

THIRD DRAFT

**GYPSY & TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION
ASSESSMENT**

**SHROPSHIRE, HEREFORDSHIRE,
TELFORD & WREKIN AND POWYS**

FINAL REPORT

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Pat Niner
Sian Sankey

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Long-term unauthorised site : For the purposes of this study, sites without planning permission but which have been occupied by Gypsies and Travellers for some time – at least 3 months. Land on which long-term unauthorised sites are established may be owned either by Gypsies and Travellers or someone else.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transient unauthorised site : For the purposes of the study, defined as land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers in caravans for a short period only while visiting or passing through the area. Land may be privately or publicly owned. Gypsies and Travellers are normally there without the consent of the landowner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S1. In February 2007, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, with Lynne Beighton of LTB Consultancy Ltd, was commissioned by the Partner authorities in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire and Powys to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. This unique 'international' study, involving authorities in England and Wales, aimed primarily to quantify the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation; there were additional objectives to quantify unmet housing-related support needs, and issues around access to wider service provision.

S2. The methodology used complies with Guidance on *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments* issued by Communities and Local Government. The study involved an analysis of Caravan Count data and secondary information provided by the Partner authorities; a consultation involving semi-structured interviews with 18 stakeholders; and an interview survey with 125 Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Respondents were interviewed across the Study Area on all types of sites and in housing; almost three-quarters of the interviews with Gypsies and Travellers were carried out by 8 community interviewers who were recruited and trained for the study. Some of the findings from a Gypsy and Traveller Survey carried out in Herefordshire in 2006 have been incorporated to supplement the GTAA survey. The quality of interviews and the response rate were adequate to ensure reliable findings.

Needs Assessment and Recommendations

S3. Table S1 (overleaf) summarises estimated pitch requirements by local authority for the periods 2007-2012 and 2012-2017. The assessment takes account of family increase, need from long-term unauthorised sites and unauthorised encampments, the end of temporary planning permissions and movement between sites and housing. The resulting pattern of requirements is on a '**need where it arises**' basis. It is uneven and reflects the current pattern of settlement of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing, and on unauthorised sites. In more qualitative terms, the survey showed that many respondents were concerned over shortage of site accommodation which would allow them to retain the culture and heritage of which they are so proud. In addition, at least 85 families are likely to move into bricks and mortar housing during the period 2007-2012 – a level which seems very slightly higher than in recent years.

Table S1 : Summary of Pitch Requirements			
Authority	Residential pitches	Transit provision	Showpeople plots
2007-2012			
Herefordshire	100	Stopping places	-
Bridgnorth	5	Stopping places	-
North Shropshire	22	Stopping places	-
Oswestry	8	Stopping places	4
Shrewsbury & Atcham	10	Transit site	-
South Shropshire	8	Stopping places	-
Telford & Wrekin	24	Transit site	5
Powys	14	Stopping places	-
Study Area	201	2 transit sites	9
2012-2017			
Herefordshire	31	-	N/A
Bridgnorth	1	-	N/A
North Shropshire	16	-	N/A
Oswestry	5	-	N/A
Shrewsbury & Atcham	3	-	N/A
South Shropshire	5	-	N/A
Telford & Wrekin	10	-	N/A
Powys	5	-	N/A
Study Area	76	-	N/A

S4. The Study Area has an extremely diverse Gypsy and Traveller population, with varying needs and aspirations. In particular there are significant differences between traditional Gypsies and Travellers (mostly Romany Gypsies) and New Travellers, as well as detailed variations within the broad groupings. In this context we recommend that future site provision includes as much variety as possible in terms of types of location, site design and facilities, tenure and management. A range of options should be developed including small family sites and socially rented sites. There is scope for innovative approaches including self-build and local authority sites leased to Gypsy and Traveller families. Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is available to fund the development of new sites by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords.

S5. It is vital that Gypsies and Travellers are directly involved in making decisions on the options to be pursued to ensure that the resulting sites fully meet needs and are sustainable. Local authorities should build better links with Gypsy and Traveller communities and consult fully on the way forward.

S6. Other recommendations are:

- There are different definitions of 'Gypsies and Travellers' in national housing and planning policies, and these raise issues for the Study Area especially over the status of some New Travellers who might be

included in a housing definition, but excluded from 'gypsy' status for planning purposes. Housing strategies must take account of all the needs identified in the GTAA. Partner authorities might raise the issue of conflicting definitions with national authorities.

- Homelessness policies and policies for the allocation of social housing should be sensitive to the cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- There is continuing need for inter-agency work between housing, health and education bodies to ensure that service provision for Gypsies and Travellers is improved in order to ensure their greater social inclusion.
- The survey revealed high levels of discrimination and harassment, with reported levels higher among New Travellers and Travellers than among Romany Gypsies. Authorities and the police must take seriously their duties under Race Relations legislation to ensure non-discrimination and promote good race relations, and should ensure such policies cover New Travellers (not an ethnic group) as well.
- There is evidence of demand for a range of housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers, and current provision is variable across the Study Area. Flexible, individually tailored, outcome-focused support services are required across the Study Area. Housing-related support should be available on both short-term and long-term bases. Specific recommendations are made under the headings: improving access to generic and mainstream service; improving access to specialist services; raising awareness; further development of sub-regional working; and future needs including those of older Gypsies and Travellers.

Other Study Findings

S7. The Caravan Count in January 2007 showed 427 Gypsy and Traveller caravans in the Study Area of which 44% were on social rented sites, 37% on private sites and 20% on unauthorised sites, mostly of a long-term nature. Herefordshire accommodated over a third of all caravans. Overall caravan numbers decreased between 1994 and 2007 although the trend has been upwards in the last 3 years.

S8. The age profile of the Gypsy and Traveller population is relatively youthful. 44% of all survey household members were aged up to 16, and only 6% were 60 or over. Average household size was 3.5 people. Two-thirds of households were families with children. Two-thirds of survey respondents identified themselves as Romany/Gypsy/English, and 20% as a Traveller or a New Traveller. Over two-thirds of households included someone in work, with a strong emphasis on self-employment especially in gardening and land work, and small building trades.

S9. It proved quite difficult to identify all the Gypsy and Traveller 'sites' (including single caravans and informal sites) in the Study Area, and the figures are likely to under-estimate the number of small informal 'sites' in the more rural areas. Best estimates are:

- Local authority sites : 13 residential sites providing 139 pitches
- Private sites : 21 sites providing 136 pitches
- Long-term unauthorised sites : 20 sites providing 70 pitches

In addition, there are 6 sites providing accommodation for Travelling Showpeople (Showmen and Circus Families). 5 of these are occupied by single extended families which each contain more than one 'nuclear' family.

S10. The survey revealed:

- On **local authority sites**, respondents had an average of 1.6 caravans or trailers. Almost half said they did not have enough space for their needs, most saying they needed a larger pitch. Amenity provision is good, with only 9% rating their site as poor on this measure. A fifth rated their site as poor in terms of location. 41% of respondents said they had some concern about safety or security on their site, mainly to do with traffic or electric pylons or cables. Larger amenity units or pitches were most frequently suggested as improvements.
- **Private sites** vary widely. Most sites are small and family owned. Sites offering rented pitches are larger and the 2 largest together provide 63% of all pitches on private sites. Survey respondents had an average of 1.5 caravans or trailers. Only 9% said they did not have enough space for their needs although occupancy rates were much the same as on local authority sites. Amenity provision is much less good than on local authority sites – for example 53% lacked a bath or shower. However, only 9% rated their site as poor on facilities. Ratings were generally much more positive than on local authority sites, though this may reflect pride of ownership, or unwillingness to criticise a private owner. 15% of respondents said they had some concern about safety or security on their site. More toilets and baths/showers were most frequently suggested as improvements.
- **Long-term unauthorised sites** are also very varied. Some are on Gypsy-owned land, others on land in other ownership but without planning permission. Most are small. Survey respondents had an average of 1.7 caravans or trailers. 12% said they did not have enough space for their needs, requiring more/larger caravans or trailers rather than a larger pitch. Not surprisingly, amenity provision is very poor – 76% lacked a bath or shower and 41% any toilet facilities. This is not necessarily out of line with respondents' wishes as residents include some Travellers who are consciously seeking a low-input, green lifestyle. However, 47% of respondents had concerns about safety or security on their site, mainly because of lack of control over who comes onto the site. When asked about improvements, some wanted better legal status, others better facilities or security. Some just wanted to be left alone.

- Sites occupied by **Travelling Showpeople** included a base and a site with rented pitches available for Circus Families, 3 small family Showmen's yards and a tolerated but unofficial Showmen's 'site' on a car park. The family yards are crowded because of family increase and the growing amount and size of equipment to be stored and maintained.

S11. Policy statements and interviews with key stakeholders suggest a fairly relaxed approach to managing unauthorised encampments across the Study Area unless on high profile locations or where Traveller behaviour causes real nuisance. Local information suggests that there were around 100 transient encampments during 2006 with an average size of 4.3 caravans. Most encampments occurred in Telford & Wrekin, Powys and Shrewsbury & Atcham. Survey respondents on transient unauthorised encampments mostly lacked access to any amenities, but had few concerns over safety or security.

S12. It proved impossible to identify all Gypsies and Travellers in housing. An estimate of 215 families is used in the needs assessment, probably an underestimate. Only 9 people were interviewed in housing in the GTAA; 23 had been interviewed in the earlier study in Herefordshire. Most were social tenants, with a minority of owner-occupiers. 2 of the GTAA sample had too little space for their needs. Most rated their home favourably with neighbours receiving the lowest rating. 5 out of 9 in the GTAA sample owned a caravan or trailer. Suggested improvements included having more people around with whom they could mix and talk – more Travellers, more young families – and less racism.

S13. Gypsies and Travellers share a nomadic or semi-nomadic culture and lifestyle. In practice, this is reflected in actual movement to differing degrees. 41% of respondents had been living where they were interviewed 5 or more years. Stability was particularly a feature of local authority sites and housing. Housing histories showed a variety of previous movement patterns. Over half of those currently living on sites had experience of living in a house – a third rating the experience as poor. Most of those currently in housing had lived on a residential site, and again experiences had been mixed. About a fifth of respondents expected to move within the next 5 years, most wanted to stay in the area. Almost two-thirds of respondents travel at some point in the year with a caravan or trailer. Reasons for not travelling include increasing age or ill health, ties because of work or schooling and having nowhere safe to stop while travelling. Some felt they no longer needed to travel because they had a permanent base. Travelling seems to be decreasing, but a fifth thought that they might travel more in future. Relatively informal stopping places are used, while travelling. There is an impression that respondents strongly preferred 'traditional' unregulated travelling to a more formal system of transit sites and booked places.

S14. Family-owned private sites were scored most highly among accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers, but respondents differed in their views on other options. Answers to a question about the best place

respondents had lived revealed the importance placed, by all Gypsy and Traveller groups, on having family around and being part of a good community. Worst places revealed a common dislike of dirt, rough neighbours and 'hassle'. The survey also revealed a wide range of 'ideals' among Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. In their 'best place' answers, traditional Gypsies and Travellers often referred to site facilities and support; New Travellers and Travellers referred to work opportunities, quiet locations and beautiful countryside. A 'one size fits all' approach to site provision will not meet needs and expectations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2007, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, with Lynne Beighton of LTB Consultancy Ltd, was commissioned by the Partners to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the Study Area comprising the geographical counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys. The Partners are:

Bridgnorth District Council
North Shropshire District Council
Oswestry Borough Council
Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council
South Shropshire District Council
Shropshire County Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Herefordshire Council
Powys County Council

1.2 The objectives of the study are:

- To quantify the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in terms of:
 - site accommodation on private sites (to own or rent)
 - site accommodation on socially rented residential sites
 - site accommodation on transit sites
 - bricks and mortar housing for owner-occupation
 - affordable bricks and mortar housing
- To establish the suitability of the above
- To quantify the unmet housing support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in order to maintain their accommodation in transitional periods
- To identify the unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller access to wider service provision, including health and education, through information provided by the Accommodation Assessment process

1.3 An Interim Report was prepared in May 2007 which included an outline of the policy framework and analyses of secondary information. It also set out proposed survey instruments for Steering Group approval. This final report restates some of the material from the Interim Report in order to provide a comprehensive account.

1.4 Chapter 2 sets out the study methodology. Chapter 3 briefly describes the policy background at national, regional and local levels. Chapter 4 presents background information on Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area from the Caravan Counts. Study findings are presented in the following chapters: the characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers (5); site provision (6); unauthorised encampments (7); housing (8); mobility: housing histories and intentions and travelling patterns (9); perceptions of need, aspirations and

household formation (10); employment, health and education (11); and housing-related support services (12). Chapter 13 estimates need for residential pitches, transit pitches and bricks and mortar housing. Chapter 14 deals with Travelling Showpeople, including survey findings on numbers and characteristics and an estimate of need for additional sites/plots. The final chapter (15) makes a series of recommendations.

Definitions

1.5 There are many possible ways of defining the group '**Gypsies and Travellers**'. The statutory definition for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments required by the Housing Act 2004¹ is:

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

The definition for land use planning purposes as set by ODPM Circular 01/2006² is narrower, excluding paragraph (a) from the above definition and excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such. In addition, case law has added a requirement that their travelling be linked to their 'means of livelihood' for someone with a nomadic lifestyle to be considered as a 'gypsy' for planning purposes. This leaves a potential gap between housing and planning definitions which is further discussed in Chapter 15.

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

1.7 The definition of '**need**' for accommodation for these groups is also difficult and sometimes contentious. Communities and Local Government Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments³ refers to the distinctive accommodation requirements of some Gypsies and Travellers. For example, caravan dwelling households:

¹ Statutory Instrument 2006 No 3190, *The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006*

² ODPM Circular 01/2006, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, 2 February 2006

³ Communities and Local Government, *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments*, October 2007

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

And for housed Gypsies and Travellers, households:

- whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable (unsuitable in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of proven psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation)

Households in these circumstances are broadly 'in need' if they are unable to obtain their own accommodation either because of lack of availability or affordability, which can reflect shortage of sites and local hostility.

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

- This is the approach taken in other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) of which we are aware. Despite the Guidance, there is no method at present of reliably distinguishing 'need' from 'aspiration' for Gypsies and Travellers.
- More significantly, because of current national shortage of sites, frequent hostility to proposals for site provision and the need for new sites to gain planning permission, site requirements can only be met through conscious public policy actions. In this sense, all requirement is 'need' in a way which is normally not true of bricks and mortar housing with its large second-hand market.

Conventions

1.9 Two conventions are followed:

- Percentages in text and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. This means that they do not always sum to exactly 100. Where a percentage is less than 1 but greater than zero, it is indicated by an asterisk (*).
- 'Quotes' included from Gypsies and Travellers are sometimes in first and sometimes in third person form because interviews were not recorded. They are distinguished by being in italic type and usually inset.

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.1 In October 2007, Communities and Local Government issued in final form Guidance on *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments*. This had been available in draft form since February 2006. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about making an assessment and the issues they need to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive as to methods, but makes clear that assessments should include analysis of secondary data and some form of Gypsy and Traveller survey. The approach taken in the Study Area is compatible with the Guidance.

2.2 Communities and Local Government published, in March 2007, a report *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. Amongst other things, this sets out criteria against which Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) can be benchmarked as robust. The GTAA for Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys meets these criteria.

2.3 The GTAA has drawn on three sources:

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

Each is described below.

Secondary Information

2.4 Five main sources of secondary information were drawn upon:

- The general literature about Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues and policy development. This provides contextual information for the GTAA.
- Partner local authorities provided information on site provision and policies through a pro-forma. Herefordshire Council provided data and analyses from the Survey of Accommodation and Other Related Needs of Gypsies and Travellers which they carried out during 2006.
- Local Plans, Core Strategy papers and other documents forming part of emerging Local Development Frameworks were reviewed. Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies were examined. These provide a local policy framework for the study.
- Supporting People Strategies were reviewed and data analysed on the usage of housing-related support services by Travellers since 2003, as recorded by the Supporting People Client Records Office. This included published data and supplementary data commissioned from the SP Client Records Office. A small-scale survey of agencies working

with Gypsies and Travellers and (potentially) providing support was carried out (see Chapter 12 for details).

- The twice-yearly Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Counts compiled by local authorities and published by Communities and Local Government (England) and Welsh Assembly Government (Wales). While Count information can be criticised for its possible inaccuracies and the exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in housing, it represents the only nationally available time-series information on Gypsies and Traveller numbers and trends which can provide valuable contextual material.

Partner and Stakeholder Consultation

2.5 A series of interviews was carried out with key stakeholders. In all, 18 stakeholders were interviewed individually or in small groups (excluding those specifically related to housing support services). Most interviews were face-to-face with a few carried out by telephone. Together these interviews covered all parts of the Study Area and topics included Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, health, policing and education.

2.6 A wide range of stakeholders were consulted over summer 2007 in connection with housing-related support services. The details of who was contacted and their responses are reported in Chapter 12.

Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers

2.7 The heart of the research was a series of structured interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area aimed at providing information about their characteristics, circumstances and needs. The 2006 survey of Gypsies and Travellers in Herefordshire was taken into account in the survey design to avoid re-interviewing people.

Sample Design

2.8 The principle behind **sample design** was to conduct interviews on as many sites as possible and so as to include all parts of the Study Area. An overall target of about 150 interviews was set. This was divided between different types of sites and houses, and quotas were set as shown in Table 2.1. The 2006 Herefordshire survey meant that quotas were set relatively low for Gypsies and Travellers on local authority sites and in houses in Herefordshire.

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

- The sample frame for socially rented, authorised private sites and long-term unauthorised sites established without planning permission was a

listing of all known sites provided by the Partner authorities. Attempts were made to achieve interviews at all listed locations. Quotas were set for the number of interviews at each location related to the size of site. Repeat visits were made to many locations in an attempt to achieve the quota of interviews. In addition, community interviewers were aware of other sites not included in the original lists, and interviews were carried out on as many such sites as possible.

- The research team was informed by Partner authorities of transient unauthorised encampments in the Study Area during summer/autumn 2007. Whenever possible an attempt was made to carry out interviews with new groups, after risk assessment, and where the Partner contact suggested that the group might be willing to be interviewed. The indications are that the majority of encampments were not contacted either because the research team was not informed or those involved declined to be interviewed.
- In identifying housed Gypsies and Travellers, the research team relied largely on information provided by the Partner authorities, but also with some contacts known to the community interviewers. No interviews were carried out with housed Gypsies and Travellers in Herefordshire because of the 2006 survey which had contacted the majority of known families. It proved difficult to get any information on housed Gypsies and Travellers in several areas, and this was the least successful part of the survey.
- Attempts were made to contact all known sites occupied by Travelling Showpeople and to conduct at least one interview there. It proved impossible to make contact on one family yard, but at least one person was interviewed on all others. More details are provided in Chapter 14.

The Questionnaires

2.10 The interviews with Gypsies and Travellers used two questionnaires, one for use with people living in trailers on any type of site (including transient unauthorised encampments), and one for use in bricks and mortar housing. The majority of questions were common to both versions of the questionnaire, and only questions relating specifically to current accommodation were different. Some answers involved the interviewer ticking a box, others required them to write down the answer given.

2.11 Sections in the questionnaires dealt with:

- current accommodation including the number and adequacy of living units (on sites) or bedrooms (in houses); site facilities and access to services; and improvements wanted.
- recent travelling patterns and the types of temporary stopping places used, and preferences for different forms of stopping place.
- recent accommodation history and questions about ever having lived in a house or on a site, as appropriate, to try to identify patterns of movement between different forms of accommodation.

- household details including age and gender, health, employment and ethnicity; there were specific questions about any household members (for example adult sons and daughters) who might need independent accommodation in the next 5 years.
- access to services, support needs, education issues and experience of harassment and discrimination.
- future accommodation needs and aspirations including intentions to move and expressions of need for social rented housing or a place on a socially rented site; desire to develop a family site; and general preferences for accommodation of different types.

2.12 The questionnaires worked well and most interviews achieved a full response. The final 'any other issues/concerns' section sometimes produced very interesting comments and views. Most answers given and analysed here can be regarded as reliable and as providing a sound basis for policy development.

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

Fieldwork and Interviewers

2.14 **Interviewers** recruited from the Gypsy and Traveller community were employed in the research, and their contribution proved to be invaluable. Overall, 88 interviews were carried out by community interviewers, 5 by an officer of one of the local authorities and 23 by CURS researchers. 5 of the interviews with Travelling Showpeople were carried out by CURS researchers, one by telephone. The remaining Showperson interview was carried out outside the Study Area by a researcher from University of Salford.

2.15 In total, 8 community interviewers (7 women and 1 man) were employed. They were recruited through stakeholder contacts. There was a full-day training session for community interviewers run by Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit, University of Salford. There were also one-to-one briefings and support through the process. For a variety of reasons, including family bereavement and family commitments, 3 of the community interviewers carried out most interviews. The general standard of work was very high, with full 'write in' answers recorded where appropriate.

2.16 Sometimes interviewers were introduced on site by a professional working with Gypsies and Travellers; sometimes community interviewers used their own contacts. There were some fieldwork problems caused by the serious flooding which hit the Study Area in July 2007 and affected both interviewers and potential interviewees.

Survey Response Rates

2.17 Table 2.1 shows achieved interviews against the targets set for each type of accommodation. In addition, there were 3 part-interviews where the respondent was unable to complete the questionnaire and it proved impossible to contact them by phone to finish the interview. These have not been included in the response or the analysis (1 on a local authority site and 2 in houses in Telford & Wrekin).

Type of accommodation	Target	Sample	%
Local authority sites	40	44	110
Private authorised sites	43	34	79
Long-term unauthorised sites	30	17	57
Housed	25	9	36
Roadside	25	15	60
Showpeople	NA	6	NA
Total	163	125	73

2.18 The number of interviews fell short of target for all categories of accommodation except local authority sites. This was despite considerable effort over a long period. The main reasons for shortfalls are:

- Private authorised sites : The majority of sites are small and scattered. Interviewers were simply unable to find 2 sites. All other known sites were visited at least twice. At a number of small sites there was no-one there at the time of the visit. There were also refusals, and on 2 sites the owner refused to allow interviews with other residents. One large site proved not to have as many caravans as expected despite several re-calls.
- Long-term unauthorised sites : Again mostly small and scattered. Again all sites were visited at least once. The main reasons for failing to get an interview were refusals and no-one being in at the time of the visit. One site had many fewer occupied caravans than expected (there were several stored, unoccupied vehicles). Some sites appear to be used seasonally only.
- Housed : The main reason for failing to meet the target for Gypsies and Travellers in housing was lack of information about families in housing. There was a conscious decision not to interview many families in housing in Herefordshire since they had been interviewed in the 2006 Survey.
- Transient unauthorised : Again lack of information about transient groups was the main reason for not meeting the target. The head of one extended family insisted on answering for the whole unit while the target set anticipated several interviews.

2.19 The estimated number of pitches/families on sites in the Study Area is set out in Chapter 6. This takes account of the results of the survey. We estimate that the survey included interviews with 28% of families on local authority, private and long-term unauthorised sites (the proportion would be higher if expressed as a percentage of families actually present during the fieldwork period).

2.20 Table 2.2 shows response by local authority area. There were some interviews in all local authorities. Broadly, the pattern reflects the distribution of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

Table 2.2 : Achieved Interviews by Type of Accommodation and Local Authority Area									
Type of accommodation	Study area	Bridgnorth	North Shropshire	Oswestry	Shrewsbury & Atcham	South Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Herefordshire	Powys
Local authority sites	44	-	4	3	3	3	15	12	4
Private sites	34	-	13	1	3	1	4	8	4
Long-term unauthorised sites	17	2	-	1	2	4	1	5	2
Housed	9	-	3	-	-	-	5	1	-
Transient unauthorised	15	1	-	1	3	-	6	3	1
Showpeople	6	1	-	2	-	1	2	-	-
Total	125	4	20	8	11	9	33	29	11

2.21 The gender mix of interviewees was:

Male	33	26%
Female	73	58%
Couples	18	14%
Not recorded	1	1%

Most interviews were with women. This is a common pattern in GTAAs and seems to reflect both the fact that women tend to be around during the day while men are away, and that women tend to be more willing to talk to 'strangers'.

2.22 Overall, we would conclude that, despite falling short of target, response rates were adequate to ensure reliable findings. Results are likely to be least reliable for Gypsies and Travellers in housing, and on transient roadside encampments where achieved samples numbers were lowest.

3. PLANNING AND SITES POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

3.1 After a decade of virtual policy vacuum on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation matters (between 1994 and 2004), a new national policy approach has been developed in England with the overall objective that *'Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully'*⁴. The three elements in policy to achieve this are:

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

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

- The Housing Act 2004 will require local authorities to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in their areas as they do for the rest of their population.
- Local authorities must then develop strategies which address the need arising from the accommodation assessment through public and/or private provision.
- The Regional Planning Body, on the basis of local authority assessed need, will determine how many pitches should be provided across the region and will specify in the Regional Spatial Strategy how many pitches should be provided in each local authority area ensuring that *'collectively local authorities make provision in a way which is equitable and meets assessed patterns of need'*⁵.
- Local planning authorities will be obliged to identify sites (not simply set planning criteria for sites) in their Development Plan Documents in line with the requirement identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Where there is clear need, the Secretary of State has the power to direct local planning authorities to identify sites in their Development Plan Documents if they fail to do so.

