

North Housing Market Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

Final report

Philip Brown and Lisa Hunt

Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
University of Salford

Pat Niner

Centre for Urban and Regional Studies
University of Birmingham

December 2007



About the Authors

Philip Brown and Lisa Hunt are Research Fellows in the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford.

Pat Niner is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham

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

Study Team

Core team members:

Dr Philip Brown
Dr Lisa Hunt
Pat Niner
Jenna Condie

Community Interviewers:

Sharon Finney
Tracey Finney
Violet Frost
Joe Hurn
Ann Smith

Steering Group

Karen Bates
Abid Razaq
Philip Somerfield
Eleanor Taylor
Stephen Ward

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
East Staffordshire Borough Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Stafford Borough Council

Acknowledgements

This study was greatly dependent upon the time, expertise and contributions of a number of individuals and organisations, without whom the study could not have been completed. Members of the project Steering Group provided guidance and assistance throughout the project and thanks must go to all of them for their support to the study team.

Special thanks are also due to all those who took the time to participate in the study, helped organise the fieldwork and provided invaluable information and support in the production of this report. We are particularly indebted to members of the North Staffordshire Inter Agency Group for their assistance and advice.

Particular thanks must, of course, go to the many Gypsies and Travellers who found the time to talk to us and answer our questions in a full, honest and patient manner. It is hoped that this report is able to accurately reflect their experiences and needs.

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

Executive Summary

The Study

1. Recent legislation and guidance from the government has indicated a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of the long standing accommodation issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society. As a result, a number of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) are now being undertaken across the UK, as local authorities respond to these new obligations and requirements.
2. A number of local authorities across the North Housing Market area (East Staffordshire Borough, Newcastle under Lyme Borough, Stafford Borough, Staffordshire Moorlands District and Stoke-on-Trent City) commissioned this assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in November 2006. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford and assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a Steering Group composed of members representing the Partner Authorities.
3. The assessment was undertaken by conducting:
 - A review of available literature, data and secondary sources;
 - A detailed questionnaire completed by housing and planning officers;
 - Consultations with key stakeholders; and
 - A total of 128 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers from a range of tenures.

Background

4. Following the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their wider housing strategies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these

strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced has a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs conducted and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.

Main Findings

Local Gypsies and Travellers and accommodation provision

5. There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area. Our best estimate is that there are at least 664 local Gypsies and Travellers
6. There are **3 socially rented sites** in the Study Area (Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford) together providing 68 pitches. These sites accommodate 193 individuals. All residents have access to amenity blocks, WC and a water supply. The sites have varied management arrangements: the Stoke-on-Trent site is managed by a self-employed Gypsy, the site in Newcastle-under-Lyme is managed by a housing association, and the site in Stafford is managed by the local authority. Most of the residents had ambivalent views towards their site (neither good nor poor). The site in Stoke-on-Trent, at the time of the assessment, was under-going a continuing process of refurbishment.
7. There are **8 (developed and in use) authorised private sites** (excluding one site where planning permission has not yet been implemented) together providing an estimated 85 pitches. The provision of authorised pitches is sporadic across the Study Area with the bulk of provision found in Stafford, followed in turn by East Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands. There is no private site provision in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Over half (56%) of the pitches on private sites are rented. All respondents on private sites reported access to an amenity block and access to WC and bath/shower. Respondents on private sites had, on average, 1.3 caravans per household with the vast majority commenting that this gave them enough space. Respondents on private sites were generally more satisfied with their accommodation than households on socially rented sites.
8. There are **3 unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area. These developments accommodated approximately 18

separate households. Households on unauthorised developments reported high levels of overcrowding but also reported high levels of satisfaction with their general accommodation, neighbours and location. Due to their undeveloped nature access to facilities on these sites was poorer than on authorised sites. All households had access to WC and rubbish collection with fewer having access to water and even less having access to an electricity supply. Just two households had access to an amenity block. The tenure arrangements on these sites were unclear.

9. There are at least **5 Travelling Showpeople** yards which are all privately owned or privately rented. Three yards were for residential and storage use with the remaining 2 used for storage only. Just one interview was achieved with site dwelling Travelling Showpeople. This respondent reported significant over-crowding in their current accommodation but reported that access to facilities was appropriate.

Unauthorised encampments

10. The Caravan Count in January 2007 recorded 0 caravans on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers). Records kept by the local authorities show that the Study Area experienced around 39 encampments over the previous full calendar year (2006) which was seen by the local authorities as a similar level for previous years; and 31 encampments over the period of assessment (April-September 2007). The average encampment size was just under 7 caravans. Most encampments stayed for a relatively short period of time with the average duration being just under 3 weeks. Most of the encampments occurred in Stoke-on-Trent, East Staffordshire and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
11. Only Stafford and Staffordshire Moorlands do not have formal written policies for dealing with unauthorised encampments.
12. A total of 15 interviews were carried out with people on unauthorised encampments between March and September 2007. The average number of caravans owned by households on unauthorised encampments was 1.2 with around 3 people living in each caravan. A lack of living space was a main issue for these households but affordability provided a major barrier to achieving more space.
13. Access to facilities was largely restricted for households on unauthorised encampments with just one respondent able to access basic facilities such as water and WC. A quarter of the respondents on unauthorised encampments had a base elsewhere.

Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing

14. The inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in local authority housing and homelessness strategies is the exception rather than the rule at

present. Only Staffordshire Moorlands reported that Gypsies and Travellers are identified in ethnic records and monitoring of social housing applications/allocations. No local authority was able to quantify the number of Gypsies and Travellers in social or private bricks and mortar housing. The Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau estimated that there were at least 40 families in housing within the Stoke-on-Trent area alone.

15. We interviewed 29 households living in bricks and mortar housing across the Study Area. Just under 4 in 5 Gypsy and Traveller households were tenants (council, private or RSL), the remaining households were owner-occupiers. Just over a third of households still retained a trailer. The vast majority of respondents viewed their house positively. Two-thirds of respondents had lived in their accommodation for a number of years. Just 2 respondents were planning to leave the house in the near future. One in ten thought they would remain in the house indefinitely. The remainder did not know.
16. Family reasons, health, education and a lack of sites were all given as major reasons which stimulated a move into housing.
17. A quarter of all respondents had lived in a house at some point in the past. Nearly half of these viewed it as a positive experience, with a quarter viewing it negatively. Respondents tended to cite feelings of being enclosed and constrained as reasons for their negative view of bricks and mortar housing.

Characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers

18. The survey of Gypsies and Travellers identified some of the important characteristics of the local population.

Household size is larger than in the settled/non-Traveller population at 2.9 persons across the whole sample

A significant minority of the sample (16%) were households over 60 years of age.

Young families appear the predominant household type in the Study Area as a whole. However, there are a significant number of single households on the socially rented sites generally involving more older people.

The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in trailers and in housing can be seen to belong, in some way, to the Study Area.

The majority of respondents (6 in 10) felt they were 'local' to the area they were residing in. 'Family connections' was the main reason given when respondents were asked why they were living where they were.

The local population includes diverse ethnic groups. Romany Gypsy is the largest ethnic group (65%), followed by Irish Travellers (23%), with much smaller numbers of others who described themselves as Traveller, Showmen or New Traveller.

Just over half of school age children attend school or receive home education. Children on unauthorised encampments had particular poor attendance levels. The more settled the children were the better their attendance levels. This is compared to the attendance levels of all school age children of around 90% – depending upon local authority area.

Around half of the Gypsy and Traveller population is estimated to have some form of health problem.

The Gypsy and Traveller population was largely sedentary. However, around half of settled or authorised households still travelled seasonally. A lack of places to stay was cited as a major reason why households did not travel.

Of those households who still travelled around a quarter of respondents intended to engage in quite local travelling (within the local area, Study Area, county or West Midlands region) with two-thirds planning to travel to other parts of the UK.

Someone was in work in just under half of respondents' families. The type of work people were engaged in was varied and included broad areas such as gardening/tree work, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering, cars, and general market trades.

Gypsies and Travellers and housing-related support

19. There were no Supporting People funded services specifically for Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.
20. The kind of housing-related services Gypsies and Travellers expressed an interest in receiving assistance with included: accessing health care, claiming benefits, harassment issues, finding accommodation and accessing legal services.
21. A number of households also commented on problems with mobility (getting to and from places) and form-filling.

Accommodation preferences and aspirations

22. All households were asked whether there was anyone living with them who was likely to want their own accommodation over the next 5 years. Overall, 27 households reported that there was, which equated to 46 individuals who will require their own accommodation by 2012.

23. There was support for the creation of additional long-stay residential sites within the Study Area with 15% of residents on existing authorised sites wanting to move to new site based accommodation. Respondents voiced a preference for residential sites with pitch capacities of between 10-20 pitches.
24. Nearly a quarter of respondents wanted to see the development of more transit/short-stay sites in the Study Area. Interest in such sites was shown from households from all accommodation types. For households on authorised/settled accommodation the creation of more authorised short-stay accommodation would enable an increase in family visits and help to maintain the tradition of travelling. Such sites should be between 5 -15 pitches in size.
25. Respondents were asked to comment on a range of differing accommodation types in order to ascertain their preferences. The clear preference was for a small private site which they/their family owned, followed by a site owned by the local authority. Living on a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller or living in a house owned by the local authority/RSL were the least favoured options.

Accommodation need and supply

26. Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. The supply of additional authorised accommodation has slowed since 1994, but the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Instead, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, with increases in unauthorised accommodation, innovative house dwelling arrangements (living in trailers in the grounds of houses), overcrowding on sites and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).
27. The 'models' for assessing the requirement for additional residential pitches, for Gypsies and Travellers, have developed significantly over the past few years. The calculation used here is an adaptation of the example provided by the CLG.¹ The calculation for years 1-5 (2007-2012) takes account of need arising from the following indicators: expiry of temporary planning permissions, household growth, need from unauthorised developments, movement between sites and housing, need from closing sites, and need from households on unauthorised encampments. On the supply side the calculation takes account of: pitch vacancies on socially rented sites, unused pitches, and known/planned developments of sites/pitches. These calculations are estimates based on information drawn from: local authority

¹ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

information, knowledge of key stakeholders, survey findings and assumptions based on the professional experience of the study team.

28. Additional requirements beyond 2012 are based on estimated household growth. This is assumed to be a 3% increase each year following commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.²
29. Transit requirements (2007-2012) are calculated by the average number of households on unauthorised encampments seeking a transit/short-stay pitch in the area; an allowance for vacancies is included in order to manage their operation effectively. No further transit provision is estimated to be required beyond 2012 on the assumption that the level of travelling will not increase in the foreseeable future and other surrounding local authorities will also have developed appropriate transit options.
30. Requirements for the additional provision for Travelling Showpeople are estimated on the basis of survey findings on household growth.
31. The table below summarises estimated requirements. The split between local authorities is indicative only and based on evidence of **'need where it arises'** and this reflects the current uneven distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Table i: Residential accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller populations

Authority	Current authorised residential provision ³ (pitches)	Current authorised socially rented transit provision (pitches)	Additional residential need 2007-2012 (pitches) ⁴	Additional residential need 2012-2016 (pitches)	Additional residential need 2016-2021 (pitches)	Additional residential need 2021 – 2026 (pitches)	Additional transit need 2007-2012 (pitches)
East Staffordshire	17	-	11	4	5	6	5
Newcastle-under-Lyme	19	-	20	4	6	7	5
Stafford	70	-	22	12	17	19	2
Staffordshire Moorlands	3	-	2	0	0	0	2
Stoke-on-Trent	42	6	29	9	13	15	10

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

² A 3% growth rate was used in the recent report from Communities and Local Government (2007) Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies. HMSO.

³ These are approximations of the provision (public and private) based on information obtained from the authorities during the course of the assessment. This includes Travelling Showpeople sites.

⁴ Inclusive of plots for Travelling Showpeople

Recommendations

32. The overarching recommendation resulting from this assessment is that the authorities across the Study Area engage pro-actively to meet the accommodation needs that have been identified as a result of this assessment and that a strategic joined-up approach is taken. More specifically a total of 38 recommendations have been made for the Partner Authorities.

Contents

About the Authors	3
Acknowledgements	5
Executive Summary	7
Table of Contents	15
List of Tables	19
List of Figures	20
List of Maps	20
Glossary	21
List of Acronyms	23
1. Overview	25
Background and study brief	25
Aims of the assessment	27
A note on terminology	27
Outline of the report	29
2. The assessment methodology	31
Stage one: Collation and review of existing secondary information	31
Stage two: Consultation with service providers and other stakeholders	32
Stage three: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers.	33
3. National, regional and local policy context	39
National policy	39
Regional policy	40
Local Plan Policies	42
4. Gypsies and Travellers in the North Housing Market area: the current picture	45
Caravan numbers and trends from the Caravan Count	45
5. Size and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population	51
Demographic and household characteristics	51
The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community	55
6. Authorised site provision – findings	57
Socially rented sites	57
Private Gypsy and Traveller sites	67
7. Planning and the unauthorised development of sites – findings	71
Planning applications	71
Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites	73
Planning issues	74

8. Unauthorised encampments – findings	77
9. Gypsies and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation – findings	85
10. Housing-related support service and general services – findings	93
Housing-related support	93
Access to local services and amenities	97
11. Employment, education and health – findings	101
Gypsies and Travellers and work, employment and training	101
Gypsies and Travellers and education	103
Gypsies and Travellers and health	104
12. Accommodation histories, intentions and travelling – findings	107
Accommodation histories	107
Travelling patterns and experiences	109
13. Household formation and accommodation - preferences and aspirations	113
Household formation	113
Accommodation preferences and aspirations	113
14. Travelling Showpeople	119
Information from local authorities	119
Views from Travelling Showpeople	120
15. Boat dwellers	121
Boat dwellers in context	121
Findings from boat dwellers	122
16. An assessment of need for residential pitches	123
Calculating accommodation supply and need	123
Additional residential pitch requirements	126
17. An assessment of need for transit pitches	129
18. An assessment of need for Travelling Showpeople pitches	137
19. Recommendations	139

Appendices

Appendix 1: CLG Caravan Count results for the North Housing Market Study Area by local authority between January 2005 and January 2007	151
Appendix 2: District summaries	153
Appendix 3: List of those involved in the consultations	159
Appendix 4: Useful documents	161

List of Tables

- Table 1: Achieved household interviews by target
- Table 2: Sample in relation to local Gypsy and Traveller population
- Table 3: Number of achieved interviews by local authority area
- Table 4: Summary of Residential Pitch Requirements: West Midlands Region and Sub-regions: 2006 to 2011 Area Estimated requirement
- Table 5: Regional and North Housing Market area pitch need by RSS period
- Table 6: North Housing Market summary of caravan numbers 1994 and 2006
- Table 7: Summary of Caravan Numbers on Unauthorised Site 1998 and 2006
- Table 8: Caravans by type of site by local authority: January 1994
- Table 9: Caravans by type of site by local authority: January 2006
- Table 10: Age of interviewees
- Table 11: Household size distribution
- Table 12: Average household size by accommodation type
- Table 13: Household type by type of accommodation
- Table 14: Marital status of the interview sample
- Table 15: Local to the area?
- Table 16: Reasons for residing in the Study Area (figures in % of sample)
- Table 17: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group
- Table 18: Estimated Study Area Gypsy and Traveller population
- Table 19: Local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites at February 2007
- Table 20: Details of site residents by local authority site
- Table 21: Facilities on local authority sites and assessment of quality by the local authority
- Table 22: Views on the site (in %)
- Table 23: Access to facilities on socially rented sites (% of sample have access)
- Table 24: Permitted absence and visitors
- Table 25: Waiting lists and allocation policies
- Table 26: Pitch rent and other financial matters
- Table 27: Private sites with the North Housing Market area
- Table 28: Views on the site (in %)
- Table 29: Access to facilities on private sites
- Table 30: Summary of planning applications and outcomes since 2001
- Table 31: Access to facilities on unauthorised developments
- Table 32: Number of encampments by local authority (April – September 2007)
- Table 33: Access to basic facilities on unauthorised encampments
- Table 34: Views on the house (in %)
- Table 35: Previous experience of bricks and mortar housing by accommodation type

- Table 36: Reasons for living in bricks and mortar (%)
- Table 37: Likelihood of using housing-related support services (in %)
- Table 38: Likelihood of using housing-related support services by accommodation type (in %)
- Table 39: Type of support by local authority area
- Table 41: % households with family members with specific health problems
- Table 42: Duration of residence on current site
- Table 43: Prior accommodation of households on authorised sites (private and socially rented)
- Table 44: Reasons for leaving prior accommodation type by current accommodation type
- Table 45: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type
- Table 46: Anticipated areas to travel to over the next 12 months
- Table 47: Popularity of preferred accommodation
- Table 48: Views on type of accommodation preferred
- Table 49: Estimated number of Travelling Showpeople yards by local authority
- Table 50: Summary of estimated need for residential pitches at a North Housing Market area level 2007-2012

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Number of caravans on social rented sites: 1994 to 2006
- Figure 2: Number of caravans on private sites: 1994 to 2006
- Figure 3: Number of Caravans on Unauthorised Sites: 1994 to 2006
- Figure 4: Number of caravans by type of site: 1994 to 2006

List of Maps

- Map1: Unauthorised encampments within the Study Area relative to authorised site provision (numbers shown in caravans)

Glossary

The following terms are used in this report and may need some clarification. It is noted that a number of the terms below are often contested and debated. It is not the intention of the authors to present these terms as absolute definitions, rather the explanations provided are those the authors used in this assessment as their frames of reference.

Term	Explanation
Amenity block/shed	On most residential Gypsy/Travellers sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
Authorised local authority site/Registered Social Landlord site	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Social Landlord.
Authorised Private site	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
Bricks and mortar	Permanent mainstream housing
Caravan	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
Chalet	In the absence of a specific definition the term 'chalet' is used here to refer to single storey residential units which resemble mobile homes.
Country People/Buffers	Term used by Irish Travellers to refer to settled people/non-Travellers.
Doubling-up	To share a pitch on an authorised site
Gypsy	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers
Gypsies and Travellers (as used in this assessment)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Show People, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation. Can also include Roma and boat dwellers if there is evidence of a need, suppressed or otherwise, for pitch accommodation.
Gaujo/Gorger	Literal translation indicates someone who is not of the Romany Gypsy race. Romany word used mainly, but not exclusively, by Romany Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community/non-Gypsy/Travellers

Mobile home	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling/or lorry
Pitch/plot	Area of land on a site/development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch.
Pulling-up	To park a trailer/caravan
Settled community/people	Reference to non-Travellers (those that live in houses)
Site	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers/chalets/vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
Stopping place	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
Supporting People	A funding programme which provides grants in order to assist in the provision of housing related support to develop and sustain an individuals capacity to live independently in their accommodation.
Suppressed/concealed household	Households, living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units and who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.
Trailer	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan
Transit site	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
Travelling Showpeople	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad
Unauthorised Development	This refers to a caravan/trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission
Unauthorised Encampment	Stopping on private/public land without permission (e.g. at the side of the road)
Yard	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site

List of Acronyms

CLG	Communities and Local Government
CJPOA	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DPD	Development Plan Document
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
LGA	Local Government Association
LPA	Local Planning Authority
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RHB	Regional Housing Board
RHS	Regional Housing Strategy
RPB	Regional Planning Body
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SHUSU	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
TES	Traveller Education Service
WMRA	West Midlands Regional Assembly

Note: Over the last few years the main Governmental department largely responsible for Gypsy and Traveller related issues (in particular regarding housing and planning) has been subject to certain degree of reform. This can cause confusion. The main changes are summarised below.

Until 2001 the **Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)** was the responsible department for these issues. In 2001 responsibility was passed to the **Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)**. In 2002 the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)** took control of these issues (within which the Gypsy and Traveller Unit was founded) with this being replaced by the **Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)** in 2006.

1. Overview

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the North Staffordshire sub-regional area. The research and report were commissioned by the North Staffordshire Partner authorities (East Staffordshire Borough, Newcastle under Lyme Borough, Stafford Borough, Staffordshire Moorlands District and Stoke-on-Trent City⁵) in November 2006. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford and assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a Steering Group composed of members representing the Partner Authorities.

Background and study brief

- 1.2 Enshrined within the Caravan Sites Act 1968 was a duty upon local authorities to provide sites to Gypsies and Travellers residing in and resorting to their boroughs. As a result of the measures contained within the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, this duty was removed. Over the subsequent years, coupled with continued migration, travelling patterns and household formation, this has meant that the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to live/stop far exceed the number of authorised pitches available. In addition to the lack of available authorised pitches, Gypsies and Travellers have also found gaining planning permission a major obstacle to providing sites for themselves and their families. Those Gypsies and Travellers who can afford to buy land are frequently in breach of planning laws when they attempt to develop that land for residential use. Subsequently, they find themselves subject to enforcement action and often evicted, frequently resorting to the use of further unauthorised land/accommodation.
- 1.3 Under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Recent legislation (Housing Act 2004 and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and guidance (Circular 01/2006) from the government indicate a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of these long standing issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.

⁵ For ease, these are referred to only by the borough, district or city name throughout this document

- 1.4 Following the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their wider housing strategies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced have a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs produced and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region. The local planning authority's Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.
- 1.5 Each DPD is subject to examination in public, and one of the tests of soundness will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence: data received from GTAAs are fundamental in providing such an evidence base for the RHSs and RSSs.
- 1.6 The regional dimension is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network. Such a strategic approach will contribute to meeting the Government's objective⁶ that 'Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully', and to the greater social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers who are amongst the most deprived groups in the population.
- 1.7 The vast majority of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) across England are either completed or in progress. Guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) requires that all GTAAs are completed by the end of 2007.
- 1.8 In order to comply with the CLGs increasing emphasis on taking regional strategic approaches, and also recognising the diverse characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller populations, it is considered good practice for several authorities to commission such work jointly. Thus, for the North Staffordshire authorities this study aims to generate a robust sub-regional understanding of the current provision, gaps and

⁶ ODPM (2006) *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: Guide to responsibilities and powers*, ODPM, p. 5.
http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/400/LocalAuthoritiesandGypsiesandTravellersGuidetoresponsibilitiesandpowersPDF223KB_id1163400.pdf

accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

Aims of the assessment

1.9 The broad aims and objectives of the study were:

- To produce detailed information about local Gypsies and Travellers in relation to their demographic profile, household formation, current accommodation needs, accommodation related service and support needs and barriers to accessing services.
- To assess the current and potential future needs within the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the North Housing Market Area for learning, health services and other services provided by local authorities and their partner organisations.
- To generate reliable estimates of future accommodation need.
- To assess the relevance of the policies and strategies in relation to Gypsies and Travellers used by the Partner authorities.

A note on terminology

Gypsies and Travellers

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

1.11 At the same time Gypsies and Travellers have been defined for accommodation and planning purposes. The statutory definition of Gypsies and Travellers for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment required by the Housing Act 2004 is:

(a) persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and

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

(i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and

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

- 1.12 There is a separate definition for planning purposes as specified in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.13 This assessment has adopted the Housing Act 2004 definition and has sought to be inclusive in the Gypsy and Traveller groupings. More specifically we sought to include all Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) living in caravan based accommodation or bricks and mortar housing. As the Housing Act 2004 definition indicates, we have also sought to include Travelling Showpeople living on their permanent base within the Study Area.
- 1.14 At the request of the Steering Group for the assessment, we have also sought to include a small number of Roma and boat dwelling households to explore their desire/need for pitch based accommodation.

Housing/accommodation need

- 1.15 Crucially, for Gypsies and Travellers, the definition of housing need is varied slightly to acknowledge the different contexts in which members of these communities live. The general definition of housing need is “households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance”, with housing demand defined as “the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent.”⁷
- 1.16 In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments refers to distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing. For caravan dwelling households, need may take the form of those:⁸
- who have no authorised site on which to reside;
 - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation; and,
 - who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.
- 1.17 In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households, need may take the form of:

⁷ODPM (2006) Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004. Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

⁸ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

- those whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable (including unsuitability by virtue of psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation).

1.18 This assessment has used a definition of accommodation need which encompasses all the circumstances detailed above.

Outline of the report

1.19 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments are a relatively new tool to assist local authorities and stakeholders to understand and gain knowledge on the needs, experiences and context of a collection of individuals who have usually not featured, or only on the margins, of other similar assessments. The information available pertaining to Gypsies and Travellers is often spread across a wide range of issues and held by a diverse group of departments and agencies. Thus, the collection and collation of this information entails a systematic process and this is reflected in the structure of this report.

Chapter 1 sets the background to the needs assessment, the aims of the assessment and a comment on the terms 'Gypsy and Traveller' and 'Housing/accommodation need'.

Chapter 2 presents details of the methodological process and research methods involved in the assessment as well as a commentary on the sampling strategy and sampling issues.

Chapter 3 sets the legislative and policy context for the assessment at a national, regional and local level.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide some detailed analysis of the local Gypsy and Traveller population by looking at the bi-annual Caravan Count for the area and the characteristics of the sample involved in the assessment.

Chapter 6 looks at the findings relating to authorised social and private Gypsy and Traveller sites in relation to management information, geographical location and resident views.

Chapter 7 examines the findings relating to planning and the unauthorised development of Gypsy and Travellers sites.

Chapter 8 provides an analysis of unauthorised encampments including a detailed exploration of the views of households on unauthorised encampments.

Chapter 9 looks at Gypsies and Travellers in private and social bricks and mortar housing, with particular attention to local authority policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers in housing, numbers in housing and views from the housed Gypsy and Traveller population about their accommodation.

Chapter 10 brings together a range of findings to explore housing/related services and how they are provided for, experienced and viewed by Gypsies and Travellers; Chapter 11 explores education, employment and health issues.

Chapters 12 and 13 examine the accommodation histories and aspirations of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Chapter 14 looks at the specific findings in relation to Travelling Showpeople; with Chapter 15 looking at the findings of consultations with boat dwelling households.

Chapters 16 – 18 bring together data on the supply of, and need for, Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit pitches, and pitches for Travelling Showpeople. These chapters comment on the type, level and broad location of the accommodation needed.

Finally, Chapter 19 sets out some recommendations based on the assessment for future work on site provision, housing policy and other policy and practice areas.

