

Swindon Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

Final Report

December 2024

RRR Consultancy Ltd



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- ES1. In 2024, Swindon Borough Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2043. The findings of this study should be used to assist policy development and planning decision making and supersedes any previous GTAAs (including any accommodation needs calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities.
- ES2. The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Showpeople, non-Gypsy and Traveller, Gypsy and Traveller, residential caravan dwellers, and boat dwellers is established through national guidance contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department of Communities and Local Government (DLUHC), December 2023).
- ES3. To achieve the study aims, the research draws on a number of data sources including:
- Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTAAs, and analysis of secondary data. This includes analysis of the most recently published (January 2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
 - Consultation with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
 - Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs.
- ES4. The above provides an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

Policy context

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

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

Population Trends

- ES10. The 2021 Census indicates that there were 177 Gypsies and Travellers residing in the borough, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population. This is lower than the average for the south-west region and England at 0.11%. Over a third (36%) of Gypsy and Traveller households living in Swindon borough reside in a caravan or mobile home, compared with a quarter (25%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in the south-west and just over a fifth (21%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in England. This means that just under two-thirds (64%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in Swindon borough reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- ES11. The DLUHC January 2024 Count shows there were 285 caravans were recorded in Swindon borough and selected neighbouring authorities. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority, with no caravans recorded in Oxford,

4 in West Berkshire, 36 in Swindon, 53 in Cotswold, 62 in Stroud, 78 in South Oxfordshire, 167 in Vale of White Horse, 328 in West Oxfordshire, and 549 in Wiltshire. Of the 1,277 caravans recorded in the 9 local authority areas, 935 were recorded on privately owned pitches (including 4 with temporary planning permission), 306 on social rented pitches (including all 36 caravans recorded in Swindon), and 40 on unauthorised pitches. Concerning density, Swindon recorded 15 caravans per 100,000 population. This compares to 112 caravans per 100,000 population in the south-west region and 46 in England.

ES12. The total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Swindon over the period July 2021 to January 2024 varied fairly widely, with a maximum of 54 caravans recorded in January 2022 compared to a minimum of 17 caravans recorded in July 2021 (a difference of 37 caravans). The number of authorised caravans recorded in the borough increased steadily over the period July 2021 to January 2024.

ES13. The number of unauthorised encampments recorded in Swindon borough in each financial year has remained steady, with 18 recorded in 2022/23 and 24 recorded in both 2021/22 and 2023/24, averaging 22 during the three financial years. Although the number of unauthorised encampments peaked at 14 in Q2 2023/24, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments over the three financial years. On average, around two-thirds (65%) of unauthorised encampments located in Swindon borough were moved on within 14 days.

ES14. There are 71 authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the borough, including 37 pitches on an authorised local authority site and 14 pitches on 7 privately owned sites. There are 20 transit pitches owned and managed by the local authority which are currently being refurbished. The refurbished transit site will, alongside a negotiated stopping policy, meet any transit need identified by this assessment. There are also 14 Travelling Showpeople plots within the borough with 4 plots located on an authorised yard and 10 plots located on an unauthorised development.

Stakeholder consultation

ES15. Consultations with stakeholders were undertaken to gather qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. The primary aim was to gain an overall perspective on the issues these groups face and to understand the specific local issues pertinent to the study area. Given that Gypsy and Traveller issues extend beyond geographical boundaries, consultations included officers from neighbouring authorities as well as those within the study area. The themes explored during these consultations included the need for additional provisions and facilities, travelling patterns, land availability, access to services, and ongoing work to address the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It is important to note that the views presented reflect the stakeholders' opinions and may relate to areas outside Swindon borough.

- ES16. The main accommodation issues identified for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the local area are centred on the need for more permanent pitches and stopping sites. Specific challenges include land availability in areas without restrictions. Other problematic areas include flood-risk locations and regions within the AONB. Community acceptance can also be challenging, especially when planning applications are made retrospectively. For Travelling Showpeople, there is a particular need for permanent sites where they can base themselves.
- ES17. The main driver for new accommodation needs among Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in local areas include several factors. Doubling-up and concealed households are significant, and teenagers reaching adulthood in the next five years leading to new household formation. Changes in planning definitions have also led some households that previously did not meet the criteria to be included in the planning definition cohort.
- ES18. The consensus on where new accommodation provision should be located in the local authority areas considers several key factors. One suggested approach is to intensify existing sites, regularise unauthorised sites, and allocate new land to meet residual needs. Another perspective points to the fringes of the borough as probable locations, seen as advantageous due to mitigated planning issues and available road access. Some responses indicate that any area suitable for general housing development should also be considered suitable for accommodation development for these communities.

Accommodation need

- ES19. Table ES1 summarises the permanent accommodation needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches over 19 years. It is important to note that the figures shown in Table ES1 include all needs as of 2024, including any which may have been identified by previous GTAAs but remained unfulfilled by the time of this assessment. The table shows that 35 new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 25 new permanent pitches (based on PPTS 2023) are needed over the 19 years.

Table ES.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-29	17	10
2029-34	6	5
2034-39	6	5
2039-43	6	5
Total	35	25

Source: GTAA 2024

ES20. There is also a need for 19 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the 19 years.

Table ES.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need
2024-29	16
2029-34	1
2034-39	1
2039-43	1
Total	19

Source: GTAA 2024

ES21. Regarding transit provision, this assessment recommends that the unused Chiseldon Firs transit site be redeveloped for use as permanent pitch provision. Also, that the local authority adopts a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The advantages of this approach are set out in detail in Chapter 7.

Conclusions and recommendations

ES22. There is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 35 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches (ethnic definition), and 25 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (PPTS 2023 definition). It is recommended that the local authority adopts a policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments. There are also a need for 19 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the 19-year period.

ES23. This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition accommodation needs figures i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed.

ES24. Alternatively, the local authorities may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and

'Ethnic' definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authority would first meet the need of 25 (10 within the first 5 years) as the obligation but accept the need of a further 10 (7 within the first 5 years) as potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls.

ES25. It is also recommended that the local planning authorities consider the accommodation needs that might materialise over the plan period from households (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) not considered by this assessment. This could include households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, new households due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separate to the need identified below and could be met through windfall applications.

ES26. In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:

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

ES27. As well as quantifying accommodation need, the study also makes recommendations on other key issues including:

Planning policy:

- To identify a range of specific sites in sustainable locations of up to 20 pitches/plots in size to be developed only for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- To consider how the accommodation needs can be met by expanding existing provision and/or providing new sites and yards (see accompanying report which reviews potential ways of meeting the identified need). This could include redeveloping the unused Chiseldon Firs transit site for use as permanent pitch provision
- To consider alternative options for developing new sites, yards and moorings such as developing them on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use.

- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authorities, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. Showmen's Guild and National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- To consider safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller site and Travelling Showpeople yards with permanent planning permission for their current use unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed to meet identified need.
- To review the planning and license status of sites not occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and determine if it is better to change their status to residential or reuse them for Gypsies and Travellers. Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.
- To liaise with owners of the sites and yards to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

- Housing organisations need to consider the type of housing allocated to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar to minimise psychological aversion and feelings of isolation.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work on Gypsies, Travellers, and Showpeople communities and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to understand further issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- Liaison with relevant enforcement agencies, such as the police, to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies concerning the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.

- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities can change. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

1. Introduction

Study context

- 1.1 In 2024 Swindon Borough Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2043. The findings of this study should be used to assist policy development and planning decision-making and supersedes any previous GTAA's (including any accommodation needs calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authority.
- 1.2 The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Showpeople, non-Gypsy and Traveller, Gypsy and Traveller, residential caravan dwellers, and boat dwellers is established through national guidance contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department of Communities and Local Government (DLUHC), December 2023).

Methodological context

- 1.3 To achieve the study aims, the research drew on several data sources including:
 - Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTAA's, and analysis of secondary data. This included analysis of the most recently published (January 2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
 - Consultation with key stakeholders providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
 - Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs (spring/summer 2024).
- 1.4 The above provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

Geographical context

- 1.5 Swindon Borough is situated in the south-west of England, positioned roughly midway between Bristol and Reading, with convenient access to London. The borough spans about 23,000 ha (or 230 square kilometres), encompassing a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Swindon, the central town, serves as the administrative heart of the borough.

- 1.6 Swindon Borough's population is approximately 235,657 people (ONS 2021), reflecting a diverse demographic mix. The borough has experienced steady growth, partly due to its strategic location and excellent transport connections. Swindon's urban structure features a 'Central' urban plan area surrounded by suburban neighbourhoods and rural villages. The town centre includes a mix of commercial, retail, and residential spaces, while plan areas like Central North, Central East, and West Swindon primarily serve as residential suburbs with local amenities.
- 1.7 Transport connectivity is a significant advantage for Swindon. The M4 motorway provides direct road access to London and Bristol, while Swindon railway station on the Great Western Main Line offers frequent services to major cities, including London Paddington, Bristol, and Cardiff. The borough also boasts a comprehensive bus network serving the town and its surrounding villages.
- 1.8 Economically, Swindon is robust and diverse, with key sectors in manufacturing, services, and technology. Historically known for its railway works, Swindon now hosts various manufacturing companies and has a substantial financial services sector, with the Nationwide Building Society headquartered in the town. The technology sector also plays a crucial role, with several tech and research companies based in the area.
- 1.9 Swindon offers a range of housing options, from modern developments to traditional homes, catering to the rising population. The borough has seen significant housing growth with major urban extensions to the north and south and New Eastern Villages, planned to the east of the urban area. Education and health services in Swindon are well-developed, with numerous primary and secondary schools, further education colleges, and healthcare services provided by the Great Western Hospital and various primary care facilities.
- 1.10 The borough is committed to maintaining its green spaces, featuring parks, nature reserves, and recreational areas. Notable green spaces include Lydiard Park, with its historic parkland and gardens, and Coate Water Country Park, popular for walking, bird watching, and water activities. Cultural and recreational facilities in Swindon are diverse, with museums like the STEAM Museum celebrating the town's railway heritage, the Wyvern Theatre hosting various performances, and the Swindon Designer Outlet being a major shopping destination.
- 1.11 Looking ahead, Swindon Borough Council has several initiatives aimed at sustainable growth, including plans for regeneration of the town centre, new housing and transport infrastructure improvements. Swindon Borough remains a dynamic area with a strong economy, excellent transport links, and a commitment to maintaining a high quality of life for its residents.

Map of the study area

1.12 A map of the study area is shown below.



Summary

- 1.13 The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in Swindon up to 2043. This is in terms of permanent pitches, sites, and transit sites and/or negotiated stopping arrangements for Gypsies and Travellers. This report will form part of the evidence base for Swindon's new Local Plan.
- 1.14 To achieve the study aims, this report focuses on the assessment of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. The research provides

a range of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

2. Policy context

Introduction

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

National Policies

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

- 2.3 On 19 December 2023, the government announced changes to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which had previously been updated in August 2015. The key difference between the PPTS published in August 2015 and the December 2023 version primarily involves changes made in response to a recent legal judgment and ongoing policy reviews.
- 2.4 In the 2023 update, the government has reverted to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers used in the PPTS as adopted in 2012. This change is in response to a Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022). The government intends to review this area of policy and case law further in 2024. Like the 2015 update, the 2023 version is to be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.5 The key difference between PPTS 2015 and 2023 is that the former removed the word 'permanently' from the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers. This meant that local planning authorities were not obliged to consider the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who had permanently ceased to travel.
- 2.6 However, the Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022) determined that PPTS was discriminatory, by excluding households who had permanently ceased to travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers.

