

# Suffolk Cross-Boundary Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment



## Final Report

By

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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.

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Particular thanks must, of course, go to the many Gypsies and Travellers 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 does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the research commissioning authorities, or any participating researchers, stakeholders and agencies. The authors take responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions in the report.

SHUSU

21<sup>st</sup> May 2007



# Executive Summary

## The study

1. Recent legislation and guidance from the government has indicated a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of the long standing accommodation issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society. As a result, a number of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are now being undertaken across the UK, as local authorities respond to these new obligations and requirements.
2. This assessment was commissioned by five authorities in Suffolk County (*Mid Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waveney District Council and Ipswich Borough Council*) in June 2006. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford with research support from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a steering group composed of officers from the commissioning authorities.
3. The assessment was undertaken by conducting:
  - A review of available literature, data and secondary sources;
  - A detailed questionnaire completed by housing and planning officers;
  - Four focus groups with 23 key stakeholders;
  - An open-ended pro-forma completed by 32 Parish Councils; and
  - A total of 128 interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households from a range of tenures; reflecting around 63% of the 'known' local Gypsy and Traveller population.

## Background

4. Following the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their wider housing strategies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced has a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial

Strategy (RSS), in this case the East of England Plan. The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs conducted and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.

## Main findings

### Local Gypsies and Travellers

- At the time of the survey the Study Area had 41 pitches on one residential site managed by Ipswich Borough Council; 91 pitches on 15 private authorised sites; 1 unauthorised development containing approximately 19 pitches; a minimum of 29 families on unauthorised encampments; and at least 23 households in bricks and mortar housing. In all there was a minimum of 203 Gypsy/Traveller families on sites, houses or encamped at the time of the survey.

Table i: Current authorised Gypsy and Traveller site provision (public and private) by local authority area

Local Authority	Council owned/managed sites (nos. of pitches)	Authorised Private sites
Babergh	0	0
Ipswich	1 site (41)	1 site (2)
Mid Suffolk	0	13 sites (69 pitches)
Suffolk Coastal	0	0
Waveney	0	1 site (20)
<b>Total</b>	1 site (41)	15 sites (91)

- In total there are approximately 91 pitches provided between these sites with 72 pitches currently occupied.
- The average household size was 2.9 persons, significantly larger than the average in the settled community.
- The average caravan to household ratio was 1.4 caravans per household.
- Survey responses suggested that there was a significant incidence of disability and ill-health, with nearly a third of people reporting some form of disability or long-term illness. When affected by poor health or disability the Gypsies and Travellers in this study appeared to experience multiple incidences.
- Almost all of the respondents thought that education is important for their children. However, only just under half of the respondents reported that their children had regular attendance at school. Irregular attendance was particularly acute for those families living in bricks and mortar accommodation and private authorised sites.

- The Gypsies and Travellers consulted, reported being involved in a wide range of jobs. Self-employment was a key feature here with building, groundwork, dealing, hawking, roofing and gardening frequently mentioned. A small number of respondents worked in non-traditional Gypsy/Traveller trades including healthcare, hairdressing and catering. As a result of aspirations for further/higher education there may be a greater tendency, over coming years, for Gypsy and Traveller children to enter more non-Traveller trades more similar to those of the settled community. However, largely because of the influence of family roles and responsibilities, traditional Gypsy and Traveller trades will remain an integral part of the community.
- Nearly half of those interviewed considered Suffolk, or areas within Suffolk, as their 'home'. Approximately a third of the sample had travelled in some way over the previous 12 month period. There was no seasonal consistency in the travelling patterns of those that had travelled in the last 12 months.

### **Gypsy and Traveller perspectives on accommodation**

- The vast majority of those interviewed thought that their site/accommodation was either OK, good or very good. Only 1 in 10 described their accommodation as poor or very poor. All of those we spoke to in bricks and mortar accommodation described their accommodation as OK, good or very good, no one described their accommodation as poor or very poor.
- Very few respondents expressed a desire to move from their accommodation within the next five years. It is clear that Gypsies and Travellers are afforded few accommodation options – any movement from sites is constrained by a perceived lack of space on other authorised sites. Generally speaking residents who have stable accommodation do not wish to return to travelling in the current supply climate. Bricks and mortar housing, in particular bungalows for older people, was seen as attractive to a number of respondents. However, at the same time, a poor perception of the council and relationship with the local authority meant that social housing was seen by many as a poor option for them.
- Around a third of people in bricks and mortar accommodation expected to live in their current accommodation indefinitely, with the same amount of people expecting to return, at some point in the next 5 years, to site accommodation. The remainder were unsure about their plans for the future.

- By far the most preferred form of accommodation was a private site owned by either themselves or their family, followed by the maintenance of a travelling way of life where people move from site to site after a set period of time. Although living in bricks and mortar was seen as a poor option for most Gypsies and Travellers, owner-occupier status was preferable to local authority or RSL accommodation.

### **Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments**

- Analysis of the records held by local authorities on unauthorised encampments showed a total of 55 encampments from August 2005-August 2006. The top two authorities which experience the highest levels of encampments were Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. Encampments tend to vary in size substantially from 2 to 55 caravans.
- A quarter of the households we spoke to on unauthorised encampments were actively looking for somewhere more stable and secure to live across the Study Area. Two-thirds were not looking to stay in the area. A number of households, who were on unauthorised encampments during the survey, wished to retain a travelling lifestyle across the Suffolk Study Area boundaries rather than live on a more residential site.
- According to the local authority officers, there appears to be a clear relationship between land ownership and duration of encampment. Encampments remained on private land longer than they did on public land.
- Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments were generally ambivalent to the area in which they were currently encamped; with only a small number describing the area of encampment in negative terms.
- There was diversity in responses on living conditions, with a number of households talking in very positive terms about their facilities, many of which they had made provision for themselves.
- According to the survey of local authorities there was 1 unauthorised development (Mid Suffolk) at the time of the assessment comprising of approximately 19 pitches. Respondents on the unauthorised development desired to stay on the site and, reportedly, had either neutral or positive relationships with the wider non-Traveller community in the area.

## Accommodation need and supply

5. Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Even though the supply of authorised accommodation has declined since 1994, the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Instead, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, with increases in unauthorised accommodation, innovative house dwelling arrangements (living in trailers in the grounds of houses), overcrowding on sites and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).

6. Given present trends, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and local policies, the supply of appropriate accommodation appears to be significantly less than the need identified. It is the conclusion of the project team that this suggests a requirement for more accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area. This need can be broken down by each district on a need where it is seen to arise basis as follows:

Table ii: Residential and transit accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller populations 2006-2011

Authority	Total residential need in pitches (1)	Supply of pitches (turnover) (2)	Total residential need (3) = (1) – (2)	Estimated transit pitch need (+/- 2) (4)	Total pitch need (3) + (4)
Babergh	1	Nil	1	10	11
Ipswich	26 – 28	25	1-3	10	11-13
Mid-Suffolk	41 - 43	Information not available	41-43	10	51-53
Suffolk Coastal	30-32	Nil	30-32	10	40-42
Waveney	1	Information not available	1	10	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>99-105</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>74-80</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>124-130</b>

Note: The overall assessed need for the Study Area was calculated as 98 – 103 and 73-78 residential pitches (see page 103 of the full report) and differs by 1-2 units because of rounding numbers up during the calculation for individual authorities.

7. Table iii provides the distribution of extra pitch provision as identified by the assessment across the Suffolk Study Area for the period 2011-2016.

Table iii: Residential accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller populations 2011-2016

Authority	Total residential need in pitches (1)	Supply of pitches (turnover) (2) <sup>1</sup>	Total residential need (3) = (1) – (2)
Babergh	Nil	Information not available	Nil
Ipswich	11	Information not available	11
Mid-Suffolk	14-15	Information not available	14-15
Suffolk Coastal	5	Information not available	5
Waveney	3	Information not available	3

<sup>1</sup> As a result of the potential changing pattern of provision over the 2006-2011 period, estimating the potential supply of pitches (based on pitch turnover) beyond this point (2011 onwards) is likely to present an inaccurate (under/over) assessment.

## **Recommendations and key issues**

8. The overarching recommendation resulting from this assessment is that the authorities across the Study Area engage pro-actively to meet the accommodation needs that have been identified as a result of this assessment.

9. In order to achieve this, this assessment has provided a wide range of recommendations, at a regional/county, general and local level, for the authorities to consider. An overview of these recommendations is given below:

### **Recommendations relating to communication, dialogue and engagement include:**

- Gypsies and Travellers should be fully involved and informed about accommodation changes and development occurring across the Study Area over the coming years;
- members of the 'settled community' need to be involved and included in any process of change and opportunities should be taken to raise awareness of some of the issues and dispel some of the myths about Gypsies and Travellers; and
- there is a need for effective communication and dialogue across districts and Counties to assist the development of joined-up and sustainable options for accommodation provision.

### **Recommendations relating to accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers include:**

- authorities should ensure that there is a variety in transit provision in order to cater for the variety of needs. This might range from formal transit sites, through to less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis, as well as temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year;
- in some cases it may be appropriate to develop larger pitches on residential sites to provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term friends and family of site residents. This should be done with close consultation of the site residents, as visitors to any residential accommodation can seriously impact upon the community equilibrium; and
- the authorities should develop one new transit site as a pilot scheme in the near future and monitor its usage and management in order to learn lessons for further provision.

### **Recommendations relating to developing accommodation include:**

- a need for those involved in site design (both residential and transit) and bricks and mortar design to approach this in a creative and innovative manner. Site developers should take a range of issues into consideration;
  - Location to local services and transport networks.
  - Pitch size.
  - Amenities.
  - Sheds.
  - Management.
  - Mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer etc.).
  - Utility of outside space (driveways, gardens etc.).
  - Homes for life principles.
  - Mobility and health issues.
  - Health and safety
  - Tenure mix
- Gypsies and Travellers should be involved in all stages of the design and development of accommodation;
- appropriate options need to be developed depending on the background of the Gypsy and Traveller population; for example, taking into account different ways of living between the different Gypsy and Traveller groups; and
- the development of permanent residential accommodation is a priority. Until this shortfall is addressed, it may be difficult to develop transit accommodation without them turning into permanent sites by default.

### **Recommendations relating to strategies, policies and systems include:**

- authorities should develop a standardised and centralised method of recording the number of unauthorised encampments and the needs of those households;
- authorities should formalise and standardise site waiting lists in order to be able to see fluctuations in need/demand and deal equitably with future demand. There also needs to be transparent allocation policies in order to avoid the perception of bias with regards to allocating a vacant pitch;
- authorities should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are recognised in all of their ethnic monitoring forms;
- the tenure accommodation aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers need to be understood and policies and practices should be developed to work with this;
- all racial harassment policies should explicitly recognise the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and all policies need to ensure they comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; and

- authorities should ensure that their bricks and mortar allocation policies do not unwittingly discriminate against Gypsies and Travellers wishing to access this form of accommodation.

**Recommendations relating to housing-related service issues include:**

- it is important each authority takes account of the strong family links that Gypsy and Traveller households have when developing accommodation in the future. A degree of detachment and familial isolation may occur if families are, in effect, forcibly dispersed; this may be particularly acute for vulnerable sections of the communities such as older people, people with disabilities and those with ill-health;
- care needs to be taken to ensure sites are accessible to transport links and local services. This does not mean they have to be in towns or at the side of major roads, but thought must be given to ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller residents are able to access local services and communities. The provision of accessible public transport might assist this; and
- Supporting People teams will need to be embedded into the strategic planning and delivery of services.

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## Glossary

The following terms are used in this report and the explanation below outlines the spirit in which these terms are applied.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Amenity block/Shed</b>	Building on a site where kitchen and bathroom facilities are located
<b>Authorised council site/Registered Social Landlord site</b>	An authorised site owned by either the council or a registered social landlord.
<b>Authorised private site</b>	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller)
<b>Bricks and mortar</b>	Permanent mainstream housing
<b>Doubling-up</b>	To share a single pitch on an authorised site
<b>Gaujo/Gorger</b>	Term used by mainly Romany (English) Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community
<b>Gypsy</b>	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Gypsies and Travellers
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b> (as used in this assessment)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Showmen, Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation.
<b>Mobile home/Chalet</b>	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling/or lorry
<b>Pitch/plot</b>	Area of land on a site/development. Can be varying sizes.
<b>Pulling-up</b>	To park a trailer/caravan
<b>Settled community</b>	Reference to non-travellers (those that live in houses)
<b>Stopping place</b>	Unauthorised locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for very short periods of time.
<b>Suppressed/Concealed household</b>	Potential 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
<b>Trailer</b>	Moveable caravan
<b>Transit site/pitch</b>	Purpose built site or pitch intended for short stays only.
<b>Unauthorised Development</b>	This refers to a caravan/trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission
<b>Unauthorised Encampment</b>	Stopping on private/public land without permission (e.g. at the side of the road)



## List of Acronyms

<b>CLG</b>	Communities and Local Government
<b>CRE</b>	Commission for Racial Equality
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document
<b>EERA</b>	East of England Regional Assembly
<b>GOEAST</b>	Government Office for the East of England
<b>GTAA</b>	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority
<b>ODPM</b>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
<b>RHB</b>	Regional Housing Board
<b>RHS</b>	Regional Housing Strategy
<b>RPB</b>	Regional Planning Body
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy
<b>SHUSU</b>	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
<b>TESS</b>	Traveller Education Support Service

**Note:** Over the last few years the main Governmental department largely responsible for Gypsy and Traveller related issues (in particular regarding housing & planning) has been subject to a certain degree of reform. It is understood that this can create difficulties in following the introduction of new legislation if the reader is unaware of such reform. As such this note aims to provide the reader with some brief information about these departmental changes.

Until 2001 the **Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)** was the responsible department for these issues. In 2001 this was then passed to the **Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)**. In 2002 the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)** took control of these issues (within which the Gypsy and Traveller Unit was founded) with this being replaced by the **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)** in 2006.



# 1. OVERVIEW

**1.1.** This research was commissioned by five authorities in Suffolk County (*Mid Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waveney District Council and Ipswich Borough Council*<sup>2</sup>) in June 2006. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford with research support from members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a steering group composed of officers from the commissioning authorities.

## The study brief

**1.2.** Enshrined within the Caravan Sites Act 1968 was a duty upon local authorities to provide sites to Gypsies and Travellers residing in their boroughs. As a result of the measures contained within the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 this duty was removed. Over subsequent years, coupled with increased migration and continued household formation, this has meant that the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to live/stop far outweigh the number of authorised pitches available. In addition to the lack of available authorised pitches, Gypsies and Travellers have also found gaining planning permission a major obstacle to providing a site for themselves and their families. Those Gypsies and Travellers who can afford to buy land are frequently in breach of planning laws when they attempt to develop that land for residential use. Subsequently, they find themselves subject to enforcement action and are often evicted, frequently resorting to the use of further unauthorised land/accommodation.

**1.3.** Under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Recent legislation (Housing Act 2004; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and guidance (Circular 01/2006) from the government indicates a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of these long standing issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.

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<sup>2</sup> For ease these are referred to only by the borough or district name throughout this document.

**1.4.** Following the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their local and sub-regional housing strategies. In terms of sub-regional housing strategies, all authorities except Waveney are a part of The Greater Haven Gateway sub-regional housing strategy.<sup>3</sup> Waveney is part of the Great Yarmouth & Waveney sub-regional housing strategy.<sup>4</sup> These sub-regional housing strategies will feed into the overarching Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) for the East of England.

**1.5.** Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level the evidence collected and analysis produced has a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), in the East of England Plan. The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAAs conducted and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.

**1.6.** Each DPD is subject to examination in public and one of the tests of soundness will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence: data received from GTAAAs are fundamental in providing such an evidence base for the RHSs and RSSs.

**1.7.** The Examination in Public of the East of England Plan concluded that a Single Issue Review of the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers was required. As a result district councils across the region need to complete Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) by early 2007 and the vast majority of GTAAAs, across the East of England Region, have now been completed.

**1.8.** In order to comply with the CLGs increasing emphasis on taking regional strategic approaches and also recognising the diverse and heterogeneous characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller populations, it is considered good practice for several authorities to commission such work jointly. Thus, in terms of the Suffolk authorities, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath took part in the Cambridgeshire GTAA, and this Suffolk study is the final step in this initial process towards generating a more robust regional and local understanding of the current provision, gaps and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across Suffolk.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4DF6AE82-D4DE-46D9-BB5E-BC1DA2466679/0/SubRegionalHousingStrategy20062010.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/sub\\_regional\\_strategy.03.06.pdf](http://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/sub_regional_strategy.03.06.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> As well as residential accommodation this study seeks to additionally explore the need for transit pitch provision in the Study Area in order to assist the RPB in developing a strategic view of accommodation need.

