

Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024

Huntingdonshire District Council

Final Report
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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Huntingdonshire District 2023/4 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provides the latest available evidence to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers across the district.

The GTAA has included:

- A review of existing (secondary) data.
- A household survey and site/yard observation. A total of 63 Gypsy and Traveller households were interviewed and information for 8 households was obtained from planning application data. Data for a total of 71 households living on pitches was obtained compared with a total of 108 households living on pitches (65.7% response rate) across the study area.
- Surveys of marina and residential caravan park site owners and managers.

Data has been carefully analysed to provide a picture of current provision across Huntingdonshire District and an assessment of future need. The findings of the study provide an up-to-date, robust and defensible evidence base for policy development. We are very grateful to the Gypsy and Traveller communities' response across Huntingdonshire District for their positive engagement with the work.

Population and current accommodation provision

The 2021 Census identified a population of 272 people who identified as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller' or 'Gypsy/Romany' plus 1 person identifying as 'Roma' living in Huntingdonshire District and an estimate of 155 households where the household reference person identifies as being a Gypsy/Traveller. This compares with 192 people living in 72 households from the 2011 Census. It should be noted that the household survey identified 100 households living on pitches and an estimated population of 319 (this is based on 201 actual population from household data weighted to take account of non-response households). This difference can be explained by a census undercount of households living on pitches and/or reluctance to identify as Gypsy/Traveller on the census form.

Across Huntingdonshire there are an estimated 38 Gypsy and Traveller sites which include at least 16 in the Middle Drove area and 22 elsewhere in the district and one Travelling Showperson's yard. Middle Drove is a very complex area and it has been particularly challenging to assess the total number of sites and pitches in the area due to the configuration of sites relative to planning applications and some areas of land were potential sites but not occupied.

The GTAA assumes the following on sites excluding the Middle Drove Area:

- 1 housing association site, 20 pitches (20 occupied by 20 Traveller households, 0 vacant).
- 17 private authorised sites, 73 pitches (65 occupied by 49 Traveller households, with some households occupying more than one pitch and 9 occupied by non-Traveller households, 8 vacant).

- 1 private temporary authorised site, 9 pitches (9 occupied by 8 Traveller households with some households occupying more than one pitch, 0 vacant).
- 1 site currently seeking planning permission (1 occupied by 1 household and 0 vacant).
- 2 unauthorised sites, 16 pitches (15 occupied by 15 households and 1 vacant).
- There is also 1 Travelling Showpersons yard with 4 plots which are all vacant.

The GTAA assumes the following on sites within the Middle Drove Area:

- 3 private authorised sites, 3 pitches (3 occupied by 3 households, 0 vacant).
- 6 private temporary authorised sites 6 pitches (6 occupied by 6 households, 0 vacant).
- 2 sites currently seeking planning permission, 13 pitches (1 occupied by 1 household and 12 vacant)
- 5 unauthorised sites, 5 pitches (5 occupied by 5 households)
- Site observation would suggest an additional 11 unauthorised sites, 11 pitches that are not occupied.
- Note that planning records currently report a total of 17 site applications across 16 sites.

In summary, the GTAA assumes a total of 38 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 146 pitches (125 occupied by 108 Gypsy and Traveller households with some households occupying more than one pitch, 9 pitches occupied by non-Gypsy Travellers and 21 vacant. There are also a potential 11 unauthorised and unoccupied pitches on 11 sites in the Middle Drove area. There is also one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots which is currently vacant.

In January and July each year, councils carry out a Traveller caravan count to inform MHCLG statistics. The latest seven bi-annual MHCLG Traveller caravan counts (January 2020 to January 2024) reported an average of 274 caravans across all sites (49.7% on private sites, 12% on council sites and 38.3% on unauthorised sites).

Planning policy requirements for needs assessments

The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in Paragraph 63 *‘the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policy (including travellers)’*. A footnote in the NPPF then states *‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document’*.

The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Site (PPTS) document states that *‘local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning’ and ‘ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies’ and ‘to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply’*.

In the absence of further guidance on preparing GTAAs, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect the PPTS, build upon those methods established through previous guidance, our practical experience and decisions made at planning inquiries and appeals.

Need assessment period

Need has been assessed over a short-term period: 2023/24 to 2027/28 and longer-term period 2028/29 to 2041/42 using demographic data. The overall need over the period 2023/24 to 2041/42 has then been extrapolated so that need can be assessed over the period to 2045/46.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements

There is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46 (Table ES1). Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing households, households on unauthorised sites, newly forming households, in-migrant households and available supply from current vacancies on existing public and private sites. The annual net shortfall need is 5.5 pitches. This is used to extrapolate need over the period to 2045/46.

Table ES1 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2023/24 to 2040/41 (and 2045/46)

Period	Pitch need
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2023/24 to 2027/28) (A)	36
Longer-term need	
Over period 2028/29 to 2032/33 (B)	20
Over period 2033/34 to 2037/38(C)	30
Over period 2038/39 to 2041/42 (D)	19
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2041/42 (13 years) E=(B+C+D)	69
F. NET SHORTFALL 2023/24 to 2041/42 (A+E) (18 years)	105
G. Annual net shortfall	5.5
H. Net shortfall 2042/43 to 2045/46 (4 years) (G x 4)	22
Total need over period 2023/24 to 2045/46 (F+H)	127

Meeting the need

The council should consider the following to help meet identified residential pitch need:

- **Regularising of sites** that are not permanently authorised (**35 pitches** of which 18 are on Middle Drove sites and 17 pitches elsewhere).
- **Additional pitch provision using existing sites.** Respondents were also asked if their sites could be expanded either through a physical expansion or intensification of use to provide more pitches. A potential **48 pitches** could be delivered this way. The council has been provided with details of potential sites for expansion/intensification.
- **Household dissolution** over the plan period is expected to provide 10 pitches
- There are 9 pitches on authorised sites which are **not believed to be occupied** by Gypsies and Travellers.

This potential supply could provide **up to 102 additional pitches**. This has the potential to meet both the five-year needs and make a significant contribution to meeting longer-term needs.

Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.

Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance households moving into Huntingdonshire District. It is therefore recommended the council has criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for private sites should they arise.

Transit provision

Based on the evidence of unauthorised encampment activity, it is recommended that the council identifies appropriate land to meet short-term needs from travelling households and managed using a negotiated stopping agreement.

Travelling Showperson plot requirements

There is one Travelling Showperson yard in Huntingdonshire District with 4 plots but this is currently unoccupied. It is recommended that the council develop a criteria-based policy to consider any applications coming forward over the plan period.

Boat dweller need

Discussions with boatyard/marina owners would indicate a need for more residential moorings in Huntingdonshire and one marina is actively considering increasing the number of residential moorings. However, it is not possible to specify a specific number of moorings needed given the complexities of ownership of moorings, the interplay between the need for continuous cruisers and residential moorings and the business objectives of individual marinas.

Residential caravan park need

Across Huntingdonshire there are 13 residential caravan parks. These meet a range of affordable needs and predominantly provide accommodation for over 55s. Well-managed and well-designed parks have a role to play in providing residential accommodation and one park owner was interested in developing more residential parks within Huntingdonshire.

Policy recommendations

The council should recognise the minimum need for 127 pitches over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 is over the short-term 5 year period 2023/24 to 2027/28 and 91 is over the longer-term (2028/29 to 2045/46). A key driver of longer-term need is household formation. The GTAA has evidenced a range of potential sites including regularising existing sites that are not authorised and the potential expansion/intensification of existing sites which could provide up to 102 additional pitches. It is recommended the council appraise sites to explore their potential for providing additional pitches.

No specific Travelling Showperson need was evidenced.

There is a need for residential moorings for house boats and one marina is actively considering increasing the number of residential moorings. However, it is not possible to quantify the actual number needed given the complexities of ownership of moorings, the interplay between the need for continuous cruisers and residential moorings and the business objectives of individual marinas.

To support the wider needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, the council should also set out criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for small private Gypsy and Traveller sites and Showperson's yards should they arise over the plan period.

Based on the evidence of unauthorised encampment activity, it is recommended that the council identifies appropriate land to meet short-term needs from travelling households and managed using a negotiated stopping agreement.

1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 In October 2023 arc⁴ was commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council to prepare the 2023/4 Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA is part of the Local Plan evidence base.
- 1.2 The overall scope of the study is to ensure that the council has a robust evidence base to determine an appropriate level of residential pitch and transit provision over the period 2023/4 to 2045/46 and to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers to meet both the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) - defined need and the council's obligations under section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It also provides an evidence base on the limited need for residential moorings and residential caravan parks.

Who the study covers?

- 1.3 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites provides the updated definition of Gypsies and Travellers as set out within Annex 1 of the 2024 PPTS:

“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, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

- 1.4 Similarly, the following definition from Annex 1 of the Guidance in respect of Travelling Showpeople is used:

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

- 1.5 In addition:

‘For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use pitches for “travelling showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.’ (DCLG Planning policy for traveller sites December 2024 Annex 1, para 5).

- 1.6 For the purposes of this study, therefore, Gypsies and Travellers live on pitches within sites, whilst Travelling Showpeople live on plots within yards.

Geography and time frame for the study

- 1.7 This study relates to the geographical area of the Huntingdonshire local authority district. For the study, this area is termed 'Huntingdonshire District'.
- 1.8 The timeframe for the study is 2023/24 to 2045/46.
- 1.9 The base date for the study is December 2024. This takes into account any changes to planning status during the preparation and finalisation of the GTAA.

Report structure

- 1.10 The GTAA 2024 report structure is as follows:
- **Chapter 1 Introduction:** provides an overview of the study.
 - **Chapter 2 Policy and local context:** presents a review of the national policy context which guides the study.
 - **Chapter 3 Methodology:** provides details of the study's research methodology.
 - **Chapter 4 Review of current Gypsy and Traveller population and provision of pitches/plots:** reviews estimates of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across the district and existing site/yard provision.
 - **Chapter 5 Household survey:** presents relevant data obtained from the household survey research.
 - **Chapter 6 Pitch / plot / transit requirements:** focuses on current and future pitch/plot requirements. This chapter includes a detailed assessment of drivers of demand, supply and current shortfalls across the district.
 - **Chapter 7 Boat dweller need:** considers the need for residential moorings.
 - **Chapter 8 Residential caravan park need:** considers the need for residential caravan parks.
 - **Chapter 9 Conclusion and strategic response:** concludes the report, providing brief summary of key findings and recommendations.
- 1.11 The report is supplemented by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** Household questionnaires.
 - **Appendix B** Glossary of terms.

2. Policy context

Overview

- 2.1 This study is grounded in an understanding of the national legislative and planning policy context that underpins the assessment and provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.2 This chapter sets out the policy context within which this GTAA has been prepared, including a consideration of the previous GTAA for the district.

Government policy and guidance

- 2.3 The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework states in Paragraph 63 *‘the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies’*. It then lists a number of groups including Travellers. A footnote to the paragraph states *‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document’*.
- 2.4 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document states that *‘local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning’* and *‘ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies’* and *‘to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply’*.
- 2.5 Policy A of the 2024 PPTS relates to evidence needed to plan positively and manage development. This states *‘in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local planning authorities should:*
- *pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers’ accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups);*
 - *cooperate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups; other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and*
 - *use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions’*.
- 2.6 In the absence of further guidance on preparing GTAAs, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect Policy A of the PPTS; build upon those methods established through previous guidance; our practical experience and findings from planning inquiries and appeals.
- 2.7 The calculation of pitch/plot requirements is based on established DCLG modelling methodology, as advocated in *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance* (DCLG, 2007). Although this guidance was

formally withdrawn in December 2016, in the absence of any updated guidance on the subject, it continues to provide a good practice approach for needs modelling.