2. The assessment methodology

- 2.1 Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the ODPM (now CLG) in February 2006 with final guidance released during the drafting of this report in October 2007. Specialised guidance on assessments was felt to be required as many local authority housing needs assessments were failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about conducting an assessment, and issues to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive in terms of methods, but suggests that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments incorporate a number of components. Such components include existing data sources; the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders; and the living conditions and views of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2.2 This assessment was undertaken in three distinct stages:
- Stage one – collation and review of existing secondary information
 - Stage two – consultation with service providers and other stakeholders
 - Stage three – survey with Gypsies and Travellers across the North Staffordshire Study Area.
- 2.3 Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

Stage one: Collation and review of existing secondary information

- 2.4 This first stage comprised a review of the available literature and secondary sources obtained from government (central and local), regional, community and academic bodies. This provided an historical, social and political overview of the situation of Gypsies and Travellers in the North Staffordshire Study Area. More specifically this included the collection, review and synthesis of:
- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans.
 - Local plans, Regional and Core Strategy documents and other literature relevant to Local Development Frameworks. Housing Strategies, Homelessness Strategies and Supporting People Strategies were analysed, as were local authority allocation and monitoring procedures.

- Various records and data maintained and provided by the local authorities. Information was obtained on: socially rented sites, private sites, resident demographics, waiting lists, unauthorised sites (developments and encampments), housing applications and planning applications.
- 2.5 Much of this information was collected via an extensive self-completion questionnaire sent to each authority, and joint-working between housing, planning, health and education was required in order to provide a completed questionnaire. Two versions of the questionnaire were developed. Version A was sent to authorities thought not to have a local authority site (from information from the bi-annual Caravan Counts). Version B went to authorities with a local authority site, and additionally asked for information about the nature of the site and its management. All five local authorities completed this questionnaire.

Stage two: Consultation with service providers and other stakeholders

- 2.6 The second stage involved gathering the views of various service providers and other stakeholders and drew on their experience and perceptions of the main issues for Gypsies and Travellers. This stage was a vital way in which initial findings could be checked and set in context by the qualitative experience of stakeholders.
- 2.7 Three focus group discussions were arranged with officers working in housing, planning and enforcement roles within each local authority.
- 2.8 In addition, a number of one-to-one consultations were held with a variety of other stakeholders, most of whom were recommended to the research team by either the Steering Group or by members of the Inter-agency Group.
- 2.9 These discussions were largely structured around three broad issues:
- The particular experiences that certain professionals have in relation to the accommodation and related needs of Gypsies and Travellers across North Staffordshire;
 - The current working practices of different professionals in relation to Gypsies and Travellers across North Staffordshire; and,
 - Stakeholder perspectives on what the priority needs are for Gypsies and Travellers across North Staffordshire.
- 2.10 Where required, these discussions were more focused upon clarifying information provided during Stage one. See the separate survey instruments document for the specific issues covered in these

consultations. The findings from these discussions are integrated into the assessment in the appropriate sections.

Stage three: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers

2.11 One of the most important aspects of the assessment was consulting with local Gypsies and Travellers. In keeping with the recommendations from the CLG, that the fieldwork for GTAAs takes into account any seasonal travelling, the survey took place between March and September 2007. The fieldwork team believes that this period allowed for the majority of households travelling to the area to be included and also allowed for the opportunity for re-visits to households who were away travelling upon initial attempts at engagement. These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews and focus groups in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey with Gypsies and Travellers is discussed below under three sections: Sampling and response rates, Questionnaire design and Fieldwork and interviewers.

Sampling and response rates

2.12 Sampling Gypsy and Traveller households for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is always problematic given the absence of accurate information concerning the size and location of the communities. As such, the sampling technique for the assessment was purposive rather than strictly random. The sampling strategy for the assessment differed depending upon the particular accommodation type currently inhabited by Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area.

- For households on socially rented sites, authorised private sites and unauthorised developments, we compiled a sample frame from information provided by the local authorities about all known sites within the Study Area. We endeavoured to interview at least one household on all these sites. Where there was more than one pitch on a site, a quota was set for interviews of 50% of the occupied pitches. Repeat visits were made to locations in order to achieve interviews if households were away from the site, it was not convenient for the household in question, or the fieldworkers ran out of time.
- For households on unauthorised encampments, local authority officers from all boroughs were encouraged to inform the fieldwork team when and where encampments occurred during the fieldwork period. Visits were made to all sites which the team was notified of. It was June 2007 before we were notified of the first encampment within the Study Area. Although the fieldwork team generally arrived at an encampment within 24 hours of notification, the team had varied success in securing interviews with households on encampments. There were two main reasons for this: many

households were reluctant to be interviewed; and, swift enforcement practices meant that many households had already been moved on.⁹ Because of the severe flooding which affected most areas of the UK it is unclear how the number of households who may have otherwise featured on unauthorised encampments were affected – although it was suggested by local authority officers that the Study Area may have experienced more encampments as a result.

- As the population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing is relatively hidden from official records there was no sample frame from which to identify people. Therefore, in order to engage with housed Gypsies and Travellers, the fieldwork team relied on a number of methods: people responding to a flyer produced about the assessment distributed by the Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau; contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had been interviewed; and, contacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team.
- Travelling Showpeople – contact with Travelling Showpeople was made possible by links provided by the local section of the Showmen’s Guild. This provided details of one individual in the area who took part in a consultation via the telephone.¹⁰
- Although Bargees/boat dwelling households are not generally encompassed within the Housing Act 2004 definition of Gypsies and Travellers, it is possible that some individuals/households may have a need for pitches. In order to explore this possibility we approached a number of boat dwellers on the canal system around the North Housing Market Area. We were keen to interview individuals who lived permanently on the canal system and were careful to avoid tourists/holiday makers – see Chapter 15 for more information on this group.

2.13 A total of 128 Gypsy and Traveller households were involved in the assessment (including interviews with site based Travelling Showpeople and boat dwelling households) within the boundaries of the authorities comprising North Housing Market Area. The tables below, which provide details about the survey sample, refer to all respondents who took part in the assessment. As a result of the different methods of consultation with site based Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers (semi-structured interviews) more specific findings in relation to access to services, employment, needs and aspirations are dealt with in separate chapters (14 and 15) later on in this report.

⁹ This latter reason was particularly the case in Newcastle-under-Lyme where a number of encampments appeared during the fieldwork period, but were evicted before the fieldwork team managed to interview them.

¹⁰ Numerous efforts were made at trying to perform a face-to-face interview but clashes with work made this impossible.

2.14 Table 1 below shows the target and achieved household interviews for each accommodation type. As can be seen most targets were achieved and exceeded with the exception of socially rented sites and boat dwellers. In terms of socially rented sites there was a certain reluctance to take part in the assessment from one of the local authority sites in the area (Stoke-on-Trent), which impacted on the ability to meet the target number of interviews overall. For boat dwellers, many people we approached declined participation; a lack of involvement was generally attributed to a perception that they were separate from Gypsies and Travellers. The fieldwork team managed to significantly exceed the number of interviews on unauthorised encampments but this is probably the result of a combination of factors: the difficulty of setting a target based on information from the Caravan Count; the possibility that 2007 saw higher levels of unauthorised encampment due to flooding in other areas; and, the lack of access to transit pitches on one of the sites, displacing households who would normally have been on authorised sites to stay on unauthorised sites. Information from the local authorities has indicated that during the study period the authorities recorded a total of 31 separate unauthorised encampments.¹¹ As a consequence, as can be seen from the table below, the figure for unauthorised encampments has been adjusted to reflect this information.

Table 1: Achieved household interviews by target

Type of accommodation	Target (No.)	Achieved (No.)	%
Socially rented sites	39	34	87
Private authorised sites	36	36	100
Unauthorised developments	5	7	140
Unauthorised encampments	3 (31 during study period)	15	500 (48 ¹²)
Housed	25	29	116
Travelling Showpeople	1	1	100
Bargees/boat dwellers	10	6	60
Total	119	128	108

2.15 Table 2 below illustrates how the assessment sample relates to the known number of pitches and estimated population by accommodation type. As can be seen, the majority of sites and over a third of all known pitches are represented. As discussed above, the exceeding or otherwise of other targets is generally a reflection of the difficulty in setting initial quotas for interviews in the current climate of information paucity on Gypsies and Travellers. Unfortunately, after a number of revisits we could not access one of the unauthorised developed sites in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

¹¹ Information was not available for the period from Stafford or East Staffordshire

¹² Interviews were conducted with approximately 48% of households on unauthorised encampments during the study period.

Table 2: Sample in relation to local Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	Number of sites			Number of pitches/households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Socially rented sites	3	3	100	68	34	50
Private authorised sites	8 ¹³	8	100	77	36	47
Unauthorised developments	3	2	100	8 ¹⁴	7	88
Unauthorised encampments	NA	NA	NA	3 ¹⁵	15	500
Housed	NA	NA	NA	25 ¹⁶	29	116
Travelling Showpeople	3 ¹⁷	1	33	3	1	33
Bargees/Canal boats	NA	NA	NA	10 ¹⁸	6	60

2.16 Table 3 below shows this response rate by local authority area. The distribution of the sample appears to reflect the known location of concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers by accommodation types, with most interviews being carried out in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. It is worth noting, however, that all districts feature in both interviews with households on unauthorised encampments and in bricks and mortar housing. As can be seen each district has Gypsies and Travellers living within their administration.

2.17 In terms of the gender split between interviewees, we spoke to 69 women (57%) and 49 men (41%).¹⁹ The greater presence of women in the sample reflects a general finding from Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, which seems to show that women are most likely to speak to researchers/interviewers. In recognising this, however, we endeavoured to engage in fieldwork outside of normal working hours, which assisted in engaging with a large number of male respondents as well.

¹³ Technically there are 9 private sites in the area but at the time of writing only 8 of these are developed.

¹⁴ This is an estimate based on the information provided by the local authority about the size of the sites

¹⁵ This estimate is based on the average number of encampments in the area over five periods of the Caravan Count and divided by a 1.7 caravan to household ratio.

¹⁶ This figure is an estimate which was felt attainable based on informal estimates by key stakeholders in the Study Area

¹⁷ From consultations with a local Travelling Showman it emerged that there were 3 private Showpeople yards currently in the Study Area. One site was consulted with via a qualitative interview, 1 site was unable to be contacted, and the remaining site was a storage yard for equipment.

¹⁸ This figure is based on a number suggested by a member of the project Steering Group.

¹⁹ Three interviews had missing data about the gender of the respondent, and the boat dwelling interviews were generally performed with couples rather than a single individual.

Table 3: Number of achieved interviews by local authority area

Type of accommodation	Accommodation type					Total
	East Staffordshire	Newcastle under Lyme	Stafford	Staffordshire Moorlands	Stoke-on-Trent	
Socially rented sites	-	8	6	-	20	34
Private authorised sites	2	-	31	1	2	36
Unauthorised developments	-	1	6	-	-	7
Unauthorised encampments	6	2	1	2	4	15
Housed	2	9	1	3	14	29
Travelling Showpeople	-	1	-	-	-	1
Bargees/Canal boats	-	-	5	1	-	6
Total	10	21	50	7	40	128

2.18 Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable and reflective response rates from accommodation types, geographical areas and gender within the North Housing Market Study Area.

Questionnaire design

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

- Current accommodation/site/encampment;
- Experience of travelling;
- Housing and site experiences;
- Household details;
- Services; and,
- Future accommodation preferences/aspirations.

2.20 Following consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, questions around income and benefits were excluded as these were seen to potentially jeopardise the ability to achieve interviews in the Study Area due to alienation that such questions can cause with the communities.

2.21 Interviews with Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers, due to the objectives of the interviews and the small numbers concerned in the local area, took a much more qualitative approach. These interviews

were led by key issues rather than structured questions. As a result, specific information relating to these groups is discussed in separate chapters (14 & 15).

- 2.22 The questionnaires used in the assessment are available in a separate document entitled 'Survey Instruments'.

Fieldwork and interviewers

- 2.23 In addition to SHUSU fieldwork staff, and of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the Gypsy and Traveller population, was the involvement of Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers, from both inside and outside the Study Area. A small number of Gypsies and Travellers were recommended to us and volunteered to become Community Interviewers. In total, five members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers.
- 2.24 In order to standardise our fieldwork approach, each interviewer was required to undergo an intensive training course on interviewer skills applicable to this particular study, and provided with support from the core study team members during their interviewing activity. Each questionnaire which was returned to us was subject to quality control and appropriate feedback was given to the interviewers. By taking this approach we found we were able to access a range of people that would otherwise have not been included in the assessment, such as 'hidden' members of the community (older people or people living in bricks and mortar housing), and those people who were uncomfortable talking to non-Travellers.
- 2.25 Broadly speaking, SHUSU staff had particular success interviewing people on local authority sites and unauthorised encampments, whereas the Community Interviewers had much better responses with households on unauthorised developments, private sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 2.26 Where possible, on local authority sites, interviewers were introduced on site by local authority officers who work with Gypsies and Travellers in the area. However, this tended not to be possible on other types of sites/accommodation.
- 2.27 Again, it must be noted that the Study Area and areas immediately surrounding the Study Area experienced significant flooding during Summer 2007. This seems to have affected the fieldwork in two main ways. Firstly, it affected the ability of interviewers to travel to, and within the, Study Area. Secondly, there was the presence of, what seems to be, deflected unauthorised encampments to the Study Area and to a variety of districts within the area. However, we do not feel that either of these two aspects has affected the reliability of the fieldwork.

3. National, regional and local policy context

3.1 For the most part Gypsies and Travellers are affected by legislation in much the same way as members of the non-Travelling communities. However, it is the policy areas of housing and planning that have particular implications for Gypsies and Travellers. In recognising that there is a significant lack of accommodation options for the various Gypsy and Traveller groups, a plethora of documents have been published over the last 18 months, which directly affect specific policies towards Gypsies and Travellers. This section looks at the relevant national, regional and local planning policies affecting Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.

National policy

3.2 The main document detailing the broad aims of the current policy towards the accommodation and planning objectives for Gypsies and Travellers is Circular 01/06. In particular, this specifies that the aims of the legislation and policy developments are to:

- ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision;
- reduce the number of unauthorised encampments;
- increase the number of sites and address under-provision over the next 3-5 years;
- protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers;
- underline the importance of assessing accommodation need at different geographical scales;
- promote private site provision; and,
- avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless, where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

3.3 An overview of the process and system for ensuring adequate provision is implemented for Gypsies and Travellers was detailed in Chapter 1 of this report.

3.4 In September 2007, revised planning guidance in relation to the specific planning requirements of Travelling Showpeople was released in Circular 04/07. This replaces Circular 22/91 and aims to ensure that the system for pitch assessment, identification and allocation as

introduced for Gypsies and Travellers is also applied to Travelling Showpeople.

- 3.5 The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant provides capital funding for improving and increasing Gypsy and Traveller site/pitch provision by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. From 2006-08 a national total of £56m has been made available, managed by the Regional Housing Boards or equivalents. In the West Midlands, a total of £4m has been agreed over the 2006-08 period. Since 2006, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have been able to set up and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.
- 3.6 Since the introduction of the Housing Act 2004, it has been made clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and requirements should feature in local authority Housing and Homelessness²⁰ Strategies. Authorities have been informed that, in line with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the needs and way of life of Gypsies and Travellers must be considered when considering accommodation applications.

Regional policy

- 3.7 In terms of regional planning policy, policy CF5 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (June 2004) deals with 'Delivering affordable housing and mixed communities'. Section F reads:

'Development plans should ensure that adequate provision is made for suitable sites to accommodate gypsies and other travellers. Such provision should reflect the order of demand in the area as indicated by the trends shown by the ODPM annual count and any additional local information'.

- 3.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently being revised. It is intended that Gypsy and Traveller issues will be part of Phase 3 of the RSS Revision process, which has a timetable culminating in submission of preferred options to the Secretary of State in Summer 2009. Because of the time lag, the Regional Assembly has produced an Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy²¹, pending the completion of all GTAA's across the West Midlands region. The Interim Statement estimated requirements for additional pitches across the region divided by GTAA partnerships. Table 4 below shows the estimated sub-regional pitch requirements.

²⁰ See Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, CLG.

²¹ See - West Midlands: Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>

Table 4: Summary of Residential Pitch Requirements: West Midlands Region and Sub-regions: 2006 to 2011 Area Estimated requirement²²

Area	Estimated pitch requirement
Shropshire & Herefordshire (and Powys) GTAA (Herefordshire, Bridgnorth, North Shropshire, Oswestry, Shrewsbury & Atcham, South Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)	120
South Housing Market Area GTAA (Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon, Wyre Forest)	170
North Staffordshire GTAA (North Housing Market Area) (East Staffordshire, Newcastle under Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent)	55
Central Housing Market Area (part)GTAA (Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby)	100
Black Country GTAA (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)	40
Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull GTAA	20
West Midlands Region	510

Table 5 shows the pitch requirements across the timeline of the RSS (2006-2026).

Table 5: Regional and North Housing Market area pitch need by RSS period

Residential pitch need period	Regional pitch need	North Housing Market sub-regional pitch allocation
2006-2011	510	55
2011-2016	220	No sub-regional split
2016-2021	210	No sub-regional split
2021-2026	190	No sub-regional split

3.9 The estimated regional requirement for transit pitches (undated) was 120, this had no sub-regional split.

3.10 In line with ODPM Circular 01/2006, the Interim Statement urges local authorities in areas with proven need to act to make provision in advance of the full regional planning process, and to use the various available powers to ensure sites are developed.

3.11 Policy H12 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 reads:

Adequate sites to meet an identified demand for Gypsies residing or resorting to the Plan area should be available for both short term and long term accommodation needs. The

²² West Midlands: Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy
<http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>

detailed criteria for suitable locations will be set out in local plans but in general sites should:

- (a) not be located in areas of open land where development is severely restricted;*
- (b) not be permitted in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or in the Green Belt.*

3.12 The commentary notes that provision of sites for Gypsies is a form of affordable housing, and that levels of proposals should broadly relate to the number of unauthorised encampments shown in official counts over the last few years, but further informed by discussions with representatives of the Travelling community and stakeholders who provide services to them. Locational criteria should have regard to Circular 1/94 and PPG12. The policy excludes members of Travelling Showmen or of persons engaged in travelling circuses. It is noted that this policy has not been saved.²³

Local Plan Policies

3.13 Four of the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have planning policies towards Gypsy and Traveller site provision. Stafford Borough Council reported that it currently does not have a district planning policy on Gypsy and Travellers. Stafford added that it currently takes guidance from the National Policy Circular 01/06 and from the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2004. Newcastle-under-Lyme commented that "*Gypsy policy in the Local Plan was not 'saved' because it repeated national policy*" referring to Circular 01/2006. Both authorities reported the intention to address Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues in the relevant policy in due course – largely influenced by the findings of the accommodation assessment.

3.14 Staffordshire Moorlands commented that the Council is in the process of preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) comprising of a folder of documents to deliver the spatial planning for Staffordshire Moorlands.

3.15 Similarly, the City of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Councils reported that they were in the process of preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) comprising of a folder of documents to deliver the spatial planning for North Staffordshire. As part of this, the LDF North Staffordshire Core Spatial Strategy (NSCSS) is being revised to ensure that local competing demands for change are managed on the same timescale as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This will include a specific policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites. The NSCSS has recently been through a period of

²³ Secretary of State's Direction – September 2007.

public engagement and is due to be submitted for public examination in 2008. It is anticipated that the NSCSS will be adopted in 2009.²⁴

- 3.16 East Staffordshire's Local Plan (July 2006) contains Policy H11 – Special Housing Needs: Gypsies which states:

The Borough Council will use the results of its research into the needs of Gypsies and travellers to promote the development of appropriate caravan sites as required, in accordance with Planning Circular 01/2006. Planning applications for private gypsy and traveller sites will be considered on their merits within the context of the prevailing development control policies and other material considerations arising from the Housing Act 2002.

- 3.17 As this shows, currently none of these local policies are pro-active and most leave considerable discretion in their implementation.
- 3.18 Constituent LPAs are at different stages in developing Core Strategies within the new Local Development Framework system. Staffordshire Moorlands commented that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) would include a specific policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites which will set out guidance for the location and delivery of sites to meet identified needs. The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD has recently been through a period of public engagement on broad options and issues and a preferred option and detailed policies are due to be published in early 2008 and subsequently submitted for public examination in late 2008. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy DPD will be adopted in late 2009.
- 3.19 There are currently no relevant policies for Gypsy and Traveller sites in emerging Core Strategies or Development Plan Documents in East Staffordshire. It is understood that this will be addressed in the relevant core strategies in due course although this was not included at the time of the assessment. Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme are producing a joint North Staffordshire Core Spatial Strategy. Policy CP14 refers to sites and was available for revised preferred options public consultation in May 2007.
- 3.20 No authority is currently considering specific locations as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site development.
- 3.21 When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, LPAs tended to refer to the criteria set out in their local plan or emerging policies, or to Circular 01/2006.

²⁴ More details about the Local Development Scheme are available on www.stoke.gov.uk/ldf

4. Gypsies and Travellers in the North Housing Market area: the current picture

4.1 This chapter looks at the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count in order to present what is known about Gypsies and Travellers within the North Housing Market Study Area. In particular, this section presents information on the size and spatial distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Caravan numbers and trends from the Caravan Count

4.2 The Caravan Count is far from perfect, but at present it remains the only official source of information on the size and distribution of a population that remains relatively unknown. Although a number of local authorities are able to provide very accurate information for the Count, generally speaking the Count needs to be treated with caution, but when tempered by locally held knowledge it can be extremely useful as a broad guide. Furthermore, it provides a vital starting point in the attempts of local authorities to ascertain levels of need given the general absence of increased provision since 1994.

4.3 According to the most recent Caravan Count, there were a reported total of 177 caravans across the Study Area. The returns for the last five Caravan Counts across the Study Area are presented in Table A1 in Appendix 1. What stands out from these figures is that the vast majority of Gypsy and Traveller caravans are accommodated on some form of authorised provision (92% of all caravans) with authorised socially rented sites accommodating over half. According to the Caravan Count, all authorities with the exception of Staffordshire Moorlands, had caravans present on some form of authorised provision, with Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent being the main providers in the area. At the last Count (January 2007) the boroughs of Stafford (74), Stoke-on-Trent (56) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (25) recorded the largest number of caravans. East Staffordshire (18) and Staffordshire Moorlands (4) recorded the lowest number of caravans.

4.4 Table 6 summarises caravan numbers for the Study Area by type of site for January and July in 1994 and 2006.

Table 6: North Housing Market summary of caravan numbers 1994 and 2006

Type of site	January			July		
	1994	2006	% change	1994	2006	% change
Social rented	60	103	+72%	61	105	+72%
Private	49	69	+41%	46	71	+54%
Unauthorised	77	14	-82%	67	15	-78%
Total	186	186	0%	174	191	+10%

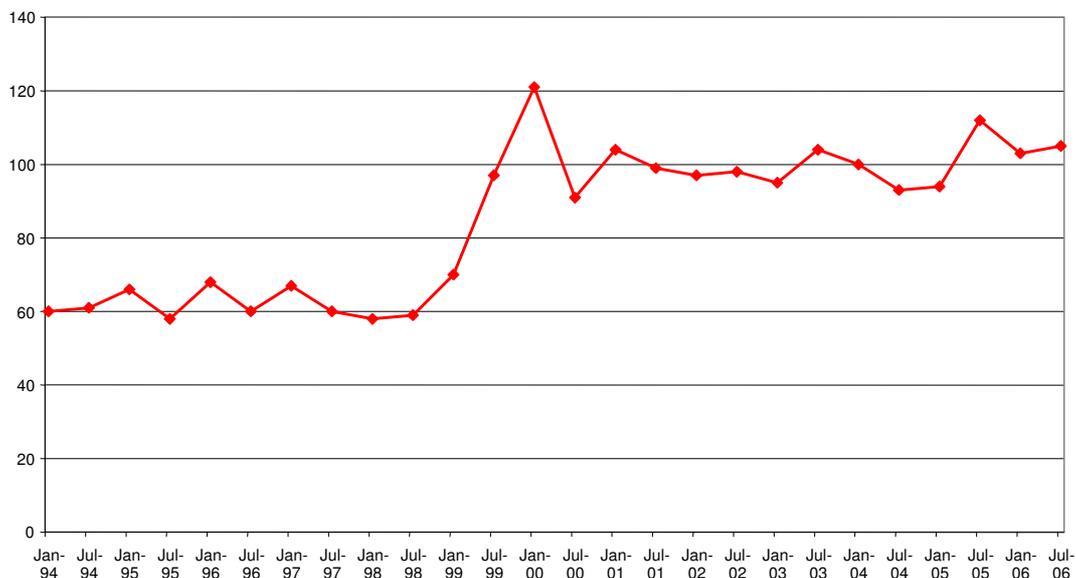
4.5 In terms of the Caravan Count comparison over time, there is an indication that:

- Overall caravan numbers have either been static between 1994 and 2006 (January) or increased slightly (July).
- This increase is accounted for by increases in caravans on social rented sites (72%) and on authorised private sites (41% to 54%), which have more than offset a significant fall in numbers on unauthorised sites (which include both unauthorised developments and encampments).
- In 1994, the January figure was higher than the July figure. The reverse was true in 2006, although changes are small.

4.6 The charts that follow illustrate Study Area changes in caravan numbers by type of site over time.

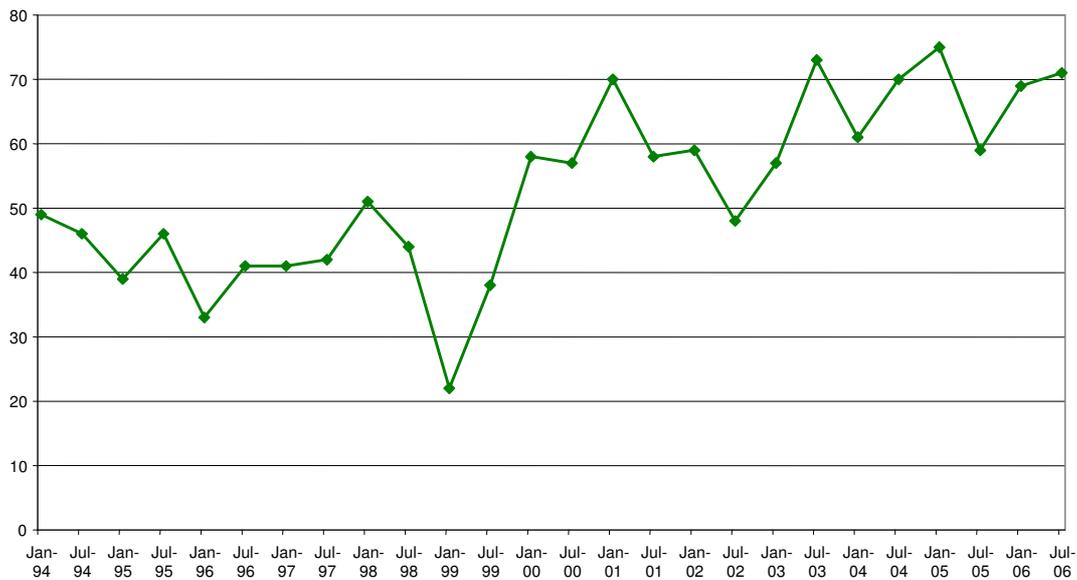
4.7 Figure 1 shows caravans on social rented sites. There was a marked increase in caravan numbers in 1999/2000 which may be due in part to the creation of 8 additional residential pitches and 6 additional transit pitches on the site in Stoke-on-Trent. Both before and after, the numbers were broadly stable, albeit with some fluctuations.

