

# North Norfolk Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

September 2024

*RRR Consultancy Ltd*



**NORTH  
NORFOLK  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

- ES1. In 2024, North Norfolk District Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake an updated Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2040. The findings of this study will be used as an evidence base to support the ongoing Local Plan examination and supersedes any previous GTAA. Whilst the Submitted local plan period is 2016-36, the base date for the GTAA is September 2024 in line with the Inspectors changes to the plan period contained in his initial letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024, (released 19 July following the General Election and changed the plan period to 2024 – 2040 so that the plan remained forward looking over a 15-year period. It is important to note that this assessment includes accommodation need which may have been identified by previous GTAAs but remained unfulfilled by September 2024. Therefore, this assessment calculates needs from for the 15-year period to 2040 with the understanding that any need not addressed between the start of the plan period and September 2024 (the base date) will have been identified by this assessment.
- ES2. The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople is established through national guidance contained in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government (DLUHC), December 2023). Throughout this report, this policy will be referred to as PPTS 2023 or simply PPTS unless referring to the previous PPTS.
- ES3. To achieve the study aims, the research drew on several data sources, including:
- Review of secondary information: a review of national and local planning policies, recently undertaken GTAAs, and secondary data analysis. This included an analysis of the most recently published (January 2024) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
  - Consultation with key stakeholders, providing qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of the different community groups.
  - Consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, covering a range of issues related to accommodation and service needs.
- ES4. The above provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

## Policy context

- ES5. On 19 December 2023, the government announced changes to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which had previously been updated in August 2015. In the 2023 update, the government has reverted to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers used in the PPTS as adopted in 2012. This change is in response to a Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022). The government intends to review this policy and case law area further in 2024. Like the 2015 update, the 2023 version will be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- ES6. Whilst it is clear that the 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age, it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes.
- ES7. Given the differences in defining Gypsies and Travellers, this GTAA provides two accommodation needs figures: first, one based on the definition of ethnic identity; second, based on the definition of PPTS 2023. The two accommodation needs definitions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
- ES8. In March 2016, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its *Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance* to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It states that, when considering the need for caravans and houseboats, local authorities must include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances, including, for example, caravan and houseboat dwelling households and households residing in bricks and mortar dwelling households.
- ES9. According to the NPPF (2023) and related planning practice guidance, a sound local plan seeks, as a minimum, to meet the area's objectively assessed needs and address the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The NPPF (2023) refers to the need to assess and address the accommodation needs of those covered by the definition of the PPTS 2023.

## Accommodation need

- ES10. There are 14 authorised pitches in the study area and 2 on unauthorised developments. There are also two transit pitches (owned by the local authority). There are no known Travelling Showpeople plots/ yards within North Norfolk.
- ES11. Table ES1 summarises permanent accommodation needs over the period 2024-2040. It is important to note that the figures shown in Table ES1 include all needs as of 2024,

including any which may have been identified by previous GTAA's but remained unfulfilled by the time of this assessment. The table shows that 11 new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition) and 9 new permanent pitches (based on PPTS 2023) are needed over the period 2024-2040 in the study area. Although the surveys undertaken with Gypsy and Traveller households asked about the preferred location of any new provision, respondents did not state any preference. They were more likely to state that they would prefer to remain close to family members already residing in the study area. Looking at the distances involved across the study area, anywhere within the study area.

**Table ES.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs**

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	7	5
2029-2034	2	2
2034-2040	2	2
Total	11	9

Source: GTAA 2024

ES12. There are currently two pending applications – one for 3 pitches and another for 2 pitches. These will address 4 identified needs for the first five years and 1 for the second five-year period. Additionally, there is a site with the potential to intensify by 1 pitch. As a result, the need for pitches under the PPTS definition for the first five years will be fully met, leaving 2 pitches outstanding under the 'ethnic' category. These remaining needs can be best addressed through windfall applications, in accordance with the submitted policy approach HOU5 resulting in a revised assessment of need as follows:

**Table ES.2: Indicative future Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs (assuming approval of the two pending applications)**

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	1	0
2029-2034	2	1
2034-2040	2	2
Total	5	3

Source: GTAA 2024

ES13. In relation to transit provision, in addition to existing transit provision, this GTAA also recommends that the local authority adopt a negotiated stopping policy at the corporate level. This involves caravans being sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The advantages of this approach are set out in detail in Chapter 5.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- ES14. The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTAA (including any accommodation need calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities. This assessment identifies that there is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 11 additional pitches (ethnic definition) and 9 pitches (PPTS 2023). There is no identified additional accommodation need for Travelling Showpeople.
- ES15. It is recommended that the authority adopts a negotiated stopping policy at the corporate level to provide for any additional capacity.
- ES16. This GTAA recommends that North Norfolk, in their local plan, adopt the 'ethnic' definition of accommodation needs figures, i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation needs of all Gypsies and Travellers but also how the accommodation needs concerning households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed. Since the Lisa Smith case (2022), there has been a greater emphasis on Gypsy and Travellers' ethnic identity than their travelling patterns (past or present).
- ES17. Alternatively, the local authority may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures, with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and 'Ethnic' definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authority would first meet the need of 9 (5 within the first five years) as the obligation but accept the need of a further 2 (2 within the first five years) as a potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls.
- ES18. In addition to the identified need there may also be an additional element of unidentified need from households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, new households due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation who have not identified themselves as ethnic. It is recommended that a flexible policy criteria approach such as in the submitted Plan policy HOU5 is sufficient.
- ES19. In addition to the above, to meet the specific accommodation needs of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:
- Regarding the different community groups, it is recommended that the local authority continue to work closely with the families to determine how their accommodation needs can best be met.

- Also, for the local authority to provide pre-planning application advice to households who have identified land to help determine if it is suitable to address accommodation needs.

ES20. It is recommended that the local authority reviews the planning status of any unauthorised developments and encourage appropriate applications.

ES21. As well as quantifying accommodation need, the study also makes recommendations on other key issues including:

- How the accommodation needs can be met through expansion of existing sites and new sites /yards.
- The delivery mechanisms such as being open to the development of sites on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use.
- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the different community groups.
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authority, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Showmen's Guild (local and national)), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- Implement a corporate policy providing negotiated stopping arrangements at agreed-upon locations to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time.
- To liaise with owners of the sites to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs when arise .
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, in line with Plan review requirements it is recommended that their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.
- Housing organisations need to consider allocating culturally appropriate housing to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar, for example, with sufficient space to accommodate a caravan.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work with the different community groups and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to understand further issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.



- In liaison with relevant enforcement agencies such as the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies about Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities can change. Their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

# 1. Introduction

## Study context

- 1.1 In 2024, North Norfolk District Council commissioned RRR Consultancy Ltd to undertake an updated Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment (GTAA) for the period up to 2040. The findings of this study will be used as an evidence base to support the ongoing Local Plan examination and supersedes any previous GTAA. Whilst the Submitted local plan period is 2016-36, the base date for the GTAA is September 2024 in line with the Inspectors changes to the plan period contained in his initial letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024, (released 19 July following the General Election and changed the plan period to 2024 – 2040 so that the plan remained forward looking over a 15-year period. It is important to note that this assessment includes accommodation need which may have been identified by previous GTAA's but remained unfulfilled by September 2024. Therefore, this assessment calculates needs from for the 15-year period to 2040 with the understanding that any need not addressed between the start of the plan period-and September 2024 (the base date) will have been identified by this assessment.
- 1.2 The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople is established through national guidance contained in the 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), December 2023). Throughout this report, this policy will be referred to as PPTS 2023 or simply PPTS, unless referring to PPTS 2015.