- 2.8 Policy B of the 2024 PPTS relates to planning for traveller sites and requires Local Plans:
- to be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and consistent with the policies of the NPPF; and
 - to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.
- 2.9 Policy B (paragraph 10) sets out that local authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:
- a. identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5-years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b. identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
 - c. consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);
 - d. relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density; and
 - e. protect local amenity and environment.
- 2.10 Policy B (paragraph 13) sets out that local authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and therefore ensure that their policies:
- a. promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
 - b. promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
 - c. ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;
 - d. provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
 - e. provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers who may locate there or on others as a result of new development;
 - f. avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;

- g. do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and
- h. reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.

Intentional unauthorised development

- 2.11 The planning policy statement issued with PPTS 2015 ([click here to read planning statement](#)) and confirmed by Ministerial Statement ([click here to read Ministerial statement](#)) makes clear that if a site is intentionally occupied without planning permission this would be a material consideration in any retrospective planning application for that site. Whilst this does not mean that retrospective applications will be automatically refused, it does mean that failure to seek permission in advance of occupation will count against the application.
- 2.12 In addition, PPTS 2024 (Paragraph 12) makes clear that in exceptional cases where a local authority is burdened by a large-scale unauthorised site that has significantly increased their need, and their area is subject to strict and special planning constraints, then there is no assumption that the local authority will be required to meet their Gypsy and Traveller site needs in full. This is intended to protect local planning authorities with significant land constraints from being required to provide for additional needs arising directly from large sites such as Dale Farm (a large unauthorised site in Essex).

Considering ‘Cultural’ and ‘PPTS’ need

- 2.13 The PPTS 2024 now contains a revised definition of Gypsy and Traveller which includes reference to people with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan.

Previous GTAA

- 2.14 The previous Huntingdonshire District GTAA was published in October 2016 and considered need from households who met and did not meet the former PPTS nomadic habit of life test. Additionally, the number of sites at Middle Drove has increased significantly since 2016. Therefore, a direct comparison between the findings of the 2016 and 2024 GTAA is not appropriate.

Responding to challenges

- 2.15 GTAAs are subject to intense scrutiny, particularly at planning inquiries and hearings. The methodological approaches taken by arc⁴ aim to maximise the robustness of evidence and measures include:
 - An up-to-date assessment of the number of pitches on sites and the number of households living on pitches and any vacancies.
 - Maximising response rates from households.
 - Carefully considering the relationship between households and the pitches they occupy.

- Sensitive analysis of the flows of existing households from and to local authority districts.
- Consideration of overcrowding and concealed households.
- Careful consideration of turnover on council / housing association pitches, with clear assumptions over future potential capacity from households moving away from pitches.
- Longer-term modelling of need using detailed demographic information contained from household survey work.
- Reasonable assumptions around the number of households in bricks and mortar accommodation who may want to move to a pitch.

Further contextual matters

- 2.16 The 2024 GTAA is being prepared at a time of notable change in the use of Gypsy and Traveller sites. There are a series of trends taking place which are affecting both the level of need across local authorities and the use of sites. A reversion back to the 2012 PPTS definition will result in higher levels of need being reported, particularly where previous GTAA's reported levels of pitch need based on the PPTS nomadic habit of life test.
- 2.17 Through our observational work elsewhere and discussions with agents, a more complex relationship between pitches, households and caravans is emerging. On some sites across the country, there has been a dramatic increase in occupancy, with additional caravans placed on sites. But these are not necessarily occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and there is evidence of pitches being used to accommodate new migrant communities. There are also concerns that residents are being displaced from their pitches, sometimes by force, and need to find somewhere else live, resulting in higher levels of in-migration to local authority areas. For Huntingdonshire, there is some evidence of sites being used to accommodate non-Traveller groups and some pitches being occupied by non-Travellers.
- 2.18 Against the backdrop of these emerging trends, the residential pitch needs expressed in GTAA's should therefore be considered as a minimum need.

Further review of the PPTS

- 2.19 The government has stated in its response to changes to the NPPF that '*in the context of our wider reforms to planning policy, we will review the PPTS next year*' i.e. 2025.

3. Methodology

Introduction

- 3.1 The GTAA research method is grounded in an understanding of the requirements of the NPPF and based on an established methodology which regularly withstands scrutiny at planning inquiries and hearings.
- 3.2 The methodology has comprised:
- a desktop analysis of existing documents, including data on pitches / sites, plots / yards and unauthorised encampments;
 - the collection of primary data, including household interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and information from planning applications;
 - a survey of residential caravan park owners;
 - a survey of marina owners and discussions with the Environment Agency regarding boat dweller needs;
 - an assessment of accommodation needs taking into account all available data and information.
- 3.3 The information gathering has been carried out in three phases, as outlined below:
- Phase 1: Literature / desktop review.
 - Phase 2: Survey of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the district.
 - Phase 3: Needs assessment and production of the GTAA 2023/4 report.

Phase 1: Literature/desktop review and steering group discussions

- 3.4 We have reviewed relevant literature, including legislative background and best practice information; and analysis of available secondary data relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Huntingdonshire District. The research has progressed with input from local authority officers.

Phase 2: Fieldwork survey and interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 3.5 Our aim is to obtain interviews from all households living on sites using a standard questionnaire (Appendix A). This questionnaire has been carefully designed in consultation with councils, feedback from community representatives and planning agents. Site visits took place in March 2024, with interviews carried out during the period March to mid-May 2024 prior to the main travelling season.
- 3.6 Data for 63 households were obtained, of which 54 were through interviews and 9 from planning application data.

- 3.7 The overall response rate for households living on pitches is taken as 63 households out of 105 households living on pitches or 60%. There were a total of 37 refusals, with 15 from one site where the manager did not want occupants to be interviewed and four households on Legacy Park which were not able to be interviewed.

Phase 3: Needs assessment and production of report

- 3.8 A detailed explanation of the pitch requirements is contained in Chapter 6 but briefly comprises analysis of the following:
- current pitch supply, households living in bricks and mortar accommodation who would prefer to live on a site; households planning to move in the next five years, and emerging households to give total need for pitches; and
 - supply based on the number of authorised pitches and turnover on sites on public pitches.
- 3.9 The overall need for pitches is then compared with the overall supply.

Pitches and households

- 3.10 One of the key challenges faced when assessing Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements is the actual nature of pitches and how this relates to the number of households they can support.
- 3.11 PPTS 2024 refers to the need for local planning authorities to *'identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets' and 'relate the number of pitches/plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density'* (PPTS 2024, paragraph 10).
- 3.12 Planning decision notices usually refer to the number of pitches on a site or the specifics of what can be on a pitch e.g., statics, tourers; or specific individuals and/or households.
- 3.13 As part of the GTAA, it is essential that the characteristics of sites, the number of pitches and how many households these can support is carefully considered. There are a range of issues which need to be considered when reviewing site and pitch characteristics and their potential implications for future pitch and site requirements which are now summarised.

Site and pitch size

- 3.14 There are no definitive parameters for site or pitch sizes. Although now withdrawn, the DCLG Designing Gypsy and Traveller sites: good practice guide (2008) states in paragraph 4.4 that *'Gypsy and Traveller sites are designed to provide land per household which is suitable for a mobile home, touring caravan and a utility building, together with space for parking. Sites of various sizes, layouts and pitch numbers operate successfully today and work best when they take into account the size of the site and the needs and demographics of the families resident on them'*.

- 3.15 Paragraph 4.47 states that *‘to ensure fire safety it is essential that every trailer, caravan or park home must be not less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan or park home that is occupied separately’*.
- 3.16 Paragraph 7.12 states that *‘as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed (for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area’*.
- 3.17 Paragraph 4.13 states that *‘smaller pitches must be able to accommodate at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle’*.
- 3.18 As a general guide, it is suggested by arc⁴ that the minimum pitch size is 25m by 25m (625 square meters or 0.0625 hectares). This would support a twin-unit chalet/mobile home (15m x 6.5m), a tourer, an amenity shed/building (5m x 4m), two vehicle spaces (minimum 2.4m x 4.8m for each space) and turning circle for vehicles, amenity space and a small garden area/play space. Residential units need to be 3m from the pitch boundary and at least 6m apart. A slightly larger pitch of 25m by 30m (750 square meters or 0.075 hectares) would be appropriate for larger household units requiring several residential units.
- 3.19 In 2010, the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain prepared a document ‘Travelling Showpeople’s sites: a planning focus – model standard package). This document was intended to provide guidelines to Travelling Showpeople and Local Planning Authorities when considering the needs of Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.20 This document confirmed that:
- A plot is a piece of land occupied by a Showperson with their family and equipment, used to store fairground rides, vehicles and other items as well as for living accommodation. The family unit can be large or small, for instance an extended family with grandparents, parents and children, or a single-family unit of parents and children.
 - A yard is two or more plots owned by the same family who may use this for their own family purposes or may let part out to other Showpeople.
 - A site is a group of plots where the land is owned by individual plot holders. Quite often a Showperson’s site will have a common shared access onto the main road network.
 - Showpeople’s sites do not fit neatly into the definition of a one land use category. The sites combine a residential use with a storage use, and maintenance is also likely to be carried out on site. The residential use can take the form of static homes and caravans.
 - For a Travelling Showperson yard, the minimum size of a plot is 0.5ha and should include space for residential accommodation and equipment storage.

Occupancy

- 3.21 A pitch may accommodate more than one family unit, for instance it could include a family, older children who have formed their own household and other family members. This could lead to potential overcrowding, and this is considered as part of the GTAA household survey.
- 3.22 Private sites may restrict occupancy to close family / friends. This limits opportunity for others to move onto the site, but this restrictive occupancy may provide for emerging needs within a household, for example as grown-up children (previously living within a parent(s) or grandparent(s) home) form independent households of their own.
- 3.23 Quality, size of pitch and proximity of caravans on pitches vary dramatically.

Response

- 3.24 For each site, a pragmatic and reasonable judgement should be made as part of the GTAA regarding the number of pitches or sub-divisions on sites. This may relate to the number of families living on sites and could include a consideration of the potential intensification of sites (for instance through further sub-division, extension or use of vacant areas within the site). Capacity and layout of sites should be identified through site observation (directly or indirectly through Google maps or similar), planning history and local knowledge of planning, enforcement and liaison officers.
- 3.25 Pitches can become intensified or sub-divided once planning applications have been approved. These sub-divisions tend to be tolerated by councils. Often pitches become subdivided to provide space for newly-forming households, particularly from family members. The potential for pitch intensification/sub-division was considered on site visits and respondents were asked whether intensification/sub-division was possible on the site they lived on.

4. Review of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population and existing provision of pitches and plots

Overview

- 4.1 This chapter looks at the current picture in terms of the current population and demography of Gypsies and Travellers across Huntingdonshire District before going on to explore the extent and nature of provision across the area.