2.7 The guidance emphasises the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development. The PPTS requires local authorities to work with neighbouring local authorities to determine transit and permanent pitch and plot targets. It states that in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local authorities should:

- effectively engage with traveller communities
- co-operate with traveller groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit/emergency accommodation needs of their areas
- and use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

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

2.9 It should be noted that the proposed changes to NPPF (consultation held July / August 2024) may impact on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. For example, the reclassification of certain Green Belt areas into "Grey Belt" land, which includes previously developed land or areas with low contributions to the Green Belt's purposes, may open up more sites for development, potentially including Gypsy and Traveller sites.¹ There may also be greater integration between policies regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites within the wider context of Non-Development Management (NDM) policies.

¹ See MHCLG, 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' (August 2024) at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

Definition Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.12 The DCLG definition of Travelling Showpeople is:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.⁴

2.13 For the purposes of this planning policy, "Travellers" means "Gypsies and Travellers" and "Travelling Showpeople" as defined above from PPTS annex 1. Also, for the purposes of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs), Travelling Showpeople are included under the definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers' in accordance with The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and

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

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

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

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

- 2.14 It is important to note that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have separate accommodation need requirements. Different terminology is used to distinguish between Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies and Travellers occupy pitches on sites, while Travelling Showpeople occupy plots on yards. As well as space for residing quarters, Travelling Showpeople also require additional space in order to store and maintain large equipment.
- 2.15 Whilst it is clear that the 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel, it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes.
- 2.16 One interpretation is that 'a nomadic habit of life' means travelling for an economic purpose. Previous case law e.g. *R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay* (1990) and *Hearne v National Assembly for Wales* (1999) has been used to support this point. There is nothing within PPTS 2015 which indicates that Gypsy or Traveller status (for planning purposes) is solely derived from whether there is any employment-related travelling.
- 2.17 More recent Planning Inspectors' reports have reached differing conclusions regarding whether the Gypsy and Traveller status (for planning purposes) should be based on patterns of employment-related nomadism. For example, a 2016 planning appeal decision regarding a site at Throcking, Hertfordshire, concluded the appellant was not a Gypsy and Traveller for planning purposes as there was insufficient evidence "that he is currently a person of a nomadic habit of life"⁶ for employment purposes (i.e. he did not meet the August 2015 PPTS definition).
- 2.18 In contrast, some other Planning Inspectors' reports have appeared to give less weight to the travelling status of Gypsies and Travellers. For example, an appeal decision regarding a site in Blythburgh, Suffolk, states that whilst the appellant had permanently

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

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

ceased to travel, he is nonetheless an ethnic Romany Gypsy with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010⁷.

- 2.19 Similarly, a local authority rejected a planning application as it determined that the household did not meet the PPTS 2023 definition. However, despite evidence that the family had reduced the extent to which they travel due to educational requirements, the Planning Inspector allowed the s78 appeal on the basis that they should be regarded as Gypsies for planning purposes⁸. Also, in deciding whether to allow a S78 appeal for a site in West Kingsdown, Kent, the Planning Inspector acknowledged that the local authority included within its future calculations the accommodation needs (in terms of pitches) of 'cultural' Gypsies and Travellers⁹.
- 2.20 Much case law precedes the December 2023 definition. The commonly cited *R v South Hams DC ex parte Gibb et al* judicial decision was undertaken in response to the now partly repealed Caravan Sites Act 1968. Also, it is increasingly recognised that defining Gypsies and Travellers in terms of employment status may contravene human rights legislation. For example, in 2003 the Welsh Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee noted the:
- '...apparent obsession with finding ways to prove that an individual is not a 'Gypsy' for the purposes of the planning system. This approach is extremely unhelpful...and there can be no doubt that actual mobility at any given time is a poor indicator as to whether someone should be considered a Gypsy or a Traveller'¹⁰.
- 2.21 In September 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published research into the impact of the PPTS 2023 definition on assessing accommodation needs¹¹. The research examined a sample of 20 GTAAAs undertaken since the August 2015 revised definition. The report found that accommodation needs were 73% lower in post-2015 GTAAAs compared to pre-2015 GTAAAs undertaken by the same local planning authorities.
- 2.22 Importantly, on 31 October 2022, the Court of Appeal determined that PPTS 2015 was discriminatory in relation to excluding households who had permanently ceased to

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

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

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

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

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

travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers. The case relates to Lisa Smith who resides on a site occupied by Ms Smith, her husband, their children and grandchildren. Two of Ms Smith's adult sons are severely disabled and cannot travel for work. The judgment determined that PPTS 2015 characterises nomadic Gypsies and Travellers as different from Gypsies and Travellers who, as a result of age or disability, are no longer able to travel. This creates sub-classes of an ethnicity which 'seems to sit uneasily with the stated aim of PPTS 2015 to facilitate the "traditional" way of life' of Gypsies and Travellers, and not simply the "nomadic" way of life'. The judgement concluded that the objective of PPTS 2015 in excluding households from being defined as Gypsies and Travellers was not 'fairness'.

- 2.23 Given the above, our approach is to use a methodology which provides first, an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity; and second, a figure based on the PPTS (August 2023). Different GTAA's reach differing conclusions on which approach/definition to adopt, and it is for local authorities to decide individually which approach to take for planning purposes. It is recommended that this be reviewed in light of evolving appeal decisions and case law. This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition of accommodation needs figures, i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation needs of all Gypsies and Travellers but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed. An alternative is adopting the PPTS figure, and the difference between the PPTS and ethnic-based needs to be covered by a criteria-based policy.

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

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

- Caravan and houseboat dwelling households:
 - who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside
 - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded¹³ or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation

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

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

- who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and
 - who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop on.
- Bricks and mortar dwelling households:
- Whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable ('unsuitable' in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of a person's cultural preference not to live in bricks-and-mortar accommodation).
- 2.25 Importantly, in respect of this report, the draft guidance states that assessments should include, but are not limited to, Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, New Age Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.26 The guidance recognises that the needs of those residing in caravans and houseboats may differ from the rest of the population because of:
- their nomadic or semi-nomadic pattern of life
 - their preference for caravan and houseboat-dwelling
 - movement between bricks-and-mortar housing and caravans or houseboats
 - their presence on unauthorised encampments or developments.
- 2.27 Also, it suggests that as mobility between areas may have implications for carrying out an assessment local authorities should consider:
- co-operating across boundaries both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions
 - the timing of the accommodation needs assessment
 - different data sources.
- 2.28 Finally, the DCLG draft guidance (2016) states that, in relation to Travelling Showpeople, account should be taken of the need for storage and maintenance of equipment as well as accommodation, and that the transient nature of many Travelling Showpeople should be considered.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

- 2.29 The Housing and Planning Act 2016, which gained Royal Assent on 12 May 2016, omits sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004, which previously identified 'gypsies and travellers' as requiring specific assessment for their accommodation needs when carrying out reviews of housing needs. Instead, the Act amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to

include all people residing in or resorting to the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, the DCLG 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.

Local Planning Policies

Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (adopted March 2015)

2.30 Policy HA8 of the Local Plan outlines the criteria for implementing new Gypsy and Traveller sites. It states that:

- a. Provision for 17 additional Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches and one Travelling Showpeople site will be made over the plan period. The location(s) of this additional requirement will be identified in a Site Allocation Development Plan Document.
- b. Development to accommodate Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be permitted provided that the site:
 - is accessible to shops, schools and health facilities by public transport, on foot or by cycle;
 - has good access to the highway network and will not cause traffic congestion or safety problems;
 - has sufficient space for the parking and manoeuvring of all vehicles associated with the occupiers;
 - is provided with adequate on-site services for water supply; power; drainage; sewage disposal; and waste disposal facilities;
 - includes appropriate landscape measures to avoid any adverse visual impact and to ensure adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for occupiers and adjacent occupiers, that avoid the use of high walls and fences;
 - does not accommodate non-residential uses that would not cause, by virtue of smell, noise or vibration, significant adverse impact on neighbouring business or residents; and
 - is in accord with the Flood Risk Policy EN6
- c. In addition, development for Travelling Showpeople will be permitted provided that the site:
 - be occupied by bona fide members of the Showmen's Guild; and

- includes sufficient space for storage and maintenance of equipment separate from residential caravans.

d. Unless the site is in close proximity to an existing children's recreational area, the site should also include a designated area for children's games and recreation.

Duty to cooperate and cross-border issues

- 2.31 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England, and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation relating to strategic cross boundary matters. Also, the need for councils to cooperate reflects the characteristic that Gypsy and Traveller travelling patterns transcend local authority borders¹⁴.
- 2.32 Local authorities are required to work together to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs for their areas. They should also consider the production of joint development plans to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has specific development constraints across its area.
- 2.33 As part of this assessment, consultation in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers, was undertaken with adjoining planning and housing authorities. The findings from the consultation are discussed in Chapter 4.
- 2.34 Given the transient nature of Gypsies and Travellers, it is important for the GTAA to consider the need for Gypsies and Travellers accommodation in neighbouring authorities. The following section summarises the results of GTAA's recently undertaken by both the study area local authorities and neighbouring or nearby local authorities.

Swindon Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2019

- 2.35 The 2019 Swindon GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy. The GTAA determined a need for a further 23 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identify definition), 20 pitches (based on PPTS 2015), or 11 pitches (based on the work interpretation) are needed over the period 2019-2036 in Swindon borough. There was also a need for 14 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the same period. The main drivers of need were new family formation, and the accommodation needs of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. In relation to transit

¹⁴ It should be noted that the government's white paper 'Planning for the Future' (August 2020) indicates that it intends to abolish the duty to cooperate.

provision, the GTAA recommended that the Council reconsider its use of the transit site at Chiseldon Firs as it was not popular with local Gypsy and Traveller families and was rarely used by visiting households. This 2024 GTAA supersedes the 2019 GTAA.

Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GTAA 2017

- 2.36 The GTAA assessed accommodation need over the period 2017 to 2031/36 (dependent on the Local Plan period of respective local authorities). In relation to Gypsies and Travellers the GTAA found a need for 7 additional pitches for households who meet the PPTS 2015 definition; 0 additional pitches for households who do not meet the PPTS 2015 definition; and between 0 and 19 additional pitches for households whose planning status is unknown. In relation to Travelling Showpeople, the GTAA found a need for 11 additional plots for households who meet the PPTS 2015 definition; 0 additional plots for households who do not meet the PPTS 2015 definition; and between 0 and 1 additional plots for households whose planning status is unknown. In relation to transit provision, the GTAA recommended adoption of a negotiated stopping place policy.

Gloucestershire GTAA 2022

- 2.37 RRR Consultancy undertook the 2022 Gloucestershire GTAA. Over the period 2021-41 (2021-2040 in relation to Stroud), the GTAA found a need for 240 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 170 new pitches (based on PPTS 2015) are needed in the study area. It was recommended that local plans seek to meet the PPTS need (as required), with an 'ethnic' need (potential need) covered by a criteria-based policy. The GTAA also identified an accommodation need of 90 additional pitches in relation to households who only travel for work purposes. The GTAA determined a need for an additional 83 Travelling Showpeople plots and 53 permanent moorings over the same period. Concerning transit provision, the GTAA recommends that, in addition to the existing transit pitches, the local authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period, with services such as water, waste disposal and toilets.