**1.9.** The primary aims of the study were to:

1. ascertain the number of Gypsy and Traveller households currently with an accommodation need and projections over the following 10 year period;
2. assess the needs and aspirations of all the travelling communities for accommodation in the respective areas, regardless of form or tenure;
3. inform future reviews and development of a range of policies, plans and strategies; and
4. inform the emerging Local Development Frameworks (LDF) and the Single Issue Review of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs.

**1.10.** The objectives of the study were to provide information on:

- suitability of existing sites with respect to location;
- current tenure types and tenure preferences for caravan dwelling/movement between housing and caravans;
- attitudes to current site provision (socially rented and private provision); presence on unauthorised encampments;
- implications of planning refusals on unauthorised developments;
- migration patterns and transient settlement patterns;
- household composition and demography, including patterns of extended family living;
- health, education and other social requirements which may influence the location and type of provision;
- measures used by housing services (homelessness, housing advice and local authority housing registers) regarding their accessibility and appropriateness for Gypsies and Travellers;
- the need for additional or expanded housing support services;
- strategies for involving Gypsies and Travellers in the development and management of all accommodation types;
- whether there is need for additional residential and transit sites within the districts/boroughs; and
- the size, type and preferred location for any additional provision required beyond that identified in existing development plans.

## **Outline of the report**

**1.11.** Chapter 2 sets the historical and contemporary policy and legislative context for the study. This draws particularly upon key issues in housing and planning legislation and policy. Chapter 3 provides an introduction to this assessment and presents details of the research methods and methodological process involved. Details of the responses to the surveys are discussed as well as some of the dilemmas faced by the researchers.

**1.12.** Chapter 4 consists of 3 inter-related sub-sections. Section I provides some detailed analysis of the bi-annual count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. This analysis looks at the trends of caravan numbers over time and their distribution across the Suffolk Study Area. Section II takes an in-depth examination as to the extent of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision and the form that this provision takes across the Study Area. Section III provides an examination of the findings from the survey with Gypsies and Travellers.

**1.13.** Chapter 5 summarises the main research findings and brings together research material on the supply of and need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation across the Study Area. This section comments on the type, level and broad location of the accommodation needed and discusses some of the key issues arising in attempts to meet this need.

**1.14.** Finally, Chapter 6 sets out some recommendations based on the research, for future work on site provision, housing policy and other policy areas.

## 2. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

**2.1.** The historical background and the complexity surrounding the identities and cultures of Gypsies and Travellers has been explored by a wide and extensive literature base that has sought to investigate the complex relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the social, historical and political fabric in which they live. As such, any attempt to review this literature is liable to be problematic as, in the face of established knowledge, there is a risk of over-simplifying these many complex issues and it is not the intention of this report to revisit these issues in great depth.<sup>6</sup> However, it is important to review the policy landscape, as past and existing legislation has a significant bearing on the current context in which Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues need to be understood at both a national and a more local level. This section presents a summary of some of the main issues.

**2.2.** For the most part Gypsies and Travellers are affected by legislation in much the same way as the non-travelling communities. However, it is the policy areas of housing and planning that have particular implications for Gypsies and Travellers. Over the last 12 months, as a result of the new legislation and governmental impetus, a plethora of new documents have been published which directly affect policies towards Gypsies and Travellers:

- ODPM Circular 1/2006, “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”;
- ODPM Gypsy and Traveller Unit, 2006, “Local Authorities and Gypsies & Travellers – Guide to responsibilities and powers”;
- ODPM Gypsy and Traveller Unit, 2006, “Guide to Effective Use of Enforcement Powers – Part 1: Unauthorised Encampments”;
- ODPM Gypsy and Traveller Unit, 2006, “Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Draft Practice Guidance”;
- ODPM proposed definition of the term ‘gypsies and travellers’ for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004 to apply in the context of regulations issued under sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004;
- CLG Definition of the term ‘gypsies and travellers’ for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004: Final Regulatory Impact Assessment;
- Commission for Racial Equality, 2006, “Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers”;
- Local Government Association, 2006, “Report of the LGA Gypsy and Traveller Task Group”.

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<sup>6</sup> Clark, C. & Greenfields, M. (2006) *‘Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain’*. University of Hertfordshire Press, gives an accessible overview of some of the key contemporary issues.

## Definitions of Gypsies and Travellers

**2.3.** Defining Gypsies and Travellers is not straightforward. Different definitions have been used for different purposes based, for example, on ethnicity and self-ascription. In England there are three broad groupings of Gypsies and Travellers comprising; traditional English (Romany) Gypsies estimated to be around 63,000 throughout Britain, traditional Irish Travellers estimated to be around 19,000 in Britain and New Travellers for whom there is little statistical information. There are also smaller numbers of Welsh Gypsies and Scottish Travellers and a small but increasing number of Roma who have arrived over the years from Central and Eastern Europe mostly as refugees and asylum seekers but others more recently as a result of EU enlargement, most of whom, however, do not appear to be seeking accommodation on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

**2.4.** Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Gypsy and Traveller groups as defined by their ethnicity or national status (Welsh Gypsies and Scottish Travellers) are recognised as distinct minority ethnic groups, and offered the protection of Race Relations legislation. New Travellers currently fall outside this definition unless they are recognised as being members of other ethnic groups.

**2.5.** Many of these groups have been in England for a number of centuries with Romany Gypsies first being recorded around the sixteenth century. Irish Travellers are thought to have come to England during the 1800s (in response to the potato famine) with their numbers increasing, relatively recently, from the 1960s onwards. New Travellers is a label applied to an extremely diverse population and their reasons for travelling encompassing a range of economic, environmental, social and personal reasons. Their numbers have increased over time, as many New Travellers have built up a tradition of travelling supported by socialisation, with a generation of children being raised within this way of life.

**2.6.** In practice there are variable definitions of the collective term 'Gypsies and Travellers' applied for different legislative purposes in relation to housing and planning. The first legislative definition of 'Gipsies' [sic] was inserted into the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and stated that "gipsies [sic] are persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, although not including travelling showmen or circus people".<sup>7</sup> This definition has been subject to amendments firstly to specify that "gipsies [sic] travel for the purposes of work" and then after consultation by the ODPM in recognition of the fact that many Gypsies and Travellers stop travelling for periods of time or permanently. This amended definition became the planning definition of who constituted a 'Gypsy' or a 'Traveller'. Thus, the planning definition refers to:

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<sup>7</sup> ODPM (2006) *Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004*. Consultation Paper, February. London:HMSO.

*“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds 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”. (ODPM Circular 01/2006, para 15).*

**2.7.** This particular definition ‘seeks to capture those with specific land use requirements arising from their current or past nomadic way of life’ (ODPM, 2006, p.9). This excludes ethnicity as a component largely because some Gypsies and ethnic Travellers have no personal history of travelling and, therefore, no requirements under this legislation, while other non-ethnic travelling population groups (for example New Travellers) may have.

**2.8.** Travelling Showpeople (more commonly referred to as Showmen) tend to be defined by their business/occupation in relation to Travelling shows, fairs and festivals. Although not a distinct ‘ethnic’ group, many generations of families and clans have been involved in such work. However, in recent years with the decline in the market for the fair the community has experienced some changes. Showpeople sites are traditionally known as ‘winter quarters’, as the nature of employment often requires lengthy and sustained periods of absence. However, as the employment opportunities for Showpeople are changing there is a need for permanent occupation by some family members for security, social, economic and educational reasons. Many established winter and permanent quarters have been lost in recent years to redevelopment schemes causing other sites to become overcrowded and increasing the number of unauthorised pitches/sites.

**2.9.** Travelling Showpeople are treated separately in planning guidance and CLG has recently (January 2007) produced a consultation document seeking to explore potential revisions to planning guidance in respect of Travelling Showpeople. The proposed definition for the revised guidance suggests that, “travelling showpeople” means:

*“Members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such). They include 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 excluding gypsies and travellers.”*

**2.10.** On the other hand, the definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004, which has recently been finalised defines ‘Gypsies and Travellers as:

*“(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)."*

**2.11.** This definition is aimed to be used alongside the planning definition but it offers a broader more inclusive base devised with a certain degree of pragmatism in order to ensure that local authorities take steps to capture all nomadic groups whose accommodation needs must be assessed, inclusive of New Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

**2.12.** In terms of this assessment, when the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is used, this will refer to the broader Housing Act 2004 definition.

## **Land use, planning and site provision legislation**

**2.13.** The obligation for local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies 'residing in or resorting to their areas' was introduced in part 2 of the Caravan Sites Act 1968. Authorities were left to determine what sites were to be provided and to acquire the necessary land to meet this need. They were, however, only required to provide for 15 caravans to meet this obligation and at the same time the Act also gave local authorities the power to designate certain areas 'no-go' for Gypsies and Travellers. This practice was heavily criticised for criminalising Gypsies and Travellers as the enhanced trespass powers applied only to members of these communities.

**2.14.** The obligation on local authorities in England and Wales to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers ceased in January 1994 with the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. The introduction of this Act was seen by many as a response to increasing incidences of rural gatherings and trespass linked to the rave culture of the early 1990s; the participants of which were not the archetypal Gypsy or Traveller. Under this Act, local authorities, as landowners, were provided with civil powers to recover land from trespassers, including unauthorised campers. Local authorities could provide itinerant groups with directions to leave the land and refusal to comply was an offence. Similarly, the police were also given powers to direct people to leave land they were trespassing upon.

**2.15.** In addition, the Act repealed part 2 of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and also repealed section 70 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, which gave powers to central government to meet the capital costs of the development of sites. In place of this, Gypsies and Travellers were encouraged to buy their own land to seek planning permission for their own accommodation. This was intended to provide Gypsies and Travellers with a

'level playing field' for planning applications. The accompanying circular (DoE 1/94) made it clear that local authorities were expected to retain and maintain existing sites and added that local authorities could still use section 24 of the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act to provide new sites where needed. However, in practice the removal of duties to provide sites brought about a halt to the expansion of site provision for Gypsies and Travellers. A DoE planning circular (1/94) highlighted that local authorities were advised to give practical help to Gypsies and Travellers wishing to acquire their own land for development. This circular also encouraged local authorities to assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs and to identify appropriate locations for sites in their development plans. The shift in responsibility for accommodation provision from the local authority to the Gypsy and Traveller communities themselves was ultimately shown to have been unsuccessful as many local authorities failed to identify appropriate sites and/or to grant planning permission. However, Circular 1/94 proved ineffective as the majority of planning applications from Gypsies and Travellers were, and continue to be, unsuccessful.

**2.16.** The DoE Circular 1/94 was replaced in February 2006 by ODPM Circular 1/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites:

*"Since the issue of Circular 1/94 and the repeal of local authorities' duty to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites there have been more applications for site, but this has not resulted in the necessary increase in provision" (ODPM Circular 1/06, p.4).*

**2.17.** The new Circular 01/06 has a number of key aims including:

- ensuring that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision;
- reducing the number of unauthorised encampments;
- increasing the number of sites and addressing under-provision over the next 3-5 years;
- the protection of the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers;
- underlining the importance of assessing accommodation need at different geographical scales;
- the promotion of private site provision; and
- avoiding Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs when there is no alternative accommodation.

**2.18.** Circular 01/06 outlines the joined-up process that must be in place between the development of RSSs, RHSs, and DPDs. It goes on to say that

“planning policies that rule out, or place undue constraints on the development of [G]ypsy and [T]raveller sites should not be included in RSSs or DPDs” (p.9). The Circular closes with an appendix which includes the provision of guidance for both local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers in the planning application process. This appendix also details examples of unacceptable reasons for refusing planning applications.

**2.19.** As previously discussed, each DPD is subject to examination in public and one of the tests of soundness will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence. Indeed, obtaining robust and reliable data is a key theme linking the various recent publications about Gypsies and Travellers. As such Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) are fundamental in providing such an evidence base for the RHSs and RSSs.

## **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments**

**2.20.** Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the then ODPM in February 2006. Specialised guidance and assessments are required as many local authority housing needs assessments were previously failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. There are a number of components to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. These components rely upon an analysis of existing data sources, the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders and the analysis of the living conditions and views of Gypsies and Travellers

**2.21.** The lack of robust and reliable data on the Gypsy and Traveller population is a major barrier to developing a coherent understanding of accommodation needs. The 2001 Census did not include Gypsies and Travellers as distinct ethnic groups (the planned 2011 Census will include the categories of Irish Traveller and Romany Gypsy) and many other agencies do not collect reliable data on numbers. Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) do collect information on the community but this relates only to families with children between the years 0-19 that TESS are aware of. As a result the main source of systematically collected information available is the twice-yearly Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count which has been in operation since 1979. This is co-ordinated by CLG in England and carried out by each local authority.

**2.22.** The methodological reliability of the count has been subject to criticism for being both inconsistent and inaccurate. In addition, endeavours to achieve a reliable picture of the size and make-up of the Gypsy and Traveller population are further complicated by a number of other factors. Firstly, there are large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar accommodation; the absence of ethnic coding in housing allocations and the reported reluctance of Gypsy and Traveller community members to reveal their background for fear of harassment, contributes further to the difficulties of establishing accurate estimations of the population. Secondly, as the Caravan Count is collated on two separate days out of the year the data provided remains a snapshot of the travelling population on these designated

days. Thus it becomes very difficult to put an accurate figure on numbers residing on unauthorised encampments due to their mobility levels. In addition, the consistency of classifying of what is deemed 'caravans' has led to certain inconsistencies between authorities and time-periods as has whether New Traveller 'caravans' have been counted<sup>8</sup>. Finally, it is caravans being counted not households. Therefore, the official count tells us little about the households within the caravans and how households have changed over time.

**2.23.** As a result it is currently virtually impossible to reliably establish the size of the total population or their living arrangements in any definitive way. This being the case, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments differ in a number of ways from general Housing Needs Assessments.

**2.24.** GTAAs need to integrate as many data sources as is possible to achieve a relatively reliable picture of the community in question. Importantly, and crucially, 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".<sup>9</sup>

**2.25.** In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance outlines distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing. For caravan dwelling households need may take the form of those households:

- who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside;
- whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but 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.

**2.26.** In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households:

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

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<sup>8</sup> This has been a particular issue in Suffolk Coastal

<sup>9</sup>ODPM (2006) *Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004*. Consultation Paper, February. London:HMSO.

- those that contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and who are unable to access suitable or appropriate accommodation.

**2.27.** It has become increasingly important, in order to produce options for accommodation provision that are sustainable, to consider the assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within a whole-world context. In terms of a whole-world context this means highlighting the inter-related nature of housing and accommodation provision with issues such as health, education, employment, training, social care and leisure. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments have presented ideal opportunities to explore how these issues impact upon one another. Thus ensuring that overarching concerns of housing and planning take on board a whole range of important factors but also that the knowledge base around these relatively under-researched communities is increased.

**2.28.** The section that follows moves more specifically into providing a detailed outline of the methodological process this assessment adopted.

### **3. THE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

**3.1.** Although operating within the recent guidelines for conducting assessments of accommodation need with members of Gypsy and Traveller communities, the methodology for this needs assessment developed and grew as the research team responded to the needs of the research commissioners, emerging good practice and the implications that working with Gypsies and Travellers across Suffolk had on the research process.

**3.2.** At an 'official' authority level, until the assessment commenced, the level of evidenced based knowledge around the needs of Gypsies and Travellers is such that for the most part anecdotal information appeared to prevail.<sup>10</sup> Although it is recognised that some authorities and officials have embedded an approach to Gypsy and Traveller issues within their various strategies, for the most part working practices tend to be ad hoc or developed in response to a particular crisis or concern.

**3.3.** At the same time Gypsies and Travellers are a relatively under-researched group and, in the main, unfamiliar with assessments and suspicious of bureaucracy. This, coupled with low literacy levels and unfamiliarity with the process of assessing accommodation related needs, precipitated the development of a methodology that would not only provide the authorities with the information they required but also 'fit' into the everyday life of the Gypsy or Traveller concerned.

**3.4.** Therefore, the approach adopted evolved out of consultation with key stakeholders including Traveller Education Support Service, local authority officers and Gypsies and Travellers themselves. Due to the scope and complexity of the study objectives, the research was undertaken in 3 distinct stages.

#### **Stage 1: Secondary information review and scoping exercise**

**3.5.** This first stage comprised a review of the available literature and secondary sources obtained from government (central and local), regional, community and academic bodies on Gypsies and Travellers. This provided an historical, social and political context to the situation of Gypsies and Travellers in Suffolk and across the UK. This first stage comprised the collection, review and synthesis of:

- the bi-annual Caravan Count;
- information from Supporting People teams;
- Traveller Education Support Service (TESS); and,
- local, regional and national practice on Gypsy and Traveller issues.

