attempt to identify land where the owner is willing to sell to Gypsies and Travellers, a private developer, local authority or housing association for the purpose of establishing a site
- 17) The Council will, either alone or in co-operation with other authorities, assist interested parties to provide pitches that can be rented and are accessible to Gypsies and Travellers.

### **Policies for Managing Unauthorised Encampments**

16.21 It is generally recognised that the abolition of the duty on local authorities to provide sites, together with a rising population and the difficulties encountered by Gypsies and Travellers seeking planning consent, has contributed to the continuation of unauthorised encampments. All the Partner authorities, together with Leicestershire Constabulary, are signatories to the *Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland*. This is an agreement on the management of unauthorised encampments. Its basic message is that a stay on land is limited in time and dependent on the co-operation of Travellers in keeping groups small (up to 6 caravans) and causing no problems. The Code states that, after moving on, the same land should not be re-occupied within a period of 3 months and the Travellers must move at least 2 miles from the previous site occupied. The Code applies to all Council land, including highway land, where criminal activity is not involved. The Code states that the local authorities will give consideration to the welfare and social needs of Travellers. The Code appears on council web sites and is widely available in leaflet format.

16.22 Leicestershire County Council has a policy of instigating possession proceedings providing that there are no social or welfare issues that need addressing, and states that it will have regard to its public duties, human rights and equalities legislation. At the same time it has a policy and practice of 'tolerance' wherever possible. Where encampments are tolerated, it states that consideration will be given to a refuse collection service by the relevant District Council and a portable toilet, encouraging Travellers to pay for the latter provision (one survey respondent noted that the cost had deterred them from accepting a toilet). The Travellers Sites and Liaison Officer (TSLO) undertakes assessments to assist the County Council determine whether an eviction should proceed if an encampment is on its land, and undertakes similar assessments for District Councils on a fee-charging, consultancy basis

where an encampment is on their land. The TSLO will not visit encampments on private land.

16.23 Leicestershire Districts and Rutland make use the County Council's TSLO to undertake social assessments, advise and make referrals to appropriate health, education, social care or housing agencies. The management arrangements for enforcement vary between authorities and often within them according to the nature of the land being encamped. None have a full-time Traveller Liaison Officer. Many have a corporate assessment procedure for responding to encampments and seek to take immediate action where the Code is breached.

16.24 Leicester City Council has a detailed enforcement procedure and employs its own Gypsy and Traveller Officer who carries out assessments and liaises with Council departments. The City states it will at all times act in a humane and compassionate fashion, using powers to evict primarily to reduce nuisance and having regard to Government guidance on managing unauthorised encampments. It indicates it will tolerate encampments of up to 6 caravans. The City Council commits itself to consulting with Traveller health and education services and giving consideration to requests for housing, health, children's and social care services. A corporate Assessment Panel makes recommendations on whether possession proceedings should be instigated or a period of 'tolerance' granted. Decisions to instigate possession proceedings will normally occur where there is a health and safety or road safety hazard, intolerable nuisance to the general public, intolerable impact on nearby property, damage or risk of damage to Council property or prejudice to its use by Council staff, an excessively large encampments for its location is causing an unacceptable impact on the environment or would be detrimental in some other way to the interests of the public if allowed to remain for an extended period. When balancing these factors the City Council also has regard to the availability and suitability of accommodation for Gypsies provided by the Council; normally Meynells Gorse is fully occupied and there is no transit provision locally suggesting that, all other thing being equal, the City will 'tolerate' an encampment.

16.25 8 out of the 10 Partner authorities had negotiated leaving dates in the last 2 years and all reported having tolerated encampments – for more than 2 years in one instance in North West Leicestershire and for 10 years in one instance in Harborough. 7 Partner authorities had embarked on Court action in the last 2 years with only one having asked the Police to use s61 powers to evict because of an imminent bonfire party on the land encamped.

16.26 **Recommendations on Unauthorised Encampments** : The Code of Practice adopted by the Partners and the working arrangements established between the parties involved constitute good practice and appear to work well. An approach of broadly tolerating unauthorised encampments clearly relieves pressure which would otherwise arise in the absence of significant transit provision by local authorities. We **recommend** retention of the Code of Practice. When transit sites have been provided, there should be a further review of approaches to enforcement, especially to consider, with the police,



effective processes for using the enhanced powers of s62(a)-(e) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

## Housing Policies and Services for Gypsies and Travellers

16.27 Information was collected from Partners and Stakeholders on relevant housing strategies and policies. There is a detailed discussion of findings in relation to housing-related support in Chapter 15. Table 16.3 shows the relevant references currently made in Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies.

