

FINAL DRAFT

**JOINT GYPSY AND TRAVELLER
ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT**

**BIRMINGHAM, COVENTRY AND SOLIHULL
COUNCILS**

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

**CENTRE FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**

MARCH 2008

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	1
Definitions	1
Conventions	3
2. Study Methodology	4
Secondary Information	4
Partner and Stakeholder Consultation	5
Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers	5
3. Planning and Sites Policy Context	10
National Policy	10
The West Midlands Region	11
Study Area Planning Policies	12
Planning Applications for Sites	14
4. The Local Gypsy and Traveller Population	15
Age and Gender	15
Household Size and Type	16
Ethnicity	18
Local Connections	19
5. Current Site Provision	20
The Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count	20
Numbers and Types of Sites	21
Local Authority Sites	22
Authorised Private Sites	25
Unauthorised Sites	28
6. Unauthorised Encampments	31
The Policy Context	31
Incidence of Unauthorised Encampments	32
7. Housing	35
The Policy Context	35
Gypsies and Travellers in Social Housing	37
Survey Findings : Respondents in Housing	39

	Page
8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns	44
Length of Residence	44
Housing Histories	45
Movement Intentions	48
Travelling	49
9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation	53
Need/Demand for Residential Site Places from Existing Households	53
Need/Demand for Housing from Existing Households	56
Need/Demand for Transit Sites	56
New Household Formation	58
General Views on Different Types of Accommodation	59
Perceptions of Need	62
10. Employment, Health, Education and Discrimination	64
Employment	64
Health Issues	65
Education	65
Discrimination	66
11: Housing-Related Support Services	68
Methodology	68
Strategic Context: Supporting People Strategies and Housing-Related Support Need Assessments	68
Existing Specialist Housing Related Support Services for Gypsies and Travellers	70
Access to Housing-Related Support Services	71
Usage of Existing Housing-Related Support Services	72
Housing-Related Support Needs and Service Gaps – Stakeholder and Providers’ Views	74
Evidence of Support Needs from Gypsy and Traveller Interviews	74
Conclusions	76
12. Assessing Accommodation Needs	78
Assessing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs	78
Additional Residential Pitch Requirements	81
Additional Transit Pitch Requirements	87
Need for Bricks and Mortar Housing	89
13. Travelling Showpeople	91
Current Provision	91
Future Needs	92
14. Conclusions	94

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great many people have contributed to this report by providing information, answering questions and generally helping the research process. We would like to thank them all.

We thank all the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in the survey interviews. In particular we are grateful to our interviewers – John Coffey, Sharon Finney, Dave Fisher and Mary Philbin – for all their hard work.

Pat Niner
Sian Sankey

GLOSSARY

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

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

Cara : Cara Housing Association which provides a floating support service for Gypsies and Travellers in Solihull and Birmingham.

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

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

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

Double pitch : **Pitch** of a Gypsy and Traveller site large enough to accommodate at least two living vehicles.

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

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

Gorgio : Term used by Gypsies for non-Gypsy people.

Gypsy : (or Romany or English Gypsy) Since the case of *CRE v Dutton* in 1989 Romany Gypsies, who form the majority of the estimated c300,000 **Gypsies and Travellers** in Britain, have been recognised as a distinct ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act 1976 (and subsequently the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000). This group is included within the definition of **Gypsies and Travellers** throughout this report.

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

Irish Traveller : Member of one of the main groups of **Gypsies and Travellers** in Britain. Irish Travellers are thought to have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland. Irish Travellers were recognised as a distinct ethnic group in the *O'Leary v Allied Domecq* case in 2000. This group is included within the definition of **Gypsies and Travellers** throughout this report.

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

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

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

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

Plot : A **pitch** on a **site** or **yard** occupied by **Travelling Showpeople** (use of the term stems from CLG Circular 04/2007).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WMCESTC : West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Travelling Children

Yard : Term used for a **plot** or **site** occupied by Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies and Travellers also use the term for a small **site** or a house with land which can accommodate trailers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S1. This Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull has been carried out by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, with Lynne Beighton of LTB Consultancy Ltd. Its main objective is to quantify the current and future need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the Study Area.

S2. There is a new policy framework for provision of site accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. The Housing Act 2004 requires local authorities to carry out assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and to develop strategies to meet identified need through public or private site provision. Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is available for site provision by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. In addition, local housing authorities have responsibilities towards homeless Gypsies and Travellers as towards any homeless person. Authorities are responsible for managing unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers.

S3. There is a regional role in site provision. This GTAA is one of a series of 6 sub-regional assessments being carried out in the West Midlands Region. As well as providing information to the commissioning Partner authorities to assist with their own strategies, its findings will contribute to the evidence base for Phase Three of the Regional Spatial Strategy Revision in the West Midlands. The Regional Assembly will consider future pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers in the light of evidence of needs from the GTAAs and take a strategic overview to produce pitch allocation numbers in the RSS which local authorities must provide within their Local Development Frameworks.

S4. The methodology adopted in the study complies with current good practice guidance. It combines secondary data, stakeholder consultation and a survey involving 108 structured interviews with Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing. Interviews were achieved in all local authorities. A lengthy semi-structured interview was carried out with the owner of the only site for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area. Overall, the response is adequate to provide robust findings. The exception is people involved in transient unauthorised encampments; none could be interviewed because of the low level of encampment during the fieldwork period.

S5. The main findings of the study are summarised in Chapter 14 of the report. Features of current accommodation are described here as a prelude to a summary of the assessed need for additional pitches and housing.

Current Accommodation Provision

S6. There are estimated to be just under 300 Gypsy and Traveller households across the Study Area, two-thirds of whom live in bricks and mortar housing, and a third on sites.

S7. The table shows current site provision by local authority, distinguishing between local authority and private authorised sites, and long-term unauthorised sites on Gypsy-owned and other land.

Residential Site Provision in the Study Area (Occupied Pitches)						
Local authority	Local authority		Private		Long-term unauth.	
	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches
Birmingham	1	6	1	4	-	-
Coventry	1 ⁽¹⁾	4	1	16	-	-
Solihull	-	-	4	37	4	9
Study Area	2	10	6	57	4	9

⁽¹⁾ The Siskin Drive site in Coventry is owned by the local authority, but managed under contract by a private company.

S8. Both local authority sites are currently under-occupied and have management problems concerning current residents. The private sites are stable (including unauthorised sites) and popular with residents.

S9. About half of all housed Gypsies and Travellers are estimated to live in Birmingham where they are spread over many areas of the City. The survey showed that 46% of housed Gypsies and Travellers were owner-occupiers, 28% were social tenants and 26% private tenants. This corresponds to a strong preference for ownership.

S10. An average of around 50 separate transient unauthorised encampments occur in a year. This represents a big decrease over the last 5 years. Most encampments are small (average 3-4 caravans) and short in duration (average 12 days in Birmingham and 4 days in Coventry). While active enforcement policies are pursued, actual evictions are rare.

Future Accommodation Need

S11. Requirements for additional residential pitches to 2007-2012 were estimated using a model which includes consideration of family increase, unauthorised sites, transient unauthorised encampments and net movement between sites and houses. Needs between 2012 and 2017 were estimated on the basis of family increase alone. The estimates are on the basis of **'need where it arises'**, and thus reflect current settlement patterns. The RSS will take a more strategic view of regional needs in forming pitch allocations for 'need where it should be met'.

S12. The estimates include assumptions about the future of the 2 local authority sites. Tameside Drive in Birmingham is assumed to revert to its nominal transit use. Siskin Drive in Coventry is assumed to be refurbished and remodelled to provide fewer, larger pitches and amenity units which better meet modern design standards. These assumptions seek to ensure that future provision meets reasonable aspirations and expectations, and is sustainable.

S13. The table summarises residential pitch requirements at local authority level. The assumption is that each family/household will require a separate pitch.

Estimates of Additional Residential Pitch Needs by Local Authority			
	Birmingham	Coventry	Solihull
Additional pitches needed 2007-2012	16	7	17
Estimated pitch supply 2007-2012	0	11	0
Net additional pitch requirement 2007-2012	16	-4	17
Estimated family formation 2012-2017	3	3	9
Total additional pitch requirement 2007-2017	19	-1	26

S14. There is likely to be continuing demand for the development of private sites, and for the expansion of some existing family sites. Expansion at Birmingham Airport could lead to the displacement of a site and further requirements not included above.

S15. Need for transit accommodation suggests that the Tameside Drive site in Birmingham should be refurbished for transit use. In Coventry and Solihull formal provision may not be necessary although authorities should identify land for use as temporary stopping places to avoid nuisance caused by uncontrolled encampments in unsuitable areas. Travelling patterns and the incidence of encampments should be monitored and transit provision reviewed on a regular basis.

S16. Family increase and possible inward migration will create continuing need for housing for Gypsies and Travellers. Levels of need are likely to be insignificant relative to the size of the housing stock and no particular policy responses seem called for. Most need is likely to be met in the private sector in line with expressed preferences. In the social sector sensitive allocation policies should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are not isolated from others of their community, and are able wherever possible to keep a caravan or trailer to maintain identity and lifestyle.

S17. There is a single site occupied by Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area located in Birmingham. This is overcrowded. Overcrowding is affecting business operations as well as quality of life for residents. Family increase cannot be accommodated leading to unwelcome dispersal of the Showmen community. The site needs to re-locate to a larger site (15-20 acres ideal) where a depot can be developed to meet both business and residential requirements.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2007, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, with Lynne Beighton of LTB Consultancy Ltd, was commissioned by the Partner Councils to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the Study Area covering the areas of Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull Councils.

1.2 The objectives of the study are to quantify the current and future need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the Study Area. The brief asked a number of specific questions which have been addressed through the survey. The study has been carried out in such a way as to meet current good practice guidance for such assessments.

1.3 Chapter 2 sets out the study methodology. Chapter 3 briefly describes the policy background at national, regional and local levels. Study findings are presented in the following chapters: the characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers (4); site provision (5); unauthorised encampments (6); housing (7); mobility: housing histories and intentions and travelling patterns (8); perceptions of need, aspirations and household formation (9); employment, health and education (10); and housing-related support services (11). Chapter 12 estimates need for residential pitches, transit pitches and bricks and mortar housing. Chapter 13 covers Travelling Showpeople and their needs. The final chapter (14) draws conclusions from the study.

Definitions

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

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

The definition for land use planning purposes as set by ODPM Circular 01/2006² is narrower, excluding paragraph (a) from the above definition and excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.

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

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

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

1.6 '**Sites**' are broadly defined as areas of land being used, temporarily or permanently, for the stationing of Gypsy and Traveller caravans used for living. Authorised sites have planning consent. They may be owned privately or by the local authority, and may be more or less well developed with provision of amenity buildings and other infrastructure. Unauthorised sites do not have planning permission for use as a site. Again they may be owned by Gypsies or Travellers (usually referred to as unauthorised development) or some other landowner including private and public bodies. Unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies or Travellers are usually referred to as unauthorised encampments. They may be long-term (having been allowed to remain in place for some months or years) or transient where they are normally subject to enforcement action to move them on. The latter category is sometimes referred to in a generic way as 'roadside' although the encampments may occur on industrial estates or car parks or playing fields.

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

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

And for housed Gypsies and Travellers, households:

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

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

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

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

'demand' rather than 'need', we believe that this is justifiable for two different reasons:

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

1.9 Need is assessed at the level of a single family unit or household (broadly a group of people who regularly live and eat together). On Gypsy and Traveller sites, this is assumed to equate to a 'pitch'; in housing, to a separate dwelling.

1.10 Needs are estimated in Chapter 12 as at 31 December 2007, and are expressed for the 5 year periods 2007-2012 and 2012-2017.

Conventions

1.11 Two conventions are followed in this report:

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

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

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

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

2.3 The GTAA has drawn on three sources:

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

Each is described below.

Secondary Information

2.4 Five main sources of secondary information were drawn upon:

- The general literature about Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues and policy development. This provides contextual information for the GTAA.
- Partner local authorities provided information on site provision and policies related to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues through a questionnaire.
- Local Plans, Core Strategy papers and other documents forming part of emerging Local Development Frameworks were reviewed. Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies were examined. These provide a local policy framework for the study.
- Supporting People Strategies were reviewed and data analysed on the usage of housing-related support services by Travellers since 2003, as recorded by the Supporting People Client Records Office. This included published data and supplementary data commissioned from the SP Client Records Office. A small-scale survey of agencies working with Gypsies and Travellers and (potentially) providing support was carried out (see Chapter 11 for details).

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

Partner and Stakeholder Consultation

2.5 A series of interviews was carried out with key stakeholders. In all, 12 stakeholders were interviewed individually or in small groups (excluding those specifically related to housing support services). Interviews were either face-to-face or by telephone. Together these interviews covered all parts of the Study Area and topics included Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, unauthorised encampment, health and education.

2.6 A wide range of stakeholders were consulted in late autumn 2007 in connection with housing-related support services. The details of who was contacted and their responses are reported in Chapter 11.

Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers

2.7 The heart of the research was a series of structured interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area aimed at providing information about their characteristics, circumstances and needs.

Sample Design

2.8 The principle behind **sample design** was to conduct as many interviews as possible on all the sites in the Study Area aiming for 100% coverage. The number of Gypsies and Travellers living in housing was unknown at the start of the research. The aim was to conduct a number of interviews with Gypsies and Traveller in housing in all three authorities, and a broad quota of between 30 and 50 interviews was set in order to provide a reasonable sample. The intention was to interview as many people as possible on roadside unauthorised encampments during the fieldwork period.

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

- The sample frame for local authority, authorised private sites, unauthorised developments and long-term unauthorised encampments came from the questionnaires completed by the Partner authorities. All sites were visited, often on several occasions in order to maximise

response. Site residents not interviewed were either consistently absent or declined to take part.

- The research team requested Partner authorities to inform them of transient unauthorised encampments in the area during the fieldwork period which extended over October, November and early December 2007. In the event, no encampments were experienced during this period in Coventry or Solihull. We were informed of one encampment (in Birmingham) but it had moved on by the time we visited on the following day. The survey has not been able to include any interviews with Gypsies and Travellers on transient unauthorised encampments.
- Partner authorities were unable to provide information allowing us to identify Gypsies and Travellers living in housing for interview. The West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Travelling Children (WMCESTC) is aware of many housed families, but were unable, for data protection reasons, to provide names and addresses. Some less formal approaches through the Consortium in Birmingham led to the collation of background information, but no-one contacted agreed to be interviewed. In the event, housed Gypsies and Travellers interviewed were identified through the Cara Housing Support team which works in Solihull, and two community interviewers (see below) who used their own community links. While this looked like being an extremely problematic area to begin with, it proved very successful and the quota was exceeded.
- There is only one site in the Study Area (in Birmingham) occupied by Travelling Showpeople. The site owner and his daughter, both resident on the site for part of the year, were interviewed.

The Questionnaires

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

2.11 Sections in the questionnaires dealt with:

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

2. Study Methodology

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

2.12 The questionnaires worked well and most interviews achieved a full response although community interviewers rarely recorded lengthy answers to open questions. Most answers given and analysed here can be regarded as reliable and as providing a sound basis for policy development.

2.13 The approach taken for Travelling Showpeople was more qualitative. The interview with the site owner and his daughter followed a topic guide rather than a structured questionnaire, and focused primarily on the current functioning of the site and general needs arising for the future. This was appropriate given the rather special circumstances involved (see Chapter 13).

Fieldwork and Interviewers

2.14 Three categories of **interviewer** were involved in the survey:

- Two workers from Cara carried out the bulk of interviews on sites and small number in houses. They were thoroughly briefed on the survey. They used their previous working contacts to identify interviewees, but stressed the independent nature of the survey and that it was not directly related to their support role.
- Two community interviewers were employed who had already worked on GTAAs in other areas either for CURS or the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at University of Salford. Both had already been trained in research techniques, but were also briefed on the project. Between them, they carried out the bulk of interviews with housed Gypsies and Travellers and a few on a site where one of the community interviewers was able to use extended family networks to gain access. Their contribution proved invaluable.
- The interview with Travelling Showpeople was carried out by CURS researchers.

2.15 Both male and female interviewers were involved, and the community interviewers came from different ethnic groups (an Irish Traveller and an English Gypsy). This mix enabled us to achieve a balanced sample of respondents in terms of gender and ethnicity.

2. Study Methodology

2.16 All interviewers used their own contacts in approaching Gypsies and Travellers for the survey, rather than being introduced on site by some third party.

Survey Response Rates

2.17 Table 2.1 shows achieved interviews. In the case of interviews on sites, response is expressed as a percentage of the estimated total population. For housing the response is assessed in relation to the indicative target set. Interviews were achieved on every site in the Study Area and we estimate that 62% of all site residents were interviewed (a good response rate in comparison to those achieved in other GTAAAs). The indicative target set for interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in housing was exceeded. No interviews were achieved on transient unauthorised encampments.

Type of accommodation	Population or indicative target	Sample	%
Local authority sites	Estimated population = 76	7	62% of estimated population
Private authorised sites		33	
Unauthorised development		4	
Long-term unauthorised encampments		3	
Housed	Indicative target = 30-50	61	153% of midpoint
Roadside	NA	-	NA
Showpeople	NA	1	NA
Total	NA	109	NA

2.18 Table 2.2 shows response by local authority area. Interviews were achieved in all local authorities. Broadly, the pattern reflects the distribution of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area. Chapter 5 will show that the greatest number of sites and occupied pitches are in Solihull.

Type of accommodation	Birmingham	Coventry	Solihull	Total
Local authority site	3	4	-	7
Private site	4	6	24	34
Unauthorised development	-	-	3	3
Long-term unauthorised encampment	-	-	3	3
Roadside	-	-	-	-
Housing	29	15	17	61
Travelling Showpeople	1	-	-	1
Total	37	25	47	109

2.19 Table 2.2 clearly shows the small sample sizes for unauthorised developments and encampments. This reflects reality, but presents some problems for presenting survey data without breaking the assurance of

2. Study Methodology

confidentiality given to respondents. Percentages based on sample sizes below 10 are generally regarded as suspect statistically. For these reasons, in this report most statistics of a personal nature are presented on the basis of sites as a whole and housing as whole, with more qualitative comments in the text where there seem to be important differences in response between either type of site or housing tenure. For similar reasons, analysis by local authority area is not possible.

2.20 The gender mix of interviewees was:

Male	50	46%
Female	42	39%
Couples	15	14%
Not recorded	1	1%

Most interviews were with men. This is an unusual pattern in GTAA's in areas which do not have high proportions of New Travellers. It may be attributable to employing male as well as female interviewers (see paragraph 2.15 above); Gypsy and Traveller men often feel happier talking to another man. The study provides a balanced range of views from men and women.

2.21 Overall, we would conclude that response rates were sufficient to provide a representative sample, and were adequate to ensure robust findings. Obviously, the survey sheds no light at all on the characteristics and needs of people on transient unauthorised encampments since none were interviewed.

3. PLANNING AND SITES POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

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

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

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

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

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

⁵ *Ibid*, pages 7 & 8

3. Planning and Sites Policy Context

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

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

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

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

3.4 New social rented Gypsy and Traveller sites are expected to contribute to site provision. Financial support is available through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants. Across England, up to £56 million has been made available over the years 2006/07 and 2007/08 and a further £97 million was announced in December 2007 for years 2008-2011. In August 2006, an Order⁶ came into force extending the permissible purposes of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to cover setting up and managing Gypsy and Traveller sites, and receiving grant to do so. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding through Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants. To date, there has been little interest in site provision from RSLs although the Housing Corporation hopes to encourage their greater participation.

3.5 Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is also still available for refurbishment of existing sites. Three sites in the West Midlands (in Dudley, Stoke-on-Trent and Stratford-on-Avon) received grant totalling £2.1 million in 2007/2008.