West Berkshire GTAA 2021

- 2.38 The GTAA recommends that the Local Plan should recognise an overall cultural need for 30 pitches, of which 20 are from households that meet the PPTS household definition over the period to 2037/38. It suggests that there is potential to convert at least 8 transit pitches to permanent residential pitches. This would reduce the overall need to 22 of which 12 is PPTS need. It recommends that the Local Plan sets out criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for small private sites to help address the needs identified. Although there is no additional need for Travelling Showperson plots, the GTAA recommends that the existing yard be safeguarded for

Travelling Showperson use. Regarding transit provision, to address unauthorised encampment activity, the GTAA recommends that the council should also consider stopover places and negotiated stopping arrangements.

Wiltshire GTAA 2022

- 2.39 According to the GTAA, over the period 2024-2038 there is a need for 188 additional pitches for Gypsies and Traveller who meet the PPTS definition, between 38 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households whose planning status is unknown, and 73 pitches for households who do not meet the PPTS definition. The GTAA also identifies a need for 12 plots for households that meet the planning definition. Regarding transit provision, since no formal transit provision has been made available since the publication of the 2022 GTAA, it is recommended that the Council continues to follow this approach. Although the 2024 GTAA states that the Chiseldon Firs transit site in Swindon has been reopened, this is not the case. The 2024 GTAA recommends that the Council should consider providing temporary stopping places at locations surrounding Trowbridge, Salisbury and to the north of the county.

Summary

- 2.40 DLUHC 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) emphasises the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to include all people residing in the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, as noted above, the DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.
- 2.41 The GTAA is based on a methodology which provides, first, an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity; and, second, a figure based on the PPTS (December 2023). Local planning policies regarding the provision of new Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople pitches and plots are outlined in Policy H8 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 outlines the criteria used to determine suitable locations for new sites and yards. This report aims to inform a new policy position in the emerging Local Plan, addressing accommodation needs through to 2043.
- 2.42 Given the cross-boundary characteristic of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, it is important to consider the findings of GTAA's produced by neighbouring local authorities. GTAA's recently undertaken by neighbouring local authorities indicate that there remains some Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs throughout the region, but none have suggested a need arising in their area should be met within the study area.

3. Trends in population levels

Introduction

- 3.1 This section examines population levels in the GTAA study area and population trends. The primary source of information for Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in England is the DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count. This was introduced in 1979 and places a duty on local authorities in England to undertake a twice-yearly count for DLUHC on the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in their area. The count was intended to estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population for whom provision was to be made and to monitor progress in meeting accommodation need.
- 3.2 Although the duty to provide sites was removed in 1994, the need for local authorities to conduct the count has remained. There are, however, several weaknesses with the reliability of the data. For example, across the country, counting practices vary between local authorities, and the practice of carrying out the count on a single day ignores the fluctuating number and distribution of unauthorised encampments. Also, some authorities include Travelling Showpeople in the same figures as Gypsies and Travellers, whilst others distinguish between the different groups and do not include Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.3 Significantly, the count is only of caravans (tourer and static caravans) and so Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar accommodation are excluded. It should also be noted that pitches / households often contain more than one caravan, typically two or three.
- 3.4 Despite concerns about accuracy, the count is a useful indicator because it provides the only national source of information about numbers and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. As such, it is useful for identifying trends in the Gypsy and Traveller population, if not determining absolute numbers.
- 3.5 The DLUHC Count includes data concerning Gypsies and Travellers sites¹⁵. It distinguishes between caravans on socially rented authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised pitches. Unauthorised sites and pitches are broken down by whether they are tolerated or not tolerated. The analysis in this chapter includes data from July 2021 to January 2024.

¹⁵. Data regarding Travelling Showpeople is published separately by the DLUHC as 'experimental statistics'.

Population

- 3.6 The total Gypsy and Traveller population residing in the UK is unknown, although the government estimates there to be between 100,000 and 300,000 Gypsy and Traveller people^{16,17}. There are uncertainties partly because of the number of different definitions that exist but mainly because of an almost total lack of information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. Estimates produced for the DLUHC suggest that at least 50% of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population are now residing in permanent housing.
- 3.7 Local authorities in England provide a count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in January and July each year for DLUHC. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Count did not occur in July 2020 or January 2021. The January 2024 Count (the most recent figures available) indicate a total of 26,632 caravans in England. Applying an assumed three person per caravan¹⁸ multiplier would give a population of 79,896 persons.
- 3.8 Again, applying an assumed multiplier of three persons per caravan and doubling this to allow for the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in housing¹⁹, gives a total population of 159,792 persons for England. However, given the limitations of the data, this figure can only be very approximate and may be a significant underestimate.
- 3.9 The 2021 national census included the category of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the question regarding ethnic identity. Table 3.1 below shows the total population of Gypsies and Travellers, as derived from the 2021 Census. It shows that in March 2021, there were 177 Gypsies and Travellers residing in the borough, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population.²⁰ This is lower than the average for the south west region and England at 0.11%.

Table 3.1 Gypsy and Traveller Population (2021)

	Population (no.)	G&T Pop (no.)	G&T Pop (%)
Swindon	233,411	177	0.08%
South West	5,701,177	6,380	0.11%
England	59,597,578	67,757	0.11%

Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2024

¹⁶ House of Commons 'Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' April 2019 located at: www.parliament.uk

¹⁷ The House of Lords 'Inequalities Faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities' (25 February 2020) provides useful links regarding inequalities faced by the GRT community.

¹⁸ Niner, Pat (2003), Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

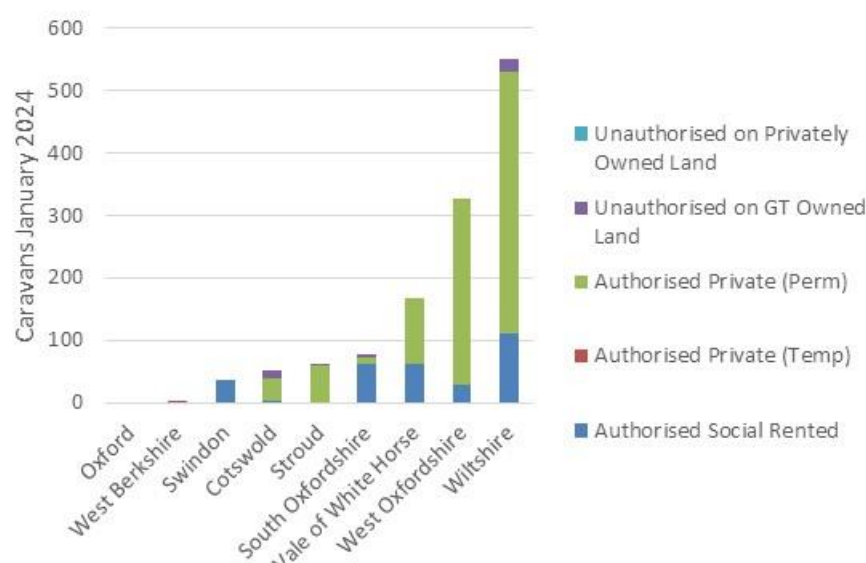
- 3.10 It is also possible to determine the Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area by tenure. Derived from 2021 Census data, Table 3.2 shows the housing type of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in Swindon, the south west region, and England. Over a third (36%) of Gypsy and Traveller households living in Swindon borough reside in a caravan or mobile home, compared with a quarter (25%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in the south west region and just over a fifth (21%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in England. This means that just under two-thirds (64%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in Swindon borough reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Table 3.2 Gypsy and Traveller households by accommodation type

	A caravan or other mobile home		Bricks and mortar accommodation		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
Swindon	27	36%	47	64%	74	100%
South west	562	25%	1,720	75%	2,282	100%
England	4,896	21%	18,790	79%	23,686	100%

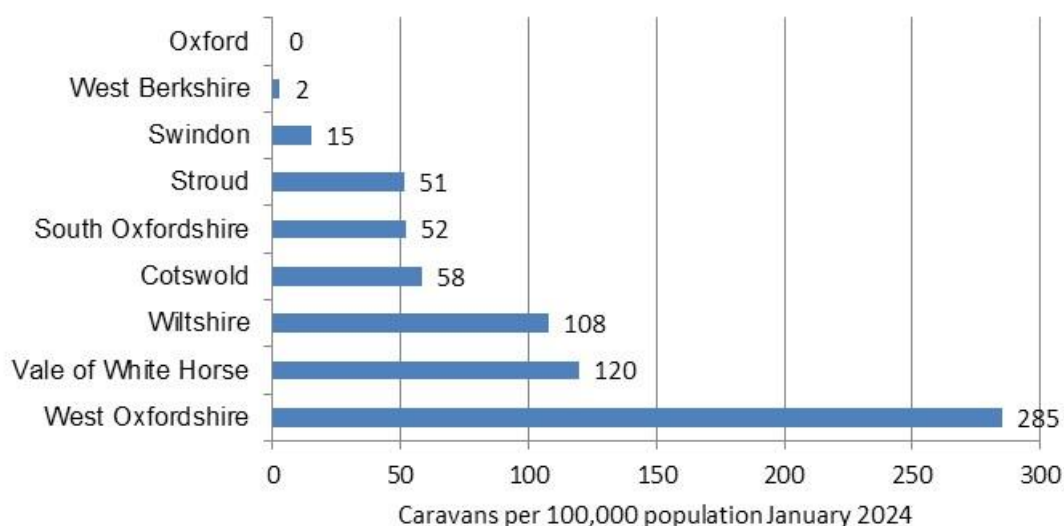
Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2024

- 3.11 Figure 3.1 below shows that 285 caravans were recorded in Swindon borough and selected neighbouring authorities by the January 2024 Caravan Count. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority, with no caravans recorded in Oxford, 4 in West Berkshire, 36 in Swindon, 53 in Cotswold, 62 in Stroud, 78 in South Oxfordshire, 167 in Vale of White Horse, 328 in West Oxfordshire, and 549 in Wiltshire. Of the 1,277 caravans recorded in the 9 local authority areas, 935 were recorded on privately owned pitches (including 4 with temporary planning permission), 306 on social rented pitches (including all 36 caravans recorded in Swindon), and 40 on unauthorised pitches.

Figure 3.1 Caravans in Swindon and selected neighbouring authorities January 2024

Source: July 2023 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

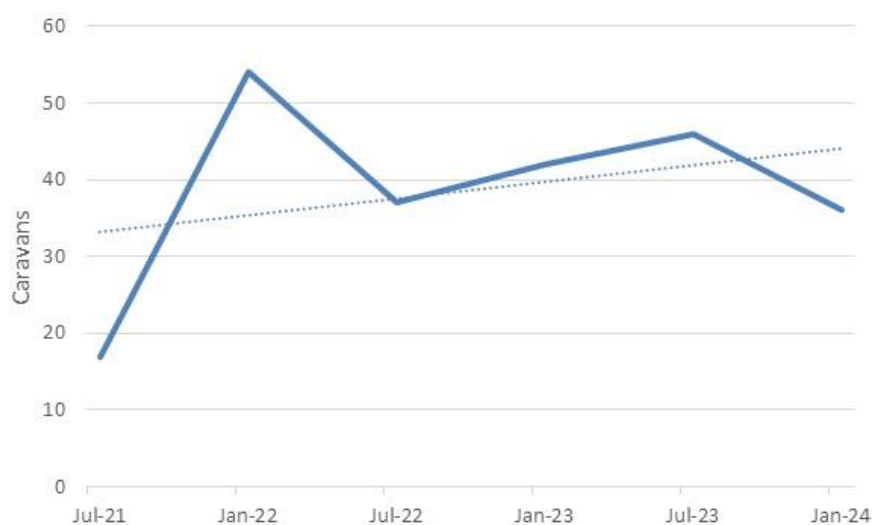
- 3.12 Figure 3.2 below shows that when the population is taken into account, the density of caravans varies. Oxford recorded no caravans per 100,000 population, West Berkshire 2, Swindon 15, Stroud 51, South Oxfordshire 52, and Cotswold 58. In contrast, Wiltshire recorded 108 caravans per 100,000 population, Vale of White Horse 120, and West Oxfordshire 285. This compares to 112 caravans per 100,000 population in relation to the south west region and 46 in relation to England.

