

Solihull Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Final Report

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About the Authors

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

Study Team

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

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

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Glossary

The following terms are used in this report and / or are used in conjunction with planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople accommodation. As such these terms may need some clarification. In the case of those which are related to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and culture, it is noted that a number of these terms are often contested and debated. It is not the intention of the authors to present these terms as absolute definitions; rather, the explanations provided are those the authors used in this assessment as their frames of reference.

Term	Explanation
Amenity block / shed	On most residential Gypsy / Travellers sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath / shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
Authorised social site	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Housing Provider.
Authorised Private site	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
Bricks and mortar	Permanent mainstream housing.
Caravan	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
Caravan Count	Bi-annual count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans conducted every January and July by local authorities and published by the CLG.
Chalet	In the absence of a specific definition the term 'chalet' is used here to refer to single storey residential units which resemble mobile homes but can be dismantled.
Core Strategy	Key compulsory Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework which sets out principles on which other Development Plan Documents are built.
Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	The main government department responsible for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues
Development Plan Documents (DPDs)	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)	The main document that identifies the accommodation requirements of Gypsies and Travellers.
Doubling-up	To share a pitch on an authorised site.
Gaujo / Gorger	Literal translation indicates someone who is not of the Romany Gypsy race. Romany word used mainly, but not exclusively, by Romany Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community / non-Gypsy / Travellers.
Green Belt	A policy or land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas.
Gypsy	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
Gypsies and Travellers (as used in this report)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Show People, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	National housing and regeneration agency. Has been responsible for administering the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant since 2009 / 2010.
Local Plan / Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
Pitch / plot	Area of land on a site / development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch / plot.
Pulling-up	To park a trailer / caravan.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	Previous planning approach across England. In July 2010 the government announced its decision to revoke RSSs.
Settled community / people	Reference to non-Travellers (those who live in houses).
Site	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers / chalets / vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
Static caravan	Larger caravan than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.
Stopping place	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
Suppressed / concealed household	Households, living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units and who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.
Trailer	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan.
Transit site	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
Travelling Showpeople	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.
Unauthorised Development	This refers to a caravan / trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
Unauthorised Encampment	Residing in caravans / trailers on private / public land without the landowner's permission (for example, at the side of the road, on a car park or on a piece of undeveloped land).
Yard	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

Executive Summary

The Study

1. The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty upon local authorities to produce assessments of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers. In 2008 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council published a joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) along with Birmingham and Coventry City Councils. This GTAA provided an overview of the accommodation and related needs and experiences of the Gypsy and Traveller population.
2. In November 2011 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council commissioned the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment for the borough. The primary purpose of this report is to provide an evidence base to inform the future development of planning policies through the Local Development Framework. This report presents the projection of requirements for the following periods:
 - 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2016
 - 1st January 2017 – 31st December 2021
 - 1st January 2022 – 31st December 2026
3. The assessment was undertaken by conducting a review of the following data sources:
 - Previous assessments of need and information submitted through the previous regional planning process;
 - The policy and guidance context;
 - The bi-annual Caravan Count;
 - Information from the local authority with regards to pitch provision and supply; and
 - A survey of 75 Gypsies and Travellers currently residing in site-based and bricks and mortar accommodation across the borough of Solihull.
4. From a base population of 104 households, we consulted with 75 resident households; 72% of the estimated resident Gypsy and Traveller community across the study area. The response rate to this survey is significantly larger than many GTAAs carried out elsewhere and significantly larger than the previous GTAA that covered the Solihull borough which achieved a 47% response rate. We believe that as the sample included a range of accommodation types and household circumstances we have no reason to believe that those households included in the survey are untypical from the total population in the area. Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable information from accommodation types within the study area.

Local accommodation provision

5. There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the borough. Our best estimate is that there are at least 325 local Gypsies and Travellers living in the borough. The population was found across a range of accommodation types:
- There are **7 authorised permanent private sites** in the borough. Together these accommodate approximately 49 pitches / households.
 - There is **1 authorised private sites with temporary consent** in the borough accommodating a single individual.
 - There are **3 unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the borough. It is estimated that these sites accommodate approximately 14 pitches / households.
 - It is estimated that there are at least **40 households living in bricks and mortar housing** in the borough.
 - There are **no socially rented sites** in the borough.
 - There is no yard-based accommodation for **Travelling Showpeople** in the borough.

Characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers

6. The survey of Gypsies and Travellers identified some of the important characteristics of the local population:
- Household size is larger than in the settled / non-Traveller population at 3 persons across the whole sample.
 - A significant proportion of the sample (16%) were households over 60 years of age.
 - The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in trailers and in housing can be seen to belong, in some way, to the borough. The vast majority of people had lived in the borough for over 10 years. Many of these were born or had strong family links in the area.
 - The local population is dominated by Romany Gypsies (72%) with a smaller number of Irish Travellers (19%).
 - The majority of households reported that they never travel. A number of those who no longer travelled cited education, health and age related reasons for becoming more sedentary. However, reasons attributed to a precarious position with regards to planning permission and / or wanting to be more settled were also common reasons for not travelling.

Accommodation need and supply

7. There are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Research from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has indicated that around 6,000 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are immediately required to meet the current shortage of accommodation within England.
8. This study has taken a thorough assessment of the need arising from all sites (permanent, temporary and unauthorised) present at the time of the survey. As such this assessment of need should be regarded as a reasonable and robust assessment of need upon which to base planning decisions going forward. Sites given planning permission or developed through new social provision after the 1st January 2012 contribute to the need requirements detailed in the table below.

Table i: Summary of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation and pitch need (1st January 2012 - 31st December 2026)

	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Total (No. of pitches)
Current authorised residential provision (pitches / plots)	49
Residential need 2012–2016 (pitches / plots)	26
Residential need 2017–2021 (pitches / plots)	6
Residential need 2022–2026 (pitches / plots)	6
Residential need 2012–2026 (pitches / plots)	38

9. It is recommended that this assessment of accommodation need is repeated in due course (circa 5 years) to ensure this assessment remains as accurate as possible.
10. Numerical transit requirements have not been provided although an indication of how provision for short-stay households could be made is detailed in the main report.

1. Introduction

Background and scope

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty upon local authorities to produce assessments of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers. In 2008, along with Birmingham and Coventry City Councils, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council published a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)¹. This GTAA provided an overview of the accommodation and related needs and experiences of the Gypsy and Traveller communities; crucially, identifying the accommodation need – in the form of residential pitch shortfall – of the population on an individual borough level. This assessment found a need for 17 pitches to be provided within the borough of Solihull between 2007 and 2012; with an additional 9 from 2012 – 2017, based on estimated family formation. This assessment did not identify any need for Travelling Showpeople pitches in the borough, given that there was no Travelling Showpeople site in Solihull. Following this GTAA and the LDF Core Strategy (now called the Local Plan), which sets out the proposed approach to the ‘Provision of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers’, a total of 12 pitches have been approved (by regularising longstanding unauthorised sites). This left an unmet need of 5 pitches to 2012 and 9 to 2017 (as highlighted above).
- 1.2 In November 2011, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council commissioned the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment update. The primary purpose of this update is to provide an updated evidence base to feed into a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the LDF Local Plan. This report presents the projection of requirements for the following periods:
- 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2016
 - 1st January 2017 – 31st December 2021
 - 1st January 2022 – 31st December 2026

Research approach

- 1.3 The approach to this study involved bringing together various existing data sources with empirical research with the Gypsy and Traveller communities across the borough. Details about the methodology for the assessment can be found in Appendix 1. The methodology entailed a review of the following data sources:
- Previous assessments of need and information submitted through the previous regional planning process;
 - The policy and guidance context;
 - The bi-annual Caravan Count;

¹Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) (2008) *Joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment: Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull Councils*, online at: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/BCS_GTAA.pdf

- Information from the local authority with regards to pitch provision and supply; and
- A survey of 75 Gypsies and Travellers currently residing in site-based and bricks and mortar accommodation across the borough of Solihull.

Structure of the report

1.4 This report is intended to assist Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in the formulation of planning policies for the provision of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. It sets out the background and current policy context, identifies the estimated Gypsy and Traveller population of the borough and presents evidence of need arising within the borough.

- **Chapter 2** looks at the past, present and emerging policy context in the area of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.
- **Chapter 3** looks at the trends in caravan numbers evident from the bi-annual Caravan Count.
- **Chapter 4** presents the findings from across all authorised private sites based on information provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and obtained through the survey of Gypsy and Traveller households.
- **Chapter 5** looks at the level of planning applications made in the borough, the presence of unauthorised sites and the views of households on unauthorised sites obtained through the household survey.
- **Chapter 6** looks at the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation as well as drawing upon the views of people obtained through the household survey.
- **Chapter 7** looks at issues associated with travelling in order to shed some light on travelling patterns and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers throughout the borough.
- **Chapter 8** looks at a range of issues including the movement intentions of the sample, the formation of new households and concealment of existing ones and the accommodation preferences of the Gypsy and Traveller population.
- **Chapter 9** covers a range of issues around the experience of employment, education and health services within the borough.
- **Chapter 10** looks briefly at the issue of Travelling Showpeople in the borough.
- **Chapter 11** provides the numerical assessment of accommodation need for the borough.
- **Chapter 12** looks briefly at the issue of transit need in the borough.
- **Chapter 13** provides concluding comments on the assessment.

1.5 The base date for this assessment is the 1st January 2012. Accommodation provided or supply removed after this date will affect the need requirements accordingly.

2. Policy context

2.1 This chapter looks at the current, past and emerging policy context impacting on the assessment of need and the provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Planning policy 2006-2011

2.2 The main document for detailing planning policy in England over the 2006-2011 period was the ODPM Circular 01 / 2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*. This specified that the aims of legislation and policy were to:

- ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision;
- reduce the number of unauthorised encampments and developments;
- increase significantly the number of Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations and with planning permission in order to address under-provision by 2011;
- protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers;
- underline the importance of assessing accommodation need;
- promote private site provision; and
- avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless, where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

2.3 Travelling Showpeople are included in separate planning guidance, CLG Circular 04/07, which aims to ensure that the system for pitch assessment, identification and allocation as introduced for Gypsies and Travellers is also applied to Travelling Showpeople.

Regional planning policy

2.4 ODPM Circular 01/2006 made it clear that borough level requirements identified in GTAAs were to be submitted to the relevant Regional Planning Body (RPB)². The RPB would then, in turn, provide pitch requirements on a borough by borough basis once a strategic view of needs had been taken through the process of producing the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

2.5 During early 2010 the West Midlands Regional Assembly published the *West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Revision: Interim Policy Statements and Policy Recommendations*. Along with other issues, this document included two policy statements that cover the sub-regional apportionment of pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople based on the previous round of GTAAs and subsequent consultation. It was the intention that this document would feed into the

² In the case of the West Midlands this was the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) which was then dissolved with all local authorities in the West Midlands taking on collective lead on planning for the region.

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and that the pitch requirements would be adopted by the Local Development Frameworks across the West Midlands region.

- 2.6 In July 2010 the Secretary of State announced his intention to revoke all Regional Strategies, as a consequence the West Midlands RSS was not completed. Local authorities were advised to continue to develop LDF Local Plans and, where these had already been adopted, use the adopted Development Plan Documents as the local planning framework. Specific guidance was provided in July 2010 in the form of a letter from the Chief Planner in order to assist in the determination of provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites³. With respect to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers this guidance stated that:

“Local councils are best placed to assess the needs of travellers. The abolition of Regional Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy. *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* (GTAAs) have been undertaken by all local authorities and if local authorities decide to review the levels of provision these assessments will form a good starting point. However, local authorities are not bound by them. We will review relevant regulations and guidance on this matter in due course.”