**3.6.** We also sought to collect vital information from housing and planning officers via an extensive self-completion questionnaire aimed at each

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<sup>10</sup> Although we acknowledge the work of the Ormiston Children and Families Trust <http://www.ormiston.org/opus3.html#travellers>

authority. The questionnaire was devised to collect comprehensive information from local authorities in a structured way and joint-working between departments was required in order to provide a completed questionnaire. Each questionnaire sought to achieve information about local policies towards Gypsies and Travellers, current accommodation provision and needs in terms of:

- council sites and their management;
- planning and private site provision (authorised and unauthorised);
- unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Travellers;
- Gypsies and Travellers and social housing;
- other accommodation; and
- Travelling Showpeople.

**3.7.** Two versions of the questionnaire were developed. Version A was sent to authorities thought not to have a council site (from information from the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Counts). Version B went to authorities with a council site (Ipswich) and asked much more information about the nature of the site and its management.

**3.8.** The questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all five local authorities across the Study Area; all replied.

## **Stage 2: Consultation with service providers and other stakeholders**

**3.9.** The second stage involved gathering the views of various service providers and other stakeholders and drew on their experience and perceptions of what the issues were for Gypsies and Travellers. Four thematic focus groups were undertaken with a range of individuals:

- Housing and Planning (10 attendees).
- Education, Health and Welfare (5 attendees).
- Equality and Enforcement (5 attendees).
- Community and Governance (3 Elected members).

**3.10.** In addition, we received 32 replies to an open-ended pro-forma which was sent out to all Parish Councils across the Suffolk Study Area. In general terms, the pro-forma and focus groups sought to explore:

- the particular experiences that certain professionals have in relation to the accommodation and related needs of Gypsies and Travellers across Suffolk;
- the current working practices of different professionals in relation to Gypsies and Travellers across Suffolk ; and
- stakeholder perspectives on what the priority needs are for Gypsies and Travellers across Suffolk based upon the theme of each focus group.

**3.11.** We also received a brief report into some of the issues of concern to a member of the settled community in one of the local authority areas.<sup>11</sup>

### **Stage 3: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area**

**3.12.** Attracting willing participants across the diversity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to engage in face-to-face interviews about their experiences of accommodation needs, preferences and aspirations posed a number of challenges for the research team. We were aware of the potential problems that could occur if trust in the project was not generated during the early stages. As a result, members of the research team began the sustained process of building relationships with key stakeholder professionals and Gypsies and Travellers themselves throughout the five Suffolk areas. In addition, we fostered links with various Gypsies and Travellers throughout the County and responded to enquires made on local internet chat forums in Suffolk. As well as easing access to potential participants, this also fulfilled a vital function of negotiating the most appropriate and effective way of involving participants in the research process.

**3.13.** Of crucial importance to opening up as many routes as possible to engage with Gypsies and Travellers in Suffolk was the involvement of Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers. We were successful in identifying and recruiting three individuals from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds from across the Study Area. In order to become Community Interviewers for this study each individual was required to have a good level of literacy, an understanding of the myriad of issues facing Gypsies and Travellers and a willingness to learn research skills. Each interviewer was required to undergo an intensive training course on research skills applicable to this particular study and provided with support from the core research team members during their interviewing activity. The community interviewing approach, although not unproblematic, aided the research process enormously. We found we were able to access a range of people that would otherwise not have been included in the assessment, such as hidden members of the community (older people or people living in bricks and mortar housing) and those people who were uncomfortable talking to non-Travellers. We did find, however, that certain interviewees would be more comfortable talking to non-Travellers (due to

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<sup>11</sup> This was submitted voluntarily by this individual.

'ethnic', community or familial tensions or for instance where someone had abandoned the travelling way of life) at which point members of the core research team were on hand to interview.

**3.14.** Key to the achievement of this data was the need for the research team to be flexible as the interviews were rarely conducted on time or in familiar research environments.<sup>12</sup> The selection of interviewees was in part driven by their availability and in part by whom the research team had secured access to. Each participant was verbally informed as to the aims and scope of the research project and the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity within the confines of this project were explained as fully as possible.

**3.15.** Separate questionnaires were produced for each accommodation type (council site, authorised private site, unauthorised development, unauthorised encampment and bricks and mortar) in order to tailor the particular interview to each participant and their circumstance as closely as possible. Questions were a mixture of tick-box answers and open-ended questions. This mixed approach helped enormously in order to gain quantifiable information but also allowed for contextualisation and qualification by the more narrative responses. Each survey contained the following sections:

- current accommodation/site/encampment;
- experience of travelling;
- housing and site experiences;
- household details; and
- future accommodation preferences/aspirations.

**3.16.** The sampling technique used was a purposive snowballing method rather than a purely random sample (which was not feasible given the lack of accurate information concerning the size and location of the community), facilitated by the involvement of key gatekeepers to the Gypsy and Traveller community. Attempts were made to interview all 'known' Gypsy and Traveller sites; some households declined participation or were unable to be interviewed for various reasons.

### **The interview sample**

**3.17.** A total of 128 Gypsy and Traveller households were involved in the interviews within the boundaries of the authorities comprising the Suffolk Study Area. It is thought that the Study Area is home to at least 203 households; the study sample therefore comprises a maximum of 63% of the total Gypsy and Traveller population. Within the interview sample, the research team endeavoured at all times to reflect 'known' locally held knowledge about the broad composition of the Gypsy and Travelling communities. Clearly the ability to do this is severely hampered by the lack of definitive knowledge about the size and make-up of the local Gypsies and Traveller community which makes a proportional and random quota sampling

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<sup>12</sup> It was not uncommon to conduct interviews in stationary cars, walking, outside etc.

approach impossible. However, efforts were made to incorporate both male and female interviewees, a range of Gypsy and Traveller groups, accommodation situations and, where possible, ensure an appropriate geographical spread across the local authority areas. This has been achieved to a certain extent. However, because of the nature of the communities, the lack of baseline knowledge about the communities and time constraints, the study called for an element of pragmatism in identifying and accessing participants and this means that there may be some gaps. The following tables outline the broad composition of the sample. Table 1 presents a breakdown of the interview sample by local authority area.

Table 1: Location of interviews by local authority

<b>Authority</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Babergh	1	1
Ipswich	22	17
Mid Suffolk	71	55
Suffolk Coastal	18	14
Waveney	16	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Accommodation type**

**3.18.** The research team was broadly successful in reflecting the ‘known’ accommodation types occupied by Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area into the interview sample. Gypsies and Travellers accommodated on private authorised sites formed the largest group in the sample (34%), followed by Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments (households staying on land not owned by the Gypsy/Traveller) (23%). Those households currently living on the unauthorised development (land owned by the Gypsy/Traveller household with no planning permission) consisted of 19% of the total sample.<sup>13</sup> Although the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar housing is unknown (but estimated to be large),<sup>14</sup> driven by the general lack of information about this group, we attempted to ensure we had representation within the sample from this group. We managed to complete 23 interviews with households currently living in bricks and mortar housing (18%). We also managed to obtain 8 interviews with households on the council site in Ipswich (6%).

<sup>13</sup> We believe we obtained an 100% census on this site, including those households who were currently doubled-up.

<sup>14</sup> Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*. ODPM. London.

Table 2: Accommodation type of interview sample

Accommodation Type	No.	%
Private authorised site	43*	34
Unauthorised encampment	29	23
Unauthorised development	25	19
Bricks and mortar housing	23	18
Council Site	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

\* N.B - includes 2 Showmen households

**3.19.** For illustrative purposes, Table 3 below presents a breakdown by local authority as to the type of accommodation that the interviewees were drawn from. Due to the lack of knowledge about their circumstances, of particular interest to certain authorities, will be the findings from interviews drawn from both bricks and mortar housing and unauthorised encampments within their district boundaries.

Table 3: Accommodation type of interview sample by local authority area

Local Authority	Accommodation Type					Total
	Bricks & mortar	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Council site	Private site	
Babergh	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ipswich	3	6	0	8	5	22
Mid Suffolk	13	10	25	0	23	71
Suffolk Coastal	4	13	0	0	1	18
Waveney	2	0	0	0	14	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>128</b>

### Gypsy and Traveller groups

**3.20.** Every effort has been made to ensure an appropriate spread across the different groups falling within the broad definition of Gypsies and Travellers so it is reflective of the composition of the five authorities across Suffolk. Thus, Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers and Showpeople are all represented, to greater or lesser extents, within the interview sample. The various Gypsy and Traveller groups involved in the assessment are shown in Table 4. The largest single group were from the Romany/Gypsy (English) community (85%), followed by much smaller numbers of other travelling groups; New Travellers (4%)<sup>15</sup>, Irish Travellers (2%), Showpeople (1.5%)<sup>16</sup>, Scottish Gypsy/Traveller (1.5%) and Welsh Gypsies/Travellers (1%). No other Gypsy and Travelling groups took part. A total of six respondents (5%) declined to disclose their ethnicity.

<sup>15</sup> Very few New Travellers chose to participate in the interviews as part of the assessment. It is therefore very difficult to draw generalised findings out from the responses we received. However, as there is significant presence of New Travellers in parts of the Study Area (in particular Suffolk Coastal) this issue is discussed in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>16</sup> A small number of additional Showpeople who were approached declined participation in the assessment.

Table 4: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

<b>Gypsy and Traveller groups</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Romany/Gypsy (English)	109	85
No answer	6	5
New Traveller	5	4
Irish Traveller	3	2
Showpeople	2	1.5
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	2	1.5
Welsh Gypsy/Traveller	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Consultation event**

**3.21.** In order to present the findings of the assessment to the communities within the Study Area a consultation event was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2007; details of this can be found in Appendix 4.



## **4. GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN THE SUFFOLK STUDY AREA: THE CURRENT PICTURE**

**4.1.** As the previous chapter aimed to demonstrate, the collation of data to provide evidence in the assessment of accommodation needs across the Suffolk Study Area has entailed a systematic process; as such the analysis of this data is equally systematic, as reflected in this report and our commentary that follows. More specifically, our analysis is divided into the following three independent, but inter-related, parts. Section I consists of an historical and contextual analysis of existing data sources held about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers utilising different forms of accommodation. Section II presents an overview as to the current nature of accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers, both public and private, and issues relating to the unauthorised use of land offered by key stakeholders, in particular local authority officers. Finally, section III sets out the key issues and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers generated during our survey of Gypsies and Traveller households.

### **Section I: The size, trends and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population**

**4.2.** This section draws together information from existing data sources in order to present what is already known about Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area. In particular this section presents information on the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population and the geographical distribution of this population.

#### **The Caravan Count across the Suffolk Study Area**

**4.3.** The Caravan Count is far from perfect but, at present, remains the only official source of information on the size and distribution of a population that remains relatively unknown. The Count needs to be treated with caution, as highlighted earlier, but when tempered by locally held knowledge it can be extremely useful as a broad guide. Furthermore, it provides a vital starting point in the attempts of local authorities to ascertain levels of need given the general absence of increased provision since 1994.

**4.4.** Gypsies and Travellers have long featured in the population across Suffolk. As with many areas across the United Kingdom, the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers within Suffolk has been subject to change. It is unclear, however, how much of this has to do with traditions of nomadism, the search for work and employment and/or the effects of being moved on from settling on unauthorised land.

**4.5.** According to the most recently available Caravan Count data there was a reported total of 325 caravans based across the Study Area. The returns for the last five Caravan Counts across the five Study Areas for Suffolk are presented in Table 5 below. What stands out from Table 5 is the sheer variation in numbers of caravans across the five local authority areas. Mid-

Suffolk (126) and Ipswich (80) record the largest number of caravans in their boroughs followed by Suffolk Coastal recording 78 caravans, Waveney (38), with Babergh recording only 3 caravans. Just one local authority (Ipswich) has caravans on socially rented provision, while Mid-Suffolk and Waveney have significant numbers of caravans on private site provision within their boroughs.

Table 5: CLG Caravan Count results for the Suffolk Study Area by local authority between July 2004 and July 2006

	Count	Caravans on Authorised Socially Rented Sites	Caravans on Authorised Private Sites	Caravans on Unauthorised Developments	Caravans on Unauthorised Encampments	Total Caravans
<b>Total for the Suffolk Study Area</b>	<b>Jul 2006</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>325</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>265</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>272</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>255</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>151</b>
Babergh	<b>Jul 2006</b>	0	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	0	0	0	2	<b>2</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Ipswich	<b>Jul 2006</b>	78	2	0	0	<b>80</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	85	2	0	0	<b>87</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	73	2	0	0	<b>75</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	70	0	0	0	<b>70</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	58	2	0	0	<b>60</b>
Mid Suffolk	<b>Jul 2006</b>	0	78	38	10	<b>126</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	0	72	38	3	<b>113</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	0	72	32	0	<b>104</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	0	72	24	0	<b>96</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	0	50	0	0	<b>50</b>
Suffolk Coastal <sup>17</sup>	<b>Jul 2006</b>	0	0	0	78	<b>78</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	0	0	0	30	<b>30</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	0	0	0	50*	<b>50*</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	0	0	0	52	<b>52</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Waveney	<b>Jul 2006</b>	0	30	0	8	<b>38</b>
	<b>Jan 2006</b>	0	33	0	0	<b>33</b>
	<b>Jul 2005</b>	26	0	0	15	<b>41</b>
	<b>Jan 2005</b>	30	0	2	4	<b>36</b>
	<b>Jul 2004</b>	26	0	0	15	<b>41</b>

\* Estimated figures

<sup>17</sup> These figures are inclusive of New Traveller caravans from data recorded by the Caravan Count returning officer responsible. The CLG published Caravan Count figures did not include New Traveller caravan numbers.

4.6. To provide a more historical dimension to these figures Table 6 summarises caravan numbers by type of site for January and July 1994-2006.<sup>18</sup>

Table 6: Suffolk Study Area summary of caravan numbers

Type of site	January			July		
	1994	2006	% change	1994	2006	% change
Council	66	85	+29	92	78	-15
Private	65	107	+65	62	110	+77
Unauthorised	44	73	+66	16	137	+756
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>+51</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>+91</b>

4.7. Table 6 demonstrates that overall caravan numbers have increased between 1994 and 2006. The rate of increase in figures depends largely upon whether the January or July figures are used. The January to January increase is 51% with the July to July increase being 91%.

4.8. The increase reflects a general increase in caravan numbers in most accommodation types over the two periods. However, the figures show that:

- The increase in caravans on council sites has been the smallest of all types of site. This may be expected if sites remain with the same occupancy levels, no expansion has taken place and no doubling-up has occurred;
- The numbers of caravans on private sites has increased by over two-thirds. This could be accounted for by a change in the management of the Kessingland site, which changed to private management during the period. It may also reflect an increase in doubling up; and
- The number of caravans on unauthorised sites (representing both unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments) have increased both over the winter period, by 66%, but increased massively over the summer period by 756%. A particular reason for this has been the recent (January 2005) counting of New Traveller caravan numbers by the authorities. In addition, the increase also reflects either an unusually low number of unauthorised caravans during the July 1994 count, or the increasing numbers of unauthorised development and encampments across the Suffolk area during summer 2006.

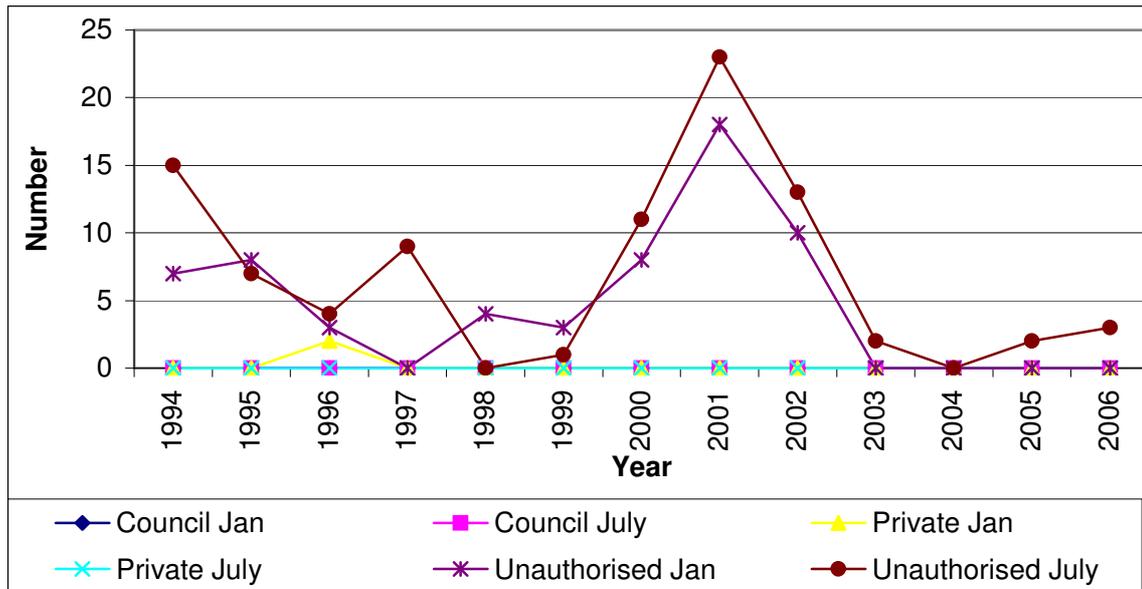
4.9. The following charts illustrate changes in caravan numbers in each authority and type of site over time in both the January and July count. As a general rule of thumb the winter (January) figures should reflect 'base' population better than the summer ones which tend to show an increase in

<sup>18</sup> 1994 is used as an historical benchmark as a result of the impact that the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act had on the travelling patterns and settlement of members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

unauthorised encampments (i.e. visitors to the area). The raw data for these charts can be found in Appendix 1.