Figure 3.2 Pro rata comparison of caravans per 100,000 population January 2024

Source: January 2024 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

- 3.13 Figure 3.3 shows the total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Swindon borough over the period July 2021 to January 2024. The number of caravans recorded during the period varied fairly widely, with a maximum of 54 caravans recorded in January 2022 compared to a minimum of 17 caravans recorded in July 2021 (a difference of 37 caravans). The dotted trend line shows that the number of authorised caravans recorded in the borough increased steadily over the period July 2021 to 8 January 2024.

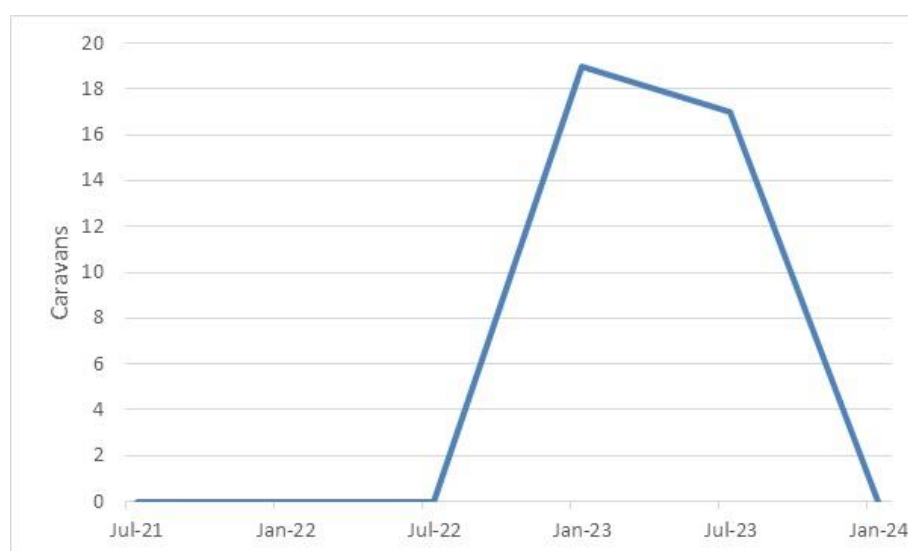
Figure 3.3 Authorised caravans Jul 2021-Jan 2024



Source: January 2024 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

Data on unauthorised sites

- 3.14 The DLUHC Count also records data on unauthorised encampments (i.e. caravans residing temporarily on 'pitches' without planning permission). Figure 3.4 shows the number of caravans recorded between July 2021 to January 2024 in Swindon. The number of unauthorised encampments recorded ranged from a maximum of 19 in July 2023 to a minimum of 17 in July 2023 (a difference of 2 caravans). (A more detailed analysis of unauthorised encampments in Swindon borough is in the section below).

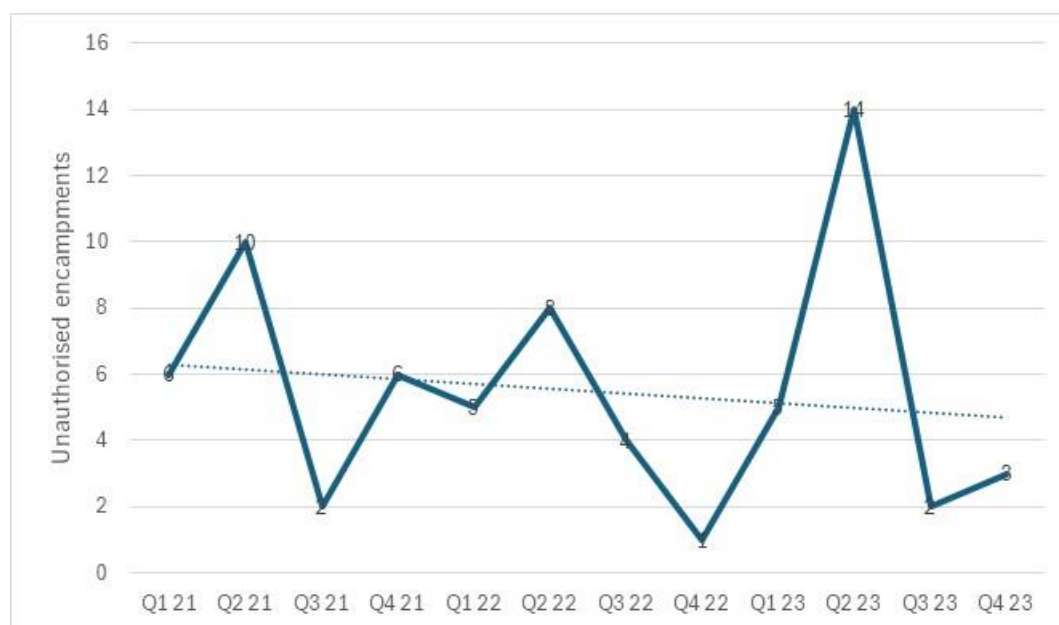
Figure 3.4 Unauthorised caravans in Swindon Jan 2020-Jul 2023

Source: January 2024 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

Local authority data on unauthorised sites

- 3.15 Swindon Borough Council record more detailed data regarding unauthorised encampments. Figure 3.4 shows the number of unauthorised encampments recorded between Q1 2021 (i.e. April to June 2021) and Q4 2023 (i.e. January to March 2023) in Swindon borough. There was a total of 66 unauthorised encampments recorded during the three financial years.
- 3.16 The number of unauthorised encampments recorded in each financial year remained steady, with 18 recorded in 2022/23 and 24 recorded in both 2021/22 and 2023/24, averaging 22 during the three financial years. Although the number of unauthorised encampments peaked at 14 in Q2 2023/24, the dotted trend line shows a gradual decrease over the three financial years. On average, around two-thirds (65%) of unauthorised encampments located in Swindon borough were moved within 14 days.
- 3.17 There is a Council-owned transit site at Chiseldon Firs, located on the A346 between Swindon and Marlborough, three miles south of junction 15 of the M4, which can accommodate between 12 and 20 caravans. Admission to the site is at the sole discretion of the Council on a case-by-case basis. The Council operate a 'first contact' policy in which they provide any unauthorised encampments residing on Council-owned land with information about local health, housing and support services. However, at the time of the household surveys (summer 2024), the transit site was closed for refurbishment.

Figure 3.4 Swindon Borough Council data on unauthorised encampments 2021/22 to 2023/24

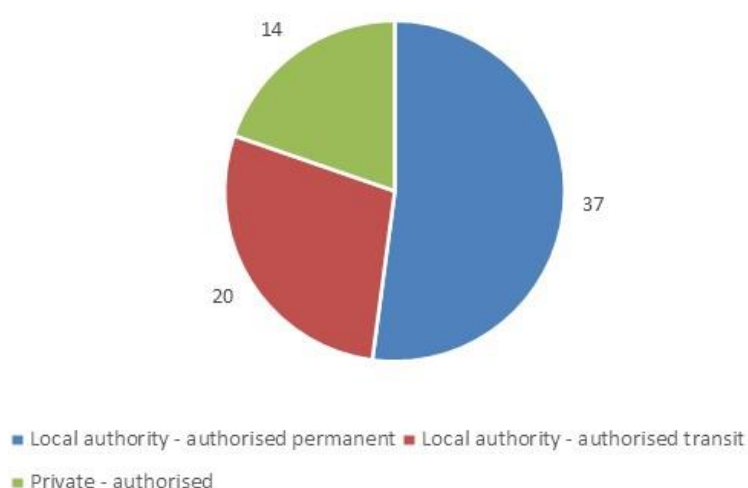


Source: Swindon Borough Council

Permanent residential pitches within the study area

- 3.18 As Figure 3.5 shows, there are a total of 71 authorised pitches in the borough, including 37 pitches on an authorised local authority site and 14 pitches on 7 privately owned sites. There are also 20 transit pitches owned and managed by the local authority which are currently being refurbished. The refurbished transit site will, alongside a negotiated stopping policy, meet any transit need identified by this assessment.

Figure 3.5 Study area Gypsy and Traveller pitches



Travelling Showpeople

- 3.19 The cultural practice of Travelling Showpeople is to live on a plot in a yard in static caravans or mobile homes, along with smaller caravans used for travelling or inhabited by other family members (for example, adolescent children). Their equipment (including rides, kiosks and stalls) is usually kept on the same plot. Table 3.3 shows that there are 14 plots within the borough with 4 plots located on an authorised private yard and 10 plots located on an unauthorised development.

Table 3.3 Study Showpeople plots

	Private plots	Temp plots	UD plots	Total
Total	4	0	10	14

Summary

- 3.20 The 2021 Census indicates that there were 177 Gypsies and Travellers residing in the borough, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population. This is lower than the average for the south-west region and England at 0.11%.
- 3.21 Over a third (36%) of Gypsy and Traveller households living in Swindon borough reside in a caravan or mobile home, compared with a quarter (25%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in the southwest and just over a fifth (21%) of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in England. This means that just under two-thirds (64%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in Swindon borough reside in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.22 The DLUHC January 2024 Count shows there were 285 caravans were recorded in Swindon borough and selected neighbouring authorities by the January 2024 Caravan Count. There is some variation in the number of caravans in each local authority, with no caravans recorded in Oxford, 4 in West Berkshire, 36 in Swindon, 53 in Cotswold, 62 in Stroud, 78 in South Oxfordshire, 167 in Vale of White Horse, 328 in West Oxfordshire, and 549 in Wiltshire. Of the 1,277 caravans recorded in the 9 local authority areas, 935 were recorded on privately owned pitches (including 4 with temporary planning permission), 306 on social rented pitches (including all 36 caravans recorded in Swindon), and 40 on unauthorised pitches.
- 3.23 In relation to density, Oxford recorded no caravans per 100,000 population, West Berkshire 2, Swindon 15, Stroud 51, South Oxfordshire 52, and Cotswold 58. In contrast, Wiltshire recorded 108 caravans per 100,000 population, Vale of White Horse 120, and West Oxfordshire 285. This compares to 112 caravans per 100,000 population in relation to the south-west region and 46 in relation to England.