The West Midlands Region

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

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

3.7 The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently being revised. Gypsy and Traveller issues are part of Phase 3 of the RSS Revision process. An Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy⁷ was produced in March 2007

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

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

pending the completion of regional GTAAs. Table 3.1 shows the Interim Statement's assessment of requirements for additional pitches based entirely on secondary information sources.

Type of pitch	Date	Region	Study Area
Residential	2006-2011	510	20
Residential	2011-2016	220	No split given
Residential	2016-2121	210	No split given
Residential	2021-2026	190	No split given
Transit	Undated	120	No split given

Source : West Midlands RSS Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy

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

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

3.10 Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are part of Phase Three of the RSS Revision (along with rural services; culture, sport and tourism; quality of the environment; and minerals policy). The draft Project Plan⁸ envisages a timetable including submission of the preferred option to the Secretary of State in summer 2009 and final WMRSS Phase Three changes being published in summer 2010. The main evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller matters is a series of 6 sub-regional GTAAs (of which this is one). The findings of these studies are not yet published. Requirements for additional pitches estimated in the GTAAs are likely to be on a 'need where it arises' basis. One of the elements in the RSS Review process will be to take a strategic regional view of whether some need should be redistributed to other areas to move towards 'need where it should be met'. It is not yet clear on what grounds such a redistribution might be made. The Revision will result in an allocation of pitches to each local planning authority which must be provided for in their Local Development Frameworks.

Study Area Planning Policies

3.11 There is a policy towards Gypsy and Traveller site provision in the Unitary Development Plans of Birmingham and Coventry, but not Solihull. These are shown in Box 1 overleaf. Both include criteria against which site proposals will be assessed. The accompanying text (para 4.65) to Coventry's

⁸ West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Revision: Draft Project Plan, November 2007. See <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=216>

3. Planning and Sites Policy Context

Policy H14 says that the local authority will identify and develop a short-stay site for Travellers. This is on the basis of the change in role of the Siskin Drive site to long stay, and evidence of need for short-stay provision due to unauthorised encampments. No such site has been identified.

Box 1 : Unitary Development Plan Policies on Gypsy Site Provision	
Birmingham Plan (adopted 2005)	
	<p>5.41 <i>The City Council provides 15 pitches for travellers at an official site at Castle Vale. Should further provision be deemed necessary during the Plan period to meet the needs of travellers an additional site (or sites) will be identified. Any proposals that might be brought forward will take account of both the requirements of the travellers and the interests of local residents and other occupiers of land. The following development control criteria will be used to assess the suitability of proposed locations:-</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Suitable access to shops, schools, social and health services, employment and public transport.</i> 2. <i>Suitable access to the major road network.</i> 3. <i>Access to mains water and electricity supply.</i> 4. <i>Potential for future improvements in accordance with the needs of site dwellers.</i> 5. <i>The need to minimise any adverse environmental effects, eg. on the landscape and on agriculture.</i>
Coventry Development Plan 2001	
	<p>H14 – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS <i>Proposals for sites for Gypsies and Travellers must meet the following criteria:</i> <i>compatibility with nearby uses;</i> <i>avoiding adverse visual impact;</i> <i>suitability for their commercial activities;</i> <i>good access to the public highway, with sufficient space on-site for parking and turning;</i> <i>reasonable accessibility to local services and facilities;</i> <i>provision of defined boundaries with embankments and/or extensive landscaping and planting; and</i> <i>compatibility with other Plan policies.</i> <i>The City Council will carry out a study to identify a site for Gypsies and Travellers.</i></p>

3.12 At present there are no relevant policies for Gypsies and Travellers in current or emerging Development Plan Documents being produced under the revised planning system. No sites are currently being considered as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision.

3.13 When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, Birmingham referred to their UDP criteria. Coventry noted that a limited land supply and significant areas of Green Belt make it hard to identify possible locations. Solihull referred to:

- urban or rural locations but ideally not within the Green Belt if other realistic alternatives exist and not sited in Conservation Areas, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest,

3. Planning and Sites Policy Context

- Local Nature Reserves or on open space
 - proximity to a range of facilities, schools, shops, jobs, medical services etc
 - good/safe highway access
 - ability to connect to services, water etc
- Finding locations which meet these criteria will not be easy.

Planning Applications for Sites

3.14 The number of planning applications is sometimes seen as an indication of need/demand for sites. Only 4 planning applications for Gypsy caravan sites were noted since 2001 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 : Summary of Planning Applications and Outcomes Since 2001			
Year	Address	Pitches/caravans	Outcome
Birmingham			
2001	Stratford Street North, Sparkbrook	Not specified	Withdrawn
Coventry			
	None		
Solihull			
2005	Shadowbrook Lane, Hampton-in-Arden	2 caravans	Application refused, granted 3 year temporary consent on appeal
2005	Salter Street, Earlswood	2 caravans	Deemed application arising from an enforcement notice. Appeal dismissed and permission refused. Enforcement action not pursued fully
2007	Canal View, Salter Street, Earlswood	1 mobile home replacing 3 caravans	No decision yet. Application to regularise unauthorised use

Source : Information from Partner authorities

3.15 The 3 applications where a decision has been made resulted in a temporary approval for 2 caravans. Reasons given for refusal were inappropriate development in the Green Belt (both refused applications in Solihull) and unsatisfactory access (Shadowbrook Road). Both these sites appear in the survey. Shadowbrook Lane is treated as an authorised site on the basis of the temporary permission. Salter Street is classed as an unauthorised development; the 2007 application relates to another site in Salter Street which is also included in the survey as an unauthorised development.

4. THE LOCAL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POPULATION

4.1 This chapter describes some of the basic demographic characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population on sites and in bricks and mortar housing. It does not include Travelling Showpeople.

Age and Gender

4.2 Table 4.1 shows the age structure of all survey respondents. The figures relate to all household members. Information was provided by all but 1 respondent who gave ages of children but not of the 2 adults in the household. This is an unusually high response rate.

Age group	Sites		Housing	
	Number	%	Number	%
0-4	14	10	44	16
5-10	22	16	73	26
11-16	12	10	34	12
<i>All children</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>53</i>
17-24	19	14	24	9
25-39	25	18	59	21
40-49	18	13	23	9
50-59	13	9	6	2
60-74	15	11	18	6
75 and over	1	1	2	1
Total	139	100	283	100

Source : GTAA survey

4.3 The most striking feature of Table 4.1 is the contrast between the age profiles on sites and in housing. Both are youthful relative to the settled community. However, while around a third of household members on sites are children aged up to 16, over half of household members in housing are children. Only 12% on sites and 7% in housing are aged 60 or over. The proportion of young adults aged 17-24 (most likely to form new households in the near future) is higher on sites than in housing.

4.4 There were slightly more women (53%) among adults than men (47%) on sites, but an equal split in housing. This is because of a number of one-parent families on sites (none in housing) rather than the fact that women on the whole live longer than men which affects the gender balance in the settled population.

4. The Local Gypsy and Traveller Population

Household Size and Type

4.5 Table 4.2 shows the household size of respondents on sites and in housing. There is obviously a wide range of household size – from 1 person to 11 people. The most common household size on sites is 1 and 2 persons which together make up more than half of all households. In housing the spread is wider with 6, 4 and 2 persons households each taking a fifth or more of all households.

Number of people	Sites		Housing	
	Number	%	Number	%
1 person	13	28	1	2
2 people	11	23	13	21
3 people	7	15	5	8
4 people	6	13	12	20
5 people	6	13	10	16
6 people	3	6	14	23
7 people	1	2	1	2
8 people	-	-	1	2
9 people	-	-	3	5
11 people	-	-	1	2
Total	47	100	61	100

Source : GTAA survey

4.6 The average household size was 2.9 people on sites and 4.5 people in housing. Both are larger than the average household size in the whole population, those in housing being significantly so. There are some variations in average household size by type of site, and by housing tenure:

Unauthorised sites	3.5 people
Local authority site	4.3 people
Private site	2.5 people
Owner-occupier	4.8 people
Social rented tenant	4.1 people
Private tenant	4.7 people

Unauthorised sites here include both unauthorised developments and a long-term encampment. It is interesting that among the sited population, household sizes are higher on social than on private sites while in housing, households are larger in the private than in the social sector. This might reflect problems large families have in accessing social rented housing where landlords are concerned to avoid overcrowding when making lettings.

4.7 Household size is related to the type of household. Table 4.3 shows this for the sited and housed samples. The classification of households here is as follows. 'Young adults' are 'children' of the family but aged more than 16.

Single person	1 adult – divided between those aged under 60 and those aged 60 and over
Couple	2 adults, no children or 'young adults' – divided

4. The Local Gypsy and Traveller Population

	between those where neither is aged 60 or over and those where one or both is 60 or over
Young family	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more aged up to 16; no 'young adults'
Older family	All adult family with 1 or more classed as 'young adults' who are neither the head the household nor spouse/partner of the head
Mixed family	Family with children up to 16 and 'young adults'
Other	3 or more adults, none classed a 'young adults' (for example, 3 adult siblings living together in a 3 person household)

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

Household type	Sites	Housing
Sample size	47	61
	%	%
Single person 60 and over	11	2
Single person under 60	17	-
Couple – 1 or both aged 60 and over	6	15
Couple – both under 60	9	7
Young family	28	67
Older family	17	2
Mixed family	11	7
Other	2	2

Source : GTAA survey

4.8 The sites sample shows a range of household types. While over a quarter are young families, the largest single category, all other household types are represented including older and mixed families (together 28%) where family formation can be expected to take place. An interesting feature of the distribution is the number of younger single person households. These are not 'young', but tend to be people in their 30s, 40s and 50s who have either never married or have lost a partner and are now living independently within their extended family on a private site. This phenomenon has not, to my knowledge, been noted elsewhere.

4.9 The pattern of household type in housing is very different, with two dominant household types – young families and older couples. Less than a tenth of the sample is an older or mixed family, and very few are single person households. All the young families were two-parent families. This is slightly surprising given that domestic violence is one of the known triggers for Gypsies and Travellers to move into housing. Information provided from WMCESTC on 39 Gypsies and Travellers in housing who allowed some of their details to be passed to the research team showed that almost a quarter comprised a family with children but only one parent. It may be that single parent families are more likely to come into contact with Traveller Education workers, or that the networks of our survey interviewers tended to exclude single parents. In reality, the household type structure of Gypsies and

4. The Local Gypsy and Traveller Population

Travellers living in housing in the Study Area may be less polarised and more varied than indicated in Table 4.3.

Ethnicity

4.10 Respondents were asked to say how they thought of themselves in terms of a number of broad Gypsy and Traveller groupings. All but 2 gave an answer. Irish Travellers were the largest group among both sited and housed samples, followed by Romany Gypsy (English)⁹. There was a wider range of Gypsy Traveller groups in housing, including 2 Roma from Bosnia¹⁰.

Gypsy Traveller group	Sites	Housing
Sample size	47	61
	%	%
Romany Gypsy (English)	40	33
Welsh/Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	6	3
Irish Traveller	51	54
New Traveller	-	3
Traveller	-	2
Roma	-	3
No answer	2	2

Source : GTAA survey

4.11 The main groupings have slightly different household profiles. Both on sites and in houses, Irish Travellers have larger households than Romany Gypsies. On sites the respective average household sizes are 3.5 people and 2.1 people; in housing they are 5.1 and 4.2 people.

4.12 The different ethnic groups also have different household profiles. This is particularly striking on sites where only 32% of Romany Gypsy households are families, and all of these are either older or mixed families. In contrast, 75% of Irish Traveller households are families of which 72% are young families. Over a quarter of Romany Gypsy households on sites are older singles or couples. In housing, there are few differences between the groups, and among both Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers young families are by far the most significant household group (70% among Romany Gypsies and 67% among Irish Travellers).

4.13 These findings underline differences between the demographic characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing in the Study Area. Issues of old age are going to arise particularly for Romany Gypsies on sites, while in housing concerns of young families are likely to predominate.

⁹ The ethnic profile in Table 5.4 for housed Gypsies and Travellers is broadly similar to that from the WMCESTC information for Birmingham.

¹⁰ The local authority questionnaire revealed that Birmingham and Coventry are aware of Roma among refugees and new migrants, but not of their number or characteristics. Needs are generally being met through policies for refugees and new migrants rather than those focusing on Gypsies and Travellers.

Local Connections

4.14 The survey asked people whether they would say that they were local to 'this area'. Different respondents may, of course, have interpreted 'this area' more widely than others. 77% of respondents on sites said that they were local to the area, compared with 49% of those in housing.

4.15 On sites, there was little difference between Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers in perceptions of being local to the area. In housing, two-thirds of Romany Gypsies felt they were local compared with 39% of Irish Travellers.

4.16 The most important reasons for stopping in the area are:

Have family living in the area	89% on sites; 79% in housing
Schools	32% on sites; 15% in housing
Place of birth	17% on sites; 30% in housing
Work opportunities	30% on sites; 18% in housing

Among other reasons given for stopping in the area, several respondents both on sites and in housing referred to ownership of their site or house. This obviously increases the feeling of belonging in the area.

4.17 Having family living in the area is the most important link for Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, in housing and on sites. There were cases where people had moved to the Study Area specifically to be near family.

4.18 All respondents on sites had other members of their family – in addition to their immediate family – living nearby, as did 89% of respondents in housing (100% of Irish Travellers and 65% of Romany Gypsies). 94% of respondents on sites thought it important to them to have family members nearby, compared with 80% in housing. There were few differences here by ethnic group.

4.19 Given the importance of family links to Gypsies and Travellers, it is likely that any area of settlement such as the Study Area will continue to attract other family members, perhaps as they become older and need support.

5. CURRENT SITE PROVISION

5.1 This chapter looks at current site provision – authorised and long-term unauthorised – in the Study Area. The first section briefly presents information from the Caravan Counts. The next section seeks to establish the number and type of sites which will act as the base for needs estimates in Chapter 12. Sections follow on local authority sites, authorised private sites and long-term unauthorised sites.

The Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count

5.2 The Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans is carried out by local authorities each January and July, and published by Communities and Local Government. Returns by the Study Area authorities have not always been complete and consistent. Coupled with the generally small numbers involved, this means that detailed analysis of numbers or trends could prove misleading.

5.3 Table 5.1 shows the number of caravans by type of site in the Study Area at local authority level in January 2007. The figures for Solihull have been corrected by the local authority. The footnote explains Coventry figures for private sites.

Type of site	Study Area	Birmingham	Coventry	Solihull
Socially rented	10	10	-	-
Private	47	4	4 ⁽¹⁾	39
Unauthorised – Gypsy-owned land	12	-	-	12
Unauthorised – other land	5	-	-	5
Total	74	14	4	56⁽²⁾

Source : Caravan Counts and information from Partner authorities

⁽¹⁾ This figure represents 4 caravans on the Siskin Drive site in Coventry which are shown as 'private' because of a site management agreement with a private company. Caravans on the Burbages Lane site are not included. This, therefore, under-states caravan numbers.

⁽²⁾ Caravan numbers on private sites and on the unauthorised sites in Solihull were incorrectly returned by Solihull (40 instead of the correct figure of 56). The figures here have been corrected and do not correspond to the published figures.

5.4 The Study Area total was 74 caravans. Three-quarters were in Solihull. 69% were on either private sites or on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but without planning consent. Compared with England as a whole and the West Midlands Region, the Study Area has:

- Relatively low proportions of caravans on social rented sites, reflecting the under-occupation of sites (see below). The Study Area is unusual in this respect compared with other conurbation areas.

- Relatively high proportions of caravans on private sites, especially in Solihull.

5.5 The January 1994 Count showed a total of 117 caravans in the Study Area. There was thus a significant decrease in caravan numbers between 1994 (117) and 2007 (74). An increase in the number of caravans on private sites over the period has not compensated for falling numbers on social rented sites and on unauthorised sites (where numbers roughly halved). Caravan numbers on authorised sites were virtually unchanged over the period suggesting that any natural population increase generated has not been accommodated on authorised sites in the Study Area. The decrease in numbers on unauthorised sites has also had a geographical dimension in that Birmingham had highest caravan numbers in 1994 but now has many fewer than Solihull.

Numbers and Types of Sites

5.6 We have built up a comprehensive picture of current site provision across the Study Area from information provided by Partner authorities and the GTAA survey itself. This estimate of current provision does not rely on the Caravan Counts. Table 5.1 shows the estimated number of sites and pitches by type of site and local authority as at December 2007. On authorised private sites, the pitch capacity is estimated in part on the basis of survey answers on the number of 'independent', though often inter-related, family units there. The figure for local authority site pitches relates to occupied pitches rather than notional capacity.

Local authority	Local authority		Private		Long-term unauth.	
	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches
Birmingham	1	6 ⁽¹⁾	1	4	-	-
Coventry	1	4 ⁽¹⁾	1	16	-	-
Solihull	-	-	4	37	4 ⁽²⁾	9
Study Area	2	10	6	57	4	9

Source : Partner authorities, Caravan Count and GTAA survey

⁽¹⁾ These are estimates for occupied pitches reached with reference to the Caravan Count and the survey.

⁽²⁾ This includes 3 unauthorised developments and 1 long-term tolerated unauthorised encampments. Pitch numbers are estimated from survey responses.

Local Authority Sites

5.7 The number of sites provided by local authorities has been static since 1994, and there are no firm plans to provide further sites. There are currently 2 sites in the Study Area which are owned by a local authority:

Tameside Drive, Castle Vale, owned by Birmingham City Council

Siskin Drive, Toll Bar End, owned by Coventry City Council

Both are to an extent problematic as illustrated by Table 5.2.

	Tameside Drive	Siskin Drive
Total pitches	15	22
Residential:		
All	-	22
Occupied	-	4
Vacant/closed	-	18
Transit:		
All	15	-
Occupied	1 extended family, estimated 6 'units'	-
Vacant/closed	??	-

5.8 Nominally there are 37 pitches at the two sites. Of these, the minority – estimated as 10 – are currently occupied and neither site is effectively open for new tenants at present.

Tameside Drive

5.9 The site appears as a transit site in the Caravan Count, but is occupied on a permanent basis by a single extended family¹¹. There has been a lengthy legal dispute between the City Council and the occupier. The site is effectively not managed and no information is available about management policies, which are currently irrelevant. The longer-term intention is to regain possession of the site and to refurbish it as a transit site. There are serious environmental concerns about the site, especially as a residential site, because of its location adjacent to the M6 and surrounding industrial land uses. The site itself has been extensively vandalised and is not in a state to re-let.

Siskin Drive

5.10 This site is owned by Coventry City Council. It was leased to a Gypsy Traveller who managed the site while living there for some years, and is still resident. The management arrangement was terminated in 2006. Since then, the site has been managed on temporary contracts by a private company (Westgate) while the site's longer-term future is determined. The objective is to find a long-term manager able to resolve current issues and for the site to be refurbished for continuing use on a permanent residential basis.

¹¹ One person interviewed was on the site as a visitor, suggesting that it may still fulfil a transit function to a limited extent at the discretion of other occupiers.

5.11 Individual pitches are small with no clearly demarcated boundaries. Amenity units are also very small with no room for kitchen appliances. Many are in very poor condition and would need to be repaired at least before an unoccupied pitch could be let.

5.12 Some management information was provided:

- Licensees are permitted to be absent for up to 12 weeks in a year while travelling; full rent is payable during their absence.
- Licensees can have visitors on site with trailers for a period of up to 2 weeks with the consent of the manager.
- There is no site waiting list and no formal pitch allocation policy. Recent allocations proved unsuccessful with families staying a matter of days only. No attempt is being made to let pitches currently.
- Most site residents are Irish Travellers. There is one non-Gypsy Traveller who owns a mobile home on the site which she is said to have bought without realising it was on a Gypsy Traveller site.
- There are 2 chalets on site, 1 static caravan and 2 touring caravans.
- The respondent to the local authority questionnaire assessed the site as average for general surroundings and environment and for location in respect of schools and shops, and poor for physical condition and maintenance.