## Methodological context

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

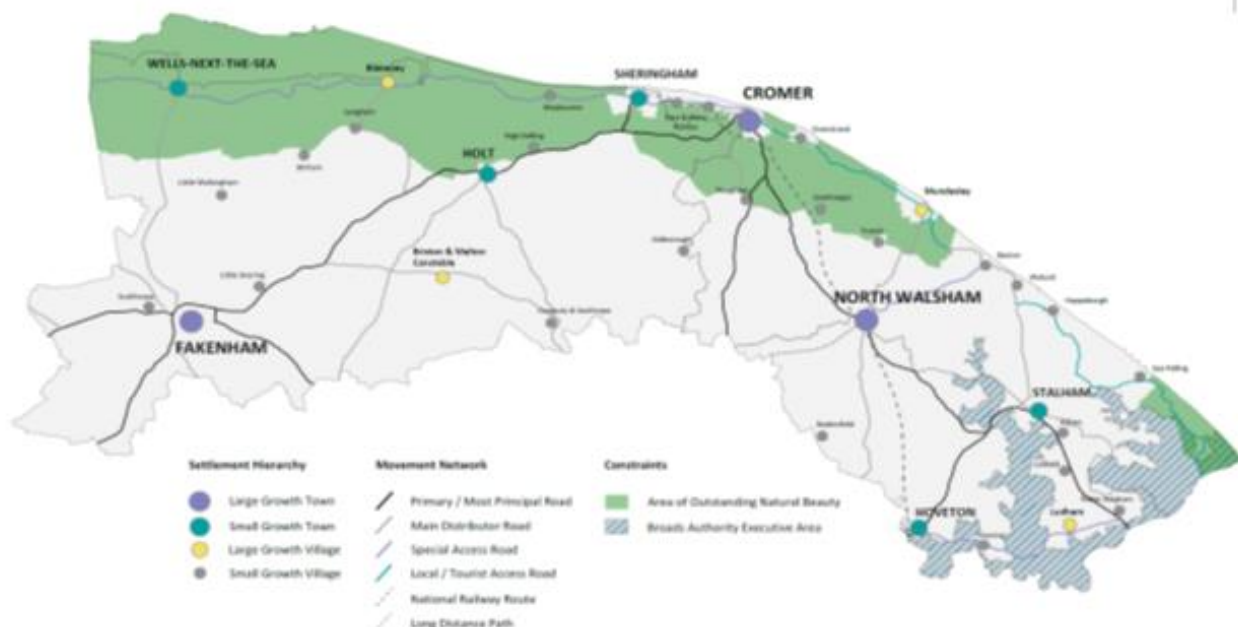
## Geographical context

- 1.5 The estimated population of the North Norfolk is 103,200 people (ONS 2021). The North Norfolk District is a large rural area of some 87,040 hectares (excluding the Broads Authority Area) with approximately 43 miles of coastline situated on the northern periphery of the East of England region. The District is one of the most rural in lowland England, with the larger settlements distributed more or less evenly across the district and accommodating around half the population; the other half live in dispersed villages and hamlets throughout the rural area.
- 1.6 The nearby urban area and major economic, social and cultural centre of Norwich (Norwich Urban Area population of 213,166(7)) is situated some 22 miles to the south of Cromer and exerts a significant influence over parts of the District. The towns of Kings Lynn situated 20 miles to the west of Fakenham and Great Yarmouth situated 16 miles to the south-east of Stalham are the other principal neighbouring settlements, but their impact on the District is far more limited.
- 1.7 The main settlements in the District are its seven towns: Cromer, Fakenham, Holt, North Walsham, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea, along with Hoveton and a further four large villages; Blakeney, Briston / Melton Constable, Ludham and Mundesley. These settlements are distributed more or less evenly across the District, and accommodate around half of the population. The other half live in the large number of smaller villages, hamlets and scattered dwellings which are dispersed throughout a large rural area. Overall the District is one of the most rural in lowland England.
- 1.8 The economy of North Norfolk remains fairly narrowly based with a relatively high dependence upon employment in the agriculture, retail, public services and tourism sectors. The local economy is particularly characterised by the fact that the majority of employees (84%) work in small businesses. Whilst there has been a change in the business base of the manufacturing sector with business closures / rationalisations in the food processing and engineering sectors in recent years, there has been a growth in employment in the manufacture of plastic and timber products and marine engineering / boat-building, which continue to perform strongly.
- 1.9 Significant numbers of employees in the District are engaged in the provision of education, health and social care, public administration, retailing and tourism. In recent years the tourism sector has enjoyed growth through investment in quality accommodation and attractions, and a move to year-round operations capturing short breaks and specialist markets, in addition to the traditional summer holiday.
- 1.10 Whilst most of North Norfolk's towns have small industrial estates, the main concentration of manufacturing employment is in Fakenham and North Walsham. Cromer, Mundesley, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-Sea are traditional destination resorts, and Hoveton acts as an important centre for Broads-based tourism.

## Map of the study area

1.11 A map of the study area is shown in Figure 1.1 below.

**Figure 1.1: Study area**



Source: Submitted version North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036, January 2022, p.14

## Summary

- 1.12 The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in North Norfolk between 2024 to 2040. This is in terms of permanent pitches, sites, and transit sites and/or negotiated stopping arrangements for Gypsies and Travellers. This report will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan review.
- 1.13 To achieve the study aims, this report focusses on the assessment of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The research provides a range of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

## 2. Policy context

### Introduction

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

### National policies

#### *National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)*

- 2.3 According to NPPF (2023) and related planning practice guidance, a sound local plan seeks, as a minimum, to meet the area's objectively assessed needs and address "the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The NPPF (2023) refers to the need to both assess and then address the accommodation needs of those who are covered by the definition of the PPTS 2023. The Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 protect Gypsies and Travellers' cultural and ethnic way of life, including living in a caravan. This GTAA considers the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers who identify as such, irrespective as to whether they have permanently or temporarily ceased to travel (i.e. those who meet the 'ethnic' definition), as well as those who meet the PPTS 2023 definition.

### Definition context

- 2.4 On 19 December 2023, the government announced changes to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), which had previously been updated in August 2015. The key difference between the PPTS published in August 2015 and the December 2023 version primarily involves changes made in response to a recent legal judgment and ongoing policy reviews.
- 2.5 In the 2023 update, the government has reverted to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers used in the PPTS as adopted in 2012. This change is in response to a Court of Appeal judgment in the case of *Smith v SSLUHC & Others* (October 2022). The government intends to review this area of policy and case law further in 2024.

- 2.6 The 2015 update involved changes to PPTS that were based on policies contained within the government response to a consultation on planning and travellers. Like the 2023 update, the 2015 version was to be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.7 The key difference between PPTS 2015 and 2023 is that the former removed the word 'permanent' from the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers. This meant that local planning authorities were not obliged to consider the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who had permanently ceased to travel:

#### **PPTS 2015:**

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

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

- 2.8 However, the Court of Appeal judgment in the case of Smith v SSLUHC & Others (October 2022) determined that PPTS was discriminatory by excluding households who had permanently ceased to travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers. In response, the government amended the definition by reinserting the word 'permanent':

#### **PPTS 2023<sup>1</sup>:**

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

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

- 2.9 The DLUHC definition of Travelling Showpeople is:

*Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age*

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<sup>1</sup> MHCLG, 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' December 2023 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>

*have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.*

- 2.10 Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople are not considered to be an ethnic minority by the Equality Act 2010 (and previously the Race Relations Act 1976). Although some Gypsies and Travellers may earn a living as ‘travelling showpeople’, Travelling Showpeople as a group do not consider themselves to belong to an ethnic minority<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.11 For the purposes of this planning policy, “Travellers” means “Gypsies and Travellers” and “Travelling Showpeople” as defined above from PPTS annex 1. Also, for the purposes of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA), Travelling Showpeople are included under the definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ in accordance with The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travellers) (England) Regulations 2006, and the *Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance* to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs (March 2016). It recommends that Travelling Showpeople’s own accommodation needs and requirements should be separately identified in the GTAA. This GTAA adheres to the definition of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as defined by the DCLG *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (December 2023) (see above).
- 2.12 It is important to note that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have separate accommodation needs and requirements. Different terminology is used to distinguish between Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies and Travellers occupy pitches on sites, while Travelling Showpeople occupy plots on yards. In addition to space for residing quarters, Travelling Showpeople also require additional space in order to store and maintain large equipment.
- 2.13 The 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel; it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes. Also, the 2023 PPTS does not require the need to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently but *not* due to education or health needs or old age. Ethnic need is based on all households who identify as Gypsies and Travellers (as protected by the Equality Act 2010) irrespective as to whether they travel or not.