- 3.24 The total number of caravans on authorised pitches in Swindon over the period July 2021 to January 2024 varied fairly widely, with a maximum of 54 caravans recorded in January 2022 compared to a minimum of 17 caravans recorded in July 2021 (a difference of 37 caravans). The number of authorised caravans recorded in the borough increased steadily over the period July 2021 to January 2024.
- 3.25 The number of unauthorised encampments recorded in Swindon borough in each financial year remained steady, with 18 recorded in 2022/23 and 24 recorded in both 2021/22 and 2023/24, averaging 22 during the three financial years. Although the number of unauthorised encampments peaked at 14 in Q2 2023/24, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments over the three financial years. On average, around two-thirds (65%) of unauthorised encampments located in Swindon borough were moved on within 14 days.
- 3.26 There are 71 authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the borough, including 37 pitches on an authorised local authority site and 14 pitches on 7 privately owned sites. There are 20 transit pitches owned and managed by the local authority which are currently being refurbished. The refurbished transit site will, alongside a negotiated stopping policy, meet any transit need identified by this assessment. There are also 14 Travelling Showpeople plots within the borough with 4 plots located on an authorised yard and 10 plots located on an unauthorised development.

4. Stakeholder consultation

Introduction

- 4.1 Consultations with a range of stakeholders were conducted to provide qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling and Showpeople. The aim of the consultation was to obtain both an overall perspective on issues facing these groups, and an understanding of local issues that are specific to the study area. In recognition that Gypsy and Traveller issues transcend geographical boundaries and the duty to cooperate in addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, consultation was undertaken with officers from neighbouring authorities, as well as from within the study area.
- 4.2 The stakeholder survey received responses from a variety of professionals across different councils and services. These included Senior Planning Officers from Wiltshire Council and West Berkshire Council, as well as the Planning Policy Manager and the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer from Swindon Borough Council. Additionally, a representative from Swindon Borough Council's Property Assets Team and the Safe & Well Team Leader from Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. The respondents represent a broad range of expertise in planning, property management, and community safety.
- 4.3 Themes included the need for additional provisions and facilities, travelling patterns, the availability of land, accessing services, and work taking place to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This chapter highlights the main points that were raised. Please note that the below reflects the views of stakeholders and not necessarily the views of the report authors. Also, the comments may relate to areas outside of the study area.

Accommodation needs

- 4.4 The main accommodation issues facing Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the local area revolve around the need for more permanent pitches and stopping sites. According to a stakeholder from a neighbouring authority, there are specific challenges related to land availability in areas without restrictions, such as the Detailed Emergency Planning Zones around Aldermaston and Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment, where residential development is generally not permitted.
- 4.5 Other problematic areas include locations at flood risk and within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (the North Wessex Downs National Landscape extends into the northern part of Swindon borough). Community acceptance also poses a challenge, especially when planning applications are made retrospectively. For Travelling Showpeople, there is a particular need for permanent sites where they

can be based. Some stakeholders have noted no significant accommodation issues due to well-managed council-run sites with direct liaison, while others report a longstanding insufficiency of suitable sites to cater to the local needs, indicating a general lack of suitable accommodation for these communities to live as they desire.

- 4.6 The main driver for new accommodation needs among Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the local area include several factors. Doubling-up and concealed households are significant, as are teenagers reaching adulthood in the next five years, which necessitates additional household formation. There is also a change in the planning definition, causing some households that previously did not meet the criteria to now be included in the planning definition cohort. Also, according to the Showmen's Guild, there is accommodation need for an extended Showpeople family including three generations. They have long-term needs due to having lived on various unauthorised sites within the area for over twenty years (tolerated by the local authority).
- 4.7 Additionally, the need for sites suitable for multiple families, where they can establish bases for static caravans, store vehicles and rides, and have good road access, drives the demand. Household formation rates stemming from existing sites and the necessity to accommodate multi-generational needs within close proximity also contribute to this requirement. Ageing Traveller needs further underscore the necessity for suitable accommodation. The overall trend points to a pressing need driven by demographic changes and evolving definitions and requirements within the community.

Locations of new provision

- 4.8 The consensus on where new accommodation provision for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople should be located in local authority areas highlights several key considerations. Some respondents prefer not to specify precise locations, referencing Wiltshire Council's Regulation 18 consultation, which suggests intensifying existing sites where there is a need, regularising unauthorised sites, and allocating new land to meet residual needs.
- 4.9 Another perspective suggests that outer fringes of Swindon as a probable locations. These areas are seen as advantageous because planning issues could be mitigated, and access to the road network would be available. Some responses indicate that any area suitable for general housing development should also be considered suitable for accommodation development for these communities.
- 4.10 Geographically, concentrations of families are acknowledged within the north and northeast parts of the Swindon Borough area. The suggested approach includes expanding existing sites, regularising appeal sites, and locating new provisions in proximity to new strategic housing sites where significant general housing development is planned. Overall, the emphasis is on strategic, sustainable locations

that align with broader development plans and provide necessary access to services and infrastructure.

Barriers to new accommodation provision

- 4.11 The main barriers to delivering new sites and yards or extending existing ones for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople include several significant challenges. Land availability is a primary issue, compounded by the complexity and costs associated with understanding the planning system, including appeals. Local opposition further complicates efforts, as communities often resist the establishment of new sites or the expansion of existing ones.
- 4.12 The affordability of sites presents another barrier. The requirements for these communities mean they often compete with developments with higher market values, making it challenging to secure affordable land with a reasonable prospect of obtaining planning consent. Sensitive locations and the necessity for community buy-in also pose obstacles. Technical reasons related to planning applications, such as concerns about flooding, contamination, noise, ecological impact, highway safety, and neighbour amenities, add layers of difficulty, especially for retrospective applications. Additionally, the scarcity of brownfield land in areas like West Berkshire exacerbates the problem.
- 4.13 Financial constraints, including the cost of land and the expenses involved in obtaining planning permission, further hinder progress. Ensuring that sites are sustainably located with access to services and facilities is crucial but challenging, as it requires compliance with various transport policies and other planning regulations. Overall, the combination of financial, regulatory, and community-related challenges presents significant barriers to meeting the accommodation needs of these communities.

Transit provision and travelling patterns

- 4.14 According to stakeholders (and supported by consultation with households) the main travelling patterns of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the local area indicate a reliance on key transport corridors. Many in these communities use major roads like the M4, A419, and A420 for their movements, often seeking temporary locations in nearby towns. Planning applications indicate that those looking for permanent bases often have addresses in Swindon, Wroughton, and Tadley. Regular movements within the region are observed, emphasising the need for good road access.
- 4.15 Some respondents have noted that Gypsies and Travellers tend to return repeatedly to the same locations, likely due to the proximity of local services and safe play areas for children. Overall, while there is a general recognition of the main transit routes and

the need for strategic locations near key transport links, detailed insights into precise travelling patterns are somewhat limited.

- 4.16 According to stakeholders, the number of unauthorised encampments in local areas varies from year to year. While some respondents did not have specific knowledge or deal directly with this issue, temporary encampments appear to have decreased, though unauthorised permanent sites have increased. The primary reason for establishing these permanent sites is the lack of alternative places for residents to stay.
- 4.17 For this year, it has been observed that the number of unauthorised encampments has decreased. However, there is a reluctance among Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople to use the transit accommodation available in Swindon. The lack of official figures makes it challenging to provide a precise trend, but the general consensus indicates a reduction in temporary encampments and an increase in permanent unauthorised sites due to insufficient suitable and available accommodation.
- 4.18 The need for transit sites in the local area is a subject of varied opinions. According to a stakeholder from a neighbouring authority, there are three broad locations in Wiltshire – near Trowbridge, Royal Wootton Bassett, and Salisbury – where emergency-stopping sites could be considered.
- 4.19 There is already one existing site at Chiseldon Firs, and according to some, there is not a pressing need for additional sites. However, some GTAA's recommend moving away from traditional transit sites towards tolerated stopping places or emergency stopping places, reflecting a shift in strategic planning.
- 4.20 Stakeholders recognised that transit sites must be planned at a more strategic level beyond the local authority. This broader approach includes considering key transport corridors such as the M4, A419, and A420 to effectively address the needs of travelling communities.

Access to services

- 4.21 The local Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities face significant challenges in accessing a range of services. They often lack sufficient access to general practitioner (GP) practices, which impacts their ability to receive regular health check-ups and medical care. Mental health care services are also inadequate, limiting their access to necessary support and treatment. Emergency health care poses another critical issue, as timely and effective responses are not always available.
- 4.22 Educational services are another area of concern, with both primary and secondary education being insufficiently accessible. This lack of access extends to further, higher, and adult education, hindering the opportunities for community members to advance

their education and skills. Children's social care services are also lacking, which affects the well-being and development of younger community members.

- 4.23 There is a deficiency in social care services for adults, impacting their ability to receive the necessary support, particularly for older individuals within these communities. Policing services are also noted as insufficient, which can affect their safety and legal protection.
- 4.24 Overall, the lack of access to these essential services creates significant barriers to health, education, and social well-being for the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities, indicating a need for targeted interventions to improve service provision and accessibility.
- 4.25 The main barriers to accessing services for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities include a lack of permanent sites, resulting in some living on the roadside. This instability hinders their ability to register for health and educational services. Cultural views and traditional gender roles within these communities also contribute to a distrust of public services, further complicating access. Additionally, GP surgeries often lack an understanding of the nomadic lifestyle, which can lead to inadequate care. General capacity issues in public services, exacerbated by budget cuts, further restrict access.
- 4.26 One significant barrier is the lack of a permanent address, which is essential for registering with various services. For example, the post office does not recognise an address until it is established by the council following planning permission. Despite this, the education and health teams in West Berkshire have built good relationships with the travelling community, encouraging vaccinations and school connections.
- 4.27 Other barriers include a lack of specific information and targeted support, particularly for families with illiteracy issues. More targeted material and signposting are also needed to guide these communities towards available services. Overcoming these barriers could involve providing more permanent sites, which would enable community members to register for essential services and improve public service understanding and capacity to cater to their unique needs.

Relations between the differing communities

- 4.28 The relationship between Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and settled communities is complex and varies widely. There are often visible tensions, especially when sites are developed without prior planning permission, which can lead to significant opposition from settled communities. This opposition is evident during consultations on planning applications or appeals, where members of the settled

community recognise the need for lawful sites but have differing views on the locations of new sites.

- 4.29 In some cases, good relationships do develop, such as when unauthorised sites are vacated, and occupants engage positively with their neighbours and local schools. For example, despite initial resistance, residents at a council-run site in a neighbouring authority developed good relationships with the school community, although redevelopment proposals still sparked negative comments due to historical events associated with the site.
- 4.30 Travelling Showpeople face specific challenges related to planning issues. To mitigate these issues, they often prefer sites with no close neighbours. The Zippos circus headquarters in Surrey is an example of a yard where the owner has fostered positive relationships with the local school by allowing visits when the circus staff are back. However, new applications for permanent plots can still generate significant objections due to concerns about landscape impact and community integration.
- 4.31 Efforts to improve relationships include working closely with local authorities and organisations to support the travelling community. For instance, free Traveller packs have been well received, helping to bridge gaps between the communities. In Swindon, while larger site applications can face significant opposition, smaller sites near settled communities generally see little tension, reflecting an accommodating attitude from Swindon residents toward diverse backgrounds.
- 4.32 Overall, while there are instances of successful integration and mutual support, ongoing tensions and opposition remain significant barriers, particularly around the development of new sites and the regularisation of unauthorised encampments.
- 4.33 Encouraging better relations between Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, and settled communities can be approached through several strategies. Firstly, ensuring that the travelling community applies for planning permission before moving onto a site is essential. This practice would address the common belief that unauthorised encampments set a negative precedent, fostering a perception of fairness and adherence to regulations. Open communication between residents can also be beneficial, creating opportunities for dialogue and mutual understanding.
- 4.34 To combat misconceptions and improve understanding, setting up a dedicated webpage to dispel myths about the travelling community and provide advice on planning processes to both travellers and settled communities is suggested. This initiative would help educate and inform the public, reducing prejudices and fostering a more inclusive atmosphere.