Residents' Views on Local Authority Sites

5.13 7 survey respondents were living on a local authority site and answered questions about the site and their opinions about it.

Living Units, Space and Amenities

5.14 2 respondents had a single living unit and 5 had 2 giving an average number of 1.7. Only 1 respondent said that they did not have enough space for their families needs; they wanted more or bigger caravans rather than a larger pitch. Larger families had more living units – all households of 4 or more people had 2 living units.

5.15 All local authority site residents have water, mains electricity and an amenity unit including a WC and a shower and/or bath. All respondents said that there was children's play space on the site, although this is not formal provision. A small number of respondents said that they did not have:

Heating in the amenity unit	3 respondents
Laundry facilities	1 respondent
Space for sitting/eating	1 respondent

5.16 2 respondents said that there was no space on their pitch for visitors with caravans. This was seen as a problem by one since family members could not come and stay there.

Other Site Features

5.17 Despite the perceived problems on both sites, residents seemed relatively content on some aspects at least. Table 5.3 summarises answers given to questions asking residents to rate their site on a number of criteria. There are more positive than negative answers on size of pitch, design of site, neighbours on site and location. There are more negative than positive answers on site facilities and management. Given objective realities, this is perhaps not surprising.

	Sample		Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	No answer
Size of pitch	7	No.	-	7	-	-	-	-
Design of site	7	No.	-	3	4	-	-	-
Neighbours on site	7	No.	1	4	2	-	-	-
Location of site	7	No.	1	3	1	2	-	-
Facilities on site	7	No.	-	-	3	3	1	-
Management of site	7	No.	-	-	3	3	1	-

Source : GTAA survey

5.18 One respondent (Tameside Drive) expressed concern over safety or security on the site, fearing his caravan might get vandalised. Another respondent (Siskin Drive) noted that anyone could come onto the site and dump rubbish although this did not make them feel unsafe.

5.19 When asked about specific problems affecting their site, answers were:

Nearness to busy roads	3 respondents
Nearness to rubbish tip/sewage works/pylons	3 respondents
Flooding or poor drainage	1 respondent
Nearness to railway or airport	1 respondent
Nearness to industrial site	1 respondent

Tameside Drive scored significantly worse than Siskin Drive on the incidence of problems.

5.20 Respondents were asked what one or two things would most improve their site. All mentioned something. At Siskin Drive the emphasis was on amenity units, wanting them to be rebuilt; one wanted a larger unit with a day room for eating and cooking. Site lighting was also mentioned, and one wanted a gate to the site. At Tameside Drive there were suggestions that it should be re-located to a quieter area and that there should be better neighbours (apparently within the site rather than externally). Despite poor rating on site management, there were no suggestions for improvement in this area.

Local Authority Sites : Comments

5.21 Local authority sites in the Study Area are currently under-occupied and in need of refurbishment. Both have, to some degree, issues with management and current occupiers who compromise the future of the site under current arrangements. Comments from residents at Siskin Drive were to do with physical aspects of the site, especially amenity units and lighting. Current residents appear happy with the social functioning of the site. This is less true of Tameside Drive although comments were muted. Tameside Drive appears to function well neither physically, environmentally nor socially for some residents.

Authorised Private Sites

5.22 Information on authorised private sites comes from the Partner authorities, the support worker at Cara who frequently visits sites in Solihull and the survey. Table 5.4 summarises provision.

Table 5.4 : Authorised Private Sites		
Site	Pitches/caravans	Comments
Birmingham		
Nechells	4 pitches	Extended family. Full planning permission 1997
Coventry		
Burbages Lane, Coventry	16 pitches	Extended families ⁽¹⁾ . Full permission; site re-located following compulsory purchase of site for Coventry Arena
Solihull		
Catherine de Barnes Lane, Bickenhill	24 families	Family + rented pitches. Full permission for 25 caravans. Potentially affected by Birmingham Airport extension plans
Valley Road, Earlswood	6 pitches	Extended family. Full permission
Bickenhill Lane, Marston Green	6 pitches	Extended family. Full permission
Shadowbrook Lane, Hampton-in-Arden	2 caravans	1 family. Temporary consent expires March 2009

Source : Partner authorities and GTAA survey

⁽¹⁾ Further information on site occupancy is not available; the survey did not ascertain how respondents were related to other site residents.

5.23 Features of provision are:

- The spread of private sites is uneven with most being in Solihull. This may reflect the location of more obviously developable land.

- Most sites are for a single family or an extended family. The main exception is the site at Bickenhill (The Haven) potentially to be affected by Birmingham Airport extension plans. It is clear from survey responses that this site, with some rented pitches, effectively fulfils a role in accommodating people for a short time as well as providing long-term residential accommodation.

5.24 The number of private sites/pitches has remained static in Birmingham and Coventry since 2001, and is expected to remain static over the next 5 years. Solihull have granted one temporary planning application in the past 5 years, and also expect the number of authorised private sites in their area to increase over the next 5 years.

Residents' Views on Private Sites

5.25 33 respondents were living on an authorised private site and answered questions about the site and their opinions on it. Of these, 24 (73%) were on sites owned by themselves or their close family and 9 (27%) were on rented pitches.

Living Units, Space and Amenity Provision

5.26 All respondents said how many caravans/trailers/buses they have at present. 25 respondents (76%) have 1 living unit and 8 (24%) have 2. The average number was 1.2 – rather less than on local authority sites. There were slight differences in the average number of living units between respondents on family sites (1.2) and rented pitches (1.4).

5.27 Only 9% (3 respondents) said that they do not have enough space. Of these, all said that they are overcrowded because they need more or bigger caravans or trailers, only 1 respondent said that they needed a bigger pitch in order to accommodate an additional or larger caravan. In terms of 'objective' occupancy rates, 21% of respondents on private sites had more than 2 people per living unit.

5.28 All private sites have a water supply and a toilet (not necessarily a WC or for exclusive use). One does not have mains electricity and uses a generator. Other amenities lacked were:

Bath	17 respondents (52%)
Children's play space	6 respondents (18%)
Amenity building	5 respondents (15%)
Laundry facilities	2 respondents (6%)
Space for eating or sitting	2 respondents (6%)
Shower	1 respondent (3%)
Kitchen facilities	1 respondent (3%)

The majority of respondents had most amenities, although it is clear that showers could sometimes be shared.

5.29 All but 7 respondents (21%) said that there was space on their pitch or site for visitors with caravans. Neither having visitor space nor lacking it was said to cause problems.

Site Ratings

5.30 Table 5.5 summarises answers to all the rating questions for private sites. Ratings are significantly more favourable than for local authority sites. The most negative ratings come for facilities on site, but here fewer than 1 in 10 are prepared to say their site is poor or very poor. Neighbours on site get the most positive response.

	Sample		Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	No answer
Size of pitch	33	%	39	46	12	3	-	-
Design of site	33	%	39	46	12	3	-	-
Facilities on site	33	%	33	42	15	6	3	-
Location of site	33	%	39	58	3	-	-	-
Management of site ⁽¹⁾	9	%	6	38	54	-	-	-
Neighbours on site	32	%	44	56	-	-	-	-

Source : GTAA survey

⁽¹⁾ Renters only

5.31 No-one voiced any concern about safety or security at their site – which is unusual compared to other GTAAs. When asked about specific problems affecting their site, answers were:

Nearness to railway or airport	46%
Nearness to busy roads	12%
Nearness to rubbish tip/sewage works/pylons	3%
Flooding or poor drainage	3%
Nearness to railway or airport	3%
Nearness to industrial site	-

Proximity to the airport (Birmingham) is clearly the matter of most concern. One respondent commented that they got used to it, and another noted it as an issue but said that it was not a problem to them.

5.32 Respondents were asked what one or two things would most improve their site. Almost a half (45%) said that there was nothing they wanted to improve the site. More/better toilets and baths/showers were by far the most commonly suggested improvements. Other suggestions were better washing and laundry facilities, more space and a better road surface. One respondent commented that the site just needed more investment made.

Unauthorised Sites

5.33 'Unauthorised sites' in this context are either unauthorised developments where Gypsies and Travellers have developed land as a caravan site without planning permission, or other land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers on a long-term basis. Table 5.6 shows that there are 4 such sites in the Study Area, all in Solihull. The 3 unauthorised developments, at the time of the survey, appeared to be occupied by 1 or 2 family units. Some were associated with a house or bungalow and it appears that caravan numbers may vary over time. The tolerated unauthorised encampment is occupied by a mother and 4 children with their own families. It is probable that there are other houses in the Study Area, especially in Birmingham, occupied by Gypsies and Travellers where caravans are present on a fairly continuous basis and occupied by separate households. Such 'sites' have not been identified and are not included in the assessment.

Table 5.6 : Unauthorised Sites		
Site	Pitches/caravans	Comments
Birmingham		
None		
Coventry		
None		
Solihull		
Salter Street, Earlswood	3 caravans; assume 1 family	Established c1987. Enforcement notice issued 1993 and upheld on appeal 1994. No move to pursue legal action due to welfare considerations (young children on site). Subject to review
Salter Street, Earlswood	2-4 caravans; assume 2 families	Caravans first there 2004. Enforcement notice issued 2004 and upheld on appeal 2005. Legal advice being sought on further legal action for non-compliance
Dickens Heath Road, Shirley	4 caravans at last visit; assume 1 family	Caravans there 1992. Enforcement notice issued 1992 against stationing of caravans used as separate dwellings. Upheld on appeal 1993. High Court injunction secured 1992. Caravans come and go.
Damson Lane, Solihull	Extended family with 5 sub-units	Land owned by Solihull Council. Extended family tolerated there for approximately 6 years.

Source : Partner authorities and GTAA survey

Residents' Views on Long-Term Unauthorised Sites

5.34 Only 7 respondents were living on unauthorised sites and answered questions about the site and their opinions on it. This is a small sample size, and the findings should be viewed as indicative only.

Living Units, Space and Amenities

5.35 2 respondents had 1 caravan or trailer and 5 had 2. The average number was 1.7, larger than on private sites and the same as on local authority sites. 4 out of the 7 said that this did not give them enough space, most wanting more or larger caravans. In terms of persons per caravan, the survey shows occupancy rates similar to those found on other sites, suggesting that the main requirement is for larger caravans which might be possible with greater certainty for the future.

5.36 Not surprisingly, amenity provision on unauthorised sites is worse than on private sites. The number of respondents without listed amenities is:

Rubbish storage/collection	5
Bath	5
Mains electricity	4
Shower	4
Amenity building/shed	4
Laundry facilities	4
Water	3
Toilet	1

All said that they received postal deliveries and that there was space for children to play.

5.37 Where respondents said that they had no access to water, mains electricity or a WC, they were asked how they managed for these services and whether it was a problem to them. 1 of 4 said that it was not a problem (lacked mains electricity and used a generator). For the 3 who lacked mains water, it was a considerable problem: *We buy water and we have a generator for electric and we go to the public baths for showers.* Lack of water was a particular problem with small children, and buying water represented a considerable expense. Residents were also paying for a portaloo on the site.

5.38 All but 1 said that there was space for visitors with caravans on their site. The lack was seen as a problem. The answer suggests that it was the illegality of their position rather than lack of space which meant they could not have visitors.

Site Ratings

5.39 Respondents were asked to rate their site on various criteria in the same way as residents on authorised sites. Those on the tolerated unauthorised encampment felt this was inappropriate. Answers were, therefore, entirely from the 4 respondents on unauthorised developments. All said that their site was very good in relation to size of pitch, design of site, neighbours on site

and location. 2 thought the facilities on site were very good, 1 that they were good and 1 that they were poor. These answers suggest people were very happy with many aspects of their site.

5.40 This is supported by responses to other questions. No-one on an unauthorised site had any concerns over safety or security on the site. No-one said that they suffered problems from flooding, nearness to busy roads, rubbish tips etc, railways or airport or industrial areas at their site. These responses are much more favourable than on either local authority or authorised private sites.

5.41 Suggested improvements for unauthorised sites made it quite clear that people wanted to stay, but to have basic services provided and/or their legal position regularised:

Water and electricity, and if we could have a flushing toilet and kitchen and laundry facilities, and also a phone line.

Full planning permission to be able to put a mobile on and access to a phone land line.

To have permission to build an outbuilding for kitchen and laundry and to use as a day room.

5.42 People may, in a sense, be choosing to live on unauthorised sites in the Study Area, but the poor amenity provision is not a matter of choice. Those who own their sites would welcome the opportunity to improve their own living conditions.

6. UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

6.1 This chapter looks at unauthorised encampments – in this context taken as short-term transient encampments. The first section looks at the policy context. This is followed by some indications of the scale of unauthorised encampment in the Study Area. Because no-one was interviewed on a transient unauthorised encampment, there is no Gypsy and Traveller perspective.

The Policy Context

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

6.3 A revised guide on managing unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers was issued by the ODPM in February 2006¹². This primarily focuses on choosing and using the most appropriate powers, speeding the process and preventing further encampments (including through the provision of appropriate sites). The promised further guidance on dealing with anti-social behaviour has not yet been issued.

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

- Birmingham and Coventry have written policies for managing unauthorised encampments; Coventry's is in draft form. Birmingham's is in the process of being revised.
- Solihull has no written policy, but does have procedural flow-chart.

6.5 Stakeholder interviews suggest an emphasis on rapid action, on negotiation over leaving dates where necessary backed up by court action for possession following welfare assessments. Birmingham has in the past employed a bailiff to evict under common law when a group has overstayed its agreed departure date. The Police are said to be reluctant to use s61 powers.

6.6 Birmingham has agreements with the Police and other agencies on managing unauthorised encampments. Solihull's procedural flowchart was developed through the Crime Reduction Partnership which includes the Council and the Police.

¹² Gypsy & Traveller Unit, *Guide to effective use of enforcement powers : Part 1 : Unauthorised encampments*, ODPM, 2006

6. Unauthorised Encampments

6.7 First contact with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments is normally made by council officers, although Birmingham note that Police and Traveller Education may also be involved on occasion.

6.8 Birmingham noted good practice as follows:

We now always negotiate a leaving date which is acceptable to both Travellers and Council. Eviction is rarely used which saves considerably on cost. This process has evolved having developed a mutual trust between Travellers and officers. This is not always possible where Travellers are not known to officers.

Incidence of Unauthorised Encampments

6.9 All authorities keep a log of unauthorised encampments: Solihull log some encampments while Birmingham and Coventry log all that are known.

6.10 The number of separate encampments experienced during 2006 was:

Birmingham	28 (normally none or 1 in the area at any time)
Coventry	10 (normally none or 1 in area)
Solihull*	3 (normally none or 1 in area)

* Solihull provided partial information from which this estimate is made. The long-term tolerated unauthorised encampment has been excluded here. Records provided showed a series of encampments in August 2006 affecting 3 parks and apparently involving the same group of Travellers with a varying number of caravans rising to 11. These encampments were high profile because of their locations and involved fly-tipping.

6.11 As might be expected, the distribution of unauthorised encampments is uneven with Birmingham having the highest numbers. Analysis of Birmingham records over a longer period suggest that numbers in 2006 were unusually low and have more normally been around 40 a year.

6.12 Details of location, number of caravans, duration and action taken for encampments during 2006 were provided for 38 encampments in Birmingham and Coventry.

- The average encampment size in Birmingham in 2006 was 3.8 caravans (range 1 to 10 caravans); in Coventry it was 3 caravans (range 1 to 5 caravans).
- The average duration in Birmingham was 11.6 days (range 1 day to 70 days on private land); in Coventry it was around 4 days (1 day to 10 days).
- The action taken is not always known. In Birmingham there were 13 encampments on public land in 2006: 8 left after a notice was served, 4 were moved by the bailiff and 1 left when a court order was applied for. Of 7 encampments in Coventry where action was known, 4 moved of

6. Unauthorised Encampments

their own accord, 2 were moved by the police and 1 was moved by the bailiff.

6.13 In answer to more general questions on the questionnaire collecting information from authorities:

- Coventry and Solihull experience more encampments in summer; Birmingham notes no clear variation over the year (analysis of encampment records since 2004 suggests that there are encampments throughout the year, but higher numbers in summer and January).
- Most involved in unauthorised encampments are said to be 'in transit' in Coventry and Solihull. In Birmingham, groups passing through and groups 'local' to the sub-region are said to be equally common. Stakeholder interviews suggest this means that the same Travellers are seen fairly regularly and are 'local' in this sense.

6.14 Stakeholder interviews suggested that land protection measures and known enforcement policies in the Study Area may have the effect of displacing encampments into adjoining areas (for example Sandwell and Walsall and, to a lesser extent, Bromsgrove for Birmingham, and Rugby and perhaps Warwick and Nuneaton & Bedworth for Coventry). The view is that Gypsies and Travellers could be attracted to Birmingham and Coventry by employment opportunities, but access these from outside the Cities' boundaries. Stakeholders also raised the possibility that the presence and behaviour of a particular dominant family in Birmingham may deter other Gypsies and Travellers from visiting the City for work, thus depressing encampment numbers. We have no hard evidence to support this anecdotal information.

Unauthorised Encampments in Birmingham

6.15 Unauthorised encampment records were provided for Birmingham between 1 April 2004 and September 2007. Further points emerged from this analysis:

- Birmingham has experienced about 40 unauthorised encampments a year since 2004 (lower in 2006).
- There has been a trend towards encampments on private rather than council land. Over the full period the split between private and public land was almost equal. In 2004, 49% of encampments were on private land, compared with 61% in 2007.
- Encampment locations have become less concentrated over time with more City wards likely to experience an unauthorised encampment in 2007 than in 2004. In 2004, 84% of encampments were recorded in Aston, Hodge Hill, Nechells and Tyburn wards. These wards accounted for only 12% of encampments in 2007.

Trends in Unauthorised Encampments

6.16 Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments has changed over the past 5 years. Experience seems to have varied: numbers have decreased in Birmingham and Coventry (markedly so according to stakeholder interviews), but have increased in Solihull where unauthorised encampments were rare until about 2 years ago.

6.17 In terms of size of group, Birmingham and Coventry said that encampments had decreased in size while Solihull had experienced an increase in size over the 5 years.

6.18 Other comments on local patterns and/or changes over time are:

- **Birmingham** : many families who used to visit the City no longer come. There are fewer incursions into parks.
- **Coventry** : there has been a major reduction in encampment numbers and size since about 2002.
- **Solihull** : there has been an increase in encampments on parks and open spaces. This is highly visible and leads to many complaints.

In both Birmingham and Coventry land protection (park access, hammer heads) are seen to have affected the incidence of unauthorised encampments. Stakeholders were unable to give other reasons to account for the observed decreases in encampment numbers over time.

6.19 When asked how they expect the number of encampments to change over the next 5 years, Solihull expected an increase, Birmingham expected no significant change, and Coventry was unable to say.

7. HOUSING

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

7.2 This chapter looks at Gypsies and Travellers and housing. The national, regional and local policy context is described. Information about Gypsies and Travellers in housing collected through the questionnaire to local authorities is described. Survey findings on the sort of housing occupied in the Study Area and respondents' views are presented.

The Policy Context

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

7.4 The 2006 Homelessness Code of Guidance¹³ refers specifically to Gypsies and Travellers, reminding authorities of their duties. Someone is homeless when they live in a moveable dwelling (caravan) and have nowhere they can legally live in it. Technically, Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites and with no permanent base are homeless although few apply as such. Authorities must give consideration to the needs and lifestyle of Gypsy and Traveller applicants when considering a homelessness application and how best to discharge a duty to secure suitable accommodation, in line with their obligations to act consistently with the Human Rights Act 1998, and in

¹³ Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate, *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*, Communities and Local Government, 2006

particular the Article 8 right to respect for private life, family and the home (paragraph 16.38). This means that, for a Gypsy and Traveller with an evidenced marked cultural aversion to bricks and mortar, 'suitable' accommodation would be a place on a caravan site if at all possible.