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<sup>2</sup> DCLG, *Consultation on revised planning guidance in relation to Travelling Showpeople*, January 2007, p. 8

- 2.14 Whilst the 2023 PPTS determines the need to assess the accommodation needs of households who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently due to their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age, it does not explicitly state how the new definition should be interpreted in relation to other factors such as whether families travel for economic or work purposes.
- 2.15 One interpretation is that 'a nomadic habit of life' means travelling for an economic purpose. Previous case law e.g. *R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay* (1990) and *Hearne v National Assembly for Wales* (1999) has been used to support this point. There is nothing within PPTS 2015 which indicates that Gypsy or Traveller status (for planning purposes) is solely derived from whether there is any employment-related travelling.
- 2.16 More recent Planning Inspectors' reports have reached differing conclusions regarding whether the Gypsy and Traveller status (for planning purposes) should be based on patterns of employment-related nomadism. For example, a 2016 planning appeal decision regarding a site at Throcking, Hertfordshire, concluded the appellant was not a Gypsy and Traveller for planning purposes as there was insufficient evidence "that he is currently a person of a nomadic habit of life"<sup>3</sup> for employment purposes (i.e. he did not meet the August 2015 PPTS definition).
- 2.17 In contrast, some other Planning Inspectors' reports have appeared to give less weight to the travelling status of Gypsies and Travellers. For example, an appeal decision regarding a site in Blythburgh, Suffolk, states that whilst the appellant had permanently ceased to travel, he is nonetheless an ethnic Romany gypsy with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.18 Similarly, a local authority rejected a planning application as it determined that the household did not meet the PPTS 2015 definition. However, despite evidence that the family had reduced the extent to which they travel due to educational requirements, the Planning Inspector allowed the s78 appeal on the basis that they should be regarded as Gypsies for planning purposes<sup>5</sup>. Also, in deciding whether to allow an S78 appeal for a site in West Kingsdown, Kent, the Planning Inspector acknowledged that the local authority included within its future calculations the accommodation needs (in terms of pitches) of 'cultural' Gypsies and Travellers<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.19 Much case law precedes the December 2023 definition and even the 2015 definition. The commonly cited *R v South Hams DC ex parte Gibb et al.* judicial decision was

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<sup>3</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/16/3145267 Elmfield Stables, Thirty Acre Farm, Broadfield, Throcking, Hertfordshire SG9 9RD, 6 December 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/J3530/A/14/2225118, Pine Lodge, Hazels Lane, Hinton, Blythburgh, Suffolk IP17 3RF 1 March 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/W/18/3198435 Ten Acre Farm, Love Lane, Headcorn TN27 9HL 9 May 2019.

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



undertaken in response to the now partly repealed Caravan Sites Act 1968. Also, it is increasingly recognised that defining Gypsies and Travellers in terms of employment status may contravene human rights legislation. For example, in 2003, the Welsh Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee noted the following:

'...apparent obsession with finding ways to prove that an individual is not a 'Gypsy' for the purposes of the planning system. This approach is extremely unhelpful...and there can be no doubt that actual mobility at any given time is a poor indicator as to whether someone should be considered a Gypsy or a Traveller'<sup>7</sup>.

- 2.20 In September 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published research into the impact of the PPTS 2015 definition on assessing accommodation needs<sup>8</sup>. The research examined a sample of 20 GTAAAs undertaken since the August 2015 revised definition. The report found that there had been a 73% reduction in accommodation needs in post-2015 GTAAAs compared to pre-2015 GTAAAs undertaken by the same local planning authorities.
- 2.21 Importantly, on 31 October 2022, the Court of Appeal determined that PPTS 2015 was discriminatory in relation to excluding households who had permanently ceased to travel from being recognised (for planning purposes) as Gypsies and Travellers. The case relates to Lisa Smith, who resides on a site occupied by Ms Smith, her husband, their children and grandchildren. Two of Ms Smith's adult sons are severely disabled and cannot travel for work. The judgment determined that PPTS 2015 characterises nomadic Gypsies and Travellers as different from Gypsies and Travellers who, as a result of age or disability, are no longer able to travel. This creates sub-classes of ethnicity which 'seems to sit uneasily with the stated aim of PPTS 2015 to facilitate the "traditional" way of life" of Gypsies and Travellers, and not simply the "nomadic" way of life'. The judgement concluded that the objective of PPTS 2015 in excluding households from being defined as Gypsies and Travellers was not 'fairness'.
- 2.22 Given the above, our approach is to use a methodology that provides an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity and, second, a figure based on the PPTS (2023). Providing two accommodation needs figures – one based on the PPTS 2023 and another using a cultural definition, assessing accommodation needs regardless of whether they travel or not – complies with both PPTS 2023 and the Equality Act 2010. This approach acknowledges the distinctions between planning definitions under PPTS 2023 and broader cultural identities, ensuring that all relevant

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Assembly 2003 cited in Johnson, Murdoch and Willers, *The Law Relating to Gypsies and Travellers*, no date).

<sup>8</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Gypsy and Traveller sites: the revised planning definition's impact on assessing accommodation needs*, Research Report 128, September 2019 located at: [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/190909\\_gypsy\\_and\\_traveller\\_sites\\_-\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_revised\\_definition\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/190909_gypsy_and_traveller_sites_-_impact_of_the_revised_definition_-_final.pdf)

accommodation needs are considered, thereby aligning with legal obligations under the Equality Act to avoid discrimination and promote equality.

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

*DCLG Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance (March 2016)*<sup>9</sup>

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

- Caravan and houseboat dwelling households:
  - who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside
  - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded<sup>10</sup> 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 on.
- Bricks and mortar dwelling households:
  - Whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable ('unsuitable' in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of a person's cultural preference not to live in bricks-and-mortar accommodation).

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-housing-needs-for-caravans-and-houseboats-draft-guidance>

<sup>10</sup> Overcrowding e.g. where family numbers have grown to the extent that there is now insufficient space for the family within its caravan accommodation and insufficient space on the pitch or site for a further caravan (DCLG 2007 p.25)

- 2.25 Importantly, with respect to this report, the draft guidance states that assessments should include, but are not limited to, Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, New Age Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.26 The guidance recognises that the needs of those residing in caravans and houseboats may differ from the rest of the population because of:
- their nomadic or semi-nomadic pattern of life
  - their preference for caravan and houseboat-dwelling
  - movement between bricks-and-mortar housing and caravans or houseboats
  - their presence on unauthorised encampments or developments.
- 2.27 Also, it suggests that as mobility between areas may have implications for carrying out an assessment, local authorities should consider the following:
- co-operating across boundaries both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions
  - the timing of the accommodation needs assessment
  - different data sources.
- 2.28 Finally, the DCLG draft guidance (2016) states that, in relation to Travelling Showpeople, account should be taken of the need for storage and maintenance of equipment as well as accommodation and that the transient nature of many Travelling Showpeople should be considered.

### *Housing and Planning Act 2016*

- 2.29 The Housing and Planning Act 2016, which gained Royal Assent on 12 May 2016, omits sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004, which previously identified 'gypsies and travellers' as requiring specific assessment for their accommodation needs when carrying out reviews of housing needs. Instead, the Act amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to include all people residing in or resorting to the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, the DCLG 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.
- 2.30 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to consider the needs of people residing in places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. The term 'houseboat' is not defined by DCLG guidance. As such, the GTAA adopts the National Bargee Travellers Association's (NBTA) definition, who define a boat dweller as:

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

## Local Planning Policies

### *Submitted North Norfolk Local Plan*

2.31 Policy HOU 5 ('Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople's Accommodation') of the North Norfolk Local Plan<sup>11</sup> states that development that meets the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers and of Travelling Showpeople will be permitted provided that it is of an appropriate scale and nature and that it complies with all of the following criteria:

- a) the intended occupants meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers, or the description of Travelling Showpeople;
- b) development minimises impact on the surrounding landscape;
- c) safe vehicular access to the public highway can be provided and the development can be served by necessary utilities infrastructure;
- d) the movement of vehicles to and from the site will not result in any unacceptable impact on the capacity of the highway network;
- e) there is adequate space for parking, turning and servicing on site;
- f) the site is in a sustainable location on the outskirts of, or within a reasonable distance of, a settlement which offers local services and community facilities;
- g) suitable landscaping, boundary enclosures and screening are provided to give privacy, minimise impact on the character and amenities of the surrounding area and neighbouring settled community;
- h) proposals should include any additional uses intended to be carried out from the site.

2.32 It also states that Conditions will be used to control the nature and level of non-residential uses on the site<sup>12</sup>. It is understood at the time of writing that following the earlier hearing sessions there are no proposed modifications at this time

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<sup>11</sup> North Norfolk Local Plan Proposed submission version publication stage regulation 19 January-2022.

<sup>12</sup> North Norfolk Local Plan Proposed submission version publication stage regulation 19 January-2022 p.123.

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## Duty to cooperate and cross-border issues

- 2.33 The duty to cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England, and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation relating to strategic cross boundary matters. Also, the need for councils to cooperate reflects the characteristic that Gypsy and Traveller travelling patterns transcend local authority borders<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.34 Local authorities are required to work together to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs for their areas. They should also consider the production of joint development plans to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has specific development constraints across its area.
- 2.35 As part of this assessment, consultation in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and boat dwellers, was undertaken with adjoining planning and housing authorities. The findings from the consultation are discussed in Chapter 4.
- 2.36 Given the transient nature of Gypsies and Travellers it is important for the GTAA to consider Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need in neighbouring authorities. The following section summarises the results of GTAAs recently undertaken by both the local authority which has commissioned this assessment, and neighbouring or nearby local authorities, specifically in relation to accommodation needs and travelling patterns (see Figure 1.1 'Study Area Map' above for authorities bordering the study area).