Census data

- 4.2 In October 2023, the ONS published detailed census data relating to Gypsy and Traveller populations. This provides valuable insights into the population dynamics and comparisons with overall populations.
- 4.3 The 2021 Census reported a population of **273** people who identified as ‘White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ or ‘Gypsy/Romany’ plus zero people identifying as ‘Roma’ living in Huntingdonshire District. The total number of households was estimated to be **155** based on the number of Household Reference People, with an estimated 79 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation and 76 on pitches. This compares with 192 people living in 72 households from the 2011 Census. It should be noted that the household survey identified 108 households living on pitches and an estimated population of 319 (this is based on 201 actual population from household data weighted to take account of non-response households). This difference can be explained by a census undercount of households living on pitches and/or reluctance to identify and Gypsy/Traveller on the census form.
- 4.4 Table 4.1 sets out a range of data relating to people identifying as Gypsies and Travellers from the 2021 Census. In summary:
- 69% live in bricks and mortar accommodation and 31% live in a caravan/mobile structure.
 - 76% rent (24% privately and 52% from a social landlord) and 24% are owner occupiers.
 - 17.6% are overcrowded compared with 3.6% of the general population.
 - 20% are singles, 12% couples no children, 22% couples with children, 34% single parents and 12% other household types.
- 4.5 In terms of health, 68.5% of Gypsies and Travellers said their health was very good/good and 11.1% said it was bad/very bad. The overall net health satisfaction score (% saying very good/good minus bad/very bad) was 57.4% compared with 79.3% of the overall population.
- 4.6 Please note that the data reported from the census may differ from the findings of the household survey. This is because of the small population base of the Gypsy and Traveller population and data highly influenced by the level of response to both the 2021 Census and 2024 household survey.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census

Theme	Category	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of total population
Dwelling Stock	Detached whole house or bungalow	20	7.8	42.8
	Semi-detached whole house or bungalow	85	33.3	31.3
	Terraced (including end-terrace) whole house or bungalow	25	9.8	17.9
	Flat, maisonette or apartment	45	17.6	7.4
	A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	80	31.4	0.5
	Total	255	100.0	100.0
Tenure	Owned: Owns outright	50	20.0	29.5
	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	10	4.0	41.6
	Private rented or lives rent free	60	24.0	16.1
	Rented Social rented	130	52.0	12.9
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Occupancy	Occupancy rating of bedrooms 0 or more	210	82.4	96.4
	Occupancy rating of bedrooms -1 or less	45	17.6	3.6
	Total	255	100	100
Household composition	One person household: Aged 66 years and over	#	#	5.4
	One person household: Other	50	20.0	6.7
	Single family household: Couple family household: No children	30	12.0	17.1
	Single family household: Couple family household: Dependent children	40	16.0	34.3
	Single family household: Couple family household: All children non-dependent	15	6.0	8.9
	Single family household: Lone parent household	85	34.0	9.9
	Other household types	30	12.0	17.8
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
General Health	Very Good	100	37.0	47.9
	Good	85	31.5	35.7
	Fair	55	20.4	12.2
	Bad	30	11.1	3.4
	Very Bad	#	#	0.9
	Total	270	100.0	100.0
	Net health score (VG+G-B-VB)	57.4	79.3	76.6

Note 1 : # indicates data are suppressed as they relate to a small number of people.

Source: 2021 Census [click here to read Census data](#)

Caravan Count information

- 4.7 Snapshot counts of the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans were requested by the government in 1979 and have since been undertaken every January and July by local authorities. An annual count of Travelling Showperson caravans takes place every January. The counts provide a source of information on the number of caravans located on authorised and unauthorised sites but do not record the actual number of pitches on sites/yards.
- 4.8 The figures for the last 7 Traveller caravan counts (January 2020 to January 2024) for Huntingdonshire District are set out in Table 4.2. Data shows an average of 274 caravans across the area. Of these, 12% were in council sites, and 49.7% were on private sites and 38.3% were on unauthorised sites.

Table 4.2 Bi-annual Traveller caravan count figures January 2020 to January 2024

Huntingdonshire District	Authorised sites (with planning permission)		Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)	Total
	Social Rented	Total Private (inc. temporary permission)	Total Unauthorised	
Jan-20	33	127	55	215
Jul-21	33	109	63	205
Jan-22	33	117	109	259
Jul-22	33	129	144	306
Jan-23	33	141	124	298
Jul-23	33	166	123	322
Jan-24	33	166	117	316
Latest 7-count average	33	136	105	274
Latest 7-Count % Average	12.0%	49.7%	38.3%	100.0%

Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, Live Table

Counts not taken in July 2020 or Jan 2021 due to the COVID pandemic

- 4.9 Over the period 2018 and 2024, there were no Travelling Showperson’s caravans recorded (Table 4.3) in Huntingdonshire District.

Table 4.3 Annual Travelling Showpeople caravan count figures January 2018 to January 2024

Huntingdonshire District Count	Authorised sites with planning permission		Unauthorised sites without planning permission	Total
	Social Rented	Total Private	Total Unauthorised	
2018	0	0	0	0
2019	0	0	0	0
2020	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0
Five-Count Average	0	0	0	0
Five-Count % Average	0	0	0	0

Source: MHCLG Travelling Showpeople Caravan Count, Live Table 3

Counts not taken in Jan 2021 due to the COVID pandemic

Local sites and yards

- 4.10 Authorised sites are those with planning permission and can be on either public or privately-owned land. Unauthorised sites are made up of either longer-term (approximately three months or longer) unauthorised encampments and can be considered to be indicative of a permanent need for accommodation (in some instances local authorities class these as tolerated sites and do not take enforcement action to remove them); and unauthorised developments, where Travellers are residing upon land that they own and that does not have planning permission (see Appendix B for more detailed definitions).
- 4.11 Table 4.4 sets out the range of sites across Huntingdonshire District, with Table 4.4a covering sites outside Middle Drove and 4.4b Middle Drove sites. The reason to differentiate sites in this way is due to the uncertainty of the number of sites at Middle Drove.
- 4.12 The GTAA assumes the following on sites excluding the Middle Drove Area:
- 1 housing association site, 20 pitches (20 occupied by 20 Traveller households, 0 vacant).
 - 17 private authorised sites, 73 pitches (65 occupied by 45 Traveller households, with some households occupying more than one pitch and 9 occupied by non-Traveller households, 8 vacant).
 - 1 private temporary authorised site, 9 pitches (9 occupied by 9 Traveller households, 0 vacant).
 - 1 site currently seeking planning permission (1 occupied by 1 household and 0 vacant).
 - 2 unauthorised sites, 16 pitches (15 occupied by 15 households and 1 vacant).
 - There is also 1 Travelling Showpersons yard with 4 plots which are all vacant.

- 4.13 The GTAA assumes the following on sites within the Middle Drove Area:
- 3 private authorised sites, 3 pitches (3 occupied by 3 households, 0 vacant).
 - 6 private temporary authorised sites 6 pitches (6 occupied by 6 households, 0 vacant).
 - 2 sites currently seeking planning permission, 13 pitches (1 occupied by 1 household and 12 vacant).
 - 5 unauthorised sites, 5 pitches (5 occupied by 5 households).
 - Site observation would suggest an additional 11 unauthorised sites, 11 pitches that are not occupied.
 - Note that planning records currently report a total of 17 site applications across 16 sites.
- 4.14 Middle Drove is a very complex area and it has been particularly challenging to assess the total number of sites and pitches in the area. In summary, there are 17 planning application references relating to 16 sites in the area which correspond with the mix of authorised, temporary authorised, planning permissions being sought and unauthorised sites listed in para 4.13. In addition, we believe through site observation there may be an additional 11 unauthorised sites that are not occupied. A total of 15 households were identified living on the 16 sites and 14 interviews were achieved. However, through site observation and discussions with planning agents, there may be more sites that are not currently occupied and it is suggested there are at least 11 unauthorised but unoccupied sites in the Middle Drove area.
- 4.15 In summary, the GTAA assumes a total of 38 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 146 pitches (125 occupied by 108 Gypsy and Traveller households with some households occupying more than one pitch, 9 pitches occupied by non-Gypsy Travellers and 21 vacant. There are also a potential 11 unauthorised and unoccupied pitches on 11 sites in the Middle Drove area. There is also one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots which is currently vacant.
- 4.16 Table 4.5 sets out the summary position regarding pitches/plots, vacancy and occupancy. This provides a transparent base position from which the modelling of future pitch need in Section 6 can proceed. However, it should be acknowledged that the existing private sites are mainly for extended family groups and the ability to live on these sites is therefore restricted. The location of sites is also presented in Map 4.1 and Map 4.2 sets out a detailed map of sites in Middle Drive with planning application references.

Table 4.4a List of Gypsy & Traveller pitches on sites (excluding Middle Drove) as at May 2024

Site Code	Site Name and address	Postcode	Type of site	Total pitches	Total occupied	Total vacant	Total G&T households	Total Non G&T households	Household interviews	Other household data	Total response	Non-response
Priv1	Cross Street Farcet	PE7 3DD	Private authorised	1	1	0	1		0	0	0	1
Priv2	Paradise Farm (Land east of Conquest House) Straight Drove Farcet	PE7 3DJ	Private authorised	2	2	0	2		0	0	0	2
Priv3	Shady Acres Harpers Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RR	Private authorised	4	4	0	4		0	0	0	4
Plan1	Land west of Kelvedon Cottage Harpers Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RR	Application submitted and awaiting decision	1	1	0	1		0	0	0	1
Priv4	Spinney Close Main Street Upton	PE28 5YF	Private authorised	4	4	0	4		0	4	4	0
Priv5	The Meadows Thrapston Road Bythorn	PE28 0QY	Private authorised	4	4	0	3		3	0	3	0
Priv6	Brington Gorse Brington Road Catworth	PE28 0PX	Private authorised	8	6	2	6		2	0	2	4
TSP1	East of Heath Road (A141) Warboys	Unavailable	Private authorised	4	0	4	0		0	0	0	0
Priv7	Legacy Park Chatteris Road Somersham	PE28 3DN	Private authorised	4	4	0	8		8	0	8	0
PrivTemp1	Legacy Park Chatteris Road Somersham	PE28 3DN	Private temporary authorised	9	9	0	8		0	8	0	0
Priv8	Rose Field Parkhall Road Somersham	PE28 3HF	Private authorised	6	6	0	6		6	0	6	0

Site Code	Site Name and address	Postcode	Type of site	Total pitches	Total occupied	Total vacant	Total G&T households	Total Non G&T households	Household interviews	Other household data	Total response	Non-response
Priv9	Roseview Paddocks (land west of East View to Ilala) Parkhall Road Somersham	PE28 3HF	Private authorised	6	2	4	2		2	0	2	0
Priv10	Hilltop Orchard South of Meadowcroft St Ives Road Somersham	PE28 3ET	Private authorised	3	3	0	3		3	0	3	0
Priv11	Oldfields Opposite Silks Farm Nursery St Ives Road Somersham	PE28 3ET	Private authorised	2	2	0	1		1	0	1	0
Priv12	1b Green Acres Needingworth Road Bluntisham	PE28 3RJ	Private authorised	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Priv13	1a, 2, 3a and 4 Green Acres Needingworth Road Bluntisham	PE28 3RJ	Private authorised	4	2	2	2		1	1	2	0
Priv14	Sunrise Meadows Needingworth Road Bluntisham	PE28 3FP	Private authorised	11	11	0	2		0	0	0	2
Unauth1	The Paddocks, Grove Lane A1307 (Old A14) Hemingford Grey	PE28 9GL	Unauthorised	15	15	0	15		0	0	0	15
Priv15	Old Pumping Station Paxton Road Offord D'Arcy	PE19 5RF	Private authorised	1	1	0	1		0	0	0	1
HA1	St Neots Travellers Site Cambridge Road St Neots	PE19 6SN	RSL authorised	20	20	0	20		14	0	14	6

Site Code	Site Name and address	Postcode	Type of site	Total pitches	Total occupied	Total vacant	Total G&T households	Total Non G&T households	Household interviews	Other household data	Total response	Non-response
Unauth2	The Caravan Waresley Road Great Gransden	SG19 3RH	Unauthorised	1	0	1	0		0	0	0	0
Priv16	Kym Stables Kimbolton Road Hail Weston	PE19 5LB	Private authorised	4	4	0	4		0	4	4	0
Priv 19	Five Acres St Ives Road Woodhurst	PE28 3BT	Private authorised	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
TOTAL				119	110	9	102	9	40	17	57	36

Non response was either due to households not being available after multiple visits or refusals.