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

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

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

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

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

7.6 Local policies were explored in the questionnaire to local authorities. It asked whether specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers in various **housing strategies** in the Study Area:

Birmingham : The versions of Housing, Homelessness and BME Housing Strategies available on the City's webpage do not include reference to Gypsies and Travellers.

Coventry : No reference in the Housing Strategy. The Homelessness Strategy 2005-2010 includes a short section on Travellers and Gypsies leading to key proposals: training for Environmental Health Officers re homelessness to ensure correct advice is given and referral made; joint working between homelessness department and environmental control team; investigate potential new sites. The Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2006-2008 (working draft) draws attention to the distinct needs of Gypsies and Travellers and notes that their accommodation needs will be separately assessed to help identification of unmet needs.

Solihull : Gypsies and Travellers are included in housing and homelessness strategies (there is no BME Housing Strategy). There are references to the joint accommodation needs assessment with Birmingham and Coventry and to the floating support service for Travellers provided by Cara. There is also recognition of the need for a

joint approach with the PCT and Police to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and their access to services are fully enabled. The needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be incorporated into the Council's equalities and diversities policies.

7.7 Categories for Gypsies and Travellers are provided in **ethnic records and monitoring** of social housing applications and/or allocations in Birmingham (and will shortly be identified in Solihull). Information from stakeholders suggests that there may be significant under-identification in Birmingham by Gypsies and Travellers and similar reluctance to self-identify as a Gypsy or Traveller was noted in other areas.

7.8 Authorities were asked to provide details of how homeless Gypsies and Travellers are supported through the **homelessness process**, and any steps taken to provide Gypsies and Travellers with housing advice and assistance. No information was provided by Birmingham.

Coventry : Gypsies and Travellers get the same support as any other homeless applicant. A choice-based lettings system is being introduced. Anyone will be able to access the Homefinder Team for assistance. A stakeholder who regularly meets Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments said that she was occasionally asked about housing and how to apply as homeless. She noted that these groups appeared to move on quickly (of their own accord) and seemed unlikely to have actually made an application.

Solihull has not received any homelessness applications over the last 12 months from people who have identified themselves as a Gypsy or Traveller. The Homelessness Team is aware of the Cara floating support service for Gypsies and Travellers, and this service would be offered if applicable.

Gypsies and Travellers in Social Housing

7.9 There was a sequence of questions in the local authority questionnaire about Gypsies and Travellers in social housing and among social housing applicants and allocations. In many instances, answers reflect the perceptions of stakeholders rather than firm evidence.

- Birmingham's records show that, at November 2007, out of a total of 30,901 applicants, 1 applicant self-identified as Gypsy/Roma and 1 as Traveller of Irish Heritage (information yet to be obtained = 2,289 and refusals = 262). It is suggested that this reflects reluctance to self-identify as a Gypsy or Traveller as well as (or rather than) low demand. Solihull has 1 known Gypsy and Traveller applicant. Coventry was unable to say.
- Only Solihull was able to provide a figure for the number of known Gypsies and Travellers housed in 2006. The figure was zero.

- Solihull had not received any homelessness presentations from people who identified themselves as a Gypsy or a Traveller in the last 12 months. No information was provided by Birmingham and Coventry. There may have been presentations in Coventry, and the Nominations and Advice Manager at Coventry perceives that domestic violence is the main reason for homelessness presentations.
- Solihull thought that the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social rented housing had remained broadly the same (very low) over the past 5 years and expected it to remain broadly the same over the next 5 years. Birmingham and Coventry were unable to say or provided no information.

7.10 Coventry and Solihull commented on the main reasons why Gypsies and Travellers move into housing (from a list of 8 potential reasons). In order of significance these were:

- Health reasons : Coventry and Solihull
- Want to 'settle' : Solihull
- Unable to find stopping places while travelling : Coventry

Neither authority identified inability to get a place on a site as a reason for moving to housing. Again, these answers are based on officer perceptions.

7.11 Authorities were asked to estimate how many Gypsies and Travellers live in social housing in their area. Solihull thought there were less than 10 families (only 1 family known to them¹⁴), and Coventry estimated 10-50 families (figures provided by WMCESTC). In Coventry, Gypsies and Travellers are particularly concentrated in Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm and Willenhall. Birmingham is seeking to establish ethnicity of its 100,000 plus tenants. In August 2007, 3 had self-identified as Gypsy/Roma (no category for Traveller of Irish Heritage) out of the 96,990 tenants providing the information at that date.

7.12 Information from WMCESTC to the research team provided more information on Gypsies and Travellers in housing in Birmingham. There are comments at different points in the report about similarities and differences between this information and the GTAA survey findings. This source provides some information on location of known Gypsies and Travellers across the City. Addresses were spread over 17 postcodes. However, five geographical groupings emerge. In order of size of apparent settlement these are:

- South East Birmingham (Yardley, Sheldon, Acocks Gren and Hall Green) where Gypsies and Travellers live in all tenures. Several of the survey interviews were in this area.
- West Middle Ring (Edgbaston, Harborne, Winson Green), almost all private tenants or owner-occupiers. The survey included no-one living in this area.

¹⁴ This is clearly an under-estimate since 2 families in council housing were included in the survey.

- South West Birmingham (King's Norton, Northfield, Bournville, King's Heath), where almost all were council tenants. The survey included families from this area.
- City Centre and Nechells, split between council and private tenants. The survey included families in this area.
- Handsworth Park, all owner-occupiers or private tenants. The survey did not include anyone in the Handsworth area.

To an extent, the survey amplified this distribution since interviews were also carried out in Sutton Coldfield and Sparkhill/Sparkbrook. Gypsies and Travellers clearly live across many areas of Birmingham even if they prove largely invisible to the local authority.

7.13 Partner authorities are broadly unaware of issues around Gypsies and Travellers in social, or any other form of, housing. Ethnic monitoring, where in place, is apparently failing to identify Gypsies and Travellers in housing who may have many reasons for seeking to conceal their ethnicity. This has implications for service delivery and presents a particular challenge if service providers are to ensure that their services meet the (hidden) needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

7.14 The model for estimating accommodation needs requires an estimate of the current base population of Gypsy and Traveller households in housing across the Study Area. Partner authorities were unable to provide an estimate. WMCESTC provided some general information as noted above, but were not confident that all Gypsy and Traveller families were known to them, especially those without children and/or living in housing. The estimates below are made on the basis of this limited information supplemented by the GTAA survey which identified families not apparently in contact with WMCESTC. We have assumed the following numbers which stakeholders agree to be a reasonable estimate:

Birmingham	100 households
Coventry	60 households
Solihull	40 households
Study Area	200 households

Survey Findings : Respondents in Housing

7.15 As noted in Chapter 2, Gypsies and Travellers in housing were identified through the interviewees and their contacts and networks. This led to 61 interviews in all, spread across all authorities in the Study Area (Birmingham 29, Coventry 15, and Solihull 17 interviews).

Property Type and Tenure

7.16 The great majority of housed interviewees were living in houses (84%) and the remaining 16% were living in bungalows. No-one was in a flat or maisonette, perhaps reflecting household size but also cultural desires.

7.17 The majority were living in private sector housing:

Owner-occupier	46%
Private tenant	26%
Social tenant	28%

This tenure distribution is broadly similar to that revealed by the WMCESTC information from Birmingham where there were slightly more social tenants and fewer owner-occupiers. Whichever source is used, the predominance of the private sector is clear. Most Gypsies and Travellers find their own housing.

Property Size and Crowding

7.18 Just over half (57%) of properties had 3 bedrooms, and 36% had 2 (5% had 4 or more bedrooms and 2% had 1 bedroom only). Owner-occupied properties were largest – 79% having 3 or more bedrooms – then social rented (53% 3 or more bedrooms) and private tenancies the smallest with 44% of properties having 3 bedrooms or more.

7.19 Overall, 12% of respondents said that they did not have enough space for their families' needs. The proportion rose to 19% of private tenants. Looking at 'objective' occupation rates shows that 9 respondents (15%) had more than 2 people per bedroom, including a family of 11 in a 2 bedroom house. The degree of 'objective' overcrowding on this crude measure varied little by tenure. While overcrowding does not seem an extensive issue, it can be important to those affected for cultural and quality of life reasons.

I have 6 children, 2 in each room. Me and my husband sleep in the living room on a blow-up bed.

Grandchildren stay over a lot, only have one spare room, so it gets a bit crowded.

Son and new wife are stopping on the drive in a trailer at the moment.

Views on Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

7.20 Table 7.1 shows respondents' ratings of their house against a number of factors. Most assessments are favourable, with a large majority rating their house good or very good on every factor. Outlook from windows and garden/open space receive most neutral or negative ratings, followed by neighbours and location. Facilities and state of repair are not apparently major problems.

	Sample		Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	No answer
Size of house	61	%	25	67	5	2	2	-
Design of house	61	%	23	71	3	3	-	-
Outlook from windows	61	%	20	53	21	5	2	-
Garden/open space	61	%	20	61	12	8	-	-
Neighbours	61	%	28	54	16	2	-	-
Location	61	%	18	64	15	3	-	-
Facilities	61	%	21	71	8	-	-	
Condition/state of repair	61	%	25	66	8	2	-	

Source : GTAA survey

7.21 5 respondents (8%) had some concerns about safety and security. 3 related to fears for children, for example one said the back yard was not sufficiently secure for them to play there safely. One respondent commented that there were thieves on their estate. One dissatisfied respondent felt her own health was adversely affected by living in a house.

7.22 When asked about the one or two things which would most improve their home, 38% said that nothing was needed. Improvements suggested can be grouped, in order of frequency of mention:

- Improvements/upgrading the house, eg fit a shower, fit a conservatory, better windows or doors.
- More space, eg get a bigger house or build an extension.
- Have a garden rather than a yard, or somewhere safe for children to play.
- General repairs or re-decoration.
- Have gates to the driveway.
- Space for a trailer/caravan.
- Would like to buy or own rather than rent.
- Improve the estate or move to a better estate.

Of this list, only space for a caravan is clearly culturally specific. There were, however, a few improvements suggested by one or two people which more obviously stem from the respondent's Gypsy Traveller status:

More Travellers nearby. There is an old couple close by but I would like some more as I can't drive.

Feel I could tell my neighbours who and what I am.

Being able to get planning permission to have our business from here.

Trailers and the Use

7.23 More than half (56%) of respondents owned one or more trailers/caravans. 51% owned 1 trailer or caravan and 5% owned 2. The survey asked how these trailers or caravans are used at present:

- 65% use their trailer/caravan while travelling
- 35% use it to accommodate visitors
- 26% use it regularly while living in the house, for example as extra sleeping space
- 12% use it for another purpose (not specified)

7.24 Not all these caravans/trailers were kept at the house in the Study Area. 76% of those with a trailer or caravan said that there was somewhere here where they could safely keep it. The remainder said that it was in storage or, in one case, kept with a friend who owned their own land. A number of respondents volunteered that they had sold their trailer when they moved to a house because there was nowhere to keep it. For some, this is a clear deprivation:

It would be nice to have my trailer close. I could clean it and think I was still living in it.

7.25 Owner-occupiers were significantly more likely to both own caravans or trailers (82% compared with 44% of private tenants and 24% of social tenants) and to be able to keep them safely (96% compared with 57% of private tenants and no social tenants). This may reflect relative affluence and ability to afford to keep a caravan or trailer, but it is also likely to reflect the sort of property owned and lack of landlord rules.

7.26 Overall, just a quarter of housed respondents said that they could have visitors to stay with their own trailers or caravans. The proportion was 46% for owner-occupiers and 6% for social and private tenants. When asked whether this caused a problem, 20% said that it did. The sorts of problems mentioned included neighbour complaints etc, but also regrets for not being able to have family members stay:

The locals throw stones and cause damage to visitors.

I'd like to have my sister and her family stay for a bit, but no room for her trailer; that's why we sold ours.

The Planning Department at Solihull check up and tell us if we have too many trailers here.

Feels the neighbours might be nasty if they knew she was a Traveller.

7.27 Insofar as keeping trailers and being able to have visitors stay with trailers is important to Gypsy and Traveller culture and identity, it is clear that there are constraints in housing. Owner-occupation seems to give much greater freedom than other tenures to retain cultural identity and this may be

one powerful motive for seeking to own. It is clear also that for a few, there are tensions around the possible consequences with neighbours of revealing Traveller identity. Different families appear to resolve these tensions in different ways.

8. MOBILITY: HOUSING HISTORIES AND INTENTIONS AND TRAVELLING PATTERNS

8.1 Gypsies and Travellers share a nomadic or semi-nomadic culture and lifestyle. In practice, this is reflected in actual movement to differing degrees. Some Gypsies and Travellers have no fixed base and are constantly travelling between one temporary stopping place and another. At the other extreme, some live in bricks and mortar or on a permanent site and do not travel at all or not beyond holidays and occasional visits to family or friends. When more settled, mobility may be reflected in frequent moves of house or permanent base. This chapter looks first at how long respondents had been at their current address, and then at housing histories – where people were living before the place they were interviewed at – then at movement intentions. The final section presents findings on travelling. As will become clear, perhaps surprisingly, it is housed Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area rather than those living on sites who conform more closely to the traditional stereotype of a travelling lifestyle.

Length of Residence

8.2 Table 8.1 shows how long respondents had been living where they were interviewed, distinguishing between respondents on sites and in housing. As can be seen, respondents on sites had been there much longer than those in housing. Almost a third of respondents in housing had been resident in their current house for less than a year, compared with only 2% of site residents. At the other extreme, 79% of respondents on sites had been there for 5 years or longer, compared with 18% of those in housing. Respondents in the private rented sector were particularly likely to have moved in recently – 69% had been there less than a year.

Length of time	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Less than 6 months	-	16
6 months, less than 1 year	2	15
1 year, less than 3 years	15	26
3 years, less than 5 years	2	20
5 years and over	79	18
Don't know	2	5

Source : GTAA survey

8.3 It is clear that moving to a house does not stop Gypsies and Travellers moving around, although not in the traditional 'travelling' sense. In some other areas (eg Leicestershire and Shropshire) mobility is facilitated by the availability of rented pitches on privately owned sites. In the Study Area's more urban context, privately rented housing may be fulfilling a similar role.

Housing Histories

8.4 Table 8.2 shows where respondents were living or staying immediately before they came to the place where they were interviewed.

Table 8.2 : Previous Accommodation		
Length of time	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Roadside	4	20
Farmland/farm	-	2
Caravan park	6	5
Private site – land owned by you	15	3
Private site – rented pitch	23	15
Council/RSL site	17	31
Private transit site	6	2
Council/RSL transit site	2	-
Housing	19	21
Other	6	2

Source : GTAA survey

8.5 This table shows a number of things:

- Both groups were equally likely to have been living in bricks and mortar housing previously.
- Respondents in housing were more likely than those on sites to have previously lacked a fixed base (the first three categories in Table 9.2).
- Respondents on sites were more likely to have previously been living on some form of private site. In contrast, those in housing were relatively more likely to have been living on a council or RSL site.

8.6 Table 8.3 shows where the previous accommodation was. As can be seen, the majority of respondents were not living in the Study Area previously. For respondents on sites, the most common areas of origin outside the Study Area were: Staffordshire, especially Stoke-on-Trent; Lancashire; Scotland; Ireland, especially Northern Ireland; London and Wales. For people in housing the most frequent previous locations were: Manchester and Lancashire; London; Leicestershire; and Staffordshire. People obviously come into the Study Area from a variety of places including Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Most previous locations tend to be either in the Midlands or to the north rather than to the south – except for London.

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

Length of time	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Birmingham	17	25
Coventry	15	3
Solihull	13	3
<i>Study Area</i>	45	31
Elsewhere in West Midlands	19	5
Other part of UK	34	59
Abroad	2	5

Source : GTAA survey

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

- Previous site closed, had to move
- Moved with family as a child or young person
- No particular reason
- To travel
- Harassment

Other minority reasons included buying the current site and: *we were on a council site before and came here because it was a Gypsy site.*

8.8 The main reasons given by respondents in housing were:

- No particular reason
- Eviction (mainly from social rented sites outside the Study Area)
- For children's schooling
- Harassment
- Work reasons
- Fears for personal safety (Bosnian refugees and people previously on the Birmingham Tameside Drive site)
- To be near family (especially people moving into the Study Area, including some older households)
- To settle

Again being able to buy was given as a reason by one or two respondents. One interesting reason which sheds some light on Gypsy and Traveller housing market transactions was: *We exchanged land (in Lancashire) for a house.*

Experience of Living in Housing

8.9 Respondents living on sites were asked whether they had ever lived in a house, and, if so, a little about their experiences there. Overall, 34% had lived in a house at some point. Three-quarters had been owner-occupiers and 25% social tenants. The great majority (88%) had lived in a house and the remaining 12% in a bungalow. Most had either been born there or had lived

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

there with parents. Only 1 respondent rated the experience of living in a house as poor: *The house is lovely but I felt trapped in one place and I don't like that feeling.*

8.10 The reason most frequently given for leaving the last house was that parents had moved or sold the house. The next most common reason was getting married, then to travel.

8.11 3 respondents interviewed on sites said that they had (or could use) a house elsewhere¹⁵. 2 had houses in Belfast, but spent a lot of time travelling in England. Another had a house near Bromsgrove. One summed this up:

I live both lifestyles. Although a 'Traveller' I enjoy having a permanent base and the ability to travel to other sites as well as utilising the trailer.

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

8.12 Respondents in housing were asked a similar sequence of questions about living on a residential site for Gypsies and Travellers where they could stay as long as they wanted. 67% of respondents had lived on such a site. In 63% of cases the site had been owned by a local council, in 27% it had been privately owned, and in 10% of cases owned by the family.

8.13 The most common location for the last site lived on was Birmingham, closely followed by London. Other locations with more than a single mention were: Manchester, Leicestershire and Wales.

8.14 Most had moved to the site for 'no particular reason'. Other reasons included being born there or moving with parents, work reasons and to get married.

8.15 Experiences of living on a site had generally been good (51%), neither good nor poor (27%) and very good (10%). 7% had found it either poor or very poor. Most of the reasons given for a poor rating referred to *trouble* or bother with other site residents. One respondent described it:

It's like most sites. You'll have good and bad times on them. I have lived on there for years, then I got married. Then we had some trouble, so we had to move.

8.16 Another quotation sums up good and bad points of sites:

Most of the sites are full and you have no room. And the rent is very dear. And you don't have your own toilet. But you can mix with your own people – that's the good thing.

¹⁵ 2 further respondents also had some accommodation in addition to the place where they were interviewed. Both were places on privately owned sites, one in Preston and one near Rugeley (owned by the respondent's mother).

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

8.17 Trouble on the site and harassment by other residents was the main reason given for leaving the last site lived on. The other main reason in addition to trouble on the site was eviction. Beyond that, a number said that there was no particular reason for leaving. Some wanted to travel, others to be more settled. Some wanted to move closer to family – one to get away from their family and be independent. Some wanted to try living in a house, although one later wished that she hadn't. Overall there was a variety of reasons given, some positive and some negative. The quotation below illustrates how things can change on sites:

The site was OK years ago, then some nasty people pulled on.

While this sort of thing happens, there is likely to be a continuing movement off sites, including into housing until the supply of safe sites increases.

Experience of Buying Own Land

8.18 Overall 13 respondents (8 on sites and 5 in housing) had bought land for a site on some occasion. 11 of the 13 (95%) had applied for planning permission. 1 had received planning permission for a house, but not for outbuildings. 6 had received permission, and 4 had been refused (including the current unauthorised developments in Solihull). Most of these applications relate to Study Area sites, but some currently living in housing had developed sites elsewhere, including one who had swapped his site for a house.