- 4.35 Greater representation and inclusion within local councils, such as the efforts being made by Swindon Borough Council, are crucial. Slowly improving inclusivity and offering more opportunities for representation can bridge gaps and enhance relationships. Addressing and challenging inaccurate assumptions about the cultures of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople is also important. Effective management of forums, partnerships, and working groups can facilitate constructive engagement, promote understanding, and resolve conflicts.
- 4.36 These measures, focused on communication, education, representation, and structured engagement, are key to fostering better relations between these community groups.

Communication

- 4.37 Local authority departments and service providers use various strategies to communicate and coordinate effectively to meet the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities. For instance, Wiltshire Council has established a Traveller Reference Group that collaborates with both internal and external partners to enhance access to health, education, and other essential services for these communities, including boaters.
- 4.38 A dedicated education team works across a neighbouring council to engage with the travelling community, ensuring that their educational needs are addressed. The housing team regularly communicates with residents on sites, providing updates on refurbishment plans. In planning policy, the council engages with agents and members of the travelling community to better understand and address their accommodation needs, aiming to incorporate these insights into the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 4.39 However, there is recognition that more inclusive approaches are needed. Currently, access to services is often mediated through the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer or site manager, which may not be fully inclusive. The relationship between specialist staff and planners is noted to be strong, supported by a good level of political understanding, but there is always room for improvement in direct and inclusive communication channels.
- 4.40 Overall, while some areas of coordination and communication are well-developed, there is an ongoing need to enhance inclusivity and direct engagement to ensure that the needs of these communities are fully met.

Good practice

- 4.41 There are several examples of good practices in meeting the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities that other local authorities and service providers could adopt. One notable initiative involves a health bus that visits Traveller sites. This mobile service offers advice on vaccinations, mental health, and education, and provides vaccinations on-site if accepted by residents. This approach has been effective in bringing essential health services directly to the community.
- 4.42 Another good practice is the 'Blue Bus' charity, which operates around the Wiltshire area. It provides activities and educational support for both children and adults within the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The bus also facilitates engagement with service providers and liaison officers, offering a valuable platform for communication and support.
- 4.43 Leeds Council has also demonstrated good practice through its collaborative site design work. In conjunction with local groups, the council undertook projects to better plan the layout of facilities, including play and open spaces, by working directly with members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities. This inclusive approach ensures that the needs and preferences of the community are considered in the planning process, leading to more functional and welcoming sites.
- 4.44 These examples highlight the importance of direct engagement, mobile services, and collaborative planning in effectively meeting the needs of Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities. Such practices can serve as valuable models for other local authorities and service providers aiming to improve their support for these communities.

Summary

- 4.45 Consultations with stakeholders were undertaken to gather qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. The primary aim was to gain an overall perspective on the issues these groups face and to understand the specific local issues pertinent to the study area. Given that Gypsy and Traveller issues extend beyond geographical boundaries, consultations included officers from neighbouring authorities as well as those within the study area. The themes explored during these consultations included the need for additional provisions and facilities, travelling patterns, land availability, access to services, and ongoing work to address the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It is important to note that the views presented reflect the stakeholders' opinions and may relate to areas outside Swindon borough.

- 4.46 The main accommodation issues identified for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in the local area are centred on the need for more permanent pitches and stopping sites. Specific challenges include land availability in areas without restrictions. Other problematic areas include flood-risk locations and regions within the AONB. Community acceptance can also be challenging, especially when planning applications are made retrospectively. For Travelling Showpeople, there is a particular need for permanent sites where they can base themselves. While some stakeholders reported no significant accommodation issues due to well-managed council-run sites with direct liaison, others highlighted a longstanding insufficiency of suitable sites to cater to local needs, reflecting a general lack of accommodation that meets these communities' desires.
- 4.47 The main driver for new accommodation needs among Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in local areas include several factors. Doubling-up and concealed households are significant, and teenagers reaching adulthood in the next five years leading to new household formation. Changes in planning definitions have also led some households that previously did not meet the criteria to be included in the planning definition cohort. There is a need for sites suitable for multiple families, where they can establish bases for static caravans, store vehicles and rides, and have good road access. Household formation rates stemming from existing sites and the necessity to accommodate multi-generational needs within proximity further contribute to this requirement. Ageing Traveller needs underscore the necessity for suitable accommodation, highlighting a pressing need driven by demographic changes and evolving definitions and requirements within the community.
- 4.48 The consensus on where new accommodation provision should be located in the local authority areas considers several key factors. One suggested approach is to intensify existing sites, regularise unauthorised sites, and allocate new land to meet residual needs. Another perspective points to the edge of town as a probable location, seen as advantageous due to mitigated planning issues and available road access. Some responses indicate that any area suitable for general housing development should also be considered suitable for accommodation development for these communities. Geographically, concentrations of families within the north and northeast parts of the Swindon Borough area are acknowledged. The suggested approach includes expanding existing sites, regularising appeal sites, and locating new provisions in proximity to new strategic housing sites where significant general housing development is planned, emphasising strategic, sustainable locations that align with broader development plans and provide necessary access to services and infrastructure.

5. Gypsies and Travellers consultation

Introduction

- 5.1 This section of the assessment focuses on the consultation with Gypsies and Travellers (spring/summer 2024). It involved questions covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs, based on a standard questionnaire. Whilst covering all questions, the method and order of questions varied in order to maximise response rates. Methods ranged from an informal style to a more formal approach which involved asking questions in a specific order.

Methodology

- 5.2 The consultation included questions regarding issues such as family composition (per pitch), accommodation and facilities, the condition, ownership, management and suitability of current sites and pitches (including facilities and services), occupancy of existing pitches (including the number of, and reasons for, vacant and / or undeveloped pitches, and future plans for pitches), travelling patterns, and accommodation needs.
- 5.3 The response rate for the consultation with households was 88% equating to 42 out of the 48 pitches (consisting of 48 occupied authorised pitches, 0 pitches with temporary planning permission, and 0 pitches on unauthorised developments). However, through a combination of direct and proxy consultation (face-to-face and telephone), it was possible to gather sufficient data representing all 48 occupied pitches.
- 5.4 The data was used to calculate the level of supply, occupancy and need and which of the two needs categories those with need met. Also, general comments in terms of the key issues were also gathered and recorded, in order to gain and present further insight and evidence the need calculations (summarised below).
- 5.5 The number and location of pitches were determined using local authority data. Households were consulted on key issues regarding accommodation needs. The combination of local authority data, site visits, and consultation with households helped to clarify the status of pitches (i.e. which pitches are occupied by Gypsies and Travellers, vacant pitches, pitches with planning permission which are planned to be developed or redeveloped, overcrowded pitches, pitches occupied by household members with a need for separate accommodation, and hidden households, amongst other needs issues). Locations where planning permission has lapsed, refused or withdrawn, or where enforcement action has previously taken place, were also visited to confirm occupancy and use.

5.6 Although attempts were made to access Gypsies and Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation, it was not possible to consult with them. However, an alternative method of determining the accommodation needs of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation has been applied (see step 15 below). The methods used in attempting to contact households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation included:

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

Existing Supply

5.7 There are a total of 51 authorised pitches in use by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community within the study area. Table 5.2 shows the occupied pitches, vacant pitches (current pitches with planning permission but not occupied at the time of the consultation), and potential pitches (pitches with planning permission expected to be developed or redeveloped and occupied within the first five-year period).

Table 5.1 Permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches within Swindon Borough

Private	LA	Total
37	14	51

Source: GTAA 2024

Table 5.2 Occupied, vacant and potential Gypsy and Traveller pitches (authorised supply)

Occupied	Vacant	Potential	Total
48	1	2	51

Source: Study area local authority 2024

5.8 Table 5.3 lists the number of pitches per authority with temporary planning permission and those with no planning permission and recorded as unauthorised developments (including unauthorised pitches tolerated by the respective planning authority and those with pending applications or appeals). As can be seen in the needs calculations below (Table 5.3) these pitches contribute towards the additional accommodation needs in the area, due to being in need of permanent planning permission and the occupants having accommodation need.

Table 5.3 Gypsy and Traveller pitches without permanent permission per local authority

Temporary	Unauthorised developments	Total
0	0	0

Source: GTAA 2024

Permanent accommodation need

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

Requirement for permanent residential pitches 2024-2029

- 5.10 The need for residential pitches in the study area is assessed according to a 15-step process, based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey (spring/summer 2024).. The results of this are shown in Table 5.4 below, while the subsequent section contains explanations of the sourcing and calculation of figures for each step. The following table (Table 5.4) relates to the study area as a whole.
- 5.11 As discussed in Chapter 2, there are differing interpretations of the PPTS (2023) definition. As such, the needs assessment provides two accommodation needs figures: first, based on ethnic identity ('Ethnic' column); and second, based on PPTS 2023 ('PPTS' column).

Table 5.4 Estimate of the need for permanent pitches in the study area 2024-29

	Ethnic	PPTS
1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	48	48
Additional residential supply		
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	1	1
3) Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant through mortality	0	0
4) Net number of family units on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	2	2
5) Number of family units on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0	0
6) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use	2	2
Total Additional Supply	5	5
Additional residential need		
7) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	0	0
8) Family units (on pitches) seeking residential pitches	2	2
9) Family units on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0	0
10) Family units on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0	0
11) Family units on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	0	0
12) Family units currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches	5	3
13) Net new family units expected to arrive from elsewhere	2	2
14) New family formations expected to arise from within existing family units	8	8
15) Family units in housing with need for a pitch	5	0
Total Need	22	15
Balance of Need and Supply		
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	17	10

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent residential pitches 2024-2029: steps of the calculation

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

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

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

Supply of pitches 2024-2029

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

Step 1: Current occupied permanent site pitches

- 5.14 Based on information provided by the councils and corroborated by site visits and household surveys, there are currently 48 occupied authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the study area.

Step 2: Number of unused residential pitches available

- 5.15 This relates to those pitches that have planning permission, are developed but not currently in use. There are currently 1 vacant pitch within the study area.

Step 3: Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant 2024-2029

- 5.16 This is calculated using mortality rates as applied in conventional Housing Needs Assessments. However, the figures for mortality have been increased in accordance with studies of Gypsy and Traveller communities suggesting a life expectancy approximately 10 years lower than that of the general population.²¹ This results in the supply of 0 pitches.

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

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

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

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

Step 6: Residential pitches planned to be built or brought back into use, 2024-2029

- 5.19 This is determined by local authority data and from an assessment of sites during visits. Such pitches are referred to as 'potential'. This means that the pitches have been granted planning permission but have not yet been developed. Potential pitches

²¹ E.g. L. Crout, *Traveller health care project: Facilitating access to the NHS*, Walsall Health Authority, 1987.

include those which have been partly developed or which were previously occupied but are currently not occupied and in need of redevelopment. There are 2 pitches in the study area that are expected to be built or brought back into use during the period 2024-2029.