⁴ Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers : Guide to responsibilities and powers*, ODPM, 2006, page 5

⁵ *Ibid*, pages 7 & 8

- Local authorities do not have to wait until the end of this planning process before providing more sites.

3.3 Apart from the reference to the regional role, a similar system is being developed in Wales within the context of a All Wales Gypsy and Traveller Strategy, to be produced by Welsh Assembly Government.

3.4 The main documents setting out the detail of the planning system are:

- ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* issued in February 2006
- WAG Circular *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* issued in December 2007
- Communities and Local Government Circular 04/2007 *Planning for Travelling Showpeople* issued in August 2007

In all these, it is clear that assessment of accommodation need (through Local Housing Market Assessments in Wales) is at the heart of the new system. While these documents deal with planning for site provision, in October 2007 Communities and Local Government issued a *Guide to Effective Use of Enforcement Powers – Part 2 : Unauthorised Development of Caravan Sites* which deals with planning enforcement issues.

3.5 New social rented Gypsy and Traveller sites are expected to contribute to site provision. Financial support is available through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants. Across England, up to £56 million has been made available over the years 2006/07 and 2007/08. In August 2006, an Order⁶ came into force extending the permissible purposes of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to cover setting up and managing Gypsy and Traveller sites, and to receive grant to do so. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants.

3.6 Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is also still available for refurbishment of existing sites. Three sites in the West Midlands (in Dudley, Stoke-on-Trent and Stratford-on-Avon) received grant totally £2.1 million in 2007/2008. A £1 million a year site refurbishment grant scheme has been introduced in Wales and grants to 9 sites totally £1.7 million were announced in December 2007.

The West Midlands Region

3.7 **Policy CF5** of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (June 2004) deals with ‘Delivering affordable housing and mixed communities’. Section F reads:

F. 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

⁶ The Social Landlords Order 2006 (Permissible Additional Purposes – England) relating to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites

the trends shown by the ODPM annual count and any additional local information.

3.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently being revised. Gypsy and Traveller issues are 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 a Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy⁷ pending the completion of regional GTAAs. Table 3.1 shows the Interim Statement's assessment of requirements for additional pitches.

Table 3.1 : West Midlands RSS Interim Statement Estimate of Additional Pitches			
Type of pitch	Date	Region	Study Area
Residential	2006-2011	510	120
Residential	2011-2016	220	No split given
Residential	2016-2121	210	No split given
Residential	2021-2026	190	No split given
Transit	Undated	120	No split given

3.9 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.

3.10 Subsequently a Supplement has been added to the Interim Statement relating to Travelling Showpeople. This assesses need across the Region as between 63 and 84 additional plots for the period up to 2016. There is no indication of the likely split of requirements between sub-regions.

Study Area Planning Policies

3.11 Table 3.2 lists the relevant current policies on provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Structure Plans, Unitary Development Plans and Local Plans produced under the former planning regime.

3.12 All relevant documents include a specific policy relating to proposals for new Gypsy and Traveller sites. Oswestry is the only authority to include an explicit policy about the extension of existing sites (setting out criteria for extending Park Hall to provide for up to 20 families and Farm Hall Kinnersley to provide for up to 10 families). All the policies set out criteria which a proposal must satisfy in order to gain permission; none identify potential site locations. Table 3.3 summarises the sort of considerations involved.

3.13 It is clear that local policies vary. Some criteria appear in almost all lists (especially screening and landscaping to reduce visual intrusion, and reasonable access to local services and amenities including primary schools,

⁷ See <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>

shops and public transport). Other criteria are rarer. Some lists of criteria are more comprehensive than others, suggesting that it would be more difficult to get approval for a proposed site in some areas than others.

3.14 Criteria which are potentially more difficult to satisfy often involve matters of judgement and degree. These include, for example, 'the site is **reasonably accessible** to . . .' or 'sites shall be located so as to **avoid affecting** existing residential areas'. Some (Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury & Atcham) seek to explain 'near' or 'accessible' in terms of (walking) distance. Balancing accessibility and impact on existing residential and other existing land uses is an obvious challenge in finding potentially acceptable site locations.

Table 3.2 : Site Provision Policies in Current Planning Documents	
Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Structure Plan 1996-2011	
	Policy P14 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers
Bridgnorth District Local Plan 1996-2011	
	Policy H16
North Shropshire Local Plan : 2000-2011, adopted December 2005	
	H19 Site provision for Gypsies
Oswestry Borough Council Local Plan 1996-2006	
	H31 Extension of Existing Gypsy Sites H32 New Gypsy Sites
Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Local Plan (adopted 2001)	
	HS15 Gypsy Sites
South Shropshire Local Plan 2004-2011	
	Policy SDS9 Gypsy Caravan Sites
Wrekin Local Plan 1995-2006	
	H20 Provision for Gypsy Sites
Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan adopted March 2007	
	H12 Gypsies and other travellers
Powys Unitary Development Plan, Deposit Draft, October 2004	
	Policy HP20 – Gypsy Caravan Sites
Brecon Beacons National Park Unitary Development Plan, Proposed Modifications September 2006	
	Policy ES31 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers

Table 3.2 : Summary of Criteria Used in Gypsy Site Planning Policies										
Criterion	Shropshire/Telford & Wrekin	Bridgnorth	North Shropshire	Oswestry	Shrewsbury & Atcham	South Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Herefordshire	Powys	Brecon Beacons National Park
Meet identified need/ no other site available	✓				✓		✓		✓	
Residents must meet definition of gypsies					✓				✓	
Local connection				✓					✓	
Near to route used by G/Ts	✓	✓	✓							
Site services available (water etc)				✓					✓	✓
Avoid flooding				✓						
Near/accessible to services/facilities	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Landscaping/ screening		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boundaries defined and fenced				✓						
Avoid impact on Green Belt/AONB/SSSI etc		✓				✓	✓			
Avoid high quality agricultural land				✓	✓	✓				
Limit adverse effect on residential area				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Safe access from/to highway				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Meets the locational needs of Gypsies							✓			
Provision for parking/turning etc							✓		✓	
Capable of accommodating business use on site							✓	✓	✓	
Sites should be small								✓		
Sites include safe play areas								✓		
Re-use of building where possible									✓	
Avoid causing pollution									✓	
No adverse effect on habitats/amenity etc										✓

3.15 Local Planning Authorities are at different stages in preparing Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents under the revised

planning system. Several explicitly refer to Gypsies and Travellers in their Statement of Community Involvement. In terms of emerging policies:

Telford & Wrekin appear most advanced with a statement in 9.3.8 of *The Submission Development Plan Document : Core Strategy October 2006* that the council will provide sites for Gypsy and Traveller homes commensurate with needs identified . . . Locational criteria are explored in Policy N6 of the *Development Control Policies: Preferred Options Report September 2005*. It is intended that wording of Wrekin Local Plan Policy H20 will be retained insofar as it is consistent with ODPM Circular 01/2006.

South Shropshire discussed Gypsy site provision in the *Core Strategy Issues and Options* report February 2006 with four options presented. Following consultation the conclusion is that there should be a policy on Gypsies and Travellers, and provision for sites subject to there being demonstrable need.

Shrewsbury & Atcham made no reference to Gypsy site provision in its *Submission Core Strategy*, and GOWM made representations on the omission. The Core Strategy has been withdrawn for further development and consultation.

Oswestry refers to Policy H7 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers in its emerging *Core Strategy Site Allocations Development Control Policies* which will provide criteria to address the provision of public or private sites where a need has been identified. There is scope for merging existing Local Plan Policies H31 and H32.

Planning Applications for Sites

3.16 The number of applications for planning permission to develop or extend Gypsy and Traveller sites is often taken as one indication of need for site provision. It also indicates the impact of local planning policies on the ground. Our information is currently incomplete, having been provided by Bridgnorth (nil), South Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin (partial), Herefordshire and Powys for the period since 2001.

In **South Shropshire** there have been 3 applications all concerning change of use from agricultural land to a Travellers site at The Oakery; applications were refused in March 2003 and May 2006. In November 2007 the third application resulted in a temporary permission being given for 1 year for 2 families able to demonstrate 'gypsy' status. At the time of the fieldwork the site was in use as a Travellers site without planning permission for many more households.

In **Telford & Wrekin**, there was an application, recommended for refusal, for the erection of a detached bungalow and alteration to access on a site previously granted planning permission for 3 mobile

homes to be used by the Gypsy Traveller applicant and his sons. The bungalow was requested because of age and ill health. The refusal was on grounds of detrimental impact on open countryside and setting an adverse precedent for development within the rural area.

In **Herefordshire** there have been 13 planning applications since 1999 affecting 12 sites (2 applications on one site); one was for a renewal of a temporary planning permission. The average application rate is just under 2 a year, but 8 of the applications were made in 2004-2006 giving an annual rate of almost 3. Of these applications, 10 were approved, creating 10 'sites' accommodating 11 families (ie all but one was for siting mobile homes or caravans to accommodate a single Gypsy family). 3 applications were refused involving 2 sites, one for a single family and one for up to 23 pitches (Main Field at Yoke Farm). In both instances reasons for refusal included reference to development in open countryside of some landscape or historic value, which could not be assimilated within the local community, and with insufficient special reasons for over-riding these policy considerations. The overall success rate of applications at 77% is unusually high against national experience.

In **Powys** a retrospective application for the siting of a mobile home is still under consideration. In 2003 an application was refused for a touring Gypsy caravan site for the period of the Royal Welsh Show in July. It is understood that caravans are 'tolerated' less formally each year during this period. An application was submitted in 2007 for a site of 0.921 hectares to accommodate an extended family members of whom have been involved in a series of unauthorised encampments over several years.

3.17 This record of recent planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites, although not complete, suggests modest continuing demand especially in Herefordshire. There are also indications of the type of demand:

- small Gypsy & Traveller sites for 1 or 2 families (generally successful).
- multi-plot sites on farms for New Travellers (unsuccessful in Herefordshire and South Shropshire during the period).

4. CARAVAN COUNT INFORMATION

4.1 This section draws on information from the Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans which is carried out by local authorities each January and July, and published in England by Communities and Local Government and in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Count was only re-introduced in Wales in July 2006. The time series data below do not, therefore, include Powys.

The Most Recent Picture

4.2 The January Counts are the more reliable as an indication of the 'base' population in an area. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of caravans between types of sites for the Study Area as a whole (including Powys) in January 2007 and compares it with the pattern for England and Wales as a whole.

Table 4.1 : Distribution of Caravans between Types of Site : January 2007			
Type of site	Study Area		England and Wales %
	Caravans	%	
Social rented	187	44	41
Private	156	37	38
Unauthorised	84	20	21
- Gypsy land tol.	-	-	6
- Gypsy land not tol.	-	-	7
- Other land tol.	40	9	3
- Other land not tol.	44	10	5
Total	427	100	100

4.3 There were 427 caravans in the Study Area. The Study Area distribution of caravans across types of site is broadly similar to the national average. Differences appear when the details of the types of unauthorised site are examined. Compared to the national average, the Study Area has relatively fewer caravans on Gypsy-owned land and more on other land. This is a particular local feature reflecting the importance of long-term unauthorised encampments established with the consent of the landowner, but without planning permission. About half of these are being 'tolerated' by the local authority.

4.4 Table 4.2 shows the distribution of caravans by local authority and type of site. The overall distribution is uneven, ranging from just 3 caravans in Bridgnorth to 148 in Herefordshire. Herefordshire also has the widest spread across types of site. Caravans on unauthorised sites are particularly a feature of South Shropshire, Herefordshire and, to a lesser degree, Powys.

Table 4.2 : Distribution of Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority January 2007					
	Total	Social rented sites	Private sites	Unauthorised – Gypsy owned land	Unauthorised – other land
Herefordshire	148	50	71	0	27
Bridgnorth	3	0	0	0	3
North Shropshire	107	35	69	0	3
Oswestry	34	25	9	0	0
Shrewsbury & Atcham	12	5	7	0	0
South Shropshire	49	11	0	0	38
Telford & Wrekin	50	50	0	0	0
Powys	24	11	0	0	13
Study Area	427	187	156	0	84

4.5 The study has shown that not all sites occupied by Gypsies and Travellers are regularly included in the Counts. This may sometimes be because the site is not seen as a 'Gypsy or Traveller site' as such; it may sometimes simply be because the local authority is unaware of small sites in an extensive rural area. The base number of sites on which need is calculated is more comprehensive than the Caravan Count.

Trends in Caravan Numbers

4.6 This section looks at changes in caravan numbers between 1994 and 2007. It **excludes Powys** where time series data is not available. Table 4.3 summarises caravan numbers by type of site for January and July in 1994 and 2007.

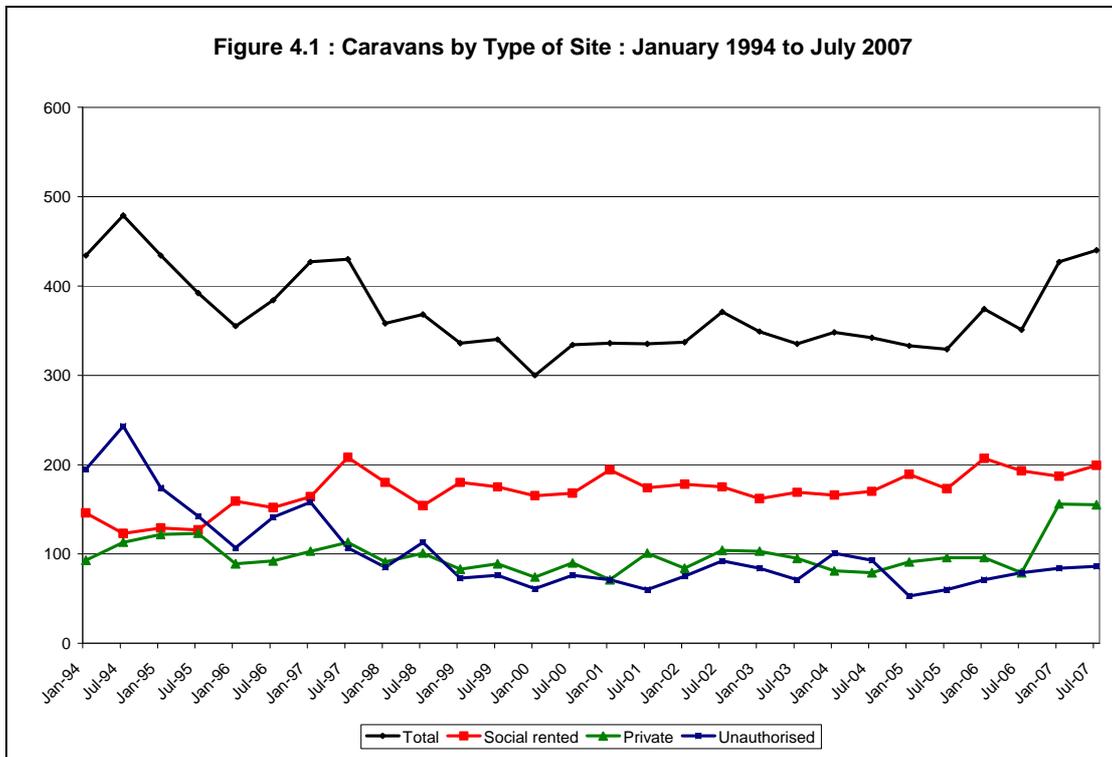
Table 4.3 : Summary of Caravan Numbers 1994 and 2007 : Study Area Excluding Powys						
Type of site	January			July		
	1994 ⁽¹⁾	2007	% change	1994 ⁽¹⁾	2007	% change
Social rented	146	187	+28%	123	199	+52%
Private	93	156	+68%	113	155	+37%
Unauthorised	195	84	-57%	243	86	-183%
Total	434	427	-2%	479	440	-8%

(1) These figures are estimates. Local government re-organisation took place in the period and figures for Malvern have been apportioned to reach a 1994 total for the area which now comprises Herefordshire within the Study Area

4.7 This table shows:

- Overall caravan numbers have decreased over the period 1994 to 2007 with the decrease being slightly more marked when measured July to July than January to January.
- The number of caravans on authorised sites has increased over the period, on both social rented and private sites.
- Caravan numbers on unauthorised sites (including both unauthorised developments and encampments) have decreased significantly, to between half or a third of their 1994 levels.

4.8 Trends in caravan numbers are graphed in Figure 4.1. The total line shows the slightly decline over the period, but also suggests an increase has taken place from about 2004 onwards attributable to increasing caravan numbers on private sites and on unauthorised sites. Caravans on socially rented sites increased to 1997, but have since been broadly stable.



The Caravan Count : Comments

4.9 The Count figures provide a general context for the study. The main points to note are:

- The lack of overall growth in caravan numbers since 1994 (in the English portion of the Study Area). During this period, family growth must have taken place. This suggests that there may have been

movement by Gypsies and Travellers into housing, and perhaps some net migration outside the Study Area.

- However, there are indications that decline has been arrested in the most recent years. Increasing numbers of caravans on private sites and unauthorised sites (not on Gypsy-owned land), suggest that the Study Area has recently demonstrated both need and demand from Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans.
- The main distinctive feature of the Study Area is the importance of unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers. About half of these are 'tolerated' by the local authorities. The study shows that many of the remainder, not 'tolerated', have been in place for some time. This particular feature will contribute to need for site provision over the next 5 years.

5. THE LOCAL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POPULATION

5.1 This chapter describes some of the basic demographic characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population. It does not include Travelling Showpeople.

Age and Gender

5.2 Table 5.1 shows the age structure of all survey respondents. The figures relate to all household members. 6 adults are excluded since information was not provided.

Table 5.1 : Age of All Household Members		
Age group	Number	%
0-4	60	15
5-10	70	17
11-16	52	13
<i>All children</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>44</i>
17-24	43	10
25-39	96	23
40-49	38	9
50-59	27	7
60-74	26	6
75 and over	1	*
Total	413	100

5.3 The profile is relatively youthful. Only 6% of household members were aged 60 or over, and 44% were children aged up to 16. One in ten household members are aged 17-24 which is the age group most likely to form new households in the near future.

5.4 There were slightly more women (52%) among adults than men (48%). This is because of a number of one-parent families rather than the fact that women on the whole live longer than men which affects the gender balance in the settled population.

Household Size and Type

5.5 Table 5.2 shows household size of all respondents. These figures also include the 55 respondents to the 2006 Herefordshire survey as well as the CURS GTAA in 2007. The information is directly comparable, and combining the two sources increases the sample size and coverage. There is obviously a wide range of household size – from 1 person to 20 people in a complex extended family who considered themselves to be a single unit. The most common household sizes are 2 and 4 people. The effect of adding in the

Herefordshire sample is to increase the proportion of 2 person households while reducing the proportion of 4 person households.

Table 5.2 : Household Size : GTAA + Herefordshire 2006 Sample				
Number of people	Number		Percentage	
	GTAA	GTAA + H	GTAA	GTAA + H
1 person	18	26	15	15
2 people	26	46	22	26
3 people	16	19	13	11
4 people	31	37	26	21
5 people	16	23	13	13
6 people	6	12	5	7
7 people	2	4	2	2
8 people	2	3	2	2
9 people	-	2	-	1
11 people	1	1	1	1
20 people	1	1	1	1
Total	119	174	100	100

5.6 The average household size was 3.5 people (GTAA and GTAA + H), which is significantly larger than the average household size in the whole population. This varies quite significantly by type of site:

Transient unauthorised	5.3 people (5.3 GTAA + H)
Long-term unauthorised	2.7 people (2.8 GTAA + H)
Local authority site	3.7 people (3.4 GTAA + H)
Private site	2.9 people (2.8 GTAA + H)
Housed	3.4 people (4.2 GTAA + H)
Total	3.5 people (3.5 GTAA + H)

The average for transient unauthorised sites is raised by two very large families containing 11 and 20 people. The main figures relate to the GTAA sample only, those in brackets include the Herefordshire survey as well. The only forms of accommodation where there are significant differences between the two figures are local authority sites – where the inclusion of the Herefordshire information reduces average household size because a higher proportion of older small households were included – and housed Gypsies and Travellers where the addition of Herefordshire increases average household size.

5.7 Household size is related to the type of household. Table 5.3 shows this by type of site (Table 5.3a is for the GTAA sample only; Table 5.3b is for the GTAA plus the Herefordshire 2006 sample). The classification of households here is as follows:

Single person	1 adult – divided between those aged under 60 and those aged 60 and over
Couple	2 adults, no children or ‘young adults’ – divided between those neither is aged 60 or over and those where one or both is 60 or over
Young family	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more aged up to 16; no ‘young adults’

Older family	All adult family with 1 or more classed as 'young adults' who are neither the head the household or spouse/partner of the head
Mixed family	Family with children up to 16 and 'young adults'
Other	3 or more adults, none classed a 'young adults'

This classification is adopted because the number of older and mixed families gives some indication of the likelihood of future family formation.

Table 5.3a : Household Type by Type of Accommodation : GTAA Only

Type of household	Transient unauthorised	Long-term unauthorised	Local authority site	Private site	Housing	Total
Sample number	15	17	44	34	9	119
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single person 60 and over	-	6	5	9	11	5
Single person under 60	7	24	7	9		10
Couple – 1 or both aged 60 and over	7	6	11	9	-	8
Couple – both under 60	7	12	7	9		8
Young family	67	35	55	47	89	54
Older family	-	6	2	9	-	4
Mixed family	13	12	14	9	-	11

5.8 Within the GTAA sample (Table 5.3a), more than half of all households are young families. Young families are relatively less common on long-term unauthorised sites. Single person households were relatively frequent on long-term unauthorised sites.

5.9 Adding in the Herefordshire sample (Table 5.3b) especially boosts sample numbers for local authority sites and in housing. This has the effect of increasing the proportion of older single people and couple on local authority sites, and of older and mixed families in housing. Looking at both tables suggests that the proportion of older and mixed families which contain 'young adults' who may want to form a new household in the near future make up between 15% and 18% of all households, and are spread across all types of accommodation.

Table 5.3b : Household Type by Type of Accommodation : GTAA + Herefordshire 2006 Sample						
Type of household	Transient unauthorised	Long-term unauthorised	Local authority site	Private site	Housing	Total
Sample number	15	21	65	41	32	174
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single person 60 and over	-	5	12	7	-	7
Single person under 60	7	19	6	7	6	8
Couple – 1 or both aged 60 or over	7	10	15	10	6	11
Couple – both under 60	7	14	8	12	6	9
Young family	67	33	43	46	53	47
Older family	-	10	2	10	16	7
Mixed family	13	10	14	7	13	11

Ethnicity

5.10 Respondents were asked to say how they thought of themselves in terms of a number of broad Gypsy and Traveller groupings. Most gave an answer. Again information is available in comparable form from the GTAA and the Herefordshire 2006 Survey. Table 5.4 looks at group by type of accommodation, and includes both samples.

Table 5.4 : Traveller Group by Type of Accommodation : GTAA + Herefordshire 2006 Sample						
Type of household	Transient unauthorised	Long-term unauthorised	Local authority site	Private site	Housing	Total
Sample number	15	21	65	41	32	174
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Romany/Gypsy/ English	60	24	78	59	84	67
Welsh Gypsy/ Traveller	7	-	2	-	-	1
Irish Traveller	13	-	5	-	3	3
New Traveller	7	14	7	17	-	9
Traveller	13	48	2	12	3	11
Other	-	5	5	10	3	5
Not known	-	10	2	2	6	3

5.11 Two-thirds of respondents think of themselves as Romany/Gypsy/English. The other main grouping are Travellers and New Travellers. 'Traveller' without any further elaboration seems to have been favoured occasionally by people whom others might classify as Gypsies but more frequently by people others might class as New Travellers. About a fifth of all respondents fall into a grouping which might be broadly seen as 'New Traveller'. Very few Irish Travellers were included in the survey.

5.12 The different types of accommodation house differing proportions of the Gypsy and Traveller groups. Romany/Gypsy/English is the largest group in all forms of accommodation except long-term unauthorised sites, but local authority sites and housing cater particularly for this group. New Travellers and Travellers are over-represented on long-term unauthorised and private sites. Transient unauthorised sites have a higher – albeit still small – proportion of Irish Travellers.

5.13 The different groups also have slightly different household profiles. 71% of Romany/Gypsy/English respondents were in families including children, and among the remainder, older singles and couples outnumbered those aged under 60. Taking New Travellers and Travellers together shows that 60% were families with children and all the rest were single people or couples aged under 60.

5.14 These findings suggests that different groups are likely to experience different forms of accommodation need. Insecurity from unauthorised status particularly impacts on New Travellers and Travellers. Family growth can be anticipated to be higher among Romany/Gypsy/English Travellers. Issues around old age also impact more significantly on this group.

Local Connections

5.15 The GTAA survey asked people whether they would say that they were local to this area. Different respondents may, of course, have interpreted 'this area' more widely than others. Overall, 55% said that they were local to the area. The proportions vary with type of accommodation:

Private sites	76% local
Local authority sites	61% local
Housing	56% local
Transient unauthorised	33% local
Long-term unauthorised	18% local

There are marked differences between groupings in perceptions of being local to the area. 68% of Romany/Gypsy/English respondents felt local to the area, compared with 33% of Travellers and 25% of New Travellers. Comments made during the interview show that many people are 'local' through long residence if not birth.