### *Breckland GTAA 2024*

- 2.37 The GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy on behalf of the Breckland Council. The overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period (2024-2046) for 71 additional pitches (ethnic definition), and 66 pitches (PPTS 2023). The ethnic need includes the 66 who meet the PPTS definition and the 5 who do not, whilst the PPTS needs relate only to those who meet the PPTS definition. There is no identified additional accommodation need for Travelling Showpeople.

### *Greater Yarmouth and Broads Authority GTAA 2022*

- 2.38 The GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy on behalf of the Greater Yarmouth and Broads Authority. Over the period 2022-2041, the GTAA found a need for a further 18 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 16 pitches

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<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the government's white paper 'Planning for the Future' (August 2020) indicated that it intended to abolish the duty to cooperate.

(based on PPTS 2015) are needed over the 19-year period. The ethnic need includes the 16 who meet the PPTS definition and the 2 who do not, whilst the PPTS needs relate only to those who meet the PPTS definition. There are no known supply or need for plots in relation to Showpeople in the area. In relation to transit provision, it is recommended that the local authorities set up a corporate negotiated stopping places policy to address transit provision.

#### *Broads Authority BDAA 2022*

- 2.39 The BDAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy on behalf of the Broads Authority. Over the period 2021-2041 the BDAA found that a further 48 permanent residential moorings are needed and a review of the short term moorings.

#### *Greater Norwich GTAA 2022*

- 2.40 The GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy on behalf of Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, and South Norfolk District Council. Over the period 2022-2038, the GTAA found a need for a further 50 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (based on the ethnic identity definition), and 29 pitches (based on PPTS 2015) are needed over the 16-year period. The ethnic need includes the 29 who meet the PPTS definition and the 21 who do not, whilst the PPTS needs relate only to those who meet the PPTS definition. The GTAA also identified a need for 43 additional Travelling Showpeople plots over the 16-year period. In relation to transit provision, it is recommended that the local authorities set up a corporate negotiated stopping places policy to address transit provision.

#### *Kings Lynn and West Norfolk GTAA 2023*

- 2.41 The GTAA was conducted on behalf of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. It identified an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period (2024-2046) of 102 pitches for those who meet the PPTS definition, 6 for those whose planning status is unknown, and 48 for those who do not meet the planning definition. This results in a total ethnic accommodation need of 156 pitches over the period 2023-2040. Additionally, there is a requirement for 6 more plots for Travelling Showpeople during the same period.

#### *Norfolk GTAA 2017*

- 2.42 The GTAA was undertaken by RRR Consultancy on behalf of Broadland District Council, Breckland Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, and South Norfolk District Council), alongside the Broads Authority. Over the period 2017-2036, the GTAA found a need for 73 additional pitches for all households ethnically identified as Gypsies or Travellers, or 41 pitches based only on families who travel for work. The GTAA also found a need for 46 plots for Travelling Showpeople, 63 boat moorings, and 140 pitches for non-Gypsy and Traveller households residing permanently on residential pitches. In relation to transit provision, there is no need for provision for Travelling Showpeople. In relation to boat dwellers, it was recommended

that the 24-hour moorings be made available for longer periods of time during out-of-season periods. With regard to Gypsies and Travellers, it was recommended that each of the four authority areas implement a negotiated stopping place policy. This assessment is an update to this for The Broads Authority and Breckland Borough Council. See Greater Norwich 2022 for Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council. North Norfolk is updating their GTAA's (due for publication later this year).

## Summary

- 2.43 DLUHC's 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (December 2023) emphasises the need for local authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 governing the assessment of accommodation needs to include all people residing in the study area in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, as noted above, the DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (December 2023) still requires local authorities to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who accord with the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS.
- 2.44 The GTAA is based on a methodology which provides, first, an accommodation need figure based on ethnic identity; and, second, a figure based on the PPTS (December 2023). Local planning policies regarding the provision of new Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople are outlined in Policy HOU5 of the Local Plan (2022), which outlines the criteria used to determine suitable locations for new sites and yards.
- 2.45 Given the cross-boundary characteristic of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, it is important to consider the findings of GTAA's produced by neighbouring local authorities. GTAA's recently undertaken by neighbouring local authorities indicate that there remain some Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs throughout the region, but none have suggested a need arising in their area should be met within the study area.

## 3. Trends in population levels

### Introduction

- 3.1 This section examines population levels in the GTAA study area and population trends. The primary source of information for Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in England is the DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count. This was introduced in 1979 and places a duty on local authorities in England to undertake a twice-yearly count for the DLUHC on the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in their area. The count was intended to estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population for whom provision was to be made and to monitor progress in meeting accommodation needs.
- 3.2 Although the duty to provide sites was removed in 1994, the need for local authorities to conduct the count has remained. There are, however, several weaknesses with the reliability of the data. For example, across the country, counting practices vary between local authorities, and the practice of carrying out the count on a single day ignores the fluctuating number and distribution of unauthorised encampments. Also, some authorities include Travelling Showpeople in the same figures as Gypsies and Travellers, whilst others distinguish between the different groups and do not include Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.3 Significantly, the count is only of caravans (tourer and static caravans) so Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar accommodation are excluded. It should also be noted that pitches/households often contain more than one caravan, typically two or three.
- 3.4 Despite concerns about accuracy, the count is a useful indicator because it provides the only national source of information about the numbers and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. As such, it is useful for identifying trends in the Gypsy and Traveller population, if not determining absolute numbers.
- 3.5 The DLUHC Count includes data concerning Gypsies and Travellers sites<sup>14</sup>. It distinguishes between caravans on socially rented authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised pitches. Unauthorised sites and pitches are broken down as to whether they are tolerated or not tolerated. The analysis in this chapter includes data from July 2021 to January 2024.

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<sup>14</sup> Data regarding Travelling Showpeople is published separately by the DLUHC as 'experimental statistics'.



## Population

- 3.6 The total Gypsy and Traveller population residing in the UK is unknown, although the government estimate there to be between 100,000 and 300,000 Gypsy and Traveller people<sup>15</sup>. There are uncertainties partly because of the number of different definitions that exist but mainly because of an almost total lack of information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now residing in bricks-and-mortar accommodation. Estimates produced for the DLUHC suggest that at least 50% of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population are now residing in permanent housing.
- 3.7 Local authorities in England provide a count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in January and July each year for the DLUHC. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Count did not occur in July 2020 or January 2021. The January 2024 Count (the most recent published figures) indicates 26,632 caravans. Applying an assumed three person per caravan<sup>16</sup> multiplier would give a population of 79,896 persons.
- 3.8 Again, applying an assumed multiplier of three persons per caravan and doubling this to allow for the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in housing<sup>17</sup>, gives a total population of 159,792 persons for England. However, given the limitations of the data, this figure can only be very approximate and may be a significant underestimate.
- 3.9 The 2021 national census included the category of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the question regarding ethnic identity. Table 3.1 below shows the total population and Gypsy and Traveller population as derived from the 2021 Census. It shows that in March 2021, there were 86 Gypsies and Travellers residing in North Norfolk, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population.<sup>18</sup> This is below both the average for the East of England (0.14%) and England & Wales (0.11%).

**Table 3.1 Gypsy and Traveller Population (2021)**

	Population (no.)	G&T Pop (no.)	G&T Pop (%)
North Norfolk	102,978	86	0.08%
East of England	6,335,075	8,974	0.14%
England	59,597,578	67,757	0.11%

Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2023

- 3.10 It is also possible to determine the Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area by tenure. Derived from 2021 Census data, Table 3.2 shows the housing type of Gypsy and Traveller households. Just under a fifth (18%) of Gypsy and Traveller

<sup>15</sup> The House of Lords 'Inequalities Faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities' (25 February 2020) provides useful links regarding inequalities faced by the GRT community.

<sup>16</sup> Niner, Pat (2003), Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM.

<sup>16</sup> Niner, Pat (2003), Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM.

<sup>18</sup> See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

households living in North Norfolk were recorded as residing in a caravan or other mobile home, whilst just over four fifths (82%) were recorded as residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This compares with a third (33%) of Gypsy and Traveller households in the East of England region living in a caravan or other mobile home and a fifth (20%) in England.