8.19 No further information was collected about the process of developing sites.

Movement Intentions

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

Length of time	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Up to 6 months	2	13
6 months, less than 1 year	-	2
1 year, less than 3 years	-	-
3 years, less than 5 years	-	-
5 or more years	2	-
Indefinitely	66	30
Don't know	30	56

Source : GTAA survey

8.21 Table 8.4 shows findings about how long people expect to remain at their current place. As can be seen, the most popular answers overall were

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

'indefinitely' or 'don't know'. 'Don't know' seems to mean different things to different people. Some seem to interpret it as uncertainty about whether they will ever move, others appear to assume that they will move but are less certain about just when.

8.22 Most people currently living on sites have no intention of moving of their own volition. A number on unauthorised sites referred to the possibility of eviction, but wanted to remain. 2 respondents would move if a better site were available or they could get their own site. Only 2 answers suggest real movement plans (4%): one wants to travel, and one will leave a site because there is too much trouble there.

8.23 14 respondents on sites answered questions about what sort of accommodation they would be looking for when they leave their current site – this includes, as noted above, people who do not really want to move. All but 1 would want to stay in the same local area. Respondents opted for several types of accommodation. A family-owned site was most frequently mentioned, then a council owned site or a private site owned by someone other than family. 3 respondents included bricks and mortar housing in their options, 1 seeking to buy, 1 to rent and 1 uncertain.

8.24 In housing, only people who definitely thought that they would move (9 respondents representing 15%) were asked why they might move. 4 wanted to move to somewhere bigger or better. The rest referred to feeling trapped, wanting more freedom or *to live the life we used to with our own people and family*. This latter small group (about 9% of all in housing) represent those unhappy in housing who want to go back to living in a trailer – they might be classed as having a cultural aversion to bricks and mortar.

8.25 9 respondents in housing gave details of what they would be looking for. 5 wanted to stay locally and 4 were not sure. Again respondents opted for more than one type of accommodation. 5 respondents said they would be looking for a council owned site, 4 would be looking for housing and 4 would be looking for a roadside temporary stopping place. Most of those looking for housing would want a house. 4 were looking for a private tenancy, 2 for owner-occupation and 1 for a council tenancy. No-one was on a housing list.

Travelling

8.26 A section of the questionnaire dealt with travelling with a caravan or trailer. This was clearly more significant for some than for others. Table 8.5 shows how frequently respondents on sites and in housing travel.

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

Frequency	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Throughout the year	15	20
Seasonally	2	12
Occasionally (1 or 2 trips a year)	6	20
Never	77	48

Source : GTAA survey

8.27 Those on sites are significantly less likely to travel than those living in housing. Less than a quarter travel at all on sites. In contrast, the majority in housing travel at least occasionally, and a third travel seasonally or at all times of the year. Seasonal travel is confined to spring and summer.

8.28 Those who never travel were asked whether there is a reason. The main themes emerging were:

- People are getting too old or ill to travel
- People are living with their family and do not need to travel
- People have ties because of work or business or children in school
- Some people in housing sold their trailer when they moved in, so cannot travel in this way
- Some cannot afford to travel
- There is nowhere to stop safely while travelling

Interestingly, this last point was very rarely mentioned. A significant number of respondents seem not to be travelling from choice rather than constraint. A few commented that they had never really travelled.

8.29 Their current pattern of travelling was said to be typical by 51% of respondents on sites and 39% in housing. Where respondents noted changes in travelling patterns, they all referred to reduced travelling, for all the reasons given above for never travelling. Changes reflect life changes, growing commitments and 'settlement':

We did travel when we were younger, but now we wouldn't be bothered pulling a trailer.

The house stops us travelling as we have commitments.

Used to be a lot fitter. Used to travel all over. Found it hard when we could not do it anymore.

Not enough places to stop anymore, so get moved on too much.

8.30 Unlike views reported in some other GTAAs, respondents did not, on the whole, express much regret over reduction in their travelling, and did not express the frankly nostalgic sentiments sometimes voiced (but see comments on best places ever lived in at paragraph 9.32).

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

8.31 Those who travel, mostly do so with their own immediate household, sometimes with other family members. The average number of people in the travelling group was 5 for people on sites and 10 for people in housing. By far the most frequent reason given for travelling in the last 12 months was a holiday. In order of importance other reasons for travelling were:

- To attend a fair or festival
- To visit relatives
- To attend family events
- Work opportunities
- To attend community events

8.32 A question asked where people like to go when they travel. A wide range of places were mentioned. Some seem to reflect holiday destinations, others family links and show some similarities with previous locations lived in by respondents. Appleby was mentioned several times as a fair and cultural event. By region, the pattern of travelling destinations mentioned in order of frequency is:

- North West (Appleby and Blackpool, and Manchester and other urban areas)
- Wales (both North Wales holiday resorts and Wrexham and Swansea)
- West Midlands, especially Staffordshire
- Ireland (mainly Republic of Ireland)
- South West (mainly holiday resorts and Bristol)
- East Midlands (especially Leicestershire and Lincolnshire)
- East (various locations in Essex, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire)
- Yorkshire & Humber
- Scotland
- London
- South East (especially Milton Keynes)
- North East
- Europe (holiday resorts)

8.33 The sorts of place most commonly stayed at while travelling differed according to whether the respondent lived on a site or in housing. Sited respondents were most likely to stay with family on private sites, on the roadside, on caravan parks or in hotels. Housed respondents were most likely to stay on caravan parks, the roadside and family on council sites. This may suggest different family networks oriented to private and social rented site provision. Caravan parks are important for both groups, and the impression given is that they are accessing holiday parks in the same way as members of the settled community with caravans (however, at another point in the survey a respondent spoke of being turned away from a caravan site because of their Traveller origin).

8.34 Just 18% of those on sites who had travelled in the last 12 months had been forced to leave a site while travelling, as had 23% from houses. This was mainly eviction, with 1 respondent each mentioning harassment and fears over personal safety.

8. Mobility: Housing Histories and Intentions and Travelling Patterns

Future Travelling Patterns

8.35 All respondents were asked whether they are likely to travel in future more, less or about the same as at present. On sites, most either said they would travel about the same as currently (49%) or did not know (40%). Only 4% (2 respondents) said they would travel more than currently and 6% (3 respondents) that they would travel less. 44% of housed respondents expected to travel the same as currently and 36% did not know. 18% expected to travel more and 2% to travel less than currently. Reasons for travelling less were to do with age and commitments.

8.36 Most respondents who expect to travel at all in the next 12 months said they would do so within the UK but outside the West Midlands. Over half of those answering on sites expected to go abroad; answers suggest that a hotel holiday was envisaged.

8.37 The main expected stopping places in the next 12 months are, for people on sites: staying with family on private sites and caravan parks. For those travelling from houses, expected stopping places were caravan parks and the roadside and, to a lesser extent, staying with family on council sites. Expectations resemble current practice, and suggest that the Study Area will contribute to unauthorised encampments elsewhere. Very few respondents expected to stay at transit sites.

9. FUTURE ACCOMMODATION, ASPIRATIONS AND HOUSEHOLD FORMATION

9.1 This chapter presents findings from the survey on questions about accommodation in the future. It contributes directly to the estimates of need made in Chapter 12. The first section looks at potential need/demand for long-stay residential site pitches, the second at need/demand for bricks and mortar housing. The third section looks at transit site need/demand. All three sections concentrate on survey findings about existing households. The fourth section looks at new household formation and the type of accommodation need this is likely to generate. The final section explores views on types of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in more general terms.

Need/Demand for Residential Site Places from Existing Households

9.2 Respondents were asked ‘would you move to a/another long-stay residential site?’ If they said that they would, they were asked further questions about the site they would like. Sub-sections below look first at answers given by respondents on sites, then in housing.

Currently Living on Sites

9.3 Just over a third (36%) of respondents on sites said that they would move to another long-stay caravan site for Gypsies and Travellers. As expected, the proportions were higher on unauthorised (60%) and local authority sites (71%) than on family-owned sites (12%). However, overall about a fifth did not know whether they would move or not. Those who would move seemed to envisage a long stay, or said that they did not know how long they would stay.

9.4 All but one of the respondents who would move wanted a site in the Study Area, although 27% also mentioned another location as a possibility. Within the Study Area, the order of preference between local authorities was Solihull, then Coventry and Birmingham – this reflects current location and the fact that most wanted to stay very locally. Answers show a desire to improve environments while retaining social and service links:

Somewhere away from the factories and airport.

Not too far from current friends and family.

In the Solihull area as my children are settled in school.

9.5 Opinion was split about desired site ownership:

Site owned privately (not family)	33%
Family owned site on own land	28%
Site owned by a council	17%
Doesn't matter	17%

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

The relative lack of preference for family owned sites reflects the fact that most currently on such sites were not interested in moving to another site. No-one was on a site waiting list.

9.6 Respondents were asked to say what are the most important things (from a checklist) for them when deciding where a site should be. In terms of the 2 most important only, the order was:

- Near to family
- Good road access
- Near green spaces/countryside
- Friendly neighbours
- Near health services
- Near schools
- Near shops
- Where there is work

Further options not thought most important by anyone were: away from the settled community, on the outskirts and close to housing. The listing suggests a desire for access to services and integration with the community, while being near to the countryside and with an over-riding concern for being near to family.

9.7 When asked what they thought the maximum number of pitches should be on a long-stay site, answers (from all sited respondents) ranged between 4 and 50, but the average was 18 pitches. 76% favoured sites with up to 20 pitches.

Currently Living in Housing

9.8 Just over a tenth (12%) of respondents in housing said that they would move to a long-stay caravan site for Gypsies and Travellers. 46% said that they would not move and 43% said that they did not know. This is a relatively low proportion definitely interested in moving to a site, and suggests that the great majority of Gypsies and Travellers in housing in the Study Area are not there simply because no site accommodation was available. The proportions varied by tenure, with no owner-occupiers interested in moving to a site, compared with 25% of private tenants and 20% of social tenants. Even among tenants interest is relatively limited. Those interested in a site were mostly unable to say how long they might stay there.

9.9 Only 7 respondents in housing would like to move to a site. 2 were unable to say where they would like the site to be. 1 wanted to return to London. The others would like the site to be in the Study Area – mainly in Birmingham or Coventry. Half would like a family-owned site, two-thirds a council site and a third said it did not matter (based on a sample of 6 and multiple answers). No-one was on a site waiting list.

9.10 Only 6 respondents answered the question about the most important things for them when deciding where a site should be. Their most important were:

- Near to family

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

Near to health services
Where there is work
Near schools

The factors also thought most important by respondents on sites (good road access, near shops, near green spaces/countryside and friendly neighbours) all appear among factors thought important by respondents in housing, but do not reach their most important list. Work opportunities seem relatively more important to housed than to sited respondents.

9.11 Respondents in housing favoured larger sites than those currently on sites. Their answers ranged between 10 and 42, with an average of 26 pitches. Only 24% favoured sites with up to 20 pitches. These answers are much higher than usual in GTAAs, and may reflect lack of direct experience of living on a site.

Views on Mixed Sites

9.12 All respondents were asked for their views on sites where there are different Gypsy and Traveller families and groups, for example English Gypsies and Irish Travellers living together. Only 1 respondent across the whole sample, currently living on a council site, thought it a good idea:

It's a good idea. No problem seen. Contrary to belief, no problems. Groups must mix. It's down to individuals.

9.13 The emphasis on the importance of the individual chimes with answers given by those who said 'it depends' (34% of sited and 21% of housed respondents). They referred to individuals and whether they could get on with each other, and also to the importance of site management:

It depends. There are good and bad in everyone. It just depends on the individual.

It depends. If there was a manager on site, it wouldn't matter if there was a mix of nationalities as the manager would be in control not the different families.

9.14 However, a number of respondents (40% of sited and 25% of housed) thought mixing families and groups on sites a bad idea. These respondents, sometimes from personal experience, thought that Irish and English do not mix, and demonstrated some stereotypes of the groups in their own answers:

They do not mix. Cultures are different, and the Irish are trouble.

Conflict between the two breeds thinking each is better than the other.

I wouldn't personally stay on an Irishman's site.

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

9.15 These answers suggest that mixed sites can work, but require careful selection of compatible families and individuals, and continuing management to ensure no group or individual gains control.

Need/Demand for Housing from Existing Households

9.16 Survey respondents on sites were asked whether they would consider moving to a house. Overall, 23% (11 respondents) said that they would. The proportion varied slightly with type of current accommodation:

Unauthorised sites	33%
Local authority site	29%
Private site (rented)	22%
Private site (owned)	20%

This suggests that people currently on unauthorised sites would mostly be unwilling to turn to housing to meet their needs. Answers generally suggest that moving to a house is not an immediate or desired prospect, but more in the 'if I had to' category. No-one was on a housing waiting list. Only 1 respondent who either said that they would not consider moving to a house or did not know, said that they might consider it if support was provided with the process of finding, settling in and managing a home. This suggests that fear of the process of moving is not the main factor deterring people currently on sites from moving to housing.

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

- Want stability
- Lack of sites
- For children's schooling/education

Some other reasons illustrate reluctance, or caveats before a move to a house would be made in reality:

If it was in the right area.

If I had nowhere to go. Would rather go to a house than go travelling – the travelling life is finished.

9.18 The indications are that there may be movement from sites to bricks and mortar housing, but this is likely to be on a very small scale in the near future unless circumstances change significantly on sites.

Need/Demand for Transit Sites

9.19 Respondents were asked whether, if there was a network of authorised transit sites, they would use them. Levels of positive interest were low – 13% of both sited and housed respondents said that they would use them. However, uncertainty was high especially among housed respondents (61% of housed and 26% of sited respondents said they did not know whether or not they would use them). In answer to a slightly different question, 11% of

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

sited respondents and 28% of housed respondents said that they would consider stopping at a short-stay/transit site, again with considerable levels of uncertainty. Transit sites seem unlikely to be attractive to Study Area travellers relative to caravan parks, staying with relatives or even the roadside.

9.20 All respondents were asked what facilities should be provided on short-stay/transit sites. Almost all opted for hard-standings, water supply, mains electricity, refuse collection, and WC and bath or shower for each family. A much smaller number opted for shared WCs and baths or showers. There was a difference of opinion between sited and housed respondents over whether there should be a manager who lives on site – 82% of sited respondents thought there should be a manager compared with only 38% of housed respondents. Most respondents clearly envisage quite formal, well-equipped provision.

9.21 Respondents on sites thought transit sites should be of a similar size as residential sites, with an average maximum number of 18 pitches. Housed respondents thought transit sites should be significantly smaller than long-stay sites and their average maximum number of pitches was only 6. By implication, these respondents appear to be envisaging a site roughly comparable in size to a roadside encampment, but fully serviced. Such provision is unlikely to be economic to provide or run.

9.22 The survey asked what respondents thought about sites that incorporate long stay/permanent plots with short stay/transit facilities. 64% of sited and 62% of housed respondents said they did not know. Among those expressing an opinion, those in housing were much more likely to be positive to the idea (36% thought it a good and 2% a bad idea) than those on sites (21% a good and 15% a bad idea). Those thinking it a good idea referred to giving Travellers on the road a chance of accessing facilities and helping people to travel. Some saw it as an opportunity to have family to stay, or a means of getting better community spirit. There was also a strong feeling that mixed sites would help some Travellers aspire to becoming more settled or would give them an idea of whether they would fit in:

Good idea. Have it all together. Makes people realise that they can have better trailers and facilities by viewing longer stay facilities.

Good idea – if had short stay, visitors could observe to see if they could integrate into a long-stay site.

9.23 Those thinking mixed sites a bad idea referred to possible differences in lifestyle and treatment of the site.

Different views on how a site is treated. Short stay have less regard for facilities and location.

New Household Formation

9.24 The formation of new households is one of the most significant elements in need for accommodation amongst Gypsies and Travellers, as in the settled community. Larger average household size (see Chapter 4) and younger marriage age amongst some Gypsy and Traveller groups mean that household formation rates will be relatively rapid. However, Chapter 4 also showed that most families among housed Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area are young families, suggesting that household formation will not be in the next 5 or even 10 years.

9.25 The survey asked whether there was anyone in the respondent's household (eg son or daughter) who is likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next 5 years. 9 sited and 5 housed respondents said that there was. 3 sited and 6 housed respondents said that they did not know. Examination of the data shows that 4 of these households include young adults not currently heading a household who might leave home on marriage over the next 5 years. However, in the estimate of needs in Chapter 12 allowance has only been made for new households said to definitely need their own separate accommodation in the next 5 years.

9.26 Where respondents said that there were individuals likely to want their own separate accommodation, they were asked how many individuals there were. Sited respondents reported a total of 10 individuals wanting their own accommodation. This is equivalent to 21% of the sample, or about a 4% family increase a year. Housed respondents also reported a total of 10 individuals wanting their own accommodation, equivalent to 16% of the total sample, or just over 3% family increase a year. All individuals said to want separate accommodation were sons or daughters.

9.27 Further questions sought to establish whether new household formation would lead to need for accommodation within the Study Area. On **sites**, 1 respondent said that her daughter was marrying and moving to her husband's home outside the Study Area. Others thought that the new household would want to stay close, in 3 instances on the same site. This suggests some pressure for increasing size of existing sites. 2 individuals likely to form a new household were thought likely to want a house rather than a site place. 5 were thought definitely to want a trailer – other answers were to the effect that it is 'up to them'.

9.28 Answers were less definite from **housed** respondents, with most saying they did not know whether the new household would want to stay nearby or what sort of accommodation they might want. Of the definite answers, 2 wanted a house and 2 a trailer and site place. All the definite answers indicate that the new household would want to stay nearby.

9.29 Taken together, these findings suggest some need for site places and houses in the Study Area from household formation. This will be quantified in Chapter 12.

General Views on Different Types of Accommodation

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

9.31 Many of those currently on sites were at the best place they had lived. The following quotations show what is particularly prized:

Everybody knows us in the area, near to the city centre.

Current site – because we had an input into how we wanted it.

Safe, secure, good facilities. Everybody looks out for everybody else – close family environment.

Where people were not living on their best-ever site, answers suggest the importance of having family around, good amenities and good people around:

Stoke-on-Trent – all the family are there.

A site in Stratford-on-Avon. Good amenities and nice neighbours.

Site in Preston. It's a lovely site. The people are nice. It's a lot quieter and people are friendly.

9.32 Answers from people in housing have a rather different flavour. They are more often tinged with nostalgia for 'home', youth, or for a travelling way of life. More immediate advantages again often refer to nice people, to having family around and to amenities. The great majority of answers refer to sites or travelling rather than to houses, although for a few their current accommodation is their best.

I was brought up on the side of the road up until I was 10 year old. It was great, no worries, pure peace. It was good because everyone was nice people we were with and there was never any trouble.

Galway, Ireland, where I was brought up as a boy. It was absolutely a beautiful place.

A site near Manchester full of my own people. It's where I felt I belonged and where I felt most at home.

It was my brother's land in Essex. It was very nice. He had done a lot to it but we had to move as it got turned down twice. It was a shame as all our family was together and that's what we all like. I hope these questionnaires make it easy for Travellers to get their own sites just for their families.

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

This is the best place for convenience and local facilities.

In the house we are in now, because I have Travellers as neighbours and friends all around and there is family next door. We are all very close.

One answer gives the 'other side' to settled community views of problematic unauthorised encampment:

We found a lovely stopping place in Yorkshire. We pulled onto a playing field in summer. It was lovely and peaceful. We weren't bothered for ages and the children were running around. They really enjoyed it too.

9.33 Several respondents on sites said that they had no 'worst' places. One was living on their worst place. Generally, answers show a combination of poor facilities, hostile neighbours and trouble on sites:

Peterborough – no facilities on site, too dirty and rough. It was unsafe there.

Roadside – it was years ago. It was dirty and no running water or electricity. It was different places as we moved around a lot then.