5.16 The most important reasons for stopping in the area are:
Have family living in the area 66% of respondents

5. The Local Gypsy and Traveller Population

Only place I could find to stay	50% of respondents
Work opportunities	45% of respondents
Schools	38% of respondents
Place of birth	20% of respondents

Having family in the area was particularly important for Romany/Gypsy/English respondents (83% said they had family in the area). Work opportunities and having nowhere else to stay were particularly important for New Travellers (83% and 67% respectively).

5.17 The majority of respondents have links with the Study Area, although the nature of the link tends to vary with different Traveller groupings.

6. CURRENT SITE PROVISION

6.1 This chapter looks at current site provision – authorised and long-term unauthorised in the Study Area. The first section seeks to establish the number and type of sites which will act as the base for needs estimates in Chapter 13. Sections follow on local authority sites, authorised private sites and long-term unauthorised sites.

Numbers and Types of Sites

6.2 Establishing ‘categories’ of sites was not entirely straightforward because of the particular characteristics of the Study Area. The main criterion used was degree of permanence:

- Local authority sites : all occupied sites provide permanent residential pitches.
- Authorised private sites : these include both family-owned sites and larger sites which provide rented pitches. All have planning permission.
- Long-term unauthorised sites : these are both on Gypsy-owned land and other land, but by definition have been in existence for some time. In the Study Area, the long-term nature of the site seems more important than land ownership. These sites do not have planning permission although they may be ‘tolerated’ by the local planning authorities. We have included ‘park-ups’ provided in association with employment in this category, although such ‘sites’ may not actually be unauthorised or in breach of planning controls.

6.3 The remaining category of ‘site’ is transient or roadside encampments. These are intended to include instances where Gypsies and Travellers are in the area for a short period, or on a particular piece of land for a short period only, usually without the permission of the landowner. In most instances distinguishing between long-term and transient unauthorised sites was simple and was based on information provided by the Partner authorities. In a few instances where respondents were identified by a community interviewer and apparently unknown to a Partner authority, we have made an arbitrary division between long-term and transient on the basis of the length of time the respondent had been on the site. Where they had been there for more than 3 months, the site is included in the long-term category; up to 3 months it is classed as transient. There is some justification for the distinction in that, while 27% of survey respondents on a ‘transient’ unauthorised site said that they had a permanent base elsewhere, none of those on long-term unauthorised sites had such a base.

6.4 We have tried to build up a comprehensive picture of current site provision across the Study Area. Because of the nature of the Study Area – a large, predominantly rural area with many locations where individual Travellers or small groups could remain ‘hidden’ – this is likely to be an understatement of provision but is the best estimate currently available. For example, one of the community interviewers said that there were ‘at least 50

single people, couples and families' scattered across northern Herefordshire; no allowance has been made for such households in Table 6.1 below unless we have independent evidence of their presence. Table 6.1 shows the estimated number of sites and pitches by type of site and local authority as at October 2007. On authorised private sites, the pitch capacity is shown rather than the occupancy at the time of the survey – a number of sites had fewer caravans than permitted but were expected to fill up over winter, and one was seriously over-crowded and had more than permitted numbers. For long-term unauthorised sites, the pitch numbers shown are a best estimate of those likely to be occupied during the year, on the basis of information from local authorities and community interviewers.

Table 6.1 : Estimated Residential Site Provision in the Study Area						
Local authority	Local authority		Private		Long-term unauth.	
	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches
Herefordshire	6	45 ⁽¹⁾	12	50	15	56
Bridgnorth	-	-	-	-	2	2
North Shropshire	1	18	2	57	-	-
Oswestry	1	13	1	9	-	-
Shrewsbury & Atcham	1	5	1	6	-	-
South Shropshire	1	10	3	6	1 ⁽²⁾	10
Telford & Wrekin	2	36	1	3	-	-
Powys	1	12	1	5 ⁽³⁾	2	2
Study Area	13	139	21	136	20	70

⁽¹⁾ The pitch total is the number of pitches occupied or available for letting. It includes all 6 pitches at Pembridge although 3 are currently unoccupied following refurbishment. It includes 2 pitches only at Openfields Bromyard. Remaining pitches at Openfields due to be created/let following planned refurbishment are included as a 2007-2012 supply item in Table 13.1.

⁽²⁾ This is the site known as The Oakery. At the time of the interviews this was a long-term unauthorised site with about 10 families. In mid November, following enforcement action, a temporary planning permission was granted for 4 caravans, 2 families who could prove gypsy status. The site has been left here as a long-term unauthorised site on the grounds that the households displaced by the enforcement action still have a need.

⁽³⁾ This site at Llwynpiod is occupied by New Traveller who received personal planning permissions after many years of unauthorised occupation. Powys is unable to say how many families/pitches there are and the estimate is based on interviews achieved in the survey and other known occupants. This may understate provision.

Social Rented Sites

6.5 There are 14 social rented sites in the Study Area. Table 6.2 shows the number of pitches each has, and the type of pitches. The final comment column identifies where any pitches are currently unoccupied. Overall, there are 139 occupied/occupiable residential pitches. One site in Herefordshire is partially closed pending refurbishment (nominal pitch numbers are in brackets in Table 6.2). There are potentially 23 transit pitches available in the Study Area, but the Madley site in Herefordshire is not in use and the 6 transit pitches at Withybeds (Powys) are rarely used.

6.6 The distribution of sites is not even. There is no local authority site in Bridgnorth. Herefordshire accounts for 7 of the listed sites (50%), but only for 32% of the occupied pitches.

6.7 Key stakeholder interviews identified a number of issues and comments relating to local authority sites:

Shropshire : There are some design issues on sites, but all are quite stable and fully occupied. There are indications of further need: 6 applicants would be interested in a pitch on a site at Richards Castle, Ludlow if one were to be provided; and officers are confident that a site at Bridgnorth would be fully occupied if provided.

Telford & Wrekin : Lodge Road is felt not to be up to standard for modern living because of small pitches. Family growth from existing sites will create need for perhaps 2 further sites.

Herefordshire : Some design faults on sites leading to pitches being too small, and in some instances too many pitches for realistic demand from the locality. Several sites suffered a major disruption in the early 2000s because of an 'invasion' of Irish Travellers who have since moved on. Previously stable sites have suffered vandalism and closure; many previous residents have moved into housing. Tensions between resident families is an issue on some sites, which can be related to pitch allocations. To avoid discrimination, all sites are available to all Travellers, but this can lead to tensions and loss of a sense of community.

Powys : Withybeds is fully occupied, but there is no evidence of need in the north of the area beyond the families currently resident. There could be problems filling pitches if families moved off. In contrast, there is need in the south of the area from a group who has been in the area for some time. There is a slight issue on Withybeds from accumulations of by-products of residents' work, including dismantled caravans.

Table 6.2 : Local Authority Sites					
Local authority	Site	Pitches (occupied)		Management	Comments
		Res.	Transit		
Herefordshire	Romany Close, Grafton	9	0	Herefordshire Council	Newly refurbished
Herefordshire	Watery Lane, Hereford	11	0	Herefordshire Council	Stable site, few pitches ever available
Herefordshire	Madley	0	17	Herefordshire Council	Disused transit site. Future doubtful
Herefordshire	Tinkers Corner, Bosbury	7	0	Herefordshire Council	
Herefordshire	Openfield, Bromyard	2 (10)	0	Herefordshire Council	2 tenants remaining following vandalism. Possibility of refurbishment with fewer pitches
Herefordshire	Croft Lane, Luston	10	0	Herefordshire Council	Site was occupied by New Travellers, now mixed and issues over site 'community'
Herefordshire	Pembridge Turnpike	6	0	Herefordshire Council	Refurbished following vandalism. 3 of 6 pitches let; all counted as lettable
North Shropshire	Manor House Lane, Prees	18	0	Shropshire County Council	Site refurbished. 2 amenity units provided with day rooms designed by community. Stable site
Oswestry	Park Hall, Oswestry	13	0	Shropshire County Council	Refurbished. Large pitches but small amenity units. 1 pitch used as an office
Shrewsbury & Atcham	Cross Houses	5	0	Shropshire County Council	Refurbished
South Shropshire	Long Lane, Craven Arms	10	9	Shropshire County Council (leased)	Refurbished. Leased to a Gypsy Traveller manager
Telford & Wrekin	Lodge Road, Donnington Wood	16	0	Telford & Wrekin Council	Refurbished
Telford & Wrekin	Ketley Brook, Lawley	20	0	Telford & Wrekin Council	Refurbished
Powys	Withybeds, Welshpool	12	6	Powys County Council	Refurbished. Transit pitches are used informally to accommodate visitors on occasion.

Residents' Views on Local Authority Sites

6.8 44 respondents were living on a local authority site and answered questions about the site and their opinions on it.

Living Units and Space

6.9 41 respondents said how many caravans/trailers/buses they have at present. Of these, 41% have 1 living unit, 56% have 2 and 2% have 3. The average number was 1.6.

6.10 48% of respondents said that they have enough space at the moment for their family's needs. This means that half do **not** have enough space. Of those without enough space, 59% are overcrowded because they need both more or bigger caravans/trailers and a bigger pitch. 27% are overcrowded because they need a bigger pitch but not more/bigger caravans, 9% need more/bigger caravans but not a bigger pitch. Most of those who need a bigger pitch to accommodate more living units already have 2 caravans/trailers; their average household size is 4.3 people. Respondents saying that they require a bigger pitch were asked why they needed a bigger pitch. In order of frequency of mention, reasons are:

- To have more or larger living units
- Car/van/lorry parking
- Storage
- Just like more space
- So can have visitors

Written-in comments flesh this out. One woman wanted a chalet, but cannot accommodate one because the position of the amenity unit compromises the plot layout. One wanted some 'grass' for the children to play.

6.11 In terms of 'objective' occupancy rates, 39% of respondents on local authority sites had more than 2 people per living unit. This might be taken as an indication of less than ideal occupancy for Gypsies and Travellers in caravans/ trailers given the ideal that older children of each sex have their own sleeping caravans.

6.12 When asked to rate their site in terms of size of pitch, 43% rated it as either good or very good and 32% as poor or very poor, with 23% saying it is neither good nor poor and 2% not giving an answer. Half or more respondents rated Croft Road Luston, Lodge Road and Ketley Brook as poor in terms of size of pitch (this appears to conflict with stakeholder views that Lodge Road is more problematic than Ketley Brook in terms of pitch size).

6.13 Taken together these findings suggest a desire for more living space among up to half of residents on local authority sites. The space also needs to be designed so that it can be used as people want. Overcrowding is not considered per se in the need assessment in Chapter 13, but these issue should be borne in mind in refurbishments and new site design. Some families might seek to move to larger pitches in future, vacating their existing pitch.

Amenity Provision

6.14 All local authority site residents have water, mains electricity and a heated amenity unit including a WC and a bath and/or shower. A proportion of respondents said that they did not have:

Laundry facilities	23%
Kitchen facilities	9%
Postal delivery	5%

6.15 When asked to rate their site on its facilities, 50% rated it either good or very good and 9% as poor or very poor. The remaining 41% said either that it was neither good nor poor or gave no answer. One respondent commented on the price of electricity. This prevented her being able to heat water for a bath or shower.

Other Site Features

6.16 Table 6.3 shows ratings on design, location and management of the site, and on site neighbours. Ratings are most favourable for management of the site and for neighbours. Only about half of respondents rated their site good on location, and only just over a third rated it good on design. This strongly suggests that residents and potential residents should be consulted on the design of local authority sites to be provided in future.

Table 6.3 : Rating of Local Authority Sites

	Sample		Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	No answer
Design of site	44	%	8	27	14	30	18	2
Location of site	44	%	14	39	25	14	5	5
Management of site	44	%	18	55	14	7	5	2
Neighbours on site	44	%	14	48	25	5	2	7

6.17 Combining all the rating questions (those listed in Table 6.3, plus size of pitch and site facilities) produces a relative ranking of sites across the Study Area. The combined rankings produce four groupings of sites:

- Consistently high positive rankings: Romany Close, Grafton; Withybeds, Powys
- Medium positive rankings: Tinker's Corner, Bosbury; Watery Lane, Hereford; Long Lane, Craven Arms; Cross Houses, Shrewsbury & Atcham; Manor House Lane, Prees; Park Hall, Oswestry
- Slightly positive/neutral rankings : Lodge Road, Telford & Wrekin; Openfields, Bromyard

- Slightly negative rankings : Ketley Brook, Telford & Wrekin; Croft Lane, Luston

6.18 41% of respondents have some concern about safety or security at their local authority site. Concerns were spread across most sites. The main concerns are:

- Issues to do with traffic and parking and especially danger to children playing on the site roads
- Electric pylons and cables over a site
- Dangers from nearby woods or quarry
- Lack of lighting at night
- Violence on site (and perceived failure of the manager to tackle this)
- General danger to health from disrepair to amenity units or old trailers on site

Some of these concerns are to do with the design of the site and its location, a few to do with residents.

6.19 Respondents were asked what one or two things would most improve their site. 14% said that there was nothing needed to improve the site. The improvements mentioned most frequently were larger amenity units and/or plots. Some suggested extending the site and providing more pitches. Reflecting safety concerns, there were suggestions for better parking provision for cars and lorries, better lighting and removal of pylons. A few wanted somewhere for children to play safely. There were references to cleaning the site up and to improved management – one respondent wanted a site warden and others different management styles. A few also referred to the mix of cultures on site. The answers below illustrate some varying suggestions and show how many things need to be ‘right’ to create a satisfactory site.

More space for larger vehicles to park safely. Bigger utility blocks with heating.

Relocation. Car park. Lower barriers. Matching fences and gates. Plumbing of mobiles connected to proper drainage. Also bigger plots, if kids get married and need a place to stay from time to time.

To be managed by well informed, intelligent understanding people who display integrity, sympathy to people’s needs and problems, and who are unbiased.

If different cultures were not mixed together, different types of Travellers don’t mind each other, but huge differences in culture make it difficult to live together.

6.20 Respondents felt sufficiently strongly about some site management issues to refer to them again at the end of the interview when asked if they had any issues or concerns not already talked about. In particular, several respondents raised pitch allocation issues. Some felt that sons and daughters of site residents should get greater priority as this suits Gypsy and Traveller

culture and leads to more stable and happy sites. Others felt that it is wrong to mix different Traveller groups with different lifestyles and that, rather than it being discriminatory to exclude by group, it is discriminatory to deny people the chance to live their life as they wish within a community of similar living patterns. These comments are rather at variance with the favourable rating of site management in Table 6.3. They suggest that those who dislike an aspect of site management tend to have – and voice – strong opinions.

Authorised Private Sites

6.21 Identifying and including private sites in the Study Area in the survey has proved challenging because there are many small family sites and relatively few larger one. There also appears to be an issue whether sites are necessarily identified as Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites, as opposed to caravan sites occupied by Gypsies and Travellers – or by people who see themselves as Travellers but may not be seen to have gypsy status by the local authority. It is also difficult to assess the number of pitches since some permissions are given in terms of caravan capacity which can represent differing numbers of ‘households’ according to the number of caravans they have (for example, a 20 caravan site could accommodate 20 families with a single caravan each, or 10 families with 2 each). Our best estimate of private sites and pitches, built up from information from Partner authorities, community interviewers and the survey, is shown in Table 6.1. This includes a total of 21 sites, providing an estimated 136 pitches. Two sites in Herefordshire have temporary planning permissions which will expire before 2011.

6.22 It appears that 15 sites (71%) are occupied by family members only, providing 33 pitches/caravan spaces (24%) of the total). These small sites are in contrast to the generally larger sites providing rented pitches. The 2 largest sites (Warren Road, North Shropshire and Yoke Farm, Herefordshire) together provide 85 pitches/caravan space – 63% of the total. These sites with rented pitches play a very different role in the local market from the small family-owned and occupied sites, and their residents have different characteristics. Some sites and/or pitches appear to be acting almost as transit sites although not explicitly described as such. This is evidenced by rates of mobility in Chapter 9, and by the fact that 12% of interviewees said they had a base elsewhere. At the time of the survey, Yoke Farm was not fully occupied but it was anticipated that residents would return to over-winter after travelling between work locations over summer. Another smaller site was over-occupied at the time of the survey and there were more caravans than strictly permitted by the planning consent.

6.23 Key stakeholder interviews raised questions about amenity provision on the larger sites with rented pitches, and there are potential issues around control of standards while retaining flexibility and affordable supply. Upgrading might lead to creation of mobile home parks rather than sites geared to trailers which would impact on families who use the sites and raises questions about

security of tenure (and the extent to which residents and site owners are familiar with security of tenure and able to exercise their legal rights).

Residents' Views on Private Sites

6.24 34 respondents were living on an authorised private site and answered questions about the site and their opinions on it. Of these, 13 (38%) were on sites owned by themselves or their close family and 21 (62%) were on rented pitches.

Living Units and Space

6.25 41 respondents said how many caravans/trailers/buses they had at present. Of these, 53% have 1 living unit, 35% have 2 and 9% have 3. The average number was 1.5 – marginally less than on local authority sites. This conceals a difference between family-owned sites where the average is 1.8 living units and rented pitches on private sites where the average is 1.4 units.

6.26 82% of respondents said that they have enough space at the moment for their family's needs. Only 9% (3 respondents) said that they do not have enough space. Of these, all said that they are overcrowded because they need more or bigger caravans or trailers, only 1 respondent said that they needed a bigger pitch. This contrasts with respondents on local authority sites who were much more likely to say that they had too little space and need bigger pitches.

6.27 In terms of 'objective' occupancy rates, 38% of respondents on private sites had more than 2 people per living unit (very similar to the proportion on local authority sites). This suggests that either the living units are larger on private than on local authority sites or that expectations are different (or both).

Amenity Provision

6.28 Amenity provision on private sites is markedly worse than on local authority sites. The proportion of respondents without listed amenities is:

Amenity building/shed	74%
Laundry facilities	65%
Kitchen facilities	65%
Space for sitting/eating	59%
Bath or shower	53%
Mains electricity	29%
WC	9%
Rubbish collection	9%
Water supply	6%
Postal delivery	5%

6.29 Clearly the local authority pattern of an amenity unit per pitch providing bath/shower, WC and basic kitchen space is not a feature of private sites. On one site there is one toilet between all women on the site, and one standpipe for water.

6.30 Where respondents said that they had no access to water, mains electricity or a WC, they were asked how they managed for these services and whether it was a problem to them. 9 respondents answered this question, a third of whom said that lack of the facility was a problem to them. Lack of mains electricity was usually overcome by solar or wind power, and candles – only one respondent had a back-up generator. Lack of a WC was overcome by ‘a hole in the ground’. Comments on whether this is a problem sum up mixed feelings:

We just get used to it. It's our way of life.

Short-term, no; long-term, yes.

Site Ratings

6.31 Table 6.4 summarises answers to all the rating questions for private sites. Ratings are significantly more favourable than for local authority sites, including for facilities where provision appears to be objectively much worse. On most measures, at least three-quarters of respondents rated their site either good or very good.

Table 6.4 : Rating of Private Sites								
	Sample		Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	No answer
Size of pitch	34	%	38	50	6	6	-	-
Design of site	34	%	35	47	9	6	3	-
Facilities on site	34	%	29	41	15	6	3	6
Location of site	34	%	29	62	9	-	-	-
Management of site ⁽¹⁾	21	%	14	38	24	14	10	-
Neighbours on site	34	%	27	53	12	3	6	-

(1) Renters only

6.32 There are differences between owner-occupied family sites and respondents renting pitches on private sites. Most of the poor ratings come from renters, but they are still significantly more likely than those on local authority sites to rate their site as good or very good on measures other than site management (private renters). On site management, 12% of respondents on local authority sites rated it as poor or very poor, compared with 24% on private sites. It would, however, be dangerous to assume that lack of complaint means everything is fine:

If you make a fuss or complain, you'd be kicked off. I'd have nowhere else to go.

Since this comment emerged in the course of the interview rather than in answer to a specific question, it is not clear how far the sentiment is shared.

6.33 A small number of respondents (5 or 15%) have some concern about safety or security at their site. Concerns were more likely to be expressed on rented than on family-owned sites. Some concerns were expressed in general terms (*hazardous area*). One was concerned about lack of lighting at night, and another about lack of fences or gate to keep the child safe. Another was afraid for the safety of their vehicle which had to be parked some way away. These concerns are rather different from those expressed on local authority sites.

6.34 Respondents were asked what one or two things would most improve their site. Almost a quarter (23%) said that there was nothing wanted to improve the site – *None. This is a good site, good people here*. More toilets and baths/showers were the most commonly suggested improvement. Some wanted green toilets. There were a few references to lower rent and/or electricity charges. Some wanted communal space indoors. There were also comments about site management, suggesting more input from the site owner and better adherence to rules. It is clear from these answers that some private site residents would like amenity provision more in line with normal provision on local authority sites, while others are seeking improvements making it easier to pursue a green, co-operative lifestyle. This illustrates the big differences encompassed within the term ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ in the Study Area.

Long-Term Unauthorised Sites

6.35 It is the long-term unauthorised sites which give the Study Area some of its distinctive characteristics. The category ‘long-term unauthorised site’ includes a variety of circumstances, for example: unauthorised development of sites by Gypsies and Travellers on land they own; ‘sites’ established with a landowner’s consent or by a landowner but without planning permission; unauthorised encampments, sometimes on public land, which are tolerated but not formalised; caravans behind houses, usually occupied by family members as separate households on an almost continuous basis; and some park-ups identified by community interviewers apparently unknown to the Partner authorities but occupied by Gypsies and Travellers for months or years. Not all occupiers of such sites regard themselves as Travellers – one interviewee bought a caravan very cheaply because they were homeless and had nowhere else to go.

6.36 Table 6.1 lists 20 sites/locations with 70 pitches/caravans. Most are small. The 2 largest locations (The Oakery⁸, South Shropshire and Shobden Rock, Herefordshire) together account for 37 pitches/caravans (53% of the total). Most sites are in Herefordshire.

⁸ As noted in the footnote to Table 6.1 The Oakery was a long-term unauthorised site at the time of the survey. It has since changed status with a 1 year planning consent for 2 families only.

Residents' Views on Long-Term Unauthorised Sites

6.37 17 respondents were living on a long-term unauthorised site and answered questions about the site and their opinions on it. This is a small sample size, and the findings should be viewed as indicative only.

Living Units and Space

6.38 16 respondents said how many caravans/trailers/buses they have at present. Of these, 56% have 1 living unit, 25% have 2, 3% have 3 and 6% have 4. The average number was 1.7, slightly larger than on both local authority and private sites.

6.39 88% of respondents said that they have enough space at the moment for their family's needs. Only 12% (2 respondents) said that they do not have enough space. Both said that they are overcrowded because they need more or bigger caravans or trailers, not because they need a bigger pitch.

6.40 In terms of 'objective' occupancy rates, only 18% of respondents on long-term unauthorised sites had more than 2 people per living unit (lower than on either local authority or private sites). This perhaps suggests that informal sites allow residents to increase the number of living units to meet family needs, but also reflects smaller average household sizes.

Amenity Provision

6.41 Not surprisingly, amenity provision on long-term unauthorised sites is worse than on private sites. The proportion of respondents without listed amenities is:

Space for sitting/eating	77%
Bath or shower	76%
Amenity building/shed	71%
Laundry facilities	71%
Kitchen facilities	71%
Mains electricity	47%
WC	41%
Rubbish collection	41%
Water supply	41%
Postal delivery	35%

Some 'sites' are effectively not developed at all as serviced areas. This is not necessarily out of line with respondents' wishes as residents include some Travellers who are consciously seeking a low-input, green lifestyle.

6.42 Where respondents said that they had no access to water, mains electricity or a WC, they were asked how they managed for these services and whether it was a problem to them. 9 respondents answered this question, only 2 of whom (22%) said that lack of the facility was a problem to them. Water is being collected from the local church graveyard, garages, workplace or a spring. Where the caravan is at a house, the house facilities are used.

Electricity was normally through a 12v system and solar panels or a generator. The most basic arrangements were summed up:

Collect water from a spring half a mile away. Solar panels for 12v or small generator. Take a spade for a walk in the woods.

Site Ratings

6.43 Respondents on long-term unauthorised sites were asked to rate their site in the same way as those on local authority and private sites. These questions worked less well where the 'site' was very informal and basically was not 'designed', where pitches were basically unlimited in size or there were no facilities, site management or neighbours. The figures below show the number of respondents saying that their 'site' was poor or very poor on the measure and express this as a percentage of those providing a rating:

Size of pitch	1 respondent (6%)
Design of site	2 respondents (17%)
Facilities on site	5 respondents (45%)
Location of site	1 respondent (7%)
Management of site	1 respondent (11%)
Neighbours on site	1 respondent (9%)

These answers, except in relation to facilities, are not very different from those recorded for private sites (Table 6.4).

6.44 The level of concern about safety or security was much higher on long-term unauthorised than on private sites. 8 respondents (47%) have concerns. The main concern was lack of control over who comes onto the site meaning it is easy for strangers to gain access. In these circumstances, theft is a worry. One respondent mentioned proximity to the road and a blind bend. Another felt threatened by a hostile local community:

Neighbours and the rest of the people here aren't welcoming. They feel victimised. Any trouble in the town and the police come here first. Their cars have been trashed and tyres let down. Locals beep horns loudly at night.

6.45 Suggested improvements for long-term unauthorised sites included making the site legal, better facilities, access and security. Two suggestions sum up attitudes of some residents on such sites:

Getting left alone.