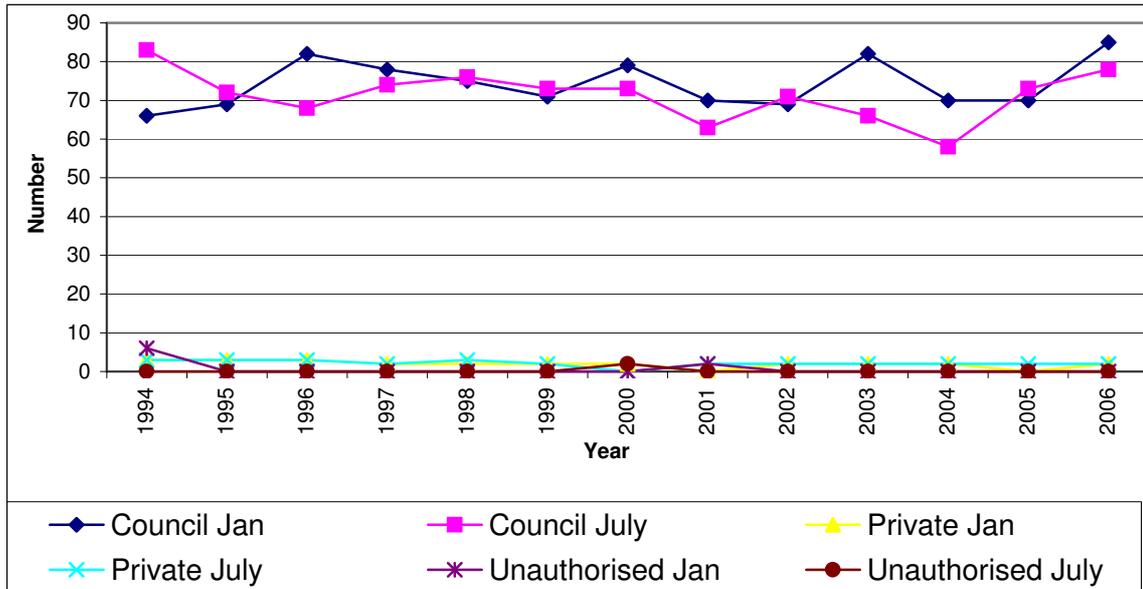
**4.10** Figure 1 shows the numbers of caravans in Babergh by type of site and demonstrates an almost non-existent presence of authorised caravans since 1997 but displays a previous trend of large numbers of caravans on unauthorised sites which almost vanished in 2003 but has recently begun to increase during the summer count.

Figure 1: Babergh: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



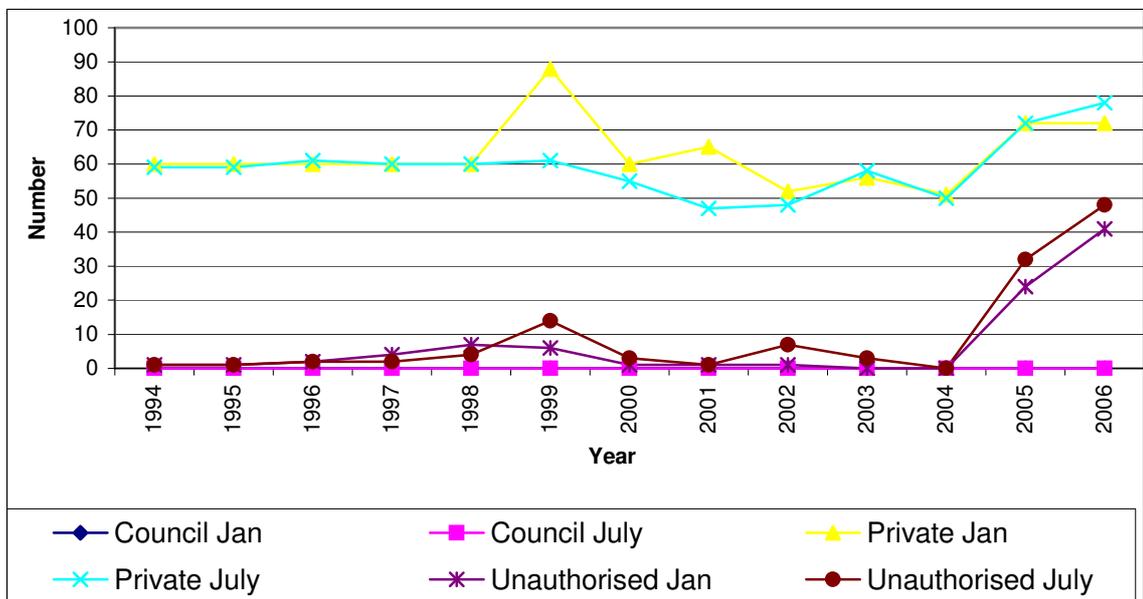
**4.11.** Figure 2 shows the numbers of caravans in Ipswich by type of site, and shows that council provision is by far the main source of provision with negligible numbers of caravans on private or unauthorised land. The number of caravans on council sites has fluctuated over the years, albeit within fairly narrow bounds, with generally less caravans present during the summer count.

Figure 2: Ipswich: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



4.12. Figure 3 shows the numbers of caravans in Mid-Suffolk by type of site and as there is no council site provision, shows that caravans on private sites have remained the most extensive form of provision since 1994. Historically, the numbers of caravans on unauthorised sites have remained at a negligible level over the years until the last two years when the number has increased sharply, due largely to the unauthorised development, where there appears to be only small differences between the January and July figures.

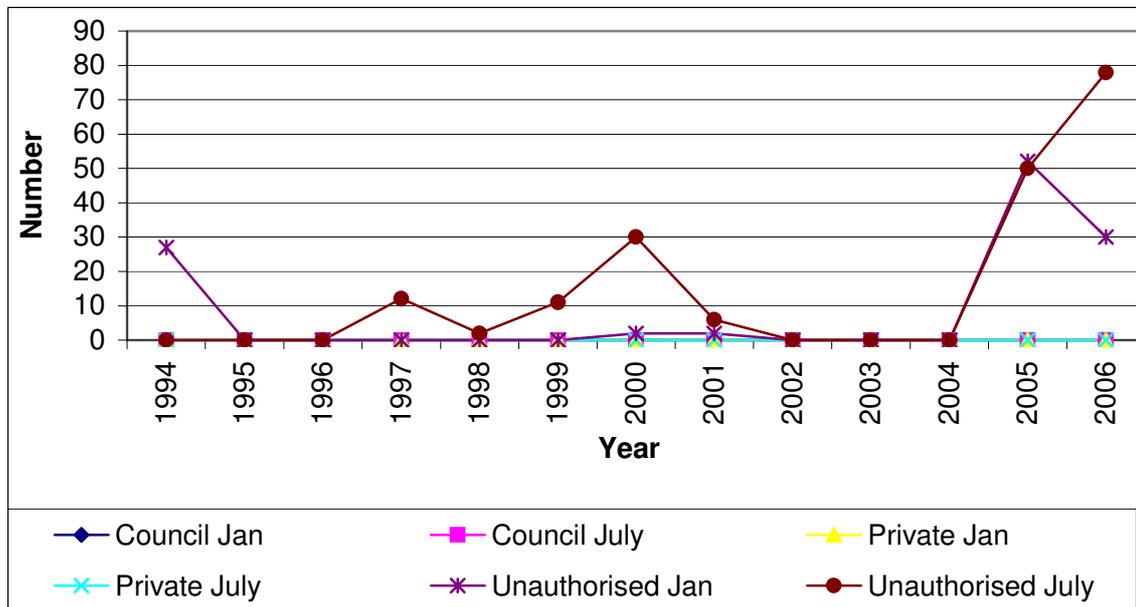
Figure 3: Mid Suffolk: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



4.13. Figure 4 shows the numbers of caravans across Suffolk Coastal by type of site and shows the very low numbers of caravans on any type of site present in the area during the winter count. There does appear, however, to be a recent trend for unauthorised caravans during the summer count. From the information collected during our fieldwork, the increase in numbers of

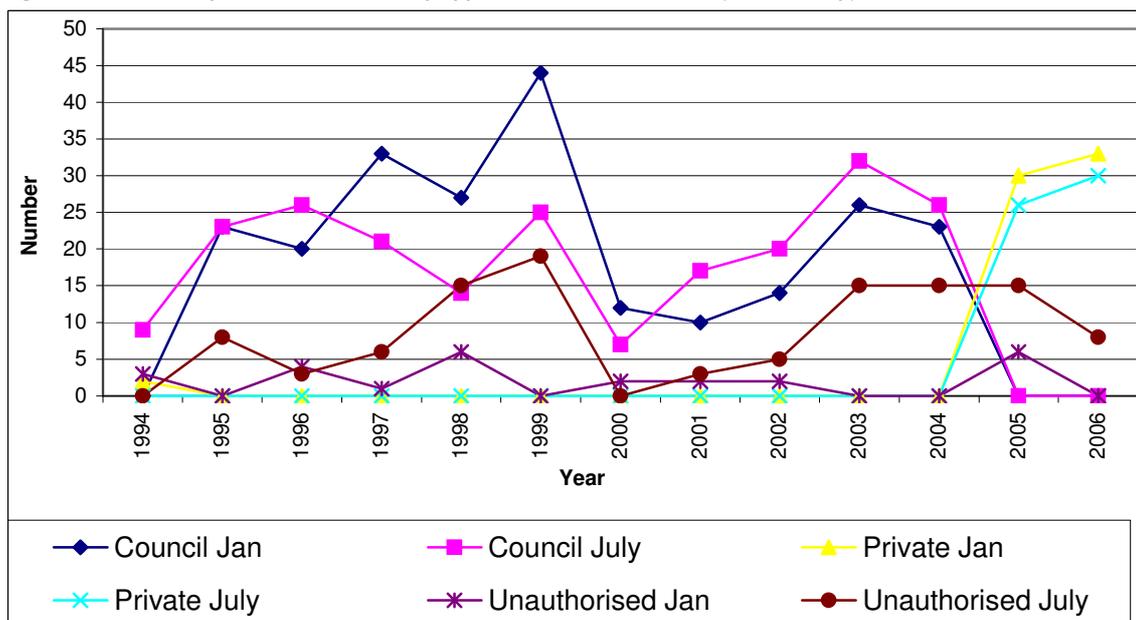
unauthorised land is largely due to the presence of New Travellers in areas of the district.

Figure 4: Suffolk Coastal: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



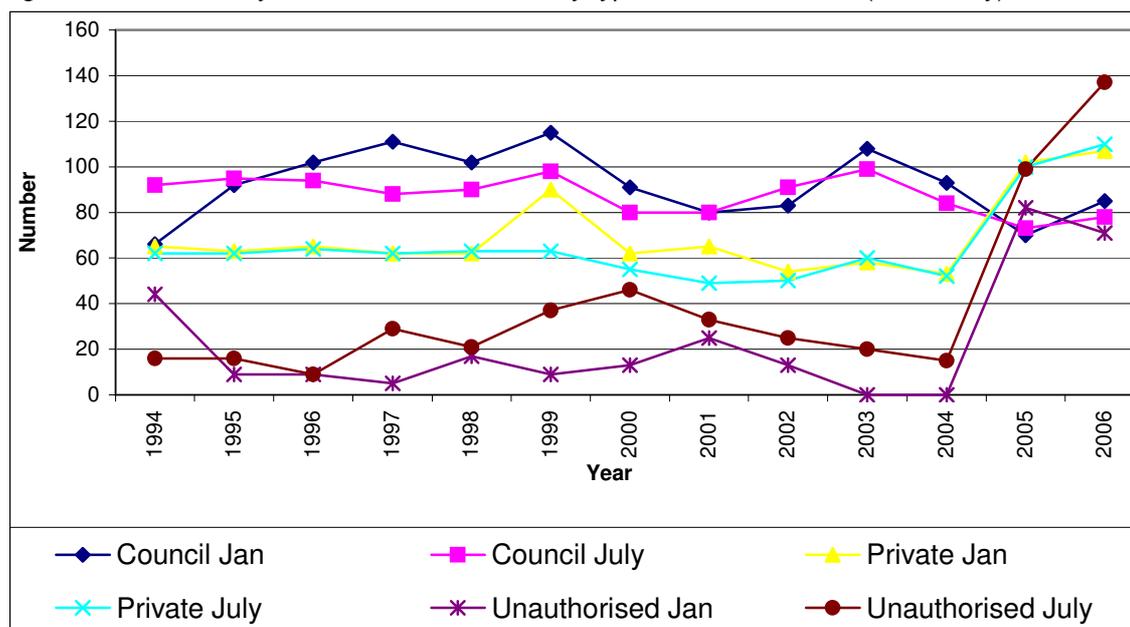
4.14. Figure 5 shows the numbers of caravans across Waveney by type of site and shows that council site provision has been the main provider of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers since 1994. Caravan numbers have fluctuated on council site provision with a significant fall in occupation during 2000, but this has been steadily increasing over recent years until the council site was leased to a private company before the January 2006 count. This figure also shows that there has been a consistent presence of caravans identified on unauthorised land over the years.

Figure 5: Waveney: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



**4.15.** Figure 6 shows the numbers of caravans across the whole Suffolk Study Area by type of site during the January counts and the July count. Until recently council sites have formed the main provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. However, from January 2006 private provision has apparently provided the main source of accommodation provision, which, as mentioned previously could be accounted for by the change in management arrangements of the site in Waveney.<sup>19</sup> Figure 6 also shows a consistent presence of caravans on unauthorised sites since 1994, with a recent sharp increase from the 2004 counts onwards.

Figure 6: Suffolk Study Area: Caravans by type of site 1994-2006 (Jan & July)



**4.16.** The final two charts, Figure 7 and Figure 8, show the total number of caravans by local authority area between 1994 and 2006 in both the January and July counts. These show that both Ipswich and Mid Suffolk have seen recent sharp increases in the number of caravans counted in their districts. Waveney continues to have a fluctuating but relatively stable caravan population. These charts also illustrate the disparity in caravans counted between the authorities as Suffolk Coastal<sup>20</sup> and Babergh observe few caravans during the days on which the count takes place.

<sup>19</sup> This site is currently managed by a private leaseholder however Suffolk County Council retains the freehold on the site.

<sup>20</sup> Although the recent counting of New Traveller caravans significantly alters this trend.