**Table 3.2 Gypsy and Traveller households by tenure**

	A caravan or other mobile		Bricks and mortar		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
North Norfolk	5	18%	23	82%	28	100%
East England	137	33%	284	67%	421	100%
England	4,598	20%	17868	80%	22,466	100%

Source: Census 2021 cited by NOMIS 2023

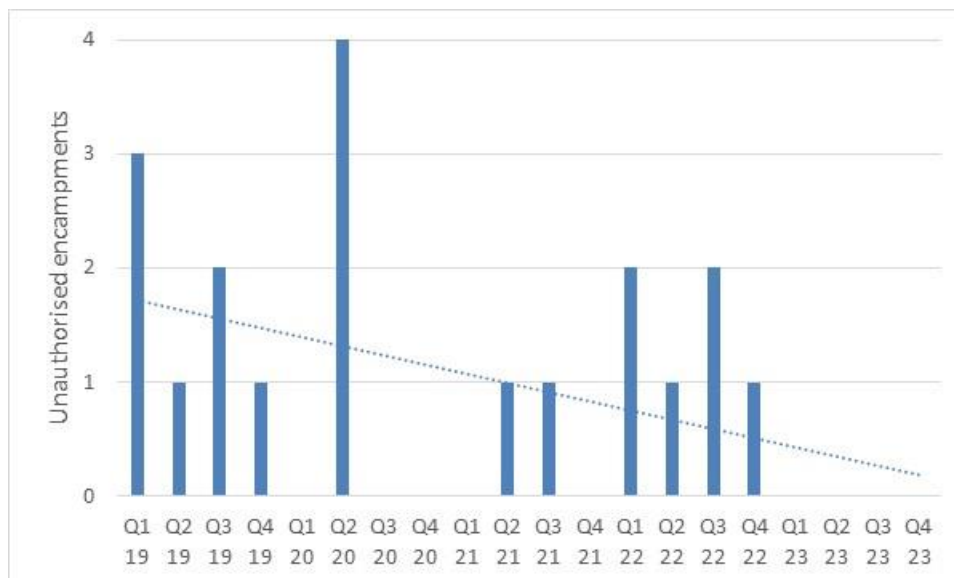
### **DLUCH Traveller Caravan Count**

3.11 No caravans were recorded in North Norfolk by the January 2024 Caravan Count although an average of four caravans were recorded on authorised pitches between July 2021 and July 2022. However, given the number of pitches in the district (see para. 3.13), it is likely that this represents an undercount of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in the district.

### **Data on unauthorised sites**

3.12 North Norfolk District Council records data on unauthorised encampments (i.e. caravans residing temporarily on 'pitches' without planning permission). Figure 3.1 shows the number of caravans recorded between Q1 (April to June 2019/20) to Q4 (January to March) 2023/24 in North Norfolk. It shows that over the 5-year period there was a total of 20 unauthorised encampments in the district with an average of 1 per quarter (although some quarters recorded no unauthorised encampments including none in 2023/24 compared to a peak of 4 in Q2 2020/21). The dotted trend line shows that, on average, the number of unauthorised encampments recorded in North Norfolk declined between Q1 (April to June 2019/20) to Q4 (January to March) 2023/24. On average, 2 caravans were recorded on each unauthorised encampment.

**Figure 3.1 Unauthorised encampments in North Norfolk Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2023/24**



Source: Jan 2024 DLUHC Traveller Caravan Count

### Permanent residential pitches within the study area

3.13 As Table 3.3 shows that there are a total of 14 authorised pitches in the study area and 2 on unauthorised developments. There are no local authority-owned permanent sites, but there are 2 local authority owned and managed transit sites with 20 pitches. This information was clarified by site visits, council data, and consultations with households and stakeholders.

**Table 3.3 Study area Gypsy and Traveller pitches**

	Private pitches	LA pitches	Temp pitches	UD pitches	Total
Total	14	0	0	2	16

Source: GTANA 2024

### Transit pitches

3.14 There are two short-stay stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers provided by North Norfolk District Council including 10 transit pitches located at Holt Road, Cromer, next to the District Council offices, and 10 transit pitches at the site south of the A148 Holt Road, north-east of Fakenham, 300 metres east of the Clipbush Lane/Fakenham bypass roundabout. Figure 3.2 shows that the number of caravans using the Cromer and Fakenham transit sites declined between 2017 and 2023. However, Covid-19 restrictions may have impacted on usage of the transit sites during 2020 and 2021. Also, both transit sites are in poor condition meaning that Gypsy and Traveller households may be discouraged from using them.

**Figure 3.2 Use of transit sites in North Norfolk 2017 to 2023**

### Travelling Showpeople

3.15 The cultural practice of Travelling Showpeople is to live on a plot in a yard in static caravans or mobile homes, along with smaller caravans used for travelling or inhabited by other family members (for example, adolescent children). Their equipment (including rides, kiosks and stalls) is usually kept on the same plot. There are no known Travelling Showpeople plots or yards in the area. There are visiting Showpeople events (fairs and circus events) and also Showpeople living in bricks and mortar with yards used for storing their equipment and others who live in bricks and mortar who own and manage stationary venues (such as amusements and static fairground rides) within the area.

### Summary

3.16 The 2021 Census indicates that there are 86 Gypsies and Travellers residing in North Norfolk, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population.<sup>19</sup> This is below both the average for the East of England (0.14%) and England & Wales (0.11%). Just under a fifth (18%) of Gypsy and Traveller households living in North Norfolk were recorded as residing in a caravan or other mobile home, whilst just over four fifths (82%) were recorded as residing in bricks and mortar accommodation.

3.17 No caravans were recorded in North Norfolk by the January 2024 Caravan Count although an average of four caravans were recorded on authorised pitches between July 2021 and July 2022.

<sup>19</sup> See ONS 2021 Census Table KS201EW Ethnic Group located at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/>

- 3.18 Over the 5-year period Q1 (April to June 2019/20) to Q4 (January to March) 2023/24 there were a total of 20 unauthorised encampments in the district with an average of 1 per quarter. On average, the number of unauthorised encampments recorded in North Norfolk declined between Q1 (April to June 2019/20) to Q4 (January to March) 2023/24. On average, 2 caravans were recorded on each unauthorised encampment.
- 3.19 There are a total of 14 authorised pitches in the district and 2 on unauthorised developments. There are no local authority-owned permanent sites, but there are 2 local authority owned and managed transit sites consisting of 20 pitches. The number of caravans using the transit sites declined between 2017 and 2023. However, Covid-19 restrictions may have impacted on usage of the transit sites during 2020 and 2021, and both transit sites are in poor condition meaning that Gypsy and Traveller households may have been discouraged from using them.

## 4. Stakeholder consultation

### Introduction

- 4.1 Consultations with a range of stakeholders were conducted to provide qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. The aim of the consultation was to obtain both an overall perspective on issues facing these groups and an understanding of local issues that are specific to the study area.
- 4.2 In recognition that Gypsy and Traveller issues transcend geographical boundaries and the duty to cooperate in addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, consultation was undertaken with officers and agencies from within neighbouring authorities, as well as from within the study area.
- 4.3 Themes included: existing provisions; main issues facing the different community groups in relation to accommodation, drivers for new accommodation; the need for additional provisions and facilities; travelling patterns; unauthorised encampments; planning process; communication between service providers; access and use of services (such as health and education); the availability of land; barriers to new provision; accessing services; and work taking place to meet the needs of the different community groups. This chapter presents brief summaries of the consultation with stakeholders and highlights the main points that were raised.

### Accommodation needs

#### *Gypsies and Travellers*

- 4.4 It was generally agreed that there is a lack of accommodation provision across the study area and surrounding authorities. It was commented that there are not enough permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers or plots for Showpeople. Stakeholders commented on how a lack of provision has led to overcrowded pitches and plots, unauthorised encampments and developments, or households having to reside in brick-and-mortar accommodation. It was suggested that some households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation are struggling and would prefer to reside in trailers.
- 4.5 Stakeholders emphasised that small family sites and yards were the most favoured form of provision and tended to be of a higher standard compared to larger sites. It was generally acknowledged that there is a lack of accommodation provision throughout the county. This is in terms of both permanent and transit provisions. It was suggested that some Gypsy and Traveller families often 'get by' by travelling on the road, using transit sites, and residing in bricks-and-mortar accommodation.

- 4.6 Stakeholders acknowledged that there are transit sites across the county, including two within North Norfolk. However, they expressed concerns about the condition of all transit provision. The two in North Norfolk, for example do not have any electric provision, minimum water and toilet provision (if any at times) and were dusty gravel and not always easy to access (being locked and households not knowing how to access. Others spoke of how families do not like to use the sites, not only due to the condition, but also due to location (in particular the one in Cromer (between local authority office and police station)) and households not wanting to mix with other households on enclosed sites.
- 4.7 Stakeholders are increasingly advocating for "negotiated stopping places" over new transit sites, a model allowing temporary, agreed-upon caravan placements with basic services. This approach, fostering agreements between authorities and temporary residents about mutual expectations, is seen as a positive way forward.