Castle Vale council site. The site was ruled by one other family who made lives hell.

9.34 Dirt, poor facilities, harassment and not feeling accepted are all referred to frequently among the worst places described by housed respondents. The following give a flavour:

Inner London in general where you could never pull anywhere to stay. The police were forever moving you on. It was not a very friendly place.

On a piece of wasteland in Nelson, Lancashire. It was cold, damp and filthy. There were a load of Asian youths throwing stones and shouting abuse every night.

On a field in front of a farm. The abuse and racism to us was terrible. The locals really didn't like us.

On a site in Scotland. We were forever getting complaints over the children. It was because we were the only Irish family on there. They blamed my children for everything.

9.35 The importance of having family and other Travellers around is summed up by this housed respondent who illustrates well the general impression from the survey that Gypsies and Travellers in housing are much happier where there are other similar families nearby.

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

This house [is the worst place]. We have all the facilities we need but we feel as we're on our own. No family and friends. My children aren't mixing with our own people and I don't want them to change their culture.

9.36 The final formal question in the survey asked 'thinking about all the things we've talked about, we would like you to give your opinion about the following ways of living, and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being a very poor option and 10 being a very good option)'. The options given were those listed in Table 9.1 where the average score given to each option is shown.

Table 9.1 : Average Scores Given to Accommodation Options		
Frequency	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	60 ⁽¹⁾
	Average score	Average score
Private site owned and lived on by you/your family	10	9.3
Site owned by another Gypsy/ Traveller	4.8	4.4
Site owned by a private landlord, not a Gypsy/Traveller	5.5	4.7
Site owned by a local council	5.1	5.5
House owned by you/your family	6.7	9.7
House rented from local council or housing association	2.5	5.3
Travelling around often and stopping on authorised transit sites	3.0	5.6
Travelling around often and stopping where you can	2.4	7.5
Site which also has houses or bungalows for Gypsies and Travellers nearby	4.8	8.4

Source : GTAA survey

⁽¹⁾ 1 housed respondent did not answer this question and has been excluded from the table.

9.37 The popularity of family-owned sites is clear across both groups. However, it is interesting that, among the housed respondents, owner-occupied housing gets a higher average score even than a family-owned site. Ownership is important as well as type of accommodation. Other points from the table include:

- Council owned sites seem slightly more popular among housed than sited respondents. Both sited and housed respondents score sites owned by a non-Traveller landlord slightly higher than a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller (not family).
- Travelling around receives higher scores from housed than sited respondents, reflecting current travelling patterns. Sited respondents

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

slightly favour travelling between authorised transit sites over travelling and stopping where they can; housed respondents score the informal higher than the formal arrangements.

- A site with houses or bungalows for Gypsies and Travellers nearby finds greater favour from housed than sited respondents and is their third most popular option.

9.38 Perhaps the main point from these answers is that the aspiration is broadly towards private, personal provision of both sites and houses. Again, there are few indications that respondents currently in housing generally see this as second best. However, management, neighbours, proximity of family and friends are apparently quite as important as actual type of accommodation to personal satisfaction as illustrated by the earlier finding on best and worst places.

Perceptions of Need

9.39 Several respondents volunteered views that more sites are needed generally and in the Study Area for Gypsies and Travellers. There was some cynicism that the survey would make a difference, but hopes that it would. Some said that planning applications should be made easier to get.

9.40 A final, general impression of need and aspiration may be gained from answers to the question whether respondents were in their current accommodation by choice or because there was no alternative. 92% of those on sites said they were there by choice, just 1 respondent said it was not by choice and 1 did not know.

9.41 For future accommodation planning, answers given by respondents in housing are interesting. Just over half (56%) said they were there by choice and 23% that it was lack of alternative. 21% were unable to say. One respondent illustrates uncertainty and conflicting pressures:

Don't know. A bit of both. By choice because we chose to move in but there was no alternative. It is nice when you give your address to someone they don't think 'Oh my, not a Gypsy'. And not to have to keep going outside in the cold to use the toilet or shower. But it's not nice on your own. The house would be OK if there were more Travellers living in the street. Some places there is 2-3 Travellers in the same street and that's nice.

9.42 Some of the final comments to the survey illustrate the ambiguous position of Gypsies and Travellers in housing. Some have been brought up in houses and have apparently fully adapted to the change. Others may have moved to housing but as a response to personal circumstances rather than as true 'settlement'. The following contrasting quotations show this clearly. At present, it is doubtful that anyone, including Gypsies and Travellers themselves, know which view will prevail.

9. Future Accommodation, Aspirations and Household Formation

We do not feel that the [survey] questions were relevant to us and our family. Our mother and father were Travellers who are both dead now. We are not ashamed of where we came from but we do not know much about the travelling part of that life as we have been brought up in houses. I find the questions quite patronising.

I hope this helps the younger ones as we are old now and don't need sites. But my young family do. It's not easy, our way of life. People don't like Gypsy and Travellers. That's why we don't tell anyone who we are and a lot of the housed ones don't. It makes things better for us. It's not like living in a trailer.

I think family-run sites are needed. And then the community relationships can develop so they all could get to know that not all Gypsy Travellers are bad. We should be allowed to live peacefully as part of British society, and not do what we have done and bring our children up like gorgios. My children lost a lot of our way of life and culture. But they are now married and are living the good life again travelling all around. I've told them not to settle down until they get old. I've been here too long just to go back on the road; we just go away for a week now and then.

10. EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND DISCRIMINATION

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

Employment

10.2 One or more family member worked in most households. 36% of households on sites and 23% in housing included no-one who worked. Several households, especially in housing, included more than one worker, usually older children rather than the wife or female partner. These levels of working are much higher than found, for example, on many social housing estates.

10.3 Self-employment was much more common than employment. Only 13% and 14% of the reported workers on sites and in housing respectively were employed rather than self-employed. The main occupations were within the general area of building work, including groundwork, tarmac and paving, roofing, painting, fascias and general building. Many fewer worked in landscaping, gardening or tree work. 3 respondents sold furniture or carpets, 2 were scrap dealers. Daughters were said to work in shops and one was a bank clerk. 2 women sold charms on occasions. However, it is clear that by far the most significant factor for economic wellbeing is the market for small construction work, often for individual householders.

10.4 Most who work, work both within and outside the local area (not further defined). Relatively few do not work within the local area at all. Most are likely to work predominantly if not exclusively within the Study Area.

10.5 Questions sought to identify ways in which a travelling lifestyle impacts on work, and the way in which work impacts on how much people travel or where they go. Very few respondents identified any such effects. Those who did mostly referred to the need to move to where work is, or noted that they would not travel elsewhere if there was local work. One noted the impact of discrimination against Travellers as an impact on work opportunities. Over 90% of working respondents said that they could work satisfactorily from their current site or house.

10.6 Only 3 respondents – all in housing – said that they would like to take part in any training or education in the future. In 2 instances this was for children who were thought likely to want to do hair or beauty work, or go to college. The only example of an adult respondent seeking training was a Bosnian Roma refugee who wanted training as a car mechanic, and English lessons for his wife.

Health Issues

10.7 Respondents were asked whether anyone in their household experienced any serious health problems or disabilities. 83% of respondents on sites and 82% in housing said that there was no-one. Health problems were slightly more likely to affect more than one person in the household in housing than on sites. Table 10.1 shows the extent to which health problems required specified care or adaptation. Under a fifth of respondent households require any of these measures. 2 respondents on sites said that they would need adaptations to their caravan in future, and would be helped by the Cara Support Worker.

Health problem requires:	Sites	Housing
Sample	47	61
	%	%
Adaptations to the home	6	2
Regular medical treatment at doctor or hospital	17	10
Regular prescriptions	15	13
Care and support from family or friends	15	12
Care and support from social services or a voluntary body	4	3
Moving to bricks and mortar housing	-	5

Source : GTAA survey

10.8 The health problems mentioned by more than one respondent, in order of frequency of mention, are:

- Asthma
- Heart problems
- Arthritis
- Mental health problems and depression (all in housing)
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure

Other problems mentioned by a single respondent were epilepsy, thyroid problems, back problems, autism and problems with feet. One respondent was wheelchair-bound.

Education

10.9 Educational provision is, of course, available to Gypsy and Traveller children in all parts of the Study Area. WMCESTC offers support to families and schools. Relatively low school attendance levels, particularly at secondary

10. Employment, Health, Education and Discrimination

schools, is a widely recognised feature of Gypsy and Traveller communities, even when quite 'settled'.

10.10 In all, 58 respondents answered question about the education of school-age children. School attendance was rather higher in housing than on sites. 76% of those in housing said that all their school age children attended school regularly, 22% said that some did and 2% said that none did (1 respondent in a council tenancy). Two-thirds of those not attending regularly were said to receive home education. None of these answers on attendance or home education have been independently confirmed.

10.11 On sites, 58% said that all school age children attend school regularly, 24% said some do and 18% that none do. This last group comprises 3 respondents, 1 each living on a council site, a family site and on a rented private pitch. Only 1 had been at their site for less than a year. 50% of those not attending school regularly were said to receive home education. Again there is no independent confirmation.

10.12 When asked how easy or difficult it is for Gypsies and Travellers to access schools/education in the area, most gave a neutral answer (neither easy nor difficult) or said that they did not know. No-one said that it was difficult and around a tenth on sites and in housing said it was very easy.

10.13 53% of respondents with school age children on sites said that they had contact with the Traveller Education Service, compared with only 2% of those in housing. This is not surprising, since Traveller Education Services concentrate on children on sites or encampments, or those recently moving into housing.

Discrimination

10.14 The survey asked respondents whether they had experienced harassment or discrimination in the area, and if so, what happened. Very low proportions reported any harassment or discrimination – 19% on sites and 10% in housing (all tenures).

10.15 Answers suggested that harassment or discrimination in the local area was seen as relatively minor and not unexpected. Some commented that they had not experienced harassment locally but had elsewhere. Some said that they were known and accepted locally – *people are used to Travellers on this estate*. The examples reported should be a cause for concern as indicating an endemic level of hostility towards Gypsies and Travellers and the extent to which Gypsies and Travellers view it as 'normal' – see the use of '*just*' in the quotations below.

Just locals on the estate, shouting the usual 'gypo'

10. Employment, Health, Education and Discrimination

My wife had a bit of trouble once in the town. By a group of teenage girls and boys. Shouting 'dirty gypo scum' – the usual. But she just ignored it. It has only been the one time.

Just locals on the estate shouting names to the children. Had a few stones chucked. The caravan was vandalised.

Being told to leave a pub when found out where we lived.

10.16 Some Gypsies and Travellers appear to hide, or not to advertise, their identity:

We've been here for years. Not many people know we are Travellers. We are just like gorgios now.

10.17 There were few indications of anyone taking formal action to challenge or complain about harassment or discrimination. One example given does not seem to have been very effective:

My children have all suffered with bullying at school by other schoolchildren calling them names. I have often been to school over it. It is not fair and it is not nice.

10.18 One respondent referred to the Castle Vale site in the context of harassment (no longer a resident). This is a reminder that all harassment is not perpetrated by the settled community but can occur between Gypsy and Traveller groups and families. However, a comment on the same issue from another respondent emphasises the perceived inadequate institutional responses to the problem:

There is a lot of bullying with Travellers in the site. As I have said, there is good and bad Travellers. The police come on the sites and see a bit of trouble and just drive off. They think 'they're only Gypsies – let them kill themselves.'

10.19 Harassment, in several sense, is an issue in the Study Area, but one which appears to affect a minority only.

11. HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

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

11.2 This chapter initially sets out the methodology used for this part of the study and the strategic context. It then identifies existing housing-related support services and considers access and usage of services, before moving on to look at housing-related support requirements and service gaps. The chapter ends with a number of conclusions.

Methodology

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

- A review of Supporting People Strategies and Action Plans for each of the administering authorities.
- An analysis of Client Records Data Forms submitted by Supporting People Providers on use of services by Travellers (primary and secondary client).
- A short questionnaire survey sent to approximately 80 organisations across the Study Area including: generic Supporting People funded housing-related support providers, Citizens Advice Bureaux and specialist providers. Only 9 organisations responded to the questionnaire survey.
- Findings from the survey interviews with Gypsies and Travellers.
- Interviews with representatives from all three Supporting People Teams.

Strategic Context: Supporting People Strategies and Housing-Related Support Need Assessments

11.4 There is explicit mention of Gypsies and Travellers in the Supporting People Strategies of all of the local authorities.

Birmingham

11.5 The Birmingham Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 highlighted Travellers as one of the vulnerable groups the Supporting People Programme supports but acknowledged that there were no schemes for this specific client group, and that little is known about the number of Travellers within the

11. Housing-Related Support Services

Birmingham area or their needs. A key priority for action was to undertake research to map the local housing-related support needs of Travellers to inform future commissioning priorities. The draft Supporting People Strategy Update 2007-2010 (v10) highlights that the research has been completed.

11.6 The research report (March 2007) had to rely on national data to estimate need levels. It estimated that there is a local population of around 132 adult Travellers in Birmingham. On this base, it assumed that there were 20 adults in need amongst Birmingham's Travellers Community. It noted that the provision of any accommodation-based support might well be superfluous, with the major need being for non-accommodation-based services, albeit perhaps tied to a specific Traveller site but not to any specific properties or pitches on the site. Given the lack of needs information it recommended that the commissioning body consider supporting an action research floating support type service which aimed both to meet immediate support needs and, more importantly, to more precisely identify the extent and nature of support needs in this community.

11.7 The draft Supporting People Strategy Update 2007-2010 (v10) highlights that a service has now been commissioned (see paragraph 11.12) and that ongoing research into the needs of the Travelling community will better inform commissioning decisions for this group.

Coventry

11.8 The Five Year Strategy for Supporting People in Coventry 2005-2010 highlights that there are currently no Supporting People funded services for Travellers in Coventry. However, should a need for support services for Travellers be identified, the Commissioning Body will consider commissioning a floating support service to meet this need. The strategy implementation plan, under implementing floating support, states that a required action is to explore the possibility of commissioning floating support services for Travellers.

Solihull

11.9 Solihull's Five Year Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 comments that Solihull has a significant number of Romany people of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish background. They are a minority ethnic group and have been occupying sites for as long as 10 years to the south and in rural areas. They do not travel but have remained on sites with caravans being their primary home.

11.10 At the time the Strategy was produced there were no specific housing-related support services for Travellers. One of the priorities identified was to undertake a needs analysis and to identify a clearer statement of priorities.

11.11 The draft Supporting People Strategy Update highlights that there is a range of support needs across the Travelling communities although there are disparate levels of income within this client group; for instance Irish Travellers

11. Housing-Related Support Services

often experience higher levels of poverty and greater reliance on benefit maximisation than other Travellers. A floating support service has been commissioned (approximately 15 units) and one of the priorities outlined in the strategy is to further develop this floating support service.

Existing Specialist Housing Related Support Services for Gypsies and Travellers

11.12 There are currently two Supporting People (SP) funded housing-related floating support services within the Study Area specifically for Gypsies and Travellers. These are both provided by Cara Housing Association:

- **Birmingham:** A 12 month pilot floating support service (approximately 25 places) was commissioned in July 2007. The service is for Travellers living on authorised sites, encampments, or bricks and mortar accommodation. The brief for this service includes research to assess need and demand for housing related-support services. The findings will inform the commissioning of future services.
- **Solihull:** A floating support service (approximately 15 places) has been commissioned as a short-term service to help Travellers establish and/or continue to successfully maintain their own home. The aim of this service is to promote independence amongst service users through support with a range of areas relating to tenancy sustainment, benefit maximisation, dealing with correspondence and liaison with external agencies/organisations. The service is currently being reviewed by the Commissioning Body.

11.13 There are currently no specialist SP funded services in Coventry. Coventry employs a Gypsy Liaison Officer but their remit appears to be focussed on enforcement.

11.14 In addition to the specialist housing-related support services there are a number of generic SP housing-related support services and other mainstream housing support and related services which Gypsies and Travellers may be able to access. However, of the nine organisations that responded to the questionnaire only Cara Housing Association had provided services, over the last year, to Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area.

Access to Housing-Related Support Services

Mainstream Services

11.15 Studies elsewhere have indicated that Gypsies and Travellers can find it difficult to access mainstream services. This can be for a number of reasons – for example: literacy issues, complicated appointment (call centres) and allocation systems, lack of public transport or lack of a fixed address. Gypsies and Travellers interviewed in the survey were asked a number of questions in relation to access to a range of mainstream services including: public transport, GPs, dentists, schools, shops etc. Answers to questions about service availability were not very useful since some respondents appear to have taken into consideration issues around whether they would ever use the service themselves as well as whether the service exists locally. More usefully, a question specifically asked whether anything was stopping respondents accessing any of these services. Only 3 respondents (3%) across the whole sample living in both bricks and mortar accommodation and on sites felt that there was something stopping them accessing any of the services. 1 referred to ill health, 1 to having to rely on someone for a lift and 1 to problems of getting a dentist in the area.

11.16 Usage of local services was as follows:

Local shops	97%
GP	92%
Dentist	83%
Post office	81%
Accident & emergency	81%
Banks	63%
Schools	54%
Maternity care respondents)	33% (may reflect number of male respondents)
Public transport	23%
Sports/leisure facilities	17%
Nursery schools and children's services	17%
Health visitor	14%
Youth clubs and services	4%
Social worker	1%
Services for older people	0

This suggests high usage of many local basic services. One of the biggest discrepancies between reported availability and use of services was public transport where 85% said it was accessible, while only 23% used it.

11.17 A quarter of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed thought that people working in the different services needed to be more aware of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers (34% said there was no need for greater awareness and 47% did not know). Comments included:

People can be ignorant of our ways and dress and be very judgemental.

11. Housing-Related Support Services

Besides our cultural differences we have nationality differences as well...[if] they have some understanding of our culture it would help people understand our ways a little better.

In addition, a number of stakeholders/providers felt there was a need for awareness training for generic staff, for example housing and tenancy support staff, as they potentially have access to a lot of hidden need.

Housing-Related Support Services

11.18 Gypsies and Travellers are often an 'invisible community' in terms of housing-related support needs. Many Gypsies and Travellers are very 'private people' and do not like to discuss personal issues with outsiders/people they do not trust. This often means that they rely on family or friends or professionals well known to them (for example a Health Visitor) for support and advice on many matters. The GTAA survey found that over 70% of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed would ask parents and other relatives for support/help and just under 50% would ask friends. A number in Solihull specifically stated they would seek support from their 'support worker'. Less than 1% would ask for support/help from site owner/manger, warden or housing manager (reflecting the proportion of family sites and private sector housing).

11.19 The general view from stakeholders was that, for a housing-related support service to be accessible and successful, the service provider needed to:

- Have a track record in providing services for Gypsies and Travellers or, as a minimum, experience of general Traveller issues and appropriate training/support.
- Be trusted by the Gypsy and Traveller community or have the ability to build this trust.
- Have an ability to enable Gypsies and Travellers to engage with other services and/or act as their advocate/intermediary with other agencies.
- Have organisational back-up, for example to cope with Supporting People requirements.

11.20 One stakeholder felt that, in the long-term, it is important for generic services to help meet the housing-related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers so that Gypsies and Travellers are offered a range of services and choice of provider. However, they felt that generic providers need to build up their knowledge, expertise and skills in providing services for Gypsies and Travellers; so in the short-term at least a specialist provider is needed.

Usage of Existing Housing-Related Support Services

11.21 A key difficulty in terms of identifying Gypsies and Travellers who have received or are receiving housing-related support is the fact that many do not

11. Housing-Related Support Services

identify themselves as Gypsies or Travellers in applications, referral forms or ethnic monitoring returns.

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

11.23 Tables 11.1 and 11.2 identify new Traveller service users (primary and secondary clients) over the period 2003-2007. No further details are available to show just what needs the service users had or the precise service received.