Figure 7: Total number of caravans by local authority area from 1994-2006 (Jan only)

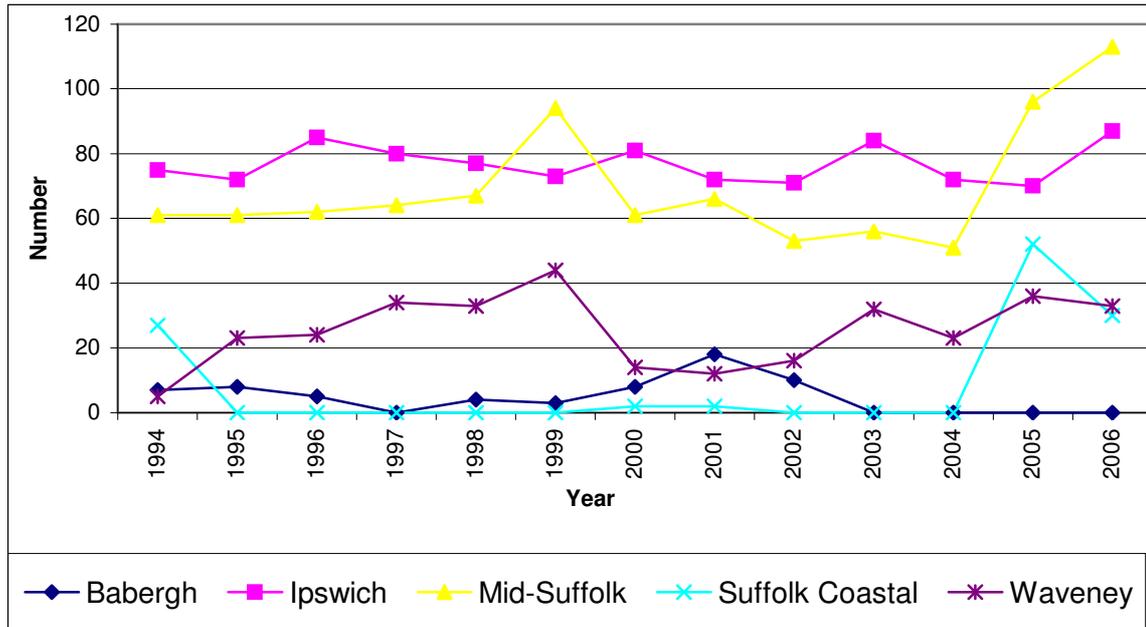
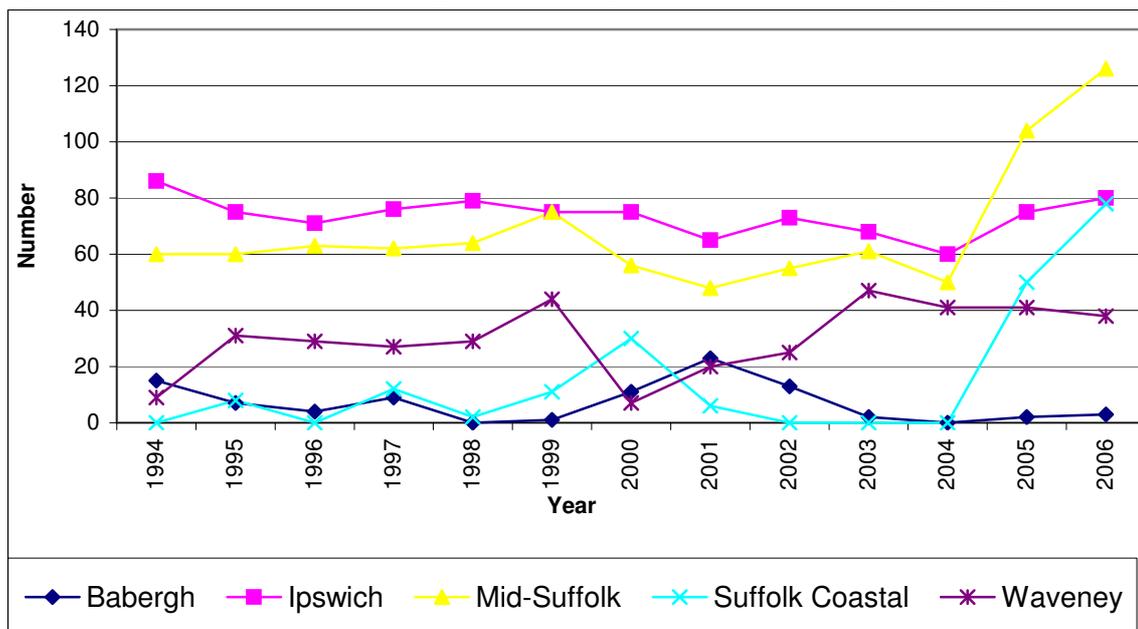


Figure 8: Total number of caravans by local authority area from 1994-2006 (July only)



## **Section II: The provision, supply and characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation**

**4.17.** 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 evidence in producing an accurate indication as to the levels of current and future need and supply of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, information was drawn from two main sources including the results of an extensive survey completed by each of the authorities (referred to here as the LA survey) and group discussions with a variety of stakeholders. These consultations were concerned with investigating the supply of accommodation on socially rented sites, private sites and housing; the known incidence of unauthorised development and encampments across the Study Area; and the policies and strategies related to all accommodation types of Gypsies and Travellers.

**4.18.** A breakdown of authorised provision (both public and private) can be found in tabular form in Appendix 2.

### **Socially rented provision: West Meadows (Ipswich)**

**4.19.** Socially rented provision is an umbrella term which encompasses those sites provided by councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). As there are no RSL sites across the Study Area, sites owned by councils will be referred to as 'council sites'. Since a change to private management of the Kessingland site, there has been only one council site present within the Study Area; this site, West Meadows, is owned by Suffolk County Council but managed by Ipswich Borough Council on their behalf.

### ***Site occupancy and over-crowding***

**4.20.** West Meadows has 41 pitches comprised of 12 single pitches, with room for two caravans, and 29 double pitches with room for up to three caravans. At the time of the assessment this site was at full occupancy with only 1 pitch being closed in recent times.<sup>21</sup> Site occupancy was described as being at a consistently high level all year (between 95%-100%).

**4.21.** In an attempt to identify current suppressed household needs and overcrowding we asked about the extent to which pitches contained doubled-up households who would ideally like a separate pitch or home of their own. In total there were 5 such households on the site.

### ***Demographic and household formation of site residents***

**4.22.** The site is occupied by residents belonging to three broad groups; Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

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<sup>21</sup> There used to be 42 pitches but one pitch was closed and converted into a memorial garden in respect of two children that died in a caravan fire on the pitch site.

**4.23.** At the time of the assessment a total of 150 residents lived on West Meadows; 61% (92) were adults over the age of 17, 13% (20) were children between the ages of 12 and 16, 12% (18) were children between the ages of 5 and 11, and 13% (20) were children under 5 years of age.

### ***Travelling and visitors***

**4.24.** One of the ways in which site rules can help or hinder the Gypsy and Traveller way of life is restrictions placed upon absence for travelling and ability to accommodate visitors on site in caravans.

**4.25.** On West Meadows, residents are permitted to be absent for 12 weeks in any one year with full licence fees required to be paid during any period of absence. Visitors are permitted on the site under certain restrictions. Such restrictions are a 4 week limit on their stay, immediate family only (may be extended to cousins) and dependent upon the licensee's pitch size.

### ***Waiting lists and allocation***

**4.26.** We asked Ipswich Borough Council to comment on a sequence of questions which sought to explore pitch allocation policies, waiting lists and numbers of pitches allocated. These are all relevant factors in understanding both demand for and access to existing socially rented sites.

**4.27.** There is a formal waiting list for pitches on the site which currently has 25 applicants and this number has reportedly increased since 2000.

**4.28.** Over the last three years (2003/2006) a total of 16 pitches were vacated; all of which were re-let; suggesting a turnover rate of about 5 pitches per year.

**4.29.** There is no formal allocation policy on the site.

**4.30.** Although many factors are taken into account in allocation, three main factors were provided (in order); previous known behaviour/references, local residence/local connection and family or personal compatibility.

### ***Licence fees or rents***

**4.31.** Technically the charges paid by site residents are licence fees but they are commonly referred to as rents and this term is used below.

**4.32.** As of August 2006 single pitches on the site are available for £51.45 per week and double pitches for £57.75 per week.

**4.33.** A large proportion of residents are in receipt of housing benefit to pay for their rent; the receipt of housing benefit is clearly important in making site places affordable.

**4.34.** A potential barrier to affordability is a damage deposit charged at the start of a licence. On West Meadows a damage deposit of £250 is required.

### ***Views on surroundings and quality of the site***

**4.35.** We were keen to explore the views on the quality of the site and the surroundings in which it is based. In response to our questionnaire, Ipswich Borough Council described the general quality and location of the site as good, although there was acknowledgement of the negative nature of the proximity of the site to environmental factors such as overhead power cables and a land fill site. Access to facilities was also seen as good.

### ***Good practice on site provision, design or management***

**4.36.** The authority was asked to provide details of any aspects of site provision, design or management which they deemed good and worth sharing with others. It was noted that the West Meadows site has a dedicated community room which was used by a large number of stakeholder organisations. This was reportedly used extensively by the Traveller Education Support Service, which provides education for the 0-5 year olds and a homework club for older children.

### ***Plans for council sites***

**4.37.** There were no plans reported to make changes to this site or in the development of further sites in the foreseeable future.

### **Authorised private Gypsy and Traveller sites**

**4.38.** The consultation with councils included a sequence of questions about private Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites. As Table 7 shows, private sites are found in Ipswich, Mid Suffolk and Waveney. Babergh and Suffolk Coastal have no private site provision.

Table 7: Characteristics of private sites across the Study Area

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Approximate number of pitches</b>	<b>Owner-occupier or rented</b>
Ipswich	1	2	Both O/O
Mid-Suffolk	13	69	9 = O/O (27 Pitches) 2 = Rented (40 Pitches – although 1 site = 19 pitches is currently closed) 2 = N/A
Waveney	1	20	All Rented

**4.39.** In total there are approximately 91 pitches provided between these sites with 72 pitches currently occupied.

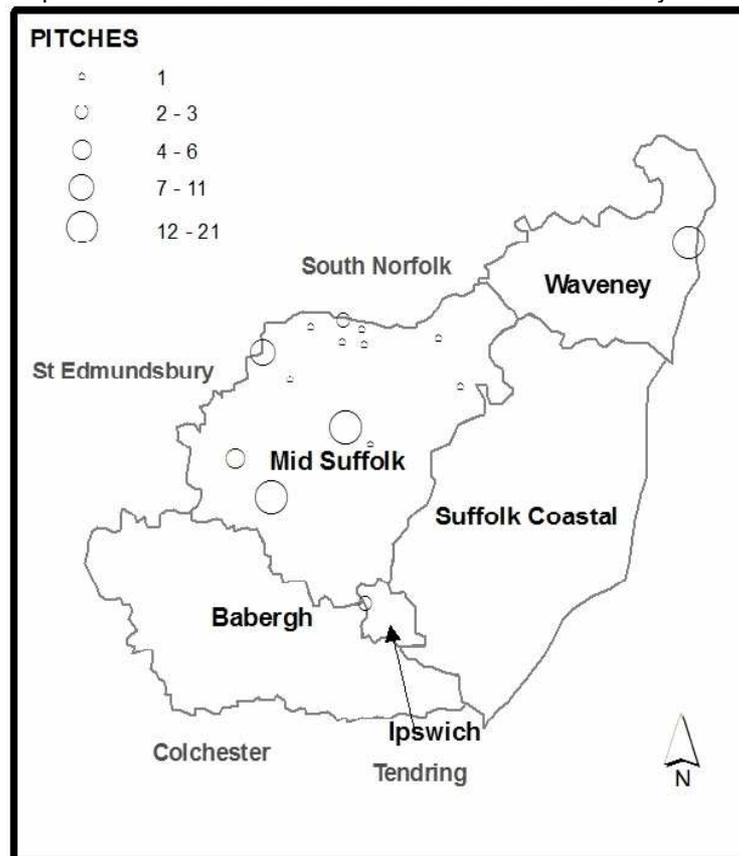
**4.40.** Authorities were asked about the planning status of their private sites. Answers were provided on 14 sites. The majority of permissions (10 sites) are full and permanent. Qualifications were referred to in a minority of instances. Such qualifications were:

- personal or family permissions; and
- Gypsy use only

**4.41.** The number of sites/pitches on private authorised sites has largely remained static since 2000 with only Mid Suffolk noting an increase of 2 sites and 2 pitches in this period.

**4.42.** According to one of the participants in a group discussion, one of the site owners in Mid-Suffolk has indicated the possibility of closing the site in order to change its use. Obviously this would impact upon the level of supply of authorised pitches across the Study Area.

Map 1: Private authorised sites across the Suffolk Study Area



### ***Planning applications***

**4.43.** Authorities were asked to comment on the number of applications for private sites they had received over a five year period between 2001 and 2006. Only Mid Suffolk and Waveney had had planning applications for private sites. These can be described as follows:

- Waveney – 1 application received (subsequently refused); and
- Mid-Suffolk – 6 applications received (2 refused; 1 granted; 2 still to be determined).

**4.44.** In terms of the refusal of these applications Mid-Suffolk commented that one of these applications was for an extension to an existing site but this was refused in compliance with the local plan and the Suffolk Structure Plan 2001, and additionally the proposed development would have been outside the

settlement boundary. The other application was refused under the same rules and it was also situated within a Special Landscape Area.

**4.45.** Because of the time lag between years there is no necessarily exact equivalence between applications and decisions made in the period.

### **Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation**

**4.46.** The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently living in 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. One of the main issues of consultation revolved around the part that housing services does, should and could play in the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area. The lack of record keeping, in terms of identifying Gypsy and Traveller households, appeared a major barrier here.

### ***Use of local authority housing services by Gypsies and Travellers***

**4.47.** Authorities were asked how many times over the last 12 months Gypsies and Travellers had made homeless presentations. The number of presentations was quite small, with Babergh and Ipswich experiencing no such presentations; Mid Suffolk had the most (4); followed by Suffolk Coastal (3) and Waveney (2).

**4.48.** Domestic violence was cited as the most common reason to present as homeless to an authority. The numbers, however, were so small that little inference can be made about the community from this.

**4.49.** In addition, authorities were asked about how they thought their current homeless practices impacted upon Gypsies and Travellers. For the most part the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers using these services were seen to be small thus prohibiting comment. However, in two instances this involved ensuring advice and assistance is available, when required, in line with other users of the service. Generally no distinction was made between Gypsies and Travellers and other potential client groups. However, one authority (Babergh) did comment upon the implications of this:

*‘Our policy for dealing with all homeless families inevitably results in the use of temporary accommodation and this has really provided an unintentional disincentive for this client group to accept our offers...We are far more aware of the sensitivities and needs of this group and we are therefore better equipped to deal with applications. Accommodation and support issues would be a fundamental part of our future planning’.*

### ***Numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in social housing***

**4.50.** Suffolk Coastal was unable to make an estimation of the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within their boundaries or provide information on the housing of Gypsies and Travellers in general.

**4.51.** There was a lack of understanding as to how large the 'housed' Gypsy and Traveller population is as both Mid Suffolk and Ipswich felt that there is somewhere between 10 and 100 Gypsy and Traveller families in socially rented accommodation dispersed throughout their districts. Waveney and Babergh stated that they expected there to be less than 10 such families in their districts.

**4.52.** Authorities were asked to estimate the number of Gypsies and Travellers registered for social housing. Most authorities could not provide this information, while Babergh estimated there to be 5, and Ipswich 3 or 4 Gypsies and Travellers registered. At the same time the number of Gypsies and Travellers housed in the last year (2005/2006) was estimated to be small, with no more than 6 occurrences across the whole of the Study Area.

**4.53.** Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) with housing stock across the Study Area were also contacted to provide information on numbers of Gypsies and Travellers. However; no organisation could provide any indication of numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in their accommodation.

**4.54.** No authority had any knowledge about Gypsies and Travellers accommodated in private housing across the Study Area.

### **The unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller sites**

**4.55.** The development of unauthorised sites did not appear to be seen as a major issue across the Suffolk Study Area. Out of the five authorities only one authority (Mid-Suffolk) had experienced the unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites since 2000. At the time of the assessment the enforcement case had been opened but was on hold pending the outcome of the retrospective planning application. The unauthorised development has an estimated 19 pitches.

**4.56.** Out of the five authorities, only Mid Suffolk felt that there was a likelihood of an increase in the number of unauthorised Gypsy/Traveller sites being developed over the next 5 years.

**4.57.** The development of unauthorised sites did, however, emerge as a significant issue during our discussions with various stakeholders, in particular the Elected Members. This was discussed as a major barrier to achieving community support for Gypsies and Travellers as there was a perception by members of the settled community that the planning system was somehow either manipulated by Gypsies and Travellers or 'softer' in some way upon them. Incidences of Gypsies and Travellers buying land and developing it for residential use, without obvious planning consent, was reported to antagonise

members of the settled community who adhere to planning control procedures.

### **Unauthorised encampments across the Suffolk Study Area**

**4.58.** The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments is a significant issue impacting upon the work of local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers, the settled population and the public purse. Because of the nature of unauthorised encampments (i.e. mobility and travelling) it is very difficult to grasp a comprehensive picture of need for residential and/or transit accommodation. This section, however, seeks to look at the 'known' prevalence of unauthorised camping in order to draw some tentative indication as to level of need.

#### ***Geographical patterns and incidence of unauthorised encampments***

**4.59.** In order to provide a more local context to the incidence of encampments all authorities were asked to provide information on either the exact number of encampments occurring in the authorities' boundaries during 2005/2006 or an estimated range.

**4.60.** Summing up the encampments recorded (using the mid range figures where only a range was given) produces a total of 55 encampments across the Study Area during the 2005/2006 period. This does not, of course, imply 55 Gypsy and Traveller groups, as the same people may have been recorded several times within the same authority or in different authorities. Equally, this is only a snapshot of unauthorised encampments during one year. However, this does assist in providing some additional information on unauthorised encampments to contextualise the Caravan Count data.