Need for pitches 2024-2029

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

Step 7: Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites

- 5.21 This is determined by local authority data. It is assumed that families residing on pitches whose planning permission expires within the period 2024-2029 will still require accommodation within the study area. There are currently 0 pitches with temporary planning permission located in the study area. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 8: Family units on pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area 2024-2029 and not leading to making a pitch vacant and available for others to occupy

- 5.22 This is determined by survey data. These family units reported that they 'needed or were likely' to move to a different home in the next five years, and wanted to stay on an authorised site, or that they were currently seeking accommodation.
- 5.23 This category of accommodation need overlaps with those moving due to overcrowding, counted in step 12, and so any family units which both are overcrowded and seeking accommodation are deducted from this total. This generates a total need in the study area of 2 pitches ('ethnic'), and 2 pitches ('PPTS').

Step 9: Family units on transit pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area 2024-2029

- 5.24 This is determined by survey data. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

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

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

in separate calculations. There were 0 households surveyed on unauthorised encampments within the study area during the survey period.

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

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

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

- 5.27 This was determined by the consultation. Households which also contain a newly formed family unit that has not yet left are excluded. This is because it is assumed that once the extra family unit leaves (included in the need figures in step 14) their accommodation will no longer be overcrowded. The calculations suggest that the need for additional pitches in the study area to resolve overcrowding over the period 2024-2029 are as follows: 5 pitches ('ethnic definition'), and 3 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

Step 13: New family units expected to arrive from elsewhere

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

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

- 5.29 The number of individuals needing to leave pitches to create new family units within the period 2024-2029 was estimated from consultation and excludes those included in steps 8, 12 and 13. This will result in the formation of 8 new households requiring residential pitches over the period 2024-2029 ('ethnic definition'), and 8 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

Step 15: Households in bricks and mortar with need for a pitch

- 5.30 This is based on households who live in bricks and mortar accommodation, but need to move to a pitch based on cultural preference. This was determined firstly by the number of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar

accommodation was determined using 2021 Census data which records how many Gypsies and Travellers living in the district and by type of accommodation. The number of those living in a caravan (as recorded by the census) was removed from the total to give the number living in bricks and mortar. According to 2021 Census data, an estimated 47 households live in bricks and mortar accommodation in the study area. Applying a 10% ratio (based on RRR Consultancy expertise), the cultural preference to reside on a pitch results in a need for 5 additional pitches. This ratio is based on established research and practical experience, including insights from RRR Consultancy, which has conducted extensive work in this area. The 10% assumption reflects patterns observed in similar studies, where a proportion of Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks-and-mortar accommodation express a desire to move to pitches.

- 5.31 As the travelling status of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation is not known, the accommodation needs arising from these households are only included in the 'ethnic' needs figures. This results in a need of 7 additional pitches in relation to the 'ethnic' definition and 0 pitches in relation to the PPTS definition.

Balance of Need and Supply

- 5.32 From the above, the Total Additional Pitch Requirement is calculated by deducting the supply from the need.

Table 5.5: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs 2024-29

	Ethnic	PPTS
Supply	5	5
Need	22	15
Difference	17	10

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent residential pitches 2029-2043

- 5.33 Considering future accommodation need it is assumed that those families with need stemming from psychological aversion to residing in houses, overcrowding, unauthorised developments and encampments will move onto sites within a 5-year period. As such, only natural population increase (same as step 15 above), mortality, and movement into and out of the study area need to be considered. The base figures regarding the number of pitches on sites at the end of the first 5-year period are shown in Table 5.6 below. Please note that the 2024 base figures include both authorised occupied and vacant pitches, whilst the 2029 base figures assume that any potential pitches have already been developed.
- 5.34 2029 pitch base figures are determined by a number of factors including:

- the number of occupied pitches in 2024 (as determined by the household survey)
- the number of vacant pitches in 2024 (as determined by the household survey)
- the number of potential pitches (as determined by local authority data)
- accommodation need for the period 2024-2029 (as determined by the GTAA).

5.35 It is assumed that by 2029 vacant pitches will be occupied, potential pitches will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need has been met by new supply.

5.36 In relation to this accommodation assessment, analysis of the current population indicates an annual household growth rate of 2.29% per annum (compound), equating to a 5-year rate of 12.0%. This is based on an analysis of various factors derived from the surveys including current population numbers, the average number of children per household, and marriage rates. A mortality rate of 2.825% applied over the 5-year period leads to a net population growth rate of 9.175%. It is assumed that the Gypsies and Travellers consultation population growth rate is likely to continue during the 5-year periods between 2029 and 2043.

5.37 Table 5.6 shows the accommodation needs for the study area for the periods 2029-2043.

Table 5.6: Summary of accommodation needs 2029-43 (pitches)

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2029-34	6	5
2034-39	6	5
2039-43	6	5
Total	18	15

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirements for transit pitches / negotiated stopping arrangements

5.38 This assessment recommends that the study area local authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy (see Appendix 1 for an example negotiated stopping place protocol). This involves households residing in caravans being able to stop at a suitable location for an agreed and limited period of time, and if necessary, with the provision of services such as waste disposal and toilets. Whilst it is important that all local authorities adopt the negotiated stopping place policy, it could be implemented on an individual local authority, across the study area, or on a countywide basis.

5.39 The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land

providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its occupants or the local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, the transient households (and landowner if situated on privately owned land).

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

Summary

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

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

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-29	17	10
2029-34	6	5
2034-39	6	5
2039-43	6	5
Total	35	25

Source: GTAA 2024

6. Showpeople consultation

Introduction

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

Methodology

- 6.2 The method adopted, as outlined in previous chapters, is based on a combination of secondary data, local authority data on number of authorised and unauthorised plots and yards, confirmation numbers of plots and yards through consulting with households and community representatives (primarily Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and the Association of Circus Proprietors of Great Britain) and consultation with households and the community representatives. The consultation has taken into account all known Travelling Showpeople households residing in the study area on authorised and unauthorised plots²², with the accommodation needs of all (100%) known plots being considered by the assessment.
- 6.3 The consultation with the community representatives and the households included questions regarding issues such as: family composition (per plot), occupancy of existing plots (including number of and reasons for vacant and /or undeveloped plots and future plans for plots), management and suitability of current yards and plots (including facilities and services), travelling patterns, health, education and employment, and accommodation needs.

Existing Supply

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

Table 6.1 Showpeople yards and plots per authority

TS Yards	TS Plots	UD yards	UD plots	Transit plots
2	4	1	10	0

Source: Study area local authority 2024

²² Please see the Glossary for definitions of Travelling Showpeople yards and plots.

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

Calculation of Permanent Accommodation Need

- 6.6 The need for permanent plots for Showpeople in the study area is based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities. It provides calculation of accommodation need for the period of 2024-2043 in 5-year periods.

Requirement for permanent plots 2024-2029

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

Table 6.2: Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2024-2029

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	4
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Number of existing plots expected to become vacant through mortality	0
4) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	2
5) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
6) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	2
Current residential need: Plots	
7) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
8) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	0
9) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
11) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	8
12) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	2
13) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	2
14) New household formations expected to arise from within existing households on sites	6
Total Need	18
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total additional plot need	16

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent plots 2024-2029: steps of the calculation

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

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

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

Supply of permanent plots 2024-2029

Step 1: Current occupied permanent plots

6.10 Based on information provided by the study area local authorities and corroborated by information from the consultation. There are currently 4 occupied plots.

Step 2: Number of unused residential plots available

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

Step 3: Number of existing plots expected to become vacant 2024-2029

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

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

6.13 This was determined by survey data. It was assumed, that those currently residing on plots expecting to leave the area permanently in the next five years – out of choice (step 4) or due to overcrowding (step 12) – would generally be able to do so. This resulted in the supply of 2 plots.

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

6.14 This was determined by survey data. It was assumed that all those currently residing on plots planning to move into housing in the next five years (step 5) or preferring to move into housing from an overcrowded plot (step 12), would be able to do so.

6.15 As with step 5, a supply of 0 plots in the study area were expected from this source, excluding those moving out of the study area, since these are already counted in step 4.

Step 6: Residential plots planned to be built or brought back into use, 2024-2029

- 6.16 This can include plots which have been partly developed or which were previously occupied but are now vacant and in need of redevelopment. There are 0 plots in the study area that are expected to be built or brought back into use during the period 2024-2029.

Need for permanent plots 2024-2029

Step 7: Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots

- 6.17 This is determined by local authority data. It is assumed families residing on plots whose planning permission expires within the period 2024-2029 will still require accommodation within the study area. There are currently 0 plots with temporary planning permission located in the area.

Step 8: Households on plots seeking residential plots in the study area 2024-2029 and not resulting in the creation of a vacant plot

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 6.22 There are no unauthorised plots in the study area and therefore there is a need of 8 plots.

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

- 6.23 Overcrowding on a Travelling Showpeople plot may differ to that on Gypsy and Traveller pitch due to the larger need for equipment and vehicle storage. Showpeople require more space for their equipment and vehicles as well as enough space for

accommodation such as caravans (static and tourers). This generates a total need of 2 plots in the study area.

Step 13: New households expected to arrive from elsewhere

6.24 This generates a total need of 2 plots in the study area.

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

6.25 This generates a total need of 6 plots in the study area.

Balance of Need and Supply

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

Table 6.3: Summary of permanent Travelling Showpeople plot needs 2024-2029

	Plots
Supply	2
Need	18
Difference	16

Source: GTAA 2024

Requirement for permanent residential plots 2030-2043

6.27 Considering future accommodation need, it assumed that those families with need stemming from psychological aversion to residing in houses, overcrowding, unauthorised developments and encampments will move onto yards within a 5-year period. As such, only natural population increase (same as step 14 above), mortality, and movement in and out of the study area need to be considered. The base figures regarding the number of plots on yards at the end of the first 5-year period are shown in Table 6.4 below. Please note that the 2024 base figures include both authorised occupied and vacant plots, whilst the 2029 base figures assume that any potential plots have been developed.

6.28 2029 pitch base figures are determined by a number of factors including:

- the number of occupied plots in 2024
- the number of vacant plots in 2024
- the number of potential plots
- accommodation need for the period 2024-2029

6.29 It is assumed that by 2029 vacant plots will be occupied, potential plots will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need has been met by new supply. The new supply for 2029 (base) will be 20 plots.

6.30 In relation to this accommodation assessment, analysis of the current population indicates that an annual household growth rate of 2.17% per annum (compound) equating to a 5-year rate of 11.3%, followed by a mortality rate of 2.825%. This is based on an analysis of various factors derived from the surveys including current population numbers, the average number of children per household, and marriage rates. It is assumed that these rates are likely to continue during the period 2034-2043.

6.31 Table 6.4 shows the accommodation needs for the periods 2029-2043.

Table 6.4: Summary of permanent accommodation needs 2029-2043 (plots)

Period	Area
2029-34	1
2034-39	1
2039-43	1
Total	3

Source: GTAA 2024

Summary

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

Table 6.5: Summary of permanent accommodation needs 2024-2043 (plots)

Period	Area
2024-29	16
2029-34	1
2034-39	1
2039-43	1
Total	19

Source: GTAA 2024

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

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

Permanent accommodation needs

- 7.4 The following outlines the permanent accommodation need over the period of 2024 to 2043:

Table 7.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-29	17	10
2029-34	6	5
2034-39	6	5
2039-43	6	5
Total	35	25

Source: GTAA 2024

Table 7.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs

Period	Area
2024-29	16
2029-34	1
2034-39	1
2039-43	1
Total	19

Source: GTAA 2024

The location of new permanent provision

- 7.5 There is general consensus that smaller sites, and yards are preferred by Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities due to better management and maintenance of provision and security. Ongoing monitoring of provision and vacant

provisions should be undertaken by the local authorities alongside discussions with different community groups, to ensure that any additional need that may arise is identified.