Table 4.4b List of Gypsy & Traveller pitches on sites (Middle Drove) as at May 2024

Site Code	Site Name and address	Postcode	Type of site	Total pitches	Total occupied	Total vacant	Total G&T households	Household interviews	Other household data	Total response	Non-response
MDPriv19	West of Hanley Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private authorised	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
MDPriv17	Hanley Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private authorised	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
MDPriv18	Smiths Field Stables West of Whites Yard and Goodliffe Cottage Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDTempAuth1	One Acre Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDTempAuth2	Land south of One Acre Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDTempAuth3	Land south of One Acre Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDTempAuth4	Land south of One Acre Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDTempAuth5	Two Acre Stables Middle Drove Ramsey heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
MDTempAuth6	White's Yard Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Private temporary authorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDUnauth3	White's Yard Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Unauthorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

Site Code	Site Name and address	Postcode	Type of site	Total pitches	Total occupied	Total vacant	Total G&T households	Household interviews	Other household data	Total response	Non-response
MDUnauth4	North of Smith Field Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Unauthorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDUnauth5	Dachshund Paddocks Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Unauthorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDUnauth6	OS 9252 'static caravan on south side of middle drove' Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Unauthorised	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
MDUnauth7	Note: 2020 Caravan Count also recorded 1 touring van at each of Honey Field and Thorney Field on Middle Drove but I have been unable to identify these addresses.	PE26 2RG	Unauthorised	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
MDPlan2	Indianas Paddock Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Application submitted and awaiting decision	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
MDPlan3	Land southeast of True Briton (includes Goldfinch Farm) Middle Drove Ramsey Heights	PE26 2RG	Application submitted and awaiting decision	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0
	Household interviews achieved at Middle Drove but not able to assign to specific site as site names given by owners differ to planning record names							9		9	
TOTAL				27	15	12	15	14	0	14	1

Please note: Middle Drove site and pitch configurations are complex and it was challenging to assign some responses to specific sites

Table 4.5 Summary of Gypsy and Traveller sites, pitches, occupancy and response

Sites in Huntingdonshire (excluding Middle Drive)	No. Sites	No. Pitches	Total occupied pitches	Total vacant pitches	Total households	Total G&T households	Total non-G&T households	Interviews completed	PLANNING DATA	Total response	Non-response
Registered Provider	1	20	20	0	20	20	0	14	0	14	6
Private Authorised	17	73	65	8	58	49	9	26	9	35	14
Private Temporary Authorised	1	9	9	0	8	8	0	0	8	8	0
Private Unauthorised	2	16	15	1	15	15	0	0	0	0	15
Planning application pending	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	22	119	110	9	102	93	9	40	17	57	36

Middle Drive sites	No. Sites	No. Pitches	Total occupied pitches	Total vacant pitches	Total households	Total G&T households	Total non-G&T households	Interviews completed	PLANNING DATA	Total response	Non-response
Registered Provider	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private Authorised	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	2	0	2	1
Private Temporary Authorised	6	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	0	6	0
Private Unauthorised	5	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	0	5	0
Planning application pending	2	13	1	12	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Sub-total	16	27	15	12	15	15	0	14	0	14	1

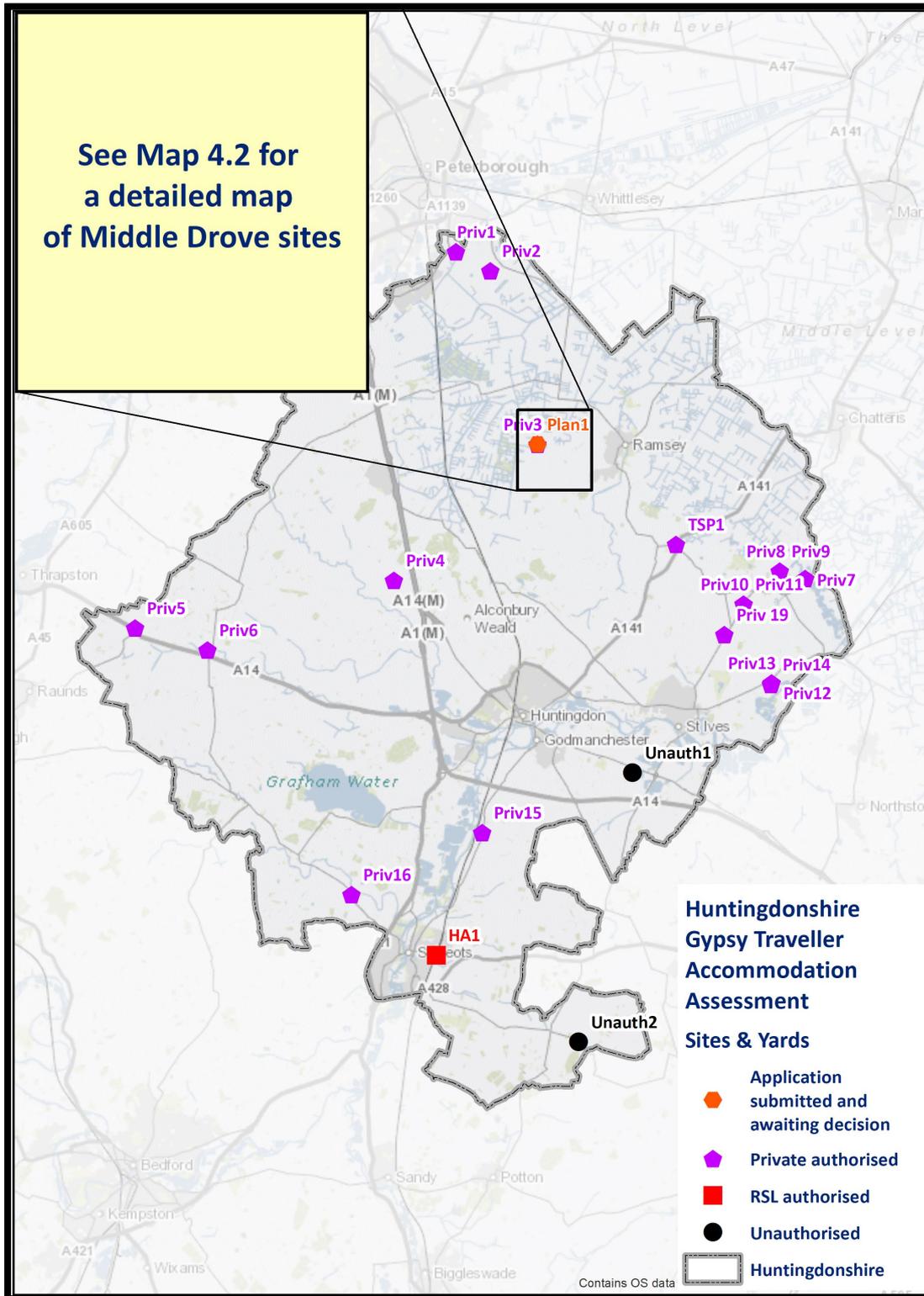
Grand TOTAL	No. Sites	No. Pitches	Total occupied pitches	Total vacant pitches	Total households	Total G&T households	Total non-G&T households	Interviews completed	PLANNING DATA	Total response	Non-response
Registered Provider	1	20	20	0	20	20	0	14	0	14	6
Private Authorised	20	76	68	8	61	52	9	28	9	37	15
Private Temporary Authorised	7	15	15	0	14	14	0	6	8	14	0
Private Unauthorised	7	21	20	1	20	20	0	5	0	5	15
Planning permission pending	3	14	2	12	2	2	0	1	0	1	1
TOTAL G&T	38	146	125	21	117	108	9	54	17	71	37

There are also a potential 11 unauthorised and unoccupied pitches on 11 sites in the Middle Drive area

Table 4.6 Summary of Travelling Showperson yards, plots, occupancy and response

Travelling Showperson yards	No. Yards	No. Plots	Total occupied plots	Total vacant plots	Total households	Total TSP households	Interviews completed	PLANNING DATA	Total response	Non-response
Private authorised	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Map 4.1 Location of Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showperson’s yard in Huntingdonshire District



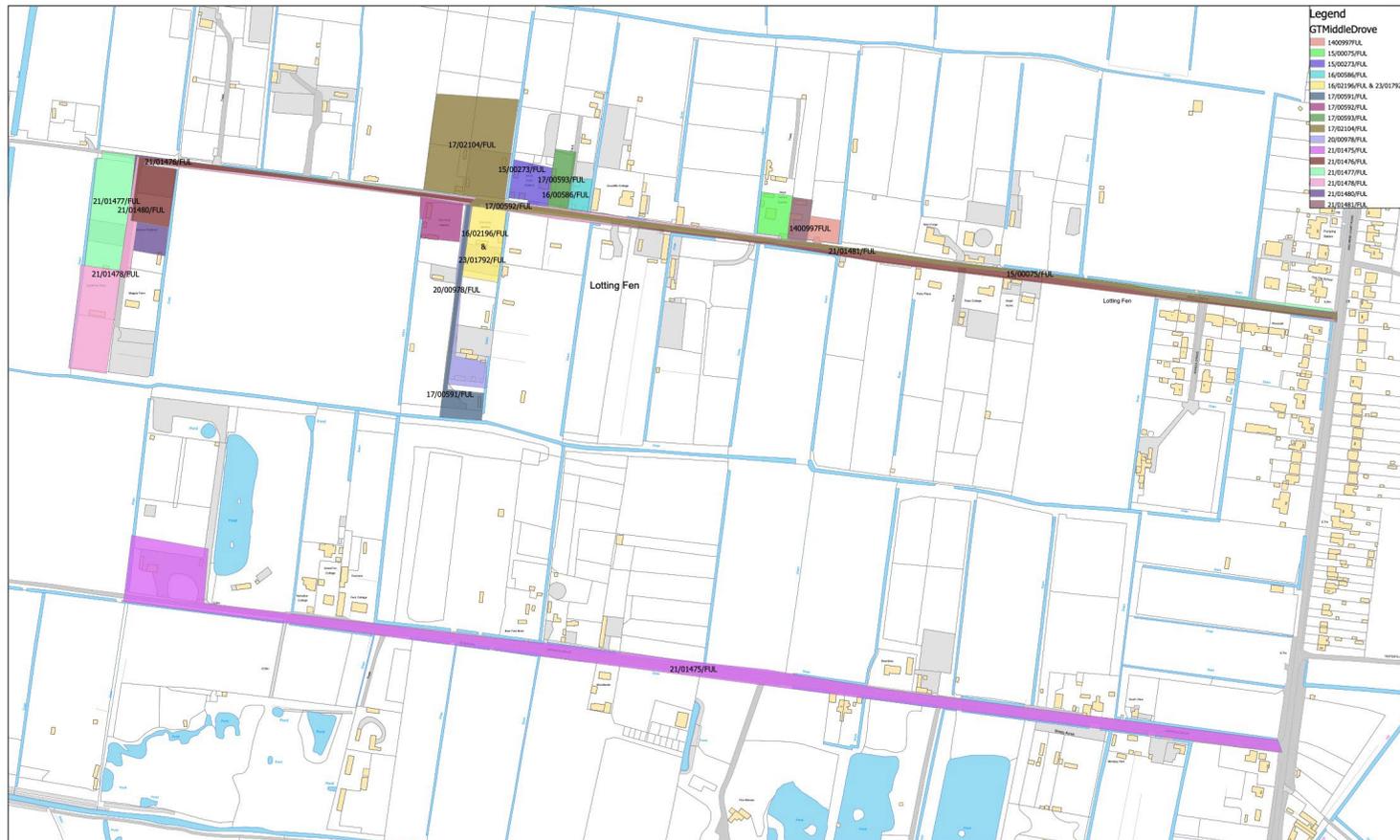
Map 4.2 Middle Drove site applications map

Description: Middle Drove Applications



Scale = 1: 1,750

Date Created: 24/06/2024



5. Household survey findings

- 5.1 This chapter presents the findings of the household survey, which was carried out to provide primary data to inform this GTAA. The survey aimed to reach as many Gypsy and Traveller and households living in the study area as possible. It was conducted using the questionnaire presented in Appendix A.