More sunshine.

6.46 As might be expected, attitudes towards long-term unauthorised sites varied, reflecting the extent to which people had chosen the life deliberately or had been forced into it by lack of alternative. Lack of security is a problem for all. Lack of basic amenities is a problem for some and a matter of choice and priorities for others.

7. UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

7.1 This chapter looks at unauthorised encampment – in this context taken as short-term transient encampments rather than encampments which might be ‘tolerated’ for months or years. The first section looks at the policy context. This is followed by some indications of the scale of unauthorised encampment in the Study Area. The final section presents survey findings on those interviewed on transient unauthorised sites.

The Policy Context

7.2 Management of unauthorised encampments is an important strand of national policy in England and Wales. Site provision is seen to be closely linked as an issue, but strong enforcement in appropriate circumstances is also seen as desirable in reducing sources of friction between Travelling and settled communities. There is also recognition that amenity and service provision for Gypsies and Travellers is poorest on unauthorised encampments and that they reinforce social exclusion.

7.3 A revised guide on managing unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers was issued by the ODPM in February 2006⁹. This primarily focuses on choosing and using the most appropriate powers, speeding the process and preventing further encampments (including through the provision of appropriate sites). The promised further guidance on dealing with anti-social behaviour has not yet been issued.

7.4 There are policies on managing unauthorised encampments across the Study Area as follows:

Shropshire : a county-wide policy signed up to by West Mercia Constabulary. The County GLO takes the lead on county land. The District takes the lead on District Council land. The GLO will visit all unauthorised encampments and may offer advice to private land owners. Legal action is a last resort, and most encampments are ended through negotiation. The general approach is described as fairly liberal with ‘toleration’ seen as fostering better relations with Gypsies and Travellers.

Telford & Wrekin : There is no formal policy, but one is being developed. There are information leaflets on powers available and land protection measures which are due to be updated. Each encampment is dealt with on its merits. The GLO visits encampments on Council land and acts as lead officer for health and welfare checks. A fairly liberal approach is followed on the grounds that there is little sense in moving people on if they encamp again nearby. Fresh water may be supplied and toilets if needed. Rubbish bags and collection may be

⁹ Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Guide to effective use of enforcement powers : Part 1 : Unauthorised encampments*, ODPM, 2006

arranged or permits given to drop off refuse. The police are involved only as a last resort or in instances where there is anti-social behaviour. Most encampments occur on industrial estates; on private land the onus is on the landowner to take action.

Herefordshire : There is a policy relating to Council owned or administered land. The policy is generally tolerant in that there will not be evictions where there is a long and established history of occupation without complaint, and most encampments will be left at least 14 days unless there are problems. Health and welfare assessments are made. Travellers will normally be allowed to remain if a number of specified conditions are met (the Code which is given to Travellers) concerning behaviour and reducing nuisance. The Council will make provision for refuse collection and identify places where water can be accessed.

Powys : There is a procedure for managing unauthorised encampments which sets out the scope for action and available powers, and procedures for site visits (to be undertaken with a police officer present). The Head of Legal Services will decide on the basis of completed reports and assessments whether any action to remove the encampment is in the public interest or whether the Council should tolerate the encampment for a limited period. There is a Code for Travellers to follow, and compliance with this is one factor in the decision whether or not to take action. The Code includes factors intended to reduce impact and nuisance to neighbours and other land-users, but also to ensure the health and safety of the Travellers.

7.5 The policy statements and interviews with key stakeholders suggest a fairly relaxed approach to managing unauthorised encampments across the Study Area unless on high profile locations or where Traveller behaviour causes real nuisance. One consequence of this is the difficulty in identifying the extent of transient unauthorised encampment rather than long-standing encampments already discussed.

The Extent of Unauthorised Encampment

7.6 It has not been possible to build up a totally consistent picture of the extent and nature of transient unauthorised encampments across the Study Area because different authorities record encampments in different ways and have information relating to varying time periods. The Caravan Counts are not helpful in this respect as there is no distinction between long-term and transient encampments on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers. Examination of the Counts suggest that most caravans included are on long-term rather than transient encampments.

7.7 Information provided by Partner authorities gives a flavour of the pattern of unauthorised encampment across the Study Area:

- In **Telford & Wrekin** details were provided and analysed for all known encampments between 2001 and 2006. Over the 6 year period a total of 357 encampments was recorded. There was a drop in encampment numbers over this period, from 107 in 2001 to 30 in 2006. Most encampments are small, with an average of 3.7 caravans (other vehicles would be present in addition). The average duration of encampment was just over 8 days, with 70% of encampments lasting up to 7 days. Most encampments were on or near industrial premises (vacant and occupied), then on land associated with roads and highways, suggesting that many will be very visible and likely to cause some disruption. Some locations (retail park and industrial areas) are subject to repeat encampment.
- In **Shropshire** county details were provided for calendar years 2005, 2006 and 2007. Over this period there were 103 recorded encampments, an average of 34 a year but with an apparent upward trend. Most encampments occurred between Easter and September each year. The average encampment size was 6.4 caravans and the average duration just over 10 days although 71% lasted up to a week only. At district level, the number of encampments over the 3 years was: Shrewsbury & Atcham 45; North Shropshire 31; Bridgnorth 12; Oswestry 11; and South Shropshire 3. Locations appear to include a mix of urban and rural sites, with several being subject to repeat encampments.
- **Herefordshire** experienced 12 encampments in 2005 on local authority land. There is no record of encampments on private land.
- **Powys** experienced 128 encampments between 2000 and 2005, an average of 25-26 a year. In the year 2006/07 there were 148 encampments, largely because of a single large extended family moving between locations.

7.8 Stakeholder interviews suggest that the majority of transient unauthorised encampments occur in or near Telford & Wrekin, with a secondary cluster in or near Shrewsbury. Elsewhere, encampments are sporadic and not viewed as a major issue (but see below). Stakeholder comments include:

- Stakeholders in both Shropshire and Herefordshire noted a decrease over the past 2/3 years in the number of Irish groups travelling through the area. Reasons for the decrease are not entirely clear, but if they are linked with unauthorised developments in other parts of the country, enforcement action taken there could lead to an upsurge in encampments again.
- In Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire, stakeholders commented on the desirability of some sort of transit accommodation linked to the M54 route. Press coverage of unauthorised encampments near Shrewsbury, Prees and Oswestry during the study period (Shropshire Star April 2007) shows that incidents occur sporadically and cause some public

outcry amongst the local settled community. Comments sparked by the original articles reveal public hostility to Gypsies and Travellers, especially related to perceived damage and mess caused at encampments.

- In the north of Powys few Travellers now pass through the area (more previously). In the south of the area there is a clearer route along the A40 from/to Fishguard and Pembroke Dock. Encampments tend to be on main roads and lay-bys for a few nights. Groups seeking to stop longer would be looking for work around the Heads of the Valleys or agricultural work in Herefordshire. A single large extended family has been moving around the south of the area.
- A special feature in Powys is the Royal Welsh Show held at Builth Wells each July. This attracts Gypsies and Travellers from a wide area. For the past few years a farmer has provided 'unofficial' transit accommodation and the Council has cleaned up the site after people have left. To date, no-one has stayed more than about 10 days and enforcement action has not been needed.
- Stakeholders pointed out the rural nature of much of their areas, and the sheer extent of land involved. Local authorities may not become aware of unobtrusive unauthorised encampment at all.

7.9 The indications are that needs for formal transit site provision in the Study Area will be modest apart from around the M54. There are no other obvious routes where frequent encampments suggest that provision would be worthwhile and effective.

7.10 The model used to estimate need for site accommodation (Chapter 13) requires estimates for numbers of transient encampments across the Study Area in a year. The estimates below reflect averages and apparent trends from the data presented above. The estimate for families is made on the basis of the information from Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire which gave an overall average encampment size 4.3 caravans and the findings of the survey that respondents on transient unauthorised encampments have 1.5 living units on average (paragraph 7.12 below). From this we estimate that the average encampment involves 3 families. The resulting estimates used are as follows:

Bridgnorth	4 encampments	12 families
North Shropshire	10 encampments	30 families
Oswestry	4 encampments	12 families
Shrewsbury & Atcham	15 encampments	45 families
South Shropshire	1 encampments	3 families
Telford & Wrekin	30 encampments	90 families
Herefordshire	10 encampments	30 families
Powys	25 encampments	75 families
Study Area	99 encampments	297 families

Survey Findings on Transient Unauthorised Sites

7.11 Only 15 interviews were with people on transient unauthorised sites. This reflects the apparent low level of encampment during the study period, but also a reluctance on the part of some groups to take part in the survey.

Living Units and Space

7.12 All 15 respondents said how many caravans/trailers/buses they have at present. 60% have 1 living unit, 27% have 2. 1 respondent each had 4 and 8 living units. The latter was an extended family of 20 people who regarded themselves as a single unit. The average number of living units was 1.9, larger than on other types of site. Excluding the large extended family brings the average down to 1.5 units, similar to the average among renters on private sites.

7.13 More than half (53%) of respondents said that they have enough space at the moment for their family's needs. Only 20% (3 respondents) said that they do not have enough space, the remainder gave no answer or did not know. 2 said that they needed more caravans, and 1 that they needed more space generally. For this transient group, shortage of space may be temporary only while travelling. 'Objective' crowding is higher than on other types of site since two-thirds of respondents were living at a density of more than 2 persons per caravan.

Amenity Provision

7.14 Amenity provision on transient unauthorised sites was poor. The proportion of respondents without listed amenities is:

Mains electricity	87%
Amenity building/shed	87%
Postal delivery	87%
Laundry facilities	87%
Bath or shower	80%
Kitchen facilities	73%
Space for sitting/eating	67%
Rubbish collection	67%
WC	60%
Water supply	60%

The small minority of respondents with the most basic of facilities (2 or 3 respondents only) were living temporarily near a relative on a site or in a house and were sharing facilities.

7.15 Where respondents said that they had no access to water, mains electricity or a WC, they were asked how they managed for these services and whether it was a problem to them. 13 respondents answered this question. 7 (54%) said that lack of the facility was a problem to them. This is a higher proportion than among those lacking similar facilities on long-term unauthorised sites. This could suggest those on transient sites lacked more facilities, or that their lack was less of a conscious lifestyle choice than on the

longer term sites. Means of overcoming the lack of electricity, water and WC included getting water wherever possible from garages, farms and other people, and using a generator, solar or wind power. One respondent commented that people are more reluctant to provide water now it is metered.

Safety Concerns

7.16 The level of concern over safety or security was surprisingly low on transient unauthorised sites. Only 3 respondents (20%) have such concerns. All were to do with theft when not at home and hostility from the local community.

7.17 While asked to suggest improvements to their stopping place, several respondents felt this was not appropriate in their circumstances. Two would like to have been on the sunny rather than the shady side of a hill so that solar panels would work better.

8. HOUSING

8.1 Many Gypsies and Travellers live in bricks and mortar housing nationally and within the Study Area. However, there is no source of information which says how many Gypsies and Travellers are in housing and estimates vary. This is true nationally, regionally and locally. There is also little evidence available about the reasons why Gypsies and Travellers live in bricks and mortar rather than caravans/trailers. It is usually assumed that a combination of factors are involved including positive reasons to do with amenity provision, warmth, access to schools, health and other services and security, and more negative reasons to do with lack of a realistic alternative of living on a good authorised site. One of the big unknowns in Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments is the extent of need for site accommodation generated from families currently living in housing. There are also issues around appropriate service delivery and potential support needs for Gypsies and Travellers in housing.

8.2 This chapter looks at Gypsies and Travellers and housing. The national, regional and local policy context is described. Material from Partners and stakeholder interviews is reported, and finally survey findings on the sort of housing occupied in the Study Area and respondents' views are presented.

The Policy Context

8.3 One of the intentions of Government policy towards Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is to 'mainstream' provision as far as possible. Thus the Housing Act 2004 makes clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are to be assessed just as all other needs are, and are to be included in local authority Housing Strategies as well as in local planning documents. However, it is clear that Government policy is **not** to encourage Gypsies and Travellers to live in mainstream housing but to make culturally acceptable provision in the form of caravan sites. Government policy and the Courts have accepted that some Gypsies and Travellers have a strong cultural aversion to living in bricks and mortar, and that their wishes should be met as far as possible.

8.4 The 2006 Homelessness Code of Guidance¹⁰ refers specifically to Gypsies and Travellers, reminding authorities of their duties. Someone is homeless when they live in a moveable dwelling (caravan) and have nowhere they can legally live in it. Technically, Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites and with no permanent base are homeless although few apply as such. Authorities must give consideration to the needs and lifestyle of Gypsy and Traveller applicants when considering a homelessness application and how best to discharge a duty to secure suitable accommodation, in line with their obligations to act consistently with the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular the Article 8 right to respect for private life, family and the home

¹⁰ Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate, *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, Communities and Local Government*, 2006

(paragraph 16.38). This means that, for a Gypsy and Traveller with an evidenced marked cultural aversion to bricks and mortar, 'suitable' accommodation would be a place on a caravan site if at all possible.

8.5 The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy (June 2005) includes a significant section on Gypsies and other Travellers in Chapter 4 (People and Communities). There are a number of policies:

Policy 4.45 : The RHB expects to see Local Authorities working with the Housing Corporation and the RSLs to see where additional pitches may be needed and how they might be delivered.

Policy 4.46 : The RHB will consult with Local Authorities through the joint WMRSS/RHS monitoring system on the process of updating Regional household needs information, data on pitches required and on trends.

Policy 4.47 : The RHB requires local authorities to integrate their strategies to take account of Gypsies and Travellers and especially pitch provision.

Policy 4.48 : The RHB expects local authorities to ensure there is good co-ordination, liaison and consistency of housing advice on accommodation matters for Gypsies and Travellers.

8.6 There is explicit mention of Gypsies and Travellers in most local Housing Strategies (not in South Shropshire Housing Strategy 2004-2009 or Telford & Wrekin Housing Strategy 2003-2006). There are relevant specific objectives or action points:

Bridgnorth Housing Strategy Revision 2007-2012 : Action point on research to understand Gypsy and Traveller needs and to consider sub-regional and local actions in response.

Oswestry : To 'meet the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travelling People' is one of 8 identified housing priorities. There are action points on consulting with Gypsies and Travellers about their housing and support needs, improving data available and improving housing and support services available.

Herefordshire Housing Strategy for Herefordshire 2005-2008 : key action points to respond to the requirement to assess the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and to develop a strategy in response to assessed needs.

Powys Housing Strategy 2004-2009 : objective to consider the accommodation and service needs of gypsy and traveller households within the local authority area.

8.7 Most references to Gypsies and Travellers are general, and to do with assessing need and then developing appropriate services. The strategies of Oswestry and Herefordshire are remarkable for the frequency of mention of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the significance accorded them as probably the largest ethnic minority group.

8.8 The needs of Gypsies and Travellers are specifically referred to in all current Homelessness Reviews and Strategies (Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire). The Herefordshire Review consultation included 2 group interviews with New Travellers, on a site and in houses, which gives useful perspectives on their views of homelessness, processes and needs. Points raised by the Review include the need to look at policies on legal sites in connection to the needs of both Romanies and New Travellers, and potential issues around the Home Point choice-based lettings system as extended to rural properties and the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

8.9 Action points from Homelessness Strategies are:

Shropshire : Improving ethnic monitoring and data collection; measuring access to services by specific groups; developing joint working arrangements between groups working with Travellers (and others) and encouraging Travellers (and others) to approach local authorities for assistance.

Telford & Wrekin : Top priority is given to maximising supply of permanent housing and establishing the evidence base on unmet needs especially for older single people and BME groups and Travellers.

Herefordshire : Undertake research to establish the extent of support required by Travellers who are choosing to move into the county's social housing stock.

8.10 Many strategy statements are about increasing information and understanding of needs, with a view to developing appropriate services on the basis of better evidence than is currently available.

Information from Partners and Stakeholders on Gypsies and Travellers and Housing

Estimate of Numbers

8.11 Table 8.1 brings together information on Gypsies and Travellers and housing (mainly social rented housing) from Partner authorities and stakeholders. Much of this comes from instances where residents of local authority sites have been housed. Gypsies and Travellers who have found their own housing in the private sector are not identified.

Table 8.1 : Information on Gypsies and Travellers and Social Rented Housing	
Bridgnorth	
	Information is not collected. Gypsy and Traveller applicants for social housing and among allocations since 2001 are assumed to be zero. Shropshire County Council shows no Gypsies and Travellers housed into Bridgnorth from sites.
North Shropshire	
	No information provided by the local authority. Shropshire County Council shows 14 Gypsy and Traveller families housed into North Shropshire from sites.
Oswestry	
	No information provided by the local authority. Shropshire County Council shows 4 Gypsy and Traveller families housed into Oswestry from sites.
Shrewsbury & Atcham	
	The local authority record 6 families housed since 2001, an average of 1 a year. Shropshire County Council shows 6 Gypsy and Traveller families housed into Shrewsbury & Atcham from sites.
South Shropshire	
	The local authority report 6 applicants for social housing and 8 families housed from sites into social housing. Shropshire County Council shows 10 Gypsy and Traveller families housed into South Shropshire from sites. (It is not clear how these two sets of figures relate to each other.)
Telford & Wrekin	
	The local authority reports 2 waiting list applicants who have identified themselves as Gypsies and Travellers, and has listed 10 families housed in social rented housing. Shropshire County Council shows 10 Gypsy and Traveller families housed into Telford & Wrekin from sites.
Herefordshire	
	In November 2006, of the 6,805 applicants on the Home Point client data base, 14 identified themselves as 'Gypsy/Romany traveller', and 4 as 'other traveller'. About 20 families are thought to have moved from sites to housing over the past 5 years. The Herefordshire Survey of Housing Needs of Gypsies & Travellers interviewed 23 people in social rented housing.
Powys	
	No information.

8.12 The information in Table 8.1 is very partial and likely to significantly under-state the number of Gypsy and Traveller families in housing. It suggests that the areas with the highest numbers of housed families are Herefordshire, North Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and South Shropshire.

8.13 The model used to estimate need for site accommodation (Chapter 13) requires estimates for the base population of Gypsies and Travellers in housing across the Study Area. The estimates used are as follows:

Bridgnorth	5 families
North Shropshire	25 families
Oswestry	10 families
Shrewsbury & Atcham	10 families
South Shropshire	20 families
Telford & Wrekin	25 families
Herefordshire	115 families
Powys	5 families
Study Area	215 families

These estimates take into account the information in Table 8.1 and add an element for Gypsies and Travellers, particularly those in the private sector, who are not known to the authorities.

Key Stakeholder Comments

8.14 Key stakeholder comments relating to housing came mainly from Herefordshire. Traditional Gypsies and Travellers moved into social housing in some numbers in the early 2000s when an 'invasion' of sites by Irish Travellers occurred. More recently, a representative of the Herefordshire Traveller Health Project noted that the Project case log reveals growing accommodation problems (usually concerning moves to or between housing) being faced by traditional Gypsies and Travellers; the Project is finding these problems harder to solve.

8.15 Some of the main issues noted in stakeholder interviews are:

- Gypsies and Travellers are obviously affected by housing market pressures on social housing like everyone else. This means longer waits for everyone, especially for larger families who need 4 bedroom properties.
- General access issues will affect Gypsies and Travellers, for example increasing emphasis on homelessness prevention increases the importance of private tenancies where Gypsies and Travellers may face discrimination. Choice-based lettings policies may impact particularly on Gypsies and Travellers who are not always used to dealing with bureaucracies and may need special help.
- There can be issues around recognising and giving priority to harassment and neighbour problems which can have a big impact of health and well being.

- Like all other sections of the community, Gypsies and Travellers have differing preferences. Some want to be in areas where other Travellers live, some do not. Choice-based lettings can help here and lead to more sustainable tenancies.
- The Herefordshire Gypsy Liaison Officer works to support housed Gypsies and Travellers. The main issues she comes across are neighbour problems, discrimination and harassment, anti-social behaviour, filling in forms, and liaison with education, health and other services. A few Gypsies and Travellers do not manage in housing even with her support.

8.16 It is likely that similar market forces will affect Gypsies and Travellers and their housing opportunities across the Study Area. Varying locational preferences are also likely to be an issue. Similarly the need for support both in accessing and sustaining tenancies is likely to be replicated more widely.

Survey Findings : Respondents in Housing

8.17 Difficulties in identifying Gypsies and Travellers in housing are reflected in the relatively small number of interviews achieved in the GTAA survey with housed families. Because the Herefordshire survey had included interviews with 23 families in housing, we aimed to concentrate on other parts of the Study Area. Despite repeated requests for contact information, we received information on housed families only in Telford & Wrekin, North Shropshire and Oswestry. We followed up all contacts. Community interviewers were able to identify a few more families, but only in Telford & Wrekin. As a consequence, only 9 interviews were completed (2 were started but the respondent had to leave part way through and we have not been able to contact them to complete the interview subsequently). Where possible the GTAA and Herefordshire 2006 Survey samples are considered together below.

Property Type and Tenure

8.18 The great majority of housed interviewees were living in houses (93% of the combined GTAA and Herefordshire sample) and the remaining 7% were living in bungalows. No-one was in a flat or maisonette, perhaps reflecting household size but also cultural desires.

8.19 The majority (91% of the combined samples) were living in social rented housing. In all instances but 1 this was an RSL property, reflecting the nature of the social housing stock following the transfer of council stock to housing associations in Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin. The remaining 9% (3 GTAA respondents) were owner-occupiers. No private tenants were interviewed.

Property Size and Crowding

8.20 Over three-quarters of the combined sample (77%) had 3 bedrooms and 13% had 4 or more bedrooms. 10% had either 1 or 2 bedrooms. This indicates the importance of family accommodation.

8.21 The Herefordshire Survey did not explicitly ask whether respondents had enough space. In the GTAA sample, 2 respondents did not have enough space for their family's needs. This related to the number of bedrooms needed to give teenagers a bit of privacy.

8.22 On a crude measure of crowding, across the combined samples, only 2 households were living at a density of more than 2 persons to a bedroom. These were a 7 person household in a 3 bedroom house, and a 9 person household in a 4 bedroom house. While this is a crude measure which ignores the age and sex of family members and size of bedrooms, it seems that overcrowding is not a serious problem in bricks and mortar. Generally, housed households appear to have more space than those living on sites.

Views on Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

8.23 The GTAA survey asked respondents to rate their property on a number of factors. Because of the small sample number no sophisticated analysis is possible. The number rating their property as good or very good varied slightly between factors:

Size of house	6 respondents
Design of house	6 respondents
Facilities at the house	6 respondents
Condition/state of repair	5 respondents
Location	5 respondents
Neighbours	4 respondents

Respondents were least positive about neighbours.

8.24 3 of the 9 respondents in the GTAA sample had some concerns about safety and security. These were to do with fear of burglary and racism:

We have racist graffiti, stolen or damaged personal possessions from young farmers etc. Death threats from old villagers.

This quote dispels any feeling that the countryside might be more accepting of Gypsies and Travellers than urban areas.

8.25 Improvements suggested include suggestions for a new kitchen and central heating from one respondent, and better access so that they can have a caravan on the premises from two respondents. Three mentioned having more people around with whom they could mix and talk – more Travellers, more young families – and less racism.

Trailers and the Use

8.26 More than half (5 out of 9) of the GTAA sample owned one or more trailers/caravans. 4 owned 1 trailer or caravan and 1 owned 2. The survey asked how these trailers or caravans are used at present:

- 3 use their trailer/caravan while travelling

- 2 use it regularly while living in the house, for example as extra sleeping space

- 2 use it to accommodate visitors

- 1 uses it for another purpose (not specified)

For these families, a trailer is part of maintaining their lifestyle. The survey did not ask questions about any storage/parking issues, but the use made of trailers suggest that most are kept at/near the house and used as part of the living space or as a spare room. One respondent volunteered that they had had to sell the caravan and trailers as there was no room at the house for them.

9. MOBILITY: HOUSING HISTORIES AND INTENTIONS AND TRAVELLING PATTERNS

9.1 Gypsies and Travellers share a nomadic or semi-nomadic culture and lifestyle. In practice, this is reflected in actual movement to differing degrees. Some Gypsies and Travellers have no fixed base and are constantly travelling between one temporary stopping place and another. At the other extreme, some live in bricks and mortar or on a permanent site and do not travel at all beyond holidays and occasional visits to family or friends. In the settled community, it is usually clear when someone moves house, that is from one permanent address to another, and when they are 'travelling'. This distinction is less clear for some Gypsies and Travellers who move between 'addresses' frequently and stay at each for a period according to family circumstances or accommodation options. This chapter examines some of these issues. It looks first at how long respondents had been at their current address, and then at housing histories – where people were living before the place they were interviewed at – then at movement intentions. The final section presents findings on travelling.

Length of Residence

9.2 Table 9.1 shows how long respondents had been living where they were interviewed by type of accommodation.

Table 9.1 : Length of Residence by Current Accommodation						
	Total	Local authority site	Private site	Long-term unauthorised	Housing	Transient unauthorised
Sample	118	43	34	17	9	15
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 1 week	5	-	-	-	22	40
1 week, less than 1 month	7	2	7	-		27
1 month, less than 3 months	9	-	9	-		33
3 months, less than 6 months	3	2	3	6		-
6 months, less than 1 year	9	9	15	12	-	-
1 year, less than 3 years	12	9	6	41	11	-
3 years, less than 5 years	14	18	15	18	-	-
5 years and over	41	57	38	24	66	-

9.3 Overall, 41% of the sample had been living at their current place for 5 or more years. This suggests a degree of settlement which is particularly apparent in housing and on local authority sites. Over a third of respondents on private sites had been there less than a year, while only 15% had been there 5 or more years. It seems that people on long-term unauthorised sites are actually more stable than on private sites. Private sites, particularly those offering rented pitches, facilitate mobility among Gypsies and Travellers.