Planning policy within Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

- 2.7 The current development policy being used to determine Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation need in the borough is the Solihull Unitary Development Plan 2006. This currently does not have a policy towards Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 2.8 The Council is currently working on producing the Local Plan for the borough. The Solihull Draft Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft was published for a 6 week period of public representation in January 2012. A draft Gypsy and Traveller policy is contained in Section 8 of the Draft Local Plan. Policy P6 outlines the Council’s policy and justification on the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and outlines that the provision of pitches beyond 2012 will be determined through a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 2.9 In July 2011 the Council published a *Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) Options Paper* to enable public consultation on the shape and content of the emerging Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD.

Emerging national planning policy

- 2.10 The government is currently formulating a radically different planning framework for England and Wales in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The draft NPPF has been recently released for public consultation. Among the many

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1631904.pdf>

significant changes to the planning system, the NPPF proposes a greater role for communities in the planning process.

2.11 The precise planning framework that will be implemented for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation provision has not been finalised. However, the government has indicated their intention to pursue the following actions:

1. To replace Circulars 01/06 and 04/2007 with new 'light-touch' guidance.
2. The introduction of stronger planning enforcement powers to help local authorities deal with breaches of planning control and limiting the opportunities for retrospective planning applications.
3. The encouragement of local authorities to provide, in consultation with the local community, an appropriate number of Gypsy and Traveller sites that reflect local and historic demand. Exploration of incentives for site provision and innovative ways in which Gypsy and Traveller sites can be funded and maintained.
4. The co-ordination of action across government to tackle the discrimination and poor social outcomes faced by Gypsies and Travellers.

2.12 In April 2011 the government issued a consultation document (*Planning for traveller sites*) (CLG, 2011). This outlined that the new policy for Gypsy and Traveller provision aims to:

- enable local planning authorities to make their own assessment to set their own pitch / plot targets;
- encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;
- protect Green Belt from development;
- remove repetition of national planning policy that is set out elsewhere;
- remove unjustified differences in policy in the two circulars, and between the two circulars and other policy statements;
- remove unnecessary guidance and context so that planning policy documents contain only policy;
- ensure that local planning authorities, working together, have fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- promote more private Traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those Travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective if local planning authorities have had regard to this policy;
- ensure that the development plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- increase the number of Traveller sites, in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;

- reduce tensions between settled and Traveller communities in plan making and planning decisions; and
- enable provision of suitable accommodation from which Travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.

2.13 At the time of writing (February 2012) the final document outlining Gypsy and Traveller planning policy has not been released. However, this assessment has anticipated certain aspects of the proposed policy in order to ensure the findings of this assessment are valid for the long-term. In particular, we have placed additional onus on the assessment of 'local and historic' need as this has been indicated to be a core feature of the policy by both the Secretary of State and the draft planning guidance. In addition to endeavouring to anticipate potential developments in policy, it should be noted that this assessment also followed the CLG guidance produced in 2007 in relation to carrying out *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments*⁴ (please see Appendix 1 for further detail of assessment methodology).

Defining Gypsies and Travellers

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.16 There is a separate definition for planning purposes as specified in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople:

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

⁴ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments* – Guidance. London: HMSO.

- 2.17 This definition focuses more narrowly upon people who either still travel or have ceased to do so as a result of specific issues.
- 2.18 A separate definition of Travelling Showpeople is provided by CLG Circular 04/2007:
- Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in ODPM Circular 1/2006.*
- 2.19 It is proposed by the government that the emerging policy will have a definition for 'travellers' which will encompass all Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Given that this policy has not yet been released, this assessment has adopted the Housing Act 2004 definition and has sought to be inclusive in the Gypsy and Traveller groupings. This has been adopted as it is recognised that this definition is "...more pragmatic and wider and enables local planning authorities to understand the possible future accommodation needs of this group and plan strategically to meet those needs"⁵.

Housing / accommodation need

- 2.20 For Gypsies and Travellers, the definition of housing need is varied slightly to acknowledge the different contexts in which members of these communities live. The general definition of housing need is "households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance", with housing demand defined as "the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent"⁶.
- 2.21 In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance on producing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments refers to distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing⁷. For caravan dwelling households, need may take the form of those:
- who have no authorised site on which to reside;
 - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation; and
 - who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.

⁵ CLG (2011) *Planning for traveller sites*. Consultation Paper, April, London: HMSO
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1886164.pdf>

⁶ ODPM (2006) *Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004*. Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

⁷ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

2.22 In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households, need may take the form of:

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

2.23 The needs presented in this report reflect both the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as used in the Housing Act 2004, which gives an overall strategic level of accommodation need, and also Circular 01/2006 which indicates the proportion of need for operational purposes. It should also be noted that in line with commentary from the CLG – as highlighted earlier – steps have been taken within this report to analyse need in the context of ‘local and historic demand’.

2.24 Housing 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.

Defining a pitch

2.25 There is no set definition for what constitutes a Gypsy and Traveller residential pitch. In the same way as in the settled community, Gypsies and Travellers require various accommodation sizes, depending on the number of family members.

2.26 The convention used in this report is that a pitch is the place on a Gypsy and Traveller site accommodating a single family / household. In some cases a single pitch may account for the entire site. The number of caravans that a household uses can be a single unit (trailer, touring caravan, static, chalet, etc.) or more. In order to ensure comparability across accommodation types it is important to determine a convention when translating caravan numbers into pitches / households.

2.27 The convention in the last round of GTAAs, and an approach advocated by CLG guidance, was the use of a 1.7 caravan to pitch ratio. Taking a more locally informed approach this assessment has indicated that from a base of 53 site based interviewees a total of 66 caravans are owned / used. This provides a 1.2 caravan to pitch ratio across the sample⁸. Therefore throughout this assessment a 1.2 caravan to pitch ratio is used to determine need where required.

Conventions

2.28 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.
- ‘Quotes’ included from Gypsies and Travellers are sometimes in first and sometimes in third person form because interviews were not audio recorded. They are distinguished by being in italic type and usually inset.

⁸ Although we attempted to distinguish between caravans used for living, sleeping and storage the survey findings indicate trailers have multiple uses, serving all these uses for the vast majority of the time.

3. The bi-annual Caravan Count and size of the population

3.1 This chapter looks at the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count in order to present what is known about Gypsies and Travellers within the borough of Solihull. This chapter also presents information on the estimated size of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Caravan numbers and trends from the Caravan Count

3.2 The bi-annual Caravan Count provides a snapshot of the local context in terms of the scale and distribution of caravan numbers across the borough. However, there are well documented issues with the robustness of the count⁹, which require any analysis to be treated with a degree of caution. Such issues include: the ‘snapshot’ nature of the data, the inclusion of caravans and not households, the exclusion of Travelling Showpeople¹⁰, and the exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in housing. Nevertheless, the Caravan Count provides a useful starting point in assessing the current picture and recent trends. Indeed, in the absence of other datasets it is virtually the only source of information on Gypsy and Traveller caravan data. With regard to the borough of Solihull the Caravan Counts, over time, offer little information for analysis purposes. However, in order to broadly illustrate the caravan numbers within the study area this information is presented below in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Caravan numbers across accommodation types within Solihull 2006 – 2011

Count	Authorised sites (with planning permission)				Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)				Total
	Socially rented	Private			Unauthorised developments		Unauthorised encampments		
		Temporary permission	Permanent permission	All private	‘Tolerated’	‘Not tolerated’	‘Tolerated’	‘Not Tolerated’	
Jan 11	0	3	46	49	7	21	0	0	77
Jul 10	0	7	35	42	17	20	8	2	89
Jan 10	0	8	35	43	9	3	8	0	63
Jul 09 ¹¹	0	-	-	35	18	0	5	0	58
Jan 09	0	-	-	32	8	7	5	0	52
Jul 08	0	-	-	37	3	10	5	0	55
Jan 08	0	-	-	38	2	8	6	0	54
Jul 07	0	-	-	42	2	10	6	0	60
Jan 07	0	-	-	35	0	0	5	0	40
Jul 06	0	-	-	34	0	5	0	5	44
Jan 06	0	-	-	35	0	7	0	5	47

⁹ Niner, P. (2002) *Review of the ODPM Caravan Count*, London: ODPM.

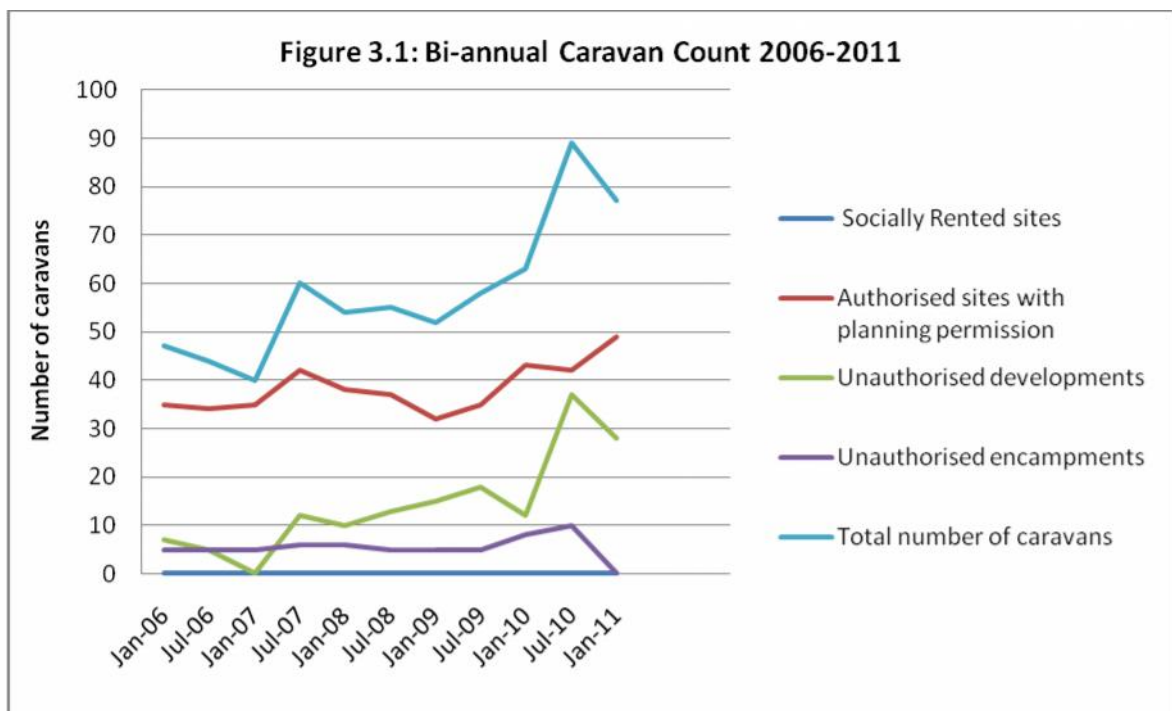
¹⁰ The January 2011 count included a count of Travelling Showpeople caravans for the first time; however, Solihull does not have a Travelling Showpeople site, so this has not increased the caravan count total.

¹¹ Please note that data which breaks down private sites into permanent/temporary permission was not available or not required to be collected at this time.

3.3 Table 3.1 shows the following:

- The caravans in Solihull are all on private or unauthorised sites (there are no socially rented sites).
- Overall caravan numbers have increased by 64% between Jan 2006 – Jan 2011. The data suggests that this increase is largely the result of increased caravans on ‘not tolerated’ unauthorised developments. For example, from Jan 2010 – Jan 2011, there was an increase from 3 to 18 caravans on ‘not tolerated’ unauthorised developments.
- Since July 2006 the number of caravans counted on ‘not tolerated’ unauthorised encampments has either been zero or very small indeed.
- There appears to be little seasonality in caravan numbers (i.e. absence of significant summer travelling); in fact the caravan numbers appear to increase slightly during the summer counts which may suggest visitors staying in the area for short periods during the summer.