**4.61.** In order to achieve more specific, accurate and contextual information on encampments than is possible by the use of the Caravan Count data alone, authorities were also asked to provide information about the number, location, size and approximate duration of encampments during the three months prior to the survey (summer 2006). This information is summarised in Table 8 below. All authorities reported incidences of encampments during the time period. Again care needs to be taken when reviewing this data as the same people may have been recorded several times within the same authority (which may be the case for Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk) and/or the same encampments may have occurred in multiple authorities.

**4.62.** Some of these encampments were relatively small and of short duration – either because of eviction or because the Gypsies and Travellers wanted to stay in the area for a short time only, Waveney being a prime example of this. However, there were a significant number of large encampments lasting for prolonged periods. Broadly speaking, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal appear, in the main, to have recently experienced large encampments which remain for extended periods of time (it is noted that this might have skewed the analysis in Table 8) with the majority of such encampments belonging to New Traveller populations.

Table 8: Characteristics of unauthorised encampments across the Suffolk Study Area May – August 2006

Authority	No. of caravans involved	Approx duration of encampment (days)	Mean number of caravans	Mean duration of encampment
<b>Babergh</b> 5 Encampments	2	28	<b>1.6</b>	<b>36 days (5 weeks)</b>
	3	21		
	1	56		
	1	7		
	1 (tent)	70		
<b>Ipswich</b> 5 Encampments	5	84	<b>3.4</b>	<b>38 days (5 weeks)</b>
	5	77		
	5	10		
	1	6		
	1	13		
<b>Mid Suffolk</b> 2 Encampments	27	84	<b>29.5</b>	<b>84 days (12 weeks)</b>
	32	84 (ongoing at the time of survey)		
<b>Suffolk Coastal</b> 12 Encampments	25	364 <sup>22</sup>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>84 days (12 weeks)</b>
	7	364 <sup>23</sup>		
	8	77 <sup>24</sup>		
	22	77 <sup>25</sup>		
	6	49		
	40	35		
	12	21		
	6	7		
	5	7		
	5	1		
	4	3		
1	2			
<b>Waveney</b> 4 Encampments	55	7	<b>16</b>	<b>7 days (1 week)</b>
	2	7		
	4	7		
	3	7		

**4.63.** As can be seen from Map 2, it is clear that the same or similar locations are used on more than one occasion. Details provided for individual encampments during the three months prior to the survey were insufficient to give any clear idea of the sort of land commonly encamped upon although it is clear from some of the details provided that business parks, car parks and redundant air fields are often affected. One location in Suffolk Coastal appeared more than once as an encampment site in the three month period (Bromeswell) as was the case in Mid Suffolk (Weybread).

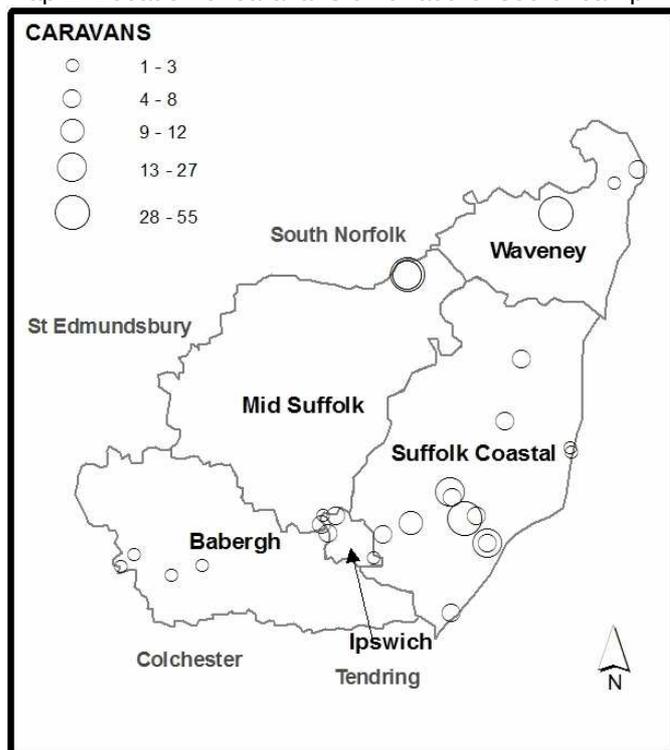
<sup>22</sup> On-going at the time of survey as the land-owner had not taken action

<sup>23</sup> As above

<sup>24</sup> As above

<sup>25</sup> As above

Map 2: Location of caravans on unauthorised encampments May - August 2006



**4.64.** In broad terms, these locations might give indications of areas where some sort of transit provision might be needed. In addition, other factors of unauthorised encampments were raised in the consultation with authorities and a number of issues emerged. For example:

- the size and nature of transit provision might be affected by the number of encampments commonly occurring in an area at the same time. There was diversity in responses to this, with Waveney reporting that encampments were rare and it was not uncommon to have no encampments at all. On the other hand, Suffolk Coastal reported that it was common for there to be four encampments at any one time within the local authority boundaries. The remaining authorities said that there was usually either one or two encampments present on average;
- all authorities experienced more encampments in summer than any other time of the year;
- certain encampments lasted for much longer than others due to no enforcement action being implemented on behalf of the private land owner; and
- four authorities with regular encampments said that most of the Gypsies and Travellers involved are 'in transit'. This may indicate that in these areas transit accommodation might be needed. In the remaining authority, Suffolk Coastal, it was stated that they believed Gypsies and Travellers were 'local' suggesting that these encampments indicate a need for more permanent accommodation.

### ***Trends of unauthorised encampments***

**4.65.** Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments had changed over the past five years. Four authorities said that numbers had remained broadly the same. One authority, Suffolk Coastal, said that numbers had increased, correlating with the Caravan Count data (see Figure 4).

**4.66.** In terms of size of encampment, three authorities said it had remained broadly the same over five years, one (Babergh) that group size had decreased and the remaining authority (Mid Suffolk) that size had increased.

**4.67.** Authorities were also asked about other changes in unauthorised encampments, type and/or location of sites encamped. Two authorities said that no changes had been observed. However, two authorities (Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk) reported that a significant change had been an increase in the numbers of New Travellers forming unauthorised encampments. For Suffolk Coastal this stemmed from the major landowner in the preferred area, the Forestry Commission, taking a more proactive approach to removing unauthorised encampments.

**4.68.** Both Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk also said that encampments had increased in size when compared to previous years.

**4.69.** Babergh observed that the use of 'sensitive locations' had become more noticeable – although they did not expand upon what constituted 'sensitive'.

**4.70.** The actions of neighbouring authorities were of concern to some authorities across the Study Area. In particular, Mid Suffolk expressed some concerns about the increase in encampments that could potentially occur as a result of evictions from neighbouring authorities, particularly those in South Norfolk.

**4.71.** However, when asked how they expected the number of encampments to change over the next five years, three authorities were unsure and two thought that numbers were likely to remain broadly the same.

**4.72.** These points together suggest rather a mixed picture for unauthorised encampments in the five areas. The last 12 months 2005-2006 has presented some new experiences for a number of authorities (e.g. large encampments and the presence of New Travellers) and it is unclear to the authorities how these will develop in the long term.

**4.73.** What appears the most interesting from the limited information available, however, was that unlike many other areas of the UK the provision of authorised Gypsy/Traveller sites did not mean a higher incidence of unauthorised encampments across the Study Area. In fact the reverse was the case and few 'known' unauthorised encampments appear to occur where authorised provision is in place.

## ***Policies on managing unauthorised encampments***

**4.74.** All authorities have a written policy for managing unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Travellers. Managing unauthorised encampments in a fair but firm manner was a major feature in the group discussions as part of the consultation with stakeholders. As part of the consultation we were keen to identify what local authorities considered good practice in dealing with unauthorised encampments. Three authorities offered examples:

*“We tend to leave landowners to take responsibility for their own land. We give advice to people who have illegal encampments on their land. This includes an e-mail system to the major landowners advising on imminent evictions. At eviction time we will provide a skip for the Travellers to use for clearing up the site. We always use possession proceedings rather than the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act” (Suffolk Coastal).*

*“Fast intervention, following notification of unauthorised encampments, to secure removal of trespassers before camps get established when in sensitive locations. Close liaison with police to address ancillary criminal behaviour especially the use of untaxed, uninsured vehicles on public highways” (Babergh).*

*“We are prepared to seek injunctions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to remove large unauthorised encampments which appear to be becoming permanent, whether or not the site is owned by the Gypsies or Travellers. To date two sites have arisen at Weybread. The Travellers concerned were not local to the district. One site vacated before injunction obtained. Other site to close shortly” (Mid Suffolk).*

**4.75.** For the most part, local authority policies towards Gypsies and Travellers appear to revolve around enforcement and the moving on of unauthorised encampments with little priority afforded to meeting the accommodation need within their district boundaries.

**4.76.** The move away from accommodation and towards enforcement was evidenced by the responses of the authorities within the group discussions. From these discussions it emerged that no local authority had a specific single Gypsy and Traveller strategy/policy, although each authority is party to a draft County-wide strategy on managing unauthorised encampments with a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy for Suffolk in development. At the same time, no authority had a dedicated Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, although there is a County level Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer. Locally based liaison work was left to the enforcement officers within each authority, who commented upon the difficulty of balancing the support and advice role with an enforcement duty. Although it was hoped that the draft Suffolk Protocol for Unauthorised Encampments would resolve some of these issues.

## **Other Gypsy and Traveller groups**

**4.77.** As part of the assessment we also sought information held by the authorities and other agencies (voluntary and community groups), which encompassed those sections of the Gypsy and Travelling community who are often excluded due to problems of definition or lack of understanding, such as Roma from Eastern Europe and the population of Travelling Showmen<sup>26</sup>.

### ***Roma from Europe***

**4.78.** Even before the recent accession countries entered the European Union (EU) a number of people from Roma communities lived in various areas of the UK, including the East of England region. Clearly, the accession to the EU of a number of countries including Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic will have increased the migratory patterns of Roma from these countries to the UK and, possibly, areas across the Suffolk Study Area. A brief section of the consultation enquired about the presence of Roma from Europe who have arrived relatively recently from Eastern Europe and/or the former Yugoslavia and who were seeking trailer/site accommodation in the area. No authorities across the Study Area said that they were aware of such communities in their area.

### ***Travelling Showmen***

**4.79.** Ipswich provided confirmation that they had 1 authorised site for Travelling Showmen but the number of pitches was unknown. Suffolk Coastal also reported that they had a long-standing (20 years) authorised site for Travelling Showmen which had between 3 and 4 pitches. No other authority reported a Travelling Showmen site within their district and no authority anticipated the numbers to increase in the future. There were no unauthorised developments by Travelling Showmen at the time of the survey.

## **Strategic and inter-agency approaches with Gypsy and Traveller populations**

**4.80.** Authorities were asked whether specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers in various housing strategies. This showed differing practice in the authorities. Ipswich was the only authority which referred to Gypsies and Travellers specifically in their current housing, homelessness and BME housing strategies. Babergh said that Gypsies and Travellers were referred to in their current BME housing strategy but were not specifically referred to in other policies. The remainder of the authorities asserted that Gypsies and Travellers were not specifically referred to in their current housing and homelessness strategies and they did not have a current BME housing strategy. Specific inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers is the exception rather than the rule at present, which will require changes when the findings of GTAAs are available.

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<sup>26</sup> Migrant workers are not included within Gypsy and Traveller groups.

**4.81.** No authority said that Gypsies and Travellers are identified in ethnic records and monitoring of social housing applications and/or allocations.

**4.82.** Inter-agency working was referred to a number of times in relation to the welfare assessment of households on unauthorised encampments. This assessment ascertains the educational, social care, health and housing needs of the household.

**4.83.** One of the overarching themes influencing current work with Gypsy and Traveller populations is the recommendation from central government of the importance of inter-agency and partnership working to ensure efficiency and consistency of approach. The results of this in practice across the Suffolk Study Area are mixed:

- as this Accommodation Assessment has been commissioned jointly by the Partners, this study embodies a positive indication of willingness to come together on issues which cross district boundaries;
- there is a draft Protocol on Managing Unauthorised Encampments and a draft Gypsy and Traveller Strategy for Suffolk;
- the involvement of other agencies, such as TESS, ensures that issues are considered from a variety of different avenues; and
- the County Council's role in a liaison capacity assists in co-ordinating approaches to a certain degree across the whole Suffolk area, particularly with the establishment of a County-wide working group on Gypsy and Traveller issues.

### **Section III: Findings from the Gypsy and Traveller survey**

**4.84.** The previous sections drew on the CLGs Gypsy Caravan Count figures and the information held by local authorities in order to provide some illustration as to the issues relating to Gypsy and Traveller caravans/families/pitches and trends across the Study Area. This section starts to look at the data and evidence gathered during the course of the data collection with Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area. The first part of this section looks at further characteristics of the sample not discussed in 3.3.1, then continues with an exploration of the range of issues expressed by the views and responses of Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area and how these impact upon accommodation provision and need.

#### **Demographics of the sample**

##### **Gender and age**

**4.85.** Of the 128 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers, a total of 126 disclosed their age. As can be seen from Table 9 the 25-39 year group were the group most consulted with during the assessment, forming 37% of the

total sample. This was followed by the 40-49 year age group (20% of the sample) and then the 16-24 year age group (17%). If we take 50+ to encapsulate those seen as 'older people' 26% of the sample was amongst this group.

Table 9: Age of interviewees

Age group	No.	%
16-24	21	17
25-39	47	37
40-49	25	20
50-59	16	13
60-74	14	11
75-84	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>

**4.86.** We were able to achieve a good gender split of respondents with a 55% female sample.

### Marital status

**4.87.** In total, 67% of the interviewees were married with a further 5% living with their partner. The remaining 28% of the interview sample described their marital status as either single (15%), divorced (7%) or widowed (4%).

Table 10: Marital status of the interview sample

Marital status	No.	%
Married	86	67
Single	19	15
Divorced	9	7
Living with partner	7	5
Widowed	5	4
Missing data	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

### Household size

**4.88.** In total the survey sample accounts for 370 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community across the Study Area. The average household size, from the survey, is approximately 2.9 persons. This hides a significant range in household sizes as Table 11 below shows.

Table 11: Household size distribution

Household Size	No.	%
1 Person	21	16
2 Persons	45	35
3 Persons	18	14
4 Persons	24	19
5 Persons	10	8
6 Persons	5	4
7 Persons	3	2
8 Persons	1	1
Missing data	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

**4.89.** The spread of household size in the sample is so varied it is impossible to draw any comment upon how accommodation type is related to the size of households. However, it is sufficient to say, in line with other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, that Gypsy and Traveller families are, on average, larger than those found in the non-travelling population as a whole (2.3). On the other hand, family size is smaller than those found in other assessments in the East of England region such as Essex (4.0) and Cambridgeshire (4.8).

### **Accommodation histories**

**4.90.** In order to gain some idea as to the movement between different types of accommodation, the survey asked respondents about the sort of accommodation they had had immediately prior to being interviewed for the study and why they had left it.

**4.91.** For those respondents currently on private authorised sites they came from a wide range of different accommodation sites; a total of 40% came from some other form of authorised accommodation (private or council site), 16% were previously in bricks and mortar accommodation, while just 13% were on the 'roadside' (unauthorised encampments). For those people on the unauthorised development, the majority (56%) had been on some form of authorised residential Gypsy or Traveller site immediately prior to the site, while 1 respondent had joined the development from a house/flat. The most common accommodation prior to being in a house was some form of authorised residential accommodation (private and public). A total of 59% of the bricks and mortar dwelling sample came from either a private or council site. Seven households (32%) in bricks and mortar housing came from unauthorised encampments. Previously living on the 'roadside' was the case for 16% of all current authorised households.

**4.92.** Of the people that described where they had previously lived (76 respondents) 30 (39%) came from previous accommodation across the Study Area. Four households could not provide a single place of origin and reported that they had come from 'all over'. The majority of the remainder named places within the East of England region, particularly areas of Essex, Cambridgeshire, South Norfolk and Hertfordshire, being the location of their previous accommodation. A small number of others reported that they had previously been living in London, Wolverhampton, Leeds, Northampton and Kent.

**4.93.** As is the case with many members of the non-travelling communities reasons for living in their current accommodation were extremely varied.

Table 12: Reasons for residing across the Suffolk Study Area by accommodation type

Reason	Current accommodation type					Total
	Bricks & mortar	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Council site	Private site	
Familiar with the area	16	10	23	2	25	76
Place of birth/home	1	7	12	2	12	34
Family lives here	9	11	19	1	23	63
Work	9	14	19	1	15	58
Schooling	3	1	19	-	11	34
Other	7	8	8	2	3	28

**4.94.** The most prevalent reason given was that the area they were currently in was familiar to them in some way. As the above table indicates, this familiarity could be seen to be explained by either the area being somewhere with family resident, the area where they work, or their place of birth.