### ***Travelling Showpeople***

- 4.8 The Showmen's Guild confirmed that there are no known accommodation yards in the study area. Travelling Showpeople families operate events and funfairs in the study area, including some along the seafront. As such, some storage yards in the study area are used by Travelling Showpeople. However, these are not used for accommodation, and the Travelling Showpeople households reside in houses.
- 4.9 A representative from the Showmen's Guild stated that they have expressed concern for many years about a lack of Showpeople provision in local areas. Consequently, yards in neighbouring authorities are full, and families are struggling to find new places. Showpeople were regarded by stakeholders as travelling for work rather than cultural needs, leisure or pleasure, and tended to only stop at pre-arranged fair or circus venues. In contrast, Gypsies, Travellers were regarded by stakeholders as being communities for whom travelling is an important element of their identity.

### **Barriers to Accommodation Provision**

- 4.10 Key barriers to new accommodation provision noted by stakeholders included public and political opposition to new sites; a lack of suitable land; the high cost of suitable land; lack of interest from landowners to developing new sites; different local authorities applying different planning guidance in relation to the development of new sites.
- 4.11 Stakeholders commented on how local authority 'calls for sites' rarely lead to potential sites being put forward by the private sector. Also, it can be difficult to gain public acceptance of proposals for new sites or yards. Landowners may be reluctant to offer land for development as new sites or yards if alternative uses are regarded as more

profitable. Stakeholders suggested that allocating land for the development of new sites or yards assures the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities that accommodation needs would be met.

- 4.12 It was acknowledged by stakeholders that the availability of land (or lack of it) is a key issue in relation to the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. The process of identifying suitable land was deemed problematic. Land suitable for the development of new sites and yards tends to be too expensive for local Gypsy and Traveller households and is more likely to be used for the development of residential properties. This often leaves small parcels of land for the development of new sites, which are not always in locations suitable for the development of new sites. Also, land in more rural locations is more likely to be refused planning permission due to being too remote from services. It may be more financially viable to extend existing sites, although larger sites can be difficult to manage and lead to conflict between families.
- 4.13 Difficulty in identifying suitable land and affordability were cited as key barriers to the provision of new sites and yards. It was suggested that there is too few permanent sites or yards is mainly due to a lack of suitable land and limited funding for the development and maintenance of new provision. The process of identifying suitable land was also deemed problematic.
- 4.14 It was suggested that local authorities should ensure that Local Plans make it clear how the requirement for new pitches will be met. Also, they should work closely with the development industry, Registered Providers, and landowners to explore opportunities for new sites. It was also suggested that all new local developments should include provisions for these communities. Some local authorities may have land suitable for development.
- 4.15 Applicants sometimes sought planning permission for the minimum number of pitches or plots with the intention of seeking permission for further pitches or plots at a later date. This is not problematic if the site or yard is large enough to cope with expansion. It was noted that some planning permissions for new provisions within the study area were initially refused but later granted on appeal. Gaining planning permission for a new sites or yards was regarded by stakeholders as a significant hurdle.
- 4.16 A key barrier to new provision mentioned by stakeholders is discriminatory attitudes towards the travelling communities. In response, it was suggested that it is important to determine policy responses in order to manage conflict that may arise from the development of new provision. This will require planning departments to work in liaison with other local authority departments and agencies.



- 4.17 Stakeholders mentioned a lack of respect and understanding between travelling communities and the settled community, noting that negative social media can worsen tensions. Problems are often more noticeable when land used for unauthorised camps is left in bad condition. However, there seems to be less awareness of issues between permanent site residents and the settled community. Furthermore, stakeholders observed that media coverage, both national and local, of the Gypsy and Traveller communities is mostly negative. This coverage shapes public perceptions, particularly concerning unauthorised encampments, and negatively influences both the public and elected officials' attitudes towards approving new sites.

## **Health and Education**

- 4.18 Stakeholders suggested that, compared to the general population, the health status of Gypsies and Travellers is significantly poorer. A key factor contributing to this includes poor access to healthcare services, particularly for households without permanent accommodation. The living conditions of Gypsies and Travellers, including insecure housing, can have a significant impact on their physical and mental health. It can be difficult for Gypsies and Travellers to register for healthcare services.
- 4.19 Compared with previous generations, Gypsy and Traveller children may be more likely to attend education. However, there can still be difficulties with Gypsy and Traveller children enrolling in schools, Gypsy and Traveller children can face bullying and discrimination in school from their peers, and sometimes, from school staff and schools often lack understanding of Gypsies and Travellers way of life, in particularly when it comes to travel patterns which often result in them needing time away from school.

## **Communication**

- 4.20 It was suggested that there needs to be better cooperation between local authorities in relation to issues concerning Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. Local authorities tend to react to traveller issues, e.g. in relation to unauthorised encampments and planning applications. There is insufficient cooperation to resolve issues around unauthorised encampments or to improve relations with the travelling community. Financial constraints mean that local authorities are not always able to take a proactive response to issues regarding the travelling communities. For example, suitable land is usually prioritised for residential development, as this yields a greater capital return compared to providing traveller sites.
- 4.21 There is a need for improvement, particularly when assessing needs and understanding the requirements and travelling patterns of the travelling communities at the county or subregional levels. There is a need to work in a joined-up way across the whole of Norfolk and agree on sites for long- and short-term stays, as well as a policy on tolerated sites.

## Summary

- 4.22 The stakeholder consultation offered important insights into the main issues faced by the travelling community within the county. It was generally acknowledged that there is a perceived lack of both permanent and transit accommodation provision. Also, some existing sites are in need of investment and upgrading to meet current standards. Social rented pitches, particularly those on larger sites, are not desirable to all households due to poor conditions and a preference to own pitches rather than pay rent. It was suggested that the main drivers of accommodation needs are younger people requiring future separate accommodation, households setting up unauthorised developments due to difficulties in the planning process and needs arising from households residing in bricks-and-mortar accommodation wanting a pitch.
- 4.23 Key barriers to new accommodation provision noted by stakeholders included a lack of suitable or affordable land, competing interests for suitable land, a lack of finance, and the complexity of planning processes. It was acknowledged by stakeholders that the availability of land (or lack of it) is a key issue in relation to the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The process of identifying suitable land was deemed problematic. Also, land in more rural locations is more likely to be refused planning permission due to being too remote from services. It may be more financially viable to extend existing sites, although larger sites can be difficult to manage and lead to conflict between families.
- 4.24 Compared to the general population, the health status of Gypsies and Travellers is significantly poorer. A key factor contributing to this includes poor access to healthcare services, particularly for households without permanent accommodation. Compared with previous generations, Gypsy and Traveller children may be more likely to attend education. However, there can still be difficulties with Gypsy and Traveller children enrolling in schools, Gypsy and Traveller children can face bullying and discrimination in school from their peers, and sometimes, from school staff and schools often lack understanding of Gypsies and Travellers way of life, in particularly when it comes to travel patterns which often result in them needing time away from school.

## 5. Gypsies and Travellers consultation

### Introduction

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

### Methodology

- 5.2 The consultation included questions regarding issues such as family composition (per pitch), accommodation and facilities, the condition, ownership, management and suitability of current sites and pitches (including facilities and services), occupancy of existing pitches (including the number of, and reasons for, vacant and/or undeveloped pitches, and future plans for pitches), travelling patterns, and accommodation needs.
- 5.3 The consultation achieved a 93% response rate from households. Through direct and indirect consultations, sufficient data was gathered to represent all known, occupied, authorised and unauthorised pitches. Consultation took place with households on 13 of the 14 authorised pitches, as well as with two unauthorised developments. Additionally, three households on transit sites were consulted, none of whom required permanent accommodation within North Norfolk but needed temporary transit accommodation.
- 5.4 The data was used to calculate the level of supply, occupancy and need and which of the two needs categories those with need met. Also, general comments in terms of the key issues were gathered and recorded in order to gain and present further insight and evidence for the needed calculations (summarised below).
- 5.5 The number and location of pitches were determined using local authority data and site visits. Households were consulted on key issues regarding accommodation needs. The combination of local authority data, site visits, and consultation with households helped to clarify the status of pitches (i.e. which pitches are occupied by Gypsies and Travellers, vacant pitches, pitches with planning permission which are planned to be developed or redeveloped, overcrowded pitches, pitches occupied by household members with a need for separate accommodation, and hidden households, amongst other needs issues). Locations where planning permission has lapsed, refused, or withdrawn, or where enforcement action has previously taken place, were also visited to confirm occupancy and use.