Administering Authority	16-17	18-24	25-31	32-38	39-45	46-52	53-59	60+	Total
Birmingham	1	19	22	17	14	12	2	6	93
Coventry	1	2	6	7	7	6	3	1	33
Solihull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Administering Authority	Floating Support	Direct Access	Supported Housing	Supported Lodgings	Women's Refugee	Foyer	Outreach	Total
Birmingham	8	56 ⁽¹⁾	15	6	8	0	0	93
Coventry	10	10	10	0	1	1	1	33
Solihull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

⁽¹⁾ Primarily relate to 2003-2005

11.24 There were no new Traveller clients identified in the Client Records for Solihull Administering Authority over this 4 year period. However, Supporting People Monitoring Information for Cara Housing Association Service in Solihull details that there were 15 clients as at 1.4.2007, all of whom had started to receive support within the last year. By the end of the quarter the service was at maximum capacity. Recent survey findings found that most of the clients received support on a weekly basis with the average duration around 30 minutes. However, the time spent with an individual in any one week can vary considerably. Common areas of support were around: literacy, form filling/paperwork, collating documents for passport applications etc, benefits, and accessing other services (e.g. health services) and advice (e.g. on planning issues and legal advice). On some sites, advice/support also focussed on specific issues, for example the proposed expansion to the Birmingham Airport (The Haven site), arranging utilities to be provided on site (Old Damson Lane).

Housing Related Support Needs and Service Gaps – Stakeholder and Providers Views

11.25 A number of stakeholders highlighted that Gypsies and Travellers were often reluctant to identify themselves as such when applying for support/accommodation etc. This means that service providers may not recognise that a client is a Gypsy or Traveller and can lead to overall needs of the client group not being fully recognised.

11.26 Stakeholders generally commented on the need for flexible, individually tailored, outcome-focused support services on hourly based contracts. The distinction between short- and long-term services was seen to be an issue, or potentially an issue, by a number of stakeholders. In reality the length of time support is required is likely to vary from short-term intensive support (for example, where there is a tenancy failure) to long-term support (for example where there are issues around literacy).

11.27 All the stakeholders felt that if additional sites were provided then housing-related support needs would increase. One stakeholder commented on the likely future increase in the number of Gypsy and Traveller clients presenting with multiple and complex needs.

11.28 A stakeholder from Birmingham felt there was an additional hidden need in relation to a number of Eastern European Gypsies and Travellers in the City who were generally being classified as refugees. They felt that refugee services were not 'geared up' to meet their needs. There was an additional barrier to accessing refugee services as Eastern European Gypsy and Travellers had often been discriminated against in the past by their own fellow nationals.

Evidence of Support Needs from Gypsy and Traveller Interviews

11.29 This section reports the housing support needs identified by Gypsies and Travellers themselves in the survey interviews. Interviewees were asked to identify whether they would use a number of specific services which people sometimes want help or support with. There were 108 respondents to this part of the survey (61 in bricks and mortar accommodation and 47 on sites). Significant differences in the support needs of these two groups were revealed by the survey. Overall the support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation were more extensive as outlined below.

Gypsies and Travellers Living in Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

11.30 **Over 80%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Help in registering with a GP or dentist (89%) – 61% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 28% said they 'might use' this service.

11. Housing-Related Support Services

- Help with filling in forms (84%) – 33% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service and 51% said they ‘might use’ this service

11.31 **Over 60%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Finding accommodation and making an application (66%) - 36% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 30% said they ‘might use’ this service.
- Discrimination or harassment support services (62%) - 33% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 29% said they ‘might use’ this service.
- Support on planning issues (63%) - 30% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 33% said they ‘might use’ this service.
- Accessing legal services (70%) – 26% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 44% said they ‘might use’ this service.

11.32 **Over 50%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Pregnancy support services (54%) – 21% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 33% said they ‘might use’ this service.
- Settling into new accommodation (52%) - 21% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 31% said they ‘might use’ this service.

11.33 **Over 30%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Claiming benefits (38%) - 8% said they ‘would definitely use’ this service, 30% said they ‘might use’ this service.

11.34 **Fewer than 15%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Meeting people (12%)
- Budgeting (11%)
- Accessing Training for adults (10%)
- Finding a job (7%)
- Parenting (0%)

11.35 None of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed in housing identified any other services they would like help or support with. Answers to these questions from Gypsies and Travellers living in housing perhaps seem surprisingly high given that, for example, the great majority of respondents were already registered with a GP and dentist, and many had already negotiated the process of buying a house. Respondents may have been thinking more generally rather than referring to personal needs.

Gypsies and Travellers Living on Sites

11.36 **Over 70%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Filling in forms (72%) - 34% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 38% said they 'might use' this service.

11.37 **Over 40%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Support on planning issues (43%) - 17% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 26% said they 'might use' this service.
- Claiming benefits (43%) - 15% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 28% said they 'might use' this service.
- Accessing legal services (44%) - 6% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 38% said they 'might use' this service.

11.38 **Over 30%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Help in registering with a GP or dentist (39%) - 9% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 30% said they 'might use' this service.

11.39 **Over 15%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Finding accommodation and making an application – 17% said they 'might use' this service
- Discrimination or harassment (23%) - 4% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 19% said they 'might use' this service.
- Pregnancy support services (17%) - 6% said they 'would definitely use' this service, 11% said they 'might use' this service.

11.40 **Less than 15%** of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed said they would or might use the following support services:

- Settling into new accommodation (11%)
- Finding a job (4%)
- Parenting (4%)
- Budgeting (2%)
- Meeting people (2%)
- Accessing training for adults (2%)

11.41 None of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed on sites identified any other services they would like help or support with. Answers here seem less surprising than for housed respondents.

Conclusions

11.42 Whilst specialist services have been commissioned in Birmingham and Solihull, there are no such services in Coventry. Gypsies and Travellers may well find it difficult to access generic housing-related support services. None of

11. Housing-Related Support Services

the generic housing-related support providers who responded to the questionnaire identified that they had provided services to Gypsies and Travellers over the last year.

11.43 The survey apparently highlights significant differences in the support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation and those living on sites. Based on the survey findings, Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation have more extensive needs and would potentially access a wider range of support services. However, the questions may have been differently interpreted. We suggest that this finding should be treated with care.

11.44 Flexible, individually tailored, outcome-focused support services for Gypsies and Travellers are required across the Study Area, with housing-related support services available on both a short-term and long-term basis.

11.45 There is likely to be additional demand for housing-related support services if additional sites are provided, and/or if the proposed expansion of Birmingham airport takes place and this impacts on The Haven site. Stakeholders also commented that, over time, housing-related support needs may become more complex.

11.46 Access to mainstream services, such as GPs and dentists, was seen as important by the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed. Although there was no evidence in this survey that Gypsies and Travellers were prevented from accessing mainstream services this has been identified as an issue in other studies. There is a need for awareness training for generic staff and other specialist staff.

11.47 The data from the Gypsy and Traveller interviews demonstrated a demand for access to specialist services such as planning and legal advice (services which are not or may not be eligible for SP funding). Gypsy and Traveller support staff have a key role to play in assisting Gypsies and Travellers access other specialist services, such as legal services, which potentially could help meet key support needs identified through the Gypsy and Traveller interviews.

12. ASSESSING ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

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

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

Assessing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs

12.3 Methods of assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. In 2003 a crude estimation of additional pitch provision was made at a national level based predominantly on information contained within the Caravan Count¹⁶. The Draft Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated¹⁷. More recently, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for helping to ensure that GTAAs are robust in their estimation of accommodation need based upon a range of factors¹⁸. Finally, Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments has been issued in final form¹⁹.

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

Current residential supply

- Local authority rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

¹⁶ Niner, P. (2003) Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, London: ODPM.

¹⁷ CLG (2006) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Draft Practice Guidance, p. 22.

¹⁸ http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf

¹⁹ CLG, *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments : Guidance*, October 2007

Residential need Years 1 to 5

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

Pitch supply Years 1 to 5

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

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

- Ideally an allowance should be made for net movement into the Study Area from elsewhere, in the same way that migrational needs are taken into account in mainstream housing assessments. However, there is effectively no source of information on this for Gypsies and Travellers. It might be possible to look at recent in-migrants, but it is impossible to identify out-migrants from an area-based study in one location only. Following a widespread convention in GTAAs, this factor is not considered. Since we know from the survey that people are moving into the Study Area (Table 8.3), this represents an implicit assumption that movement into and out of the Study Area will be in balance.
- Family formation is a 'flow' factor in need (as opposed to a 'snapshot' element such as need from families currently on unauthorised developments). Ideally there should be a 'flow' element on the supply side represented by pitches coming vacant over the assessment period. There are two reasons for omitting this element. The first is purely practical in that we do not have robust information on which to base estimates of pitch turnover, particularly on private sites with rented pitches. The second is that the calculation of movement between sites and houses already takes into account one potentially important element in pitch turnover and to include a further estimate would risk double counting.

12.6 There are three particularly problematic aspects to making an assessment of requirements for residential pitches in the Study Area:

- It is evident that a high proportion of the Gypsy and Traveller population, especially in Birmingham and Coventry, lives in houses. Predicting potential movement between sites and houses and identifying the net contribution such movement makes to need for pitches, is one of the most difficult elements in GTAA calculations. This will be relatively important in the Study Area.
- Another problematic element is estimating need for residential pitches from transient unauthorised encampments – that is those families who are not simply passing through or seeking to stop in the area for a period during an event or while working. This is doubly problematic in the Study Area because we were unable to interview any families on transient unauthorised encampments.
- Both local authority sites in the Study Area are currently under-occupied and, to a greater or lesser degree, have management problems related to the presence of dominant families who influence or control who lives on the site. In these circumstances, a pitch on an existing local authority site may be seen as neither feasible nor desirable by Gypsies and Travellers in the area. This could have the effect of depressing expressed desire to move to a local authority site. In Birmingham there are hints from the survey and stakeholders that the influence of dominant families is more pervasive and affects Gypsies and Travellers who might want to come to the City for work, thus affecting the level of unauthorised encampment. Such factors cannot be predicted. Assumptions have been made below about the future of these sites, but wider possible implications of change have not been considered.

12.7 Thus attempting to estimate the elements of need and supply is a challenge in Years 1 to 5. It is all but impossible for Years 6 to 10. Current demographic and migrational characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller communities are a function of current social and economic circumstances, and likely to be heavily influenced by the current national shortage of site accommodation. If national policy succeeds in addressing shortage, Gypsy and Traveller family characteristics and movements could change significantly in ways which cannot be predicted now. In this context of uncertainty, there is a convention in GTAAs to estimate family growth on the basis of a standard assumed compound annual growth rate (usually 3%) for Years 6 to 10. This convention is followed here.

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

12.9 Approaches to assessing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers for bricks and mortar housing are still less developed, in part because information about Gypsies and Travellers in housing is so poor. Virtually nothing is known about Gypsies and Travellers in the private housing sector which is so important locally, and because questions on income and savings are so resented, any assessment of affordability is impossible. The section below (paragraph 12.23 et seq) piece together an assessment of the likely scale of movement to housing, but this is far from comprehensive.

12.10 The base date for current supply is 31 December 2007, and the assessment periods are 2007-2012 and 2012 to 2017.

12.11 A final preliminary comment is appropriate. These assessments, and particularly those relating to residential pitches, are purely on the basis of **'need where it arises'**. The current spread of authorised site provision is not even, whether at national level or within the Study Area. Inevitably, family growth will arise where people currently live, and long-term unauthorised sites have a particular geographical location. GTAAs have found in general that, because of family and other links and perhaps familiarity, many Gypsies and Travellers want to stay very close to where they currently live. This all has the effect of reinforcing current patterns of provision and settlement. As noted in paragraph 3.10, one of the roles of the Regional Spatial Strategy is to determine whether identified need should be met in the areas where it arises or whether provision should be spread more widely to increase choice. Study Area authorities will have the opportunity to participate in consultation on these questions during Phase Three of the RSS Revision in the West Midlands Region. At that point, wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability will be taken into account in moving towards **'need where it should be met'**.

Additional Residential Pitch Requirements

12.12 Table 12.1 summarises the assessment for residential pitch requirements in the Study Area between 2007-2017. The detailed derivation of the figures is described below. There are three particularly significant assumptions made which have a policy dimension:

- The estimates assume that Tameside Drive (Birmingham) will, during the first 5 year period, revert to its nominal function as a transit site, and will thus no longer contribute to residential pitch supply. This assumption is made because we believe the site is not suitable for long-term residential use due to its location and immediate environment close to the M6 and industrial uses. The site would have to be refurbished for continuing use, and it is possible that Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant would be denied because the site's environment affects its sustainability as a residential site. The implication of this for the model in Table 12.1 is shown in Row 6 where the rehousing needs of current site residents are included.

12. Assessing Accommodation Needs

- The Siskin Drive site (Coventry) has 22 pitches which are very small, and have no marked boundaries. The amenity units are also very small and have no space for kitchen appliances. The site falls far short of the design guidelines for sustainable residential sites issued in draft form by Communities and Local Government²⁰. Because of its current state of repair, the site requires refurbishment before it can be brought into full use. The model in Table 12.1 assumes that the site will be refurbished during the first 5 years, and that in the course of the work the opportunity is taken to re-design the site to provide 15 double pitches and amenity units built to modern design and space standards. Apart from achieving improved space standards for residents, the smaller number of pitches means that the site should be easier to manage in the future. This assumption is reflected in Row 14 of Table 12.1 which shows the net contribution of bringing unused pitches on the site back into use following refurbishment. If detailed design work suggests that the number of pitches at Siskin Drive should be higher or lower than the 15 assumed, the calculations of pitch requirement should be reviewed and Coventry's total amended accordingly.
- The Haven site in Solihull accommodates 24 families, including some on rented pitches. It is significant in current provision in Solihull and the Study Area. The site will be adversely affected by expansion of Birmingham Airport. Table 12.1 does **not** allow for any rehousing which might be required from this site during the period to 2017. Any such need arising would be additional to that estimated here.

²⁰ CLG & Housing Corporation, *Draft Guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies & Travellers: A Consultation Paper*, May 2007. See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/guidancedesignsites>

Table 12.1 : Summary of Estimated Need for Additional Residential Pitches 2007-2017		
Element of need and supply		Pitches
	Current residential supply	
1	Local authority rented pitches (occupied)	10
2	Private authorised pitches	57
3	Total authorised pitches	67
Residential pitch need 2007-2012		
4	End of temporary planning permissions	1
5	Closure of sites	0
6	Rehousing need from Tameside Drive (to transit use)	6
7	Concealed households/family growth to 2012	17
8	Long-term unauthorised sites	9
9	Movement between sites and housing	7
10	Transient unauthorised encampments	0
11	Additional residential need	40
Additional supply 2007-2012		
12	Pitches with permission but not developed	0
13	New sites planned	0
14	Pitches at Siskin Drive brought into use following refurbishment (net of currently occupied pitches)	11
15	Supply 2007-2012	11
16	Requirement for extra pitches 2007-2012	29
17	Family growth 2012-2017	15
18	Total requirement for extra pitches 2007-2017	44

12.13 The detailed derivation of each row in Table 12.1 is:

Rows 1-3 : Current supply is taken from Table 6.1. It is based on information provided by local authorities, supplemented by information from the survey. It does not rely solely on the Caravan Count. Only pitches actually occupied on local authority sites are included here.

Row 4 : There is a temporary planning permission affecting 1 family which will end during the assessment period.

Row 5 : No sites are expected to close between 2007 and 2012. If Birmingham Airport expansion plans are implemented during the assessment period, and if this means that The Haven site is displaced, there would be an additional requirement to replace pitches for 24 families.

Row 6 : As noted in paragraph 12.12, the estimates assume that Tameside Drive will revert to transfer use. The estimated 6 resident families will require rehousing.

Row 7 : The estimate for current concealed households and new household formation requires estimates of:

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

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

Calculating new household formation		
Sites (authorised and unauthorised)		
	Step 1 : How many new households will form?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> the number of individuals needing their own separate accommodation over the next 5 years was equivalent to 21% of the sample on sites (paragraph 9.26).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> this should be accepted as a rate of increase in line with rates found in other GTAs.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are 76 households on sites. $76 \times 21\% = 16$ new households forming.</p>
	Step 2 : How many will seek site accommodation in the Study Area?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 70% of new households likely to want site accommodation in the Study Area (paragraphs 9.27)</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 70% of 16 new households = 11 seeking to stay in the Study Area.</p>
Bricks and mortar housing		
	Step 1 : How many new households will form?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> the number of individuals needing their own separate accommodation over the next 5 years was equivalent to 16% of the sample in housing (paragraph 9.26).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> this should be accepted as the implied rate is reasonable in comparison to other GTAs.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are estimated to be 200 households in housing (paragraph 7.14). $200 \times 16\% = 32$ new households forming.</p>
	Step 2 : How many will seek site accommodation in the Study Area?	
		<p><i>Survey finding:</i> 2 out of 10 individuals (20%) forming new households were said to want trailer accommodation in the Study Area (paragraph 9.28).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This should be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> 20% of 32 new households = 6 seeking to stay in the Study Area.</p>
Total need from household formation 2007-2012		
	Sum of new households from sites and housing = $11 + 6 = 17$.	

Row 8 : The convention in GTAs is to treat unauthorised developments (that is sites developed on Gypsy-owned land without planning permission) as requiring 100% authorised site accommodation in the area of the development. In the Study Area, we think it is appropriate to treat long-term

12. Assessing Accommodation Needs

unauthorised sites on other land in this way too. Table 5.6 showed 9 families on unauthorised sites. Each family is assumed to require a separate pitch.

Row 9 : This figure is the balance of estimates of movement from sites to houses and vice versa. Again survey findings and assumptions are involved.

Calculating net movement between sites and housing	
<i>Movement from authorised sites to houses</i>	
	<p><i>Survey finding:</i> no sited respondents were actually intending to move to housing in the next 5 years. 23% said they would consider moving to housing (paragraph 9.16), but answers suggested some were insurance reasons.</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> round down to 10%. This figure is assumed in other GTAs as allowing for some movement to housing over the assessment period.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are 67 households on sites. $67 \times 10\% = 6.7$ (rounded 7) households currently on authorised sites needing housing 2007-2012.</p>
<i>Movement from houses to sites</i>	
	<p><i>Survey findings:</i> 12% of respondents in housing would consider moving to a long-term residential site (paragraph 9.8). 4 out of 7 (57%) would want a site in the Study Area (paragraph 9.9).</p> <p><i>Assumption:</i> This can be accepted.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> There are an estimated 200 households in housing. $200 \times 12\% \times 57\% = 13.7$ (rounded 14) households currently in housing needing an authorised site pitch 2007-2012.</p>
<i>The net balance</i>	
	The net balance is $14 - 7 = 7$. This is a net requirement for site pitches.

Row 10 : Need for permanent residential pitches arising from transient unauthorised encampments is one of the most difficult elements to predict. Circumstances where such need might arise are where families are travelling around from one unauthorised site to another within a local area simply because they want to stay in the area but can find nowhere that they are permitted to stop. Another scenario would be families with no base, who currently travel widely but want to 'settle' and need to be in the Study Area because of family links or employment opportunities. Information from stakeholders suggests that there are no such families in the Study Area at present, and this element is assumed to be zero.

Row 11 : Sum of elements 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

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

Row 13 : New sites planned again = 0.

Row 14 : As explained in paragraph 12.12 the estimates assume that Siskin Drive will be refurbished and re-modelled to provide 15 double pitches. 4 pitches are currently occupied, so the net increase to effective supply is $15 - 4 = 11$ pitches.

Row 15 : Sum of elements 12, 13 and 14.

Row 16 : Row 11 minus Row 15 = total residential pitches required for the Study Area 2007-2012.