**4.95.** In terms of 'other' reasons for being in the area respondents commented that they were there for a variety of reasons including 'house building opportunities', 'family buried in the area', 'just passing through', 'family in hospital' and 'no other place available'. Indeed, a number of respondents elaborated on their answers and the vast majority of these suggested that some kind of connection to the area, either in terms of the area itself or their family links, was of prime importance to them:

*"My brother and my wife were here and they got us a plot. I was thinking about the welfare of my little girl at the time."*

*"I heard there was some land for sale and the people buying it were people I knew, some are cousins. I was getting married so I bought some land with my wife to start a new life together."*

*"I left my father-in-law's to go back to my dad, my mam's not been too well so I stayed with them and then I found this land."*

**4.96.** Other reasons revolved around attempts to bring stability to their lives either for their children, their own health or because of the stress of being moved on:

*"It was time to move and my husband had seen this house so as we was sick of moving we just left the side of the road."*

*"We came here for work but couldn't find anywhere to pull onto so we had to move onto the side of the road. The Police kept moving us until we got this house."*

*"We moved into this house so the children could get an education."*

**4.97.** A large number of respondents talked about how bad experiences or poor site conditions made them move from their previous accommodation:

*“The camp where I was is run down badly, 15 years ago it was fine but it’s really bad now. I had to leave, I couldn’t take it anymore.”*

*“I didn’t like it, I didn’t like the people there, people were coming and going, not really knowing who they were, no privacy, felt intruded.”*

*“It was extremely rough, not a good place to bring children up. I’m happy I’ve got my own place now with nice people here.”*

**4.98.** A large number of other factors in their decisions to move were related to their marriage, safety and security or simply a move to a more pleasant area of the country.

### **Views on current accommodation**

**4.99.** We asked everyone currently living on a site (not on unauthorised encampments) how they rated their current accommodation. The majority of those who answered thought that their site could be generally seen as being very good (46%); 25% thought their site was good; 17% described it as OK; 12% thought their site was either poor or very poor.

**4.100.** No one on the unauthorised development commented negatively on their site, with 72% of those interviewed describing it as very good. Residents on authorised private sites were likely to see their accommodation as either very good or good (61%), with only 6 households describing it as poor or very poor in some way. Half of those interviewed (4 households) on West Meadows saw their accommodation in a positive light, with 3 households describing the site as poor or very poor.

**4.101.** We asked all those currently living in a house to rate their accommodation on a five-point scale. A total of 78% of current bricks and mortar residents described their accommodation either as good or very good; the remaining 22% said it was OK. No one described their house as poor or very poor.

**4.102.** We asked all authorised residents to talk about their views on their location and accommodation. The majority of comments provided positive reflections upon the area or site. In particular many of the council site residents praised the warden/manager of the site:

*“He always listens to both sides and explains things to us.”*

*“It has strict management which means there’s not a lot of hassle.”*

**4.103.** Other people on both private sites and the unauthorised development stated that their site neighbours were good and that there was good access to local facilities. Of the negative comments, one person on the council site said that electric pylons could be a problem in the rain as they tended to get electric shocks from other metals in the vicinity. Other negative comments were generally around the size of people’s pitches, which were generally seen as small but manageable.

**4.104.** Access to basic facilities on authorised sites and the unauthorised development are shown in Table 13 below. Water and power were accessible for all on their site. Waste disposal and access to a toilet was slightly less accessible. Many households had access to some form of kitchen facility or facilities for showers. A third of those we spoke to did not have access to a shed. All those we spoke to on the council site had access to these facilities.

Table 13: Access to facilities

Type of facility	Have access to facilities	
	No.	%
Water	64	100
Electricity supply	64	100
Waste disposal/collection	60	94
WC/Toilet	59	92
Showers	57	89
Laundry	55	86
Kitchen	53	83
Space for eating/sitting	48	75
Bath	43	67
Shed	42	66

**4.105.** Comments were sought from everyone about their facilities and most people expressed contentment with their current situation. However, much of this contentment was premised on the basis that:

*“Compared to the roadside, this is much better.”*

**4.106.** We also sought to find out about the sorts of improvements people would like to see if they had the opportunity. Respondents on the unauthorised development site talked about their general inability to think about improvements until their planning decision had been reached. The majority of those respondents who commented focused upon the need for more space (bigger pitches), for an extra trailer or for family to come and stay. Also, the importance of a shed was discussed with these needing to be larger than they currently were in order to be more appropriate to their lives.

**4.107.** We also asked everyone what they thought about the local neighbourhood. The majority of those asked reported either ambivalent feelings of OK (44%) or positive comments (52%). Those living on the unauthorised development were the most likely to feel positive about their neighbourhood, followed by those on private authorised sites, then those in bricks and mortar accommodation. Respondents on the council site were the most ambivalent. Only 1 respondent (on the council site) described the area

as poor. The views offered on their local neighbourhood were, more often than not, premised on the basis of there being no 'trouble' from the local 'Gauja' community:

*"50% support us, 50% don't, we have never been truly accepted in this area because we are Travellers."*

*"This is our home, no one has complained about us yet."*

*"I don't really mix with the locals, but they seem ok."*

*"I don't mix with the people in the village but none of them have said a bad word to me."*

### **Space, over-crowding and concealed households**

**4.108.** It is worth bearing in mind that concepts of occupancy of accommodation and over-crowding are sometimes different among Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community. Traditionally, Gypsies and Travellers living in trailers have had much less floor space per person than is common among the housed population, with the area around the trailer also acting as living space. As families grow and children get older, the traditional Gypsy/Traveller response has been to acquire further trailers to provide segregated sleeping/living accommodation according to age and sex. On residential sites, having a large trailer, mobile home or 'chalet' and one or more touring caravans also gives freedom to travel off-site for a period while the main home remains on-site. In this context, 'over-crowding' could mean too small or too few trailers, too small an amenity building, too small a plot to accommodate the desired number of trailers, or indeed an 'over-occupation' of the site itself.

**4.109.** Within our Gypsy and Traveller sample the average household to caravan ratio was 1.4 caravans per household, this was broadly the case across all accommodation types. Those households on unauthorised encampments had, on average, 1.1 caravans per household. This is a smaller household to caravan ratio than has been found elsewhere from other GTAAs and national work which indicates 1.7 caravans per household per pitch. This is perhaps explained by the predominance of Romany Gypsies who, very generally speaking, tend to have slightly smaller families than Irish Travellers.

**4.110.** When asked about the level of space this afforded them, 81% thought that their current accommodation and living arrangements were sufficient for their needs. Those households that saw themselves as being overcrowded came entirely from across all accommodation types, but were particularly prevalent on the unauthorised development (where 8 households (32%) were overcrowded) and the council site (3 overcrowded). Those on the unauthorised development were currently awaiting the outcome of their planning application before they increased their accommodation capacity. Affordability was a major issue for those who felt they needed more space.

## **Living on unauthorised encampments**

**4.111.** The majority of those households on unauthorised encampments we interviewed had been on the encampment for a relatively short period of time. Three had been there for less than 1 week, 14 had been there for between 1 and 4 weeks, 6 had been there for between 4 weeks and 12 weeks, and 5 had been there for over 12 weeks.

**4.112.** Very few of those households on unauthorised encampments had any idea about the length of time they anticipated staying where they currently were, 3 households were intending to stay for between 1 and 2 weeks and 3 households for 1 month. However, the remainder of the respondents (22/79%) could not provide an expected length of duration.

**4.113.** Only 7 households on unauthorised encampments (25%) were actively looking for somewhere more stable to live, 64% were not looking for stable accommodation across the Study Area, 11% were unsure.

**4.114.** When asked how regularly they were in the area 13 households (46%) said that they were always in the area, 2 were there at regular periods throughout the year and 11 (39%) were not regular visitors to the area.

**4.115.** The inference from these responses is that a number of households currently on unauthorised encampments wish to retain a travelling way of life, particularly within the boundaries of the Study Area. A total of 76% of the sample from unauthorised encampments intended to either continue staying in the general area or travel to the area again at some point.

**4.116.** For those currently living on unauthorised encampments, access to facilities was a major issue. Most of the basic facilities are inaccessible to Gypsies and Travellers. Electricity supply, generally maintained by the use of a generator, is the only main facility that half of the unauthorised encamped population can achieve. When asked to comment on facilities the following was recorded:

*“Our water supply is approximately 2-3 miles away. Electric is supplied by a wind turbine.”*

*“We’ve no access to showers unless we go to the local swimming baths.”*

**4.117.** Interestingly, all of those currently on unauthorised encampments reported their inaccessibility to waste disposal. From our consultations as part of this study this was repeatedly reported as a main issue of tension within the settled community as Gypsies and Travellers in many villages, towns and local areas become synonymous with fly-tipping. However, their access to local authority recycling centres excludes disposals for ‘business’ purposes, unless a charge is paid.

**4.118.** In attempting to understand what attracted those residing on unauthorised encampments to the place they were, respondents were asked to comment on the stopping place. Eight respondents (28%) thought that the stopping place was either good or very good, 57% described it as OK, only 4 respondents (14%) described the place as either poor or very poor. When asked to comment further on their answer we received a range of comments that generally spoke in neutral terms about the area being '*OK for a short stay*'. Some said that the stopping place was fantastic because they had created what facilities they had for themselves and that the land owner was very good to them. Only 1 respondent mentioned harassment from locals/neighbours, other descriptions of the local settled community were largely positive. A total of 31% had health and safety concerns, which included things like rats, damp and security issues, with a small number of concerns surrounding potential problems to emergency services accessing the site:

*"Council have tried to block access, this could prevent emergency services getting through."*

### **Living in bricks and mortar accommodation**

**4.119.** Some of the issues relevant to the bricks and mortar respondents have been discussed above. However, because the issues relating to Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation has remained relatively hidden in recent years, it is important to draw some issues out. Here we look at some of the findings relevant to those respondents currently living in bricks and mortar accommodation and also general views from the larger sample on this type of accommodation.

**4.120.** From the respondents we spoke to in bricks and mortar housing 67% lived in a house and 33% in a bungalow.

**4.121.** In total 57% of bricks and mortar dwellers were owner-occupiers; 22% were council tenants; 7% were private tenants; just 1 respondent was an RSL tenant.

**4.122.** From the 23 people we spoke to most (52%) had lived in their accommodation for between 1 and 5 years, 35% had been in their accommodation for less than a year.

**4.123.** Generally speaking, people thought that they were likely to remain in their house for a long time, 36% of people had no intentions of moving, 9% thought they would leave their house in the next year with a further 23% expecting to leave within 5 years. A total of 32% of current bricks and mortar dwellers were unsure of what they would do. Of those people that were leaving in the foreseeable future all said that they wanted to either travel once more or return to living in trailer accommodation. There were various reasons given for this largely centred upon being with other Travellers and maintaining family links. For instance,

*“If we find a piece of land, somewhere where our nieces and nephews can come and stay with us we would like to go back to living in caravans, but only if we have our own place”*

*“I want to be with other Travellers”*

**4.124.** However, one respondent simply commented, *“I’ve had enough of this house, I’m going back to my trailer”*.

Seven current bricks and mortar dwelling households still owned 1 caravan, only 1 household owned 2 caravans. A total of 13 households (62%) had no caravans.

**4.125.** We were interested in trying to find out the proportion of the Gypsy and Traveller population who had lived in a house but were now living in trailer or chalet accommodation. Table 14 presents this information. What this table shows is that a significant proportion (37%) of the sample have been in bricks and mortar accommodation but have chosen to leave. This is particularly interesting as 13 households who are currently living on unauthorised encampments have had experience of bricks and mortar living and subsequently left their accommodation.

Table 14: Previous experience of bricks and mortar housing by accommodation type

Lived in a house in the past?	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Council site	Private site	Total
Yes	13	6	2	17	38
No	15	18	6	25	64
No answer	1	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>103</b>

**4.126.** Some of those living on unauthorised encampments, who previously had bricks and mortar experiences, were Gypsies and Travellers who had been born and/or raised in housed accommodation. Others had moved into housing as a child with their family, either because of a lack of sites or for educational benefits, and since left that accommodation. This perhaps serves to demonstrate that a move into housing in one generation does not necessarily remove demand for trailers in the next.

**4.127.** Of particular interest was the reasons given for leaving this accommodation. There was a whole range of different responses perhaps reflecting some of the diversity of the Gypsy and Travellers population. For instance, some simply commented that:

*“I never felt comfortable living in a house even though I was born in one.”*

**4.128.** While some women talked about how they married someone which entailed caravan dwelling:

*“Because I got married.”*

*“I moved out when I married a Traveller.”*

**4.129.** For some, living in a house was just a pause until they returned to caravan dwelling once the opportunity arose:

*“We just began to travel again.”*

*“I got a place on a site.”*

**4.130.** One of the main reasons that people left bricks and mortar accommodation, however, was due to problems they were having living in the community with non-Travellers:

*“We were forced out of the house by the locals who didn’t like us.”*

*“It was too difficult being accepted in the neighbourhood, didn’t like the locals, wanted to be with Travelling people.”*

**4.131.** Other reasons included debt or ‘financial pressure’:

*“We were in debt so the council evicted us.”*

**4.132.** A sizeable number of households reported that they would consider living in a house. See Table 15 below; 19 of those interviewed (14%) would consider moving into a house, 64 (71%) would not consider moving into a house, and 7 households (8%) were unsure.

Table 15: Move into bricks and mortar accommodation?

<b>Consider moving into bricks &amp; mortar?</b>	<b>Unauthorised encampment</b>	<b>Unauthorised development</b>	<b>Council site</b>	<b>Private site</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	2	1	2	14	<b>19</b>
No	12	22	5	25	<b>64</b>
Don’t know	2	1	0	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>90</b>

**4.133.** When asked to expand on their aversion to living in a house, people commented about how it was impossible because of their culture to live in a house:

*“I’m a Gypsy. I live in a trailer, not a house and that’s the way it should be.”*

**4.134.** Some respondents spoke about how they would see living in bricks and mortar accommodation as quite claustrophobic:

*“I couldn’t go from so much fresh air and freedom to that.”*

*“It would be like locking me up.”*

*“It’s hard to explain, in a house you feel shut in, my wife gets very depressed.”*

**4.135.** Because living in bricks and mortar is seen as unsuitable for many people, we were keen to explore under what conditions people would opt to living in this kind of accommodation. A number of respondents talked about how it was something they were considering due to increasing health issues:

*“I have thought about it, mainly because of my back.”*

**4.136.** Similarly, others commented on how easy living in a house would be when compared to living in trailers:

*“I want it for my children, plenty of room and a backyard. I’ve got relatives in houses and they are always warm and don’t freeze to death in the winter.”*

**4.137.** In trying to open a bricks and mortar option up for people, we asked respondents to describe to us the kind of bricks and mortar dwelling that would be appropriate if they had the opportunity to design it themselves. Although many people took this opportunity to reassert to us that they would never consider living in a house, a number of people talked about how designers could make bricks and mortar housing more attractive for Gypsy/Travelling communities.

**4.138.** These design ideas were all founded around the need for a normal house/bungalow, but preferably somewhere with plenty of space outside:

*“It would be nice to have somewhere for a couple of trailers.”*

*“A house with a hard standing so I could have my trailer here.”*

### **Travelling patterns and experiences**

**4.139.** All respondents were asked about their travelling patterns, experiences and preferences over the last 12 months.

**4.140.** In total just over a third of the sample (50 households) had travelled over the previous 12 months. The type of travelling varied from seasonal, monthly, weekly and spur of the moment. A slightly higher proportion (75 households/59%) reported that they had not travelled at all in the last 12 month period.

**4.141.** From all the households on differing accommodation types, apart from those on unauthorised encampments, it was those on private authorised sites that were the most likely to have been travelling at some time during the past 12 months. Of the 23 households interviewed from bricks and mortar housing, 18 said that they had not travelled at all in the past year, while 5 households reported travelling at some point.