Gypsy and Traveller households living in Huntingdonshire District

- 5.2 A review of the characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller households living in Huntingdonshire District has been based on data from a total of 71 households living on sites who were interviewed as part of the 2024 GTAA.
- 5.3 The number of responses achieved is summarised for each question. The household data are presented in a manner which maintains respondent confidentiality. If analysis refers to 'small numbers' this means 4 or fewer households responding to a question.
- 5.4 **Ethnicity** (base=66): Of household representatives 92.4% identified as Gypsy (including Romany, Romany Gypsy and English Gypsy) and 7.6% as Irish Traveller.
- 5.5 **Household size** (base=65): 15.4% of households were single person; 18.5% two person; 18.5% three person; 24.6% four person, 10.8% five person and 12.3% six or more people.
- 5.6 **Household type** (base=65): 15.4% were singles, 23.1% were single parents, 12.3% were couples, 43.1% were couples with child(ren) which can include non-dependent children, 6.2% were multi-adult families or extended families, such as couples with siblings living with them.
- 5.7 **Age profile (base=65 households, 226 people)**: The household data obtained identified a total of 229 Gypsies and Travellers (unweighted) living on sites in Huntingdonshire District and age information was available for 226. The population figure is estimated to be 344 if weighted to take account of non-response households. The age profile is as follows: 40.7% aged 13 or under, 8.8% aged 14-17, 25.7% aged 18-34, 9.7% aged 35-49, 8.4% aged 50-64 and 6.6% aged 65 and over.
- 5.8 **Length of residence** (base=42): 16.7% had lived at their current place of residence for less than 5 years, 21.4% between 5 and less than 10 years, 9.5% between 10 and less than 15 years, 33.3% between 15 and less than 20 years and 19% for 20 years or more.
- 5.9 **Overcrowding**: When asked if their home was overcrowded (base=36), 8.3% said yes and 91.7% said no. When asked whether their pitch was overcrowded (base=35), 11.4% said yes and 88.6% said no.
- 5.10 **Regarding the need for more residential pitches** (base=24), respondents were asked if they felt there was a need for more pitches. This was to gauge local views on need and does not influence the needs assessment modelling carried out. 41.7% said there was a need for more and 58.3% said no more pitches were needed. Five respondents stated a number and most said

between 10 and 20 pitches. However, respondents tend to reflect on need in immediate need in their local area rather than for the district as a whole which would explain this low number.

Help and support needs

- 5.11 Respondents were asked if they had any broader help and support needs. Several respondents mentioned illness and disability but there were no specific support needs identified for which households required assistance.

Travelling Showpeople

- 5.12 There are no Travelling Showpeople currently living in Huntingdonshire District. Although there is one yard, this is vacant.

Stakeholder feedback

- 5.13 As part of our research, arc⁴ contacted a range of stakeholders to obtain feedback on Gypsy and Traveller matters. Eight stakeholders responded and comments are now summarised. Please note these are the views of stakeholders (which comprised local authority officers and officers from neighbouring districts) and not necessarily the views of the council or arc⁴.
- 5.14 The main issues raised are summarised below:
- A need for more residential pitches, with sites close to towns and local facilities.
 - Funding and local opposition and acceptance of Travelling communities were seen as key barriers to delivery for both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
 - Regarding transit provision, there was a recommendation to develop two to three transit sites on main transport routes with water, electricity and possibly hardstanding, with each site having 6-8 pitches. A key issue would be effective site management of any temporary sites. One stakeholder who works closely with communities did not think unauthorised encampment activity was a significant issue in Huntingdonshire.
 - Stakeholders recognised there are Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation and on residential caravan parks, but this was not always through choice. One stakeholder commented that more would live on sites if there were pitches available as this is more in keeping with their traditional way of life.
 - Concerns were raised about literacy and the need to help community members to find and access services.
 - Movement between local authority areas was recognised, but the ability to move around during summer months has become increasingly difficult due to changes in the law.
 - There is a need to recognise that not all Travelling people get along with each other. When moving onto new sites, potential residents should be

informed that any anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated and damage rectified.

- Education can be a challenge and one stakeholder suggested liaising with local libraries and online learning resources for people studying at home or travelling.
- The GTAA contributes to the Duty to Cooperate but discussions should continue with neighbouring local authorities.

5.15 Overarching conclusions were that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are taken seriously, that evidence of need provides a clear direction for the best location and identified levels of need; and a need to ensure that Travellers feel valued and part of the community.

6. Gypsy and Traveller pitch and transit site requirements

Introduction

- 6.1 This section reviews the overall pitch and plot requirements of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Huntingdonshire. It takes into account current supply and need, as well as future need, based on modelling of data. This chapter also considers transit pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers. Finally, the chapter presents planning policy recommendations.
- 6.2 The calculation of pitch requirements is based on modelling as advocated in *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Guidance (DCLG, 2007)*. Although now formally withdrawn, the former DCLG guidance still provides the best-practice approach towards the assessment of pitch and plot needs (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).
- 6.3 This approach requires an assessment of the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers and a projection of future needs. It advocates the use of a survey to supplement secondary source information and derive key supply and demand information. Modelling presents an overall need based on the 2012 PPTS definition which is also called the ‘cultural’ need.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement model overview

- 6.4 Pitch need is assessed for two time periods. A short-term 5-year model looks at need over the five years (2023/24 to 2027/28). A longer-term model looks at need over the period to 2041/42 using demographic data. The overall need over the period 2023/24 to 2041/42 has then been extrapolated so that need can be assessed over the period to 2045/46.
- 6.5 In terms of **cultural need**, the 5-year model considers:
- the baseline number of households on all types of site (authorised, unauthorised and temporary authorised sites) based on household survey data collected in 2023/24 and the baseline position on pitches as at December 2024 which took into account changes in the planning status of pitches during the preparation of the GTAA;
 - existing households planning to move in the next five years (currently on sites and also from bricks and mortar) and where they are planning to move to;
 - emerging households currently on sites and planning to emerge in the next five years and stay within the study area on a pitch; to derive a figure for total pitch need
- 6.6 In terms of **supply**, the model considers:
- total supply of current pitches on permanent authorised sites (this does include pitches on sites which have been granted temporary authorisation to meet need but the site is located in flood zone 3 but are also within a managed drainage system).

- supply from new sites being developed; and
 - vacant pitches on authorised sites.
- 6.7 The model then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply over the next five years by summarising:
- total need for pitches; and
 - total supply of authorised pitches.
- 6.8 The longer-term model then considers the cultural need over the period to 2041/42. This is based on the age profile of children under 13 living in Gypsy and Traveller households on pitches.
- 6.9 The overall annual net shortfall is calculated and used to extrapolate need over the period to 2045/46.

Huntingdonshire pitch need analysis: Description of factors in the 5-year need model

- 6.10 Table 6.1 provides a summary of the 5-year pitch need calculation. Each component in the model is now discussed to ensure that the process is transparent and any assumptions clearly stated.

Need

Current households living on pitches (1a to 1e)

- 6.11 These figures are derived from council data and site observation data. In summary there are a total of 108 households living on pitches (See Table 6.1).

Current households in bricks and mortar accommodation (2)

- 6.12 The 2021 Census reports a total of 115 households of whom 68.3% live in bricks and mortar accommodation or around 79 and 31.7% living on sites or around 36. This data reflects a considerable undercount of Gypsies and Travellers living on sites, with GTAA evidence identifying 101 households living on sites alone. This is likely to be due to a census undercount of Traveller households.

Weighting of data

- 6.13 Survey data has been weighted to take account of non-response households. For Gypsy and Traveller households the weighting is $108 \text{ (total households)} \div 71 \text{ (total responses)} = 1.5211$.

Table 6.1 Summary of demand and supply factors: Gypsies and Travellers – 2023/24 to 2027/28

CULTURAL NEED		Huntingdonshire District	
1	Households living on pitches	1a. On LA Site	20
		1b. On Private Site – Authorised	52
		1c. On Private Site - Temporary Authorised	14
		1d. On private site – unauthorised	20
		1e. On Private Site - Pending planning permission	2
		1f. Total (1a+1b+1c+1d+1e)	108
2	Estimate of households living in bricks and mortar accommodation	2021 Census estimate	79
		<i>Weighting for non-response</i>	1.5211
3	Existing households planning to move in next 5 years or on unauthorised site	Currently on sites	
		3a. To another pitch/same site (no net impact)	0
		3b. To another site in district (no net impact)	2
		3c. From site to bricks and mortar (-)	0
		3d. To site/bricks and mortar outside district	0
		Currently in Bricks and Mortar	
		3e. Planning to move to a site in LA (+) (see para 6.16)	0
		3f. Planning to move to another B&M property (no net impact)	0
		In-migrant households	
		3g. Allowance for in-migration (+)	5
	3h. TOTAL Net impact (-3c-3d+3e+3g)	5	
4	Emerging households (5 years)	4a. Currently on site and planning to live on current site	14
		4b. Current on site and planning to live on another site in the district	20
		4c. Currently on site and planning to live outside the district	0
		4d. Currently in B&M planning to move to a site in LA (+)	0
		4e. Currently in B&M and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4f. Currently on Site and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4g. TOTAL (4a+4b+4d)	34
5	Total Need	1f+3h+4g	147
SUPPLY			
6	Current supply of authorised pitches	6a Current supply of occupied permanently authorised pitches	88
		6b. Vacant permanently authorised pitches	8
		6c. Temporary authorised sites granted permission where sites are in flood zone 3 but also with a managed drainage system	6
		6d. Authorised pitches likely to be not occupied by Gypsies and Travellers	9
		6e. Total current permanently authorised supply (6a+6b+6c+6d)	111
RECONCILING NEED AND SUPPLY			
7	Total need for pitches	5 years (from 5)	147
8	Total supply of permanent authorised pitches	5 years (from 6e)	111
5-YEAR PERMANENT AUTHORISED PITCH SHORTFALL 2023/24 TO 2027/28			36

Existing households planning to move in the next five years (3)

- 6.14 This was derived from information from the 2024 household survey for respondents currently on pitches.
- 6.15 Evidence for existing households currently on sites indicates a net +5 (weighted) pitch need based on existing households planning to move.
- 6.16 For households currently in bricks and mortar, based on national arc⁴ studies it is estimated that 5.3% of households living in bricks and mortar would prefer to live on a site which would equate to 4 households. However, there was little evidence of households actually moving from bricks and mortar to a site in the past 5 years.
- 6.17 There is a need for +5 (weighted) pitches due to households moving in the district based on past trends of in-migration over the past 5 years. Modelling assumes the same level of in-migration in the next five years.
- 6.18 The factors presented in Section 3 of the model result in an overall net requirement of +5.0 pitches (weighted) from existing households planning to move in the next 5 years.