Table 16.3 : Gypsy and Traveller Coverage in Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies									
Issue mentioned	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Leicester City	Rutland
Commitment to cross boundary working			No coverage	✓	No coverage	No coverage	No coverage		✓
Development of floating support								✓	
History of site provision								✓	
Housed Traveller population								✓	
More analysis is required to see if transit sites are needed	✓	✓							
Need to develop a new site								✓	
Site provision will help deal with encampment		✓							
Tolerance policy towards encampments								✓	

16.28 Across the Study Area there is a wide variation in the housing services provided to Gypsies and Travellers and the housing strategies and policies to which they relate. These differences reflect: policy choices and priorities; the size of an authority; characteristics and locations of Gypsy and Traveller populations in each area; historic patterns of service delivery; and the resources available. Of the 9 local housing authorities, only the City has an in-house Gypsy Liaison Officer.

16.29 Gypsies and Travellers access social housing through mainstream allocation policies and homelessness procedures. There is specific support available for the process only in Leicester where the Gypsy Liaison Officer can help with applications. The Partners interviewed perceive that their housing services are accessible to Gypsies and Travellers but, in the absence

of ethnic monitoring which recognises Gypsies and Travellers as a category, the accuracy of this perception depends on officer awareness.

16.30 The impression given from the information supplied by the Partners is that, except in Leicester and Harborough, the number of Gypsies and Travellers applying for housing or as homeless is very small, and only 1 or 2 families a year are housed. Officers were not aware of any Gypsies or Travellers being housed over the past few years in Melton (1 offer refused), Oadby & Wigston and Rutland. Trends in applications were usually described as stable or downward in the case of homeless applications. A small grouping of housed Travellers was known only in Market Harborough where the District Council estimates that it has about 6 Travellers on its housing register at any time and reports that it receives a 'steady trickle' of homelessness declarations from Travellers – although it also noted that these were often cancelled when it became clear that quick re-housing would not occur. By contrast, the Leicester Homelessness Strategy notes that 473 properties were allocated to Traveller families (including some families moving between properties) between 1993 and 2003, and there are known clusters of Traveller families in some of the peripheral estates.

**16.31 Recommendations on Housing Policies and Services for Gypsies and Travellers** : from the analysis undertaken we **recommend** that:

- 1) Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as categories used in the ethnic monitoring systems of housing services
- 2) Patterns of demand for, and access to, services by Gypsies and Travellers are systematically monitored and reviewed
- 3) Council staff are trained in knowledge and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller culture and the discrimination they experience
- 4) Sensitive allocations should take place wherever possible when housing Gypsies and Travellers, for example by offering corner plots
- 5) The housing support needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be considered and, if appropriate, assessed when tenancies are offered
- 6) Specialist housing advice and housing support services are available to Gypsies and Travellers in all types of accommodation across the Study Area through joint commissioning or shared service arrangements.

## 17. RECOMMENDATIONS ON SITE PROVISION

17.1 Table 17.1 brings together estimates of requirements for residential and transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and for Travelling Showpeople 2006-2011 and 2011-2016 at Study Area and district level.

<b>Table 17.1 : Summary of Pitch Requirements</b>			
Authority	Residential pitches	Transit caravan capacity	Showpeople families
<b>2006-2011</b>			
Blaby	13	Up to 10	1
Charnwood	9	Up to 10	4
Harborough	19	Up to 10	24
Hinckley & Bosworth	26	Up to 10	2
Melton	6	Up to 10	-
North West Leicestershire	32	Up to 20	8
Oadby & Wigston	1	-	-
Leicester City	24	Up to 20	3
Rutland	2	Up to 10	3
<b>Study Area</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2011-2016</b>			
Blaby	13	-	2
Charnwood	2	-	5
Harborough	11	-	5
Hinckley & Bosworth	16	-	1
Melton	2	-	-
North West Leicestershire	11	-	2
Oadby & Wigston	-	-	-
Leicester City	15	-	2
Rutland	1	-	3
<b>Study Area</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>

17.2 These estimates are on the basis of '**need where it arises**'. They thus mirror the current uneven pattern of provision and the distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area. Decisions about 'need where it should be met' will be taken partly at regional and partly at local level, and should involve consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties.