Figure 1: Number of caravans on social rented sites: 1994 to 2006



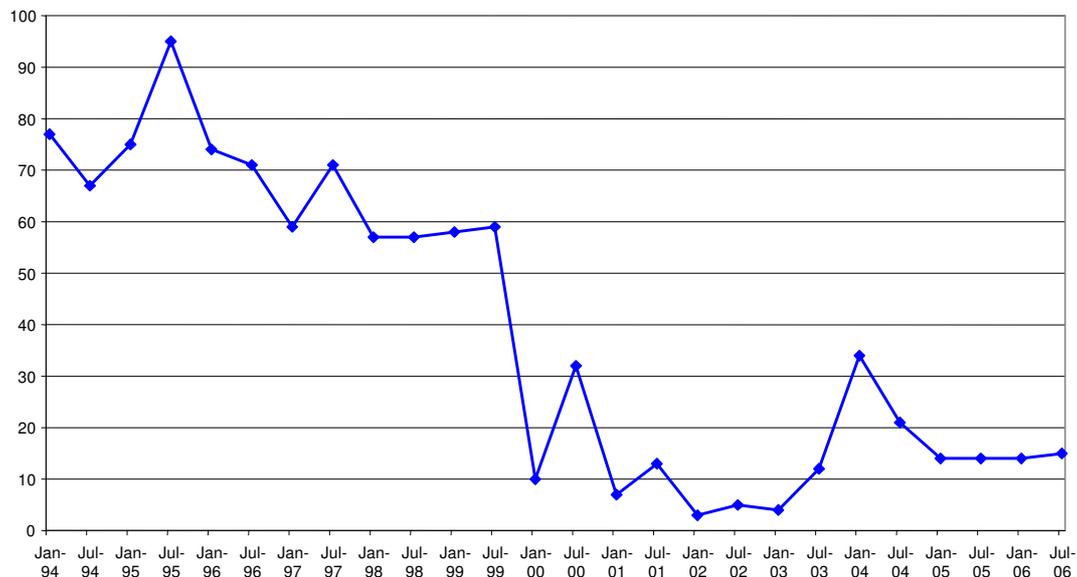
4.8 Figure 2 shows that numbers of caravans on authorised private sites have increased fairly steadily over the period. The low in 1999 is attributable to a zero count for that period in East Staffordshire, and may represent either a missed entry or a particular event affecting a site.

Figure 2: Number of caravans on private sites: 1994 to 2006



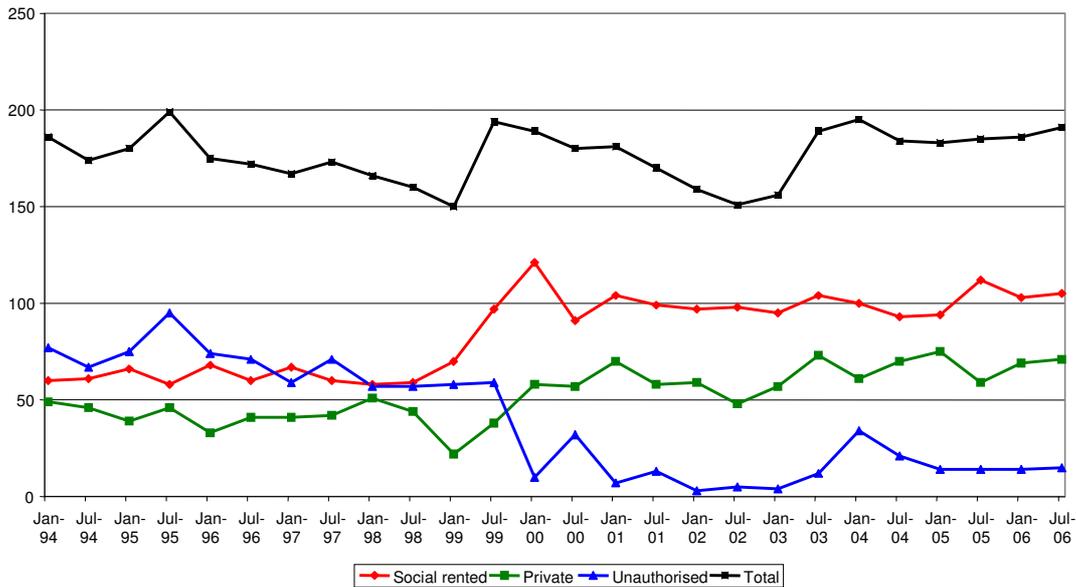
4.9 Figure 3, illustrating the number of caravans on unauthorised sites, shows a sharp downward trend around 1999/2000. There has been no clear trend since then. It is not clear from the figures alone whether the decline in numbers on unauthorised sites was directly related to the increase on social rented sites, although Stoke-on-Trent is the main location for both changes.

Figure 3: Number of Caravans on Unauthorised Sites: 1994 to 2006



4.10 Figure 4 brings all the figures together and adds a Total line. It shows how the changes on different sorts of sites contribute to the overall stability of the total.

Figure 4: Number of caravans by type of site: 1994 to 2006



Unauthorised sites

4.11 Because unauthorised sites include both unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments, overall trends can hide significant shifts between the two forms of unauthorised site. Table 7 presents the breakdown of caravan numbers on different types of unauthorised sites in 1998 (when a breakdown of figures was first available) and 2006. The numbers are so small that the change calculations are not very helpful. Caravans on Gypsy/Traveller-owned land usually equate with unauthorised development of sites; caravans on other land with unauthorised encampments.

Table 7: Summary of Caravan Numbers on Unauthorised Site 1998 and 2006

Type of site	January			July		
	1998	2006	% change	1998	2006	% change
Gypsy/Traveller land: Tolerated	0	1	Infinite increase	0	2	Infinite increase
Gypsy/Traveller land: not tolerated	24	10	-58%	14	5	-64%
<i>Gypsy/Traveller land: total</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>-54%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>-50%</i>
Other land: tolerated	33	0	-100%	22	0	-100%
Other land: not tolerated	0	3	Infinite increase	11	8	-27%
<i>Other land: total</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>-91%</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>-76%</i>
Total	57	14	-75%	47	15	-56%

4.12 The table shows:

- In January 2006 there were more caravans on unauthorised developments than on encampments. Numbers were roughly similar on each type of unauthorised site in July. In both months, almost all caravans were on sites which were not tolerated.
- 2006 figures for both unauthorised developments and encampments were lower than in 1998. A major change is the disappearance (in 1999) of 22 to 33 caravans from tolerated encampments on other land. This affected Stoke-on-Trent and may be linked with the increase of caravans on social rented sites at the same time.

4.13 Overall, the figures for 2006 are low, suggesting that unauthorised sites contribute quite modestly to pitch needs in the Study Area.

Geographical patterns

4.14 Table 8 shows the distribution of caravans between local authorities by different types of site at January 1994.

Table 8: Caravans by type of site by local authority: January 1994

Type of site	Study Area	East Staffordshire	Newcastle	Stafford	Staffordshire Moorlands	Stoke-on-Trent
Social rented sites	60	0	18	12	0	30
Private sites	49	25	0	22	2	0
Unauthorised – all	77	0	4	14	0	59
Total	186	25	22	48	2	89

4.15 Table 9 shows the distribution of caravans between local authorities by different types of site at January 2006.

Table 9: Caravans by type of site by local authority: January 2006

Type of site	Study Area	East Staffordshire	Newcastle	Stafford	Staffordshire Moorlands	Stoke-on-Trent
Social rented sites	103	0	21	12	0	70
Private sites	69	14	0	55	0	0
Unauthorised – Gypsy/Traveller-owned land	11	0	0	10	1	0
Unauthorised – other land	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total	186	14	21	77	1	73

4.16 Comparing 1994 and 2006 shows that caravan numbers have been broadly stable in Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands, have risen in Stafford (thanks to private sites) and have fallen in East Staffordshire (fewer caravans on private sites) and Stoke-on-Trent (more caravans on social rented sites which is more than offset by a decrease in caravans on unauthorised sites).

5. Size and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population

5.1 This chapter aims to provide some information on the demographics of the sample involved in this accommodation assessment, and uses this to make some indication of the overall size and composition of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the North Housing Market Study Area. Broadly, this information concerns the 121 Gypsies and Travellers involved in the study excluding Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers due to the different information ascertained as a result of the different consultation methods used.

Demographic and household characteristics

5.2 Characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller communities are often hidden or not widely known. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments present an ideal opportunity to get to know more about the community at large, particularly in terms of living circumstances, age, Gypsy and Traveller groups and household composition. The following aims to provide some information about the composition of Gypsy and Traveller households in the sample.

Age of interviewees

5.3 The age profile of the sample can be seen from Table 10. The 25-39 age group were the most consulted during the assessment, forming 34% of the total sample. This was followed by the 40-49 age group (18%) and then jointly by the 16-24 and 50-59 age groups (14%).

Table 10: Age of interviewees

Age Group	No.	%
16-24	18	14
25-39	44	34
40-49	23	18
50-59	18	14
60-74	16	13
75-84	7	5
Not available	3	2
Total	128	

Household size

5.4 In total, the survey sample accounts for 357 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the North Housing Market area. The average household size for the whole sample is 2.8 persons – larger than the household size of the non-Traveller population. However, this hides a range in household sizes as indicated in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Household size distribution

Household Size	No.	%
1 Person	25	20
2 Persons	42	33
3 Persons	17	13
4 Persons	24	19
5 Persons	13	10
6 Persons	6	5
Missing	1	1
Total	128	

5.5 There was significant differences in the size of households in relation to their current accommodation type as well. As can be seen from Table 12, respondents from unauthorised sites tended to have larger households than those who were more settled or living in authorised accommodation.

Table 12: Average household size by accommodation type

Accommodation type	Average household size
Socially rented sites	2.3
Bricks and Mortar	2.9
Private sites	3.0
Unauthorised developments	3.4
Unauthorised encampments	3.6

Household type

5.6 Table 13 shows the household type by type of accommodation. Families have been classified as follows:

Family type	Definition
Single person -	1 adult
Couple -	2 adults, no children or young adults
Young family -	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more children aged up to 16 years; no young adults
Older family -	All adult family with 1 or more children classified as 'young adults' (over 16 years but living within another household)
Mixed family -	Family with children under and over 16 years
Other -	3 or more adults, none classified as young adults

Table 13: Household type by type of accommodation

Household type	Socially rented sites	Private sites	Bricks and mortar	Unauthorised sites ²⁵	Boat dwellers and Showpeople	Total
Number in sample	34	36	29	22	7	128
Percentage	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single	38	8	24	9	-	21
Couple	26	39	14	18	86	26
Young family	24	36	38	50	-	36
Older family	-	6	14	18	14	8
Mixed family	6	6	3	2	-	5
Other	6	6	3	-	-	4

5.7 Table 13 shows that:

- Young families are currently the predominant household type in the Study Area.
- There are a large number of single households on the socially rented sites in the Study Area particularly involving older people.
- Authorised sites have significant numbers of households without children (couples) and young families living on them.
- There are more young families on unauthorised sites than any other accommodation type.

Marital status

5.8 In total, 68% of the interviewees were married with a further 1% (1 person) living with their partner. The remainder described their marital status as either single (13%), widowed (9%) or divorced (5%).

Table 14: Marital status of the interview sample

Marital status	No.	%
Married	87	68
Single	16	13
Widowed	11	9
Divorced	7	5
Missing	6	5
Living with partner	1	1
Total	128	

Local connections to the Study Area

5.9 When asked, the majority of households felt that they were local to the area where they were currently accommodated (62%). See Table 15 for a breakdown by current accommodation type.

²⁵ The data for unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments has been combined as a result of the comparably smaller number of interviews conducted on each type of accommodation.

Table 15: Local to the area?

Accommodation type	No. households local	% of total sample
Unauthorised developments	6	86
Private sites	25	69
Socially rented sites	19	58
Bricks and Mortar	16	57
Unauthorised encampments	8	53

5.10 As Table 15 shows, more than half of all households across all accommodation types consider their current area of residence as their local area. This is significantly the case for households on unauthorised developments private sites. Interestingly, households on socially rented sites, bricks and mortar and unauthorised encampments all report similar levels of local connection to the area. Table 16 below looks in further detail at why households claimed they were in the Study Area.

Table 16: Reasons for residing in the Study Area (figures in % of sample)

Reason	Current accommodation type					Total
	Bricks and mortar	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Socially rented site	Private site	
Family lives here	64	43	86	76	78	71
Work	21	43	71	-	42	27
Place of birth	21	14	14	21	28	22
Schooling	14	-	43	6	22	14
Other	21	29	14	15	11	17
Family/community event	11	-	14	9	6	8
Holiday	-	-	-	-	-	0

5.11 The presence of family in the Study Area was a major reason why households were residing where they were. This was particularly the case on unauthorised developments (although the small sample size needs to be considered) and this is broadly consistent with findings from other GTAAs. In addition, households on unauthorised developments appeared to have many of the indicators of local connection we asked about. There was an even split between the motivations for unauthorised encampments residing in the area, with nearly half of households in the area due to family connections and half present in the area due to work. Family connection was also a significant factor for households on socially rented sites, private sites and bricks and mortar housing. Interestingly, no households said they were in the area due to a holiday.

5.12 Thus, from these findings the majority of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing can be seen to 'belong', in some way, to the Study Area.

Gypsy and Traveller groups

5.13 The largest single group was from the Romany/Gypsy (English) community (65%), followed by Irish Travellers (23%) and then smaller but comparable numbers of Traveller (not specified) (3%) and Roma (3%). Three Showpeople households took part (2%), one was in bricks and mortar housing, one was on a private site not designated as a Showperson's site and one was on a recognised Showperson's site. One New Traveller household took part (1%) who currently lived in bricks and mortar housing. Three interviewees declined to disclose their ethnicity. All boat dwellers described their ethnicity as 'Other'.

Table 17: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

Gypsy and Traveller groups	No. of households	%
Romany/Gypsy (English)	79	62
Irish Traveller	28	22
Other	7	5
Traveller (not specified)	3	2
Roma	3	2
No answer	3	2
Showperson/Circus person	3	2
New Traveller	1	1
Don't know	1	1
Total	121	

The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community

5.14 For most minority ethnic communities, presenting data about the size of the community in question is usually relatively straightforward (with the exception of communities who have large numbers of irregular migrants and migrant workers, etc. amongst them). However, for Gypsies and Travellers, one of the most difficult issues is providing accurate information on this population (see Chapter 4). As a result, we have used information provided by the local authorities and others, together with our survey findings, in order to provide a best estimate as to the size of the North Housing Market Gypsy and Traveller population (see Table 18) at the time of the assessment. Due to their mobility levels this estimate does not include households on unauthorised encampments or boat dwelling households.

Table 18: Estimated Study Area Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	Families/Households (based on 1 pitch = 1 household)	Individuals	Derivation
Socially rented sites	62 (residential) 6 (transit)	193	Actual number from local authority records.
Private sites	85	255	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.0)
Unauthorised developments	8	27	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.4)
Housing	65 ²⁶	189	Number of families involved in the survey multiplied by average household size from the survey (2.9)
Travelling Showpeople	5	N/A	Number of yards known to the research team
Total	225	664	

5.15 We estimate that there are at least 664 Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area, although the estimate for housed Gypsies and Travellers is likely to be a significant under-estimate.

²⁶ This is based on an estimate provided by Stoke-on-Trent's Citizens Advice Bureau coupled with the operational experiences of the study team. Due to a lack of information this is likely to be an underestimate of the total population in bricks and mortar accommodation across the Study Area.

6. Authorised site provision – findings

6.1 A certain degree of caution needs to be taken when extrapolating the characteristics, trends and needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population from the Caravan Counts and other such data alone. In order to provide more specific information on the local Gypsy and Traveller population, this chapter draws upon the survey completed by local authorities on site provision, stakeholder views and knowledge, and the views of Gypsies and Travellers who occupy these sites. The chapter deals first with socially rented accommodation and then authorised private sites.

Socially rented sites

6.2 Socially rented (local authority) sites make a significant contribution to caravan numbers and the local Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area. There are 3 local authority sites Silverdale (Newcastle-under-Lyme); Glover Street (Stafford); and Linehouses (Stoke-on-Trent). There are a total of 68 pitches. Six (9%) of pitches are transit and the rest residential. The Linehouses site in Stoke-on-Trent is significantly larger than the others, and is among the largest in England. There was 1 vacant pitch at Glover Street Stafford, expected to be let within a month. There has been no change in the number of pitches on these sites over the past 5 years. Table 19 below summaries pitch occupancy levels at the time of the survey.

Table 19: Local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites at February 2007

Pitch details	Local authority site		
	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Total pitches	17	12	39
<i>Residential: All</i>	17	12	33
Occupied	17	11	33
Vacant	0	1	0 ²⁷
<i>Transit: All</i>	0	0	6
Occupied	0	0	6
Vacant	0	0	0

6.3 Table 20 below summaries the details of the site residents on the three sites. Together the local authority sites accommodate some 193 people, of whom 65 (34%) are children aged up to 16.

²⁷ Although a number of pitches have been disrupted/vacated as a result of the refurbishment works the households who usually live on these pitches are accommodated elsewhere and are due to return to the site upon completion of the works. As a result, we assume all pitches to be fully occupied.

Table 20: Details of site residents by local authority site

Details of site residents	Local authority site		
	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Site population	36	17	140
Number of children	7	4	54
% children	19%	24%	39%
Average persons per occupied pitch	2.1	1.5	3.6
Doubled-up pitches	2	0	12
Number of living units	2 chalets 2 statics 17 trailers/tourers	2 chalets 10 trailers/tourers	3 chalets 33 statics 16 trailer/tourers
Ethnic groups among site residents	English Gypsy Scottish Traveller Irish Traveller Welsh Gypsy	English Gypsy	English Gypsy Irish Traveller
Pitch occupancy in year	100%	75%-100%	75%-100%
% of site residents lived on site 5+ years	Over 90%	60%-90%	60%-90%

6.4 Significant points to note from Table 20 are:

- The average number of persons per occupied pitch is between 1.5 and 3.6 persons – an average of 2.4 persons between the sites, which compares well with the finding of 2.3 persons per household from the survey sample. The proportion of children among the site population is also relatively low.
- Sites in Stoke-on-Trent and, particularly, Newcastle are ethnically mixed.
- The Newcastle site appears more stable than the others in terms of pitch occupancy over the year and the proportion of long-standing residents.
- There is some evidence of need from ‘doubled up’ households (Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent) who would ideally like a separate pitch or house of their own.
- The site in Stoke-on-Trent is the only site with transit pitches.

Residents’ views:

6.5 All respondents on the socially rented sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Twenty-four respondents (71%) had 1 trailer, 9 respondents (27%) had 2 trailers and just 1 respondent had 3 trailers. All respondents on the site in Stafford had just 1 trailer, in Newcastle 50% (4 respondents) had 1

trailer, 3 respondents had 2 trailers and 1 had 3 trailers, 70% of respondents on the site in Stoke-on-Trent had 1 trailer with the remaining 30% possessing 2 trailers.

- 6.6 The average number of living units (trailers) was 1.3 per household. The majority of respondents felt they had enough space (82%) for their needs. Those households that felt that this did not give them enough space told us that this was due to the size of the pitch that they had.
- 6.7 When asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, how they viewed their neighbours on the sites the vast majority (76%) thought their relationships with neighbours were either very good or good, 21% had ambivalent views, with only 1 respondent viewing their neighbours in a negative light.
- 6.8 The majority of households we spoke to on the socially rented sites had been on the site for significant periods of time; 62% for five or more years, 24% for between 1 and 5 years. Just 14% had been on the site for less than 12 months.
- 6.9 Two households on socially rented sites had bases elsewhere; 1 had a pitch on a private site and the other had a house. One household's base was in Manchester and the other was in Dublin. This is not to say that they had multiple residences, rather, they had access to other places if needed (i.e. family members residence).

Site ownership and management

- 6.10 Within the Study Area sites are owned and managed as follows:
- **Newcastle:** owned by Staffordshire County Council, managed by Aspire Housing (LSVT RSL)
 - **Stafford:** owned and managed by Stafford Borough Council
 - **Stoke-on-Trent:** owned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, managed by a Gypsy/Traveller in conjunction with the City Council and the Gypsy Council
- 6.11 Authorities were asked to provide details of any aspects of site provision, design or management which they think works well and worth sharing with others.
- **Newcastle** talked about how they regularly discuss all matters relating to the site with residents and hold regular meetings with them. A warden also lives on the site.
 - **Stoke-on-Trent** talked about how although the site is council-owned, day-to-day management is subject to a tripartite agreement between the City Council, the national Gypsy Council and the

resident site manager. The tripartite agreement entails: the ownership of the site resting with the City Council; expertise and experience of the Gypsy Council (although stakeholder discussions revealed that the Gypsy Council have effectively no involvement in the site in recent years); and, the management of the site provided by a self-employed site manager (who is a Gypsy/Traveller) who lives on the site. It was noted that the existence of the tripartite agreement is unusual but it was created to assist in regenerating the site, which had fallen into disrepair and had high levels of antisocial behaviour from residents. The authority stated that effective management and high quality service provision was a priority for them. A Traveller Liaison Officer is employed to provide services to Gypsies and Travellers in the community with the current post-holder being in the position since March 1999. The Linehouses site has received previous government recognition. In the 2003/2004 consultation document for Gypsy site refurbishment the ODPM referred specifically to the site saying: *'the only site currently operating successfully as a mixed site with a designated transit element is the Stoke-on-Trent site'*.

Residents' views:

- 6.12 We asked respondents to comment, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, on the site management of the sites. The response was mixed and 47% thought that the management was either very good or good; 32% were ambivalent; while 21% thought site management was poor or very poor.
- 6.13 Only residents on the site in Stoke-on-Trent viewed the site management as poor or very poor, with the majority of the remainder of the households on the Stoke-on-Trent site having neither good nor poor views. Two respondents at Stoke-on-Trent thought that site management was very good. All the respondents on the sites in Newcastle and Stafford thought that the management of the sites was either good or very good.
- 6.14 Comments on site management from respondents included:

"[site manager] is a good warden, we don't want anyone else to take over."

"This could be a lovely camp if only the manager cared. I hope when we start a family we get a new manager believe me he does not care what the situation is on here, he is untouchable."

"if this camp was looked after properly it would be a good camp the manager is a...law unto himself, he does nothing for the camp."

“The Council shouldn't hand responsibility to other Gypsies and Travellers as it doesn't work. They have rules and make rules up.”

Site facilities and quality

6.15 In order to gather information on what was provided on each local authority site and the general quality of the site, a series of questions were asked about site facilities and the local area (see Table 21 below).

Table 21: Facilities on local authority sites and assessment of quality by the local authority

	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Site facilities	Amenity unit per pitch Site office Meeting room Play area	Amenity unit per pitch	Amenity unit per pitch
Facilities in amenity units	Bath only WC with entry from outside Space/provision for cooking Space/plumbing for laundry Day room Effective heating	Bath only WC with entry from outside Space/provision for cooking Space/plumbing for laundry Effective heating	Bath only WC in bathroom Space/provision for cooking Space/plumbing for laundry
Quality of surroundings /environment	Good/poor	Good	Average
Location and access to schools/shops	Very good	Very good	Poor
Site condition and maintenance	Very good	Good	Good
Any known disputes etc over last year?	Some intimidation	No	No

6.16 As might be expected, site facilities and amenity units are most developed in Newcastle where all pitches are residential. Improvements are underway on the Linehouses site following successful bids for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant (formerly Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant). It is expected that refurbishment of the site will be complete by April 2008. Improvements will include the provision of a community building, new toilet and shower facility for the transit site and new amenity blocks for 25 plots. Adverse comments from local authority officers on site environment or access suggest some significant concerns:

- **Newcastle:** a very busy road at the site entrance and a landfill site at the rear.
- **Newcastle:** the instance of intimidation involved people driving onto the site, parking outside caravans and playing loud music and intimidating residents. The police were involved and resolved matters.
- **Stoke-on-Trent:** the site is isolated and is 2 miles from the nearest shop, bus stop or schools. It is situated at the top of a single-lane access road which has no pavement or street lighting. Consultation with other stakeholders revealed that there was a general concern about the isolating nature of the site, particularly with regards to transport links and access to services.

Residents' views:

6.17 Site residents were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their site including: size of pitch; design of site; location; and, facilities on site. The majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or ambivalently (Table 22)

Table 22: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	18	44	26	12	0
Design of site	9	56	29	3	3
Location of site	9	59	26	0	6
Facilities on site	0	41	50	9	0

6.18 Few respondents moved to either extreme (very good/very poor) on issues and there was very little difference between sites. Clearly this conflicts with the perceptions of the local authority officers on some issues (i.e. the location of the Stoke-on-Trent site). This may be explained in part because of the relatively low expectations that members of the Gypsy and Traveller community tend to have about sites/accommodation. Many of the Gypsies and Travellers we came into contact with tended to be content that they had an authorised pitch. We did receive other more qualitative comments about the sites, these include the following:

“The site is actually only a temporary site on a 5 year lease basis. Why?” (Stafford)

“The sheds could do with a bit of updating but no problems with the site as it is.” (Newcastle)

“They’re making a tip next to the site which is a bit worrying.”
(Newcastle)

6.19 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those we spoke to on the 3 sites (see Table 23 below). As can be seen, most households we spoke to had access to the services we enquired about. All facilities were available to respondents on the Newcastle site, with the exception of showers where only a small number of people had access to these. Similarly, all facilities were available to respondents on the Stafford site, with the exception of baths where no respondent reported being able to access these – which was a significant issue for a number of the less mobile or older residents of the site. In addition, residents of the site in Stafford had particular concerns over the standard of their amenity blocks as a number of respondents commented about their poor design and appearance. It was felt by a number of residents that the current standard of amenity blocks, which resembled temporary structures, was a result of a lack of permanency attached to the site which hindered the development of more modern facilities. Access to services was most varied on the site in Stoke-on-Trent. Although basic facilities were available to all (water, electricity, rubbish collection, shed, WC and postal service), only a quarter of sheds were heated, half of the respondents did not have access to a shower and around two-thirds of people did not have access to a bath, kitchen, laundry or eating facilities. Clearly for Stoke-on-Trent there is some disparity between the views of local authority officers and the views of site residents. However, this may be due to the disruption to the site caused by the refurbishments taking place at the time of the study and the interviewees located on the transit part of the site.