Emerging households (4)

- 6.19 This is the number of households expected to emerge in the next 5 years based on 2023 household survey information and planning application data. The total number is +35 (weighted). If young people aged 18 and over were living with family and have not specified that they want to form a new household, this is assumed to be through choice and the model does not assume they want to form a new household. The model however does factor in need from 21no. 13 to 17 year-olds who are likely to emerge in the next 5 years but had not indicated this on the household survey.

Total need for pitches (5)

- 6.20 This is a total of current households on authorised pitches, households on pitches planning to move in the next five years and demand from emerging households currently living on pitches. This indicates a total need for 147 pitches (108 existing households on pitches, a net need for 5 (weighted) pitches from existing households planning to move including in-migration and a need for 34 (weighted) pitches from emerging households).

Supply

Current supply of authorised pitches (6)

- 6.21 Modelling assumes a total supply of 111 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller use. There are a total of 88 authorised pitches occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and 8 vacant pitches on authorised sites. There are also 6 pitches on temporary authorised sites in Middle Drove which are included in supply. These pitches are within flood zone 3 but are also within a managed drainage system. There are also 9 pitches that are likely to be occupied by non-Gypsy and Travellers.

Reconciling supply and need

- 6.22 There is a total need over the next five years (2023/24 to 2027/28) for 147 pitches in Huntingdonshire (row 7) compared with a supply of 111 authorised pitches (row 8). The result is an overall short-term need for 36 additional pitches.

Longer-term pitch requirement modelling

- 6.23 Longer-term pitch need modelling has been carried out using known household structure information from the household survey of households living on pitches. On the basis of the age of children in households, it is possible to determine the extent of 'likely emergence', which assumes that a child is likely to form a new household at the age of 18.
- 6.24 The year when a child reaches 18 has been calculated and it is possible to assess how many newly forming households may emerge over the period 2028/29 to 2040/41. A reasonable assumption is that half of these children will form new households, bearing in mind culturally women tend to move away on marriage and men tend to stay in close proximity to their families on marriage. The model therefore assumes that 50% of children will form households when they reach 18 and that these households remain in Huntingdonshire. This approach has been tested at inquiry and the assumption has been corroborated by several Travelling interviewees. Analysis would suggest a total need for 69 additional pitches over the period 2028/29-2040/41 (Table 6.2). This should be considered as a minimum level of longer-term need as other factors such as net in-migration in the longer-term may have an impact on need, which could be considered in future GTAA updates.

Table 6.2 Future pitch requirements based on the assumption that 50% of children will require a pitch in Huntingdonshire

Time period	No. children	No. pitches (rounded)
2028/29 to 2032/33 (5 years)	40	20
2033/34 to 2037/38 (5 years)	61	30
2038/39 to 2040/41 (4 years)	38	19
Total (2028/29 to 2041/42) (14 years)	138	69

Overall plan period pitch need

- 6.25 Table 6.3 summarises the overall need for pitches across Huntingdonshire over the period 2023/24 to 2041/42. The main drivers of need in the first five years are new household formation and in-migration.
- 6.26 Table 6.4 considers need over the period to 2045/46. This is done by calculating an overall annual need of 5.5 and extrapolating this over the period to 2045/46, that is assuming the same level of need over this time period. The result is an overall minimum pitch need of 127 over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46.

Table 6.3 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2023/24 to 2041/42

Period	Pitch need
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2023/24 to 2027/28) (A)	36
Longer-term need	
Over period 2028/29 to 2032/33 (B)	20
Over period 2033/34 to 2037/38(C)	30
Over period 2038/39 to 2041/42 (D)	19
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2040/41 (14 years) E=(B+C+D)	69
NET SHORTFALL 2023/24 to 2041/42 (A+E) (19 years)	105
Annual net shortfall	5.5

Table 6.4 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2023/24 to 2045/46

Period	Pitch need
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2023/24 to 2027/28) (A)	36
Longer-term need	
Over period 2028/29 to 2032/33 (B)	20
Over period 2033/34 to 2037/38(C)	30
Over period 2038/39 to 2041/42 (D)	19
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2041/42 (13 years) E=(B+C+D)	69
F. NET SHORTFALL 2023/24 to 2041/42 (A+E) (19 years)	105
G. Annual net shortfall	5.5
H. Net shortfall 2042/43 to 2045/46 (4 years) (G x 4)	22
Total need over period 2023/24 to 2045/46 (F+H)	127

Potential capacity for Gypsy and Traveller pitches on existing sites

Turnover on sites

- 6.27 Turnover relates to the number of pitches that are expected to become available for occupancy. Analysis only includes expected turnover on public sites as this is referenced in (former) government guidance and more accurate data on changes in pitch occupancy is likely to be available. Although there is likely to be turnover on private sites, the ability of households to move onto private sites may be more restrictive (for instance the site may be restricted to a particular family) and less likely to be recorded.
- 6.28 Turnover on the public site is very low, evidenced by the fact that all respondents living on the public site had lived on their pitch for at least 5 years. Therefore no turnover on sites is assumed in modelling.

Regularisation of existing sites

- 6.29 There are currently 35 pitches on sites that are not permanently authorised:
- 21 unauthorised pitches (20 occupied, 1 vacant)

- 14 pitches currently progressing through the application process (2 occupied, 12 vacant)
 - There may also be several unoccupied unauthorised pitches at Middle Drove
- 6.30 It is recommended that the council considers assessing these pitches against an appropriate assessment criteria and/or policy guidance to consider if they can be regularised (permanently authorised).

Potential for additional pitches on existing sites

- 6.31 Survey respondents suggested potential for additional pitches on existing sites (Table 6.5). Through discussions with residents on sites and private site owners, the GTAA identified a total of 48 potential pitches. It is recommended that the council investigate the potential for additional pitches on sites as a way of helping to meet need. However, the council needs to consider flood risk that may render sites inappropriate or less desirable for permanent use if flood mitigation is not in place.

Table 6.5 Potential additional pitches on existing sites to help meet Gypsy and Traveller need

Site Code	Site Location	Number of additional pitches
MD	Graystone Paddocks, Middle Drove	3
Priv6	7 Brington Gorse	5
Priv10	Hilltop Orchard	3
Priv5	The Meadows	5
MDPriv19	West Hanley Stables, Middle Drove	20
Priv8	Rosefield	5
MD	Gypsy Lane	2
MD	Plot 6, Middle Drove	1
MD	Plot 2, Middle Drove	2
MDTempAuth5	Two Acres Stables, Middle Drove	2
Total		48

Vacant pitches on private sites

- 6.32 There were eight vacant pitches on authorised sites which are included in the five-year needs model as an element of supply. In addition, there are 21 vacant pitches on sites that were not authorised but these are included in the potential pitches for regularisation.

Non-Travellers living on authorised sites

- 6.33 Based on site observation and discussions with community members, there are an estimated 9 households currently living on authorised sites that are likely to be non-Gypsy and Traveller.

Potential for additional pitches on existing sites through household dissolution

- 6.34 When considering the potential future supply of pitches, consideration should be given to the potential availability of pitches due to household dissolution. By considering the age profile and household structures of households, there is the potential for 10 pitches to become available through household dissolution over the period to 2041/42.

Impact of turnover, regularisation and additional pitches on overall need

- 6.35 The overall pitch need over the next 5 years (2023/24 to 2027/28) is 37. There is a further need from 2028/29 to 2041/42 for 62 pitches and a need for 21 pitches over the period 2042/43 to 2045/56, resulting in an overall need for 120 pitches.
- 6.36 There is a potential supply of additional pitches through:
- Regularisation (35 pitches of which 18 are on Middle Drove and 17 elsewhere in Huntingdonshire)
 - The use of 9 authorised pitches currently believed to be not occupied by Gypsies and Travellers
 - Potential expansion/intensification (48 pitches)
 - Potential household dissolution (10 pitches)
- 6.37 This potential supply could provide up to **102** additional pitches. This has the potential to meet the five-year need and make a significant contribution to meeting longer-term needs.
- 6.38 Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.
- 6.39 Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance households moving into Huntingdonshire. It is therefore recommended the council has criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for private sites should they arise.
- 6.40 It is implicit in this study that the needs arising from the private family sites will be met either through the use of vacant pitches on those sites or through new site provision. The modelling assumes no turnover on private sites as this cannot be monitored effectively. Additionally, if pitches do become available they are likely to meet family rather than wider needs.

Tenure preferences

- 6.41 Households were asked about tenure preferences for new sites and some responded (base=7). All stated a preference for sites owned/managed by Travellers.

Transit requirements

- 6.42 There are a number of ways to deliver temporary places where Travellers can stop whilst passing through a local authority area. These include transit sites, stop over areas and negotiated stopping.
- 6.43 Households interviewed were asked their views on transit provision (base=30) and a limited need for transit provision was reflected in their responses:
- 16.7% said there was an overall need for places where people can stop whilst travelling through the district and 83.3% said there was no need.
 - 19% said there was a need for transit pitches and 81% said there was no need.
 - Of those who said there was a need (base = 4), only one person stated a number of between 4 to 5.
 - When asked about stopping places (base=19), 47.4% said they were needed and 52.6% said they were not needed.
- 6.44 An indicator of transit need is unauthorised encampment activity and data for Huntingdonshire District are now presented.
- 6.45 A total of 6 encampments have been reported by the council over the past few years. Of these, 3 were in St. Neots and 3 in Huntingdon although the number of caravans was not reported.
- 6.46 When considering transit need, the council needs to be mindful of new legislation through the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act (Part 4). This will make using land for stopping without permission a criminal offence rather than a civil offence. The Act gives police increased powers to act and introduces significant penalties (fines up to £2,500, impounding vehicles and prison sentences).
- 6.47 Although only a minority of household survey respondents indicated there was a need for transit provision, there is some evidence of unauthorised encampment activity and a need to provide land to address the need for temporary places to stop. There are several ways to deliver temporary places where Travellers can stop whilst passing through a local authority area and in general, councils are moving towards providing temporary stop over areas and negotiated stopping to help meet short-term transit need rather than develop transit sites.
- 6.48 A temporary stop over area is land which can be used on a temporary basis if unauthorised encampments occur or are likely to occur. They can be fields, areas of hardstanding or a mixture of both. Temporary facilities can be provided when the temporary stop over is in use, for instance portable toilets and rubbish collection.
- 6.49 Negotiated stopping involves councils making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The terms of the agreement can vary but usually include the provision of Portaloos, waste disposal, water; the length of the agreement can vary but tends to be around 28 days; and users agree to comply with rules for behaviour and use of the site (see [click here for more information on stopping sites](#) for more information).