17.3 In planning site provision we **recommend** that local authorities take account of the following points which emerge from the study:

- The survey has revealed considerable diversity within an overall small population. There are different ethnic groups, different family sizes and – importantly – different opinions, needs and aspirations. For example,

some housed Gypsies and Travellers enjoyed living near other Gypsy and Traveller families, while others preferred not doing so. Some expressed preferences for small sites, some for larger ones. Some expressed preferences for sites managed by Gypsies and Travellers, others thought this would not be a good idea. New site provision should cater as far as possible for the variety of needs and preferences which result from the diversity of the local Gypsy and Traveller population. This means variety of site tenure, site size, location and design. In most instances it would be appropriate for a requirement of, say, 30 pitches to be met by a series of small sites rather than by a single large site.

- New site provision must meet need. There are two main implications from this:
  - Those in need must be able to access the pitches they require. Socially rented pitches are allocated according to need. The proportion of social rented pitches is currently relatively low in the Study Area. While majority preferences are for private ownership, there is a clear continuing role for social provision for families unable to afford their own sites who prefer not to rent from another Gypsy or Traveller. We suggest, as a guide, that 25% of new pitch provision should be in the form of socially rented pitches. Residents on Aston Firs and Meynells Gorse did not favour site expansion to provide more pitches (and there are physical constraints on expansion), so additional social provision should take the form of new sites.
  - There are indications that the number of older Gypsies and Travellers will increase in the future. Some will choose to move into housing for greater comfort, but others will want to remain on sites. Consideration of mobility needs will become increasingly important in site design particularly for new socially rented sites. For existing residents, good information and liaison on health needs and services is important.
- New site provision should seek to meet Gypsy and Traveller preferences as well as need so that sites will be fully used. Failure to meet preferences runs the risk of continuing unauthorised site development and tension with the settled community. Analysis of preferences has three important implications.
  - 'Edge of settlement' locations seem especially favoured (although not universally). Transit sites in particular need good access to the road network.
  - The majority of respondents preferred privately owned sites, and especially family-owned sites. The desire for ownership is also strong among Travelling Showpeople.

- Many interviewees said that they had too little room on their pitch for their family's needs. Preferences suggest larger average pitch sizes for the future to accommodate more and larger living units and to allow more flexible use, including the accommodation of family members or visitors to reduce need for more formal transit provision. Travelling Showpeople also require large pitches/ yards for accommodation and business purposes.
- There are issues around delivery of new site provision to be considered.
  - A prominent feature of current provision in the Study Area is the number of relatively large privately-owned sites where pitches are rented. These are undoubtedly catering for need at present, including opportunities for relatively short stays and over-wintering. However, underlining the importance of variety of provision, it would not be appropriate for the whole of a district's pitch allocation to be met through the provision of more similar sites. It is particularly hard to ensure that all families in need can access pitches controlled by commercial Gypsies and Travellers who may exclude members of another ethnic or family groupings.
  - The study has revealed a widespread aspiration towards the development of family sites, linked with recognition that a minority could afford to develop such a site unaided. Little is known as yet about what might happen to land prices when land is allocated for site development in Local Development Frameworks. Affordability could become a major issue. It is understood that approaches are being developed by Communities and Local Government to provide site ownership options which increase affordability. Study Area authorities should consider these options carefully.

#### 17.4 The study has revealed issues around existing sites.

- Some existing private sites have very poor amenity provision. We **recommend** that local authorities – as site licensing as well as planning authorities – start discussions with site owners about improvements which might be made. In these discussions it will be important to ensure that raising standards does not jeopardise affordable supply. In some instances, it might be appropriate to permit the creation of additional pitches if this facilitates improved amenity provision for all site residents.
- Existing social rented sites appear to function well and are generally popular, with waiting lists which far exceed vacancies arising. The study reveals that one reason given by Gypsies and Travellers for not favouring social rented sites is the possibility of having very mixed neighbours. Too much mixing can lead to tensions on sites and loss of community feeling. We **recommend** that authorities managing sites should explore how allocation processes can better identify those with

compatible lifestyles while avoiding unlawful discrimination. New site development to create a number of smaller sites would help here and permit greater choice.

17.5 We understand that the Gypsy & Traveller Unit at Communities and Local Government is working to produce guidance on site design and site management. We **recommend** that Study Area authorities carefully consider the guidelines when produced and ensure that local provision and management adopt best practice.

17.6 The study revealed significant levels of perceived discrimination against both Gypsies and Travellers and Showpeople. This is sometimes related to accommodation issues, and continuing prejudice and lack of understanding between the Travelling and settled communities can be a significant barrier to achieving new site provision. We **recommend** that all local authorities act to fulfill their duties under race relations legislation to promote race equality and good race relations. This is also important in social cohesion agendas.