3.4 Figure 3.1 below illustrates the trends in caravan numbers recorded in the Caravan Count and described above.



The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community

3.5 For most minority ethnic communities, presenting data about the size of the community in question is usually relatively straightforward (with the exception of communities who have large numbers of irregular migrants and migrant workers etc. amongst them). However, for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, one of the most difficult issues is providing accurate information on the size of the population. As a result, we have used information provided by the local authorities

and key stakeholders, together with our survey findings, in order to provide a best estimate as to the size of the local Gypsy and Traveller population at the time of the assessment.

- 3.6 Table 3.2 presents the estimation of the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population. Using the best information available we estimate that there are at least 325 individuals or 104 households in the study area.

Table 3.2: Gypsy and Traveller population base in the area

Type of accommodation	Families / Households (based on 1 pitch = 1 household)	Individuals	Derivation
Socially rented sites	0	0	Information provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Private sites (permanent)	49	118	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (2.4)
Private sites (temporary)	1	1	Actual number
Unauthorised developments	14	50	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.6)
Housing	40 ¹²	156	Number of families estimated to live in the area multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.9)
Travelling Showpeople	0	0	Information provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Total	104	325	

¹² We did not receive any information regarding the accurate size of the Gypsy and Traveller bricks and mortar-based population. It is generally agreed that there are now more Gypsies and Travellers living in conventional housing in the UK than living on sites or unauthorised encampments. The Commission for Racial Equality's 2006 report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers* suggested that the housed population could be around 3 times the trailer-based population. Using a multiplier of 3 times the site population may be excessive in the absence of definitive evidence of the size of the population. Therefore, as a general rule of thumb we estimate that we interview around 50% of the actual bricks and mortar-based population. However, we also have the benefit of the previous GTAA estimates which estimated that the bricks and mortar population in Solihull equated to around 40 households. In the absence of more informed data we have also applied this figure to this assessment.

4. Authorised social and private sites

4.1 A certain degree of caution needs to be taken when extrapolating the characteristics, trends and needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population from the Caravan Counts and other such data alone. In order to provide more specific information on the local Gypsy and Traveller population, this section draws upon the information provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council on site provision within the borough as well as information obtained through a survey of Gypsy and Traveller households.

Socially rented sites

4.2 There are currently no socially rented sites in the borough.

Authorised private sites

4.3 This section looks at private sites across the study area. There are 8 authorised private sites in the borough; of these 7 have permanent planning permission – this includes one larger site (permission for 25 pitches), and 6 smaller sites (i.e. between and 1 and 7 pitches). There is 1 temporary authorised private site (with 1 pitch)¹³.

Table 4.1: Private authorised sites

Consent	No. of sites	Estimated No. of pitches
Permanent	7	49
Temporary	1	1
Total	8	50

4.4 We assume all sites are at capacity as we are unable to assess otherwise. However, it should be noted that we were alerted to a small number of potential vacancies existing on at least one permanent site; however this cannot be verified.

4.5 It was not thought that any sites in the area were planned to close. It has been thought that planned expansion at Birmingham Airport could lead to the displacement of a site and further requirements; however, consultation with officers at Solihull Council said this is not going to impact on sites in Solihull.

4.6 According to information received from the local authority, of the 17 pitches required between 2007-2012 as stated in the previous GTAA, 12 pitches have been granted planning permission.

Permanent private site residents: findings from the survey

4.7 A total of 39 people were interviewed on the permanent private sites (80% of the private population). Of these, 18 respondents rented (46%) and 15 owned (38%) the pitch they were occupying. A further 6 respondents (8%), indicated that there was some 'other' means on ownership / renting. When asked to elaborate, these

¹³ For reasons beyond our control, we were unable to consult with the sole resident of this site for this assessment.

respondents indicated that the site was leased from the Council jointly to the family. The majority of respondents (87%) owned their trailers; 5 people indicating that they rented their trailers (13%).

- 4.8 Most respondents (79%) reported that they had 1 trailer / chalet / unit. However, 7 respondents (18%) had 2 trailers, and 1 respondent (3%) indicated that they had 3 trailers. The average number was 1.2 caravans per household.
- 4.9 When asked whether they had enough space for their household, 27 respondents said yes (69%) and 12 said no (31%). The reasons that were given for needing more space are shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Reasons for needing more space (private sites)

Reasons	Number	%
Need larger caravans / trailers / units	7	58
Need more bedrooms / living space	7	58
Need a larger site	6	50
Need a larger pitch	5	42
Need more caravans / trailers / units	4	33

Note: This is based on a question that allowed respondents to select multiple answers

- 4.10 A total of 12 respondents (31%) reported that they accommodated visitors on their site on a short term basis; the remainder (27 respondents - 69%) said that they did not accommodate visitors. In terms of who visited the site, with the exception of 2 respondents, people indicated that it was mainly family members who visited for short periods multiple times a year, for example:

“Two daughters and their children, usually for summer months, [with] 2 trailers”

“Family members, [stay] between 2 weeks and 2 months, once a year - they bring their own trailers”

“My wife’s sister sometimes stays for a week in the summer and brings one trailer with her”

“Family / friends, 1-2 weeks, 2 - 3 times a year, they bring their own trailers”

- 4.11 Most people (33 respondents - 85%) stated that accommodating visitors was not a problem on their site; 5 people (13%) indicated that it was a problem; and 1 person indicated that the *“site is too dirty; people do not want to visit me”*. With regards to the respondents who stated that hosting visitors was a problem, all of them indicated that this was due to lack of space.

4.12 The majority of respondents on the permanent private sites said they had lived in the area (i.e. the borough of Solihull) for more than 10 years (34 respondents - 87%)¹⁴. The same percentage also reported that they had lived on their current site for more than 10 years (see Table 4.3). A small number of respondents indicated that they had been living in the area for 1 – 3 years.

Table 4.3: Length of time living in the area and on the site

Length of time	Living in area		Living on site	
	Number	%	Number	%
10 years or more	34	87	34	87
Between 5-10 years	1	3	2	5
Between 3-5 years	-	-	-	-
Between 1 -3 years	4	10	3	8
Between 6-12 months	-	-	-	-
Total	39	100	39	100

4.13 When asked why they had come to live in the general area people cited a variety of reasons (see Table 4.4 below). The most common reasons cited however was that they had family living in the area (34%) or were born / raised in the area (22% of respondents).

Table 4.4: Most important reason for living in the area

Reason	Number	%
Have family living here	11	34
Born / raised in the area	7	22
Like the area	4	13
Children’s education	3	9
Looking after family member in old age	2	6
Availability of site / land	2	6
Homeless	1	3
Work in the area	1	3
Only place I could find	1	3
Total	32	100

Note: excludes 7 non-responses

4.14 With regards to the respondents who had been living in the area / on their site for less than 10 years, they had moved to Solihull from the following places: Bedworth, Birmingham, Falkirk, Tamworth and Wolverhampton.

4.15 A total of 32 respondents (82%) reported that they never left the study area throughout the year, while the remaining 7 respondents (18%) reported that they lived in the area between 41-51 weeks of the year. The most common reason for leaving the area was to attend fairs (particularly Appleby Fair); however, individual respondents made reference to the following:

¹⁴ It should be noted that the interviewers directed respondents to interpret ‘the area’ throughout the survey as within the borough of Solihull.

“With best mate for 2 weeks at her own ground”

“Go to Scotland back to family and hopefully get work”

- 4.16 One respondent stated that they had a base somewhere else; this was a private site with temporary planning permission in Warwickshire. This respondent went on to explain that they were hoping to move to this site in the future:

“I’ve just bought it with my brother and we are trying to get permanent planning so I can be close to my family”

5. Planning and unauthorised sites

5.1 The development of sites for Gypsies and Travellers can be a major source of tension between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. The current planning system is intended to create conditions where there is no need for unauthorised developments because land will be allocated for authorised site development within the Local Development Framework. This chapter focuses upon the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission. This chapter then looks at the presence of unauthorised encampments in the area.

Planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites

5.2 A total of 13 planning applications involving the development or extension of Gypsy and Traveller sites have been received in the borough since 2006. In summary the outcomes of the 13 applications were:

- Approved 7 applications
- Allowed on appeal 1 application
- Refused 3 applications
- Dismissed on appeal 1 application
- In progress 1 application

5.3 It is clear that a number of applications are being approved, although a number of these applications were existing temporary sites which were granted full permanent planning permission.

5.4 Reasons given for refusal were generally around the development being inappropriate within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt has also been cited as a reason for refusal of the Eaves Green Lane development, as well as a number of others issues which are:

- Impact on rural character and appearance;
- Impact on hedgerows and wildlife;
- Poor access to local services; and
- Increased vehicular traffic and highway safety issues.

Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller sites

5.5 Since 2006 there have been a total of 7 instances of unauthorised development relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites in the borough. Of these 7:

- 3 have been granted planning permission;
- 2 have had their applications refused;
- 1 application is pending a decision; and
- 1 development is currently tolerated.

- 5.6 At the time of the study there were a total of 3 unauthorised developments within the borough. See Table 5.1 below. It is estimated that these 3 sites accommodate 14 pitches / households.

Table 5.1: Unauthorised developments in the area

	Site	No. of pitches	Comments
1.	Land adjacent to the Pleck (to the west), Shadowbrook Lane, Hampton-in-Arden	3	Private, family site, planning application submitted - currently awaiting determination.
2.	Eaves Green Lane, Meriden	8	Retrospective planning permission refused. Subsequent appeal dismissed.
3.	The Uplands, Dickens Heath Road, Dickens Heath	3	Unauthorised private, family site. In the curtilage of a residential property.
	Total	14	

Unauthorised developments residents: findings from the survey

- 5.7 A total of 14 households were interviewed on unauthorised developments, with representation across all 3 sites. In terms of number of trailers / chalets / units households had, these sites demonstrated a similar profile to residents of private sites with most having a single trailer (10 respondents - 71%) or two trailers (4 respondents - 29%). The average was 1.3 caravans per household.

- 5.8 When asked whether they had enough space for their household, 11 respondents said yes (79%) and 3 respondents said no (21%). The reasons that were given for needing more space are shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Reasons for needing more space (unauthorised developments)

Reasons	Number	%
Need more caravans / trailers / units	3	100
Need larger caravans / trailers / units	3	100
Need more bedrooms / living space	3	100
Need a larger site	2	67
Need a larger pitch	2	67

Note: This is based on a question that allowed respondents to select multiple answers

- 5.9 A total of 5 respondents (42%) reported that they accommodated visitors on their site on a short term basis. Like the residents on the private authorised sites, people indicated that it was mainly family members who visited for short periods; however, a number of people suggested that visitors would stay in their trailers rather than bringing trailers with them:

“Brother and family, 1 or 2 times a year, they don't bring trailers with them”

“Family, couple of times a year, for 2-4 weeks; they would stay in chalet, not bring trailers”

“My daughter stays on a regular basis, brings her own trailer”

- 5.10 Most people (10 respondents – 71%) reported that accommodating visitors was not a problem on their site. The 4 respondents who did say it was a problem made reference to having a lack of space, particularly if people brought trailers with them.
- 5.11 The majority of respondents on the unauthorised developments said they had lived in the area (i.e. borough of Solihull) for more than 10 years (10 respondents - 71%), with an additional 3 respondents living in the area for between 5-10 years (21%) (see Table 5.3). With regards to how long people had been living on unauthorised developments, the majority of respondents had been living there for less than 5 years, with over half of the respondents living there for 1-3 years (57%).