Housing Histories

9.4 Table 9.2 shows where respondents were living or staying immediately before they came to the place where they were interviewed.

Table 9.2 : Previous Accommodation by Current Accommodation						
	Total	Local authority site	Private site	Long-term unauthorised	Housing	Transient unauthorised
Sample	118	43	34	17	9	15
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Roadside	23	21	12	41	11	40
Farm/farmland	14	9	15	29	11	7
Family site	4	5	9	-	-	-
Private site – rented	25	23	47	12	-	13
Local authority site	14	23	-	6	55	-
Housing	11	16	12	-	11	7
Other	9	2	6	12	11	33

9.5 This table shows a number of things:

- Residents on local authority sites come from a variety of accommodation, including roadside and other unauthorised sites, private sites with rented pitches and, to a lesser extent, from housing.
- Private sites also demonstrates a range, but movement from another private site is most significant. It is interesting that no-one had been on a local authority site immediately previously.
- The great majority of people on long-term unauthorised sites had previously been on some form of unauthorised site. There is little evidence of people leaving either authorised sites or housing to move to this sort of unauthorised site.

- The same is true of respondents on transient unauthorised sites. The large 'other' category here represents other forms of unauthorised occupation, eg illegal squatted camp, council car park, industrial units.
- The most common route into housing in the sample is from local authority sites; no-one moved from a private site to housing.
- Overall, the importance of private sites offering rented pitches is clear. A quarter of the sample were previously living on a private rented pitch, and this represented the largest single previous accommodation type. Relatively little is known about such sites, but they are obviously significant in the Gypsy and Traveller 'housing market'.

9.6 Respondents were asked why they left their previous accommodation and came to their present place. There was a wide variety of reasons and no single reason predominated. Reasons given by more than 10 respondents, in order of frequency of mention, were:

- Site/accommodation conditions (particularly important for people now on local authority sites and in housing) – for example: *wanted hard-standing as sick of mud; (on Merthyr site) it was very rough and smelly.*
- Eviction (particularly important for people now on transient and long-term unauthorised sites) – for example: *asked to leave by farmer.*
- Wanted independence (particularly important for people now on long-term unauthorised sites) – for example: *to move on to my own place with my brother.*
- Work reasons (particularly important for people now on private and long-term unauthorised sites) – for example: *it was a business opportunity and something different.*
- To travel (particularly important for people now on transient and private sites) – for example: *done my time, time to change my environment.*
- For children's schooling (particularly important for people now on local authority sites)
- Fears over personal safety (particularly important for people now on local authority and long-term unauthorised sites, and in housing) – for example: *got out of house due to domestic violence.*
- Health reasons/illness (particularly important for people now on local authority sites and in housing) – for example: *daughter has epilepsy and had to bath the children outside, too cold.*
- Harassment (particularly important for people now in housing)
- Get married/live with partner (particularly important for people now on local authority sites) – for example: *was chucked out of parents' house for marrying a Gypsy boy.*

Other reasons include social factors (*seemed a lot more interesting, more sociable, rural*) and factors directly related to lifestyle (*the horse went lame*).

9.7 Very generally, local authority sites seem to be catering for people who have moved for reasons to do, particularly, with household formation, health and education and who had fears for personal safety. People moving to private sites and long-term unauthorised sites are more likely to mention work,

independence and travelling as reasons. Those on unauthorised sites are more likely to have been affected by eviction or site closure. This suggests that the different forms of accommodation play rather different roles.

Experience of Living in Housing

9.8 Respondents living on sites were asked whether they had ever lived in a house, and a little about their experiences there. Overall, 59% had lived in a house at some point (ranging from 82% of those on long-term unauthorised sites to 46% of those on local authority sites). The house was equally likely to have been owner-occupied or rented from a social landlord with a smaller number rented from a private landlord. Most were houses rather than flats or bungalows. 44% of those who had ever lived in housing had either been born and raised there, or had moved with parents. 17% said that they had moved there because there were no sites available, and 11% had been homeless. These broadly involuntary or negative reasons far outnumber more positive reasons for moving to housing such as health and education. Some just *thought it was a good idea at the time*. Another summed up the experience: *moved in with a partner, fell out, moved out*.

9.9 Respondents' experiences of living in housing were not always positive. Just over a third (35%) of those who had ever lived in a house rated the experience as good or very good, 23% thought it neither good nor poor and 42% rated it poor or very poor. Reasons for finding it poor mostly related to dislike for bricks and mortar, claustrophobia, isolation and expense:

It was dirty – landing and lifts. It was like living in a box – dark. You couldn't hear the weather.

Isolating, depressing, not my usual style of living.

Expensive, neighbours, no room to breathe

Some commented that their financial circumstances meant they had the 'choice' of very poor housing only. Housing was often said to have led to debt and ill health.

9.10 The problems are directly reflected in the reasons given for leaving housing. Others included moving to live with a partner, work reasons and to be closer to the community.

Experience of Living on Residential Sites (Gypsies and Travellers in Housing)

9.11 Respondents in housing were asked a similar sequence of questions about living on a residential site for Gypsies and Travellers where they could stay as long as they wanted. 7 of the 9 respondents (78%) had lived on such a site. In all instances this had been a local authority site (mainly Ketley Brook, Hereford and Prees, but also others outside the area). 2 had been born

there or moved with parents. 3 had moved because of site or accommodation conditions, 1 to get married and 1 for children's schooling.

9.12 Experiences of living on a site had been mixed – 3 rated it good or very good, 3 rated it poor or very poor and 1 was neutral. Poor ratings related to poor site conditions and to sites deteriorating because of 'mess from other people' and problematic, rough residents. Reasons for leaving reflected these problems and health issues. One answer sums up the advantages of a house in the context of site shortage:

To move to a house for comfort, hot water etc and because it was difficult to find suitable sites.

Experience of Buying Own Land

9.13 15 respondents across the sample (13%) had bought land for a site on some occasion. This was spread across all current accommodation types but was, as would be expected, most common on private sites where some interviewees were surveyed on sites they had developed themselves. 9 of the 15 (60%) had applied for planning permission.

9.14 The sample includes those who succeeded and failed in getting planning consent. It was never an easy process:

Applied for planning permission but had an injunction put on so we had to leave.

After many appeals, illegal evictions, physical fights and stand-offs with the police and council, the Planning Inspectorate gave us permission to live here.

First site applied for was refused. Second site has had a 30 year battle before gaining permission.

Movement Intentions

9.15 Early in the interview, respondents were asked how long they thought they would stay on their current site, stopping place or house, why they might move and where they might go. These questions were not entirely successful in identifying intentions to move or the sort of accommodation which might be looked for.

Table 9.3 : How Long do Respondents Expect to Stay at their Current Accommodation						
	Total	Local authority site	Private site	Long-term unauthorised	Housing	Transient unauthorised
Sample	119	44	34	17	9	15
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 1 week	3	-	3	-	-	13
1 week, less than 1 month	4	-	3	6		20
1 month, less than 3 months	3	-	-	18		-
3 months, less than 6 months	3	2	6	6		-
6 months, less than 1 year	1	-	3	-	-	-
1 year, less than 3 years	4	7	6	-	-	-
3 years, less than 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 years and over	4	7	6	-	-	-
Indefinitely	39	59	38	18	22	13
Don't know	39	25	35	53	77	53

9.16 Table 9.3 shows findings about how long people expect to remain at their current place. As can be seen, the most popular answers overall were 'indefinitely' or 'don't know'. 'Don't know' seems to mean different things according to current accommodation type. On private and local authority sites and in housing it appears to indicate a lack of conscious plans to move but awareness that something might turn up to make movement necessary or desirable. On unauthorised sites, 'don't know' also includes a significant element of uncertainty about how long they would be able to stay as well – in other words it is the 'when' rather than the 'whether' of movement that is in question.

9.17 This is amplified by looking at answers to a question about why they would leave their current site or stopping place.

- On **transient unauthorised sites** most expected to be evicted. One wanted to find a warmer park-up for winter and another had already found a more permanent park for winter. One was going back to her house.

- Most of those on **long-term unauthorised sites** would move only when evicted. Eviction was pending for several from The Oakery at the time of the interviews (since effected). Others would move when work dried up, or to find a more suitable winter park-up.
- On **authorised private sites**, some were only temporary residents who would move on soon. Other reasons were more hypothetical, linked to needing to move for work or to a piece of land of their own.
- On **local authority sites** most wanted to stay, but some spoke about potentially having to move – residents were unsure of the future of the Park Hall site in Oswestry¹¹. Some would move if they found a better site or were able to develop their own site. A few felt they might want a change, or more definitely wanted to move because they were dissatisfied with the site or its management.
- In **housing**, most movement possibilities were dependent on some event – a child leaving school or more sites being built.

9.18 Given this uncertainty about moving and what might trigger it, one response is to look only at positive answers on likelihood of moving. On this basis, the following proportions of respondents said that they were likely to move within 5 years:

Total	18%
Local authority sites	9%
Private sites	21%
Long-term unauthorised sites	30% (apparently raised by expectation of eviction at The Oakery)
Housing	-
Transient unauthorised sites	33% (misleading because many respondents said they did not know just when rather than whether they would move; most are likely to move quite quickly)

As might be expected, anticipated movement is higher on unauthorised than authorised accommodation. Anticipated mobility is higher on private than local authority sites. One suggestion from this is that future turnover on local authority sites will be low.

9.19 Overall, 53 respondents answered a question on whether they would like to stay 'in this area' (not further defined) if/when they left their current place. Of these 83% said that they would like to stay in the area.

9.20 Respondents were asked what type of accommodation they would be looking for when they left, and were offered a number of options. Most gave

¹¹ This uncertainty came strongly through interviews on the Park Hall site. Shropshire confirm that the site is permanent and that there are no plans to close it. The source of the rumour and uncertainty is unclear.

more than one answer – indeed a few said they would be looking for all forms of accommodation. This cannot, therefore be taken as an indication of firm intentions. Answers do give an indication of priorities. Overall the order of priority was:

- Family owned site (with or without planning permission)
- Local authority site
- Private site owned by someone else
- Land/site provided in connection with work
- Roadside/informal stopping place
- Bricks and mortar housing

This shows the relative unpopularity of housing.

9.21 There were differences in order of priority according to present accommodation. The two options receiving most mentions were:

- Local authority site residents : local authority site and family site with planning permission
- Private site residents : private site owned by someone else and family site with planning permission
- Long-term unauthorised site residents : land/site provided in connection with work and family site with planning permission
- Transient unauthorised site resident : family site without planning permission and family site with planning permission

Family sites appear on the priorities for all groups. Second choices suggest a desire to continue broadly in the same sort of accommodation as currently occupied. No group is looking for housing as a priority.

Travelling

9.22 A section of the questionnaire dealt with travelling whilst living in a caravan or trailer. This was clearly more significant for some than for others.

9.23 Table 9.4 shows how frequently respondents travel on each type of accommodation. Those on transient unauthorised sites have been excluded since the great majority said that they travel throughout summer at least, and a third travel every week or all year round.

9.24 The majority in each type of accommodation travel sometimes. Those on local authority sites and in housing are least likely to travel frequently. There is little difference between those on private sites and on long-term unauthorised sites in this respect.

Table 9.4 : Frequency of Travelling by Type of Accommodation					
	Total	Local authority site	Private site	Long-term unauthorised	Housing
Sample	103	44	34	16	9
	%	%	%	%	%
Every week	-	-	-	-	-
Every month	1	-	3	-	-
Every couple of months	14	9	9	31	22
Throughout summer	37	27	53	31	33
Once a year	11	16	9	6	-
Never	38	47	27	31	44

9.25 Those who never travel were asked whether there is a reason. Five main themes emerged from answers:

- People are getting too old to travel
- People have a permanent base and do not need to travel
- People have ties because of work or business or children in school
- People with mobile homes have no caravan to travel with
- There is nowhere to stop safely while travelling

9.26 Their current pattern of travelling was said to be typical by 55% of respondents. 37% said that their travelling had changed over the past few years (8% gave no answer or did not know). From the reasons given for changing frequencies it is apparent that the great majority are travelling less now rather than more. All the themes described above apply, together with reluctance to travel because of fear of losing the current place. Some quotations illustrate these themes:

Fewer and fewer safe stop-overs. Difficult to get caravan out of storage.

We get moved off all the places our grandparents used to be allowed to park. People are scared to travel in case they get into trouble and then they put us out on the road again.

I used to travel loads, but thanks to finding a site to stay on I have found fulfilling full-time work and am maintaining it.

It is too much like hard work.

We did not travel so much when I lived in a caravan on a site, but when we went into a house I get restless to travel.

9.27 Most travelled with other family members. Slightly fewer said that they travelled with friends or their own household only. Still fewer normally travelled alone. Respondents were asked how many trailers or caravans they normally travel with, and how many people are in the group they travel with. Answers ranged between 1 and 10 caravan/trailers and 1 and 30 people. Most groups were small. The average numbers were 2.1 caravans/trailers and 7.7 people in the group.

9.28 A question asked where people like to go when they travel. A wide range of places were mentioned. Some seem to reflect holiday destinations, others may reflect family links, areas where work is available or cultural events (Appleby, Stow, Holywell). By region, the pattern of travelling destinations mentioned in order of frequency is:

- South West
- Wales
- Study Area itself
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- South East
- East
- North West
- London
- Scotland, Ireland and Europe

The first three (South West, Wales and the Study Area itself account for over half of all travelling locations.

9.29 In order of importance, respondents travelled for the following reasons in the last 12 months:

- Attend a fair or festival
- Work opportunities
- To visit relatives
- A holiday
- To attend family events
- To attend community events
- Other

Work, holidays, fairs and conventions all feature among the main reasons for travelling in the past year.

9.30 The sorts of place most commonly stayed at while travelling were the roadside or farmers' fields (each mentioned by about 55% of those travelling). Staying with family/relatives on private sites was next most common (about 40%), and caravan parks or land provided in connection with work (30-33%). Only 19% said that they had stayed on public or private transit sites, and 17% that they had stayed with family/relatives on a council site. Relatively informal provision was generally used.

9.31 Just over a quarter (27%) of those who had travelled said that they had been forced to leave a site while travelling in the last 12 months. The proportion rose to 53% among those on transient unauthorised sites who have, of course, travelled more than others. About a fifth of those who had

travelled had been evicted and 10% each had left a site because of harassment or fears for their personal safety. About 6% had had to leave because of site closure. One had to leave because work finished. There is no indication from the survey where (geographically) evictions or harassment had taken place. While evictions would obviously have been serious for those affected, it is clear that the majority did not have to leave sites, even those found quite informally.

Future Travelling Patterns

9.32 All respondents were asked whether they are likely to travel more, less or about the same as at present. A fifth thought they would travel more, 14% that they would travel less and 46% about the same as present. Almost a fifth (19%) were unable to say. Most of those saying they would travel more already travel to some extent. Answers suggest that the numbers who never travel might decrease a little on balance.

9.33 Those who anticipated travelling in the next 12 months said where they might travel and what sorts of land/sites they might use. In order of popularity areas of travel were:

- Parts of the UK outside the West Midlands and Wales
- Within Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys
- Within the area local to where they were interviewed
- Elsewhere in Wales
- Elsewhere in the West Midlands
- Abroad

The Study Area is big enough to generate internal travelling demands. This is a consideration when estimating need for transit provision and stopping places.

9.34 When asked where they would like to pull on to when travelling in future, locations in order of popularity were:

With family/relatives on private sites	64%
Farmers' fields	63%
Site/land provided in connection with work	52%
Caravan park	51%
Public or private transit sites	46%
With family/relatives on council sites	45%
Roadside	35%
Hotels	9%
Other	14%

Most respondents gave several answers. Preferences are broadly similar to stopping places already used (paragraph 9.30) except for the roadside. Roadside stopping places ranked higher among actual places used in the past than among preferred places for the future. Transit sites are less popular than caravan parks or less formal provision with family or on farmers' fields. Many respondents mentioned green lanes and common land as preferred stopping places. There is an impression that respondents strongly preferred 'traditional' unregulated travelling to a more formal system of transit sites and booked places.

10. FUTURE ACCOMMODATION, ASPIRATIONS AND HOUSEHOLD FORMATION

10.1 This chapter presents findings from the survey on questions about accommodation in the future. It contributes directly to the estimates of need made in Chapter 13. The first section looks at potential need/demand for long-stay residential site pitches, the second at need/demand for bricks and mortar housing. The third section looks at transit site need/demand. All three sections concentrate on survey findings about existing households. The fourth section looks at new household formation and the type of accommodation need this is likely to generate. The fifth section explores views on types of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in more general terms. The final section reports general comments on perceptions of need arising during the course of interviews rather than in response to specific questions.

10.2 An issue throughout this chapter is possible distinction between ‘need’, ‘demand’ and ‘aspiration’. We ensure that it is always clear what question was asked and report the findings.

Need/Demand for Residential Site Places from Existing Households

10.3 Respondents were asked ‘would you move to a/another long-stay residential site?’ If they said that they would, they were asked further questions about the site they would like. A fifth of respondents were not sure whether they would move to a/another long-stay site or not. Proportions saying that they would move by current accommodation are:

Local authority site	59%
Private site	44%
All authorised sites	53%
Long-term unauthorised sites	71%
Transient unauthorised sites	67%
Housing	67%
Total	58%

The figures suggest high levels of willingness to move. The desire for long-stay sites is particularly high, as might be expected, among those on unauthorised sites and in housing. These figures are very much higher than those presented in paragraph 9.18 above about people expecting to move in the next 5 years, and may be regarded as broadly aspirational. It is clear from comments that actual movement would depend on the site, where it is, how it is managed and who else is on it.

10.4 Those who expressed an interest in a long-stay site were asked how long they would expect to stay there. About a third said that they did not know. Of those giving an answer, about 8 out of 10 said that it would be 5 or more years.

10.5 When asked where they would like the long-stay site to be, the great majority said they would like it to be within the Study Area (there are indications from comments recorded that sites near Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton would attract residents). Across the whole sample, 56% wanted only the Study Area, 34% wanted the Study Area but also mentioned some other location, and 10% wanted the site to be outside the Study Area. All respondents on transient unauthorised sites who expressed interest in a long-stay site wanted that site to be in the Study Area, as did 75% of those on long-term unauthorised sites.

10.6 When asked what sort of long-stay site they would like, most respondents gave several answers. Overall, in order of frequency of mention, preferences were:

Family owned site on own land	82%
Site owned by a Council	61%
Other site owned privately	39%
Doesn't matter	11%

As with other similar questions in the survey, respondents on local authority sites and in housing were relatively likely to favour local authority sites, while those on private sites and long-term unauthorised sites favoured private sites. On transient unauthorised sites, 70% of those interested in a residential site favoured a local authority site compared with 30% favouring a private site.

10.7 Across the whole sample, only 3 respondents (2 on transient and 1 on long-term unauthorised sites) were on a site waiting list (2 for a Telford site and 1 for Whitchurch).

10.8 Views on the maximum number of pitches on a long-stay residential site were mixed, and ranged from 1 to 30. 87% of respondents thought there should be no more than 20 pitches, and 42% thought that 10 pitches should be the maximum. The average was 13 pitches. There were some difference in views on maximum site size between different Gypsy and Traveller groups. The average maximum site size for Romany/Gypsy/English respondents was 14.6 pitches, compared with 10.7 pitches for New Travellers and Travellers.

Need/Demand for Housing from Existing Households

10.9 Survey respondents on sites were asked whether they would consider moving to a house. Overall, 28% said that they would. The proportion varied with type of current accommodation:

Local authority site	39%
Private site	24%
All authorised sites	32%
Long-term unauthorised site	24%
Transient unauthorised site	13%

This suggests that people currently on unauthorised sites are unlikely to turn to housing to meet their needs. Housing is perhaps more likely to contribute indirectly if local authority site residents move to a house and vacate pitches for re-letting. These figures may, however, be indicative of a general open-

mindedness rather than a statement of firm intent. Comments offered in the interview illustrate this. For example, some envisaged possible ill health in the future, others set pre-conditions such as: *only if close to other Gypsies or if it was my own and I had room for my family to move on with me*. One respondent expressed sentiments hinted at in other comments: *if I had to I would, but I would rather not*. In contrast some positively wanted to move for current ill health or for greater comfort. Only 6 respondents were on a waiting list for housing (3 on local authority sites, 2 on long-term unauthorised sites and 1 on a transient unauthorised site); 2 applied to Home Point in Herefordshire, 1 applied to Telford & Wrekin, 1 to Oswestry and 1 to Stratford-on-Avon because Bridgnorth were said not to accept an application. Chapter 9 showed relatively low numbers of respondents, especially on local authority sites, who expected to move in 5 years and housing was their least favoured option. This seems a better indicator of likely movement from sites to housing in the near future than the figures set out above.

10.10 Where respondents said they would consider moving to a house, they were asked for reasons. In order of frequency of mention they were:

- Want stability
- Lack of sites
- For children's schooling/education
- Homeless
- Health reasons
- Want a change
- Work reasons
- Dislike travelling

If the planning process succeeds in creating greater provision of authorised sites, the first two reasons might disappear although some of the others would still be relevant although not necessarily immediately rather than as an insurance against future needs.

10.11 The indications are that there may be movement from sites to bricks and mortar housing, but this is unlikely to be on a major scale.

Need/Demand for Transit Sites

10.12 Respondents were asked whether, if there was a network of authorised transit sites, they would use them. Just a quarter did not know. Overall, 41% said that they would and 34% that they would not use them. The proportion varied according to current accommodation circumstances: 80% on transient unauthorised sites would use transit sites, as would around half of those on private sites and long-term unauthorised sites and a fifth of those on local authority sites or in housing. Willingness to use transit sites partly reflects expectations about travelling at all as well as views on their use while travelling. 55% of those who travel at present said that they would use transit sites if there was a network, and 16% that they would not. This suggests that transit sites would not be universally accepted although most would use them. It is apparent from comments recorded during interviews that use would in practice depend on the way sites were managed and who else was there.

10.13 55% would stay on a short-stay/transit site for up to a month, and 76% would stay up to 3 months. The remaining quarter of respondents appear to be thinking of rather longer stays than are normally envisaged for transit sites. One comment noted the need for sites for an overnight stay only while travelling to avoid having to stop on the roadside.

10.14 When asked what facilities should be provided on short-stay/transit sites, answers were:

Water supply	99
Refuse collection	97
Hard-standings	94
Mains electricity	84
WC for each family	79
Bath/shower for each family	76
Manager who lives on site	65
Shared WCs	33
Shared baths/showers	30

Most respondents clearly envisage quite formal, well-equipped provision. Taking provision of a bath/shower for each family as an indication of a fully serviced transit site, there are marked difference between Gypsy and Traveller groups. 91% of Romany/Gypsy/English respondents thought that transit sites should provide a bath or shower for each family, compared with only 46% of New Traveller or Traveller respondents. At a very simple level, what suits one group is unlikely to satisfy the other.

10.15 Respondents generally thought that transit sites should be slightly smaller than residential sites. 95% thought the maximum number of pitches should be up to 20 and 53% that it should be up to 10 pitches only. Again Romany/Gypsy/English respondents favoured rather larger sites than New Traveller and Traveller respondents.

10.16 The survey asked what respondents thought about sites that incorporate long stay/permanent plots with short stay/transit facilities. Opinions were very mixed. 39% said that they did not know, 29% thought it a good and 32% a bad idea. People on local authority sites and in housing were particularly likely to think it a bad idea. The main reasons given against combined residential and transit sites were the disruption this might cause to long-stay residents and the potential for mixing incompatible families and consequent nuisance and rows; transit people were thought less likely to care for their part of the site. Reasons favouring combined sites included the possibility of having visitors and a feeling that long-stay residents would look after the site and stop it deteriorating. Some felt that such sites would cater for all aspects of Travelling life rather than having 'residence' and travelling separated. Respondents on one of the private sites liked the idea because their site already functioned in that way. This was seen as a benefit by both long-stay residents and visitors:

That's what this is and it's good. My kids can pull on when they want and I get to play with my grandchildren and my daughter can clean me up. Ha. Ha.

Because when we move back on, the old faces are still on the site and it's nice to all meet up again.

Respondents agreed that management was critical to the success of a combined site, and there were indications that this would be better achieved by a Gypsy or Traveller than by a local authority.

New Household Formation

10.17 The formation of new households is one of the most significant elements in need for accommodation amongst Gypsies and Travellers, as for the settled community. Larger average household size (see Chapter 5) and younger marriage age amongst some Gypsy and Traveller groups mean that household formation rates will be relatively rapid.

10.18 The survey asked whether there was anyone in the respondent's household (eg son or daughter) who is likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next 5 years. 39 respondents (33%) in all said that there was. In several instances more than one household member would be forming a household in the next 5 years. In some cases the young person might want their own caravan rather than a totally independent home. However, from examining the answers, the indications are that the majority involve new household formation in the sense commonly meant in the settled community.