Table 23: Access to facilities on socially rented sites (% of sample have access)

	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Water	100	100	100
Electricity supply	100	100	100
Rubbish collection	100	100	100
Shed (%heated)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (25)
Shower	13	100	50
Bath	100	0	35
Kitchen facilities	100	100	30
WC	100	100	100
Laundry	100	100	30
Eating/sitting space	100	100	30
Postal service	100	100	100

6.20 All residents were asked to comment on whether they had any concerns around health and safety issues on the sites. No residents on the Newcastle site had such concerns, half of those on the Stafford site had concerns and a quarter of residents on the Stoke-on-Trent site had concerns.

6.21 When asked, a few people expanded upon the concerns they had. Such comments included:

“The site could be kept cleaner.” (Stoke-on-Trent)

“No lights at night.” (Stoke-on-Trent)

“The camp is dirty and a health hazard.” (Stoke-on-Trent)

“They should move the site away from the fumes.” (Stafford)

“It’s not safe when trailers are this close together in case of a fire.” (Stoke-on-Trent)

6.22 A number of these issues on the Stoke-on-Trent site may be being dealt with as a result of the current refurbishment programme (see page 68 site improvements).

Travelling and visitors

6.23 One of the ways in which rules on sites can help or hinder Gypsy and Traveller ways of life is the restrictions placed upon absence for travelling and ability to accommodate visitors on the site in caravans. Table 24 summarises the authorities approach to this.

Table 24: Permitted absence and visitors

	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Normal maximum absence allowed in a year	4 weeks, return, then can go again	8 weeks	6-8 weeks
Rent payable during absence?	Full rent	Part rent	Full rent
Can licensees have visitors with caravans overnight?	Yes	Yes	No
Circumstances	Bereavement or wedding normally	Family illness, funerals, etc. for short period	NA

6.24 Thus absence is permitted for periods up to 8 weeks in a year. Visitors are permitted for short periods for major family events in Newcastle and Stafford. No visitors are permitted overnight on the site in Stoke-on-Trent under any circumstances, which was attributed to a lack of space available on the site.

Residents’ views:

6.25 There was a good deal of variation in the way in which residents on socially rented sites travelled. Half of all respondents reported that they

no longer travelled. The remainder travelled either seasonally (26%) or once every year (15%). Only 9% of respondents (3 households) travelled every couple of months.

- 6.26 When asked to comment on why they hadn't travelled recently, the vast majority of those who responded talked about no longer being able to either because of their age or some form of disability. One person commented that they no longer had the ability to travel as they lack a moveable caravan:

"I don't have a trailer to travel with – I live in a chalet."

- 6.27 Another respondent commented on the lack of places to stay:

"There's no where to go is there?"

Waiting lists and pitch allocation

- 6.28 Waiting lists and pitch allocations are relevant factors in order to help understand both demand for, and access to, existing local authority sites. Table 25 summarises the three local authority sites, showing different approaches between the sites. An average of about 5 pitches a year has been vacated over the past 3 years – an overall turnover rate of about 6% per year. Vacancies are not being re-let at Stoke-on-Trent at present because of the improvement works. A number of the vacancies on the Stoke-on-Trent site, however, have become vacant following the death of a resident and the pitch is subsequently re-let to their surviving spouse. As a result, average pitch turnover is adjusted to 1 pitch per year, per site.

Table 25: Waiting lists and allocation policies

	Local authority site		
	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Waiting list?	Formal	No list	Informal
Numbers on list	Unknown	NA	20-30 average
Trends in numbers	Decreased	Static	Static
Pitches vacated 2004-2005	1 per annum	Av 1.3 per annum	Av 3.2 per annum
Formal allocation policy?	Yes	No	No ²⁸
Most important factors taken into account	Local connection Previous known behaviour (Need and time on list taken into account)	Need for accommodation Medical/health needs Family/personal compatibility	Previous known behaviour Local connection Family/personal compatibility

²⁸ Allocation for pitches rests with the site manager. The City Council liaison officer has some informal influence in pitch allocation, but this appears limited.

6.29 As can be seen, there is a particular emphasis on informality when allocating pitches to households. When allocations are considered, local connection and previous known behaviour, and/or family or personal compatibility are among the most important factors taken into account. This suggests a concern for the smooth running of sites and site communities. This is particularly the case on the Stoke-on-Trent site and exists as a way in which to avoid problems of cohesion on the site, which arose prior to the current management arrangements. However, it could result in some families being excluded as they are seen to be, or are 'labelled' as, potentially disruptive.

Financial issues

6.30 Technically, the charges paid by site residents are licence fees, but they are commonly referred to as rents, and this term is used below. Table 26 shows rents charged, damage deposits charged, proportion of residents receiving housing benefit (HB) and any Supporting People payments received.

Table 26: Pitch rent and other financial matters

	Newcastle (Silverdale)	Stafford (Glover Street)	Stoke-on-Trent (Linehouses)
Pitch rent – res. single	£52	£51	£44.71
Pitch rent – res. double	£62	NA	£51.86
Pitch rent – transit	NA	NA	£39.04
Damage deposit?	No	£153	No
% of residents receiving HB	Over 90%	Over 90%	Over 90%
Supporting People payments?	No	No	No

6.31 Rents range between £39 for a transit pitch in Stoke-on-Trent to £62 for a double residential pitch in Newcastle. Rent levels vary on sites in Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent according to the type and size of pitch. An initial damage deposit is only charged in Stafford.

6.32 No Supporting People payments are received for any site residents. Almost all (over 90%) of residents receive housing benefit towards their rent.

Site improvements

6.33 The sites in Newcastle and Stafford have not been the subject of bids for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant, nor are there firm plans for a bid in future. The Stoke-on-Trent site has been the subject of previous bids:

- 2003 - £24,000 received to update bathroom facilities to the 25 original plots

- January 2007 - £293,630 received (75% of the total cost) to replace toilet and bathroom facilities on the transit site and 10 amenity blocks for plots. Work commenced on the site in August and phase one is due to be completed by December 2007.
- July 2007 - £465,396 received (75% of the total cost) – to replace the remaining 15 amenity blocks and provide a community building; improvements to service roads, car park and fencing to plots. All refurbishment work is expected to be completed during 2008.

Plans for existing sites

6.34 Respondents from the local authorities were asked whether certain specified changes were planned during the next three year period. Stafford reported no plans for Glover Street. Newcastle reported plans to undertake major repairs and improvements at Silverdale. Stoke-on-Trent also reported plans to undertake major repairs and improvements at Linehouses and work will be completed to refurbish the site by April 2008 following two successful applications for funding from the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.

Other plans for local authority sites

6.35 All 5 authorities, including those currently without a site, were asked if they had any current plans to provide additional local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in their area over the next 5 years. No authority had such plans.

Private Gypsy and Traveller sites

6.36 This section looks at private sites across the Study Area. Table 27 summarises reported private sites either with planning permission or tolerated and in existence for more than 10 years (and therefore protected from enforcement action). There are a total of 8 developed sites, together providing 85 pitches, and 1 site with planning permission, but not yet developed, with a potential of 3 pitches. There are sites (or planning permissions not yet implemented) in all authorities except Newcastle, although most are in Stafford.

Table 27: Private sites with the North Housing Market area

Site	Local authority	Pitches	Planning status
Site 1	East Staffordshire	17	Licensed site
Site 2	Stafford	6	Permanent residential
Site 3	Stafford	16	Permanent residential
Site 4	Stafford	14	Permanent residential
Site 5	Stafford	20	Permanent residential
Site 6	Stafford	3	Accepted as authorised
Site 7	Staffordshire Moorlands	1	Tolerated
Site 8	Stoke-on-Trent	8	Recent planning permission, not yet developed ²⁹
Site 9	Stoke-on-Trent	3	Planning permission not implemented

6.37 A striking feature of private site provision is the clustering of sites in Hopton (Stafford), which accounts for about two-thirds of developed pitches across the Study Area.

6.38 The number of private sites/pitches had increased since 2001 in Stafford (number of sites have remained static but pitches have increased) and Stoke-on-Trent (1 site has been created, 3 additional pitches are due to be created but have not yet been developed). Only Stafford expected the number of authorised private sites in the area to increase over the next 5 years; Stoke-on-Trent did not give an answer. Some authorities made the caveat that any increase will depend on the outcome of the GTAA.

6.39 It proved difficult to accurately establish the pitch capacity of all private sites. The pitch capacity which is stated in Table 27 above is drawn from information held by local authority officers where planning permissions are often based on maximum caravan occupancy rather than clearly defined pitches. Where pitch numbers are not defined, we use a 1.7 caravan to pitch ratio to ascertain the approximate number of pitches. However, it must be noted that such ratios can and do change over time and this is merely indicative.

6.40 In addition, in comparison to socially rented sites where there is good access to management information via local authority records, it proved difficult to gain any clear idea about occupancy levels and vacancies on private sites. As a result we have assumed all developed (including the site currently under development) were at capacity during the assessment period. Therefore the base figure used in the assessment for private sites is 85.

²⁹ The development of the site began during the GTAA period and interviews took place on the site.

6.41 Although permissions for pitches on private sites appear predominantly to be for permanent residential use, pitches in the Study Area are in reality divided between those that are owner-occupier and those which are rented. Again, although it is difficult to provide accurate information on the division of owner-occupier and rented pitches, from our sample, we estimate that 56% (48/85) of pitches are rented and 44% (37/85) are owned by their occupier. Clearly this tenure split is significant for the sorts of families accommodated and their likely duration of stay. A number of pitches on rented sites may be performing a role similar to transit sites.

Residents' views:

6.42 All respondents on the private sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Twenty-five respondents (69%) had 1 trailer and 11 respondents had 2 trailers (31%). The average number of living units per household was 1.3 trailers – which was the same for households on socially rented sites.

6.43 The vast majority of households (86%) thought they had enough space for their needs. Those households who felt that they did not have enough space attributed this to either an inability to afford another trailer (3 households on rented pitches) or being constrained by the size of their pitch.

6.44 Site residents of private sites were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their site including: size of pitch; design of site; neighbours on site; location; facilities on site; and, management. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or ambivalently (see Table 28). Owner-occupiers were more likely to view these issues as very good, whereas residents who rented pitches were likely to provide 'good' comments.

Table 28: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	41	39	17	0	3
Design of site	33	47	17	0	3
Neighbours on site	39	50	8	0	3
Location of site	33	47	19	0	0
Facilities on site	30	47	19	3	3
Management	33	53	11	0	3

6.45 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those we spoke to on all private sites (see Table 29 below). As can be seen, most households had access to the services we enquired about. Access to services was similar across the different tenures although, as might be expected, households on rented pitches tended to have less access to facilities than owner-occupiers.

Table 29: Access to facilities on private sites

	% of sample have access
Water	100
Electricity supply	100
Shed (%heated)	100 (36)
WC	100
Postal service	100
Rubbish collection	89
Kitchen facilities	61
Laundry	58
Eating/sitting space	58
Shower	56
Bath	56

- 6.46 Just two households on private sites mentioned concerns they had around health and safety on their sites. One of these was an owner-occupier who simply said that there *“was loads of rats”*, the other was a household on a rented pitch who said that *“the site is not safe for kids as it’s close to the road and it smells”*.
- 6.47 Two households on private sites (8%) said that they had an additional base elsewhere both of which were classed as private sites, one in Luton and the other in Peterborough.

7. Planning and the unauthorised development of sites – findings

- 7.1 Unauthorised developments are a major source of tension between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. Government objectives of greater social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers can only be met if unauthorised developments cease. The new planning system is intended to create conditions where there is no need for unauthorised developments because land will be allocated for authorised site development. This chapter looks in depth at the experience of local authorities of receiving planning applications to develop Gypsy and Traveller sites and of Gypsies and Travellers making applications to develop such sites. In addition, this chapter focuses upon the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission.

Planning applications

- 7.2 Following on from the previous chapter, indications of increasing number of private sites are linked with the recent pattern of planning applications. The local authority survey asked how many planning applications had been received, granted, refused and granted on appeal since 2001. Table 30 summarises these responses.
- 7.3 A total of 9 applications were received in 3 out of 5 LPAs. Seven applications involved additional pitches or caravans and seven different locations were involved. One application is yet to be determined. Other decisions led to permissions for an additional 29 caravans in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent; an application for 5 pitches/10 caravans was refused. The first application on the Burlsem site was refused, but subsequently granted for a smaller development (Stoke-on-Trent). Overall, more than half of applications involving an increase in pitches/caravans were approved. Reasons given for refusal are set out in Box 1 below.

Table 30: Summary of planning applications and outcomes since 2001

Year	Address	Pitches/caravans	Outcome
East Staffordshire			
	None		
Newcastle			
N/A	Linley Road, Talke	2	Pending
Stafford			
2003	Within Lane, Hopton	2 additional caravans	Approved, maximum 8 families and 16 caravans
2003	Within Lane, Hopton	1 pitch re-position	Approved
2004	Widdens CP, Hopton	Access road	Approved
2005	Within Lane, Hopton (MH site)	16 caravans	Approved, maxima 16 families, 16 caravans
2005	Hilderstone Road, Spot Acre	5 pitches/10 caravans	Currently on appeal
Staffordshire Moorlands			
	None		
Stoke-on-Trent			
2002	Linehouses, Golden Hill	8	Granted on appeal
2002	Bycars Road, Burslem	5	Refused
2002	Bycars Road, Burslem	3 (not yet implemented)	Granted

7.4 It is clear that the Green Belt was a significant issue in two of these refusals.

Box 1: Reasons for refusal of planning applications since 2001

Stafford
<p>Hilderstone Road, Spot Acre (Change of use to small family gypsy site (5 pitches), 10 caravans (trailers) and 5 utilities)</p> <p><i>Stafford Borough Council, in pursuance of powers under the Town and Country Planning Act, hereby refuse the above development in accordance with the accompanying plans and subject to the following reasons:-</i></p> <p><i>1. The development constitutes inappropriate development, with the hardsurfacing of the whole of the application site and the siting of caravans, utility structures and the parking of associated vehicles, which significantly detracts from the openness of the North Staffordshire Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it. Furthermore, it is not considered that the justification advanced in support of the application constitutes very special circumstances sufficient to warrant the approval of the application and the overriding of existing policy restrictions. The proposal conflicts with guidance contained in PPG2: Green Belts, Circular 1/94, Consultation Paper Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites (December 2004), with policies D5B and H12 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 and with policies E&D10 and HOU21 of the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001.</i></p>

Box 2: Reasons for refusal of planning applications since 2001

Stoke-on-Trent
Linehouses
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt for which very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. Approval of the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy GP1 of the City Plan 1990-2001, Policies D5B and H12 of the Structure Plan 1996-2011 and advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.</i>2. <i>The proposal would constitute an unsustainable form of development by virtue of its isolated location and subsequent promotion of travel by car. Approval of the application would therefore be contrary to Policies D1 and T1A of the Structure Plan 1996-2011 and advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Notes 3 and 13.</i>
Bycars Road, Burslem
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>The proposal would represent over-development of the site by reason of an inability to make adequate provision for car and lorry parking, additional caravans and visiting families. As such the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety in the area and approval of the application would be contrary to policies TP14 and HP10 of the City Plan and advice given in Circular 1/94 'Gypsy Sites and Planning'.</i>

Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites

- 7.5 There were three reported instances of unauthorised developments of Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2001. One was at Spot Acre, Stafford (subject of a planning application and refusal above) involving 5 pitches. An enforcement notice was served in July 2005. An appeal was lodged and dismissed in May 2006. The appellant has been given leave to appeal to the High Court with a hearing date to be fixed. Comments from a stakeholder consulted during the course of the assessment asserted that the site is *'ideal'*, but that it is situated in the Green Belt. The other two unauthorised developments were in Newcastle-under-Lyme; one at Red Street Colliery involving an estimated 1 pitch and another in Talke involving an estimated 2 pitches.
- 7.6 Views from the local authorities differed as to whether the number of unauthorised developments would increase over the next 5 years; 2 thought they would not, 1 that they would and 2 gave no answer because of lack of evidence.

Residents' views

- 7.7 During our fieldwork we managed to consult with households on two of the developments. However this only meant consultations with 7 households. As a result, the views of residents are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages. It must also be noted that these views reflect 2 sites rather than all 3 unauthorised developments present at the time of the study.

- 7.8 Five households on the unauthorised developments provided details about how many living units they had: 2 households had 1 unit; 2 households had 2 units; and, 1 household had 3 units. The average number of living units per household was 1.8 – larger than the number for both private and socially rented sites.
- 7.9 More than half (4 respondents) thought that this did not give them enough space. In all 4 cases this was attributed to the size of the pitch they were residing on.
- 7.10 A total of 4 households had people living with them who required their own independent accommodation – this amounted to 10 separate households who require independent accommodation.
- 7.11 Residents of the developments were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their site including; size of pitch; design of site; neighbours on site; location; facilities on site; and, management. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the location of the site and the people they shared the site with.
- 7.12 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those on the developments (see Table 31 below). As might be expected, due to their often undeveloped nature, access to facilities on developments was not as good as authorised sites. Only a small number of people had access to important facilities such as water or electricity.

Table 31: Access to facilities on unauthorised developments

	No. have access	No. have no access
WC	7	-
Rubbish collection	7	-
Water	6	1
Postal service	6	1
Eating/sitting space	3	4
Shed (heated)	2 (2)	5 (5)
Kitchen facilities	2	5
Laundry	2	5
Bath	2	5
Electricity supply	1	6
Shower	1	6

- 7.13 Only 1 of the respondents on the unauthorised development had concerns about health and safety, but did not expand on what concerns these were.

Planning issues

- 7.14 Local authority officers were asked if they could volunteer an example of good practice in relation to the planning approach to engagement

with Gypsies and Travellers, or suggest ways forward. Such comments included:

“The Council is keen to build links with Gypsy and Travellers within the area through the Forward Planning section. It is expected that officers from the Forward Planning section will accompany officers from Environmental Health when survey work is carried out twice a year to establish links and discuss spatial planning issues with this sector of the local community.”
(Stafford)

“Local authorities, particularly those authorities which jointly have small numbers of Gypsies and Travellers, need to team up in order to provide specialist advice to Gypsies and Travellers.”
(Newcastle)

- 7.15 We were keen to explore, with Gypsies and Travellers, their experience of buying land and/or going through the planning process.
- 7.16 We asked all respondents if they had ever purchased their own land; a total of 18 respondents had. This included all the households on the unauthorised developments and a significant number of households on private sites. One household on an unauthorised encampment had bought their own land at some time in the past, as had one household in and bricks and mortar housing. A total of 16 respondents had applied for planning permission.
- 7.17 We asked respondents to elaborate on their experiences of the planning system in order to gain some insight into the process from their perspective. The comments included:

“We got turned down but we are going to try again.”

“Didn’t pass but we’re hoping for the best to come in the future.”

“It took about 6 years to get passed.”

“It got passed.”

“We put in 3 times and it got refused. I don’t know why, it was in a lane in Nottingham nowhere near houses or the town and it was only my family of four trailers. They made us move off, but I’m saving up my money to buy some more land and I’ll try again.”

“As me and a lot of our family have bought our own land and been refused I think the council should make planning permission laws easier. It’s not like we are asking for much – just better living conditions and to be treated equally.”

8. Unauthorised encampments – findings

- 8.1 The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments is a significant issue impacting upon local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers, the settled population and the public purse. Just as unauthorised developments are often cited as a major source of tension - unauthorised encampments are often the type of accommodation which has become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers and is often a further source of tension with the wider community.
- 8.2 Due to the nature of unauthorised encampments (i.e. unpredictability, seasonal fluctuations etc.), it is very difficult to get a comprehensive picture of need for residential and/or transit accommodation without considering a range of interconnected issues. This section, however, seeks to look at the 'known' prevalence of unauthorised encampments and views of households on such encampments in order to draw some tentative indication as to level and nature of need for authorised provision.

Policies on managing unauthorised encampments

- 8.3 East Staffordshire, Staffordshire Moorlands and Staffordshire County Council have written policies for managing unauthorised encampments. Local authorities are party to joint agreements or protocols with other agencies for managing unauthorised encampments as follows:

East Staffordshire	Police and other agencies
Newcastle	Police, other LAs and other agencies
Stafford	No
Staffordshire Moorlands	No ³⁰
Stoke-on-Trent	Police

- 8.4 In all cases, first contact with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments is usually made by a council officer. Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent stated that a Police officer can also be the first contact.

Good practice on managing unauthorised encampments

- 8.5 Good practice on managing unauthorised encampments was identified by:
- **Stoke-on-Trent:** There is a working protocol between the Stoke-on-Trent division of Staffordshire police and the council to establish a consistent and joint approach between the two agencies.

³⁰ Although during a focus group it was mentioned that there is a draft procedure in place which will be formalised pending the outcome of this GTAA.

- **Staffordshire Moorlands:** The officer asks what the intentions are; if they say they will move on in the next few days, then the officer will revisit to check this has been done. If they are still there, they will check if there are any problems which have prevented them moving on (e.g. ill health, etc). The officer will check if they have anywhere else to go to, and will ask if they wish to see a housing advisor from the Housing Options team. The officer will request that all rubbish is bagged up and left in a pile if they are unable to remove it themselves. The approach this council takes is measured and no enforcement action has yet had to be taken. They have devised a questionnaire to use, which is a quasi-welfare assessment including a number of issues such as education, health, etc.
- **Stafford:** Has a long standing protocol with the Police. They have not had a problem in managing encampments as they rarely happen and when they do they only stay for a short time before moving on.

Geographical patterns and incidence of unauthorised encampments

8.6 All authorities keep a log of unauthorised encampments: Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent log all known encampments while East Staffordshire, Newcastle and Stafford log some (in one instance (ES) on council land and elsewhere when notified).

8.7 The number of separate encampments experienced during 2006 is shown below. As can be seen the distribution is very uneven, with most occurring in Stoke-on-Trent (see map 1).

Stoke-on-Trent	23 (normally 1 in area at a time)
East Staffordshire	8 (normally 1 in area at a time)
Newcastle	7 (normally 1 in area at a time)
Staffordshire Moorlands	1 (normally none in area)
Stafford	0 (normally none in area)

8.8 Details of location, number of caravans, duration and action taken were provided for 28 encampments (including 12 in Stoke-on-Trent). The average encampment size was just under 7 caravans (range 0 (horses) to 25; however, 78% of encampments involved fewer than 10 caravans. Average encampment size was larger in East Staffordshire (10 caravans) than in Newcastle (6 caravans) and Stoke-on-Trent (5 caravans).

8.9 During the period of fieldwork for this assessment the areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands experienced most encampments see Table 32, which looks at numbers of achieved interviews by local authority area. There are a number of reasons for the particular geographical spread of encampments:

- Areas of Stoke-on-Trent are currently being regenerated, which means that there are a number of pieces of, yet-to-be re-developed land which Gypsies and Travellers tend to use;
- The transit pitches on the local authority site are currently closed;
- The severe flooding meant that higher ground (i.e. Staffordshire Moorlands) was perhaps used more often; and,
- Proximity to major roads and through fares (Stoke-on-Trent), particularly with regard to North-South travelling and use of sea ports (Holyhead and Liverpool).

Table 32: Number of encampments by local authority (April – September 2007)

Authority	No. of encampments
East Staffordshire	0
Newcastle-under-Lyme	4
Stafford	0
Staffordshire Moorlands	4
Stoke-on-Trent	23

8.10 In terms of the information provided by local authorities for encampments during 2006, the duration was given for 19 of the 28 encampments. The average was just under 3 weeks, but this is skewed by a small number of unusually long-lasting encampments. Only 4 encampments (21%) lasted longer than 3 weeks. Data is too incomplete to make safe comparisons of duration between authorities.

8.11 In terms of action taken:

Stoke-on-Trent: 5 resolved by negotiation; 4 by a private owner taking action; 3 by a court order

East Staffordshire: 4 known uses of Civil Procedure Rules 55 (out of 8)

Newcastle: notice served in all cases

Staffordshire Moorlands: all resolved informally

Trends in unauthorised encampments

8.12 Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments has changed over the past 5 years. Experience seems to have varied: numbers have increased in East Staffordshire; decreased in Stafford; and, remained broadly the same elsewhere.

8.13 In terms of size of group, all said that encampments had remained broadly the same size over the past 5 years.

8.14 Other changes over time noted were:

- **Stoke-on-Trent:** over the last 2/3 years encampments have been on hard surfaces only, not fields, etc.
- **East Staffordshire:** over the last 3/4 years, encampments have mainly been by families who want to remain in the locality. The majority of these families are now on a site run by a neighbouring authority which may account for the apparent reduction in encampments locally during the assessment period.

8.15 When asked how they expected the number of encampments to change over the next 5 years, all either did not know or expected no significant change.

8.16 It is clear from the responses from the local authority officers that unauthorised encampments are often an issue for authorities, particularly in Stoke-on-Trent. Stoke-on-Trent commented that the addition of a number of transit pitches on the local authority site meant that over the last 8 years (since 1999) the number of unauthorised encampments have been reduced by approximately 60% on previous levels.

- Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent experience more encampments in summer; the other areas note no clear variation over the year.
- Most involved in unauthorised encampments are said to be 'in transit' in all areas other than East Staffordshire, where most are said to be local.