- 6.50 Based on emerging good practice nationally, it is recommended that the council considers developing a flexible approach to unauthorised encampment activity using negotiated stopping arrangements. It is recommended the council records additional information when unauthorised encampments are reported, including number of caravans and length of stay. The council should consider identifying areas of land that can be used for encampments accommodate Travellers passing through Huntingdonshire.

7. Boat dweller need

Introduction

- 7.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 (section 124) creates a duty under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to a local authority area with respect to the mooring of houseboats as part of the periodical review of housing needs. It deletes sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004.
- 7.2 In general, living on a houseboat is a lifestyle choice but there are small numbers of people who identify as Boat Travellers/Bargee Travellers who are do not have permanent moorings. Moorings tend to be used for leisure purposes and it is challenging to establish how many are used for residential purposes. The GTAA therefore focuses on engaging with marina and boatyard owners to establish their views on future residential need.

Local plan policy

- 7.3 Local Plan policy LP38 considers water-related development and residential moorings and the background to policy is now summarised. The plan recognises that boatyards and marinas are located across Huntingdonshire and they can make a valuable contribution to the local economy. The plan also acknowledges that living on boats is a lifestyle choice for some residents and contributes to increasing the diversity of residential accommodation within the district. However, the Council considers residential use of boats or houseboats to have significant shortcomings in terms of meeting the needs of residents and prospective residents, particularly with regards to accessibility against a backdrop of an ageing population. The plan also recognises that the number of berths, either residential or for leisure uses, is subject to frequent change. However, it is reasonable to assume that the residential use of boats represents a very small proportion of the total residential accommodation available in Huntingdonshire. The plan acknowledges the challenges of gauging the proportion of existing moorings that may be suitable for residential use and the identification of suitable locations for additional moorings. Therefore, the Local Plan does not set a target for residential moorings. It also sets a 20% limit on conversion of existing moorings to residential use.

Existing moorings in Huntingdonshire

- 7.4 Across Huntingdonshire there are 13 marinas locations that provide moorings for boats, mainly for leisure purposes (Table 7.1). The largest concentration of residential houseboats is at Hartford marina near Huntingdon.

Table 7.1 Marinas and boat yards in Huntingdonshire

Marinas and boat yards	Postcode	Status	No. moorings
Buckden Marina, Mill Road, Buckden	PE19 5QS	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 200 cruisers and 40 narrowboat moorings
West View Marina, High Street, Earith	PE28 3PN	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 100
The Boathaven, Low Road Fenstanton	PE27 5ET	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 180
Huntingdon Boathaven and Caravan Park, The Avenue, Godmanchester	PE29 2AF	Private authorised for leisure	50 boats and 30 caravan pitches
Purvis Marine and Leisure, Hartford Road, Huntingdon	PE29 3RP	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 20
Pike and Eel Marina, Overcote Lane, Needingworth	PE27 4TW	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 200
Bill Fen Marina, Factory Bank, Ramsey	PE26 2RD	Private authorised for leisure	140-150
Crosshall Marine, Crosshall Road, St Neots	PE19 7GE	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 100
Ouse Valley River Club/ St Neots Boat Owners Club, Tuzzy Wuzzy Meadow, St Neots	PE19 6NX	Private authorised for leisure	Approximately 70
Rivermill Marina, School Lane, St Neots	PE19 8GW	Private authorised	Up to 30
St Neots Marina, Off St Mary's Street, St Neots	PE19 2TA	Private authorised	Approximately 70
Hartford Marina, Banks End, Wyton	PE28 2AA	Private authorised	Approximately 250
Daylock Marine/ Wyton Moorings, Banks End, Wyton	PE28 2AA	Private authorised	Approximately 35

Boatyard and marina survey

- 7.5 As part of this study, all 13 marinas were contacted to obtain their views on future need for moorings for boat dwellers. Four responses were received.
- Three of the marinas only provided moorings for leisure purposes and one provided some moorings for residential purposes
 - Three respondents acknowledged a need for residential moorings, with 'high demand' and 'often getting inquiries' mentioned. One respondent

considered there was a need for more residential moorings and actively seeking the conversion of leisure to residential moorings. This would provide a more permanent income stream throughout the year and take account of the acknowledged need for residential moorings in Local Plan policy LP38. This particular respondent also acknowledged the 20% limit on converting leisure to residential moorings but considers that the number of additional moorings required should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis relative to each individual marina and their business growth plans.

Feedback from general consultation with the Environment Agency, Canals and Rivers Trust and boater households

- 7.6 Arc4 has carried out a series of interviews nationally with houseboat residents. In general, living on a houseboat is a lifestyle choice but there are small numbers of people who identify as boat travellers/bargee travellers.
- 7.7 The Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) are the national organisation responsible for issuing boat licences to residents and users of canals. Although there are no waterways which the CRT has responsibility for in Huntingdonshire, the CRT provide useful background data to houseboat need.
- 7.8 There are two types of licence: for permanent moorings, but these do not have to be residential moorings and most are for leisure purposes; and a licence without a mooring where the boater is required to 'bona fide navigate' meaning that the boater needs to keep moving around and not be in any location for more than 14 days.
- 7.9 Regarding the need for residential moorings, the CRT comment that based on their national boater survey, nationally the number of people living on boats has slowed and possibly declined slightly this year. To assist with planning for boater needs, the Canals and Rivers Trust comment that local plans/policies should acknowledge and support residential mooring if there are appropriate locations but would expect most permanent moorings to be still for leisure use. There is also a need for short stay moorings for leisure and residential boaters while they move around. The CRT also comment that many liveaboard boaters do so without having a permanent mooring as they can moor in many places - so it's not the mooring space but rather the availability of facilities for them to access (e.g., water points, wet waste disposal, refuse/recycling) that is important.
- 7.10 A useful discussion was also held with the Environment Agency with responsibility which are summarised below.

General context:

- There are a series of marinas on the River Ouse in Huntingdonshire which mainly accommodate leisure boats
- There are some with residential moorings e.g. Hartford Marina
- Demand for residential moorings has increased, for instance from people moving from canal to river marina moorings

- There is a general preference to accommodate leisure boats rather than residential as financial returns are greater
- On canals, towpaths are available (often leased to utility companies) and linear moorings are available
- On rivers, usually no paths, fragmented ownership of river banks and trespassing if don't have permission to moor on land.
- Smaller marinas don't have infrastructure to support residential moorings (for instance, water, electricity, waste) and to develop this would be costly.

Characteristics and affordability

- Living on a houseboat is often perceived to be cheap option.
- People sometimes buy cheap boats (£20/25k) which may not be safe. Costs can soon mount up if you rent a mooring in a marina (£6-7k year) and people then resort to permanent cruising for most of the year to avoid this.
- Generally it's a transient lifestyle, with only a minority of boaters living on permanent residential moorings
- Get a lot of single divorced men on boats

Summary

- There is a need for residential moorings but it's challenging to quantify an actual numerical need.
- Needs to be set within the context of how marinas operate, the financial costs of providing residential moorings, and leisure moorings are likely to give a greater financial return

Conclusions on need for residential moorings

- 7.11 The council has an appropriate local plan policy LP38 to consider the need for residential moorings. Discussions with boatyard/marina owners and an Environment Agency representative would indicate there is a need for more residential moorings in Huntingdonshire and one marina is actively considering increasing the number of residential moorings. However, it is not possible to specify a specific number of moorings needed given the complexities of ownership of moorings, the interplay between the need for continuous cruisers and residential moorings and the business objectives of individual marinas.

8. Residential caravan park need

Introduction

- 8.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 (section 124) creates a duty under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to a local authority area with respect to sites for caravans. arc4 considers that residential caravan parks principally provide accommodation to help meet general housing need. It deletes sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004.

Existing residential caravan parks in Huntingdonshire

- 8.2 Across Huntingdonshire, separate from Gypsy and Traveller sites, there are 13 residential caravan parks with an estimated 468 residential caravan pitches (Table 8.1).

Residential caravan parks survey

- 8.3 Contact was made with site owners/managers to obtain their views on current and future demand, and whether additional residential caravan parks are needed in Huntingdonshire.
- 8.4 Residential caravan park owners/managers responses were received from two parks. The following were noted, bearing in mind the responses may not be reflective of all owners/managers:
- Caravans tend to be occupied by over 55 and retired people and one park had a broader range of residents, roughly 25% young singles, 25% young couples, 25% older singles and 25% older couples.
 - Living in a park home can be a lifestyle choice offering affordable accommodation, with one park renting bungalows/chalets with a general 50:50 split between those receiving and not receiving housing benefit. With private rents increasing considerably, parks are offering a genuine alternative for households needing affordable housing.
 - A strong sense of community can be generated on residential parks, with around half of residents one park being there for over 10 years.
 - There are waiting lists for accommodation and one respondent spoke of an 'expansive demand' for parks, that is parks are increasingly providing accommodation and as they get developed they become occupied.
 - There is demand for well-designed, well-managed parks.
- 8.5 One respondent was considering expanding provision on additional parks and diversifying the range of accommodation units to include wooden lodges.
- 8.6 Similar surveys carried out elsewhere have tended to show that:
- Residential caravan parks are mainly occupied by older singles and couples, with some specifically built for retirement living.
 - There is a need for more affordable park home options.

Table 8.1 Residential caravan parks in Huntingdonshire

Residential caravan/ park homes site	Postcode	Status	No. pitches
Lordsway Park, High Street Alconbury	PE28 4BF	Private authorised	20
Millside Marina/Carters Boatyard, Mill Road, Buckden	PE19 5QT	Private authorised	21
Park Lane Meadows, Park Lane, Godmanchester	PE29 2AN	Private authorised	40
Quiet Waters Caravan Park, Manor Lane, Hemingford Abbots	PE28 9AJ	Private authorised	32
Willow Walk Park Homes, Banks End, Wyton	PE28 2AA	Private authorised	10
Grove Park, The Grove, Old Hurst	PE28 3AG	Private authorised	41
Willow Way/ St Ives Caravan Park, Off Farthing Lane, St Ives	PE27 5NT	Private authorised	96
St Neots Mobile Home Park, Howitt's Lane, St Neots	PE19 2JR	RSL authorised	50
Upton Park, Main Street, Upton	PE28 5YD	Private authorised	41
Fenside Caravan park, Puddock Road, Warboys	PE28 2UA	Private unauthorised	16 plus on-site manager's caravan
The Paddock Mobile Home Park, Ramsey Road, Warboys	PE28 2RW	Private authorised	28
Pine Hill Park, Sawtry Way Wyton	PE28 2DZ	Private authorised	48
Blenheim Court, Mere Way Wyton	PE28 2JS	Private authorised	25
Total residential pitches			468

Conclusions on need for residential caravan parks

- 8.7 The evidence in the GTAA corroborates the importance of having residential caravan parks which provide for a range of households. Additional need for residential caravan parks has been indicated by owners of two sites. It is recommended that the councils rely on general housing policies to inform future planning applications for the delivery of residential caravan parks should they arise.

9. Conclusion and response

- 9.1 This concluding chapter provides a brief summary of key findings and recommendations.

Current accommodation

- 9.2 There are well-established Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities living across Huntingdonshire. The GTAA assumes a total of 38 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 146 pitches (125 occupied by 108 Gypsy and Traveller households, 9 non-Gypsy and Traveller households and 21 vacant, with some households occupying more than one pitch). There are also an estimated 11 unoccupied and unauthorised single pitch sites at Middle Drove.
- 9.3 Please note that on some sites the number of pitches does not match the number of households because some households occupy more than one pitch.
- 9.4 There is one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots but this is not currently occupied.