Table 5.3: Length of time living in the area and on the site

Length of time	Living in area		Living on site	
	Number	%	Number	%
10 years or more	10	71	2	14
Between 5-10 years	3	21	-	-
Between 3-5 years	1	7	3	21
Between 1 -3 years	-	-	8	57
Between 6-12 months	-	-	1	7
Total	14	100	14	100

- 5.12 When asked why they had come to live in the general area people cited a variety of reasons (see Table 5.4 below). Like the residents on the private authorised sites, the most common reason (4 respondents – 30%) was that they had family living in the area.

Table 5.4: Most important reason for living in the area

Reason	Number	%
Have family living here	4	30
Children's education	2	15
Looking after family member in old age	2	15
Born / raised in the area	1	8
Own / family / dependent's health	1	8
Like the area	1	8
Homeless	1	8
Lack of sites	1	8
Total	13	100

Note: excludes one missing case

- 5.13 A total of 10 respondents (71%) reported that they never left the study area throughout the year. The remaining respondents reported that they lived in the area between 41-51 weeks of the year (2 respondents – 14%) or that they did not know how many weeks of the year they lived there (2 respondents – 14%). The respondents who left the site mainly went to fairs or to visit family; however; some respondents indicated that they didn't like to leave their site as they were currently trying to get planning permission:

"We have not moved for over 2 years as we are trying to get this land passed"

"We don't all leave at the same time as we are trying to get it passed - so we take it in turns"

- 5.14 None of the respondents on the unauthorised developments had a base somewhere else.

Unauthorised encampments: findings

- 5.15 The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments can be a significant issue that impacts upon local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. Unauthorised encampments are often the type of accommodation which has become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers due to often residing on public and private land.
- 5.16 Due to the nature of unauthorised encampments (i.e. unpredictability, seasonal fluctuations, etc.), it is often very difficult to grasp a comprehensive picture of need for residential and / or transit accommodation without considering a range of interconnected issues. However, as seen in Chapter 3 the level of encampment 'not tolerated' has been at zero (or very low i.e. only 2 caravans in total since July 2006). Indeed during the fieldwork for this assessment we did not receive notification of any unauthorised encampments within the borough.
- 5.17 The local authority has a written policy for managing unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Travellers and has a joint protocol with the Police. It is understood that it is usual practice for an officer from the local authority to make first contact with Gypsies and Travellers who are encamped within the borough.
- 5.18 There is no official log of unauthorised encampments within the borough but it is thought that the number of encampments occurring are at quite a low level. It is estimated by the local authority that there has been between 1 and 5 encampments per year since 2009; however, it was stated that there were no encampments during 2011.
- 5.19 The authority provided details of encampments that occurred during 2009 and 2010 together with their broad location, size and duration. A total of 7 encampments were recorded during that two year period. A number of these were large encampments with a number of encampments staying in the area for significant periods of time. Table 5.5 below presents these details.

Table 5.5: Unauthorised encampments 1st January 2009 – 31st December 2010

Camp	Location	Number of caravans involved	Duration of encampment (weeks)	Indication of action taken
1	Lavender Hall Park, Balsall Common	24	2	Section 77 Notice
2	Heath Park, Yorkminster Drive	3	6	Court Order Notice
3	Hillfield Park, Monkspath Hall Road	8	2	Section 77 Notice
4	Tudor Grange Park, Monkspath Hall Road	11	1	Section 77 Notice
5	Wychwood Avenue Open Space	18	3 Days	Section 77 Notice
6	Hillfield Park, Monkspath Hall Road	8	2	Section 77 Notice
7	Tudor Grange Park, Monkspath Hall Road	11	9 Days	Section 77 Notice

- 5.20 The average encampment size consisted of 12 caravans / trailers and the average duration that encampments lasted was 15 days.
- 5.21 There were reportedly more encampments in the area in summer and most households on unauthorised encampments were deemed to be 'in transit'.
- 5.22 The number of encampments has reportedly decreased in recent years, as has their size.

6. Gypsies and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation

6.1 The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within bricks and mortar accommodation are unknown, but potentially large. Movement to and from housing is a major concern for the strategic approach, policies and working practices of local authorities.

Estimating the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar housing

6.2 Neither the local authority officers nor members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities in the area were able to accurately estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar housing in the borough. The following information was provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council:

- During 2011 two households who ascribed as being a 'Gypsy or Traveller' were housed by Solihull Community Housing (SCH).
- 6 households from within Solihull who ascribed as being a 'Gypsy or Traveller' were currently registered for social housing (5 indicated they were 'Irish Traveller' and 1 'Gypsy').
- No homelessness applications have ascribed as being a 'Gypsy or Traveller'.

6.3 The Commission for Racial Equality's 2006 report, *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, suggested that the housed population is around 3 times the size of the trailer-based population. However, this provides a potential housed population of 192 households. This figure would appear unrealistic given the size of the borough and the lack of households found in bricks and mortar accommodation in the previous GTAA. In the absence of accurate evidence as to the numbers in housing, an alternative approach would be to base the estimate of the base population of Gypsies and Travellers living in houses on the number of interviews with bricks and mortar-based households we secured (22 interviews). However, it is likely that this would be an understatement of the actual housed population. As such the estimate contained in the previous GTAA of 40 households is taken as an estimate of the housed population here. This estimate was seen as generally realistic by stakeholders at the time.

6.4 A more accurate estimation of the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in houses will only be possible when a number of issues are resolved:

- Gypsies and Travellers feel able to disclose their ethnic group in monitoring forms
- Monitoring forms allow for the ethnic groups as options
- The data from the Census 2011 is released

6.5 Until this point, estimates based on the informal knowledge of stakeholders and the experiences of fieldworkers, such as those in this study, will be the only and best source of evidence.

Bricks and mortar housing residents: findings from the survey

6.6 A total of 22 people were interviewed in bricks and mortar accommodation: 12 respondents were owner-occupiers (55%); 7 were social housing tenants (32%); and 3 were private tenants (14%).

6.7 In terms of the size of the dwelling:

- 15 respondents had 3 bedrooms (68%);
- 3 respondents had 2 bedrooms (14%);
- 3 respondents (all owner-occupiers) had 4 or more bedrooms (14%); and
- 1 respondent had 1 bedroom (5%).

6.8 The majority of respondents (18 – 82%) indicated that they had enough space in their home; 4 respondents said they did not (2 living in private rented, 1 in socially rented accommodation and 1 owner occupier).

6.9 When asked why they did not feel they had enough space, 1 respondent indicated that they would like more bedrooms or living space, while 1 respondent stated:

“Would like a drive to put a trailer on”

6.10 The respondent who was an owner occupier indicated that they needed a larger site and more caravans / trailers / units; this related to the fact that they lived in bricks and mortar but had a site attached the property as well.

6.11 In total, 9 households (41%) in bricks and mortar accommodation still owned trailers. All these households had just 1 trailer.

6.12 The majority of respondents currently living in bricks and mortar accommodation said that they had lived in the area (i.e. borough of Solihull) for more than 10 years (19 respondents - 86%). A high percentage of people had also been living in their current home for more than 10 years (14 respondents - 64%) (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1: Length of time living in the area and in the house

Length of time	Living in area		Living in house	
	Number	%	Number	%
10 years or more	19	86	14	64
Between 5-10 years	2	9	3	14
Between 3-5 years	1	5	3	14
Between 1 -3 years	-	-	2	9
Between 6-12 months	-	-	-	-
Total	22	100	22	100

6.13 Table 6.2 below shows the main reason given by respondents for living in their current house.

Table 6.2: Main reason for living in current house

Reason	Number	%
Health reason (own or family member)	5	23
To be near family / friends	3	14
For children's education / schooling	3	14
There was a vacancy (renting)	3	14
Land was available to buy	2	9
Lack of sites	2	9
To look after family	1	5
House was available to buy	1	5
Wife didn't like living in trailer	1	5
Total	21	100

Note: excludes one non response

6.14 As can be seen, there were a range of reasons given. Just under a quarter of respondents suggested that they were living in bricks and mortar accommodation because of health reasons; two of these respondents made specific reference to health problems of other family members. Following health reasons, people made reference to proximity to family / friends, children's education and, for those who were renting, a property becoming available. Two respondents stated that land was available to buy, suggesting that they had self-built properties.

6.15 The majority of people who were currently living in housing had lived there all their adult life (41%) (see Table 6.3). However, as can be seen, people had moved into housing from a range of accommodation types, with a number of people moving to their current accommodation from transit sites (6 respondents – 27%). All but 2 respondents had moved into housing in Solihull from outside the borough (for example, from Birmingham, Cambridge, Coventry, Luton, Nuneaton, Peterborough and St Helens). The 2 respondents who had moved into housing from within Solihull had both been living on an unauthorised encampment in the study area.

Table 6.3: Accommodation prior to current house

Reason	Number	%
Been here all adult life	9	41
Transit site	6	27
Unauthorised encampment	2	9
Residential council site	2	9
Residential private site – temporary permission	1	5
Bricks and mortar (social rented)	1	5
Private site with bungalow on	1	5
Total	22	100

Housing experiences of site-based respondents

6.16 Only 9 respondents across the whole site-based population (17%) had, at one time or another, lived in a house: 5 had owned their own home; 3 had lived in socially rented accommodation; and 1 in private rented accommodation (1 respondent did not elaborate on tenure of housing). These respondents had all lived in housing outside the study area; for example, Birmingham (4 respondents), Falkirk (2), Stoke-on-Trent (2) and Tamworth (1).

- 6.17 With regards to why they had lived in a house, 4 respondents (44%) indicated health reasons, 2 of whom made reference to ill health of parents; a further 3 respondents (33%) indicated that they had moved there with family / parents; 1 respondent (11%) said they were born / raised in a house; and 1 respondent (11%) had moved into a house due to a lack of sites.
- 6.18 When asked to rate their experience of living in a house: 3 respondents said good or very good (33%); 4 respondents (44%) were ambivalent (i.e. said neither good nor poor); and 2 respondents said very poor (22%).
- 6.19 With regards to why they stopped living in that house, 5 respondents (55%) indicated that they moved out because they got married. The remaining 4 respondents made reference to individual reasons; for example, a vacancy came available on their current site, they left for work reasons, they were fearful of harassment, and their children were experiencing discrimination at a nearby school.
- 6.20 Out of the entire sample of site based households 2 households (4%) reported that they would be interested in looking for accommodation in housing at some point in the future. Both households were currently living on one of the private permanent sites in the borough. However, when pressed for a preference neither household reported firm intentions to move into a house.

7. Travelling

- 7.1 In order to shed some light on the travelling patterns and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers throughout the study area, respondents were asked about a range of issues associated with travelling.
- 7.2 One of the most important issues to gain some information on was the frequency that households travelled. The vast majority of people reported that they never travelled or travelled seasonally, which generally means for short periods during the summer months. Table 7.1 breaks this down by accommodation type.

Table 7.1: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type

Frequency	All		Unauthorised development		Private residential sites (perm)		Bricks and mortar	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
A few times a year	13	17	1	7	5	13	7	32
Once per year	9	12	2	14	4	10	3	14
Never	53	71	11	79	30	77	12	55
Total	75	100	14	100	39	100	22	100

- 7.3 Across the sample as a whole, 53 respondents (71%) indicated that they never travelled. However, the data suggests variation between site-based residents (particularly unauthorised sites) and those in bricks and mortar accommodation, with housed residents being more likely to travel a few times a year (32%, compared to sample average of 17%)¹⁵. The residents on the unauthorised developments were least likely to travel (79% indicated that they never travel). As highlighted previously (Chapter 5), some residents on unauthorised sites suggested that they did not like to travel while they were trying to get planning permission on their site.
- 7.4 Table 7.2 below illustrates the main reasons given for not travelling. As can be seen, health and educational needs featured for a number of respondents. However, individual respondents made reference to a variety of reasons, including work and family commitments or a general desire to be settled. The following are some of the comments that were made:

“Settled and children will go to school in the next year or so”

“We are settled now, [we] like the facilities that we have now”

“Settled because of work and family”

“[It’s] not safe to move up and down anymore”

¹⁵ This is a common finding from other areas of the UK where the researchers have undertaken GTAAAs. It is also common to find that a large proportion of residents report that they never travel.