8.17 From reviewing the available information trends are unclear for unauthorised encampments.

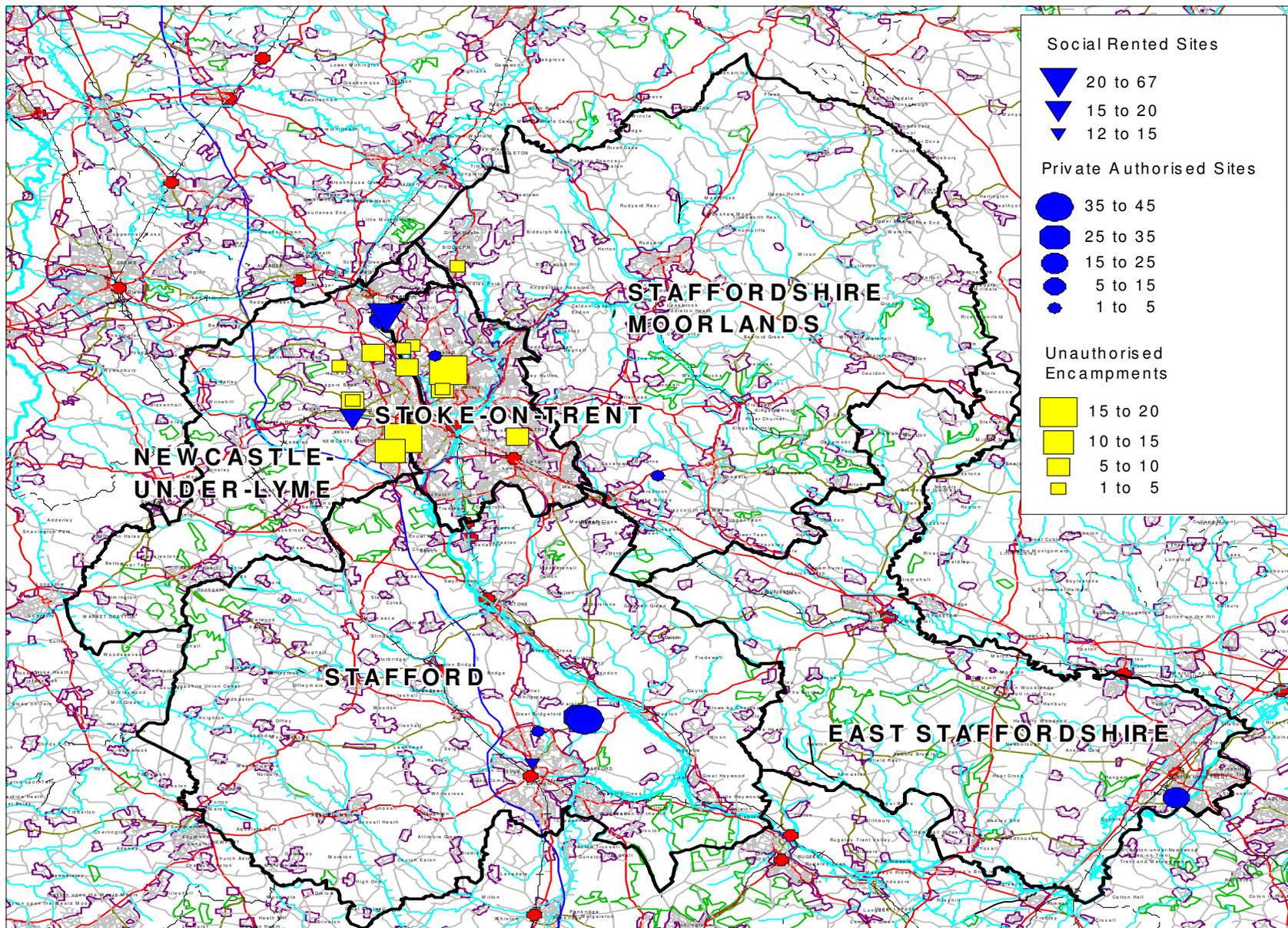
Living on unauthorised encampments – views from Gypsies and Travellers

8.18 Fourteen of the 15 households interviewed on unauthorised encampments provided details about how many living units they had; 11 households had 1 trailer and 3 households had 2 trailers. No households had more than 2 trailers. The average number of living units was 1.2 trailers.

8.19 When the average household size for encampments is divided by the average number of trailers households possess this provides us with an average of 3 people in each trailer on unauthorised encampments.

8.20 Four in ten people felt that this did not provide them with enough space. A lack of space was attributed to both an inability to afford additional accommodation and an inability to obtain an authorised pitch on a site.

Map1: Unauthorised encampments within the Study Area relative to authorised site provision (numbers shown in caravans)



- 8.21 The majority of those interviewed had been on the encampment for a short period of time. Twelve had been there for less than 1 week and 2 had been there for between 2 weeks and one month. One household did not know how long they had been there.
- 8.22 With regards to how long they anticipated staying on the encampment, 9 respondents (60%) were intending to stay for up to 1 week, the remainder (6 respondents) did not know.
- 8.23 Respondents were asked the reasons why they were leaving the encampment. The main reason given related to the actions of others; for example, *“Council is moving us on”* or *“we’re getting moved on now”*. Others talked about how their intention was always to use the site as stopping place en route to another place – particularly Appleby Fair *“we’re off to Appleby”* or *“we’ll move on, you know, keep on travelling”*.
- 8.24 Out of those respondents who were leaving the area 5 (38%) would have liked to stay in the area, 5 were happy to leave and 3 households did not know whether they would like to stay. In terms of the accommodation they were looking for 4 households wanted another stopping place and 5 respondents wanted a pitch on an authorised local authority site. No respondents said that they wanted a pitch on a private site (rented or their own), a pitch on an unauthorised development or bricks and mortar housing. One person commented:
- “I hope this questionnaire helps us get more and more sites so we don't have to move every week.”*
- 8.25 For those households currently living on unauthorised encampments, access to facilities was a major issue (see Table 33 below). Most of the very basic facilities were inaccessible to Gypsies and Travellers. The only encampment who had access to anything was located in Staffordshire Moorlands although it was unclear from where access was provided. Just one comment was made about the access to basic services:

“We can't use the showers at services, would be good if you could.”

Table 33: Access to basic facilities on unauthorised encampments

Type of facility	Have access	
	Number	%
Water	1	7
WC/Toilet	1	7
Showers	-	-
Waste disposal/collection	1	7
Electricity supply	-	-

- 8.26 All but one household on an unauthorised encampment reported that they could not access to waste disposal. From consultations undertaken as part of this study this was repeatedly reported as a main issue of tension within the settled community, as Gypsies and Travellers in many villages, towns and local areas become synonymous with fly-tipping. However, as many Gypsies and Travellers only means of transport are vans, their access to local tips is restricted by the exclusion of 'business' disposals, unless a charge is paid, at local authority recycling centres.
- 8.27 In attempting to understand what attracted those residing on unauthorised encampments to the place they had stopped, respondents were asked to comment on the specific stopping place. A total of 6 of the households on unauthorised encampments thought that the place was very good or good (mostly the areas in Newcastle, Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire); whilst the remainder (6) described the stopping place as either poor or very poor (generally Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent).
- 8.28 A total of 4 households on unauthorised encampments (27%) had a base elsewhere: 1 household lived in a house; 1 on an RSL site; and, 2 households on a private site. Areas in which these bases were situated were Cardiff, Chester, Helsby and Middlewich.
- 8.29 A third of respondents on encampments had concerns about the area in which they had stopped. When asked to expand on these concerns people mentioned the proximity to the road; for example, *"Its too close to the road for the kids."*

9. Gypsies and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation - findings

- 9.1 The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within bricks and mortar accommodation are unknown, but potentially large. Movement to and from housing is a major concern for the strategic approach, policies and working practices of local authorities. One of the main issues of the consultation revolved around the role that housing services do, should and could play in the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area.
- 9.2 This chapter looks at the information held by the authorities around Gypsies and Travellers and housing and looks at the approaches these authorities take. The chapter then continues with analysing the responses of housed Gypsies and Travellers who took part in the assessment.

Housing policies

- 9.3 Authorities were asked whether specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers in various housing strategies:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Current housing strategy | Yes in East Staffordshire (referring to proposed action to assess needs) and Stoke-on-Trent. |
| Current homelessness strategy | Yes in Staffordshire Moorlands |
| Current BME housing strategy | Yes in Stoke-on-Trent, which is the only LA with such a strategy and specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers in connection with take-up of advice services and involvement/engagement in housing services |
- 9.4 Obviously specific inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers is the exception rather than the rule at present, which will require changes when results of the needs assessment are available.
- 9.5 Only Staffordshire Moorlands said that Gypsies and Travellers are identified in ethnic records and monitoring of social housing applications and/or allocations.
- 9.6 Authorities were asked to provide details of how Gypsies and Travellers who are homeless are supported through the homelessness process. East Staffordshire made no comments. Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle said they would receive similar support to any other applicants. Stafford said that the same support is given as to other applicants, but also pointed out that there are very few known incidents

of homelessness among Gypsies and Travellers and that 'Stafford Borough Council are sensitive to each applicant and would look to find appropriate support and/or accommodation'. Staffordshire Moorlands commented:

"The Housing Advisor would try to assist with finding a vacancy on a site. If this wasn't possible or required then the normal homelessness/ advisory process would be followed – including finding somewhere to keep a caravan safe."

- 9.7 There were two positive answers to a question about steps taken to provide Gypsies and Travellers with housing advice and assistance or to help them access social housing:
- **Stafford** : *One recorded case where a Gypsy family fleeing violence was assisted into accommodation away from other Gypsy and Traveller sites.*
 - **Staffordshire Moorlands** : *We would use the same procedure as with other BME groups, we would liaise with the stock transfer RSL and other RSLs to ensure a family were not housed in an area where there were known problems of residents for example targeting other ethnic group.*

Gypsies and Travellers in social housing

- 9.8 Authorities were unable to quantify the number of allocations and registrations for social housing:
- Staffordshire Moorlands said that no Gypsy and Traveller applicants are currently registered for social housing, or were housed in 2006. All other authorities either said this was unknown or did not respond.
 - Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands said no homelessness presentations had been made by Gypsies and Travellers over the past 12 months. All other authorities either said this was unknown or did not respond.
 - No authority was able to comment on trends in the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social rented housing over the past 5 years, or anticipated trends over the next 5 years.
 - No authority was able to comment on the main reasons why Gypsies and Travellers move into housing.
 - No authority was able to give an estimate of the number of Gypsies and Travellers living in social rented housing in their area or to say whether there were any concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers in housing. At another point in the questionnaire, Stoke-on-Trent said

that concentrations do exist in council housing in Goldenhill, Tunstall and Stanfields, and that there were issues around harassment by neighbours and rent arrears caused by non-dependants living in families claiming housing benefit or using the address as a postal address.

- 9.9 The Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) estimated there to be around 40 families living in housing in Stoke-on-Trent. This figure reflects the families known to the CAB in one local authority area and is probably a significant underestimate of actual numbers. Based on the fieldwork for the assessment the study team was able to engage with households in bricks and mortar housing in all local authorities. Based on these operational experiences it seems reasonable to assume that there will be at least 40 households in bricks and mortar housing in Stoke-on-Trent, 10 households in Newcastle-under-Lyme and 5 households in each of the remaining areas (Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford and East Staffordshire) – an estimated total of at least 65 households in bricks and mortar housing across the Study Area as a whole.

Gypsies and Travellers in private housing

- 9.10 Answers to questions about Gypsies and Travellers in other forms of housing were largely uninformative:

- No authority could provide any information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in private housing.
- **Stafford** and **Staffordshire Moorlands** were not aware of any issues arising in relation to Gypsies and Travellers living in their area; other authorities did not respond.
- **Stafford**, **Staffordshire Moorlands** and **Stoke-on-Trent** said Gypsies and Travellers do not live on caravan or mobile home parks not specifically designed for them; others said there was no information or did not respond.

Roma from Europe

- 9.11 At the request of the Steering Group, a brief section of the local authority questionnaire referred to communities of Roma who have arrived relatively recently from Eastern Europe and/or the former Yugoslavia. Two authorities were aware of Roma families or individuals in their area:

- **Newcastle** said there were Roma in the area, but were unable to give any details of numbers, areas of settlement, countries of origin or household characteristics.

- **Stoke-on-Trent** was unable to comment on numbers, areas of settlement or countries of origin, but said they had moved as asylum seekers/refugees and as migrant workers, and were mainly families. There are no indications that local Roma are seeking to adopt a nomadic lifestyle.

9.12 The Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) in Stoke-on-Trent, which has a growing workload as a result of the increase in migrant workers in the area from A8 countries, support these assertions. Although there are significant numbers of Eastern Europeans in the areas, there were no reports of a desire for pitch/site accommodation. However, there was one incidence of a household from an Eastern European country arriving at Linehouses (Stoke-on-Trent) of their own volition with a trailer and seeking a pitch. They were directed to alternative accommodation and did not return.

Living in bricks and mortar housing – views from Gypsies and Travellers

- 9.13 Among the 29 respondents whom we consulted who lived in bricks and mortar accommodation, 20 (69%) lived in a house; 4 (14%) lived in a bungalow; and, the remainder (5 respondents) lived in a flat or maisonette.
- 9.14 In total, 21% of bricks and mortar dwellers were owner-occupiers; 31% were council tenants; 31% were private tenants; and, around 10% (3 households) were RSL tenants. Two respondents said they had some other kind of tenure arrangement but did not expand on what this was.
- 9.15 In terms of the size of the dwelling; 24% had 1 bedroom; 48% had 2 bedrooms; 24% had 3 bedrooms; and, one household had 4 or more bedrooms. All thought that their property gave them enough space.
- 9.16 In total, 38% of households in bricks and mortar accommodation still owned trailers. Most of these households had just 1 trailer – just 1 household had 2 trailers.
- 9.17 Residents in bricks and mortar accommodation were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their accommodation including: size of house; design of house; neighbours; location; facilities; and, condition/state of repair. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the size and design of the house. Neighbours was the factor which generated the most ambivalence from respondents.

Table 34: Views on the house (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of house	59	35	7	-	-
Design of house	48	38	14	-	-
Neighbours	10	38	45	7	-
Location	45	38	14	3	-
Facilities	45	38	14	3	-
Condition/state of repair	31	48	17	3	-

9.18 All respondents had access to all basic facilities we enquired about, with the exception of 2 respondents who did not have a shower and 1 respondent who did not have a bath.

9.20 Most respondents had lived in their accommodation for a long time: 28% for 5 years or more; 38% had been there for between 1 and 5 years; with the remainder (24%) there for less than a year. Three respondents had been in accommodation for less than 3 months.

9.21 Generally speaking, when asked how long they were likely to remain in their house the vast majority said they did not know (83%); 12% thought they would remain indefinitely; and, 2 respondents (7%) were planning to leave within the next 6 months. When asked their reasons for leaving one respondent said:

"I've just got divorced so I'm going back to live with my family."

9.22 The other respondent commented:

"We are moving this week as my mother in law is ill and we are going to help look after her."

9.23 We asked all Gypsies and Travellers about their experience of living in bricks and mortar accommodation. A total of 28 households (23% of the overall sample) had experience of bricks and mortar housing. If we remove the households who are now in bricks and mortar housing from this, this indicates that 17% of the Gypsy and Traveller sample had been in bricks and mortar accommodation (both council and private rented) at some time in the past, but had since left. This is particularly interesting as 13 households who are currently living on unauthorised encampments have had experience of bricks and mortar living.

Table 35: Previous experience of bricks and mortar housing by accommodation type

Current accommodation type	No. lived in a house	% sample lived in a house
Unauthorised encampments	13	20
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Socially rented sites	9	26
Private sites	7	19
Bricks and mortar	9	31
Total	28	23

9.24 There were a variety of reasons given for why they had lived in bricks and mortar housing (see Table 36). There were equal numbers of people who had lived in housing as a result of a move with family, health or children’s education. Lack of sites was also an issue.

Table 36: Reasons for living in bricks and mortar (%)

Reason	% proportion
Moved with parents/family	31
Health reasons	31
Children’s’ education	31
Lack of sites	24
Total	28

9.25 As many people left bricks and mortar accommodation, we were keen to ascertain people’s views and experiences of living in houses, flats, etc. and why they had left. We asked people on a five point scale, very good to very poor, to rate their experience. Quite surprisingly, a large number of people (45%) thought that living in bricks and mortar accommodation was either a very good or good experience; 29% had indifferent views; and, 23% thought it was a poor or very poor experience. One respondent could not comment. If people had a poor or very poor experience we asked them to elaborate on why this was the case. We received a number of comments including:

“The children wouldn’t settle.”

“I just felt trapped in a house.”

“I didn’t like it one bit, me and my brothers didn’t make any friends and I think we should be with our own people to mix.”

“Neighbours complained about us and people reported our dog to the RSPCA.”

“When you close the door you see no one its not like in a trailer where you have loads of windows, in a house there’s only one in each room.”

9.26 Of particular interest was the reasons given for leaving this accommodation. There were a whole range of different responses, perhaps reflecting some of the difficulties faced by Gypsies and Travellers in adjusting to a different way of living. For instance, some simply commented that they did not like it, whilst some women talked about how they got married, which meant returning to caravan dwelling:

“Because I got married.”

9.27 A few people commented on how restricted they felt living in bricks and mortar accommodation:

“I couldn’t settle, it didn’t feel right.”

“The wife couldn’t settle, it’s not the same as living in a caravan.”

“I felt trapped.”

9.28 With someone else commenting:

“I wanted to go back to travelling, it’s what we’re used to.”

9.29 Out of all the people who had previously lived in a house, very few people would consider doing so again:

“I think that the council and Police should make it easier for Gypsies and Travelling people to stay on sites so they don’t move into houses. All houses are bad. They cause health problems, we feel closed in, and on our own. We want our family all around us.”

9.30 Twelve respondents would consider moving to a house with all 12 coming from some kind of rented site accommodation. Reasons given for considering bricks and mortar dwelling included (in order of popularity): need for stability; children’s education; lack of sites; health; and, desire for a change.

9.31 Just one respondent was on a waiting list for a house with the local authority (Stoke-on-Trent).

10. Housing-related support service and general services - findings

- 10.1 The questionnaire to local authority officers also sought to ascertain and collate the recognition of Gypsies and Travellers in relation to housing-related support services – many of which come under the umbrella of the Supporting People programme.

Housing-related support

- 10.2 Gypsies and Travellers are mentioned in the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Supporting People 5 Year Strategies 2005-2010 which states that there were no Supporting People funded services specifically for Gypsies and Travellers at the time. Staffordshire planned research into Gypsies and Travellers needs, and Stoke-on-Trent refers to jointly commissioning a service working in partnership with all interested parties to provide some culturally specific floating support – initially to establish a service specification and commissioning options.
- 10.3 When asked which services Gypsies and Travellers most frequently approach the Council about (with a list of general housing-related support categories provided) authorities either said that they did not know, or that Gypsies and Travellers do not commonly approach the Council.
- 10.4 When asked to provide details of any housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers, the County districts noted there are no such services in their area, although Gypsies and Travellers might be able to access other generic floating support services. Stoke-on-Trent commented:

The five year Supporting People Strategy identifies Gypsies and Travellers as a vulnerable group in the city. Information on the local community was gathered during a needs analysis study carried out during 2003/04. The study identified a range of needs and activities that Travellers needed support with including:

- *Translation or interpretation of support related materials;*
- *Advice, advocacy, liaison with statutory agencies;*
- *Help with claiming welfare benefits;*
- *Developing budgeting skills/help managing finances;*
- *Help with personal safety;*
- *Help with maintaining tenancy conditions; and*
- *Help in setting up and maintaining a home.*

The needs mapping work completed in 2003/4 is due to be updated and Stoke-on-Trent City Council has commissioned research to be conducted amongst BME communities within Stoke-on-Trent during 2007, to identify housing-related support needs and make further

recommendations as to how these can be met by organisations within the City. This research will be the first stage of mapping the needs of BME communities and more analysis will be needed to explore further needs in subsequent years.

The existing Strategy Action Plan sets out the requirement to establish service specification and commission options for provision of housing related support to help Gypsies and Travellers access and/or maintain their accommodation. Work on developing this provision is ongoing.

- 10.5 In addition, during the course of the assessment we contacted individuals who worked in social care backgrounds and who had some experience of working with Gypsy and Traveller communities. This revealed that the known take up of social care services from members of the community was at a very low level. There were reports of short-term involvement via occupational therapy needs, but these were not prolonged periods of involvement. One officer was aware of just one referral for aids and adaptations. There is some take-up of direct payments to carers but this is seen to be at quite a low level compared to the amount of caring members of the family do for one another in Gypsy and Traveller families. There was no reported awareness of any social care involvement by children and family services, which was seen as strange by officers within Stoke-on-Trent, considering the number of households with children in the City.

Views from Gypsies and Travellers on housing-related support services

- 10.6 It proved extremely difficult to find a suitable method to gain some idea as to the level of experience/need within the Gypsy and Traveller community for housing-related services. The very concept of an outside agency providing services such as support for settling into new accommodation or childcare was often seen as nonsensical because of the reliance upon strong family networks and the support that the extended family have historically provided within Gypsy and Traveller communities. However, we were keen to attempt to gain some idea about the levels of need for a number of services. We consulted with key stakeholders and reviewed key documents³¹ from elsewhere to produce a list of the kind of services to gain views on. Gypsies and Travellers were asked about these services however due to the qualitative nature of the consultations the views on such services by Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers proved difficult to ascertain.

³¹ See Supporting People Eastern Regional Cross Authority Group - Gypsy and Traveller Conference, 27th April 2005 <http://www.spkweb.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6DA547AB-FCBB-4B4F-AE12-A5DD282B4C34/7895/FinalReportofGypsyandtravellerWorkshopApril2006.doc> and The Housing Support Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and York, December 2006, <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/consultations/engage/downloaddoc.jsp?id=941>

10.7 We asked all Gypsy and Traveller respondents to comment on the likelihood of using a number of services on a scale which covered; 'would never use', 'might use', 'would definitely use' and 'don't know' (see Table 37).

Table 37: Likelihood of using housing-related support services (in %)

Support need	Would never use	Might use	Would definitely use	Don't know
Finding accommodation	60	17	10	12
Settling into new accommodation	69	11	6	11
Budgeting	81	3	2	7
Meeting people	79	6	3	4
Accessing a GP	45	30	12	6
Accessing legal services	63	15	7	9
Harassment	51	18	11	14
Claiming benefits	59	18	12	6
Finding a job	74	7	6	8
Accessing training (for adults)	67	7	6	14
Pregnancy	67	9	4	11
Parenting	79	3	2	7

10.8 As can be seen, the majority of all respondents were not interested in receiving support with any of the services highlighted above. Possibly due to the perception that many of these services are not applicable to Gypsies and Travellers, these findings cannot be seen to provide an illustration as to the definitive need for such services. However, the results do seem to indicate where the current main concerns from respondents are. The services which elicited most interest, albeit still small, were (in order of interest): accessing a GP, claiming benefits, harassment, finding accommodation and accessing legal services:

"We're always getting harassment from the locals round here and wherever we go."

10.9 Table 38 breaks the interest in these services down by accommodation type. This table shows that those respondents in bricks and mortar housing are those who are, generally speaking and in comparison to other accommodation types, most likely to use a significant number of these services. It was those on socially rented sites who seemed least interested in accessing such services. Reasons for this may be the networks that are already in place (particularly on the Stoke-on-Trent site) with health, advice, and liaison officers etc., which already fulfil some of these support needs, either formally or informally.

Table 38: Likelihood of using housing-related support services by accommodation type (in %)

Support need	Unauthorised sites³² (% who said they might or would definitely use)	Socially rented sites (% who said they might or would definitely use)	Private sites (% who said they might or would definitely use)	Bricks and mortar (% who said they might or would definitely use)
Finding accommodation	36	15	6	61
Settling into new accommodation	18	12	3	42
Budgeting	5	-	3	14
Meeting people	14	6	3	23
Accessing a GP	64	15	54	48
Accessing legal services	14	9	34	37
Harassment	23	24	23	58
Claiming benefits	18	24	26	62
Finding a job	9	3	20	21
Accessing training (for adults)	14	3	17	25
Pregnancy	9	9	20	19
Parenting	5	6	7	10

10.10 Consultations with members of the Inter-agency Group also revealed the hope that the creation of a community centre on Linehouses (Stoke-on-Trent) would help to further embed a variety of support (i.e. health, education and social care) into the lives of Gypsies and Travellers on the site.

10.11 In terms of pin pointing the people in different local authority areas who expressed an interest in these services there was some general indicative findings (table 39 below) which are difficult to quantify, because of sample sizes and expressed desire for services, so qualitative need is shown instead. It must be noted that these may be led by the concentration of the sample in certain areas rather than an accurate and proportional reflection of the need for such services.

³² Unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments.

Table 39: Type of support by local authority area

Support need	Comments on preferences by area and accommodation type
Finding accommodation	Interest generally from people living in bricks and mortar housing in Stoke-on-Trent
Settling into new accommodation	Most interest shown from households within Stoke-on-Trent. Mostly from those on the socially rented site but also from households in bricks and mortar housing.
Budgeting	No discernable geographic differences
Meeting people	Most interest shown by households in Stoke-on-Trent particularly those in bricks and mortar housing.
Accessing a GP	Most areas showed some interest in this with particular interest shown in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent.
Accessing legal services	The two groups who appeared to want this service above all others were households living on private sites in Stafford and people living in bricks and mortar housing in Stoke-on-Trent
Harassment	There was a general need from housing for this from all local authority areas.
Claiming benefits	All areas appeared so show some desire for this service – both those housed and site based.
Finding a job	No discernable geographic differences
Accessing training (for adults)	Particular desire from Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent areas
Pregnancy	Particular need identified from Stafford (private sites) and Stoke-on-Trent generally.
Parenting	No discernable geographic differences

Access to local services and amenities

10.12 In order to gain some idea as to the interaction that the Gypsies and Travellers have with various local services, we asked people if they felt that they or their family had sufficient access to certain services and how important these services were to them (see Table 40). As can be seen, for the most part the services that are most important to people seem to be the ones to which Gypsies and Travellers had access to. However, it was quite often the case that people do value the health service/GPs/dentists, but do not necessarily have access to them. In terms of access by local authority this generally reflected the sample sizes obtained in each authority i.e. respondents in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent appeared to have greater access to these general services than respondents from other areas.

Table 40: Access to services and importance of service

Service	Have access (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)	Not so important (%)	Not important at all (%)	Don't know (%)
Local shops	91	46	34	6	4	7
A&E	90	50	18	3	17	9
Banks	88	42	23	16	4	6
Post office	86	40	30	13	3	8
GP/health centre	83	62	23	3	2	7
Dentist	74	43	24	9	9	7
Public transport	63	17	9	15	34	20
Sports & leisure services	62	6	15	21	22	26
Health visitor	45	17	12	14	22	24
Maternity care	36	10	-	7	36	35
Social worker	32	7	3	7	40	30

10.13 When asked to comment further on what prevented them accessing such services the predominant theme was mobility. One respondent on the site in Stoke-on-Trent commented that, *“There’s no bus so I have to get taxis and there’s no NHS dentist and I can’t afford a private one”*. A respondent on an unauthorised encampment talked about their transitory nature in certain areas, *“We can’t have a doctors or a dentist if we’re not in one place for a long time”*. Similarly, another household on an unauthorised encampment talked about how moving around made it difficult to access services, *“We don’t stay in one place, we are always moving so we can’t access much”*.

10.14 We asked an open question which invited respondents to comment on ways in which these and other services could be improved. We received various comments, with transport being an issue, particularly on the Stoke-on-Trent site:

“They could run a bus service around here but I suppose most people have cars. But I have to get taxis.”

“It might be good to put a bus stop near the site. At the moment it’s at the top of the road.”