10.19 Looking first at respondents on authorised sites (local authority and private), a total of 40 household members (sons and daughters) will need their own accommodation over 5 years. This equates to 51% of respondents on authorised sites. The great majority (84%) will want to stay near to their current place in the Study Area. 80% are said to be likely to want to live in a trailer or caravan, and only 4% to want a house and 16% 'up to them'.

10.20 The sample in housing was very small – just 9 respondents. On the basis of survey answers, new households will be equivalent to 67% of existing households. At least half will want to stay near their current location, and all are said to be likely to want to live in a caravan or trailer rather than a house. These figures are quite high when based on such a small sample. However, Table 5.3b on household type was based on the GTAA survey together with the Herefordshire 2006 sample. Housed respondents included the highest proportion of older or mixed families (including young adults not yet in an independent household) of any accommodation type. This lends weight to the survey findings suggesting rapid household formation.

10.21 On long-term unauthorised sites, new household formation is equivalent to 41% of existing households. Three-quarters are likely to want to stay nearby and at least half in a trailer or caravan.

10.22 Taken together, these findings suggests significant need for site places in the Study Area generated by household formation. This will be quantified in Chapter 13.

General Views on Different Types of Accommodation

10.23 The survey included questions on the best and worst places respondents had lived, teasing out what they were like and why they were so good or bad. These questions aimed to identify the sorts of things that are particularly important to Gypsies and Travellers about accommodation.

10.24 People's best place elicited a range of answers. In terms of frequency of mention, having family around and being part of a good community were most important. Other things mentioned by several respondents related to the facilities at a site or in a house, size of plot or amenity building, access to shops and other services, and being clean, quiet and safe. Beautiful surroundings were important for some, as were sources of work. Some referred to places where they felt free and some referred specifically to somewhere being their own. Some were frankly nostalgic for a lost past. One of the strongest impressions to emerge from answers is the wide range of 'ideals' among Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. Traditional Gypsies and Travellers often refer to site facilities and support. New Travellers and Travellers refer to work opportunities, quiet locations and beautiful countryside. Both groups refer frequently to family and community, and to freedom. One answer sums up the waste and anguish that comes from unauthorised development and enforcement action:

My own place. It was beautiful. I did so much work on it, planted Christmas trees at the bottom of the field, laid lawns and plants and so on but all got bulldozed.

10.25 Houses, local authority and private sites and the roadside all figured among people's worst places. Dirt, rats and other vermin, smells, crowding, rough residents, lack of facilities all figure in problems about sites. Lack of facilities and fear of eviction made the roadside worst for some. Harassment and hassle were recurring themes across Traveller groups. Lack of community, rough people, drugs were also mentioned by several people.

10.26 These questions illustrate the point that there are different ideals, but that cleanliness, security and appropriate space and services (whether spacious amenity units or composting toilets) are prized generally. Roughness, lack of family and community, isolation and harassment are universally disliked. People prize being able to live as they want to, but those ways differ.

10.27 The final formal question in the survey asked ‘thinking about all the things we’ve talked about, we would like you to give your opinion about the following ways of living, and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being a very poor option and 10 being a very good option)’. The options given were those listed in Table 10.1 where the average score given to each option is shown.

Table 10.1 : Average Scores Given to Accommodation Options						
Accommodation options	Transient unauthorised	Long-term unauthorised	Local authority site	Private site	Housing	Total
Sample number	15	17	44	34	9	119
Private site owned and lived on by you/your family	8.9	8.7	9.3	9.6	9.6	9.3
Site owned by another Gypsy/ Traveller	6.9	6.7	3.8	8.0	5.6	5.9
Site owned by a private landlord	7.1	6.6	5.8	6.5	7.0	6.4
Site owned by the local council	7.3	4.5	8.4	5.9	8.4	7.1
House owned by you and your family	4.5	4.8	6.0	5.2	8.2	5.6
House rented from local LA or HA	2.5	3.4	3.9	3.7	4.4	3.7
Travelling around often and stopping on authorised transit sites	6.8	4.6	5.2	6.3	5.0	5.6
Travelling around often and stopping where you can	7.7	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.6
Site which also has houses/bungalows for Gypsies and Travellers nearby	7.0	3.8	8.0	7.8	9.0	7.4

10.28 Across the whole sample, the relative popularity of a private site owned by the family is clear. This option receives significantly higher scores than any other option. Second and third are sites with houses or bungalows for Gypsies and Travellers nearby and a site owned by the local council; these options get broadly similar average scores. The lowest average score is given to houses rented from a council or housing association. Houses generally receive lower scores than sites. One respondent commented that they had never considered a house or bungalow because it would not be possible to live with the wider family; this respondent was particularly attracted to the option of a site with nearby houses and bungalows which might get over this problem.

10.29 There are some interesting differences of view according to current accommodation. For example:

- Sites owned by another Gypsy or Traveller get a relatively high score from people on private sites and a particularly low score from people on local authority sites. The reverse is true for the local authority site option (although the lowest score of all for authority sites comes from those on long-term unauthorised sites). There is a suggestion here that people favour either the public or the private sector as a rented option and would be reluctant to move to the non-favoured sector.
- Respondents on transient unauthorised sites are particularly likely to give any form of housing a low score. For respondents in housing, an owner-occupied house is one of the more favoured options.
- Respondents on unauthorised sites, both transient and long-term, score travelling around and stopping where you can higher than travelling around and stopping on authorised transit sites. Scores on these options are closer for other groups, and those on private sites favour the authorised over the unauthorised option.
- Respondents on long-term unauthorised sites give particularly low scores to the option of a site with houses for Gypsies and Travellers nearby. This is probably because this group includes higher proportions of New Travellers who may have different perceptions of extended family links.

10.30 Beyond the overall popularity of family-owned sites, as an ideal if not a reality, an important point from this analysis is the breadth of preferences expressed. A range of provision is likely to be needed. As with the settled community, it is clear that 'one size' certainly does not 'fit all'.

Perceptions of Need

10.31 Several respondents volunteered views that more sites are needed in the Study Area for all types of Gypsies and Travellers. Some were particularly concerned about how sons and daughters would find accommodation – and accommodation which would allow them to retain the culture and heritage of which people are so proud. There were strong feelings that it should be easier for people to get planning permission for their own sites.

10.32 Three important themes to comments have not been presented so far:

- Several respondents stressed that there is a need for sites for all Gypsy and Traveller groups, and that these should be differently located and designed to accord with different lifestyles. In part these comments seem to stem from the fears some New Travellers expressed of being denied Gypsy and Traveller status for planning purposes and discriminated against.

- There were fears that national and local policy was towards encouraging settlement, and that formal provision of more sites would make councils more intolerant of those who choose not to live on them and want to continue travelling. There were also fears that councils might be tempted to meet their provision responsibilities by providing sites where no-one wants to live, then clamping down on unauthorised sites because provision has been made. In these scenarios, extra provision might be at the expense of freedom and choice.
- Several respondents mentioned forces leading to loss of sites, which obviously has implications for requirements in the future. Some thought that a local authority's perceived failure to take action on nuisance behaviour on one of its sites was intended to give an excuse to close the site if decent families moved away or if things really deteriorated. Some respondents on private sites had had the experience elsewhere of being evicted from sites when owners wanted to change from catering for Gypsies and Travellers to providing a park for settled-community mobile homes.

10.33 It is important that these fears are not realised, and that local policy responses to site provision take them into account.

11. EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND DISCRIMINATION

11.1 The survey included a number of questions about employment, health and education. While not directly related to accommodation needs, these contribute to the wider context of policy development for Gypsies and Travellers within which accommodation issues must be set.

Employment

11.2 One or more family member worked in most households. Only 31% of households included no-one who worked, 51% included 1 worker and 16% included 2 or more – either both partners/spouses or older children in work. Proportions of households with no worker were highest on local authority sites and on transient unauthorised sites, and lowest on private and long-term unauthorised sites. These levels of working are much higher than found, for example, on many social housing estates.

11.3 Self-employment was much more common than employment. Out of a total of 95 working family members reported, 82 (86%) were self-employed. The main occupations were:

- Gardening
- Land work, farm work
- Tree work
- Scrap
- 'Anything'
- Building work – fascias, uPVC, roofing, tarmac
- Selling – hawking lace and charms, furniture and carpets, cars
- Mechanic, driving, tyre fitting
- Community care and teacher support
- Festivals and events
- Arts and crafts, wood carving, ornamental metal work

There is a mix of 'usual' occupations of traditional Gypsies and Travellers and New Travellers. Gardening and tree is common to both groups. Across the sample many respondents noted a combination of occupations to be followed as opportunities arise. For example:

Fieldwork, gardening, stewarding at events. Security at events, site crew work at events. Wreath making. Assisting Travellers school

Selling things like carpets, rugs, jet washers, or any tree or gardening work

A few comments noted the impact of Polish and other migrant workers on job opportunities on farms, making it harder to find work.

11.4 Place of work varied. Just half of respondents with a working family member said that they worked both in and outside the local area (not further defined). 4% said that they normally worked outside the area and 46% worked

mostly within the local area. Most are likely to work mainly or exclusively within the Study Area.

11.5 Questions sought to identify ways in which a travelling lifestyle impacts on work, and the way in which work impacts on how much people travel or where they go. 46% of respondents said that travelling lifestyle impacts on their work. Slightly more (52%) said that work impacts on their travelling patterns.

11.6 Comments on the nature of the impacts show that these two are in practice very blurred. Three main themes emerged from answers:

- Many respondents travel to find work, to find new people to sell to, or if current jobs dry up: *need to travel to different areas to sell to fresh people; to find work we have to move around.*
- A few noted that they could not get jobs because they had no site: *we have no site, are on roadside and so can't get long-term employment; if I have no proper address, have no home phone and can't get jobs.*
- A few identified racism and discrimination because of their Gypsy and Traveller background as stopping them getting jobs: *people don't like Travellers so won't let you work with them. They can tell by the look of you so won't employ you.*

11.7 Most respondents (77%) said that they could work satisfactorily from their current accommodation. The main reasons for not being able to work satisfactorily fell into two broad groupings. Some were being interviewed at their home base rather than their workplace (especially on private and long-term unauthorised sites), so in effect had to travel to work at festivals or events or for seasonal land work. Others felt that they were prevented from working by their current accommodation itself. This was rarely because of rules or planning conditions, or lack of space, but more frequently because the address identified the person as a Gypsy or Traveller which meant that they would not get a job.

11.8 About a third of respondents said that they had ever had any specific training for work. This was most commonly in the form of an apprenticeship or on-the-job training, then a local college and finally training provided by family or friends. New Travellers and Travellers were much more likely to have had specific training for work than Romany/Gypsy/English respondents. It is likely that traditional Gypsies and Travellers did not consider the sort of on-the-job training which goes on in families between fathers and sons and mothers and daughters as 'specific training for work'.

11.9 Just under a third of respondents would like to take part in some training in the future. Again there were group differences, with between half and two-thirds of New Travellers and Travellers saying that they would like to take part in training in future compared with less than a fifth of Romany/Gypsy/English respondents. The main types of training wanted were:

IT and computers (mentioned most frequently by all groups)
Forestry and arboriculture
HGV licence
Chainsaw and other plant handling
Teaching and youth work
Literacy and numeracy
Business and accounts
Care assistant training
Welding

Other things mentioned by a single respondent included bricklaying, floristry, textiles and first aid.

Health Issues

11.10 Respondents were asked whether anyone in their household experienced any listed health problems. No definitions were given and respondents may have interpreted things differently. Answers were:

Visual impairment	18%
Problems getting around	16%
Learning disability	12%
Hearing impairment	11%
Mental health problems	11%
Communication problems	6%

11.11 Over a third of respondents (36%) said that someone in their household suffered from some health problem other than those listed. Things mentioned appear to range from the major to the relatively minor. Problems mentioned by more than one respondent, in order of frequency of mention, are:

Asthma
Heart problems
Depression or anxiety
Diabetes
Arthritis
Allergies
Cancer
Skin problems (psoriasis, eczema)

Many other problems were mentioned by a single respondent.

11.12 Putting answers to these questions together shows that 56% of respondent households include at least one person with a health problem. Incidence of reported health problems was highest in housing (89%) and on transient unauthorised sites (80%), lower on long-term unauthorised sites (53%) and local authority sites (52%) and lowest of all on private sites (44%). The incidence of health problems was slightly higher among New Travellers and Travellers (60%) than among Romany/Gypsy/English respondents. Some of the problems may be relatively minor, some are certainly serious and some may have direct links to accommodation and security.

Education

11.13 60 respondents answered question about the education of school-age children. Of these, 60% said that all their school-age children attend school regularly. Just over a quarter (27%) said that some of their children attended school regularly, and 13% said that none did. Not surprisingly, the proportion for children not attending school regularly was higher on unauthorised sites (both transient and long-term) at around a third compared with people on authorised sites and in houses where the proportion was less than a tenth. Two-thirds of children who do not attend school regularly receive home education. The proportion receiving home education was lowest among those in housing and on transient unauthorised sites.

11.14 When asked how easy or difficult it is for Gypsies and Travellers to access schools/education in the area, 15% were unable to say. Of those who gave an answer, 86% thought it was either easy or very easy. Just 2 respondents (1 on a transient unauthorised site and 1 on a private site) thought it was difficult to access schools in the area. One of these at least had been at their current stopping place for less than a month (the other did not say how long they had been there).

11.15 10% of respondents did not know whether they had contact with the Traveller Education Service or not. Of the remainder, slightly more than half did have contact.

11.16 General comments about schools and education suggest that circumstances vary, and that some schools are seen as very good, some less so. The issue of racist bullying of children in schools recurred.

Discrimination

11.17 The survey asked respondents whether they had ever experienced harassment or discrimination in the area, and if so, what happened. In all, just 50% of respondents said that they had experienced harassment or discrimination in the area. Incidence of reported harassment were higher on long-term and transient unauthorised sites (59% and 60% respectively), than on local authority sites or in housing (55% and 56% respectively) and lowest on private sites (35%). Travellers and New Travellers were more likely than Romany/Gypsy/Traveller respondents to report experiences of harassment or discrimination (65% compared with 48%).

11.18 The sorts of harassment reported included name calling and graffiti, bullying in schools, being refused service or work and being followed around in shops. Respondents often saw this a 'normal', but resented such treatment. They particularly resented prejudice fanned by misinformation and settled community failure to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' Gypsies and Travellers but always to expect the worst. Comments made include:

Some people discriminate - they look at us as if the dogs done something on their shoe.

Generally people need to realise being a Traveller is not a criminal act. Travellers are not second-class citizens.

We have been repeatedly discriminated against by GPs, even refused services because we weren't local residents even when in the catchment area.

11.19 A few answers drew attention to discrimination and harassment between Gypsy and Traveller groups. Two gorgio (non-Gypsy Traveller) women had married into a Gypsy Traveller family and faced resentment and some harassment from other family members and site residents.

11.20 There was little evidence of anyone taking formal action to challenge or complain about harassment or discrimination. Exceptions were getting notices about Travellers taken down in Telford Market, and challenging a local radio programme over its depiction of Gypsies. One reason for not taking things further is summed up:

The very people that you are able to complain to are the very people that discriminate or harass you.

One respondent saw police response as a form of harassment:

Police taking number plates in the middle of the night. If the police are called for any reason it's like a riot has erupted – too many police at one time for no apparent reason.

In this context, people are unlikely to turn to the police for protection against minor, routine harassment.

11.21 The way that harassment can contribute to accommodation issues and acute need is illustrated by the story of one extended family, interviewed at a location classed as a transient unauthorised site because of the relatively short time they had been there. This Gypsy family had lived in housing for a period, but had suffered abuse and harassment there. They left the house to resume a traditional Gypsy lifestyle. Since then they had been living on 'tolerated' unauthorised sites while waiting for an authorised site to be provided. For many years they were on a site which flooded in heavy rain and was infested with rats. Following their appearance in a TV documentary they suffered harassment and had a caravan deliberately set on fire. They left the site, fearing for their safety and found accommodation on a farmer's field, with his permission. There have been no further problems with abuse or harassment, but attempts to get the current site authorised are again being met with public protests.

11.22 These accounts of harassment and discrimination are obviously serious, but should not obscure the finding that half of respondents had not had bad experiences locally. Some specifically said that local people were 'fine', especially when they got to know Gypsies and Travellers. Notwithstanding the example in paragraph 11.21, people may be more tolerant of traditional Gypsies and Travellers than of New Travellers.

12: HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

Introduction

12.1 The primary purpose of housing-related support is to develop and sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in their accommodation. Examples of housing-related support services include: enabling individuals to access their correct benefit entitlement, ensuring they have the correct skills to maintain a tenancy, ensuring they have access to other services such as health services, providing advice, advocacy and liaison. The length of time which support is provided can vary from the short-term to the long-term.

12.2 This chapter initially sets out the methodology used for this part of the study and the strategic context. It then identifies existing housing-related support services and considers access and usage of services, before moving on to look at housing-related support requirements and service gaps. Conclusions and recommendations from the material presented are in Chapter 14.

Methodology

12.3 This review of housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers is based on:

- A review of Supporting People Strategies and Action Plans for each of the administering authorities
- An analysis of Client Records Data Forms submitted by Supporting People Providers on use of services by Travellers (as primary and secondary client)
- A short questionnaire survey sent to 42 organisations across the Study Area (15 organisations returned completed questionnaires)
- Findings from the survey interviews with Gypsies and Travellers
- A focus group with the Shropshire Gypsy Liaison Officers, and representatives from both Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Supporting People Teams.
- An interview with a representative from the Herefordshire Supporting People Team

12.4 Unfortunately, it was not possible to secure an interview with the Powys Supporting People Team.

Strategic Context: Supporting People Strategies

12.5 There is explicit mention of Gypsies and Travellers in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire Supporting People Strategies.

12.6 The **Shropshire** Supporting People (SP) Strategy emphasises the importance of an inclusive approach to ensure Gypsies and Travellers have

fair access to SP services, no matter where they live – whether on an official site, an unofficial encampment or in ordinary housing. It recognises a need to formalise the support services offered to Gypsies and Travellers who pass through the county on unauthorised encampments. The strategy reasserts the prime role of the County Council's Gypsy Liaison Officers in providing support and acting as a conduit for other agency input. One of the action points is to conduct research to establish where new caravan plots should be based and to identify the kind of housing support services required.

12.7 The **Telford & Wrekin** SP Strategy states that there are no designated SP funded housing-related support services for Travellers, although support services are funded from other sources and provided by the Travellers Unit. An action point identified is to work with the Travellers Unit to look at existing provision and identify need. One of the strategic priorities identified is to: 'Provide additional provision for travellers and the up-and-coming generations.' The strategy also refers to the development of a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy which has not yet been completed.

12.8 The **Herefordshire** SP Strategy recognises that the largest ethnic minority group in the county is probably Gypsies and Travellers. It identifies as a commissioning priority the need for 'a comprehensive needs analysis and a re-specified floating support service for Travellers'. The 2005/2006 Strategic aims for the Traveller client group were:

- Commissioning further development of the Traveller Liaison Scheme to meet identified need
- Evaluating and commissioning cross-authority provision to meet identified need

An action point identified is research into the housing and housing-related support needs of Travellers.

12.9 The Herefordshire SP Annual Update 2006-2007 identified as a priority the development of a housing-related support scheme to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and to complement the services provided by the Council's Traveller Liaison Service. A pilot housing-related floating support service for Gypsies and Travellers has now been commissioned.

12.10 The **Powys** SP Draft Operational Plan 2006-2007 does not include any explicit mention of Gypsies and Travellers.

Existing Specialist Housing Related Support Services for Gypsies and Travellers

12.11 There are currently two SP-funded housing-related floating support services, within the Study Area, specifically for Gypsies and Travellers, these are:

- The service provided by the Shropshire Gypsy Liaison service – which provides support primarily to Gypsies and Travellers who live on official sites. Support may also be provided to Travellers based on unofficial sites. The contract is currently for a minimum of 46 people. There is

recognition that there is a need to formalise the support services offered to Gypsies and Travellers who pass through the county on unauthorised encampments.

- Herefordshire Housing Support Team (Shelter) has been commissioned to provide a 12 month pilot floating support service for Gypsies and Travellers which commenced on 1st April 2007. A specialist Gypsy and Traveller Housing Support Officer has recently been appointed to work both at a strategic level, and to offer housing-related support services primarily to Gypsies and Travellers living or looking to move into bricks and mortar accommodation.

12.12 There are currently no specialist SP-funded services in either Telford & Wrekin or Powys.

12.13 The Herefordshire Gypsy Liaison Officer also provides support to housed Gypsies and Travellers and works with local authority site residents. The Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer in Telford and Wrekin is currently based in Environmental Services and is focussed on managing the local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites rather than providing housing-related support services. The role of this post/service is currently under review. There is no comparable service in Powys.

12.14 In addition, to the specialist housing-related support services there are also a number of generic SP housing-related support services and other mainstream housing support and related services which Gypsies and Travellers may be able to access. Of the 15 organisations that responded to the questionnaire, 7 identified that they provided services to Gypsies and Travellers. This included the Herefordshire Travellers' Health Project and a number of Citizens Advice Bureaux (Herefordshire and Shropshire) in addition to a generic floating support scheme, a Family Crisis Centre and a Women's Aid project (all three located in Powys). A number of Gypsies and Travellers in the interview survey indicated that if they needed help with something they would ask for support from Citizen Advice Bureaux.

Access to Housing-Related Support Services

12.15 Gypsies and Travellers are often an 'invisible community' in terms of housing-related support needs. Many Gypsies and Travellers are very 'private people' and do not like to discuss personal issues with outsiders/people they do not trust. This often means that they rely on family or friends or professionals well known to them (for example a Gypsy Liaison Officer or a Health Visitor) for support and advice on many matters.

12.16 Gypsies and Travellers often find it difficult to access mainstream housing support and related services. This can be for a number of reasons – for example, literacy issues, complicated appointment (call centres) and allocation systems, lack of public transport, lack of a fixed address. The Health Visitor interviewed highlighted a higher take-up of services amongst

younger Gypsies and Travellers. However, she commented that there is still a reluctance to attend organised group/self-help sessions, for example mums and toddler groups.

12.17 Providers and stakeholders in the questionnaire survey and/or interviews highlighted many of the difficulties outlined above. They also commented on:

- A lack of resources to provide targeted services.
- Mistrust and suspicion of organisations. Trust is developed on an individual level rather than an organisational level and is based on personal contact. Staff continuity is therefore very important and particular challenges arise when key personnel working with the Gypsy and Traveller community change or are absent for long periods of time. It is essential that planned succession strategies are in place.
- The service provision experience needs to be positive otherwise Gypsies and Travellers will not engage. This may mean it is difficult for an individual to carry out both an enforcement and support role.
- The frequency of movement from sites makes continuity of support difficult to maintain especially for those on unauthorised sites or some private sites in the Study Area.
- Lone worker concerns (health and safety issues).

12.18 One of the providers commented on changes in SP policy in Powys with a focus on provision of services in certain urban areas which made it difficult/ impossible to continue to work in rural areas where Gypsies and Travellers tend to be located. Another provider commented on the SP requirement that service users should have a fixed address, which may not be possible for some families, which in turn meant they did not fit the criteria and so may not be considered eligible for SP support. In addition, another provider felt it can be difficult to meet SP requirements in terms of carrying out an assessment and drawing up a support plan for individuals with no fixed address; this may in some cases impact on availability of SP funded Services and Client Records data.

12.19 A number of stakeholder interviewees raised concerns about a general lack of awareness amongst generic service staff of Gypsy and Traveller issues and cultures. This was reaffirmed in the Gypsy and Traveller interview survey: over 50% of interviewees felt people working in different services needed to be more aware of Gypsy and Traveller cultures, ways of life and issues affecting them. Comments offered in the interviews with Gypsies and Travellers illustrate this:

We all get tarred by the same brush. If services got to know Travellers' ways they would understand more and be able to help more.

Sometimes people automatically think we can read and write. They have no knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller history.

If people see address on CV they assume you can't read and write. People are ignorant towards us. Gypsy culture is now trying to encourage younger kids to read and write.

12.20 One of the providers specifically commented that whilst they would like their organisation to provide services for Gypsies and Travellers: *without a fuller understanding of their needs, co-operation from the local authority and Housing Corporation funding, we are limited in what we can do.*

Usage of Existing Housing-Related Support Services

12.21 A key difficulty in terms of identifying Gypsies and Travellers who have/are receiving housing-related support is the fact that many do not identify themselves as a Gypsy or Traveller in applications, referrals forms or ethnic monitoring returns etc.

12.22 Evidence of the use of housing-related support services for the English local authorities can be found in Supporting People Client Records which identify new SP service users described as Travellers. This source of data, however, has limitations since the description of 'Traveller' is made by service providers rather than service users themselves. In addition, as already outlined, many Gypsies and Travellers will not classify themselves as Travellers on ethnic monitoring forms etc.

12.23 The tables below identify new Traveller service users (primary and secondary clients) over the period 2003-2007 by SP Administering Authority. The figures are relatively low and this mirrors the national picture.