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

## Existing Supply

- 5.7 There are 14 authorised pitches in the study area. Table 5.1 shows the occupied pitches, vacant pitches (current pitches with planning permission but not occupied at the time of the consultation), and potential pitches (pitches with planning permission expected to be developed or redeveloped and occupied within the first five-year period).

**Table 5.1 Occupied, vacant and potential Gypsy and Traveller pitches.**

Occupied	Vacant	Potential	Total
14	0	0	14

Source: Study area local authority 2024

- 5.8 Table 5.2 below lists the number of authorised pitches per authority, including vacant and potential pitches.

**Table 5.2 Permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches per authority**

Private	LA	Total
14	0	14

Source: GTAA 2024

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

**Table 5.3 Gypsy and Traveller pitches without permanent permission**

Temporary	Unauthorised developments	Total
0	2	2

Source: GTAA 2024

## **Permanent accommodation need**

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

## **Requirement for permanent residential pitches for the first five years**

- 5.11 The need for residential pitches in the study area is assessed according to a 15-step process based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey. The results of this are shown in Table 5.4 below, while the subsequent section contains explanations of the sourcing and calculation of figures for each step. The following table (Table 5.4) relates to the study area as a whole.
- 5.12 As discussed in Chapter 2, there are differing interpretations of the PPTS (August 2015) definition. As such, the needs assessment provides two accommodation needs figures: first, based on ethnic identity ('Ethnic' column), and second, based on PPTS 2023 ('PPTS' column).

**Table 5.4 Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches for period 2024-2029**

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

Source: GTAA 2024

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

5.13 Information from the local authority and the census plus evidence from the survey was used to inform the calculations, including:

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

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

## Supply of pitches

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

### **Step 1: Current occupied permanent site pitches**

- 5.15 Based on the information provided by the councils and corroborated by site visits and household surveys, there are currently 14 occupied authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the study area.

### **Step 2: Number of unused residential pitches available**

- 5.16 This relates to those pitches that have planning permission and are developed but not currently in use. There are currently 0 vacant pitches within the study area.

### **Step 3: Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant**

- 5.17 This is calculated using mortality rates as applied in conventional Housing Needs Assessments. However, the figures for mortality have been increased in accordance with studies of Gypsy and Traveller communities, suggesting a life expectancy approximately ten years lower than that of the general population.<sup>20</sup> This results in the supply of 0 pitches.

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

- 5.18 Two households surveyed as part of the GTAA stated that they intend to leave the study area in the next five years. As there is no data regarding households who would like to in-migrate from outside the study area, both in- and out-migration are determined as 0.

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

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

### **Step 6: Residential pitches planned to be built or brought back into use**

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

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<sup>20</sup> E.g. L. Crout, *Traveller health care project: Facilitating access to the NHS*, Walsall Health Authority, 1987.

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

### **Need for pitches**

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

#### ***Step 7: Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites***

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

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

- 5.23 This is determined by survey data. These family units reported that they 'needed or were likely' to move to a different home in the next five years and wanted to stay on an authorised site or that they were currently seeking accommodation.
- 5.24 This category of accommodation needs overlaps with those moving due to overcrowding, counted in step 12, and so any family units which both are overcrowded and seeking accommodation are deducted from this total. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic') and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

#### ***Step 9: Family units on transit pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area***

- 5.25 This is determined by survey data. Three households were consulted of which none reported that they required permanent pitches within the study area in the next five years. This generates a total need in the study area of 0 pitches ('ethnic') and 0 pitches ('PPTS').

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

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



have been included in this calculation – transiting Gypsies and Travellers are included in separate calculations. There were 0 households surveyed on unauthorised encampments within the study area during the survey period.

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

- 5.27 This was determined by consultation data. The guidance also indicates that the accommodation needs of families living on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected must be considered. Regularising families living on their land without planning permission would reduce the overall level of need by the number of pitches given planning permission. This generates a total need in the study area of 2 pitches ('ethnic'), and 2 pitches ('PPTS').

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

- 5.28 This was determined by the consultation. Households which also contain a newly formed family unit that has not yet left are excluded. This is because it is assumed that once the extra family unit leaves (included in the need figures in step 14) their accommodation will no longer be overcrowded. The calculations suggest that the need for additional pitches in the study area to resolve overcrowding over the period 2024-2029 are as follows: 0 pitches ('ethnic definition'), and 0 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

**Step 13: New family units expected to arrive from elsewhere**

- 5.29 In the absence of any data derivable from primary or secondary sources (beyond anecdotal evidence) on the moving intentions of those outside the study area moving into the area, as in the case of those moving out of the area, it is assumed that the inflow of Gypsies and Travellers into the area will be equivalent to the outflow. This amounts to a net inflow of 0 households into the study area.

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

- 5.30 The number of individuals needing to leave pitches to create new family units within the period 2024-2029 was estimated from consultation and excludes those included in steps 8, 12 and 13. This will result in the formation of 3 new households requiring residential pitches over the period 2024-2029 ('ethnic definition'), and 3 pitches ('PPTS' definition).

**Step 15: Family units in housing with need for a pitch**

- 5.31 This was determined firstly by the number of Gypsy and Traveller households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation was determined using 2021 Census

data which records how many Gypsies and Travellers living in the district and by type of accommodation. The number of those living in a caravan (as recorded by the census) was removed from the total to give the number living in bricks and mortar. Based on 2021 Census data, there is an estimated 23 households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation in the study area. Applying a 10% ratio in relation to psychological aversion results in a need for 2 pitches.

- 5.32 As the travelling status of households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation is not known, the accommodation needs arising from these households are only included in the 'ethnic' needs figures. This results in a need for 2 additional pitches in relation to the 'ethnic' definition and 0 pitches in relation to the PPTS definition.

### ***Balance of Need and Supply***

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

**Table 5.5: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs for the period 2024-2029**

	Ethnic	PPTS
Supply	0	0
Need	7	5
Difference	7	5

Source: GTAA 2024

### **Requirement for permanent residential pitches from 2029-2040**

- 5.34 Considering future accommodation needs, it is assumed that those families with needs stemming from those residing in houses, overcrowding, unauthorised developments and encampments will move onto sites within a 5-year period. As such, only natural population increase (same as step 15 above), mortality, and movement into and out of the study area need to be considered. The base figures regarding the number of pitches on sites at the end of the first 5-year period are shown in Table 5.5 below. Please note that the 2024 base figures include both authorised occupied and vacant pitches, whilst the 2029 base figures assume that any potential pitches have already been developed.

- 5.35 2029 pitch base figures are determined by several factors, including:
- the number of occupied pitches in 2024 (as determined by the household survey)
  - the number of vacant pitches in 2024 (as determined by the household survey)
  - the number of potential pitches (as determined by local authority data)

- accommodation need for the first five-year period (as determined by the GTAA)

- 5.36 It is assumed that by the end of the first five years vacant pitches will be occupied, potential pitches will have been developed and occupied, and any additional need has been met by new supply.
- 5.37 In relation to this accommodation assessment, analysis of the current population indicates an annual household growth rate of 2.35% per annum (compound), equating to a 5-year rate of 12.3%. This is based on an analysis of various factors derived from the surveys, including current population numbers, the average number of children per household, and marriage rates. A mortality rate of 2.825% applied over the 5-year period leads to a net population growth rate of 9.475% rounded to 9.5%.
- 5.38 Tables 5.6 shows the accommodation needs for the study area for the periods 2029-2034 and 2034-2040

**Table 5.6: Summary of accommodation needs 2024-40 (pitches)**

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	7	5
2029-2034	2	2
2034-2040	2	2
Total	11	9

Source: GTAA 2024

### **Requirements for transit pitches / negotiated stopping arrangements.**

- 5.39 Whilst acknowledging the existing Transit provision (sites) within the authority this report recommends that the local authority set up a corporate approach around negotiated stopping places policy (see Appendix 1 for an example of a negotiated stopping place protocol). This involves households residing in caravans being able to stop at a suitable location for an agreed and limited period of time, and if necessary, with the provision of services such as waste disposal and toilets. Whilst it is important that the local authority adopts the negotiated stopping place policy, it could be implemented on an individual local authority, across the study area, or on a countywide basis.
- 5.40 The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land, providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its occupants or the local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, and the transient households (and the landowner if situated on privately owned land).