10.15 Other people talked about form-filling being a major issue:

“I think we’re ok as [the site manager] helps with letters and forms because we can’t read. We used to have the Citizens Advice Bureau come on site but stopped due to funding - that was a good service.”

“Yes, I think some services could help more with the forms being filled in.”

10.16 The use of public transport/taxis is interesting as many households in other GTAA’s have indicated an overarching preference for car use.

However, the suggestion from some of these more qualitative findings is that there may be an immobile minority within the areas. This may need to be a particular consideration for potential location of possible sites within the areas.

10.17 The Stoke-on-Trent CAB added that one of their major areas of work with Gypsies and Travellers is assistance with various forms and applications.

10.18 Suggestions from Gypsies and Travellers around health were also noted:

"I think there could be a bit better access to all GPs and health centres for Travellers not just in Stafford but all over."

"I think it could be easier to see a doctor. They know that the Gypsies are in town so they could see the children and make sure they're ok. It'd save us going to A&E all the time."

10.19 We also asked whether people who worked in the local authority, health service, education and other services should be more aware of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers. Around a fifth of people (17%) felt that more awareness was required, nearly half (46%) felt that awareness was not needed, the remainder (36%) did not know.

11. Employment, education and health – findings

- 11.1 This section presents findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the three main service areas of employment, education and health.
- 11.2 There are various agencies in the Study Area which work with Gypsies and Travellers in the areas of employment, education and health. Many of these agencies are members of the North Staffordshire Gypsy and Traveller Inter-agency Group, which meets quarterly.
- 11.3 Stoke-on-Trent Youth Service runs a regular youth club, which significant numbers of Gypsies and Travellers attend. Stoke-on-Trent Library Services runs a mobile library services to the Stoke-on-Trent site (Linehouses).
- 11.4 Underpinning much of this is the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Stoke-on-Trent, which has a dedicated Gypsy and Traveller team providing an advice service to Gypsies and Travellers and community development/cultural awareness sessions to outside agencies (predominantly Staffordshire Police). The specialised work on Gypsies and Traveller issues has been ongoing since around 2000 and they have seen an increase in take-up of their service from the community, as awareness as to their role/influence has increased.

Gypsies and Travellers and work, employment and training

- 11.5 For this section the survey started with a general question about the kind of work undertaken by respondents and their families. Answers were extremely varied with the most popular broad areas being gardening/tree work, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering, cars (scrap and retail) and general market trades. It was clear that many of these trades were practical and manual and it was not uncommon to find families engaged in multiple trades.
- 11.6 We also asked how many people were self-employed and employed in the households. A total of 114 respondents volunteered information on this, 65 households had 94 self-employed members, and 7 households had 8 employed members. A total of 49 respondents did not have self-employed or employed household members. Clearly self-employment is a major mode of employment for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 11.7 Only 9 households who currently travelled (7%) felt that travelling had an impact on their work. We asked people to expand on the reasons why this was the case:

“If I didn't keep moving I could get work to last for 3-4 weeks but because we move a lot I only get work for 1-2 weeks.”

“If some people know we are Travellers they won't have us do work for them.”

"If we keep getting moved on its hard to get work"

"Sometimes we have to move and we might have work to do so we have to drive back to do it."

"Some areas you can get work, more so than others, you go where the work is."

- 11.8 Conversely, only 3 households (3%) felt that their work impacted on their travelling way of life. Again, we asked people to expand on how why this was the case:

"If we get work we stay and don't move."

"We need to be stable in order to get work."

"Our work has got better over time as we don't have to move around as much now, we can now get work to last for more than a week."

- 11.9 The survey also asked whether or not households had any particular 'site needs' in relation to their work (i.e. the storage of equipment, etc.). Only 2 households said they did, and both wanted a bigger pitch (private site owners).

- 11.10 In terms of training for work, only 5% of the sample (6 respondents) had been on some form of training, either formal through the colleges or work (3 people) or informal through friends, family and social networks (3 people). An additional 7 respondents (7%) wanted to take part in training at some point in the future. People commented further by saying:

"I'd like to do something in beauty therapy and hair."

"Brick laying or plumbing."

"Building and plumbing."

"I'd want a carpenter course"

"I might do hair dressing or be a school teacher for Travellers."

"My son might do a course for block paving if he could get on but as he can't read very good I don't know if they would take him on, but it would be nice if the colleges did more for Travellers."

- 11.11 We asked each respondent to comment on the level/standard of education that they themselves had obtained. A large number of

people chose not to answer the question. For those respondents that did comment, generally speaking there were very low levels of educational attainment, with only 1 respondent saying that they had done some form of examination. Twenty-six respondents (31%) said they had had no education; 17 respondents (21%) said they could read and write OK and 15 respondents (18%) said they had gone to school, but many left at 11 years of age.

Gypsies and Travellers and education

- 11.12 A total of 50 households out of the 121 Gypsy and Traveller households (excluding Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers) (41%) had school age children (between 5yrs and 16yrs). A total of 25 households said their children regularly attend school (half of households with school-age children) with an additional 3 households reporting that their children receive home education. Fifteen respondents said their children did not attend school regularly, and 5 respondents said they did not know if their children went to school regularly.
- 11.13 In terms of differences in attendance levels, children were most likely to attend school regularly if they were in bricks and mortar accommodation or on private sites. Just 43% of households with children on socially rented sites reported regular school attendance. Respondents on unauthorised encampments reported the lowest levels of regular attendance in comparison to other accommodation types.
- 11.14 We asked those respondents with school-age children to rate their children's schools. The majority of people could not comment (46%), just 1 respondent said the school was poor (2%), 10% felt they were neither good nor poor, while 42% thought the schools were good or very good. The respondent who rated the school as poor was asked to expand on their view and commented negatively on the ethnic diversity in the school:
- "It needs more English in it. It's more Pakistani than anything else."*
- 11.15 With another respondent commenting later that:
- "They separate the kids at school to give them extra help but it makes them stand out as different. Ours' don't need extra tuition. They should treat them the same as all the other children."*
- 11.16 We also asked people how easy or difficult they thought accessing children's education/schools was in the local area. Although most said they did not know (38%), 31% felt that access was either easy or very easy. Only 5 respondents (4%) thought access was difficult or very difficult. Those respondents living in bricks and mortar accommodation

thought that access to education/schools was easier than respondents from other accommodation types.

- 11.17 Just 15 respondents (30%) with school age children had contact with the local Traveller Education Service (TES). All 15 respondents thought the service was either very good or good. We asked people to expand on what they thought was good about the service, comments received included:

“They helped get my son into school. They were really helpful as we thought he wouldn’t get a place but they managed to get him one.”

“If anything is wrong, affecting my children, they are very good at sorting the situation out.”

“If there are any problems I just get in touch with them and they will sort it out”.

“If you need them to read a letter from school they will and if the children are off they come and find out why.”

“The children are looked after well and I feel they are safe and not being bullied.”

“They are people who understand our culture.”

Gypsies and Travellers and health

- 11.18 North Stoke-on-Trent Primary Care Trust (PCT) has two health visitors who specialise in working with Gypsy and Traveller families. Although engaging in the full range of health care issues, these health visitors appear to concentrate on three main issues; anti and post natal care, immunisation and health promotion.
- 11.19 Identifying households where members have particular health needs for special or adapted accommodation is an important component of housing needs surveys. A growing number of studies show that Gypsies and Travellers experience higher levels of health problems than members of the non-travelling population.
- 11.20 We asked whether respondents had members of their households who experienced some specific conditions (mobility problems, visual impairment, hearing impairments, mental health problems, learning disabilities or communication problems). As can be seen from Table 41, the vast majority of households do not have members with any of these specific conditions. However, a small but significant number of households do have members with these health problems, with a smaller number of households having multiple members with health issues.

Table 41: % households with family members with specific health problems

Type of condition	No one in household	One person in household	Two people in household	Three people in household
Mobility problems	82	13	3	-
Visual impairment	88	7	3	-
Hearing impairment	93	4	1	-
Mental health problems	93	3	1	-
Learning disability	91	4	2	1
Communication problems	92	5	1	-

11.21 A further 26 households (21% of the sample) had someone in their family who experienced some other kind of health problem. Conditions reported included (in most prevalent order) arthritis, asthma, heart problems, blood pressure, kidney problems, breathing problems, diabetes. One person mentioned brittle bones and another reported repeated strokes.

11.22 Although it is difficult to provide definitive information from this data we estimate that around half of the Gypsy and Traveller community have some form of health problem.

11.23 One person made a comment, at the end of their interview, about something that concerned her regarding her visits to the GP. This centred on a lack of understanding about what the GP was prescribing and the respondents lack of confidence in that situation:

“When I go to the GP I would like someone who could tell me simply what is being said. Quite often I walk about with a prescription, not knowing what it’s for or how to take it properly. I don’t like asking the doctor to explain it better because I feel stupid. He must think I’m thick to ask or say that I don’t understand him.”

12. Accommodation histories, intentions and travelling – findings

12.1 This section looks specifically at some of the ways the Gypsies and Travellers we spoke to during the course of the study have lived in the past and how they would like to live in the future.

Accommodation histories

12.2 In order to gain some idea as to the movement between different types of accommodation, this section of the survey looked at a range of different issues including: the sort of accommodation they had immediately prior to their current accommodation; the general location of prior accommodation; reasons for leaving this accommodation; and, the reasons for living in their current accommodation.

12.3 The majority of Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised sites in the Study Area had been on their current site for lengthy periods (Table 42). Just 16% had been on the site for less than one year.

Table 42: Duration of residence on current site

Duration of residence	% of respondents
Less than 6 months	6
6 – 12 months	10
12 months – 3 years	16
3 years – 5 years	14
Over 5 years	51

12.4 Households on unauthorised developments were long-standing residents and all had been on the sites for 1 year or over.

12.5 The previous accommodation of those on authorised sites, in order of significance is shown in Table 43. As can be seen, the main form of accommodation that households on authorised sites had prior to their current site was on the roadside (unauthorised encampments), followed closely by renting a private pitch and then by a socially rented site.

Table 43: Prior accommodation of households on authorised sites (private and socially rented)

Type of prior accommodation	% of respondents
Roadside	31
Private rented pitch	30
Socially rented site	16
Private transit site	9
Bricks and mortar housing	7
Other	4
Socially rented transit site	1
Own land	1

12.6 Households from unauthorised sites came from a variety of different accommodation types, particularly unauthorised encampments and to a lesser extent private rented pitches. One respondent on an unauthorised encampment had been in bricks and mortar housing immediately prior to being on the roadside.

12.7 We asked people to tell us what precipitated their move from their previous accommodation (respondents could name multiple reasons). Such reasons were varied (see Table 44). For households on unauthorised encampments, however, there were 3 main reasons; travelling, eviction and harassment. Interestingly, a significant number of residents on unauthorised developments left their previous accommodation due to site closure, although it was not disclosed which site this related to.

Table 44: Reasons for leaving prior accommodation type by current accommodation type

Reason for leaving	Current accommodation type				
	Unauthorised encampment (%)	Unauthorised development (%)	Socially rented sites (%)	Private sites (%)	Bricks and mortar (%)
Health reasons/illness	-	14	15	6	11
Eviction	40	14	-	8	7
Harassment	20	-	3	6	4
Personal safety	-	14	3	6	7
Site closure	-	43	-	3	-
Wanted independence	-	29	3	8	11
To travel	43	-	9	30	-
Site/accommodation conditions	-	-	6	-	7
Got married	-	-	6	8	7
Other	46	14	68	58	44

12.8 In terms of 'other' reasons given for leaving accommodation, there were a variety of responses. A number of reasons focussed upon joining family or friends on the site or in the area such as:

"I came to be near relatives."

“Wanted to come and live near my family again.”

12.9 However, there was a diverse array of other reasons given including:

“We wanted a permanent site.”

“The site manager we knew came here and we followed; he knows how to run a good site.”

“We wanted a more settled way of life.”

“To try and live in a house to see if it’s as good as gaujos say.”
“Wanted a change of faces and places.”

Travelling patterns and experiences

12.10 In order to shed some light on the travelling patterns and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers throughout the Study Area, respondents were asked about a range of issues associated with travelling.

12.11 One of the most important issues to gain some information on was the frequency that households travelled. The vast majority of people reported that they never travelled or travelled seasonally, which generally means for short periods during the summer months. Table 45 breaks this down by accommodation type.

Table 45: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type

How often travelled?	Current accommodation type				
	Unauthorised encampment (%)	Unauthorised development (%)	Socially rented sites (%)	Private sites (%)	Bricks and mortar (%)
Every week	64	-	-	3	-
Every month	7	-	-	-	-
Every couple of months	-	-	9	11	4
Seasonally	29	14	27	31	30
Once per year	-	14	15	14	11
Never	-	71	50	36	57

12.12 Unsurprisingly, unauthorised encampments are the most mobile, followed a long way behind by people in authorised accommodation (private sites, socially rented sites and bricks and mortar accommodation).

12.13 We asked those who said they never travelled to tell us why. Again, we received diverse replies. Some common themes were around being less physically mobile or disabled, being too old or general health reasons. Others talked about their children’s education, or how they

were *'settled'*. A number of people elaborated on how this had changed over time, with comments including:

"There's not enough camps, the situation is so different from years ago."

"The whole lifestyle has changed since we've been in the house. It's like its two different worlds."

"We used to travel more, but it's not as safe to pull onto places now. I wouldn't stay on the roadside anymore."

"We were finding it more difficult to find safe places to stop and are getting older now."

"We stay here for the children's schools and for work, it's made life a lot easier knowing we don't have to keep moving."

12.14 For those who did travel, however, we asked them where they liked to go. This was an open question designed to allow respondents to mention three of the places they visit most frequently. By far the most common answer consisted of areas within the Study Area, with many people talking about visits to Leek, Stafford, Burton and Stoke-on-Trent. The second most common destination was Appleby Fair or Penrith, with a large number of people mentioning Fairs in general. Although people mentioned preferences for travelling to Kent, London, Luton, Essex, Cambridge, Northampton, Wales and Birmingham there did seem to be a general 'Northwards' theme in travelling patterns. A large number of respondents mentioned areas such as Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire, Morecambe and Blackpool. One of the most common responses, however, was *'anywhere and everywhere'*:

"I'll go anywhere as long as my family are with me."

12.15 For those people who still travelled there was a wide variation in how many caravans/trailers they travelled with from 1 to 20, with most people travelling with between 1 and 3 caravans.

12.16 In total, approximately half of the sample had travelled to some extent over the past 12 months. It was clear from the responses that attendance at Appleby Fair was the main reason Gypsies and Travellers chose to travel. However, during this 12 month period households travelled for a number of reasons. In order of popularity, after Appleby Fair, people tended to travel to visit relatives, attend family events, for work and for holiday. Other comments about why people had travelled included:

"For the kids, it's good for them. It's tradition and I want them to meet other travellers."

“To get out of the house and back on the road so my children won't forget what we are.”

12.17 With regard to what type of accommodation people had used while travelling during the last 12 months, by far the most common was pulling up at the ‘roadside’, which as a general rule would indicate unauthorised encampments. This was followed by the use of private sites (residential and transit) with smaller numbers using mainstream caravan parks, friends/family sites and hotels.

12.18 Out of the people who had travelled in the last 12 month period, 14% had been forced to leave where they were staying; largely as a result of evictions, but also because of harassment issues.

12.19 In order to further understand people’s travelling patterns, we asked everyone where they thought they might travel in the next 12 month period (summer 2007 – summer 2008). Interestingly, there was a significant amount of travelling anticipated in areas local to where they were based now. This was particularly the case for households on unauthorised encampments, where 53% of households on unauthorised encampments intend to return to the same local area and areas surrounding it (Table 46).

Table 46: Anticipated areas to travel to over the next 12 months

Travel in the next 12 months?	% of travelling respondents
Within same local area	21
With same LA	15
Within North Housing Market area ³³	22
Within the County	23
Within the West Midlands	22
Other parts of the UK	65
Abroad	17

12.20 In terms of preference for accommodation when travelling people were asked about the sort of sites/land they would like to use in future (table 47).

Table 47: Popularity of preferred accommodation

Type preferred accommodation	% of respondents
With family on private sites	67
With family on socially rented sites	31
Caravan park	27
Public/private transit sites	26
Roadside	22
Other	9
Hotels	8

³³ This was explained to people in terms of actual geography

- 12.21 As Table 47 shows, when travelling, people would rather stay with family on private sites, followed by family on socially rented sites (this is not possible in Stoke-on-Trent). More people wanted to stay on mainstream caravan parks than actually used them in the last 12 month period. Transit sites and roadside accommodation were viewed at about the same level of popularity. However, anecdotal evidence from fieldwork in other local authority areas indicate that there is a general negative view of transit site provision amongst Gypsies and Travellers. This however, may reflect the perceived current standard, management and availability of such sites, generally seen as quite poor, rather than a comment on the nature of transit accommodation itself.
- 12.22 Almost half of respondents thought that their last 12 months travelling patterns were likely to remain similar for the foreseeable future.

13. Household formation and accommodation preferences and aspirations

Household formation

13.1 A total of 10 households (8% of the sample), reported concealed households (i.e. that there were separate households currently living with them in need of accommodation), which is a total of 17 separate households. These were generally their children, but in some cases they were described as being extended family members (i.e. sister in law, parents, etc). Three-quarters of these new households were expected to want to settle in the area where they currently lived. The remainder did not know where they would want to settle. All except one household wanted trailer accommodation.

“One of the main problems for us Gypsies is that families are growing and there are not enough pitches for the children who want to live near their family.”

13.2 Respondents were also asked whether there were people living with them who were likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next five years (2007-2012). A total of 17 households said that there were people living with them who would require independent accommodation within the next five year period. This amounted to 29 separate households (16 of which were on authorised site based accommodation). We are confident there was no double counting between these different time periods.

13.3 All but one household were thought to want trailer based accommodation (including those households currently in bricks and mortar housing) or said that *‘it was up to them how they lived’*. The majority of people also thought that these households would be likely to continue living near where they currently live.

Accommodation preferences and aspirations

13.4 The final section of the survey with Gypsies and Travellers looked at some of the ways in which they would like to see accommodation options change and what some of their preferences were around accommodation.

Long stay residential sites

13.5 A total of 16 respondents said that they would like to move to either a long-stay residential site or a different residential site. Just 3 households on unauthorised encampments were interested in this. No respondent on the unauthorised developments was interested, as they said they were happy where they currently were. A total of 5 households from socially rented sites wanted to move to another site

(15% of the sample from socially rented sites) 4 of these households were from the Stoke-on-Trent site. Seven households from private sites expressed an interest in a moving to a different site (19% of the sample from private sites in the Study Area). Two households from bricks and mortar accommodation (1 from Staffordshire Moorlands and 1 from Newcastle) reported a desire the move to site based accommodation (7% of the bricks and mortar sample).

- 13.6 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in long-stay sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. The majority of people could not indicate a time and simply answered 'don't know' (78%); 9% thought they would stay on the site for around 6 months to 1 year; 6% thought they would stay between 3 and 5 years; and, 3% thought they would stay on a site for 5 years and over.
- 13.7 There were mixed views on the preferred size a long-stay residential site should be. No one thought a site should be less than 5 – 10 pitches with a few indicating that 30-50 pitches was the maximum number. There seemed to be a general consensus, however, that a site containing around 10-20 pitches would be their preference. This also supports recent guidance on site design released by the CLG (currently in consultation form).

Transit/short-stay sites

- 13.8 A total of 28 respondents said that they would be interested in stopping at a short-stay or transit site (23% of the sample). This comprised of 8 households on unauthorised encampments; 6 households on socially rented sites; 7 households from private sites; and, 4 households from bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 13.9 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in short-stay sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. The majority of people could not indicate a time and simply answered 'don't know' (63%); 5% felt they would stay for a very short time (1 week); 10% thought they would stay on the site for around 2-4 weeks; 8% thought they would stay between 1 month and 3 months; 8% thought they would stay between 3 months and 6 months; and, 3% thought somewhere between 6 months and 1 year.
- 13.10 Similar to long-stay residential sites there were mixed views on the preferred size a site should be. No one thought a site should be less than 5 pitches, with a few indicating that 20 pitches was the maximum number. There seemed to be a general consensus, however, that a site containing between 5 -15 pitches would be their preference.

Incorporated long-stay and short-stay sites

13.11 We also asked people what their thoughts were about sites that incorporated both long-stay pitches and short-stay pitches. Most respondents said they did not know (65%), 20% thought it was a good idea with around 16% viewing it as a bad idea. We asked people to comment on their answer. Comments in favour of such a site included:

"I think it's a good idea because if our children wanted to come and stay with us for a week or two they could."

"Yes good idea, it would give people a chance at least."

"It means you can have a change, it would be like it was years ago for today's younger people."

13.12 More tentative comments included:

"As long as the people coming on to the site are nice it'll be ok but we don't want people upsetting the place."

"It all depends on what people are mixing as Romany and Irish don't mix well."

"People can go and stay with their families, but I wouldn't be happy about strangers staying though."

13.13 Views against such a site included:

"Short stay people disrupt the permanent people."

"No, transit people would leave rubbish and not keep the place tidy."

"There would be too many people moving on and off, the site would get run down quickly."

13.14 Overall, it was clear from the people we spoke to that it was not thought a good idea to mix residential and transit users on the same site. However, a number of people commented that it would be good to have the ability to visit and stay with family who lived on sites. Therefore, where short-stay pitches are made available, on residential sites, some control over transit users may be necessary in order to ensure and maintain feelings of safety and cohesion for the more permanent residents.

Accommodation preferences

13.15 We asked all respondents to comment on their preferences for different forms of accommodation:

- A private site owned and lived on by them or their family
- A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller
- A site owned by the local council
- A family owned house
- A local authority or housing association owned house
- Travelling around and staying on authorised transit sites
- A 'group housing' type site (mixture of transit/residential/chalet/trailer accommodation)

13.16 The answers were ranked on a scale from 1 to 10; 1 being the worst option for them and 10 being the best option. The mean (average) answer for each scenario are presented in preference order in Table 48 below. This shows that by far the most preferred form of accommodation is a private site owned either by themselves or their family. This is followed by a site owned by the local authority, and then jointly by the maintenance of a travelling way of life where people move from site to site, and 'group housing'. Living in a privately owned house was seen reasonably favourably. Living in a local authority or housing association house was regarded as the least favoured option, followed closely by living on a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller.

Table 48: Views on type of accommodation preferred

Type of site	Mean answer
A private site owned by them or their family	8.6
A site owned by the local council	7.5
Travelling around on authorised transit sites	5.6
'Group housing'	5.6
A family owned house	5.2
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller	4.7
A local authority or housing association owned house	4.0

13.17 We also asked for people to talk freely about the kind of things they wanted to see developed. A number of comments were made including:

"We need more family run sites so that families can all be together. We need more help with planning permission and there are lots of people who need council run sites."

“Where we live needs to accommodate horses with us being horse drawn. We need grazing and a lot of sites don’t have it.”

“It would be good to know there was a network of transit sites to use if you needed them but they must be run properly by the council.”

14. Travelling Showpeople

14.1 Travelling Showpeople occupy an unusual position in planning terms and a separate planning Circular, detailing the particular planning needs of Travelling Showpeople, has recently been produced; Circular 04/07. As well as detailing the requirements for pitch identification and allocation for Travelling Showpeople, Circular 04/07 also requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAAs.

Information from local authorities

- 14.2 None of the Study Area development plans included policies towards sites for Travelling Showpeople. No planning applications had been received for Showpeople sites since 2001, and there had been no instances of the unauthorised development of sites by Showpeople since 2001.
- 14.3 Provision has been static since 2001. Stoke-on-Trent thought that there might be an increase in the number of sites for Showpeople in its area over the next 5 years; other authorities thought an increase unlikely.
- 14.4 There were mixed reports of Travelling Showpeople sites/yards from the local authorities across the Study Area. The authorities identified 3 separate pieces of land being used by Travelling Showpeople which comprised of a single site in Stoke-on-Trent with 1 pitch, which has established use rather than planning permission; a storage site for Travelling Showpeople equipment within Staffordshire Moorlands; and, a Travelling Showpeople's yard and storage area in Biddulph, Staffordshire Moorlands. In spite of repeated attempts the Study Team were unable to make contact with households on these 3 sites. In addition to these sites, the Study Team made contact, through the local section of the Showmen's Guild, with a Travelling Showperson who lived in Newcastle-under-Lyme and owned two Yards within the authority.

Table 49: Estimated number of Travelling Showpeople yards by local authority

Local authority	Number of yards
East Staffordshire	Nil
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2
Stafford	Nil
Staffordshire Moorlands	2
Stoke-on-Trent	1

14.5 From this information (table 49) it can be estimated that the number of Travelling Showpeople pitches/plots in the Study Area currently equates to at least 5 pitches (on a 1 pitch equals 1 household basis).

Views from Travelling Showpeople

- 14.6 Just one interview with site based Travelling Showpeople was achieved. Although attempts were made to complete a face-to-face questionnaire interview, as a result of working patterns of the respondent, a qualitative telephone consultation was conducted instead. This yielded a number of findings.
- 14.7 The respondent was currently living within Newcastle-under-Lyme on a yard he owned. The respondent also owned another yard, within the same district, upon which his brother and his brother's family lived. The families have lived in the Newcastle-under-Lyme/Stoke-on-Trent area for over 100 years. Because of a reduction in the areas requiring Travelling Fairs, coupled with the impact health and safety legislation had reportedly played, the respondent mainly worked in areas to the South of England (e.g. Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon). However, he considered his current area of residence his '*home*' and said he had '*too many ties*' to think about moving elsewhere.
- 14.8 The respondent we spoke to was currently looking for an additional yard within the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent area to buy, in order to resolve current overcrowding on his present yard. The family had four grown-up children, 3 of whom were married to other Travelling Showpeople, who were currently living with the respondent and his wife. The current site was unable to expand further and was temporarily accommodating all households on a piece of land more suited to 2 households. The size of site required roughly equated to around one acre per additional household; 4 additional acres, as the family wished to continue to live together. In terms of where such yards should be located, regular access would be required to the M6 and the A500 and potential sites should be situated in close proximity to these but with reasonable access to local facilities.
- 14.9 The respondent was very complementary about the local authority (Newcastle-under-Lyme) and did not report having any issues in relation to their accommodation needs or services they were provided with.

15. Boat dwellers

15.1 As part of the assessment, and as part of the groups of concern to GTAA's, the fieldwork team sought to explore whether boat dwelling households within the Study Area had any displaced need or desire for pitch based accommodation. This section consists of two parts, firstly a brief overview as to the accommodation and related issues of boat dwelling households, and secondly a examination as to the findings of primary research with boat dwelling households within the areas.