Row 17 : Family growth on a 2012 base of 67 existing authorised pitches in 2007 + 29 additional pitches provided 2007-2012 = 96. A 3%pa compound growth rate is applied = 15 additional pitches. A rate of 3% seems appropriate given that the age and family size structures in the Study Area are broadly similar to those in other GTAAs.

Row 18 : Row 16 + Row 17 = total requirement 2007-2017.

12.14 In summary, Study Area requirement for additional residential pitches 2007-2012 is **29 pitches**, with a further requirement 2012 to 2017 of **15 pitches**. The total requirement 2007-2017 is **44 additional residential pitches**.

Estimated Requirement by Local Authority

12.15. Table 12.2 shows the estimated additional pitch requirements by local authority. These have been generated using exactly the same model as used in Table 12.1 and explained in paragraph 12.13. Study Area proportions have been used (for example for new household formation) rather than attempting to apply rates calculated for each authority. Sample numbers at local authority level would be very small, making assumptions based on them very unreliable statistically. In addition, such detailed analysis might breach assurances of confidentiality given to survey respondents. Use of Study Area proportions is usual in GTAAs.

Authority	Additional pitches required		
	Birmingham	Coventry	Solihull
Need 2007-2012	16	7	17
Supply 2007-2012	0	11	0
Requirement 2007-2012	16	-4	17
Family growth 2012-2017	3	3	9
Total 2007-2017	19	-1	26

Source : GTAA study

12.16 The distribution of pitches obviously reflects current site provision, unauthorised sites and the estimated distribution of Gypsies and Travellers in housing on the need side, and assumed contributions to supply.

- In **Birmingham**, need arises mainly from family increase in housing, net movement from houses to sites and rehousing from Tameside Drive. Additional pitch requirements might be met through a replacement for Tameside Drive and another small site,

- In **Coventry**, need arising is broadly balanced by additional pitches created at the refurbished Siskin Drive site.
- In **Solihull** need arises from all sources, including unauthorised sites. Requirements might be met through 2 further sites to 2012 and another between 2012 and 2017. Planning permissions for currently unauthorised developments, renewal of a temporary planning permission and permission for expansion of existing sites would, if acceptable on planning grounds, make a contribution to meeting requirements.

Types of Site

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

- Chapter 9 showed a strong preference for family-owned small sites. This is equivalent to the widespread desire for owner-occupation in the settled community. While the survey did not explore income or savings to establish how many Gypsies and Travellers could actually afford to buy land and develop their own sites, it is clear that not all families will be able to do so. There is likely to be a continuing need for social rented sites provided by either local authorities or RSLs. Both types of site tenure will be required. Local planning authorities should seek to make it as simple as possible for Gypsies and Travellers to get planning permission on their own sites in order to meet aspirations as well as need to ensure sustainability.
- There are clear ethnic differences within the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the Study Area between Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers. While mixed sites can work (as evidenced by The Haven in Solihull), segregated sites are more common and apparently more acceptable to most Gypsies and Travellers. New provision across the Study Area should cater for both groups.

Additional Transit Pitch Requirements

12.18 Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, it remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or family members. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. The Study Area currently appears to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers in the area temporarily while visiting relatives, and those who come into the area to work for a period and then move on. Current enforcement policies ensure that most stays are brief.

12.19 National policy is clear that there should be provision for Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally

or inappropriately. While transient unauthorised encampment appears to be a less major issue than a few years ago, encampments still occur and cause tensions with the settled community while providing very basic accommodation and little access to services for the Gypsies and Travellers involved.

Need for Transit Sites and Stopping Places

12.20 Transient unauthorised encampments were not considered as an element in the calculation of need for residential sites, implying that needs should be met entirely through transit provision. Chapter 6 presented information on the current pattern of transient unauthorised encampment which suggests that the Study Area might expect around 50 encampments in a year (mostly in Birmingham), with an average size of 3-4 caravans (including some repeat visits by the same Travellers and some shifting between locations by the same group in response to enforcement action). Levels of encampment are higher in summer although encampments can occur at any time of the year.

12.21 There is no simple way of translating encampment information into estimates of transit need. The following comments indicate general requirements. These are all additional to residential pitch needs set out above.

- In **Birmingham**, the scale of encampment is sufficient to suggest a need for formal transit provision. While the Tameside Drive site is unsuitable for continuing residential use, it is well located relative to the motorway system. Its environmental problems would have lesser impact for limited stays on transit provision. Running the site, when refurbished, on a transit basis (up to say 10 pitches) would in a sense test demand for further, better provision in the future.
- In **Solihull**, the scale of encampment experienced recently is too small to merit provision of formal transit provision. It would be more appropriate to ensure that future residential site provision has space to provide temporary accommodation for people visiting site residents (not strangers or other Gypsies and Travellers in transit). Pieces of land should be identified to which other Gypsies and Travellers coming into the area could be encouraged to move.
- In **Coventry** the picture is less clear. Again recent encampment experience suggests that relatively informal provision might be more appropriate, in the form of identified stopping places where services can be provided as required. It is important that the incidence of encampments is monitored and reported to ensure that the need for formal provision is reviewed as necessary.

12.22 Requirements for provision of transit accommodation in the period 2012-2017 is impossible to predict. Additional provision would only be required if the level of travelling were to increase markedly. This underlines the general importance of monitoring and reviewing travelling patterns and the

incidence of transient unauthorised encampments regularly, and re-assessing provision usage and requirements.

Need for Bricks and Mortar Housing

12.23 The study has revealed a desire among local Gypsy and Traveller communities already on sites to continue to live in caravans, trailers or mobile homes. There is less evidence of a widespread desire among Gypsies and Travellers in housing to move (back) to sites although these figure widely among their best places lived in (see paragraph 9.32). This could change when good quality site provision becomes a more realistic aspiration. However, on the basis of current information it seems likely that Gypsies and Travellers will continue to live in housing for convenience, comfort, access to services or merely for 'a change', and because of its practical availability.

12.24 An indication of need for additional housing can be given by looking at family formation likely to occur. On the basis of an estimated housed population of 200 households and the survey finding of new household formation over 5 years at 16%, 32 new households will be formed in the Study area 2007-2012. 20% of these were assumed to be seeking site accommodation. The remaining 80% represents 28 households seeking housing, though not necessarily all in the Study Area. Survey data is too crude to allow this calculation to be refined.

12.25 The survey suggests that bricks and mortar housing is accommodating in-migration to the Study Area. 19 survey respondents had been at their address for less than 1 year. Of these, 14 (74%) had previously been living outside the Study Area. Unfortunately, no information is available on out-migration, or even indications of whether this is less than, matches or exceeds in-migration. However, the extent of in-migration revealed probably suggests that the estimate of an additional c30 newly formed households is likely to be conservative as an indication of housing requirements 2007-2012.

12.26 Most requirements are likely to arise in Birmingham simply because most of the current population is there. The survey findings on current tenure and aspirations/preferences suggest that most Gypsies and Travellers will look towards the private sector to meet requirements.

12.27 Compared with the total housing stock across the Study Area, these estimated requirements are insignificant and in themselves warrant no particular policy response. However, there are more qualitative pointers from the survey which should influence allocation policies insofar as Gypsies and Travellers turn to the social sector:

- There are clear indications that many Gypsies and Travellers settle into housing and are happier there if there are others of their community nearby. This appears to reduce the social and cultural isolation which can follow a move to housing after the much more communal lifestyle on a site or travelling.

12. Assessing Accommodation Needs

- Again, many Gypsies and Travellers appear to want to continue to travel with caravans after moving into housing. It is possible that this becomes more significant as a marker of identity in housing than on sites. It follows that, where possible, it would be helpful if properties were allocated where Gypsy and Traveller tenants could safely keep a caravan or trailer on the premises or nearby.
- A minority of survey respondents reported routine racial abuse and harassment because of their Gypsy Traveller background. Management staff and others dealing with racial harassment should be aware of this and sensitive to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers alongside other black and minority ethnic groups.

13. TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

13.1 Travelling Showpeople and their needs are the subject of CLG Circular 04/2007 (*Planning for Travelling Showpeople*). Need must be assessed as for Gypsies and Travellers and any resulting needs built into local plans and strategies to ensure adequate provision of sites and plots for Travelling Showpeople. At present there is no reference to Travelling Showpeople in development plans in the Study Area.

Current Provision

13.2 Information from Partner authorities and the Midlands Section of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain has identified a single site in Birmingham within the Study Area. Thus there are no sites in Coventry or Solihull. There used to be another site in Stechford, Birmingham but this no longer exists for use by Showpeople.

13.3 The Birmingham site is in Hay Mills (just off a main radial road south of the City Centre). It is owned by the operator of one of the largest funfair businesses in Britain, and acts as the main depot for storing and maintaining equipment (rides, stalls etc) owned by the business as well as providing plots for 25 mobile homes or trailers. The planning permission permits residential use throughout the year. The site has been in use for Showpeople since the early 1900s when it was also a fairground.

13.4 The site's location is seen to be good. Relations with neighbours are said to be positive. Local people are employed in vehicle and equipment maintenance. Crime affecting the site is said to have increased recently, never having been a problem previously.

13.5 The site is arranged in two parts, one devoted to the storage and maintenance of business vehicles and equipment, and one to residential use with plots arranged on the outside of an access road which runs around a central area with trees. At the time of the visit in February 2008, this central area was also being used for parking/storing vehicles and equipment. There is a bricks and mortar house occupied by the business owner, a large shed for maintenance and a temporary office.

13.6 Residential accommodation is mixed, with mobile homes as well as a variety of Showmen's trailers (some very large) and caravans. Site residents include the owner and his family, employees of the funfair business who do not pay rent for their plots and other families who rent plots and have usually been resident for many years. There is effectively no turnover in plots. Some older residents are retired and live on the site for most of the year. Some others stay most of the time so that children can attend local schools. Others travel to put on fairs. While not empty, the site is less fully occupied between around Easter and November than during the winter.

Future Needs

13.7 The lengthy semi-structured interview with the site owner and his daughter (also very active in the business) provided information on **site needs**, rather than the circumstances and needs of individual residents.

13.8 Need arises from there being too little space on the site. This is evidenced in different ways:

- It affects the functioning of the business. For example:
 - The depot needs more/larger buildings for the maintenance of vehicles and equipment, including a paint-shop, maintenance space with an inspection pit and an engineering shop. If this were available, it would be possible to employ more people and increase local employment opportunities.
 - Some equipment has to be stored off-site. Storage at commercial rates is expensive as well as inconvenient.
 - There is not space for all the rides and equipment to be brought to the depot for testing during the winter months, so some maintenance and testing has to be carried out during summer when equipment could otherwise be in use.
 - The depot functions less efficiently because it is difficult to move and access specific vehicles without moving others – *we're playing draughts with vehicles at present.*
- It diminishes quality of life for residents :
 - Shortage of space means that the intended segregation between commercial and residential uses on the site cannot be maintained during winter.
 - Residents may not be able to have larger living units because there is insufficient space. One resident had to leave when he bought a larger caravan.
- It means that family growth cannot be accommodated, and families (and thus the Showman community) have to split when they would prefer to stay together:
 - Several examples were quoted of adult 'children' of site residents having to leave the site when they married and required their own independent accommodation and equipment. While this is usual in the 'settled community', the Showman culture is for extended families to continue to live and work together.
 - There can be problems for new families forced to leave the site in finding alternative accommodation, but also in breaking into the business in a new area if they move a long way.
 - There is a danger that the site becomes a community of older people which is culturally unacceptable. One interviewee contrasted her experience of growing up on the site with many other children of a similar age with that of her son who is the only site child of his age group.

13. Travelling Showpeople

- It means that the site cannot provide places for Showmen who need accommodation and would love to live there.

13.9 The site owner is actively looking for land to re-locate the site to provide more space. The ideal would be a small-holding of 15-20 acres (6-9 hectares), reasonably close to shops, schools and other services and to major road links, in the area between Birmingham and Warwick. Major constraints on achieving the ideal are finding land at '*a sensible price*' and especially land with some prospect of getting planning permission for use as a Showmen's depot.

13.10 The needs identified here are by no means unusual since many (perhaps most) long-established Showmen's sites are overcrowded and unable to accommodate further family growth. The scale of operation involved, and thus the amount of land required, is unusual. While the need is arising within the Study Area, it is not clear that it could or should be met within that area. Future provision of sites for Travelling Showpeople seems likely to be an important element in the RSS Revision where the strategic aspects can better be considered.

14. CONCLUSIONS

14.1 This chapter summarises the main points emerging from the GTAA carried out in Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull. Paragraphs below report on the local Gypsy and Traveller population, current site provision, housing, unauthorised encampment, future accommodation needs, housing-related support and other aspects.

14.2 The main characteristics of the local **Gypsy and Traveller population** in the Study Area are:

- The population is relatively small. We estimate that there are around 300 households, two-thirds of whom live in bricks and mortar housing and a third in a caravan/trailer on some form of site. There are about 25 families of Travelling Showpeople living on a single site in Birmingham.
- The population is ethnically mixed. Irish Travellers form the largest group, followed by Romany Gypsies. Although not the main focus of this study, it is apparent that there is an unknown number of European Roma in the area.
- Average household sizes are significantly larger than among the community as a whole. Families with children form the most common type of household; on sites many families include older children while in housing children are mostly young.
- The indications from the demographic profile are that new family formation will be relatively rapid in future. Maximum formation rates in housing will occur after 2012 or 2017.
- There is a strong pattern of self-employment, and jobs in the construction and small building field provide the mainstay of the local Gypsy and Traveller economy.
- Levels of ill health are relatively low, but serious for a minority of families.
- Families retain nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles to differing degrees. Perhaps surprisingly, housed Gypsies and Travellers are more mobile and more likely to travel than those on sites.

14.3 **Current site provision** can be summarised:

- There are 67 occupied pitches on 8 authorised sites across the Study Area. The Caravan Count suggests that the level of provision on authorised sites has changed little since 1994.
- Current authorised provision is unevenly spread with the largest number of sites and occupied pitches in Solihull.

- The majority of occupied authorised provision is privately owned by Gypsies and Travellers, mainly taking the form of sites owned and occupied by extended families. This appears to match clear accommodation preferences for family-owned sites.
- Local authority sites in Birmingham and Coventry are both under-occupied and both face more or less serious management problems linked to current residents. There is a premium on sorting such problems out and ensuring that the sites can fully contribute to meeting need.
- There are 4 long-term unauthorised sites accommodating 9 families, all located in Solihull. Provision of amenities is less good than on authorised sites, but residents want to stay in the area and – where they own the land – want to stay on that site.

14.4 **Bricks and mortar housing** is important accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers locally:

- We estimate that 200 households live in housing, perhaps half of them in Birmingham where Gypsies and Travellers appear to be widely spread across the City.
- The majority of housed Gypsies and Travellers are in the private rather than the social sector and have secured their own accommodation without resort to public or social agencies. There is a strong preference for owner-occupation and, among housed Gypsies and Travellers, an owner-occupied house scores more highly than a family-owned site among accommodation options.
- A certain ambivalence is apparent among housed Gypsies and Travellers about living in bricks and mortar. Some seem almost totally 'settled' and live much like members of the settled community; some are clearly unhappy in housing and demonstrate a marked cultural aversion to bricks and mortar. The intermediate group are more difficult to understand. While there is no evidence at present of a widespread desire to move from housing to sites, this could change if good quality, safe sites become a practical reality.
- To a large extent housed Gypsies and Travellers appear to be 'hidden' from local authorities and other agencies. In part this reflects an unwillingness to self-identify as a Gypsy or Traveller. This makes it hard for agencies to tailor services particularly to Gypsy and Traveller needs.

14.5 Findings on **unauthorised encampment** in the Study Area are:

- The frequency of transient unauthorised encampments has decreased over the last 5 years, especially in Birmingham and Coventry. The full reasons for this decline are not known.
- There are about 50 separate unauthorised encampments a year across the Study Area; most last less than a week because of enforcement actions, although the number of actual evictions is small and most encampments are ended by negotiation.
- Stakeholders think that most unauthorised encampments are caused by families and groups passing through the Study Area or seeking to stay for a short period for work reasons rather than people who want to stay on a more permanent basis.
- It was not possible to interview anyone from the single transient unauthorised encampments identified in the survey period, so their perspective is missing.

14.6 An assessment of **future accommodation needs** to 2017 was at the heart of the study:

- Requirements for additional residential pitches to 2007-2012 were estimated using a model which includes consideration of family increase, unauthorised sites, transient unauthorised encampments and net movement between sites and houses. Needs between 2012 and 2017 were estimated on the basis of family increase alone.
- The estimates include assumptions about the future of the 2 local authority sites. Tameside Drive in Birmingham is assumed to revert to its nominal transit use. Siskin Drive in Coventry is assumed to be refurbished and remodelled to provide fewer double pitches and amenity units which better meet modern design standards. These assumptions seek to ensure that future provision meets reasonable aspirations and expectations, and is sustainable.
- An additional 29 residential pitches will be required 2007-2012, and a further 15 between 2012 and 2017. The 44 pitches required over the decade are divided between local authorities:

Birmingham	19
Coventry	- (assumed supply slightly more than balances need)
Solihull	26
- There is likely to be continuing demand for the development of private sites, and for the expansion of some existing family sites. Expansion at Birmingham Airport could lead to the displacement of a site and further requirements not included above.

- Need for transit accommodation suggests that the Tameside Drive site in Birmingham should be refurbished for transit use. In Coventry and Solihull formal provision may not be necessary although authorities should identify land for use as temporary stopping places to avoid nuisance caused by uncontrolled encampments in unsuitable areas. Travelling patterns and the incidence of encampments should be monitored and transit provision reviewed on a regular basis.
- Family increase and possible inward migration will create continuing need for housing for Gypsies and Travellers. Levels of need are likely to be insignificant relative to the size of the housing stock and no particular policy responses seem called for. Most need is likely to be met in the private sector in line with expressed preferences.
- In the social sector, the study highlights the need to make allocations sensitively with a view to reducing isolation of Gypsy and Traveller families from others of their community and enabling tenants to keep caravans/trailers to maintain identity and lifestyle.
- The site occupied by Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area is overcrowded. Overcrowding is affecting business operations as well as quality of life for residents. Family increase cannot be accommodated leading to unwelcome dispersal of the Showmen community. The site needs to re-locate to a larger site (15-20 acres ideal) where a depot can be developed to meet both business and residential requirements.

14.7 The study looked at **housing-related support** provision and needs:

- Specialist floating support services for Gypsies and Travellers are provided in Birmingham and Solihull; there are no such services in Coventry.
- Flexible, individually tailored, outcome-focused support services for Gypsies and Travellers are required across the Study Area, with housing-related support services available on both a short-term and long-term basis.
- Gypsies and Travellers sometimes find it difficult to access generic housing-related support services and mainstream services such as GPs and dentists (although there is no evidence of the latter in the Study Area). There is a need for awareness training for generic staff and other specialist staff.
- The Gypsy and Traveller interviews demonstrated a demand for access to specialist services such as planning and legal advice. Gypsy and Traveller support staff have a key role to play in assisting Gypsies and Travellers access such specialist services.

14.8 Conclusions also include **other points**:

- It is important in all areas to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are fully reflected within mainstream strategic and policy developments.
- It is important to introduce/maintain ethnic recording which identifies Gypsies and Irish Travellers – although with a recognition that, initially at least, many will be reluctant to self-identify. A priority objective is to increase mutual understanding and trust between Gypsies and Travellers and local authorities and other agencies.
- Authorities should be aware of continuing ‘routine’ harassment and discrimination suffered by Gypsies and Traveller. Tackling this should be built into race equality and diversity policies and backed up with training. Social landlords should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers benefit from racial harassment policies.
- Authorities should seek to tackle stereotyping of Gypsies and Travellers and negative media coverage which will fuel settled community hostility and make site provision more difficult.