Future Gypsy and Traveller residential need

- 9.5 There is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing households, households on unauthorised sites, newly forming households, in-migrant households and current vacancies on existing public and private sites. The annual net shortfall need is 5.5 pitches over the period 2023/24 to 2041/42. This is used to extrapolate need over the period to 2045/46.
- 9.6 Much of this need is arising from sites on Middle Drove. It should be acknowledged that the Middle Drove area is particularly complex in terms of the number of households and number of pitches on sites. This reinforces the conclusion that the GTAA is expressing a minimum need for pitches based on available information and an appreciation of the complexity of households and pitches at Middle Drove.
- 9.7 In order to meet its need for pitches, the council is recommended to consider intensifying and expanding existing sites; and regularising sites that are not permanent authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Some pitches are also likely to come available through household dissolution and some existing pitches are not believed to be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers.
- 9.8 This potential supply could provide 102 additional pitches. This has the potential to meet both the five-year needs and make a significant contribution to meeting longer-term needs.
- 9.9 Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.
- 9.10 Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving

into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

Transit provision

- 9.11 The council should consider how land can be provided for short-term use and particularly in response to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. It is recommended the Council collect further information on unauthorised encampments including number of caravans and length of stay to better inform a response to transit need.
- 9.12 Based on the evidence of unauthorised encampment activity, it is recommended that the council identifies appropriate land to meet short-term needs from travelling households and managed using a negotiated stopping agreement.

Travelling Showperson need

- 9.13 There is currently one Travelling Showperson yard in Huntingdonshire but this is not occupied. It is recommended that the council develop a criteria-based policy to consider any applications coming forward over the plan period.

Residential caravan park need

- 9.14 Across Huntingdonshire there are 13 residential caravan parks. These meet a range of affordable needs and predominantly provide accommodation for over 55s. Well-managed and well-designed parks have a role to play in providing residential accommodation and one park owner was interested in developing more residential parks within Huntingdonshire.

Boat dweller need

- 9.15 The council has an appropriate local plan policy LP38 to consider the need for residential moorings. Discussions with boatyard/marina owners and an Environment Agency representative would indicate a need for more residential moorings in Huntingdonshire and one marina is actively considering increasing the number of residential moorings. However, it is not possible to specify a specific number of moorings needed given the complexities of ownership of moorings, the interplay between the need for continuous cruisers and residential moorings and the business objectives of individual marinas.

Future updating

- 9.16 The GTAA should be updated on a 5-yearly basis to ensure that the level of pitch and plot provision remains appropriate for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson population across Huntingdonshire. A future review should also reflect on changes in demand for houseboat dwellers and general caravan dwellers.

Appendix A: Gypsy and Traveller Fieldwork Questionnaire

Date and Time	
Site Reference	
Address	
General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and Data Protection	<p>This study is being done for your local council to identify if there is a need for more residential pitches and transit provision in the area. A report will be prepared based on the findings of these surveys.</p> <p>The information you provide will not be used to identify you personally, will be kept strictly confidential. Anonymous survey data may be shared with the council.</p>
Can you please say if you are happy to carry on with the questionnaire on this basis?	<p>Yes No</p>

1	Pitch/Property Type (and tenure if B&M)	
2	No. Statics/mobiles/chalets or bricks and mortar	
3	No. tourers/caravans	
4	Description of pitch occupancy	
5	No. households	
6	No. concealed households	
7	No. doubled up households	
8	Does anyone else use this pitch as their home? If so, who	

9	HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS			
		Gender	Age	Relationship to respondent
	Respondent			
	Person 2			
	Person 3			
	Person 4			
	Person 5			
	Person 6			
	Person 7			
	Person 8			

10	ETHNICITY	
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11	How many bedspaces are there on your pitch?	
12	Overcrowding of home	Y / N
13	Overcrowding of pitch	Y / N
14	Thinking back to when you were 15, were you living on a site, on the roadside or living in bricks and mortar housing?	S, R, B&M
15	Where were you living? Record district/settlement name	

	TRAVELLING QUESTIONS	
16	In the last year have you or someone in your household travelled?	Y / N
17	If yes, reason(s) for travelling	
18	If yes, please describe when and where do you travel? (if relevant)	
19	If no, what reasons do you or your household have for not travelling now or in the future?	

	WHERE YOU PLAN TO LIVE IN THE FUTURE	
20	Are you planning to move to another place to live in the next 5 years?	Y / N
21	Why are you planning to move ?	
22	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing)	
23	What type of dwelling ? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)	
24	If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics)	

	IF IN B&M HOUSING	
25	If you live in bricks and mortar housing, are you happy to live here or would you prefer to live on a pitch?	Happy Here / Prefer pitch
26	If you would prefer to live on a pitch is this because you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar (this means if affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed)?	Y / N

	EMERGING HOUSEHOLDS	
27	Emerging households: Are there any people in your household who want to move to their own pitch in the next 5 yrs?	Y / N

		HH1	HH2	HH3	HH4
28	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing)				
29	What type of dwelling ? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)				
30	If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics)				
31	If living in bricks and mortar do you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar? (this means if affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed)	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

	ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL PITCHES	
32	Scope to expand site (extend the boundary of the site)	Y / N
33	No. additional pitches	
34	Scope to intensify pitches (put more pitches on the existing site)	Y / N
35	No. additional pitches	
36	Are there any vacant pitches on the site which could be used by another family? If so how many pitches	
37	In general, is there a need for more authorised pitches (for people to live on all the time?) in this district?	Y / N
38	If so, now many are needed?	
39	Who should own them (Council, people from the Traveller Community, non-Travellers)	
40	Do you own any land or know of anywhere within the district which could be considered for development as a site?	

	TRANSIT AND TEMPORARY STOPOVER NEED	
41	Is there a need to provide places where people can stop whilst travelling through the district? This can include transit pitches or stopover places	Y / N
42	Is there a need for transit pitches (for people stopping over temporarily) in the district? A transit pitch is intended for short-term use and usually includes space for two caravans, parking space and access to electricity, a toilet, washing facilities	Y / N
43	If so, how many are needed?	
44	Who should manage them ? (Council, Traveller Community)	
45	Where should they be located?	
46	Is there a need for stopover places? A stopover place is land which can be used on a temporary basis and usually include access to portaloos, waste disposal and water	Y / N
47	If so, how many are needed?	
48	Who should manage them ? (Council, Traveller Community)	
49	Where should they be located?	

RESIDENTIAL HISTORY		
50	How many years have you lived here?	
Routing	If more than five years	Go to Q56
	If five years or less	Go to Q51
51	Where did you move from? (District)	
52	Were you living on a Private Site, Council Site, Roadside or Bricks and Mortar housing?	
53	When you moved here, was the pitch vacant, a brand new pitch or had the pitch been created by dividing up an existing pitch?	
54	What were the reasons for moving here?	
55	Did you already have a connection with the area ? (e.g. family or friends living here; or you used to live here?)	

SUPPORT NEEDS	
56	Do you or a member of your household have any health-related needs? Could you please explain what they are?

FINAL QUESTIONS	
57	Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your housing or support needs?
58	Do you know anyone in bricks and mortar housing looking to live on a pitch? If so, can you provide contact details

OTHER COMMENTS

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

Bargee Travellers: Itinerant boat dwellers on Britain’s inland and coastal waterways. This includes anyone whose home is a boat and who does not have a permanent mooring for their boat with planning permission for residential use.

Caravans: Mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as trailers.

CJ&POA: Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994; includes powers for local authorities and police to act against unauthorised encampments.

CRE: Commission for Racial Equality.

Duty to cooperate: introduced in the Localism Act 2011 and is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It placed a legal duty on local planning authorities in England to engage constructive, actively and on an ongoing basis with prescribed bodies on the preparation of a Local Plan. The Duty, as a legal test, has now been rescinded by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. This has replaced the legal test with a soundness test (in national policy).

Gypsies and Travellers: Defined in MHCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites 2024* annex 1 as “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, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

Irish Traveller: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland and have been in England since the mid nineteenth century. They have been recognised as an ethnic group since August 2000 in England and Wales (*O’Leary v Allied Domecq*).

MHCLG: Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government. Previously renamed DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in 2021 from the MHCLG in 2018. The ministry has oversight of policies to meet the needs Gypsies and Travellers in England.

Mobile home: Legally a ‘caravan’ but not usually capable of being moved by towing.

Negotiated Stopping: 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 a bit of land more suitable for all parties. 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 has so far included Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise and the Local Authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. See www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk for more information.

Pitch: Area of land on a Gypsy/Traveller site occupied by one resident family; sometimes referred to as a plot, especially when referring to Travelling Showpeople. DCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* (August 2015, amended December 2023) states that “For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often

called a “yard”). *This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use plots for “travelling showpeople”, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment”.*

Plot: see pitch

PPTS: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2012 and 2015 editions) and amended in December 2024.

Roadside: Term used here to indicate families on unauthorised encampments, whether literally on the roadside or on other locations such as fields, car parks or other open spaces.

Roma: Migrant populations from Central and Eastern Europe that have arrived in the UK in the last half-century. It is an umbrella term used to describe sub-groups including Sinti, Lovari, Erldes and others.

Romany: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origin back to migrations, probably from India, taking place at intervals since before 1500. Gypsies have been a recognised ethnic group for the purposes of British race relations legislation since 1988 (CRE V Dutton).

Sheds: On most residential Gypsy/Traveller sites 'shed' refers to a small basic building with plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC, sink), which are provided at the rate of one per pitch/plot. Some contain a cooker and basic kitchen facilities.

Showpeople: Defined by DCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites 2015* (amended in December 2023) as *“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above”.*

Site (Gypsy and Traveller): An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy/Traveller caravans; often though not always comprising slabs and amenity blocks or ‘sheds’. An authorised site will have planning permission. An unauthorised development lacks planning permission.

Slab: An area of concrete or tarmac on sites allocated to a household for the parking of trailers (caravans).

Stopping places/stopover sites: A term used to denote an unauthorised temporary camping area tolerated by local authorities, used by Gypsies and Travellers for short-term encampments, and sometimes with the provision of temporary toilet facilities, water supplies and refuse collection services.

Tolerated site: An unauthorised encampment/site where a local authority has decided not to take enforcement action to seek its removal.

Trailers: Term used for mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as caravans.

Transit site: A site intended for short-term use while in transit. The site is usually permanent and authorised, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

Unauthorised development: Establishment of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission, usually on land owned by those establishing the site.

Unauthorised development may involve ground works for roadways and hard standings. People parking caravans on their own land without planning permission are not Unauthorised Encampments in that they cannot trespass on their own land – they are therefore Unauthorised Developments and enforcement is always dealt with by local planning authorities enforcing planning legislation.

Unauthorised encampment: Land where Gypsies or Travellers reside in vehicles or tents without permission. Unauthorised encampments can occur in a variety of locations (roadside, car parks, parks, fields, etc.) and constitute trespass. The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act made it a criminal offence to camp on land without the owner's consent. Unauthorised encampments fall into two main categories: those on land owned by local authorities and those on privately owned land. It is up to the landowner to take enforcement action in conjunction with the police.

Wagons: This is the preferred term for the vehicles used for accommodation by Travelling Showpeople.

Yards: Travelling Showpeople travel in connection with their work and therefore live, almost universally, in wagons. During the winter months these are parked up in what was traditionally known as 'winter quarters. These 'yards' are now often occupied all year around by some family members.