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

## Summary

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

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

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	7	5
2029-2034	2	2
2034-2040	2	2
Total	11	9

Source: GTAA 2024

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### Introduction

- 6.1 This final chapter draws conclusions from the evidence. It then makes a series of recommendations relating to meeting the identified need for new provisions, facilities, and recording and monitoring processes.
- 6.2 The chapter begins by presenting a summary of the accommodation needs, followed by a review of the accommodation needs and facilitating the additional accommodation needs. As previously discussed, this report focuses on the assessment of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers. It acknowledges that, whilst there is currently no occupied supply or identified need for Travelling Showpeople, there is still a need to consider them in addressing transit need and any need that might materialise during the local plan period.
- 6.3 The accommodation needs calculations undertaken as part of this GTAA were based on analysis of both secondary data, site visits and consultation with Gypsies and Travellers.

### Permanent accommodation needs

- 6.4 Table 6.1 outlines the permanent accommodation need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the period of 2024 to 2040:

**Table 6.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs**

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	7	5
2029-2034	2	2
2034-2040	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: GTAA 2024

### Transit provision

- 6.5 Whilst acknowledging the existing Transit provision (sites) within the authority this report recommends that the local authority set up a negotiated stopping places policy. This is land temporarily used as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect the fact that the site will only be used for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally only stay on the agreed location for a few days. Amenities such as Portaloo's and showers (or access to alternative nearby facilities) and skips or wheelie bins should ideally be made available for the duration of the agreed period.

- 6.6 According to research undertaken on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2019), negotiated stopping is a balanced and humane approach to managing roadside camps. It is based on a mutual agreement between the local authority and Gypsy and Traveller families on matters such as waste disposal and basic temporary facilities. This can sometimes involve directing Gypsy and Traveller households away from contentious public spaces to more appropriate council land. The approach has been proven to achieve significant savings in public spending and decrease social costs for Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 6.7 The GLA (2019) report cites a number of examples of good practice, including those of Hackney. The local authority has worked closely with the Gypsy and Traveller communities and involved them in dialogue and negotiation. This has resulted in a consistent practice over many years of allowing stopping time and making provision of basic facilities. There have been many locations in the borough that were common stopping places; some were used for short periods of time for families passing through or visiting relatives, and others were used for months and even a couple of years. The practice was also formalised to an extent through leniency agreements, which specified arrangements between the local authority and the Traveller families. This is also incorporated into the council's unauthorised encampment protocol.
- 6.8 The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. It was first developed by Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) and involves local authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to more suitable land (please see Appendix for an example of negotiated stopping place protocol).
- 6.9 Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land, providing the encampment does not cause any danger, problems or nuisance to its occupants or local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, and the transient households (and the landowner if situated on privately owned land).
- 6.10 The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but may include Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise with the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. However, as Leeds GATE states, negotiated stopping is a locally agreed solution, so it may differ in different locations. For Negotiated Stopping to work, the local authority must negotiate with roadside Travellers. It will involve talking to and consulting roadside Travellers and working out solutions.

- 6.11 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved on to an appropriate alternative location. It is important for the local authority to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the local authority area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities. Also, the local authority should consider allowing households visiting family or friends who reside on permanent sites in the local authority area to temporarily reside on the site for an agreed amount of time.
- 6.12 Agreements could be made with households residing on sites and allowing visiting family and friends to stay for agreed periods of time. This would lead to fewer unauthorised encampments which adversely impact on the local community and allow households with stopover requirement to stay for an agreed period.

## Summary

- 6.13 The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTAA (including any accommodation need calculated prior to this assessment) for the local planning authorities. This assessment identifies that there is an overall accommodation need in the study area for the local plan period for 11 additional pitches (ethnic definition), and 9 pitches (PPTS 2023). There is no identified additional accommodation need for Travelling Showpeople.
- 6.14 It is recommended that the authority incorporates a policy to address negotiated stopping places for transient and / or visiting Gypsy and Traveller encampments and make this available to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It is recommended that the authority incorporates this as part of their local plan as addressing the transit need. There is also the option of reestablishing the existing transit provision, in conjunction with the negotiated stopping policy.
- 6.15 Looking at the distances involved across the study area, anywhere within the Local Plan area would be acceptable in terms of locating new permanent sites and yards to meet the identified need.
- 6.16 This GTAA recommends that North Norfolk in their local plan adopt the 'ethnic' definition accommodation needs figures i.e. meeting the accommodation needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers. This will not only demonstrate knowledge of the overall accommodation need of all Gypsies and Travellers, but also how the accommodation needs in relation to households not meeting the PPTS definition are being addressed. Since the Lisa Smith case (2022) there is greater emphasis on Gypsies and Travellers ethnic identity than their travelling patterns (past or present).

- 6.17 Alternatively, the local authority may adopt the 'PPTS 2023 definition accommodation needs figures with the difference between the PPTS 2023 figures and 'Ethnic' definition being an additional need that the council(s) may choose to meet. This means that the local authority would first meet the need of 9 (5 within the first 5 years) as the obligation but accept the need of a further 2 (2 within the first 5 years) as potential need if further applications are brought forward through windfalls.
- 6.18 In addition to the identified need there may also be an additional element of unidentified need from households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, new households due to in-migration, and those residing in bricks and mortar accommodation who have not identified themselves as ethnic. It is recommended that a flexible policy criteria approach such as in the submitted Plan policy HOU5 is sufficient.
- 6.19 There are currently two pending applications – one for 3 pitches and another for 2 pitches. These will address 4 identified needs for the first five years and 1 for the second five-year period. Additionally, there is a site with the potential to intensify by 1 pitch. As a result, the need for pitches under the PPTS definition for the first five years will be fully met, leaving 2 pitches outstanding under the 'ethnic' category. These remaining needs can be best addressed through windfall applications, in accordance with the submitted policy approach HOU5 resulting in a revised assessment of need as follows:

**Table 6.2: Indicative future Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs (assuming approval of the two pending applications)**

Period	Ethnic definition	PPTS 2023 definition
2024-2029	1	0
2029-2034	2	1
2034-2040	2	2
Total	5	3

Source: GTAA 2024

- 6.20 In addition to the above in order to meet the specific accommodation need of the different community groups, the report recommends the following:
- In relation to the different community groups, it is recommended that the local authority work closely with the families to determine how their accommodation need can best be met.
  - Also, for the local authority to provide pre-planning application advice to households who have identified land to help determine if it is suitable to address accommodation need.
  - It is recommended that the local authority reviews the planning of unauthorised developments and consider granting permanent status.



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

- How the accommodation needs can be met through expansion of existing sites and new sites /yards
- The delivery mechanisms such as being open to the development of sites on a cooperative basis e.g. community land trust, shared ownership, or small sites owned by a local authority but rented to families for their own use
- To consider alternative site funding mechanisms such as: site acquisition funds; loans for private site provision through Community Development Financial Institutions; and joint ventures with members of the different community groups..
- Prior to action being taken against sites or yards being used without planning permission, the local authority, in partnership with landowners, occupants and relevant agencies (e.g. National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Showmen's Guild (local and national)), to review its current, historic and potential planning status, and review the most effective way forward.
- Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.
- To liaise with owners of the sites to determine how they could expand the number of pitches to meet the family's accommodation needs when arise .
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, in line with Plan review requirements it is recommended that their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.
- Housing organisations need to consider allocating culturally appropriate housing to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar, for example, with sufficient space to accommodate a caravan.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work with the different community groups, and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- In liaison with relevant enforcement agencies such as the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities.

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

## Appendix 1: Example negotiated stopping place protocol

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Glossary

## **Amenity block**

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

## **Authorised site**

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

## **Average**

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

## **Bargee Travellers and boat dwellers**

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

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

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

## **Bedroom standard**

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

**Bricks and mortar accommodation**

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

**Caravan**

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

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

**Concealed household**

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

**Doubling up**

More than one family unit sharing a single pitch.

**Emergency stopping places**

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

**Family Owner Occupied Gypsy Site**

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

**Family unit**

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

**Gypsy**

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



## **Gypsy and Traveller**

The DLUHC's December 2023 definition of Gypsies and Travellers<sup>21</sup>, is set out below:

*For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:*

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

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

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

## **Hidden Household**

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

## **Household**

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

## **Irish Traveller**

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

## **Local Authority Sites**

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

## **Local Development Documents (LDD)**

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

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<sup>21</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>.

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

**Negotiated Stopping**

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

**Net need**

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

**New Traveller** (formerly 'New Age Traveller')

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

**Newly forming families**

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

**Overcrowding**

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

**Permanent residential site**

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

**Pitch**

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

**Primary data**

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

**Private rented pitches**

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

**Psychological aversion**

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

**Secondary data**

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

**Settled community**

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

**Site**

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

**Socially rented site**

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

**Tolerated**

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

**Transit site/pitch**

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

### **Travelling Showpeople**

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

### **Travelling Showpeople Plot**

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

### **Travelling Showpeople Yard**

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

### **Unauthorised development**

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

### **Unauthorised encampment**

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

### **Unauthorised site**

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