- 7.6 Ensuring that new provisions are located in a safe environment is important although the impact of land costs on determining feasibility must also be considered. The settled community neighbouring sites, and yards should also be involved in consultations.
- 7.7 In terms of identifying broad locations for new permanent sites, there are a number of factors which could be considered including:

Costs

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

Social

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

Availability

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

Deliverability

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

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

- The affordability of land suitable for the development of new sites and the cost of development
- The need to ensure that new provisions are within accessible travelling distance of social, welfare and cultural services
- The need to carefully consider the proximity of new provisions to existing provisions i.e. whether social tensions might arise if new provisions are located too close to existing provisions
- The sustainability of new provisions i.e. ensuring that they do not detrimentally impact on the local environment and do not place undue pressure on the local infrastructure.

7.9 It is apparent from discussions with Gypsy, Traveller households undertaken as part of the household surveys that most households would prefer any new provision built to accommodate existing family members to be situated close to existing provision. However, households were less likely to state preferred locations for any new provision within the study area. Also, whilst households prefer easy access to main roads in order to facilitate travelling, new sites should not be situated too close to main arterial routes as to cause environmental issues such as noise pollution or poor air quality.

7.10 It is important that new provisions are accessible to amenities such as shops, schools and health facilities or where there are good transport links or within reasonable distance for households to access the necessary facilities and amenities. DCLG (2015) guidance suggests that local planning authorities should strictly limit new Gypsy and Traveller site development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas do not dominate the nearest settled community and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. As stated in Chapter 2, the study area local authority Local Plan policies contain locational criteria to help determine suitable locations for the development of new sites or yards.

7.11 The DCLG (2015) guidance states that when considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:

- a. effective use of previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land
- b. sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness
- c. promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children
- d. not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community.

The size of new provision

- 7.12 Given that there can be management and maintenance issues regarding large sites, it is recommended that any future site and/or extension to existing sites does not exceed 20 pitches. DCLG (2008)²³ guidance states that there is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs. However, they do suggest that as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.
- 7.13 Based on DCLG guidance, it can be determined that a pitch of approximately 325 square metres would take into account all minimum separation distance guidance between caravans and pitch boundaries as stipulated in guidance and safety regulations for caravan development. A pitch size of at least 500 square metres (0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the following on-pitch facilities:
- Hard standing for a touring caravan (enabling households to travel)
 - Hard standing for a static caravan (including double static trailers)
 - 2 car parking spaces
 - 1 amenity block
 - Hard standing for storage shed and drying
 - Garden/amenity area.
- 7.14 If granting permission on an open plan basis, permission should be given on a pitch-by-pitch equivalent basis to the above. For example, an existing pitch which has enough space to accommodate a chalet structure, 2 touring caravans and 1 – 2 static caravans along with 4 parking spaces, 2 blocks etc., could be counted as 2 pitches even if based on an open plan basis on one structured pitch. However, this would need to be recorded for future monitoring.

Showpeople plots

- 7.15 In relation to Showpeople, size of new plots need to not only accommodate providing for living space (similar to above), but also space for work equipment. The new plots need to accommodate structures and / or caravans designed for living quarters sufficient to accommodate the household and meet their specific requirements, and space away from the living quarters for storage and maintenance of work equipment and vehicles and domestic vehicles i.e. family car(s). Due to the need for both accommodation space and space for storage and maintenance of very large

²³ Please note that this publication was withdrawn in September 2015.

equipment, the size and space required for a Showpeople plot needs to be much larger than a standard Gypsy and Traveller pitch.

Transit provision

- 7.16 It is recommended that the local authorities set up a negotiated stopping places policy. This is land temporarily used as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the agreed location for a few days. Amenities such as portaloos and showers (or access to alternative nearby facilities) and skips or wheelie bins should ideally be made available for the duration of the agreed period.
- 7.17 According to research undertaken on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2019), negotiated stopping is a balanced and humane approach to managing roadside camps. It is based on a mutual agreement between the local authority and Gypsy and Traveller families on matters such as waste disposal and basic temporary facilities. This can sometimes involve directing Gypsy and Traveller households away from contentious public spaces to more appropriate council land. The approach is proven to achieve significant savings in public spending and decreased social costs for Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 7.18 The GLA (2019) report cites a number of good practice examples including Hackney. The local authority has worked closely with the Gypsy and Traveller community and involved them in dialogue and negotiation. This has resulted in a consistent practice over many years of allowing stopping time and making provision of basic facilities. There have been many locations in the borough that were common stopping places, some used for short periods of time for families passing through or visiting relatives, others used for months and even a couple of years. The practice was also formalised to an extent through leniency agreements which specified arrangements between the local authority and the Traveller families – this is also incorporated in the council's unauthorised encampment protocol.
- 7.19 The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. It was first developed by Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) and involves local authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to more suitable land (please see Appendix for an example negotiated stopping place protocol).
- 7.20 Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its occupants or local community. The

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

- 7.21 The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but may include Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise with the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. However, as Leeds GATE state, negotiated stopping is a locally agreed solution so may differ in different locations. For Negotiated Stopping to work it has to involve local authorities negotiating with roadside Travellers. It will involve talking to and consulting roadside Travellers and working out solutions.
- 7.22 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved on to an appropriate alternative location. It is important for local authorities to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the local authority area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities. Also, local authorities should consider allowing households visiting family or friends who reside on permanent sites in the local authority area to temporarily reside on the site for an agreed amount of time.
- 7.23 Agreements could be made with households residing on sites and allowing visiting family and friends to stay for agreed periods of time. This would lead to fewer unauthorised encampments which adversely impact on the local community and allow households with stopover requirement to stay for an agreed period of time.

Summary

- 7.24 The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTAA (including any accommodation need calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities. This assessment identifies that there is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 35 additional pitches (ethnic definition), and 25 pitches (PPTS 2023).
- 7.25 There is also a need for 19 additional Travelling Showpeople plots during the same period. It is recommended that the authorities incorporate a policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments.
- 7.26 It is recommended that the local planning authorities determine which of the accommodation needs figures in relation to Gypsies and Travellers they choose to prioritise in their Local Plans.

- 7.27 This GTAA recommends adopting the 'ethnic' definition of accommodation needs figures, i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation needs of all Gypsies and Travellers but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed.
- 7.28 Alternatively, the local authorities may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition of accommodation needs figures, with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and the Ethnic definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authorities would first meet the need of 25 (10 within the first 5 years) as the obligation but accept the need for a further 10 (7 within the first 5 years) as a potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls. It is recommended that the work interpretation of need should simply be used as a form of reference and comparison with other authorities who use this approach.
- 7.29 It is also recommended that the local planning authorities consider the accommodation needs that might materialise over the plan period from households (Gypsies, Travellers, and Showpeople communities) not considered by this assessment. This could include households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separate to the need identified below and could be met through windfall applications.
- 7.30 In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:
- In relation to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople it is recommended that the local authorities work closely with the families to determine how their accommodation need can best be met.
 - Also, for the local authorities to provide pre-planning application advice to households who have identified land to help determine if it is suitable to address accommodation need.
 - In order to meet the accommodation needs of Showpeople, it is also recommended that the local authorities work closely with households on the unauthorised developments to address their current and future accommodation needs.
 - It is recommended that the local authorities review the planning of unauthorised developments and consider granting permanent status.
- 7.31 As well as quantifying accommodation need, the study also makes recommendations on other key issues including:

Planning policy:

- To identify a range of specific sites in sustainable locations of up to 20 pitches/plots in size to be developed only for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople.
- To consider how the accommodation needs can be met by expanding existing provision and/or providing new sites, yards or moorings (see accompanying report which reviews potential ways of meeting the identified need). This could include redeveloping the unused Chiseldon Firs transit site for use as permanent pitch provision.
- To consider alternative options for developing new sites, yards and moorings such as developing them on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use.
- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authorities, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. Showmen's Guild and National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- To consider safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller site and Travelling Showpeople yards with permanent planning permission for their current use unless it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed to meet identified need.
- To review the planning and license status of sites not occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and determine if it is better to change their status to residential or reuse them for Gypsies and Travellers. Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.
- To liaise with owners of the sites and yards to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

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

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

Appendix 1: Example negotiated stopping place protocol

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

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

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

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

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

1. You will be asked to park your caravan and vehicles in a designated place on the site. This is to prevent further caravans joining the encampment. Your family must stay within the boundaries of the site.
2. You will be issued with a toilet. This is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.
3. You will be issued with a bin for all your domestic waste. You are responsible for keeping the area around your caravan clean and tidy. The bin is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.
4. All dogs must be kept under control and tied up. Dogs must be tied up on a lead or in a kennel during the night or when you leave the site for any period of time. The dog wardens will visit this site if loose dogs are reported.
5. No fires larger than a small cooking fire are to be lit, absolutely no burning of commercial or domestic waste is allowed.
6. The nearest Household Waste for larger items is at Trade waste can be disposed at
7. Environmental enforcement officers will monitor the site and take action against any activity likely to cause environmental harm, inconvenience or distress to surrounding occupants such as fly-tipping, excessive noise or use of quad bikes.
8. Give consideration to other people within the local vicinity in terms of noise nuisance and the parking of vehicles.
9. Not to engage in any anti-social behaviour, disorder or fly tipping on or near this site. Horses will not be tolerated on the site and the presence of horses may be regarded as 'anti social behaviour' for the purposes of this agreement. Any traps owned by families are not to be used in or around the immediate area.

10. This agreement has been negotiated between [Local Authority] and Gypsy/Traveller people in the [local] area. You are encouraged to cooperate with the Local Authority to make the agreement work by discussing any incidents, concerns or suggestions that may affect the agreement with local authority officers when they visit weekly. You can also telephone the council [phone number], [police liaison officer] or speak to staff at [Third party advocacy where available] if you want them to raise issues on your behalf.

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

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

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

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Glossary

Amenity block

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

Authorised site

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

Average

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

Bargee Travellers and boat dwellers

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

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

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

Bedroom standard

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

Bricks and mortar accommodation

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

Caravan

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

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

Concealed household

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

Doubling up

More than one family unit sharing a single pitch.

Emergency stopping places

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

Family Owner Occupied Gypsy Site

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

Family unit

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

Gypsy

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

Gypsy and Traveller

The DLUHC's December 2023 definition of Gypsies and Travellers²⁴, is set out below:

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

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

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

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

Hidden Household

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

Household

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

Irish Traveller

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

Local Authority Sites

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

Local Development Documents (LDD)

These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory

²⁴ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>.

development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

Negotiated Stopping

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

Net need

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

New Traveller (formerly 'New Age Traveller')

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

Newly forming families

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

Overcrowding

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

Permanent residential site

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

Pitch

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

Primary data

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

Private rented pitches

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

Psychological aversion

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

Secondary data

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

Settled community

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

Site

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

Socially rented site

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

Tolerated

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

Transit site/pitch

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

Travelling Showpeople

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

Travelling Showpeople Plot

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

Travelling Showpeople Yard

An area of land laid out and/or used for Travelling Showpeople for residential occupation, which can be authorised (have planning permission) or unauthorised. Yards can be self-owned by a Travelling Showpeople resident or rented from a private or social landlord. Some yards are leased or rented from the Showmen's Guild. They can vary in type and size although they need to consider the need for residents to store and maintain fairground equipment.

Unauthorised development

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

Unauthorised encampment

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

Unauthorised site

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