Table 7.2: Reasons given for never travelling

Reason	Number	%
You / family member / dependents health	16	30
You / family member / dependents educational needs	14	26
You / family member / dependents older age	9	17
You / family members are settled	9	17
Nowhere to stop anymore	6	11

Note: This is based on a question that allowed respondents to select multiple answers

- 7.5 The respondents who said that they never travelled were asked when they had last travelled (see Table 7.3 below). Just over a third (34%) indicated that they had not travelled for more than 10 years (with individual respondents indicating it had been 30 years or more); a further 31% said that they had never travelled in the past.

Table 7.3: Last time you travelled

Reason	Number	%
Never travelled	13	31
10 years or more	14	34
5 years or more but less than 10	3	7
3 years or more but less than 5	6	15
1 year or more but less than 3	3	7
Can't remember	2	5
Total	41	100

Note: excludes 12 non-responses

- 7.5 The 22 respondents who indicated that they did travel were asked where they liked to go; this was an open question designed to allow respondents to mention three of the places they visit most frequently. The most common destination seemed to be Appleby Fair in Cumbria, with a smaller number of respondents making reference to Stowe Fair. However, overall there was no particular destination that stood out in the responses, with individuals making reference to the following places / areas: Bedford, Belfast, Birmingham, Blackpool, Bulkington, Cambridge, Cannock, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Falkirk, Limerick, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Newark, Nottingham, Scotland (all over), Somerset, Stratford, and Wales (all over). It was difficult to ascertain and quantify a specific travelling pattern from these responses; however, it seems that there was a preference for remaining in the 'South' of England, with the exception of visits to Appleby Fair or the individuals who visited Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- 7.6 For those people who still travelled, the majority travelled with just 1 caravan (86%), with the remainder travelling with 2 caravans; 9 respondents (41%) indicated that they also travelled with 1 piece of equipment.
- 7.7 Of the people who said they travel, 19 (86%) had travelled at some point in the past 12 months. In terms of why they had travelled in the last 12 months, the most common reason was to 'attend a fair' (10 respondents – 45%); this was followed by 'visiting relatives' (5 respondents – 23%). The remaining respondents made reference to 'work opportunities' or 'a holiday'. With regards to where people had

stayed during travelling, perhaps unsurprisingly given the main reasons for travelling, people indicated that they had stayed on fair sites or with relatives on their sites (private and socially rented). A small number of respondents indicated that they had stayed at the roadside (in the countryside) or on transit sites.

8. Future accommodation, household formation and accommodation affordability

8.1 This chapter looks at a range of issues including the movement intentions of the sample, the formation of new households and concealment of existing ones and the accommodation intentions of the Gypsy and Traveller population. These factors are key drivers in the assessment of accommodation need within the borough. This chapter presents the findings from the survey (Chapter 11 translates this into ‘need’).

Future accommodation

8.2 Respondents were asked their intentions to move (see Table 8.1 below). Over three-quarters of the sample as a whole (58 respondents - 77%) said that they intended to stay on / in their current accommodation indefinitely; this percentage was higher amongst the residents on the unauthorised developments and private permanent sites (79% for both).

Table 8.1: Intentions to move

Intention	All		Unauthorised development		Private residential sites (perm)		Bricks and mortar	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Going to stay indefinitely	58	77	11	79	31	79	16	73
Would like to move immediately	4	5	-	-	2	5	2	9
Would like to move in next 1-2 years	2	3	-	-	1	3	1	5
Would like to move in next 12 months	1	1	-	-	1	3	-	-
Would like to move in next 2-5 years	1	1	-	-	1	3	-	-
Other	9	12	3	21	3	8	3	14
Total	75	100	14	100	39	100	22	100

8.3 As can be seen, 4 respondents indicated that they wanted to move immediately. The information below provides a summary of their responses:

- 1 respondent living in private rented bricks and mortar accommodation. They gave 3 reasons for wanting to move: wanting to move to a preferred site, wanting independence, and the ‘possibility the landlord wants his house back’. They indicated that they wanted to move to a permanent council site or their own site with planning permission, with the latter being their preference (although they indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a pitch). They said that they needed to stay within Solihull because of children’s schooling and health reasons (either their own or other family members). They said that there was currently no accommodation for them to move to. They indicated that they were on the waiting list for a house with Solihull Council. They also indicated that they were on the waiting list for a site. When asked to elaborate they made the following comments:

“Hopefully when Solihull [Council] build a site I will be able to apply for a place”

- 1 respondent living in private rented bricks and mortar accommodation. They gave 1 reason for wanting to move: *“to move to a better house”* (indicating that they wanted another house). They said that they needed to stay within Solihull because they had family in the area, work in the area and for children’s schooling (with this being the most important reason). They said that there was currently no accommodation for them to move to. They were not on the waiting list for a site. They were currently on the waiting list for a house with Solihull Council.
- 1 respondent renting a pitch on a private authorised permanent site. They gave 4 reasons for wanting to move: to be nearer to family / friends, wanting to move to a preferred site, wanting independence, and site / accommodation conditions (this being identified as the most important reason). They indicated that they wanted to move to a permanent council site or their own site with planning permission, with the latter being their preference (although they indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a pitch). They said that they needed to stay within the West Midlands (but not specifically Solihull). They said that they didn’t know if there was any accommodation for them to move to. They were not on the waiting list for a site or a house.
- 1 respondent renting a pitch on a private authorised permanent site. They gave 6 reasons for wanting to move: to be nearer to family / friends, for children’s schooling, health reasons, to look after older relatives, to move to a preferred site, and because they had bought some land (this being the most important reason). This respondent indicated that they had an unauthorised development outside Solihull (where other family members were living). They were waiting for planning permission before they could move.

8.4 One respondent wanted to move within the next 12 months. They were renting a pitch on a private authorised permanent site. Their main reason for wanting to move in the next 12 months was to get married: *“I am single and getting old in Gypsy culture, so hopefully I’ll meet someone soon and get married and move away”*. They intended staying in Solihull as they were born there, and their preference was to move to a permanent council site; however, they indicated that they were currently on the waiting list for a site outside Solihull (in Rugby).

8.5 Two respondents wanted to move in the next 1-2 years. One was renting a pitch on a private authorised permanent site and wanted to move because of site / accommodation conditions. Their preference was to own their own site in Solihull (although they indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a pitch). They were not on the waiting list for a site or house. The second respondent was living in private rented bricks and mortar accommodation, and wanted to move to be nearer to family / friends. Their preference was to move to site-based accommodation, but they did not specify an area. They were not on the waiting list for a site or house.

8.6 One respondent wanted to move within the next 2-5 years. Their main reason for wanting to move was to get married; their *preference* was to stay in Solihull (because of family in the area), but they didn’t know if they would stay in the area. They were not on the waiting list for a site or house.

8.7 As Table 8.1 highlights, there were also a number of respondents (9 – 12%) who indicated ‘other’ in terms of their intentions. When asked to elaborate, people’s responses indicated that they were unsure about what would happen in the future. For example, the 3 respondents on the unauthorised developments made comments relating to the status of their site or the need to move to an authorised site:

“I am going to stay here indefinitely but would like to move onto a site”

“I would like to move to a site at some stage, when one is built”

“I do not know what we will do, I just wish this site would get passed then it could look nice and then it would look like home and not a dirt track”

8.8 The 3 respondents on the private permanent sites, on the other hand, indicated that their intentions depended on personal relationships; for example:

“I am not looking for anywhere yet, but I will look for somewhere if my girlfriend doesn’t want to live down here”

“It depends whether I meet someone to get married”

“If I reconcile with my husband I may move”

8.9 With regards to the 3 respondents in bricks and mortar accommodation, 1 simply said they were ‘not sure’, while the remaining 2 made the following comments:

“Not sure we always buy and sell; we’re always looking for somewhere new to go”

“When children have left home I might move or if possible I would like to buy this house from the council”

Household concealment

8.10 A total of 3 households (4% of the sample) reported concealed households (i.e. separate households currently in need of accommodation and living with them). All of these were family members (i.e. older children) who required their own accommodation. Table 8.2 below shows the composition of these households by accommodation type.

Table 8.2: Concealed households by accommodation type

Type of accommodation	Explanation
Unauthorised development	HH1. 1 household with 1 person – daughter of the respondent, 21 years of age.
Permanent private sites	2 households: HH2. 1 household with 1 person – son of the respondent, 18 years of age. HH3. 2 households each of 1 person – son and daughter of the respondent, 25 and 22 years of age respectively.

- 8.11 No households were concealed within bricks and mortar accommodation. From looking at these household members it is reasonable to assume that this concealment equates to an accommodation need for 4 separate households.
- 8.12 Table 8.3 outlines the responses people gave in relation to how the accommodation need for these concealed households was expected to be resolved. It should be noted that all households were expected to move within the same local area as the respondents (i.e. within Solihull).

Table 8.3: Accommodation intentions and arrangements for each concealed household

Household (see Table 8.2 above)	Intentions and arrangements being made	Potential pitch need
HH1	Probable move to bricks and mortar.	Nil
HH2	Indicated that sort of accommodation would be 'up to them' / didn't know if site-based. Indicated that there is not enough room to accommodate them on their pitch.	Unknown
HH3	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for both son and daughter to live on pitch with them, but not enough room to accommodate them.	2 pitches

- 8.13 From examining the intentions and arrangements being made for these households it is reasonable to assume a pitch need of 3 pitches.

Household formation

- 8.14 Respondents were also asked whether there were people living with them who were likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next five years (2012–2017). A total of 7 households (9%) said that there were people living with them who would require independent accommodation within the next five-year period.
- 8.15 All of these were family members (i.e. children). Table 8.4 below shows the composition of these households by accommodation type.

Table 8.4: Household formation by accommodation type

Type of accommodation	Explanation	Number of households who will be 18 years old in 2017
Bricks and mortar accommodation	HH1. 2 people – son and daughter of the respondent, currently aged 15 and 13 years respectively.	HH1. 2 households
Unauthorised development	HH2. 2 people – son and daughter of the respondent, currently aged 16 and 13 years respectively.	Hh2. 2 households
Permanent private sites	Five existing households:	
	HH3. 1 person – daughter, currently aged 12.	HH3. 0 households
	HH4. 1 person – daughter, currently aged 10.	HH4. 0 households
	HH5. 1 person – son, currently aged 11.	HH5. 0 households
	HH6. 2 people – 2 sons, currently aged 10 and 11.	HH6. 0 households
	HH7. 2 people – 2 sons, currently aged 9 and 10.	HH7. 0 households

8.16 Table 8.5 below outlines the responses people gave in relation to how the accommodation needs of these households is expected to be resolved. It should be noted that all households were expected to move within the same local area as the respondents (i.e. within Solihull).