Boat dwellers in context

- 15.2 During the 19th and early 20th Centuries a large number of families travelled across the country to move goods on the canal system. This was largely a product of the industrial age and since its decline the numbers of people permanently residing on canal and narrow boats has fallen significantly. It is unclear how many people still live permanently on the canals. However, there remains a small population of people that are accommodated on boats on canals and who would broadly self-identify as a 'Bargee' or occupational 'boat dweller'.
- 15.3 In terms of modern day employment some boat dwellers still practice traditional type of work such as pottery, painting and embroidery, with others operate a range of businesses including scrap dealing and performing.
- 15.4 Many of the issues of concern to boat dwellers are also those shared by other groups of Travellers particularly around access to and rules governing residential accommodation. Broadly, there are two types of authorised accommodation for boat dwellers: residential moorings and non-residential/cruising moorings. Residential moorings are those with planning permission for residential use where the owner/tenant can rent a mooring, in a set location, and reside permanently. Non-residential or cruising moorings refer to a mooring where the household can not reside permanently but who can spend the occasional night/short-stay. British Waterways, local authorities and private landlords can all be involved in the provision of moorings to boat dwellers.³⁴
- 15.5 Individuals who live on such boats are required to have a British Waterways cruising licence and a boat safety scheme certificate in order to move a houseboat on the canal system.
- 15.6 It is clear that there are a number of people who use houseboats as an alternative means of accommodation, as retirement pursuits or as holidays opposed to more traditional occupational boat dwellers. The remit for the GTAA was individuals who fall into this latter category. The fieldwork team endeavoured through more flexible methods of

³⁴ Shelter (2007) available at <http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/advice/advice-2623.cfm>

consultation (i.e. qualitative interviews), based on the GTAA main areas of investigation, to see if there were identifiable need for pitch based accommodation from households on the canal system in the Study Area.

Findings from boat dwellers

- 15.7 Interviews were conducted with 6 boat dwelling households, 5 within Stafford and 1 within Staffordshire Moorlands. None were occupation boat dwellers and had been living on canal boats for between 2 and 5 years.
- 15.8 When asked about their reasons for living on a canal boat most commented upon their desire for a change of lifestyle in terms of a slower pace of life, or that living on a boat had always been their 'dream'. All had previously lived in a house which they had owned with 2 respondents retaining their property whilst also living on their boat. Four respondents did not have an alternative base.
- 15.9 All respondents were happy with the facilities that they had access to with facilities available ranging from water, heating, WC, shower, electric to internet access and digital television.
- 15.10 All respondents were couples who had either retired at 'traditional' ages (i.e. in their 60s), had retired early (i.e. 40s and 50s) or were self employed (van driver and painter). The oldest person consulted was 70 years old the youngest was 43 years of age.
- 15.11 Their views on local services were largely positive with the exception of one person who commented upon the lack of waste recycling opportunities for people living on the canal and an inability to fully register at local health centres (apart from a temporary registration) which made obtaining prescriptions more difficult. Other than these comments the respondents did not have any other issues.
- 15.12 In terms of the areas they travelled to 3 respondents tended to remain in the Stafford area with the remaining 3 tending to travel "*all across the country*".
- 15.13 All respondents thought they would remain living in their boats for the foreseeable future with two commenting "*health allowing*".
- 15.14 There were no pitch requirements identified from people living on the canal system.

16. An assessment of need for residential pitches

- 16.1 Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Indeed, population characteristics emerging from research around Gypsy and Traveller accommodation agree that the formation of new households is inevitable.³⁵ The supply of additional authorised accommodation has slowed since 1994, but the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Rather, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, including an increase in the use of unauthorised sites; innovative house dwelling arrangements (i.e. living in trailers in the grounds of houses); overcrowding on sites; and, overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).
- 16.2 From an analysis of the data presented throughout this report there is every indication that the North Housing Market Study Area will share in this national growth, as a result of its long-standing Gypsy and Traveller community; key transport links; and, attractive urban and rural localities. In turn, this survey has indicated that in many Gypsy and Traveller families, older children will want to form new households, preferably near their families across the Study Area.
- 16.3 Given the presence of unauthorised encampments, household concealment, and future household formation, the current supply of appropriate accommodation appears to be significantly less than the 'need' identified. It is the conclusion of the project team that there is a need for more site accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers within the North Housing Market area. The following sections look in depth at this issue, considering residential and transit pitch need for Gypsies and Travellers, specific pitch needs for Travelling Showpeople and needs relating to bricks and mortar accommodation.

Calculating accommodation supply and need

- 16.4 The methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. In 2003 a crude estimation of additional pitch provision was made at a national level based predominantly on information contained within the Caravan Count.³⁶ The Draft Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments also contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.³⁷ More recently, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for helping to ensure that GTAAs are accurate in their estimation of accommodation

³⁵ Niner, P. (2003) Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, London: ODPM.

³⁶ Niner, P. (2003) Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, London: ODPM.

³⁷ CLG (2007) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Guidance. HMSO.

need based upon a range of factors.³⁸ It is from this latter guide that our estimation of supply and need is drawn. In particular, residential accommodation need is considered by carefully exploring the following factors:

Current residential supply

- Socially rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

Residential need 2007-2012

- Temporary planning permissions, which will end over the assessment period.
- Allowance for family growth over the assessment period.
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments.
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between sites and housing.
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between the Study Area and elsewhere.
- Allowance for potential closure of existing sites.
- Potential need for residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments.

Pitch supply 2007-2012

- Vacant pitches over the assessment period.
- Unused pitches, which are to be brought back into use over the assessment period.
- Known planned site developments.

16.5 Each one of these factors is taken in turn, and illustrated at a North Housing Market area level initially. It is then broken-down by local authority.

16.6 Within the guidance for producing GTAAs there is also the consideration of 'new households likely to arrive from elsewhere'. It remains unclear from the findings if movement between the Study Area and elsewhere will affect the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring residential accommodation across the Study Area. Although a number of households indicated a desire to live elsewhere in the UK these families tended to be those on unauthorised encampments who intended to maintain a travelling lifestyle or return to their permanent base.

16.7 It is understood that generally speaking, the Study Area is a popular area for Gypsies and Travellers looking for both residential and short-stay/transit accommodation. Gypsies and Travellers spoke about the 'draw' of major urban areas such as Lancashire, Manchester,

³⁸Communities and Local Government (2007) Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies. HMSO.

Birmingham and London; the possibility of short-term employment opportunities in the area; family links in the area; and, the route through Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle is noted for its links to transport networks (roads and seaports).

- 16.8 As this accommodation assessment (in line with other accommodation assessments) included Gypsies and Travellers within the boundaries of the Study Area, it is impossible to present a reliable estimation on the need for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers currently living elsewhere. In considering the large number of rented pitches available in the area it is felt that those Gypsies and Travellers who arrive from elsewhere will probably be balanced by those Gypsies and Travellers who move on from the area and leave vacancies. For simplicity, both elements (new households and private site vacancies) are omitted.
- 16.9 The assessment period referred to above relates to the 2007-2012 period with an alternative approach taken to making estimates beyond this point for 2012-2026. As a result of the impact that the creation of more authorised pitches may have on the Gypsy and Traveller community (in terms of households characteristics, travelling patterns, settlement patterns) it is unwise to consider each of the above factors beyond the initial assessment period. Instead we use a simple estimate of family/household growth to illustrate likely natural increase in the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is applied to both a North Housing Market area and local authority level.

A cautionary note on local authority pitch allocation

- 16.10 Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling community are generally much wider, as there is social housing available in every authority in the country, there are no local authority sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England, and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Some authorities have no authorised private sites. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances; for example, an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or, an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).

16.11 As requested in the research brief, we have identified Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs at a sub-regional and a local level. This has been done on a ‘**need where it is seen to arise**’ basis. However, the results of this apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should be actually met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the North Housing Market area. Decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities, the County Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability.

Additional residential pitch requirements

16.12 Table 50 below summarises the model for residential pitch requirements in the Study Area between 2007-2012 local authority requirements can be found in Appendix 2. Each requirement is expanded upon below.

Table 50: Summary of estimated need for residential pitches at a North Housing Market area level 2007-2012

Element of supply and need		Pitches
	Current residential supply	
1	Socially rented residential pitches	61
2	Private authorised pitches	85
3	Total authorised pitches	146
	Residential pitch need 2007-2012	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	0
5	New household formation	51
6	Unauthorised developments	18
7	Movement between sites and housing	-20
8	Closure of sites	0
9	Unauthorised encampments	32
10	Additional residential need	81
	Additional supply 2007-2012	
11	Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	0
12	Pitches with permission but not developed	3
13	New sites planned	0
14	Vacancies on socially rented sites	1
15	Supply 2007-2012	4
16	Requirement for extra pitches	77

Element of supply and need 1 - 16

1. The number of pitches on residential socially rented sites provided by local authority information.
2. The number of occupied residential pitches on private authorised sites provided by local authority information
3. Sum of 1 + 2
4. There are no temporary planning permissions of sites due to end during the assessment period.
5. The number of new pitches required from new household formation. This requires estimates of:
 - a. The number of new households likely to form;
 - b. The proportion likely to require a pitch; and,
 - c. The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area.

Household formation findings from sites and houses are presented separately.

New households forming on sites

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from authorised sites was the equivalent of 33% of respondents.

Assumptions: treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will probably over-state need as there may be some inter-marrying within the Study Area of individuals, and there may have been some over claiming. From local advice and what seems reasonable for the area we have adjusted these figures by 7.5% (i.e. 1 in 7.5 people will form a household with another individual in the area)³⁹ therefore new households will be equivalent to 92.5% of such individuals. 97% of new households require their own accommodation and need a pitch, all are assumed to want to stay in the Study Area.

Calculation: 33% grossed to total current population on sites = 33% of 146 = 48 households/pitches. 97% of 48 families = 47 families minus 7.5% = 43 households.

³⁹ From local expertise it was suggested that 1 in every 10 Irish Travellers would form a household within the Study Area with Romany Gypsies forming households within the Study Area every 1 in 20 times.

New households forming in housing

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from bricks and mortar accommodation was the equivalent of 14% of respondents.

Assumptions: treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will probably over-state need as there may be some inter-marrying within the Study Area of individuals, and there may have been some over claiming. As above we have adjusted these figures by 7.5% therefore new households will be equivalent to 92.5% of such individuals

Calculation: 14% of known housed population (65 households) = 14% of 65 minus 7.5% = 8 households. These households represent a small proportion of housed Gypsies and Travellers. As a result this figure is likely to under-state. From the information provided via the survey we assume that these households require their own accommodation and need a pitch all are assumed to want to stay in the Study Area.

Total pitch need from household formation on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing = **51 pitches**

6. According to our survey there were 3 unauthorised developments at the time of the assessment comprising of approximately 8 pitches. Since these sites are, by definition, unauthorised, these households are in need of authorised, legal accommodation, whether through the granting of planning permission on their own site or pitch provision elsewhere. However, we found that these unauthorised developments also had a high level of over-crowding on them with potential household formation over the assessment period. We found that there was the equivalent of 8 additional households living on these pitches which required separate accommodation.

It is estimated that there is a need for approximately **18 pitches** to accommodate these households. This need is for permanent residential pitches, as those households who were interviewed on unauthorised developments wanted to stay in the area where they were currently living.

If authorities regularise these developments this would count towards additional pitch provision, but permissions would need to take account current levels of overcrowding on these sites.

7. This is the net figure of estimation of the flow from sites to houses and vice versa.

Site to/from housing movement

Finding: 17% of respondents on authorised sites expressed an interest in moving to a house in the Study Area

Assumption: All will move to a house

Calculation: 17% grossed to population = 17% of 146 = 25 families/households

Finding: 7% of families/households in bricks and mortar families expressed an interest in a site place in the Study Area

Assumption: All will move from housing to sites if pitches are available

Calculation: 7% of known bricks and mortar population = 5 families/households

The net movement from housing to sites and sites to housing is **20 families** requiring housed accommodation over the assessment period.

8. Plans to close existing sites, which have been calculated within the supply of site accommodation, will ultimately displace a number of Gypsies and Travellers resulting in an increase in housing need. This figure is the number of pitches that will be affected if sites known to be closing do so. It is the understanding of the project team that there was no intention to close any residential site in the Study Area.
9. This factor takes into account households involved in unauthorised encampments that require a residential pitch in the Study Area. Need for transit accommodation is considered in Chapter 17. The calculation of need for residential accommodation requires estimates of the number of households involved in unauthorised encampments, and of how many of these need a residential pitch in the Study Area.

Families involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings: The Caravan Count shows potentially low numbers of unauthorised encampments for the Study Area as a whole. Survey information from the local authorities indicates that in 2006 there were an estimated 39 separate encampments. This is broadly reflective of previous years although authorities within the Study Area have experienced both higher and lower numbers of encampments. The year of 2007 has seen a slight increase in unauthorised encampments, which are thought to be due to flooding in adjoining areas, temporary reduction in transit pitches on 1 socially rented site and major regeneration in one area (Stoke-on-Trent) leading to greater open space providing opportunities to stop.

Assumptions:

- Information from officers indicated that the vast majority of encampments were thought to be either new or regular visitors to the area, as opposed to groups moving between areas within the Study Area. Assumes this to be 90% of encampments.
- The average encampment size during 2006 was 7 caravans. The survey showed an average of 1.2 caravans per household. There was an average of 6 families on each encampment.
- It was felt by frontline workers that a number of families who feature on unauthorised encampments are repeat encampments over the study period (i.e. the local authority would be visited a number of times during the calendar year by the same family) this was felt to be the case in 25% of encampments.

Calculation: 90% of encampments during 2006 multiplied by average encampment size = 90% of 39 times 6 = 211 families minus 25% = 158 families.

Need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments

Finding: 20% of households on unauthorised encampments were interested in moving to a residential pitch in the Study Area.

Assumptions:

- 20% assumed about accurate due to information on family ties and place of birth.
- This is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families each year. Other households on unauthorised encampments should be incorporated into other GTAAs.

Calculation: 20% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 20% of 158 = 32 households/pitches

10. Sum of elements 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

11. Zero – there are no pitches which are currently closed due to enter re-use.

12. Pitches for which planning permissions have been granted but which are not yet developed = 3 pitches

13. Zero – there were no plans reported to develop new socially rented sites.

14. Vacancies on socially rented sites are estimated on the basis of an average of 1 pitch being re-let in each year on each site - 3 times 5 = 15 pitches

15. Sum of elements 11, 12, 13 & 14

16. Row 10 minus Row 15 = total residential pitches required for the Study Area.

Permanent residential accommodation need over the next periods 2012-2016, 2016-2021 and 2021-2026

The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements once GTAA's across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site/pitch provision. There is no means of knowing how Gypsies and Travellers will decide to live in the next decade. There may be an increase in smaller households, moves into bricks and mortar housing may be more common or household formation may happen at a later age. However, in order to take a strategic view, it is important to be able to plan for the longer-term. Therefore, in order to balance the complexity of issues with a need to plan for the longer term we have used an assumed rate of household growth of 3% a year compound as applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2011.⁴⁰ This figure is also quoted in the recent CLG report.⁴¹ All households on sites are assumed to require pitches. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period and that any households on unauthorised encampments will not require permanent residential accommodation in the Study Area.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2012-2016** is an additional **28 residential pitches**.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2016-2021** is an additional **40 residential pitches**.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2021-2026** is additional **46 residential pitches**.

Total additional residential pitch need at the Study Area level 2007-2026 = 191 pitches⁴²

⁴⁰ Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. In the Republic of Ireland a report noted that the 4% family growth rate assumed by the Task Force on the Travelling Community had proved very accurate between 1997 and 2004 (*Review of the Operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998*. Report by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, 2004).

⁴¹ Communities and Local Government (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. HMSO.

⁴² When need is calculated at a local level as a result of rounding pitch requirements to whole numbers there is some inevitable discrepancy.

17. An assessment of need for transit pitches

- 17.1 Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or visit family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. Currently the worst living conditions are commonly experienced by Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments, who do not have easy access to water or toilet facilities, as well as difficulties in accessing education and health services.
- 17.2 National policy is clear that there should be provision in order for Gypsies and Travellers who chose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately. During the course of this assessment we have found clear evidence as to the need for authorities to make provision for Gypsies and Travellers in transit. This is shown by:
- The records of local authorities and the information in Caravan Counts, both of which show a number of encampments within the Study Area;
 - The fieldwork experiences of the study team who found a number of unauthorised encampments who declined participation in the assessment on the grounds that they 'were just passing through';
 - The number of people who took part in the assessment who indicated they often travel to the area, but who do not want residential accommodation; and,
 - The level of interest in the provision of transit sites/stopping places in the area.

Assessing the need for transit pitches

- 17.3 The assessment of need for transit provision uses the need for regularisation as evidenced by unauthorised encampments; as a result, the methodology for calculating the need for transit provision is similar to that for calculating the need for residential provision from unauthorised encampments.

Households involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings: The Caravan Count shows potentially low numbers of unauthorised encampments for the Study Area. Survey information from the local authorities indicates that in 2006 there were an estimated 39 separate encampments. This is broadly reflective of previous years although authorities within the Study Area have experienced both higher and lower numbers of encampments. The year of 2007 has seen a slight increase in unauthorised

encampments which are thought to be due to flooding in adjoining areas, temporary reduction in transit pitches on 1 socially rented site and major regeneration in one area (Stoke-on-Trent) leading to greater open space providing opportunities to stop on.

Assumptions:

- Information from officers indicated that the vast majority of encampments were thought to be either new or regular visitors to the area, as opposed to groups moving between areas within the Study Area. Assumes this to be 90% of encampments.
- The average encampment size during 2006 was 7 caravans although encampments could be between 1 and 25 units. The survey showed an average of 1.2 caravans per household. There was an average of 6 families on each encampment.
- It was felt by frontline workers that a number of families who feature on unauthorised encampments are repeat encampments over the study period (i.e. the local authority would be visited a number of times during the calendar year by the same family) this was felt to be the case in 25% of encampments.

Calculation: 90% of encampments during 2006 multiplied by average encampment size = 90% of 39 times 6 = 211 households minus 25% = 158 families.

Need for transit provision

Finding: 53% of households on unauthorised encampments were interested in using a transit pitch/authorised stopping place in the Study Area.

Assumptions:

- 53% assumed about accurate due to information provided by respondents on unauthorised encampments about expected length of stay (short-term); reasons for stay (stop-over, family, work); and, the reported preferences from the survey.

Calculation: 53% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 53% of 158 = 84 households/pitches.

17.4 This indicates that the authorities can expect to see an estimated 84 additional households require short-stay accommodation during one calendar year.

17.5 By taking into account that the main travelling months are, generally speaking, between April-October it seems reasonable to assume that the vast majority of this travelling will be done within this 6 month period. If a transit pitch has an upper time limit of stay of 4 weeks this

means that one 10 pitch transit site during the summer will have the capacity to cater for around 60 of these households.

- 17.6 Therefore, it is estimated that the provision of around 24 transit pitches will provide the capacity required to cater for the households identified as in need of transit accommodation. These pitches should be distributed across the Study Area and a larger number developed in authorities which experience the greatest number of encampments.

Total additional need for transit pitches = 24 pitches

- 17.7 It is clear that travelling and resulting unauthorised encampments are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites need to accommodate the diversity of travelling. It is important to note that the provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampment.

- 17.8 It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. There are two fundamental aspects here:

1. Larger pitches on residential sites provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term visitors.
2. Variety in transit provision is needed to cater for the variety of needs. This might include formal transit sites; less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis; or, temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year.

- 17.9 At a partnership level, a single transit site makes little sense. Travelling occurs at various scales. The partner authorities are in an ideal position in order to plan, devise and implement a network of transit accommodation between the local authorities. In addition, the provision of transit accommodation is an area of opportunity where local and County authorities can work with adjoining regions, Counties and authorities to pool information and to ensure that proposals make sense in the wider context.

18. An assessment of need for Travelling Showpeople pitches

- 18.1 Circular 04/07 requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAs as such, because of the separate planning issues for Travelling Showpeople, and their differing accommodation needs, we have produced a separate calculation of residential need. It must be noted that pitches for (commonly referred to as 'yards') Travelling Showpeople are significantly larger than that required for other groups of Travellers.
- 18.2 All of the factors that are used to determine Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need are considered in order to calculate need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople; however, a number of these are significantly different for Travelling Showpeople. In particular, this includes:
- *Unauthorised sites* – Travelling Showpeople tend not to camp illegally on land which they do not have permission for to the same extent as is experienced by other Travelling groups. Information from the Showmen's Guild indicated that the maintenance of good working relationships with local authorities are important to their businesses therefore any illegal activity by Travelling Showpeople, whose occupation relies on having permission by an authority to operate, potentially risks the ability to work. As a result Travelling Showpeople will rarely appear as unauthorised encampments, preferring instead, during the fair season, to double-up on authorised sites, use an unauthorised stopping place, (often with agreement with the land owner) or travel back to their authorised pitch. There were no unauthorised sites used by Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area at the time of the assessment.
 - *Movement from other areas* – The areas in which Travelling Showpeople live are heavily influenced by the circuit of fairs that each household attends. As a result, there is a tendency to live within 'their patch' of preferred fairs, which in turn means that Travelling Showpeople will move to other areas for short-periods only rather than to seek permanent accommodation. The decline in Fairs within the Study Area means that the North Housing Market area possibly acts as a disincentive to reside within the borough for those without other ties to the area.
- 18.3 As discussed in chapter 14, the fieldwork with Gypsies and Travellers and survey of local authority information revealed that the population of Travelling Showpeople within the Study Area was very small – confined to 2, possibly 3, Travelling Showpeople yards with living units and equipment with the remaining yards for storage of equipment only. The owners of the stored equipment either live in houses in or outside the Study Area or have site based accommodation in other areas.

Travelling Showpeople accommodation need

Finding: From the one site based Travelling Showpeople family we managed to speak to we ascertained that the only indicator of additional accommodation need appeared to be over-crowding on an existing site. This over-crowding amounted to 4 additional households in need.

Assumptions:

- All households require accommodation either within Newcastle-under-Lyme or Stoke-on-Trent
- Including an allowance for the additional site within Newcastle-under-Lyme (1 household)

Calculation: Need for additional accommodation for Travelling Showpeople = 5 households.

Note: if the respondent who took part in the study decided to move to a new larger site the current site may become available for development.

19. Recommendations

- 19.1 The following chapter is divided into two main sections. The first looks at site provision and the implications of two broad options: a continuation of the status quo: and, a more proactive approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision. The second section presents a number of recommendations based on the findings.
- 19.2 The authorities which make up the North Housing Market area could choose to keep their approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in line with their historical approach. This would broadly involve:
- No additional public site/pitch provision. Pitches on existing public and private sites would come available through current natural turnover, and these would then be let according to current allocation policies and practices;
 - Receiving applications for the development of private Gypsy or Traveller sites. Past records suggest that these may be unsuccessful. It is likely that these will stimulate long processes of refusals, enforcement, appeals and inquiries;
 - A continuation, and possible increase, in the number of unauthorised developments occurring across the Study Area; and
 - The continuation and eventual increase in the number of unauthorised encampments across the Study Area.
- 19.3 The implications of such an option include:
- The various needs that have been identified during the course of this assessment will not be met;
 - Households which are currently suppressed, and new households which are forming, will not be able to locate appropriate accommodation across the Study Area;
 - Families living on unauthorised encampments will continue to experience poor living conditions and poor access to basic services;
 - The legal and other costs of accommodating unauthorised sites continue and may increase;
 - Any current community cohesion between members of the non-Traveller community and Travelling communities may be put under pressure as unauthorised developments and encampments occur repeatedly across the Study Area; and

- The authorities fail to meet the requirements of both the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which outlines the requirement for Development Plan Documents to be prepared in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. By failing to address these needs Housing Strategies may well be declared not fit for purpose and Development Plan Documents unsound.
- 19.4 Alternatively, each of the local authorities, in partnership with key agencies, could take a more proactive approach to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in order to meet the accommodation need identified in this assessment. The over-arching recommendation from the authors is that the authorities involved aim to work in a pro-active fashion to meet the accommodation needs which have been identified as a result of this assessment.
- 19.5 Each authority has a significant amount of work to do in order to create greater synergy between the current situation of the Gypsy and Traveller population and situation enjoyed by the vast majority of the non-Traveller communities. The following aims to provide the authorities concerned with conclusions and recommendations, emerging during the course of this assessment, as to how the need identified can be best met. There are six broad headings: overall strategy, systems and policy framework; accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers; communication and engagement; developing accommodation; Travelling Showpeople accommodation; and, health and housing-related support issues.
- 19.6 Although there is a general theme of joined-up working in these recommendations, it must be remembered that each of the authorities will need to develop their own responses to this need in order to provide locally intelligent accommodation options for resident Gypsy and Traveller households. A number of the recommendations, and variations thereof, have been made within other GTAAs that the authors have been involved in. We have brought our experience of practice (both good and bad) to this assessment in order to make these recommendations. We believe it is important that local authorities begin to take a common approach to embedding Gypsy and Traveller issues into their plans and good practice sharing - this should happen both within and across areas. It is acknowledged that these recommendations are quite generic; therefore, those authorities who are not already implementing these recommendations should begin, and those authorities already engaged in such work should continue to do so.

Recommendations

Strategy, systems and policy framework

- 19.7 The North Housing Market area authorities and the County have important, strategic and facilitating roles to play in order to support local authorities and each other in developing pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers. It is important that partnerships between the authorities are maintained after the assessment of need and this is linked into work of Staffordshire County Council.

Recommendation 1: A North Housing Market wide co-ordination group on Gypsy and Traveller issues comprised of local authorities and the County Council should be established to assist the authorities in developing a meaningful and co-ordinated approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and related issues. The Steering Group for this GTAA would provide an excellent foundation for this to happen. This group could link into the existing work and networks of the North Staffordshire Inter-agency Group.

- 19.8 The North Staffordshire Gypsy and Traveller Inter-agency group has evidently become a useful way in which agencies across the North Housing Market area can network, share information and work together to produce co-ordinated action for Gypsies and Travellers. Currently the attendance of the Inter-agency Group is heavily weighted towards agencies and individuals with a particular interest in Stoke-on-Trent. This group will provide an excellent base of experience, advice and support for other authorities and related partners who will, over the coming years, see an increase in Gypsies and Travellers living in their areas as a result of the findings of this assessment.

Recommendation 2: All authorities should support the existing North Staffordshire Inter-agency Gypsy and Traveller Group into increasing the geographical and service membership of the group.

- 19.9 Although, in comparison to other areas, some local authorities had access to much more information around the make-up of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities, there is a need to improve information collection and sharing.