Table 12.1 : New SP Service Users described as Travellers April 2003-April 2007 by Age Group								
Administering Authority	18-24	25- 31	32-38-	39-45	46-52	53-59	60+	Total
Herefordshire	1	-	2	2	1	-	-	6
Shropshire	2	4	2	1	2	1	-	12
Telford Wrekin	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Study Area (exc Powys)	5	4	4	3	3	1	-	20

Source: SP Client Records (primary and secondary clients), University of St Andrews

Table 12.2 : New SP Service Users described as Travellers April 2003-April 2007 by Type of Service Used				
Administering Authority	Floating Support	Direct Access	Supported Housing	Total
Herefordshire	6			6
Shropshire	7	3	2	12
Telford Wrekin	1	1		2
Study Area (exc Powys)	14	4	2	20

Source: SP Client Records (primary and secondary clients), University of St Andrews

12.24 The stakeholder from Herefordshire felt this was a realistic picture of usage of the service up to April 2007. However, a new service has recently been commissioned – the Herefordshire Housing Support Team – which now has 8 active cases and is at full capacity (the Supporting People Contract is for 6 cases).

12.25 The stakeholder from Telford & Wrekin felt the figures may be correct given the lack of specialist SP-funded services and the issues around ethnic monitoring recording.

12.26 The stakeholders from Shropshire felt the client records data under-represented usage of services. Their own records, for the Shropshire Gypsy Liaison Service, showed that in 2007 there were 48 clients (31 females, 17 males) receiving floating support; all of whom became clients over the period 2003-2007. Of these 48, 1 was under the age of 18, 2 were aged 18-24, 9 were aged 25-31, 7 were aged 32-38, 1 was aged 39-45, 4 were aged 46-52, 5 were aged 53-59 and 8 were aged over 60. The age of 11 clients was unknown.

12.27 No similar records are kept in Wales. Travellers are not identified as a specific client group under Supporting People monitoring arrangements in Wales.

Housing-Related Support Requirements and Gaps Providers – Stakeholder and Provider Views

12.28 Stakeholders commented on the need for flexible, individually tailored outcome-focused support services which are capable of meeting sometimes complex and multiple needs. The length of time support is required is likely to vary from short-term intensive support (for example, where there is a tenancy failure) to long-term support, for example where there are issues around literacy. In addition, the number of hours of support an individual requires is also likely to vary considerably. By way of example, in the case of the Shropshire Gypsy Liaison Service, over the quarter ending September 2007, the amount of support given to an individual in a specific week varied from 15 minutes to 10 hours.

12.29 All stakeholders stressed that Gypsies and Travellers were often reluctant to identify themselves as such when applying for support/accommodation etc. This means their needs are not highlighted.

12.30 Stakeholders from Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin commented on a future gap in housing-related support services in relation to the likely growth in the number of older Gypsies and Travellers.

12.31 All of the providers who answered the relevant part of the questionnaire, identified that there were gaps in housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers. The following needs were highlighted:

- Need more staff providing housing-related support services, for example, the Herefordshire Supported Housing Team (Shelter) would like to be in a position to expand the services it can offer and in particular to be able to provide services to Gypsy and Travellers living on sites.
- More support for Travellers on unofficial sites/roadside encampments – in some areas this may have been seen to conflict with the Council's enforcement role.
- Provision of information and advice, particularly around financial literacy, money, debt and benefits.
- Information on site/plot availability, outcome of applications and assessment process (there is a need for greater transparency).
- Local specialist legal advice.

12.32 One provider felt protocols/effective ways of working need to be developed between services such as housing, education and health. One provider commented that Gypsies and Travellers on private sites tended to be more independent and require less support.

Evidence of Support Needs from Gypsy and Traveller Interviews

12.33 This section identifies the housing support needs identified by Gypsies and Travellers themselves in the survey interviews. Interviewees were asked to identify whether they would use a number of specific services which people sometimes want help or support with. There were 119 respondents to this part of the survey.

12.34 **In the region of 70%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would use or might use the following support services:

- **Support on planning issues (72%)** – 53% of interviewees said they 'would use' this support service, and 19% of interviewees said they 'might use' use this service. 8 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation and 12 of the 15 interviewees on transient sites said they 'would use' this service.

- **Accessing a GP (71%)** – 42% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, 29% said they ‘might use’ this service. 7 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation, and 9 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites said they ‘would use’ this service.
- **Accessing legal services (71%)** - 43% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, 29% said they ‘might use’ this service. 7 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation, and 11 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites said they ‘would use’ this service.
- **Discrimination or Harassment (69%)** – 44% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ and 25% said they ‘might use’ this service. 7 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation, and 9 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites said they ‘would use’ this service. (See Chapter 11 for incidence of harassment experienced.)

12.35 **Over 50% of interviewees** said they ‘would use’ or ‘might use’ the following support services:

- **Claiming Benefits (63%)** – 35% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, 28% said they ‘might use’ this service. 6 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation ‘would use’ this service and 10 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites ‘would or might use’ this service.
- **Filling in Forms (59%)** - 23% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, 36% said they ‘might use’ this service. 10 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites ‘would or might use’ this service.
- **Finding Accommodation (57%)** - 34% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, and 23% said they ‘might use’ this service. All 9 of the interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation ‘would or might use’ this service and 12 of the 15 interviewees on transit sites ‘would or might use’ this service.

12.36 **Over 40% of interviewees** said they ‘would use’ or ‘might use’ the following support services:

- **Finding a job (44%)** - 17% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, and 27% said they ‘might use’ this service. 6 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation said they would or might use this service.
- **Accessing Training for Adults (42%)** - 14% of interviewees said they ‘would use’ this support service, and 28% said they ‘might use’ this service.

12.37 **Over 30% of interviewees** said they would or might use the following services:

- **Settling into new accommodation (37%)** - 6 of the 9 interviewees in bricks and mortar accommodation would or might use this service. The low incidence may reflect reluctance to move into housing.
- **Pregnancy (32%)**

12.38 **Around 20% or less of interviewees** 'would use' or 'might use' the following services:

- **Budgeting (21%)**
- **Meeting People (12%)**
- **Parenting (10%)**

12.39 Interviewees were also asked if there were any other services they would like help with. Other key support services identified were:

- Accessing a dentist – identified by a number of interviewees
- Support, advice, advocacy services in dealing with the council and other agencies
- Taking prescribed medication
- Setting up businesses and meeting required standards
- Vehicle maintenance – help and advice on maintenance, securing a mechanic, workspaces etc
- Support to help fight eviction
- Accessing education and financial assistance/ financing education

13. ASSESSING ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

13.1 Nationally, there are no signs that growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. GTAAs already completed make it clear that new families will form. They also suggest that many Gypsies and Travellers wish to continue living in caravans/trailers or mobile homes on sites. Others will want to live in housing. There is also evidence that, while the level of mobility may have decreased with the difficulty of finding somewhere safe to stop while travelling, a significant proportion of the Gypsy and Traveller communities wish to continue to travel for cultural and economic reasons for part of the year at least. The findings reported here suggest that there is, and will be, continuing need for accommodation of all type within Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys for Gypsies and Travellers.

13.2 This chapter presents an assessment of need for permanent residential sites, bricks and mortar housing and transit sites/stopping places over the next 10 years. The first section looks at approaches to assessing accommodation needs more generally.

Assessing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

13.3 The methods of assessing 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.¹² The Draft Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.¹³ More recently, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for helping to ensure that GTAAs are robust in their estimation of accommodation need based upon a range of factors.¹⁴ Finally, Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments has been issued in final form¹⁵.

13.4 A 'model' of supply and need for residential pitches has emerged. The following factors are to be taken into account – some similar to elements in mainstream housing needs assessment, some particular to Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans:

Current residential supply

- Local authority rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

¹² Niner, P. (2003) Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, London: ODPM.

¹³ CLG (2006) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Draft Practice Guidance, p. 22.

¹⁴ http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf

¹⁵ CLG, *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments : Guidance*, October 2007

Residential need Years 1 to 5

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

Pitch supply Years 1 to 5

- Unused pitches which are to be brought back into use over the assessment period
- Known committed new site developments
- *Pitches likely to become vacant over the assessment period*

13.5 The objective is to provide a quantitative estimate for each of these elements. This is done below for the Study Area and for the constituent local authorities. The items in italics above are **not** included:

- Ideally an allowance should be made for net movement into the Study Area from elsewhere, in the same way that migrational needs are taken into account in mainstream housing assessments. However, there is basically no source of information on this for Gypsies and Travellers. It might be possible to look at recent in-migrants, but it is impossible to identify out-migrants from an area-based study in one location only. Following a widespread convention in GTAAs, this factor is not considered. This represents an implicit assumption that movement into and out of the Study Area will be in balance.
- Family formation is a 'flow' factor in need (as opposed to a 'snapshot' element such as need from families currently on unauthorised developments). Ideally there should be a 'flow' element on the supply side represented by pitches coming vacant over the assessment period. There are two reasons for omitting this element. The first is purely practical in that we do not have robust information on which to base estimates of pitch turnover, particularly on private sites with rented pitches. The second is that the calculation of movement between sites and houses already takes into account one potentially important element in pitch turnover and to include a further estimate would risk double counting.

13.6 Attempting to estimate all the remaining elements of need and supply is a challenge in Years 1 to 5. It is all but impossible for Years 6 to 10. Current

demographic and migrational characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller communities are a function of current social and economic circumstances, and likely to be heavily influenced by the current national shortage of site accommodation. If national policy succeeds in addressing shortage, Gypsy and Traveller family characteristics and movements could change significantly in ways which cannot be predicted now. In this context of uncertainty, there is a convention in GTAAs to estimate family growth on the basis of a standard assumed compound annual growth rate (usually 3%) for Years 6 to 10. This convention is followed here.

13.7 Methods of assessing need for transit pitches and stopping places is less well developed than for residential site pitches. The usual method is to consider the level of transient unauthorised encampment as evidenced by the Caravan Counts or local authority records, and suggest provision which would enable most families/caravans to be accommodated on authorised provision over the course of a year. This approach is broadly followed below.

13.8 Approaches to assessing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers for bricks and mortar housing are still less developed, in part because information about Gypsies and Travellers in housing is so poor. Virtually nothing is known about Gypsies and Travellers in the private housing sectors, and because questions on income and savings are so resented, any assessment of affordability is impossible. The section below (paragraphs 13.24 to 13.27) piece together an assessment of the likely scale of movement to housing, but this is far from comprehensive.

13.9 The base date for current supply is autumn 2007, and the assessment periods are 2007-2012 and 2012 to 2017.

13.10 A final preliminary comment is appropriate. These assessments, and particularly those relating to residential pitches, are purely on the basis of **'need where it arises'**. The current spread of authorised provision is not even, whether at national level or within the Study Area where Bridgnorth currently has no provision. Inevitably, family growth will arise where people currently live, and long-term unauthorised sites have a particular geographical location. GTAAs have found in general that, because of family and other links and perhaps familiarity, many Gypsies and Travellers want to stay very close to where they currently live. This all has the effect of reinforcing current patterns of provision and settlement. One of the roles of the Regional Spatial Strategy is to determine whether identified need should be met in the areas where it arises or whether provision should be spread more widely to increase choice. Study Area authorities will have the opportunity to participate in consultation on these questions during Phase 3 of the RSS Review in the West Midlands Region. At this point wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability will be taken into account in moving towards **'need where it should be met'**.

Additional Residential Pitch Requirements

13.11 Table 13.1 summarises the assessment for residential pitch requirements in the Study Area between 2007-2017. The derivation of the figures is described below.

Table 13.1 : Summary of Estimated Need for Additional Residential Pitches 2007-2017		
Element of need and supply		Pitches
	Current residential supply	
1	Local authority rented pitches	139
2	Private authorised pitches	136
3	Total authorised pitches	275
	Residential pitch need 2007-2012	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	3
5	Closure of sites	0
6	Concealed households/family growth to 2012	105
7	Long-term unauthorised sites	49
8	Movement between sites and housing	22
9	Transient unauthorised encampments	30
10	Additional residential need	209
	Additional supply 2006-2011	
11	Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	8
12	Pitches with permission but not developed	0
13	New sites planned	0
14	Supply 2007-2012	8
15	Requirement for extra pitches 2007-2012	201
16	Family growth 2012-2017	76
17	Total requirement for extra pitches 2007-2017	277

13.12 The derivation of each line in Table 13.1 is:

Rows 1-3 : Current supply is taken from Table 6.1. It is based on information provided by local authorities, supplemented by information from the survey.

Row 4 : There are 2 temporary planning permissions for sites due to end during the assessment period; from the survey it is apparent these affect 3 families.

Row 5 : No sites are expected to close between 2007 and 2012. Obviously this could happen if, for example, a private sites switches to non-Gypsy and Traveller residents. However, this is unpredictable at present.

Row 6 : The estimate for current concealed households and new household formation requires estimates of:

- a. The number of new households likely to form
- b. The proportion likely to require a pitch
- c. The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area

Making the calculation requires a combination of base information and assumptions, treating sites and housing separately. The various steps in the calculation are set out below.

Calculating new household formation		
Authorised sites		
	Step 1 : How many new households will form?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> the number of individuals needing their own separate accommodation over the next 5 years was equivalent to 51% of the sample on authorised sites (paragraph 10.19).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> this should be reduced by a third to allow for inter-marriage, over-claiming and children needing their own caravan on the family pitch rather than a separate pitch. Therefore assume new household formation will be equivalent to 34% of site households.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are 275 households on authorised sites. $275 \times 34\% = 93.5$ new households forming.</p>
	Step 2 : How many will seek accommodation in the Study Area?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 84% of individuals needing their own accommodation want accommodation in the Study Area (paragraph 10.19).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 84% of 93.5 new households = 78.5 seeking to stay in the Study Area.</p>
	Step 3 : How many will seek caravan/site accommodation?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 80% wanted caravan/site accommodation.</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 80% of 78.5 = 63 new households from sites seeking caravan/site accommodation in the Study Area.</p>
Long-term unauthorised sites		
	Step 1 : How many new households will form?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> the number of individuals needing their own separate accommodation over the next 5 years was equivalent to 41% of the sample on long-term unauthorised sites (paragraph 10.21).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> this should be reduced by a third to allow for inter-marriage, over-claiming and children needing their own caravan on the family pitch rather than a separate pitch. Therefore assume new household formation will be equivalent to 27% of households on long-term unauthorised sites.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are 70 households on long-term unauthorised sites. $70 \times 27\% = 19$ new households forming.</p>

	Step 2 : How many will seek accommodation in the Study Area?
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 75% of individuals needing their own accommodation want accommodation in the Study Area (paragraph 10.21).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 75% of 19 new households = 14 seeking to stay in the Study Area.</p>
	Step 3 : How many will seek caravan/site accommodation?
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 50% wanted caravan/site accommodation.</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 50% of 14 = 7 new households from long-term unauthorised sites seeking caravan/site accommodation in the Study Area.</p>
Bricks and mortar housing	
	Step 1 : How many new households will form?
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> the number of individuals needing their own separate accommodation over the next 5 years was equivalent to 67% of the sample in housing (paragraph 10.20).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> this should be reduced by a half to allow for inter-marriage, over-claiming and the possibility that the survey sample is skewed towards families with children. Therefore assume new household formation will be equivalent to 33% of housed households.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are estimated to be 215 households in housing (paragraph 8.13). $215 \times 33\% = 71$ new households forming.</p>
	Step 2 : How many will seek accommodation in the Study Area?
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 50% of individuals needing their own accommodation want accommodation in the Study Area (paragraph 10.20).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 50% of 71 new households = 35 seeking to stay in the Study Area.</p>
	Step 3 : How many will seek caravan/site accommodation?
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 100% wanted caravan/site accommodation.</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This can be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 100% of 35 = 35 new households from housing seeking caravan/site accommodation in the Study Area.</p>
Total need from household formation 2007-2012	
	Sum of new households from authorised sites, long-term unauthorised sites and housing = $63+7+35 = 105$.

Row 7 : The convention in GTAA's is to treat unauthorised developments (that is sites developed on Gypsy-owned land without planning permission) as requiring 100% authorised site accommodation in the area of the development, unless there is evidence that this is not what the families involved want. In the Study Area, we think it is appropriate to treat all long-term unauthorised sites (including long term sites on land in all ownerships) in this way. There were an estimated 70 'pitches' on long-term unauthorised sites (Table 6.1). The survey found that 70% of interviewees on long-term unauthorised sites wanted a long-stay residential site in the Study Area (paragraph 10.3). $70\% \text{ of } 70 = 49$ households estimated to need a residential pitch.

Row 8 : This figure is the balance of estimates of movement from sites to houses and vice versa. Again survey findings and assumptions are involved.

Calculating net movement between sites and housing	
<i>Movement from sites to houses</i>	
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> just 9% of respondents on authorised sites were both expecting to move within 5 years and interested in moving to a house. <i>Assumption:</i> round up to 10%. <i>Calculation:</i> There are 275 households on authorised sites. $275 \times 10\% = 27.5$ households currently on authorised sites needing housing 2007-2012.</p>
<i>Movement from houses to sites</i>	
	<p><i>Survey findings:</i> 67% of respondents in housing would consider moving to a long-term residential site in the Study Area (paragraph 10.3). However, no-one interviewed in housing was actually firmly expecting to move in the next 5 years (paragraph 9.18). This suggests that the figure for desire to move to a site should be treated with some caution. <i>Assumption:</i> reduce the proportion to a third of the survey proportion, to 23%. <i>Calculation:</i> There are an estimated 215 households in housing. $215 \times 23\% = 49.5$ households currently in housing needing an authorised site pitch 2007-2012.</p>
<i>The net balance</i>	
	The net balance is $49.5 - 27.5 = 22$. This is a net requirement for site pitches.

Row 9 : Need for permanent residential pitches arising from transient unauthorised encampments is one of the most difficult elements to predict. Circumstances where such need might arise are where families are travelling around from one unauthorised site to another within a local area simply because they want to stay in the area but can find nowhere that they are permitted to stop. Another scenario would be families with no base, who currently travel widely but want to 'settle' and need to be in the Study Area because of family links or employment opportunities. The steps in the calculation to reach an estimate are set out below.

Estimating need for residential pitches from transient unauthorised encampments	
<i>Step 1 : How many families are involved?</i>	
	<p><i>Study finding:</i> Chapter 7 presented the information available on transient unauthorised encampments in the Study Area and in paragraph 7.10 provided an estimate of the number of encampments and families involved in a year by local authority. <i>Assumption:</i> see paragraph 7.10. <i>Calculation:</i> There are about 297 families involved in transient unauthorised encampments across the Study Area in a year.</p>
<i>Step 2 : How many need residential pitches?</i>	
	<p><i>Survey findings:</i> 67% of respondents on transient unauthorised encampments said that they would be interested in a permanent residential site in the Study Area. This is at variance with the views of stakeholders that the great majority of families on transient (as opposed to long-term) unauthorised sites are either moving through the Study Area or are in the area for a particular event or while work opportunities exist. <i>Assumption:</i> reduce the proportion of families on transient unauthorised</p>

	<p>encampments needing residential site places to 10%. This is a big reduction but chimes with stakeholder views. It also takes account that a proportion of encampments are caused by the same family/group moving between locations. As in other GTAA's this is counted as a single need rather than one which recurs each year of the assessment period.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 10% of 297 families = 30 in need of a residential pitch 2007-2012.</p>
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Row 10 : Sum of elements 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Row 11 : Pitches which are currently closed due to refurbishment of sites in Herefordshire at Bromyard (8 additional pitches).

Row 12 : Pitches for which planning permissions have been granted but which are not yet developed = 0 pitches.

Row 13 : New sites planned again = 0.

Row 14 : Sum of elements 11, 12 and 13

Row 15 : Row 10 minus Row 14 = total residential pitches required for the Study Area 2007-2012.

Row 16 : Family growth on a 2012 base of 275 existing pitches in 2007 + 201 additional pitches provided 2007-2012 = 476. A 3%pa compound growth rate is applied = 76 additional pitches. A rate of 3% seems appropriate given that the age and family size structures in the Study Area are broadly similar to those in other GTAA's.

Row 17 : Row 15 + Row 16 = total requirement 2007-2017.

Estimated Requirement by Local Authority

13.13 Table 13.2 shows the estimated additional pitch requirements by local authority. These have been generated using exactly the same model as used in Table 13.1 and explained in paragraph 13.12. The detailed figures in Table 13.3 show how each element of need contributes to the requirement at local authority level.

Table 13.2 : Estimates of Additional Residential Pitch Needs by Local Authority			
Authority	Additional pitches required		
	2007-2012	2012-2017	2007-2017
Herefordshire	100	31	131
Bridgnorth	5	1	6
North Shropshire	22	16	38
Oswestry	8	5	13
Shrewsbury & Atcham	10	3	13
South Shropshire	18	5	23
Telford & Wrekin	24	10	34
Powys	14 ⁽¹⁾	5	19
Study Area	201	76	277

⁽¹⁾ See paragraph 13.15

13.14 The distribution of pitches obviously reflects current provision and the estimated distribution of Gypsies and Travellers in housing and the incidence of unauthorised encampments. This is purely on the basis of ‘**need where it arises**’. Debate needs to take place later on ‘need where it should be met’. Herefordshire has the highest estimated requirement because of the relatively large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers both on sites and in housing, and the relatively large number of long-term unauthorised sites in the authority.

13.15 The figure for Powys is based on the operation of the model using standard assumptions. In this case it is known that there is current need from a large extended family. At their insistence, they have been included in the survey as a single household. However, in terms of pitch provision several pitches will be required for the different ‘nuclear’ family elements. A proposal is being considered at present which would provide a site for the extended family and other members currently living in housing and other accommodation over a wide area (12 pitches plus 3 for visitors). In these circumstances known first-hand evidence of need should take priority over Table 13.2 which represents the outcome of a purely numerical exercise in calculation.

13.16 The estimates for the Study Area and for constituent authorities are made for 10 years only. Projecting needs for any longer period is very difficult because so little is known about demographic trends among the Gypsy and Traveller population. There is also an assumption that needs assessments will be reviewed and updated. The West Midlands Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy made long term projections on the basis of assumed falling rates of family formation. The assumptions were:

2011-2016	3.0%pa
2016-2021	2.5%pa
2021-2026	2.0%pa

If authorities require a longer term projection, these rates might be used for consistency.

Table 13.3 : Detailed Estimates of Additional Residential Pitch Needs by Local Authority								
	Herefordshire	Bridgnorth	North Shropshire	Oswestry	Shrewsbury & Atcham	South Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Powys
Local authority rented pitches	45	0	18	13	5	10	36	12
Private authorised pitches	50	0	57	9	6	6	3	5
Total authorised pitches	95	0	75	22	11	16	39	17
End of temporary planning permissions	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Closure of sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Concealed households/family growth to 2012	46	1	21	7	4	8	13	5
Long-term unauthorised sites	39	2	0	0	0	7	0	1
Movement between sites and housing	17	1	-2	0	1	3	2	0
Transient unauthorised encampments	3	1	3	1	5	0	9	8
Additional need 2007-2012	108	5	22	8	10	18	24	14
Pitches currently closed	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pitches with permission not developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New sites planned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supply 2012-2017	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requirements for additional pitches 2007-2012	100	5	22	8	10	18	24	14
Family growth 2012-2017	31	1	16	5	3	5	10	5
Total requirement 2007-2017	131	6	38	13	13	22	34	19

Types of Site

13.17 The survey highlighted two more qualitative findings which have implications for site provision:

- Chapter 10 showed a strong preference for family-owned small sites. This is equivalent to the widespread desire for owner-occupation in the settled community. While the survey did not explore income or savings to establish how many Gypsies and Travellers could actually afford to buy land and develop their own sites, not all families will be able to do so. There is likely to be a continuing need for social rented sites provided by either local authorities or RSLs. Both types of site tenure will be required. Local planning authorities should seek to make it as simple as possible for Gypsies and Travellers to get planning permission on their own sites in order to meet aspirations as well as need. Innovative ways of enabling Gypsies and Travellers to establish family sites might be examined.
- The diversity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the Study Area has been stressed at many points in this report. This must be reflected in site provision. Traditional Gypsies and Travellers and New Travellers have different lifestyles which feed through to different locational and design criteria for sites. In particular, imaginative responses to the desire of many in the Study Area to live a 'green' low impact lifestyle will be required. Standard Gypsy site designs will not be adequate for all.

Additional Transit Pitch Requirements

13.18 Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, it remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or family members. 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. The Study Area accommodates Travellers moving between farms for work in a fashion which is apparently quite rare in other parts of the country. Mobile groups on unauthorised encampments currently experience the worst living conditions, sometimes lacking basic water or toilet facilities as well as having greater problems accessing regular education and health services.

13.19 National policy is clear that there should be provision for Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately. While transient unauthorised encampment appears not to be a major issue outside Telford & Wrekin, there are sporadic incidents of encampment anywhere in the Study Area. A number of Study Area residents travel within the Study Area and will continue to do so.

Need for Transit Sites and Stopping Places

13.20 Transient unauthorised encampments were considered as one element in the calculation of need for residential sites. 10% of an estimated annual number of families involved were included. The remaining 90% require some form of transient accommodation if unplanned unauthorised encampment is not to continue. The 90% represents just under 267 families a year to be accommodated across the Study Area, distributed as follows:

Herefordshire	27 families
Bridgnorth	11 families
North Shropshire	27 families
Oswestry	11 families
Shrewsbury & Atcham	40 families
South Shropshire	3 families
Telford & Wrekin	81 families
Powys	67 families
Study Area	267 families

In this context families do not equate directly with pitches since, with limited stays while travelling, the same pitch can accommodate several families in the course of a year.