Table 8.5: Accommodation intentions and arrangements for each household

Household (see Table 8.4 above)	Intentions and arrangements being made	Potential pitch need
HH1	Indicated need for site-based accommodation (not on current site), preferably provided by council.	2 pitches
HH2	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for both son and daughter to live on pitch with them, could accommodate them but would need planning permission.	2 pitches
HH3	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for daughter to live on pitch with them, but no room to accommodate her.	1 pitch
HH4	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for daughter to live on pitch with them, could accommodate her but would need permission from landlord.	1 pitch
HH5	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for son to live on pitch with them, but no room to accommodate him.	1 pitch
HH6	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for both sons to live on pitch with them, don't know if they can accommodate them.	2 pitches
HH7	Indicated need for site-based accommodation. Intention for both sons to live on pitch with them, could accommodate them but would need planning permission.	2 pitches

8.17 Although we recognise that Gypsies and Travellers tend to form independent households at a younger age than households in the settled community we have used the benchmark of 18 years of age in 2017 as household formation age. As such

we have moderated some of these household formation rates from an accommodation need for 11 households. We therefore estimate that there will be an additional pitch need of 4 pitches. From examining the intentions and arrangements being made for these households it is reasonable to assume all require pitch accommodation within the borough.

- 8.18 We are confident that we have ensured no double counting between household concealment and household formation.

Accommodation affordability

- 8.19 In order to explore issues of accommodation affordability we asked a series of related questions. The first of these looked at the ability of households to afford accommodation options presented in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6: Ability to afford any of the following

Type of accommodation	Number	%
A pitch on a private site with planning permission	4	5
A pitch on a private site without planning permission	4	5
Land to be developed into a site	7	9
Cannot afford to purchase land or a site	45	60
Not relevant	26	35

Note: This is based on a question that allowed respondents to select multiple answers

- 8.20 As can be seen very few people appeared to be able to afford to develop their own site based accommodation. With regards to those who indicated 'not relevant', the majority indicated that the question was not relevant as they were not interested in moving. Some respondents indicated that it was not relevant as they had already purchased their own land (i.e. respondents on unauthorised developments).
- 8.21 The next question explored how much they pay per week / month in rent or mortgage for their accommodation (see Table 8.7). Nearly half of the sample as a whole (49%) indicated that they did not pay rent / mortgage (100% of those living on unauthorised developments and 54% of those on permanent private sites).

Table 8.7: Cost of rent / mortgage

Cost	All		Unauthorised development		Private residential sites (perm)		Bricks and mortar	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under £130 pm	6	8	-	-	6	15	-	-
£256-385 pm	5	7	-	-	1	3	4	18
£386-515 pm	2	3	-	-	-	-	2	9
£516-645pm	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	5
Don't know	13	17	-	-	10	26	3	14
Prefer not to say	11	15	-	-	1	3	10	45
Don't pay rent or mortgage	37	49	14	100	21	54	2	9
Total	75	100	14	100	39	100	22	100

- 8.22 Given the number of people who indicated that they did not know how much their rent / mortgage was or did not want to say, it is difficult to draw conclusive results on costs.
- 8.23 In line with many other assessments of the affordable accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers relatively few respondents were willing to answer the specific questions relating to income. The reasons for these are complex but tend to revolve around issues of trust between the interviewer and respondent and particular privacy issues associated with Gypsy and Traveller communities. This is not atypical from other similar assessments and few conclusions should be drawn about the need for affordable accommodation or otherwise from these responses or from the rates of pitch ownership on sites in the borough.
- 8.24 It is worth noting that a diversity of socio-economic situations is present amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities, from the moderately wealthy to very poor families. Although obtaining empirical evidence on the economic circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers is very difficult, it is well established that Gypsies and Travellers are amongst the most culturally, socially, physically and financially excluded in society. A number of families will always be able to afford to purchase or rent pitches at market rates. However, in line with the rest of society, other sections of the communities will be excluded from accommodation provided at market rates and will require additional support to access safe and secure accommodation in line with their cultural needs. The absence of a range of tenure to address this diversity of socio-economic circumstances may lead to a perpetuation and possible increase in hidden homelessness.

9. Experiences of employment, education and health services

9.1 This chapter focuses on a range of issues of interest to the local authority. Specifically these are the employment experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in the area, their engagement with education and issues around the accessing of health care services.

Employment experiences

9.2 We asked all respondents to tell us about the employment structure in their household. Unsurprisingly the majority of households had individuals within them where self-employment was the main source of income; 44 households (59% of the sample) had one or more people who were self-employed. A total of 9 households had people who were employed (12% of the sample) with only 1 household who had an individual within their household unit who was both employed and self employed. A small number of respondents were 'retired' (15% of the sample) and a similar proportion had household members who were unemployed (16%). No household had any member in either further education or higher education. A total of 42 households (56%) had a member of the household whose primary role was described as 'homemaker'.

9.3 For those respondents who were in work, 33 respondents (65%) said that they worked within the Solihull area, while 16 respondents (31%) worked within the West Midlands area. Just 2 respondents (4%) worked in other areas across the UK.

9.4 A total of 10 respondents (20%) indicated that they had site needs relating to their work. These respondents all made reference to needing space to store wagons and machinery.

9.5 We asked all respondents if they, or members of their family, had ever experienced any problems accessing employment; 14 people said yes (19%). When asked to elaborate, all of the comments related to discrimination due to being Gypsies and Travellers. This included people losing jobs because they were Gypsies and Travellers, people 'hiding' their ethnicity, and difficulties relating to their address being a site. The following illustrate some of the main comments that were made:

"My daughters did get refused at different jobs and it seemed every time they said they were Travellers; they both work now for Premier Inn, been there 3 years but they don't know they are Gypsies, we keep it quiet"

"My granddaughter had a job in a corner shop; when they found out she was a Gypsy they said there was no more work, so she don't tell her work mates now"

"Problems relating to address of the site, when people know it's a caravan site they will not supply goods"

"Some people don't like me working for them because I live in a trailer, but I have work now"

Education experiences

- 9.6 Respondents were asked if they, or members of their family, had ever tried to access further or higher education; just 5 respondents (7%) said yes. One of these respondents indicated that they had experienced problems when accessing further or higher education, and made the following comment:

“When they found out that I was a Traveller, they treated me differently - I went to college for hair and beauty”

- 9.7 We asked the respondents who had never tried to access further or higher education why this was the case (see Table 9.1 below); 63% said that they were not interested in higher / further education, while just over a quarter said that they did not have any qualifications (27%).

Table 9.1: Reasons for not trying to access further / higher education

Reasons	Number	%
No interest	44	63
No qualifications	19	27
Work commitments	2	3
Don't know what's available	1	1
Other	4	6
Total	70	100

- 9.8 With regards to the respondents who said ‘other’, the following comments were made:

“It's just not the done thing”

“[My] children [are] not old enough yet but they are doing well at school so they might do”

“Schools were not interested in educating us when I was young”

“When I was at school I was always taken out of class because I was a Gypsy and I never had any education”

Access to health services

- 9.9 The majority of respondents reported that they had sufficient access to A & E, GP / health centre and dentists (97%, 92% and 85% respectively). They were least likely to access health visitors or maternity care; however, this was primarily because these services were deemed as not relevant to them.

Table 9.2: Access to selected health services

Service	Yes		No		Not relevant	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
A & E	73	97	1	1	1	1
GP / health centre	69	92	6	8	-	-
Dentist	64	85	8	11	3	4
Health visitor	37	49	6	8	32	43
Maternity care	26	35	5	7	44	59

- 9.10 Just 5 respondents (7%) indicated that there were issues that stopped them from accessing the above services. With the exception of one respondent, these were all people who were living on unauthorised developments and perceived that they were treated differently because they were seen as 'temporary'. The following comments were made, all of which related to GPs / health centres:

"As they think we aren't staying here, they don't want to take us on, so I go back to Tamworth to my old health centre"

"They just don't like to see you - they only see us as temporary"

"They only let you be seen as a temporary but my wife had the same doctor for over 12 years then when we bought this land they took her off and the kids - they refuse to put them back on the list"

"We are just waiting for this land to get passed, then they might take us on as they only see us as temporary"

10. Travelling Showpeople

- 10.1 Travelling Showpeople occupy an unusual position in planning terms and a separate planning Circular, detailing the particular planning needs of Travelling Showpeople, has been produced: Circular 04/07. As well as detailing the requirements for pitch identification and allocation for Travelling Showpeople, Circular 04/07 also requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within the assessments of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.
- 10.2 There are no Travelling Showpeople known to be living within the borough.
- 10.3 The lack of Travelling Showpeople in the borough appears to imply that there is a nil need for yard-based accommodation from Travelling Showpeople households. However, it should be noted that Travelling Showpeople remain distinct from Gypsies and Travellers and further work may need to be produced, across local authority boundaries, to accurately understand their accommodation needs. There may be a need for accommodation in the borough from families working in the area but who live in adjacent or other authorities. A cross-boundary assessment in partnership with the Showmen's Guild would, most effectively, identify such shortage.

11. An assessment of accommodation need

11.1 Irrespective of the proposed change in policy targeted at resolving Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Research from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has indicated that around 6,000 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are immediately required to meet the current shortage of accommodation within England.¹⁶

A note on the assessment of accommodation need

11.2 Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling community are generally much wider - as there is social housing available in every authority in the country - there are no local authority sites in around a third of the local authorities in England. Few local authorities have more than one socially rented site and a significant number of authorities have no authorised private sites.

11.3 Despite all local authorities across England completing a first round of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAs) over the 2006-2009 period, the methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. The model drawn upon here derives from a number of sources including:

- The Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.¹⁷
- Guidance for Regional Planning.¹⁸
- Knowledge and experience of assumptions featuring in other GTAAs and results of EiP tests of GTAAs
- The emerging messages arising from the recent CLG consultation document '*Planning for Travellers*'.

11.4 In a move from the first round of GTAAs this assessment has focussed more closely on the constitution of 'local and historic' need by:

- Surveying households resident in the borough, as opposed to extrapolating trends and findings from households resident outside the borough (i.e. which often occurs where neighbouring authorities have combined to produce joint GTAAs).

¹⁶ See Brown, P., Henning, S. and Niner, P. (2010) *Assessing local housing authorities' progress in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in England and Wales : Update 2010*. Equality and Human Rights Commission.

¹⁷ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Guidance*, London: HMSO.

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

- Drawing upon empirical primary research within the borough as opposed to developing projections based upon trends within the Caravan Count. Via a process of triangulation, records are brought together with survey responses on issues such as unauthorised sites, temporary consents and concealed households to develop a robust assessment of need. Similarly, an empirical assessment of local likely future needs is made possible via the comprehensive survey of households. Together these factors represent the latest position on historic demand.
- 11.5 It should be noted that the need reported as arising here is generated from households currently accommodated across a variety of accommodation types (i.e. private sites and unauthorised sites). This does not necessarily entail a need for these types of tenure and an exploration of tenure preference follows the assessment of need.
- 11.6 This study has taken a thorough assessment of the need arising from all sites present at the time of the survey. As such this assessment of need should be regarded as a reasonable and robust assessment of need upon which to base planning decisions going forward.
- 11.7 Table 11.1 below contains the requirements for net additional pitches that need to be developed to meet the measured need. Sites given planning permission or developed through new social provision, ‘genuine’ vacancies on private sites arising in the borough¹⁹ occurring after the 1st January 2012 contribute to the need requirements detailed in the table below.
- 11.8 Accommodation need has been considered in this assessment by carefully exploring the following factors:

Current residential supply

- Socially rented pitches.
- Private authorised pitches.

Residential need 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2016

- Temporary planning permissions, which will end over the assessment period.
- Concealment of households.
- Allowance for family growth over the assessment period.
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments.
- Movement over the assessment period between sites and housing.
- Whether the closure of any existing sites is planned.
- Potential need for residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments.
- Movement between areas.

¹⁹ As highlighted previously, potential vacancies will require further monitoring.