Recommendation 3: There is a need for a standardised and centralised method of recording occurrences of unauthorised encampments and the needs of households on these encampments. Steps should be taken to produce a North Housing Market area wide Caravan Count in order to take a much more strategic and accurate view of accommodation need, travelling patterns and trends.

Recommendation 4: In order to adhere to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and to ensure the high quality of on-going monitoring, authorities should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are recognised in all their ethnic monitoring forms, most urgently in relation to housing and planning.

19.10 With an increase in the provision of pitches and sites for Gypsies and Travellers, there will be a need to ensure that access to these sites embrace transparency and equality. There is currently a high degree of suspicion from Gypsies and Travellers in the fairness of obtaining pitches based on perceptions of prejudice held by local authorities, site managers and site owners. Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most diverse groupings in UK society. This diversity can at times lead to potential conflict.

Recommendation 5: Residential and transit site waiting lists should be:

- Accessible to all resident Gypsies and Travellers in the North Housing Market Study Area
- Available to be accessed in advance and outside the area via telephone or ICT systems
- Clear and transparent in terms of allocation policies
- Formalised
- Centralised
- Standardised

Recommendation 6: Authorities should ensure that principles of equality are embedded in relation to the wide range of services provided. In particular this includes:

- Housing policies
- Homeless policies
- Harassment
- Communication and engagement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Site management
- Housing-related support
- Choice-Based Lettings
- Allocation policies
- Planning Policies

Recommendation 7: Authorities should be sensitive to the different cultural and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers who may present as homeless and those who may require local authority accommodation.

Recommendation 8: All authorities should take a common approach to the Welfare Needs Assessment. This should be

grounded in good practice and be pro-active in meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 9: Housing officers, site managers and other relevant personnel should liaise to ensure that advice on allocation policies and procedures is always up-to-date and that site managers or other liaison staff can assist people through the system.

Recommendation 10: The practice of licensing pitches should be discontinued and replaced by more formal tenancies. A tenancy would assure the resident of greater security and encourage feelings of ownership in their site/accommodation.

19.11 The management of sites requires careful attention. Inappropriate management can foster and encourage a perception of partisanship and divisiveness, and does little to build social cohesion on the sites and lessen social exclusion for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Recommendation 11: Authorities should implement the principles contained within the emerging guidance for site management published by the CLG.

Recommendation 12: The management of sites needs to be evaluated at regular intervals

Accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers

19.12 It is clear that travelling and any resulting unauthorised encampment are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites need to accommodate the diversity of travelling. Provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampments (i.e. a mixture of residential and transit provision may not work in all cases because of possible community tension between 'settled' and 'highly mobile' Gypsies and Travellers, or varying reasons for travelling).

19.13 In addition, the authorities that make up the Study Area appear to be attractive areas for seasonal, short stay or stop-over travelling. Although calculations have been produced, such travelling is difficult to quantify as need in terms of pitch provision, so the authorities will need to develop a range of appropriate strategies to meet this often unpredictable need.

19.14 It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. There are three fundamental recommendations here:

Recommendation 13: There needs to be variety in transit provision in order to cater for the variety of needs. This might range from formal transit sites, through less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis to temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year;

Recommendation 14: There is a need to work across districts, with private landowners and key Gypsy and Traveller groups in order to provide feasible and appropriate options for mass gatherings, should they occur.

19.15 The provision of transit/short-stay accommodation requires careful 'joined-up' planning. As the assessment has shown, travelling occurs at various scales, sub-regionally, regionally and internationally. County Councils and RPBs such as the West Midlands Regional Assembly are in a unique position in order to plan, devise and implement a network of transit accommodation between the local authorities across the region. In addition, the provision of transit accommodation is an area of opportunity where RPBs can work with adjoining regions to pool information and to ensure that proposals make sense in the wider context.

Recommendation 15: The level of accommodation provision across the North Housing Market Study Area should remain under constant review.

Communication and engagement

19.16 Communication with local Gypsy and Traveller households will be imperative during the coming years of change and upheaval caused by an increase in accommodation provision (both locally and nationally). Such communication will require co-ordination and sensitivity. The process of developing pitches for Gypsies and Travellers provides an opportunity to begin a clear and transparent dialogue with members of the 'settled community', including local residents and parish and district councillors, local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers. Local agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau in Stoke-on-Trent are well placed to advise local authorities on this, based on their experience and current work.

Recommendation 16: The authorities should engage in efforts to raise cultural awareness issues and dispel some of the persistent myths around Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 17: Authorities should develop their communication and engagement strategies already in place for consultation with non-Travelling communities and tailor these, in an appropriate manner, to Gypsy and Traveller community members.

19.17 There is a need to develop a more constructive dialogue between Gypsies and Travellers seeking to develop private sites and planning authorities. Initial and appropriate discussions with the planning authority could avoid the economic fallout which occurs when land is developed and planning permission is later refused.

Recommendation 18: Planning departments should offer appropriate advice and support to Gypsies and Travellers on the workings of the planning system and the criteria to be considered in applications.

19.18 Our experience of collecting data about the Gypsy and Traveller community across each authority has highlighted that certain sections of some local authorities are more involved in Gypsy and Traveller issues than others and have a clear lead on these issues. Other authorities adopted a more ad hoc approach and the responsibility of Gypsy and Traveller issues occasionally went to an officer who had shown an interest. There are two recommendations here.

Recommendation 19: Each authority should identify a clear lead officer who manages each authority's response to Gypsies and Traveller issues.

Recommendation 20: Each authority should develop a working group within the authority involving all the partner agencies, in order to remain updated as to key national and local issues. For instance, housing colleagues should be fully involved in all decisions relating to planning and site provision.

Developing accommodation

19.19 Clearly the process of developing accommodation to meet the need identified here will require significant funding, much of which will be directed at the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant held by Communities and Local Government. A number of stakeholders noted that until the need for residential accommodation was satisfied it will be challenging to develop transit accommodation/sites/places without them turning into residential sites by default.

Recommendation 21: Those officers and agencies leading the planning, design and development of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should involve the target Gypsy and Traveller population in all stages. In turn site (both residential and transit) and 'housing' design should be approached in a creative and innovative manner. Preferences and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers should be taken into consideration. Important things to consider include:

Location to local services and transport networks
Pitch size
Amenities
Sheds
Management
Mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer, etc.)
Utility of outside space (driveways, gardens, etc.)
Homes for life principles
Health and related support issues
Tenure Mix
Space for short-term visitors

Recommendation 22: Authorities should ensure that existing statutory guidelines and emerging good practice are used in relation to residential and transit site design, management and health and safety issues.

19.20 It is crucial that the Gypsy and Traveller population are provided with choice and a range of options for future accommodation. Authorities should not solely rely on the planning system in order to meet their identified pitch need as this may serve to exclude those less economically active/mobile households. The tenure aspirations and preferences of Gypsies and Travellers need to be understood and policies and practices developed to work with these. Many households wanted to be owner-occupiers but few households could actually afford to do this. Although we did not monitor fiscal levels during the study, households clearly had varying income levels. Some households, particularly those on unauthorised encampments and those renting private pitches seemed particularly under resourced and often lacked the ability to provide adequate space for their household needs. Discounted for sale, shared ownership and trailer rental are just three of the methods which may help increase the economic mobility and engender a greater sense of belonging for Gypsy and Traveller households.

Recommendation 23: The principles and methods used by authorities and RSLs of promoting affordable accommodation to members of the non-Traveller communities should be adapted to the accommodation used by members of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

19.21 At the same time of new sites being developed the authorities still have an obligation to ensure that accommodation currently in place for Gypsies and Travellers continues to meet their needs and aspirations.

Recommendation 24: Authorities should continue to refurbish and upgrade existing sites where needed.

Recommendation 25: Stafford Borough Council should examine the rolling lease on their socially rented site and either secure a permanent lease for the site or secure a replacement permanent site in the vicinity.

Health and housing-related support Issues

19.22 The indications are that although the sample for this study generally experienced few incidences of ill health and disability, when this was not the case the suggestions are that health needs are a significant factor in influencing accommodation need. This affects decisions to continue to reside on 'sites', which without support were seen as difficult to do so, or houses where adaptations were easier to accommodate. There were a number of issues which emerged during the assessment that would improve the life of a number of Gypsies and Travellers and provide different sections of the communities with independence.

Recommendation 26: It will be an important component, in order to produce sustainable solutions for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision, for all relevant departments to engage with Gypsy and Traveller needs. This is particularly the case for Supporting People teams, who should be involved in the strategic planning and delivery of services.

Recommendation 27: Authorities should work with Supporting People to create additional floating Gypsy and Traveller housing support workers. Such officers could offer support and assistance to enable those people wishing to remain in bricks and mortar accommodation or live on sites, to do so.

Recommendation 28: Supporting People teams should network with Supporting People teams locally, regionally and nationally in order to share and disseminate good practice on meeting the housing-related support needs of Gypsy and Traveller community members.

Recommendation 29: The profile of Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) should be raised in relation to Gypsies and Travellers who wish to remain in their own homes. It is important that such agencies are able to engage with people living on private sites as well as those living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Recommendation 30: There remain barriers to accessing healthcare and issues around making the contact with all health professionals productive and appropriate. Health professionals should look at ways in which access to and engagement with health care can be improved.

19.23 This report encourages Supporting People teams to ensure they are involved in the provision of services to Gypsies and Travellers and this may be best performed by the creation of a number of floating support units. However, because of the nature of need required and the unknown size of the precise population, as well as the potential initial reluctance to access such support, it is difficult to specify the number of units which will be provided. However, in order to ensure that Supporting People funded support is successful it is anticipated that flexibility will be key.

Recommendation 31: Housing-related support should be flexible in order to offer support when it is needed (i.e. settlement on a site/in a house), with scope to withdraw it on a phased basis or continue as required.

Recommendation 32: In order to assist with the development of more authorised accommodation, adjustment to sites/houses and the regularisation of Gypsies and Travellers, each Gypsy and Traveller in all the authorities in the area should have access to housing-related support in the form of floating support units. This will require review over time and the number of units needed may reduce.

19.24 A major source of recurring tension within the non-Traveller community is around the abandonment of household and occupational waste on areas which have been encamped upon. Gypsies and Travellers however often only have vans and light haulage vehicles as their means of transport. Such transport often prohibits the use of local recycling centres without a charge being paid.

Recommendation 33: Options should be devised by each authority for Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites who have no means to dispose of their household waste to do so.

Recommendation 34: The authorities need to develop ways in which to deal firmly with households who leave occupational waste in areas where encampments have happened rather than discard this at the appropriate recycling centre.

Travelling Showpeople accommodation

19.25 Authorities should consider the above recommendations as applying to all Gypsy and Traveller groups, inclusive of Travelling Showpeople. However, because of the unique position afforded to Travelling Showpeople in the planning guidance, coupled with a changing labour market and living arrangements for Travelling Showpeople households, accommodating Travelling Showpeople poses particular challenges. There are a number of additional recommendations that emerge from the accommodation situation of this particular community.

Recommendation 35: When developing new site provision for Travelling Showpeople, authorities should take a strategic view of allocation of yards which accommodates logistical issues such as travelling with large equipment.

Recommendation 36: Authorities should consult with the local branch of the Showmen's Guild to discuss plans to increase and develop the accommodation provision for Travelling Showpeople.

Recommendation 37: Authorities should be aware of and implement the guidance issued by the CLG around planning and Travelling Showpeople sites.

Recommendation 38: In order to adapt to current working and living patterns of Travelling Showpeople, authorities should move towards the establishment of permanent site provision rather than temporary accommodation.

Appendix 1

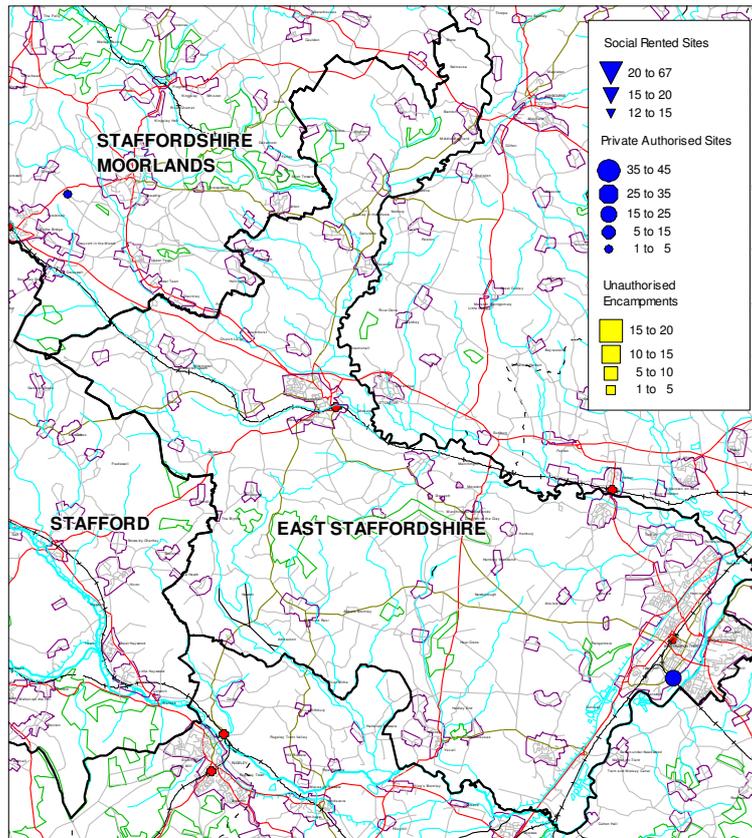
Table A1: CLG Caravan Count results for the North Housing Market Study Area by local authority between January 2005 and January 2007

Authority area	Count	Authorised Socially Rented Sites	Authorised Private Sites	Unauthorised Developments	Unauthorised Encampments	Total Caravans
Total for the North Housing Market Study Area	Jan 2007	89	73	15	0	177
	July 2006	105	71	7	8	191
	Jan 2006	103	69	11	3	186
	July 2005	112	59	9	5	185
	Jan 2005	94	75	7	7	183
East Staffordshire	Jan 2007	0	18	0	0	18
	July 2006	0	18	0	0	18
	Jan 2006	0	14	0	0	14
	July 2005	0	14	0	0	14
	Jan 2005	0	14	0	0	14
Newcastle under Lyme	Jan 2007	21	0	4	0	25
	July 2006	21	0	3	3	27
	Jan 2006	21	0	0	0	21
	July 2005	22	0	0	0	22
	Jan 2005	22	0	0	7	29
Stafford	Jan 2007	12	55	7	0	74
	July 2006	12	53	2	0	67
	Jan 2006	12	55	10	0	77
	July 2005	18	37	8	0	63
	Jan 2005	12	59	7	0	78
Staffordshire Moorlands	Jan 2007	0	0	4	0	4
	July 2006	0	0	2	0	2
	Jan 2006	0	0	1	0	1
	July 2005	0	0	1	2	3
	Jan 2005	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent	Jan 2007	56	0	0	0	56
	July 2006	72	0	0	5	77
	Jan 2006	70	0	0	3	73
	July 2005	72	8	0	3	83
	Jan 2005	60	2	0	0	62

Appendix 2: District summaries

This appendix to the report includes summaries for the five local authorities within the North Housing Market area. This shows the map of each authority showing existing site provision (where there is provision), and a summary table of provision and of estimates of additional requirements for residential pitches and transit site pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and pitches for Travelling Showpeople families. The explanation of how these figures have been derived is described in Chapters 16, 17 and 18 of the main report. Rounding these numbers to the nearest whole pitches means that there is some inevitable slight discrepancy between the need identified at the broader Study Area level and the need identified more locally.

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL



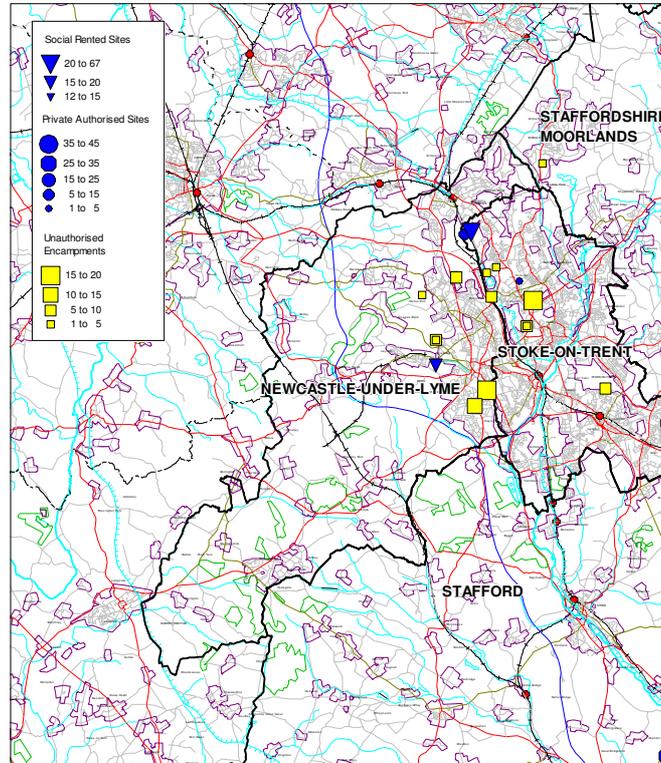
*Numbers shown indicate caravans

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	-	-
Transit pitches	-	-
Private sites	1	17
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av annual encampments	8	NA
Showpeople sites	-	-
Housing	NA	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007-2012	2012-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026
Residential pitches	11	4	5	6
Transit pitches	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Travelling Showpeople pitches	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL



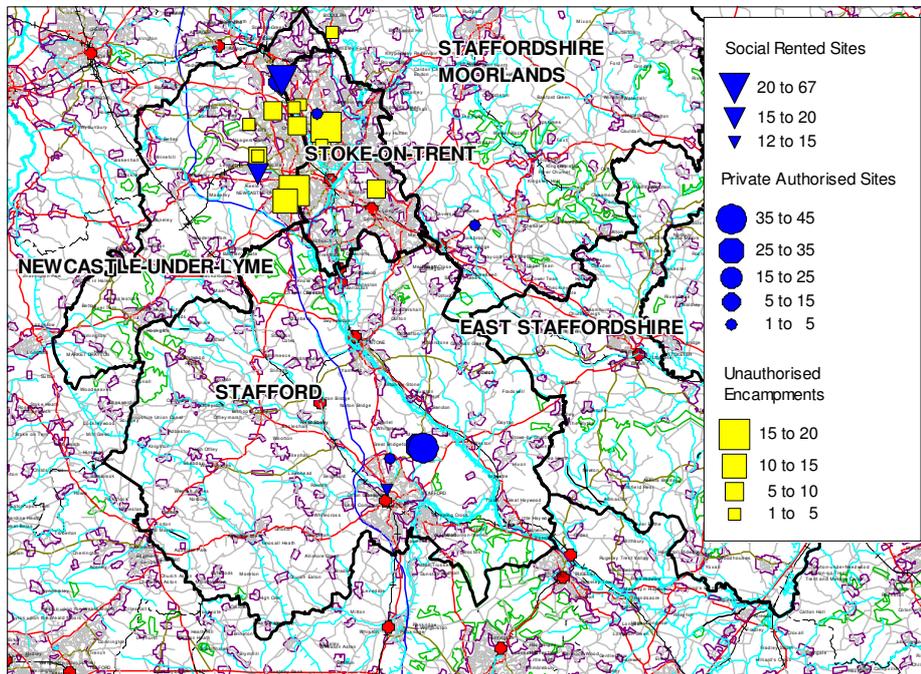
*Numbers shown indicate caravans

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	1	17
Transit pitches	-	-
Private sites	-	-
Unauthorised developments	2	3
Av annual encampments	7	NA
Showpeople sites	2	2
Housing	NA	10

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007-2012	2012-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026
Residential pitches	15	4	6	7
Transit pitches	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Travelling Showpeople pitches	5	N/A	N/A	N/A

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



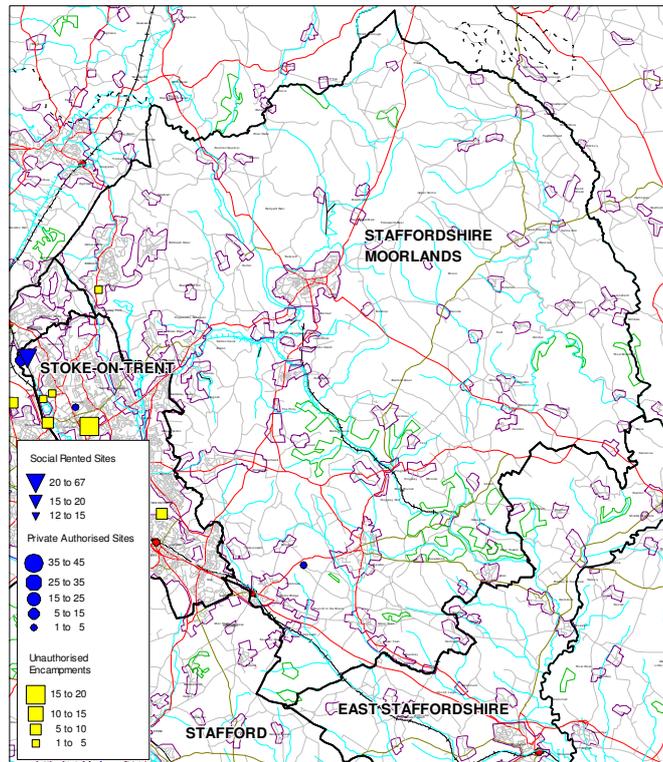
*Numbers shown indicate caravans

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	1	12
Transit pitches	-	-
Private sites	5	59
Unauthorised developments	1	5
Av annual encampments	0	0
Showpeople sites	-	-
Housing	N/A	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007-2012	2012-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026
Residential pitches	22	12	17	19
Transit pitches	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Travelling Showpeople pitches	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL



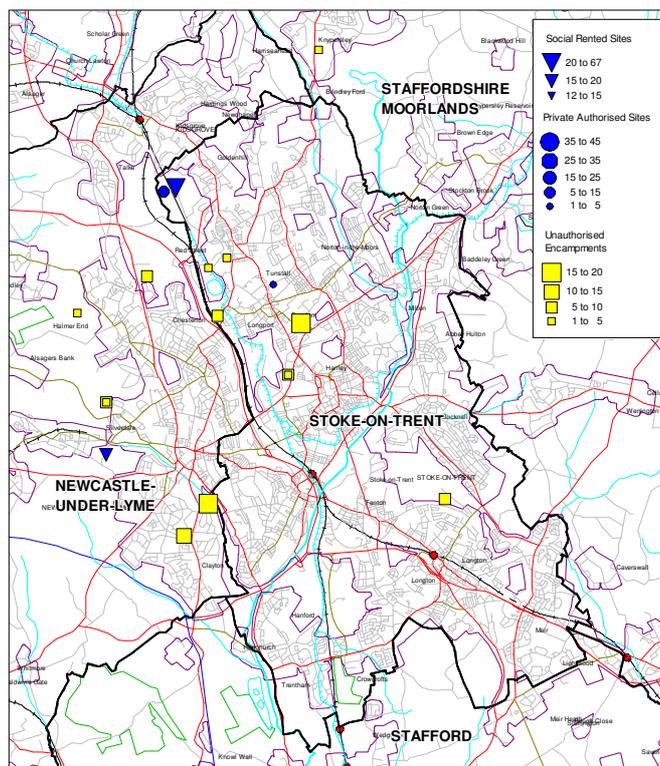
*Numbers shown indicate caravans

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	-	-
Transit pitches	-	-
Private sites	1	1
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av annual encampments	1	N/A
Showpeople sites	2	2
Housing	N/A	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007-2012	2012-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026
Residential pitches	2	0	0	0
Transit pitches	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Travelling Showpeople pitches	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL



*Numbers shown indicate caravans

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	1	33
Transit pitches	N/A	6
Private sites	2	11 ⁴³
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av annual encampments	23	N/A
Showpeople sites	1	1
Housing	N/A	40

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007-2012	2012-2016	2016-2021	2021-2026
Residential pitches	29	9	13	15
Transit pitches	10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Travelling Showpeople pitches	-	N/A	N/A	N/A

⁴³ This includes two private sites currently under development

Appendix 3: List of those involved in the consultations

The following provides as detailed a list as possible as to the individuals and organisations consulted during the course of the assessment via the stakeholder survey, focus groups and interviews.

Focus groups

Planning

Ian Baldwin, Strategic Planning Officer, Staffordshire County Council
Ruth Wooddisse, Senior Planning Officer, Staffordshire Moorlands
Julie Edelston, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Housing

Karen Bates, Housing Needs Officer, Staffordshire Moorlands
Sarah Preihs, Supporting People, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Jane Whyatt, Housing Advisory Officer, Trent & Dove Housing LTD
Martin Wainwright, Supporting People, Staffordshire County Council
Joanne Basnett, Principal Housing Strategy Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Enforcement

Rob Senior, Traveller Liaison Enforcement Officer, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Kim Realff, Enforcement Officer, East Staffordshire
Karen Gilliatt, Enforcement Officer, Stafford Borough Council
Shaun Simms, Staffordshire Moorlands

Other consultations

Abid Razaq, Housing Strategy Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme
Eleanor Taylor, Policy and Strategy Officer, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Stephen Ward, Housing Strategy and Research Officer, Stafford Borough Council
Philip Somerfield, Planning Policy, East Staffordshire Borough Council
Jude Hawes, Citizens Advice Bureau Stoke-on-Trent
Lisa Whitaker, Adult Social Care, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Angela Drakakis-Smith, Researcher
Simi O'Docherty, Site Manager, Linehouses

Appendix 4: Useful documents

The following list contains a number of documents referred to in this report as well as a number of others which provide useful information about Gypsies and Travellers.

Circular 1/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*. ODPM

Circular 04/2007 *Planning for Travelling Showpeople*. CLG

Communities and Local Government (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

Communities and Local Government (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. London: HMSO.

Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006) *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*. London: HMSO

IPPR (2003). *Moving Forward: a consultation paper on the provision of accommodation for Travellers and Gypsies*. Institute for Public Policy Research, London.

Lovatt, M. (2006) *The Housing Support Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and York*, December.

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

ODPM (2006) *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: Guide to responsibilities and powers*. London: HMSO.

ODPM (2006) *Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004*. Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

Parry, G., Van Cleemput, P., Peters, J., Moore, J., Walters, S., Thomas, K., and Cooper, C. (2004) *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*, University of Sheffield

Supporting People Eastern Regional Cross Authority Group (2005) - *Gypsy and Traveller Conference*, 27th April.

West Midlands Regional Assembly (2007) *Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy*. WMRA