13.21 Transient accommodation can be provided in a number of different ways. These include:

- Formal, managed transit sites with services provided including hard-standings, water, electricity, drainage, rubbish storage and collection, and either communal or individual WCs and showers. Maximum length of stay on a transit site is normally controlled.
- Informal sites or stopping places which are identified by authorities as places where Gypsies and Travellers could be advised to go and where they could stay for a short period without fear of eviction. Ideally, water and electricity could be provided, together with firm and stable land on which to site caravans. Toilets could be provided on a temporary basis when requested by Gypsies and Travellers on the stopping place.
- Some social travelling and family visits could be accommodated if site and pitch provision is designed with the possibility of accommodating short-term visitors in mind.

13.22 The survey revealed a preference among the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for less formal stopping places while travelling (paragraph 9.34). Given the relatively modest numbers of families estimated to need accommodation on transient provision, at individual local authority level, we suggest that each local authority should identify one or more locations for stopping places which can be used as and when required. The figures suggest that there may be a need for 2 more formal transit sites related to the M54 in/near Telford & Wrekin and in/near Shrewsbury.

13.23 If such provision is made in the period 2007-2012, there may be no need to make further provision 2012-2017 unless the level of travelling increases markedly. More generally, travelling patterns and the incidence of transient unauthorised encampments should be kept under review and provision re-assessed regularly.

Need for Bricks and Mortar Housing

13.24 The study has revealed a significant continuing desire among local Gypsy and Traveller communities to live in caravans, trailers or mobile homes. However, some families will want to live in housing for convenience, comfort, access to services or merely for 'a change'. As noted above (paragraph 13.8), estimating the need for housing for Gypsies and Traveller is particularly difficult because so little is known about Gypsies and Travellers in housing. The survey is not very helpful here because of the very small sample of people in housing included.

13.25 As a minimum, the method used to estimate future need for residential pitches has implications for housing need – broadly need not to be met on sites should be met by housing. Need assessed in this way gives an indication of orders of magnitude rather than precise estimates. At Study Area level and for the period 2007-2012, need might arise:

Family formation	40 families
Movement from sites	25 families
Movement from long-term unauthorised encampments	20 families
Total	85 families

13.26 Putting together the indications of movement into social rented housing from Table 8.1 suggests an overall movement of about 60 households over 5 years, or 12 a year. The estimate for the future is slightly higher as is appropriate given general population increase which gives a higher base position. There is, however, no indication that there will be a major upsurge in demand for housing. It is worth pointing out that this could change with circumstances on sites, as evidenced by movement from sites to houses in Herefordshire in response to past problems on sites.

13.27 It is not possible to arrive at a distribution of need for housing at local authority level. The indications are, however, that need will be relatively greatest in those areas where the housed population is already highest, namely: Herefordshire, North Shropshire, South Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

13.28 Chapter 10 showed that home ownership is preferred over social rented housing among Gypsies and Travellers as for the settled community. There is, however, simply no evidence on which an estimate of tenure split could be made for the future. A proportion of more affluent Gypsies and Travellers will be able to buy properties, many more will have to rent. The relative proportions are unknown.

14. TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

14.1 Travelling Showpeople and their needs are the subject of CLG Circular 04/2007. Need must be assessed as for Gypsies and Travellers and any resulting needs built into local plans and strategies to ensure adequate provision of sites and plots for Travelling Showpeople.

14.2 It proved difficult to identify all sites for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area. Information was pieced together from Partner authorities, the Midland Section of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and the Showmen interviewed. Lack of comprehensive information from local authorities is not unusual – some long-established sites do not have specific planning permission and Showmen's Guild sites are exempt from site licensing requirements.

Current Provision

14.3 There appear to be 6 sites occupied by Travelling Showpeople or Circus Families:

- Showmen's sites:
 - Smithfield Car Park in **Oswestry** which is council owned and leased to a Showman family.
 - Three small family yards in **Telford & Wrekin** (Mitchells Yard and Hedges Yard which are adjacent to each other in Hadley, and Stokes Yard in Wellington).
- Circus Family sites:
 - Jolly's Castle, Ridgeway Farm, Edgton in **South Shropshire** which has planning permission for occupation by a Circus Family.
 - Upper Netchwood Farm, Monkhopton in **Bridgnorth** where there is planning permission for the stationing of 6 vehicles for residential occupation for Travelling Showpeople for 11 months of the year.

14.4 A total of 6 semi-structured interviews were carried out with site owners/residents connected with 5 of these sites. Only one small family yard was not included. In addition, a telephone interview was carried out with a connection of one of the interviewees who had local knowledge and a wider perspective on accommodation problems facing circus performers. The small number of interviews carried out, and the personal nature of information provided, presents problems in reporting findings so as not to breach confidentiality. Sections below on Showpeople, accommodation and accommodation needs combine general and local material, and are quite generalised.

Travelling Showpeople

14.5 Travelling Showpeople – as defined for the purposes of Circular 04/2007 – comprise two related but distinct groupings.

- Travelling Showmen are defined by their distinctive occupation – travelling around the country to provide fairs, rides and amusements with associated catering and other stalls for short periods of time. Showmen interviewed owned rides (sometimes very large), stalls and other equipment. This equipment must be stored when not in use and maintained to increasingly rigorous safety standards.
- Circus families are associated with circuses, and appear to fall into two broad groupings – circus proprietors (who may also perform) and performers who may work on contract with different circuses over time. Again there are storage issues for sometimes very bulky equipment as well as accommodation issues when not working. Some performers require space/equipment for practicing. Stabling and exercise areas for animals may be needed.

14.6 Family links and family businesses are important. The culture often involves extended families living together and sometimes working together as well. On one Showmen's family yard in Telford & Wrekin, the owner and his wife live along with his son, wife and 2 children, and his daughter, husband and 1 child. On another site the head of the family and his wife live with 2 sons (one unmarried, the other with partner and baby) and an unmarried daughter is present intermittently. Showmen families often wish to remain together, which inevitably puts pressure on space as families grow and adult sons and daughters acquire their own equipment as well as living accommodation.

14.7 Prosperity for the group is obviously directly linked to the economic viability of fairs and circuses. Interviewees reported having had a very poor season in 2007 because of the wet weather, and foot and mouth and blue tongue diseases. Restrictions on animal movements because of foot and mouth had severely impacted on one Showman since it affected attendance at agricultural fairs where he was providing amusements. The circus family has not returned to their Shropshire base for winter 2007/8 to avoid movement of their animals being restricted because of Bluetongue; they have been able to carry on touring outside the restriction area from a temporary base in Stockton-on-Tees. A poor season can badly affect businesses in an industry already feeling threatened by changing tastes in entertainment, closure of fairgrounds and increasing health and safety requirements. In turn this impacts on ability to meet accommodation needs by buying land and developing or extending a yard.

14.8 Other factors relevant to accommodation issues include:

- Rides are getting bigger and more sophisticated and thus require more space for storage and testing. Good access to sites for very large vehicles is also important.
- The pattern of work over the year is said to be changing. The season is becoming longer and less continuous than previously with Christmas fairs, and gaps between fairs during the spring and summer. Showmen need somewhere to go with their equipment during gaps in engagements (equipment cannot be left unattended because of insurance conditions) and there are attractions in being able to return 'home' for short periods when necessary. Circus performers require somewhere to stay with their trailers when not in work.

14.9 All the families interviewed had been in and around the Study Area for many years. The Showmen mainly travelled around the West Midlands and into Wales. Being in the Study Area was important both because of family links and as a central point for employment. The Showmen interviewed were inter-related.

Sites and Accommodation

14.10 Nationally, Travelling Showmen's sites differ widely in size, facilities and location. There are three general 'types':

- 'Modern' multi-yard sites, as advocated by the Showmen's Guild, comprising a number of individually owned 'yards' of about 100x100 feet off an internal access road. Each yard contains both residential accommodation and equipment storage and maintenance facilities, and is usually occupied by its owner but may be rented out. There are no sites of this sort in the Study Area.
- Sites offering rented plots. Sites elsewhere in the country are managed by the Showmen's Guild; some sites are privately owned and managed. Some sites of this sort accommodate both long-term residents and short-stay emergency needs, for example, when a fair is rained off. Again there is no site of this kind in the Study Area. An interviewee told us that there used to be 3 large sites offering rented plots in Telford & Wrekin (Oakengates, Wellington and Newport), owned by the same person, which were sold for new town development. This means that there are a number of Showmen families with links to Telford.
- Yards occupied by a single (extended) family. Yards include residential and storage uses side by side. All the Showmen's yards in the Study Area are of this kind. Three in Telford & Wrekin are owner-occupied, together accommodating 8 'nuclear' family units. These are said to have planning permission. All are said to be very fully occupied or overcrowded. The remaining 'yard' is less formal being the corner of the Cattle Market car park in Oswestry. The family's tenure seems

unclear and they seem to have very little security. There are no mains water or sewage connections for their trailers. Water has to be carried from the Cattle Market, and sewage tanks in the trailers are emptied into barrels which are manhandled to the Cattle Market for disposal.

14.11 The interviews suggest that yards are occupied as they are partly by choice, and partly because of lack of an alternative. All were glad to have found a place to live. Locations in relation to local shops and services were said to be good, and access was not reported as a problem. However, there are issues regarding space, security or conditions for the future.

14.12 The examples of circus accommodation in the Study Area are very different in character:

- In South Shropshire the site is the base for a family circus. The land is around 7 acres in extent and has an amenity block with 3 trailers and a separate area for storage of equipment and lorries and stables for horses. There is no workshop on site and a lot of work has to be done out of doors. The majority of equipment is stored in an old aircraft hangar on rented land in Herefordshire.
- In Bridgnorth, the site offers pitches on a rental basis. The site comprises hard-standings with electricity hook-ups. There is a disposal point for sewage from trailer tanks and an external tap for water supply. At the time of the research visit no-one was in residence although the site was being used for storage and the owner of the equipment was said to come and go as his business required. Plots are available for performers when necessary, with people coming as a result of word of mouth. The site is seen as an extremely valuable resource because there are so few similar sites where circus people can find space, but its remote location, basic facilities and exposed hill-top position make it relatively unattractive for extended stays.

14.13 Most interviewees were living in some form of Showmen's trailer. These are large wheeled trailers designed to be towed by a lorry. Some include 'pull-outs' which provide more space. Where interviewees were living in Showmen's trailers they all had a bath or shower and WC (in one instance little used because of lack of water supply). In addition, some families also had a touring caravan used for shorter trips. One family yard contained 3 large trailers and a touring caravan plus fairground equipment. An interviewee commented that she had no view from her windows because the trailer was parked right up against a ride because of lack of space. Extended families require several living vehicles, which themselves are getting larger.

Travelling Showpeoples' Accommodation Needs in the Study Area

14.14 Paragraph 9 of Circular 04/2007 *Planning for Travelling Showpeople* says that a new circular is necessary because evidence shows that the advice

set out in the previous circular has failed to deliver adequate sites for Travelling Showpeople. The preceding consultation paper made clear that one objective is to increase the number of Travelling Showpeople's sites in appropriate locations with planning permission in order to address current under-provision over the next 3-5 years. Thus Government is convinced of the need for further provision nationally.

14.15 As noted in paragraph 3.10 above, the West Midlands Regional Assembly assesses need across the Region as between 63 and 84 additional plots by 2016. This estimate is based on secondary sources and consultation with the Midlands Section of the Showmen's Guild. It is unlikely to include explicit recognition of any needs from Circus Families.

14.16 Interviewees in the Study Area were unanimous in saying that more sites/yards are needed both nationally and locally. This was usually on the basis of knowledge within the community of Showpeople facing difficulties in finding accommodation and widespread overcrowding of yards. The main obstacles to further provision were seen as finding sites which would be acceptable within the planning system, and land prices which were seen to be largely unaffordable for Showpeople if already identified as suitable for site development.

14.17 This was a broadly qualitative survey – inevitably so given the very small number of Showpeople in the Study Area – but even so, clear need was identified:

- The Showmen extended family on the Oswestry Cattle Market car park said that they were satisfied with the accommodation, despite the lack of mains services. However, they were fearful for the future if there is change to the scale or location of the Cattle Market. They will require accommodation for 3 or 4 nuclear families within an extended family unit if they have to leave. They are unlikely to have the resources to buy land to develop as a site, particularly because of the time and risk involved in negotiating the planning system. They would like to remain in the same general area which is central to their work.
- At least 2 of the 3 family yards in Telford & Wrekin are overcrowded and have too little space to live and to store all equipment comfortably. (The third yard was not included in the survey but seems likely to share these problems.) One interviewee has plans to extend his yard; land is apparently available but not in his ownership. Again the interviewees would like to stay in the same general area.
- The circus family would ideally like more space so that equipment could be stored on site as well as living accommodation. If the family's 'children' (all adult) marry, there is not room for them all to live on the present site. They want to remain living together.

14.18 Need in the Study Area stems from current site circumstances as well as future family growth. Family Showmen's yards house three generations,

but the third generation children are young and unlikely to be seeking their own independent accommodation over the next 5-10 years, although they are likely to need their own trailers for sleeping space within the wider family unit, again requiring more space.

14.19 In terms of Showmen's plot requirements at local authority level for the period 2012-2017, this locally-generated need equates to:

Oswestry	4 plots (to regularise insecure position)
Telford & Wrekin	5 plots (to allow expansion of existing yards)

There is no evidence of need elsewhere in the Study Area. There is too little evidence to make estimates for the period 2012-2017.

14.20 As an aspiration, one of the interviewees would like to develop a modern multi-yard site in Telford & Wrekin to meet the needs of his own family and those of other Showmen with links to the Telford area (from when there were more sites in the area). He was confident that there would be no difficulty filling such a yard and felt that Telford would be an excellent location because of its motorway links. Such a development might meet local need and contribute to meeting regional requirements.

14.21 As a guide to requirements, drawing on information from the Showmen's Guild, locational criteria for a multi-yard site include:

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

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

14.22 The needs of the Circus Family in South Shropshire have not been included in the above figures. The family could require a larger site in the future if/when new households form and wish to continue living together. The local authority should monitor this situation and seek to assist in site finding if/when the need arises.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 This final chapter includes conclusions and recommendations from the needs assessment. There are three sections: site provision; housing and other services; and housing-related support.

Future Pitch Provision

15.2 Table 15.1 summarises pitch requirements by local authority for the periods 2007-2012 and 2012-2017 from Chapters 13 and 14.

Table 15.1 : Summary of Pitch Requirements			
Authority	Residential pitches	Transit provision	Showpeople plots
2007-2012			
Herefordshire	100	Stopping places	-
Bridgnorth	5	Stopping places	-
North Shropshire	22	Stopping places	-
Oswestry	8	Stopping places	4
Shrewsbury & Atcham	10	Transit site	-
South Shropshire	18	Stopping places	-
Telford & Wrekin	24	Transit site	5
Powys	14	Stopping places	-
Study Area	201	2 transit sites	9
2012-2017			
Herefordshire	31	-	N/A
Bridgnorth	1	-	N/A
North Shropshire	16	-	N/A
Oswestry	5	-	N/A
Shrewsbury & Atcham	3	-	N/A
South Shropshire	5	-	N/A
Telford & Wrekin	10	-	N/A
Powys	5	-	N/A
Study Area	76	-	N/A

15.3 The pattern of requirement is on a '**need where it arises**' basis. It is uneven and reflects the current pattern of settlement of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing, and on unauthorised sites.

15.4 The estimates are made on the basis of the Gypsy and Traveller population we have been able to identify. There are indications that other Gypsies and Travellers are in the area whom we have not been able to contact and include. Site provision may encourage such 'hidden' needs to come forward in future. Local authorities should monitor any such trends, which are particularly likely in Herefordshire, South Shropshire and Powys.

These authorities may, in future, wish to carry out more detailed local assessments of needs.

15.5 One of the most striking features of the Study Area is its diversity in terms of the Gypsy and Traveller population and their needs and aspirations. In particular there are significant differences between traditional Gypsies and Travellers (mostly Romany Gypsies) and New Travellers, as well as detailed variations within the broad groupings. As paragraph 10.26 notes, people prize being able to live as they want to, but those ways differ. In this context **we recommend** that future site provision includes as much variety as possible.

15.6 Variety should encompass:

- Different **locations**. For example, traditional Gypsies and Travellers often prefer locations on the edge of settlements, with good access to schools and other services. Some New Travellers referred to the importance of access to employment opportunities largely in rural areas, and some preferred remote areas. All groups shared the wish to avoid the poor quality environments and nuisance neighbouring land uses thought typical of many existing sites. All site locations should obviously be suitable for long-term residential use.
- Different **design** of sites. Design in this context includes both site size and the facilities offered. The survey showed that most interviewees favoured small sites with fewer than 20 pitches, but a few wanted larger sites. Traditional Gypsies and Travellers favoured slightly larger sites (average maximum size 15 pitches) than New Travellers (average maximum size 11 pitches). Traditional Gypsies and Travellers favoured well equipped sites with amenity units and all services. Some New Travellers favoured basic sites suited to a low impact, environmentally friendly lifestyle.
- Different **tenures** for sites. All groups showed a preference for owner-occupied family sites over sites offering rented pitches and owned by a local council, private landlord or another Gypsy and Traveller. While income information is not available, it is likely that many families will not be able to buy and develop a site of their own. A range of options should be developed including:
 - planning permissions for small sites to be developed by families for their own use.
 - sites developed by local authorities or Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) offering rented pitches.
 - intermediate options, for example, sites developed on a co-operative basis, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to an extended Gypsy Traveller family for their own use. These options might involve the families carrying out physical development on the site (self build) with the land owner providing the land on affordable terms. Local councils might develop such initiatives directly or in partnership with RSLs. CLG and the Housing Corporation are encouraging

RSLs to become more involved in Gypsy and Traveller site provision.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is available to local authorities and RSLs to cover 100% of site development costs. Grant criteria are meeting clearly assessed need, site sustainability, value for money and deliverability in terms of time and budget. Guidance also refers very favourably to innovation and widening the range of options available¹⁶.

- Different forms of **site management**. Tenure and management are linked. However, on rented sites management options include management directly by a local authority or RSL, and private management by a Gypsy Traveller or other landlord. Innovative schemes might explore greater self-management by residents on existing as well as new sites. This should be seen alongside the proposed changes to security of tenure on local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites currently before Parliament in the Housing and Regeneration Bill.

15.7 It is particularly important that new sites should be sustainable – any high profile failures could seriously jeopardise future provision in such a potentially contentious area. It is vital that Gypsies and Travellers are directly involved in making decisions on the options to be pursued to ensure that the resulting sites fully meet needs. Local authorities should build better links with Gypsy and Traveller communities and consult fully on the way forward.

Definitions of Gypsies and Travellers

15.8 The different definitions adopted in national housing and planning policies raise issues for the Study Area. This relates particularly to the position of some New Travellers. This assessment has adopted the Housing Act definition of Gypsies and Travellers (see paragraph 1.5) which is wider in important respects than the planning definition of gypsy status. In particular the assessment has treated all New Travellers as being within the target population group without enquiring closely into their ‘cultural tradition of nomadism’ or caravan dwelling, or links between their nomadism and means of livelihood. This means that there could be a group which the GTAA has assessed as being in need who do not have gypsy status for planning purposes. The potential impact of this was highlighted during the course of the GTAA by the Planning Inspector’s decision in respect of The Oakery in South Shropshire to grant temporary planning permission for accommodation for only the 2 families on the unauthorised site able to prove gypsy status. This led to the displacement of other residents and suggests they and others in a similar position have little chance of success in gaining permissions for ‘gypsy’ sites in future.

15.9 In this context, **we recommend:**

¹⁶ Communities and Local Government, *Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant Guidance 2006-2008* (updated August 2007)

- Housing strategies must take account of all the needs identified in the GTAA and seek to explore avenues by which land can be identified through the planning system for those without and well as with gypsy status in planning terms.
- Partner authorities most affected – South Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys – should raise the issue with higher authorities (the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Communities and Local Government in England, and Welsh Assembly Government in Wales) drawing attention to the potential impact it could have on the success of site provision policy in areas with a large New Traveller population. The basic illogicality in national policy requires resolution.

Housing and Other Services

15.10 The survey was not very successful in identifying and interviewing Gypsies and Travellers in housing, and the main emphasis has clearly been on sites and site provision. The indications are that there will continue to be small movement by Gypsies and Travellers into housing, including social rented housing. We would underline the importance of:

- Ensuring that homelessness staff are fully aware that people who live in a caravan and have nowhere legal to put it are homeless, and that the courts have found that 'suitable' accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers with a proven cultural aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation should be site provision wherever possible.
- Ensuring that allocation policies are sensitive to the cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers – for example that there is adequate support for Gypsies and Travellers in negotiating choice-based lettings schemes and seeking where possible to allocate properties which would allow Gypsy and Traveller tenants, who wish to do so, to keep a caravan in order to maintain an important part of their cultural identity.

15.11 There were limited questions in the survey about health and education. Answers suggest a high degree of ill health (56% of respondent households included someone with a health problem); the majority were accessing local GPs and dentists. Two-fifths of respondents with school-age children said that some or all of their children did not attend school regularly, and not all receive home education. There is a continuing need for inter-agency work to ensure that service provision for Gypsies and Travellers is improved to ensure their greater social inclusion. Better site provision should help here both directly (by improving conditions, lessening stress and unwanted mobility) and indirectly (by increasing trust between the Travelling and settled communities, leading to greater engagement).

15.12 The survey revealed high levels of discrimination and harassment – 50% of respondents reported experiencing discrimination or harassment in the area and some time. Reported incidence was higher among New Travellers

and Travellers than among Romany Gypsies. In this context there is need for action:

- The Race Relations legislation places a positive duty on local authorities to ensure non-discrimination on racial grounds and to promote good race relations. Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic groups for the purposes of this legislation, and authorities, and the police, should take their responsibilities seriously as advocated in the CRE's *Common Ground* report.
- New Travellers are not an ethnic or racial group so far as legislation is concerned. However, local authorities should make their staff aware that similar issues of harassment and discrimination arise, and be prepared to take action to ensure non-discrimination and promote good community relations in the same way as for other Gypsy and Traveller groups.

Housing-Related Support

15.13 There is evidence of demand for a range of housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers. Services are variable across the Study Area. Shropshire has a specialist service but there are service gaps in terms of unauthorised encampments and housed Gypsies and Travellers. The pilot service in Herefordshire has uncovered previously unmet demand among housed Gypsies and Travellers, and is now at capacity level and provides a limited service to Gypsy and Travellers on authorised sites and does not cover unauthorised encampments. Telford & Wrekin and Powys offer very limited or no specialised support services.

15.14 Flexible, individually tailored, outcome-focused support services are required across the Study Area. Housing-related support should be available on both short-term and long-term bases. The general view among stakeholders was that services should be contracted on an hours basis rather than a case base. A number of specific issues in terms of 'eligibility criteria' and 'Supporting People requirements' which were seen to make it difficult for those with no fixed address to access Supporting People funded services are highlighted in paragraph 12.18 above and need to be clarified.

Improving Access to Generic and Mainstream Services

15.15 Access to mainstream services, such as GPs and dentists, was seen as important by the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed and most proved to be registered locally. There is evidence that Gypsies and Travellers find it difficult to access some mainstream services and there has been a low take-up by Gypsies and Travellers in housing of generic floating support services. The skills, experience, knowledge, personal contacts and track record of specialist Gypsy and Traveller staff (for example Gypsy Liaison Officers, Specialist Gypsy and Traveller Support Workers) is critical. Mainstream service

providers, such as Health Services, and generic organisations providing housing-related support services need to have strong links with these staff in order to facilitate access. There are already good practice examples of close working, for example Severnside Housing Tenancy Support Workers and the Shropshire Gypsy Liaison Officers carry out joint-visits. The Herefordshire Traveller Health Project provides a specialist service to all Gypsy and Traveller groups which goes beyond directly health-related issues into wider issues affecting well-being. These good practice examples need to be built on.

Improving Access to Specialist Services

15.16 The data from the Gypsy and Traveller interviews demonstrated a demand for access to specialist services such as planning and legal advice (services which are or may not be eligible for SP funding). Gypsy and Traveller staff have a key role to play in assisting Gypsies and Travellers access other specialist services, such as legal services, CABs and Planning Aid which potentially could help meet key support needs identified through the Gypsy and Traveller interviews. Gypsy and Traveller specialist workers need to develop strong links with these specialist agencies/ services.

Awareness Raising

15.17 There is a need for awareness training for generic staff and other specialist staff. The potential of the Gypsy and Traveller staff/services providing this training should be explored further. This training could be provided through, for example, SHOG, training sessions for individual organisations or groups of organisations across the study area.

Further Development of Sub-regional Working

15.18 There was a significant level of support for improved working between SP Administering Authorities within the Study Area. This could lead to the joint commissioning of services across Administering Authority boundaries. Although it is acknowledged that the strategic policy and financial context is different for Powys, it is still important that the Powys SP People Team develop their working relationship, and actively engage, with the other SP Administering Authorities in the Study Area.

15.19 In addition, there was support for the development of sub-regional meetings between specialist Gypsy and Traveller Service Providers including Gypsy Liaison Officers (it was suggested Wrexham might also be included in these meetings). Ideally this should be replicated at the Regional Level.

Future Needs

15.20 A number of providers and stakeholders commented on the potential growth in demand for housing-support services from older Gypsies and Travellers. Future work should explore this issue further.