Additional supply 2012–2016

The supply of pitches between 2012–2017 has been considered but concluded to be nil. The supply of pitches within the borough should be closely monitored. New mechanisms may be required to enable this. A number of factors are potential sources of supply:

- Pitches currently closed but re-entering use
- New sites planned
- Vacant pitches

11.9 Site overcrowding was also considered (i.e. whether there were more living units on sites designed for less) but there was no strong evidence that sites are overcrowded in this way to any great extent. Pitch overcrowding (i.e. more households occupying a single living area than they are designed for) is addressed within the consideration of household concealment.

11.10 The requirements are presented in summary form in Table 11.1 below. Table 11.1 details the accommodation and pitch need, derived from applying the definition as used in the Housing Act 2004. The housing definition is considered to illustrate overall accommodation need for the borough. Each element is explained in greater detail below. **All figures relate to pitches not sites.**

Table 11.1: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and pitch need (1st January 2012 – 31st December 2026)

	Element of supply and need	Accommodation Need Total (households)
	Current residential supply	
1	Socially rented pitches	0
2	Private authorised pitches	49
3	Total authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches	49
	Residential pitch need (2012–2017)	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	1
5	Concealed households	4
6	New household formation	5
7	Unauthorised developments	14
8	Net movement from housing to sites	2
9	Closure of sites	0
10	Unauthorised encampments	0
11	Movement between areas	0
12	Residential pitch need (2012–2017)	26
13	Supply (2012-2017)	0
14	Residential pitch need (2012-2017)	26
15	Residential pitch need (2017–2022)	6
16	Residential pitch need (2022–2027)	6
17	Total Residential pitch need (2012–2027)	38

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

Explanation of the need requirement elements

Current residential supply

11.11 **Row 1:** The number of pitches on socially rented sites provided by local authority information.

11.12 **Row 2:** The number of pitches on private authorised sites provided by local authority information.

11.13 **Row 3:** The total number of authorised pitches within the borough.

Residential pitch need 2012–2017

11.14 **Row 4:** The number of pitches which have temporary planning permission due to expire within the assessment period. This is assumed to count towards estimated need. Establishing the permanency of this site would count towards additional pitch provision.

- 11.15 **Row 5:** This details the number of concealed households occupying existing accommodation who require independent accommodation within the borough. A total of 4 households require site-based accommodation due to being concealed.

Concealed households across accommodation types requiring site based accommodation

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that there were no households on unauthorised developments or bricks and mortar housing that required site-based accommodation. However, there were 3 households found to be concealed during the survey of private sites. These concealed households are the equivalent of 10% of the sample on private sites.

Assumptions: It is likely that these 3 households will form and demand independent accommodation; therefore no pitch sharing adjustment has been made.

Calculation: 3 households are equivalent to 10% of the sample on private sites which equates to 4 households across the population of households on private sites in the borough.

- 11.16 **Row 6:** This is the number of new pitches required from new household formation.

Pitch requirement from new households forming

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that there were 5 households likely to require pitch based accommodation in the borough in the next 5 years from unauthorised developments and bricks and mortar housing. There were no households expected to form and require pitch based accommodation from private sites.

Assumptions: It is unlikely that all households will form and demand independent accommodation. In order to account for a degree of pitch sharing that may take place in practice, a ratio of pitch sharing has been assumed at a rate of 1:075.

Calculation:

- Unauthorised developments – 2 households were identified in the survey that required independent site based accommodation. No grossing has occurred as every household on unauthorised developments was consulted in the borough.
- Bricks and mortar – 2 households were identified in the survey that required independent site based accommodation which is the equivalent to 10% of the sample in bricks and mortar accommodation. This is then grossed to the whole population of households in bricks and mortar housing and the pitch sharing ratio is applied. This equates to 3 new households

11.17 **Row 7:** This is the level of need arising from current unauthorised developments. According to our survey there were 3 unauthorised developments at the time of the assessment comprising approximately 14 pitches. The vast majority of households on these sites appear to be long term residents of Solihull. Since these sites are, by definition, unauthorised, these households are in need of authorised, legal accommodation, whether through the granting of planning permission on their own site or pitch provision elsewhere.

11.18 **Row 8:** This is the estimation of the flow from sites to houses and vice versa.

Movement between housing and sites

Movement from sites to housing finding: No site based household expressed a firm intention to move into bricks and mortar accommodation.

Movement from housing to sites finding: Only 1 respondent in bricks and mortar accommodation had firm intentions to move from their house on a site. This is the equivalent of 5% of the bricks and mortar sample.

Calculation: 5% of the estimated bricks and mortar population = 2 households who will move from housing to sites over the assessment period.

Net movement from housing to sites = 2

11.19 **Row 9:** Plans to close existing sites, which have been calculated within the supply of site accommodation, will ultimately displace a number of Gypsies and Travellers resulting in an increase in housing need. It is the understanding of the project team that there was no intention to close any residential site in the borough.

11.20 **Row 10:** This provides an estimation of the need arising from households on unauthorised encampments. This factor takes into account households involved in unauthorised encampments that require a residential pitch in the study area. The Caravan Count records, and records collected by the local authority, indicate that where unauthorised encampments occur these are for short periods during the summer months indicating a need for transit accommodation as opposed to residential accommodation. The survey team saw no primary evidence of unauthorised encampments during the fieldwork.²⁰ The previous GTAA arrived at similar conclusions and the number of encampments have decreased in the period since this GTAA was conducted.

11.21 **Row 11:** This is the level of movement of households between areas. The survey found no evidence to suggest that there is or is not movement between areas. It is assumed that if movement does occur in-migration will balance out migration

11.22 **Row 12:** This is the total gross residential need for pitches arising in the borough between 2012-2017.

²⁰ This should remain under close review by the agencies responsible.

11.23 **Row 13:** No elements of supply over the 2012-2017 period have been factored into this assessment.

11.24 **Row 14:** The total net requirement for pitches in the borough over the period 2012–2017.

Permanent residential accommodation need over 2017–2022 and 2022-2027

11.25 The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements until the current lack of pitch based accommodation has been addressed at a national level. There is no means of knowing how Gypsies and Travellers will decide to live in the next decade. There may be an increase in smaller households, moves into bricks and mortar housing may be more common or household formation may happen at a later age.

11.26 However, it is necessary to plan for the long term and anticipate pitch need from Gypsy and Traveller households. In order to tackle the complexity of needs that may well occur over the next decade it is established practice in assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need to apply an assumed rate of household growth. It has been common in similar studies to employ a standard 3% per annum compound rate of household growth. In order to produce a more locally responsive assessment this study assessed the local household formation rate and found this to be around 0.7% per annum compound. This is significantly lower than is found elsewhere which suggests some potential skewing of the findings which may understate requirements. It should be noted that Table A2.5 outlines a significant number of children that will have reached an age where households are typically formed in Gypsy / Traveller families (i.e. 18-21 years) in the 2017-2022 period. However, against the data that has been recorded within the survey the 3% household growth rate may overstate requirements as a result a 2% growth rate has been employed. This figure is then applied, minus an assumed ratio for pitch sharing of 1:0.75, to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2017. All household growth is assumed to require a site-based solution. This study does not allow for unauthorised developments over the next periods (2017 – 2022 and 2022 – 2027) because the factors which will contribute to future need have been clearly identified and measured as part of the study. The supply of pitches over the 2017–2027 period has been considered, but has been assumed to be zero. This is consistent with earlier GTAA's and implicitly compensates for not taking into account needs arising from drivers other than family growth.

11.27 **Row 15:** The total requirement for pitches in the borough over the period 2017-2022.

11.28 **Row 16:** The total requirement for pitches in the borough over the period 2022-2027.

11.29 **Row 17:** The total requirement for pitches in the borough over the period 2012-2027.

Exploring tenure preference in relation to accommodation need

11.30 As highlighted in Chapter 8, the assessment attempted to explore issues around accommodation affordability. Linking in with this, the survey sought information on tenure preference of those in need of accommodation as well as those with aspirations to move in the future. The tenure preferences that were explored in the survey were: own site with planning permission; renting permanent pitch on council owned site; renting transit pitch on council owned site; and renting pitch on private site. Table 11.2 below provides a summary of the responses given in the survey. For ease of reference, these have been categorised according to the residential pitch need categorised in Table 11.1 above. There are two issues to note in relation to the Table 11.2 below. Firstly, the summary is based on collating responses to a number of linked questions on the survey. Secondly, in some cases, the figures will not correspond to the residential pitch need in Table 11.1 – this is due to the grossing / rounding that was necessary to calculate residential pitch need.

Table 11.2: Summary of tenure preference information

End of temporary planning permissions	
No further information available on required tenure	1
Concealed households	
Children currently living with parents on private rented site – want to continue living on private rented site with parents	2
Child living on private site – don't know what type or tenure of accommodation they want	1
New household formation	
Children living on private rented site – want permanent pitch on council site if one was developed	2
Children living on unauthorised developments – would want to remain with parents	2
Child living with parents on private rented site - no further information provided on required tenure	1
Unauthorised developments	
Want to continue living on current site indefinitely	12
Would like to move to another site – would consider another owned site or permanent pitch on a council site if one was developed	2
Movement from housing to sites	
Preference for permanent pitch on a council site or living on own site (but indicated they couldn't afford to develop own site)	1

11.31 Table 11.2 indicates that:

- 2 newly forming households need accommodating on a council site (if developed) – equating to 2 pitches;
- 2 households living on unauthorised developments would consider moving to a council site (if developed) – equating to 2 pitches. Their preference was to own a site but they indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a site;
- 1 household living in bricks and mortar would consider moving to a council site (if developed) – equating to 1 pitch. As above, their preference was to own a site, but they indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a site.

11.32 In addition to the responses from households with identified accommodation need, there were 3 households currently renting a pitch on a private site who indicated *aspirations* to move within the next 5 years due to conditions on their current private rented site:

- 1 household indicated that they wanted to move to a council site (if developed);
- 2 households stated preference for moving to their own site; however they both indicated that they could not afford to purchase land or a site. They both indicated that they would consider moving to a permanent pitch on a council site (if developed).

12. An assessment of need for transit accommodation

12.1 Although to a certain extent nomadism and travelling are currently restricted, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or visit family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. Nationally, the worst living conditions are commonly experienced by Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments who do not have easy access to water or toilet facilities and have difficulties in accessing education and health services.

Need for transit sites and stopping places

12.2 National policy is clear that there should be provision in order for Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately. 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.

12.3 It appears that transit need may, in part, be being catered for by site-based households resident in the area who allow their families and friends to stay with them for short periods at various times throughout the year. Similarly, it is apparent that unauthorised encampments occur as a result of people staying for short periods in the area.

12.4 There are a number of issues to note when considering the provision of transit accommodation:

- The geographic nature of the area - the provision of one transit site may not provide for transit need in the way in which it arises (i.e. some people may simply be passing through and others will be visiting the area to see relatives).
- A single transit site would force the mixing of differing groups (family and ethnic) and could lead to potential tensions.
- The needs of the travelling groups often combines a mixture of motivations (i.e. work, family and holiday). A uniform transit site may not meet the differing requirements.
- Larger pitches on residential sites, or larger number of pitches on sites, provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term visitors and 'future-proof' against an increase in unauthorised encampments.

12.6 Although transit need could be met by the creation of 'hard' purpose-made pitches / sites, it is also recommended that consideration is also given to the need for the development of such 'hard' pitches with the possibility of 'soft' transit pitches (i.e. designated stopping places). Such 'softer' options would provide Gypsies and

Travellers with somewhere authorised and more secure to stop whilst creating a minimal environmental impact. Such stopping places are often favoured by Gypsy and Traveller households.

- 12.7 The scale of encampment experienced in the borough is relatively small and contained to specific periods of the year. As such this does not merit the formal provision of a transit site. As well as ensuring future residential provision can accommodate people visiting site residents (where appropriate) pieces of land should be identified to which other Gypsies and Travellers coming into the area could be encouraged to move.
- 12.8 Requirements for provision of future transit accommodation are impossible to predict from this survey. 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.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 This chapter provides some concluding comments in relation to the assessment of accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the borough of Solihull. The primary purpose of this assessment was to provide an updated evidence base to feed into a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the LDF Local Plan.
- 13.2 This assessment followed the CLG guidance produced in 2007 in relation to carrying out *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments*. However, the government is currently formulating a radically different planning framework for England and Wales in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). At the time of writing (February 2012) the final document outlining Gypsy and Traveller planning policy had not been released. This assessment therefore anticipated certain aspects of the proposed policy in order to ensure the findings of this assessment *are valid for the long-term*. In particular, we placed additional onus on the assessment of 'local and historic' need, which was indicated to be a core feature of the policy by both the Secretary of State and the draft planning guidance.
- 13.3 The assessment consulted with 75 resident households, which is 72% of the estimated resident Gypsy and Traveller community across the study area. The response rate to this survey was significantly larger than many GTAAs carried out elsewhere and significantly larger than the previous GTAA that covered the Solihull borough, which achieved a 47% response rate. As such this assessment of need should be regarded as a reasonable and robust assessment of need upon which to base planning decisions going forward.
- 13.4 This report has presented the projection of requirements for the following periods:
- 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2016
 - 1st January 2017 – 31st December 2021
 - 1st January 2022 – 31st December 2026

Although the pitch requirements over the 2012 - 2017 period should be regarded as a reasonable and robust assessment, pitch requirements for the 2017-2027 period should be seen as indicative due to the reliance on household growth figures. It is recommended that the assessment of accommodation need is repeated in due course (circa 5 years) to ensure this assessment remains as accurate as possible.

- 13.5 The Gypsy and Traveller population in the borough of Solihull appears relatively stable, with very few incidents of unauthorised encampments. This means that the accommodation need is arising from Gypsies and Travellers resident within the borough as opposed to those from outside the area.
- 13.6 The long term accommodation needs arising from Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks and mortar accommodation continue to be largely unknown. Although this assessment has been successful in including the needs of this group, it is not known how representative these findings are across the entire population who live in bricks

and mortar accommodation. More work may be needed in order to estimate the size of the housed population and monitor their accommodation need. Some of this may be made possible as a result of findings from Census 2011, which included the ethnicities of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller.

- 13.7 Finally, it is worth noting the diversity of socio-economic situations amongst the Gypsy and Traveller population, from the moderately wealthy to very poor families. Obtaining empirical evidence on the economic circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers is very difficult. However, in line with the rest of society, this assessment identified that some Gypsies and Travellers were able to afford to purchase or rent pitches at market rates while other sections of the communities would require additional support to access safe and secure accommodation in line with their cultural needs. The absence of a range of tenure options to address this diversity of socio-economic circumstances may therefore require further consideration.

Appendix 1: The assessment methodology

Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the ODPM (now CLG) in February 2006 with final guidance made available in October 2007. Specialised guidance and assessments was felt to be required as many local authority housing needs assessments were previously failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about conducting an assessment and issues to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive in terms of methods but suggests that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments integrate a wide variety of evidence such as existing secondary information, views of selected stakeholders and the views of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

It is noted that the recent draft Planning Policy Statement 'Planning for traveller sites' (CLG, 2011) has proposed removing the need for dedicated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAs) from any new guidance. It states,

While the Government is keen that planning policy highlights the importance of ensuring that targets are based on robust evidence, it does not consider it necessary to prescribe to local planning authorities the type and volume of evidence required, especially as their conclusions will be tested through the process of consultation and Examination in Public of local plans. This also accords with the Government's "streamlining" objectives by removing policy that is already adequately covered by legislation. The proposed policy states that local planning authorities set their own evidence-based targets for the provision of pitches / plots. The policy does not dictate what targets local planning authorities should adopt. This is a matter for local planning authorities to decide themselves depending on the circumstances in their particular area.

However, in the absence of alternative methodologies for assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, we have adopted a modified survey of the sort used in the first round of GTAAs.

This assessment was undertaken in two distinct stages. Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

- Stage one – collation and review of existing information.
- Stage two – survey with Gypsies and Travellers across the study area.

Stage One: Collation and review of existing secondary information

This first stage comprised a review of the available secondary sources to provide an overview to the situation of Gypsies and Travellers in the study area. More specifically this included the collection, review and synthesis of:

- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans
- Records and data maintained and provided by the local authority
- The original GTAA produced by the University of Birmingham in 2008

Stage Two: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers

One of the most important aspects of the assessment was consulting with local Gypsies and Travellers. The fieldwork took place between December 2011 and January 2012. These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey with Gypsies and Travellers is discussed below under three sections: sampling strategy and response rates; questionnaire design; and fieldwork and interviewers.

Sampling and response rates

Sampling Gypsy and Traveller households for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is always problematic given the absence of accurate information concerning the size and location of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. As such the sampling technique for the assessment was purposive rather than purely random.

- For households on the authorised private sites and unauthorised developments we compiled a sample frame from information provided by the local authority. We set an aspirational quota for the interviews of 100% of the occupied pitches on these sites. Repeat visits were made to locations in order to achieve interviews if households were away from the site, it was not convenient for the household in question or the fieldworkers ran out of time.
- As the population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing is relatively hidden from official records, there was no comprehensive sample frame from which to identify people. Therefore, in order to engage with housed Gypsies and Travellers the fieldwork team relied on three main methods: contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had already been interviewed as part of the assessment; the contacts of the Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team; and contacts provided by stakeholders²¹.
- For households on unauthorised encampments, officers were encouraged to inform the fieldwork team when and where encampments occurred during the fieldwork period. There were no unauthorised encampments reported to the team during the fieldwork period and none were found. From looking at the Caravan Count and from information provided by the local authority it appears that the low number of encampments is reflective of the current trend.

A total of **75 households** were involved in the assessment within the borough.

Table A1.1 below illustrates how the assessment sample relates to the known number of pitches and estimated population by accommodation type. As can be seen, we endeavoured to include all known sites in the study area. To clarify, Table A1.1 reflects achieved household interviews. This represents the households who opted to participate in the study rather than the number of households approached. We believe that the sample is as

²¹ Officers from Solihull Council identified a small sample of individuals based on housing register data; the Council wrote to these individuals to explain that the assessment was taking place and inviting them to take part. Following this letter 2 respondents contacted the Council to take part in the assessment and their details were passed to the University research team.

representative as can be reasonably expected. The fieldwork took place over a 7 week period between December 2011 and February 2012.

Table A1.1: Sample in relation to local Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	No. of sites			No. of pitches / households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Private authorised pitches (permanent)	7	7	100	49	39	80
Private authorised pitches (temporary)	1	0 ²²	0	1	0	0
Unauthorised developments	3	3	100	14	14	100
Unauthorised encampments	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Housed	NA	NA	NA	NA	22	NA

From a base population of 104 households, we consulted with 75 resident households; 72% of the estimated resident Gypsy and Traveller community across the study area. The response rate to this survey is significantly larger than many GTAA's carried out elsewhere and significantly larger than the previous GTAA that covered the Solihull borough which achieved a 47% response rate. We believe that as the sample included a range of accommodation types and household circumstances we have no reason to believe that those households included in the survey are untypical from the total population in the area. Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable information from accommodation types within the study area.

Questionnaire design

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

- Current accommodation;
- Local and historic connection;
- Travelling;
- Previous housing experiences;
- Household details;
- Health services and energy efficiency²³; and
- Future accommodation.

Fieldwork and interviewers

In addition to SHUSU fieldwork staff, and of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the Gypsy and Traveller population, was the involvement of Community Interviewers. In total, two members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers. These interviewers were of Romany Gypsy

²² For reasons beyond the control of the research team the one household on the temporary private site could not be accessed.

²³ The issue of energy efficiency is considered in a separate document.

background and lived outside the study area. They had both worked previously with the SHUSU team (in both the first round of GTAA's and in recent GTAA updates). In addition, a Gypsy and Traveller Floating Support Worker also carried out interviews for the assessment. This individual had worked with Gypsy and Traveller communities in the study area for a number of years, and had also worked as an interviewer on the previous GTAA carried out by the University of Birmingham in 2008. The three interviewers took part in refresher training, prior to commencing fieldwork, and were provided with support from the core study team members during their interviewing activity. Each questionnaire was subject to quality control and appropriate feedback was given to the interviewers. By taking this approach we found we were able to access a range of people that would not otherwise have been included in the assessment, such as 'hidden' members of the community (i.e. people living in bricks and mortar housing), and those people who were uncomfortable talking to non-Travellers.

Appendix 2: Demographics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population

This section aims to provide some information on the demographics of the sample involved in this accommodation assessment. Characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller communities are often hidden or not widely known. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) present an ideal opportunity to get to know more about the community at large, particularly in terms of living circumstances, age, Gypsy and Traveller groups, household composition, employment status, and education / training needs. The following aims to provide some information about the Gypsy and Traveller households in the sample.

Gypsy and Traveller groups

The majority of respondents identified themselves as Romany / Gypsy (English) (72%), followed by Irish Traveller (19%). A small number of respondents (4) indicated that they were Scottish Gypsies / Travellers, while one person identified themselves as a New Traveller.

Table A2.1: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

Age group	Number	%
Romany / Gypsy (English)	54	72
Irish Traveller	14	19
Scottish Gypsy / Traveller	4	5
New Traveller	1	1
Prefer not to say	2	3
Total	75	100

Gender and age of interviewees

In terms of the gender of interviewees, the sample included 53 women (71%) and 22 men (29%). This reflects a commonly achieved gender distribution in GTAAAs.

The age profile of the sample can be seen in Table A2.2 below. As can be seen, 41% of respondents were aged 25 – 39, with a further 23% aged 40 – 49. A total of 12 respondents (16%) of the sample were aged 60 years and over.

Table A2.2: Age of interviewees

Age group	Number	%
17–24	8	11
25–39	31	41
40–49	17	23
50–59	7	9
60–74	11	15
75-84	1	1
Total	75	100

Household size

In total, the survey sample accounts for 232 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in Solihull. The average household size for the whole sample is 3 – larger than the household size of the non-Traveller population. However, this hides a range in household sizes as indicated in Table A2.3 below.

Table A2.3: Household size distribution

Size	All		Unauthorised developments		Private residential sites (perm)		Bricks and mortar	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 Person	16	21	-	-	15	38	1	5
2 Persons	12	16	3	21	7	18	2	9
3 Persons	14	19	4	29	9	23	1	5
4 Persons	20	27	3	21	5	13	12	55
5 Persons	10	13	3	21	1	3	6	27
6 Persons	2	3	1	7	1	3	-	-
8 Persons	1	1	-	-	1	3	-	-
Total	75	100	14	100	39	100	22	100

There appeared to be variation in the size of households in relation to their current accommodation type. As can be seen from Table A2.4, respondents living on the private permanent sites tended to have smaller households.

Table A2.4: Average household size by accommodation type

Accommodation type	Average household size
Bricks and Mortar	3.9
Unauthorised developments	3.6
Residential private sites (perm)	2.4

A total of 14 households (19%) had adults within their household who were over the age of 60; 6 households had one adult over 60, and 8 households had two adults over 60.

A total of 41 households (55%) had children in the household. There were a total of 89 children across these 41 households; an average of 2.2 children per household. Over half of the children in the sample (55%) were aged 6 – 10 (see Table A2.5 below).

Table A2.5: Age of children

Age group	Number	%
0 – 5	22	25
6 – 10	49	55
11 – 16	18	20
Total	89	100