**4.142.** The vast majority of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed (65%) felt that their last 12 months travelling patterns was in fact typical of their general experience, with 32% of those interviewed feeling that this had changed in some way. Those on private sites and the unauthorised development were the most likely to have seen a change in their travelling patterns. By far the main explanation provided for this change was in some way related to the difficulties people found in maintaining a travelling way of life with the current shortage of available places:

*“Everybody’s family is growing and there is no room where I would like to go if I wanted to.”*

*“It’s not as easy to move any more as the council or the Police move you on.”*

*“It’s typical of nowadays, I’ve moved less and less each year. No one wants Gypsies in their town and as time goes on this means you don’t have any options to move to.”*

**4.143.** A large number of others talked about ‘family reasons’ or ‘schooling’ when describing how they tended to travel less:

*“You can’t really move so much anymore if you want your children to have schooling.”*

*“I met and married my wife last year and we also had a baby so we decided to stay settled for a bit.”*

*“My missus and kids left. I’m on my own now and can’t be bothered moving up and down.”*

**4.144.** In addition, a few people talked about how increased permanency or ‘settlement’ makes more sense in ‘today’s world’; in particular, one person on the unauthorised development told us:

*“The Travellers I know don’t want to move all the time, they want a home, this means they can do more things like keep the children in school, have a home address for banks, pay national insurance and tax, get credit. It just helps you in general, you can’t do much without a permanent address, we need a base, a home.”*

**4.145.** Similarly, someone else commented:

*“Times are changing, people are and work, it’s easier to work in one place if you have a business. Everywhere you go you’re not wanted, at least in one place, once you gain the locals’ trust, you become welcome.”*

**4.146.** It was clear from the responses that work and family were the main reasons Gypsies and Travellers chose to travel during the past 12 months.

However, during this 12 month period, households travelled for a number of different reasons, all which might have encompassed a single trip or multiple journeys. Various trips relating to family, such as weddings and family visits were cited, as was 'holidays' and 'fairs'. A number of people cited 'evictions' as being the main reason why they had to travel, rather than a voluntary choice of travelling.

**4.147.** In order to try and develop some understanding as to the type of accommodation Gypsies and Travellers used when travelling, the survey asked about the type of accommodation that people had used while travelling during the last 12 months (see Table 16). By far the most common method of accommodating the household was pulling up at the 'roadside' (74%), which as a general rule of thumb would indicate unauthorised encampments. This was followed by the use of private sites (60%) with smaller numbers using council provision (24%) and farmer's fields (20%) (although it is unclear whether this was with or without permission and could in fact be also considered as unauthorised encampments). Some of the 'other' type of accommodation used by Gypsies and Travellers (19% of the time) included such things as fairs (both Showmen and other Travelling groups), transit sites, holiday and caravan parks, hotels, houses.

Table 16: Accommodation used while travelling 2005/06

Type of site used	No.	%
Roadside	37	74
Private site	30	60
Don't know	14	28
Council site	12	24
Other type	12	24
Farmer's field	10	20

**4.148.** In terms of places people would prefer to stop, when travelling, a few people were happy to continue to stop for short periods of time on the roadside:

*"I like the roadside, I feel free."*

*"I like stopping on the side of the road, nobody can tell me what to do."*

**4.149.** For others, however, staying on the roadside was seen to be quite dangerous:

*"It's not safe to stay on the roadside anymore, there's got to be plenty of you – safety in numbers you see."*

**4.150.** Although both private and council sites were mentioned as places where people like to stay when travelling, there was a slight preference towards family-run private sites. Such sites were perceived as better because they are often smaller, other Gypsies and Travellers are known and the sites are generally in a better state of repair. Council sites were the preference for many but they were generally seen to be very run down and too big in some

cases. Furthermore, the scarcity of council-run sites was commented upon. A few people did mention that places in the countryside, such as parks and farmers fields, would be good places as they not only provide a nice environment to stop but also provide their children with space to play away from the roads.

**4.151.** A number of people were able to use holiday camps quite regularly and the ability to book ahead was a key feature brought up by a number of interviewees, to avoid a first come first served situation and to ensure they were off the roadside.

**4.152.** During the last 12 months over half of the people who had been travelling had been forced to leave at some point. This was particularly acute for those on unauthorised encampments, as at the time of the interview 76% had been forced to leave. Many forcible exits were put down to authorities and the police moving Gypsies and Travellers on and this tended to generate confusion and frustration with those moved:

*“We were on the roadside and served with a C61.”*

*“Had to leave due to action taken by Suffolk Coastal Council. I feel it was totally out of order. Action was taken the same time as Travellers were invited to a meeting.”*

*“Council didn’t want us there. We were in the forest. It felt like a lot of hassle, being evicted, at first but now we are getting used to it.”*

**4.153.** In order to understand travelling patterns further we asked everyone whether they had travelled outside Suffolk<sup>27</sup> at all (see Table 17). It was quite common for people to travel outside of the Suffolk Study Area at some point, 44% of households having done so at some point in the last 2 years.

Table 17: Travelling outside of the area in the last 2 years by accommodation type

Travelled outside area in last 2 years	Current accommodation type					Total
	Bricks & mortar	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Council site	Private site	
Yes	8	22	7	3	14	54
No	14	4	15	5	27	65
Don't know	0	3	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>122</b>

**4.154.** Many places across the UK were named, not least of all Luton, Doncaster, Nottingham, and Cornwall. The most prominent destinations, however, were areas either within the East of England (Essex, Cambridge, Norfolk) or Lincolnshire.

<sup>27</sup> We enquired about ‘Suffolk’ generally rather than the ‘Suffolk Study Area’ due to probable confusion by what this meant.

**4.155.** Because the travelling way of life often means that, in contrast to the majority of the settled population, people often become attached to several locations for one reason or another, the survey asked respondents if they felt 'local' to the Suffolk Study Area. In total 82 (64%) of those we asked considered themselves a 'local' and many (62/48%) considered either Suffolk in general as 'home' or a particular area within Suffolk. Mid Suffolk, Woodbridge, Bury St Edmunds and Woolpit were the areas most cited within Suffolk for being seen as home.<sup>28</sup> Outside of the Suffolk Study Area the remainder of the sample more often than not cited areas such as Midlands, Lincolnshire or Norfolk. Approximately 13% of the sample felt that nowhere in particular was home as they had travelled about so much in the past, with one respondent commenting that, "*Home is where the trailer is.*"

**4.156.** Only 8 people (6%) said that they had a base somewhere else. This was described as either being a private site, council site or some other kind of base.

### **Health issues**

**4.157.** A growing number of studies show that Gypsies and Travellers experience higher levels of health problems than members of the non-travelling population.<sup>29</sup> It therefore has to be assumed that the health needs of local Gypsies and Travellers will impact on their accommodation needs. Identifying households where members have particular health needs for special or adapted accommodation, for example, is an important component of housing needs surveys.

**4.158.** Out of the total sample, 35 households (27%) reported that someone in the household had either a disability or long-term illness. The type of illness that households experienced was particularly varied. Complaints such as asthma, high blood pressure, heart condition and arthritis were particularly common. A number of those surveyed had been assessed or in contact with the local authority and were receiving assistance as a result. The vast majority of those who had a health concern also commented on having the support from a GP or as being under the care of a health worker of some kind.

**4.159.** What was most concerning was that when there was a tendency for an individual or household to experience health problems, it was often the case that the household had multiple disabilities or health problems.

**4.160.** What seemed clear was that for some, ill health or disability acted as an impetus to bricks and mortar settlement:

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<sup>28</sup> Again, as above, we enquired about 'Suffolk' generally rather than the 'Suffolk Study Area', which is why Bury St Edmunds is included in the response.

<sup>29</sup> Parry, G., Van Cleemput, P., Peters, J., Moore, J., Walters, S., Thomas, K and Cooper, C. (2004) The Health Status of Gypsies & Travellers in England. Report of Department of Health Inequalities in Health Research Initiative Project 121/7500

*“I’ve got breathing problems, the doctors have been very good. I would be knackered if I didn’t have this house.”*

*“I’ve got a pace maker, I’m diabetic and I’ve got [high] blood pressure. I’m well now but I’m glad I’ve got a stable house to live in now.”*

#### **Accommodation support and related service issues**

**4.161.** In terms of the awareness of the role of housing services, 30% of the sample knew that the council could offer them information, advice and help to access housing. However, many of those asked did not want anything to do with the council services.

**4.162.** The vast majority of respondents considered the council synonymous with being evicted or forced into housed accommodation. Some respondents commented that the council should do more for Gypsies and Travellers even if it is more difficult for them than for non-Traveller/Gypsy families:

*“They don’t build enough sites, they only think in one dimension – houses, not alternatives.”*

*“Some of them try to help and are nice but at the end of the day we are only Gypsies so no one really cares.”*

**4.163.** Many other comments talked about how advice that the council provides to Gypsies and Travellers treats them all the same:

*“They don’t know anything about us, their answer is to move us on or stick us altogether on one site and they are surprised when we move. You don’t want to stay on sites with people you don’t like it’s not fair, we want choice, we are not a herd of sheep.”*

**4.164.** It was unclear from the survey responses how many people were accessing the benefits system.

**4.165.** The vast majority of respondents declined to comment on any question which explored their financial commitments (income levels, benefit take-up, rent levels). As a result it is difficult to arrive at conclusions around household budgeting and affordability issues. However, it is clear from informal conversations outside the formal interviews with respondents that there are differing levels of income and expenditure associated with daily life, in particular rent and service/utility charges.

**4.166.** Few people reported encounters with racism, however a number of people did report incidents which they had construed as discrimination against them because of their Gypsy or Traveller status. These were generally in relation to the local community when travelling or in relation to the council during the eviction process.

**4.167.** The vast majority of people said they did not use public transport. Most people said that when they had needed to travel they used their own car, with a small number of people mentioning that they used the local Park and Ride system when travelling into the local town.

### **Educational issues**

**4.168.** When asked, 90% of the total interview sample thought that education, either in schools or at home, was important or very important for children from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds. Only 6% thought it was not very important, while 4% did not know.

**4.169.** Of the 82 to whom the question of their children’s regular attendance at school was deemed relevant, 46% reported that their children are regular attendees at school, with the remainder reporting that their children do not hold regular attendance or that they do not know if they do. Table 18 below looks at attendance levels and explores some of the differences in attendance by the accommodation type of the household. Those children living on the unauthorised development appear to have the highest levels of regular attendance. In contrast, and quite surprisingly, children who are in relatively stable accommodation of private sites and bricks and mortar housing report low levels of school attendance levels and high levels of irregular attendance. Clearly children who live on unauthorised encampments appear to be irregular attendees at school, but this may be explained by the extent of travelling the household is currently engaged in. Unfortunately the sample size on the council site is perhaps too small to comment.

Table 18: Attendance at school by accommodation type

<b>Accommodation type</b>	<b>Regular attendance</b>	<b>Attendance level (%)</b>
Unauthorised developments	16	89
Council/RSL Sites	3	50
Unauthorised encampments	4	40
Private authorised sites	10	39
Bricks and mortar	5	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>46</b>

**4.170.** When commenting about education for their children, bullying was often cited as a disincentive to attend school.

### **Work, employment and training**

**4.171.** The survey asked a number of questions around the work and employment status of the local Gypsy and Traveller population. This started with a general question about the kinds of work done by Gypsies and Travellers in the surrounding areas. Answers were extremely varied and included work such as building, groundwork, dealing, hawking, roofing, gardening, house painting, farm work and tarmacing. It was clear that many of these trades involved practical skills and reflected the self-employed preferences of the population.

**4.172.** When asked whether or not they, as a household, were currently engaged in any type of work, 86 people indicated that they were. By far the most common response was gardening/landscaping. A number of people were also involved in scrap; tree work; painting and decorating; building; tarmac; or a mixture of these trades. As well as these more traditional trades, however, there was a large diversity in the work people did and many respondents talked about their work in non-traditional Gypsy/Traveller trades and professions such as nursing; dog walking; boat building; leisure services/cinema; lorry driver; and engineering.

**4.173.** Given the lack of information from respondents, it is quite difficult to indicate any patterns with regards to work and travelling; however, from the interviews we found that 26 households currently travelled for work purposes. Not surprisingly, the majority of these (61%) were the respondents interviewed on unauthorised encampments. They were interviewed in Ipswich, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. The type of work they did was mainly farm work, scrap, tarmac and tree work, and people tended to stop on private sites or roadside while travelling for work. When asked about the specific geographical locations they visited, the only responses given were Felixstowe and London, as most indicated that they simply travelled 'all over'. What was clear from the interviews, however, was that the majority of the respondents on unauthorised encampments indicated that they come to this area at least once a year, with some people reporting that they were always in the area.

**4.174.** With regards to those living on private sites, gardening/landscaping was the most common type of work being undertaken. Two people on private sites (from Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk) reported that they travelled for work; however, these were related to travelling fairs.

**4.175.** On the unauthorised development, buying and selling and groundwork were frequently referred to. Three people reported that they currently travelled for work, which was mainly ground work or gardening, but gave no specific locations except Essex.

**4.176.** On the local authority site, one, who was a painter and decorator, reported travelling for work, but again, did not specify where they travelled.

**4.177.** For those living in bricks and mortar accommodation, two of people travelled for work purposes. The places they referred to were Ipswich, Felixstowe and Bury St Edmunds.

**4.178.** Around 19 interviewees out of the sample indicated that they did not work either due to retirement, illness or family responsibilities.

**4.179.** Interviewees were then asked what sort of work they hoped their children would move into in the future. Again, this provided a mixed response and answers varied from '*anything as long as they are happy*', '*anything as long as it pays well*', to general wish for them to be '*self-employed*'. Others mentioned the probability of their children entering 'traditional' or family

business such as scrap dealing, building or landscaping. By far the majority of those interviewed, however, referred to hopes that their children would obtain what some called ‘*proper*’ or ‘*professional*’ jobs. It was clear that education was a main driver behind getting such roles:

*“I hope they go to school or university and find a job that gives them everything they need.”*

*“As little physical work as possible, I want them to study and be a doctor, lawyer or footballer.”*

**4.180.** The survey also asked whether residents had any particular need to store equipment. A total of 38 out of 88 households did have equipment that they needed to store. Such equipment was generally described as various kinds of machinery like generators, welding equipment, gas bottles. In total 50% of those on unauthorised encampments had equipment that they travelled with. This equipment was more often than not related to the production of power for the caravan (generators) but also work-related equipment such as ladders, tools or a work van.

### Household formation rates

**4.181.** The survey asked if there was anyone in the household who was likely to need their own accommodation in the next five year period. The vast majority of those asked (77%) felt that this would not be the case, while 16% of the sample, equating to at least approximately 20 new households by 2011, reported that extra accommodation will be needed. However, as there are often multiple children in a household of similar age it is likely that this is an underestimate. A total of 9 interviewees (6%) did not know if this would be the case.

Table 19: Need for extra accommodation between 2006-2011 by accommodation type

Accommodation type from which need emanates from	Extra accommodation needed in the next 5 yrs	No extra accommodation needed in the next 5 yrs
Bricks and mortar	4	17
Private authorised sites	8	32
Unauthorised encampments	2	24
Unauthorised developments	2	23
Council/RSL Sites	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>99</b>

### Accommodation preferences and aspirations

**4.182.** One of the main sections of the survey with Gypsies and Travellers looked at some of the ways in which they would like to see things changed. Some of these issues have been discussed earlier, however, there are a number of things that are particularly interesting.

## Transit sites in Suffolk

**4.183.** There was significant support from those we spoke to for the added provision of transit sites, 23% of those asked would have liked to see the development of transit sites in Suffolk. Perhaps unsurprisingly over half of those currently on unauthorised encampments wanted to see the development of transit or short-stay sites in the area.

**4.184.** Many said that such sites would be much more preferable to the current alternative as they provide a level of stability particularly in relation to getting work in the area. Most who thought the development of transit sites was a good idea said they would use these as a base to travel to work from, or as a good way of holidaying securely in the area.

**4.185.** In order to gain some idea as to how transit sites could be made more attractive, we were keen to find out what type of site was the preferred option (see Table 20). For those people interested in transit site provision, the preferred option was a site owned and managed by themselves, followed by a council site. Only 2 respondents thought a transit site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller would be a good idea.

Table 20: Type of transit site preferred

Type of transit site preferred	No.	%
Owned by the Council	12	22
Owned by you	17	31
Owned by another Gypsy/Traveller	2	4
Other	8	15
Don't know	15	28

**4.186.** The ideal size of a transit site was commented upon and a variety of responses was given. Most (48%) preferred for there to be no other family/household on the site, while others suggested slightly larger sites with room for 5 -10 pitches, with space for 2 trailers and a vehicle per pitch. Only 6% felt that they would be interested in using sites that were bigger than 11 pitches.

**4.187.** We took suggestions for potential locations for transit sites. Again a wide variety of responses were generated, including those that mentioned the need for a network of sites across, not only Suffolk, but adjoining areas too (Essex, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire). By far the most preferred location would be for somewhere rural and away from busy roads. Apart from Felixstowe there were no specific place preferences provided.

**4.188.** With regards to the kind of facilities transit sites should provide, these are shown in Table 21. Clearly the supply of a hard standing, water and electricity are important facilities which should be present on a site. The provision of the most appropriate facilities (i.e. individual toilets) is seen as preferable to facilities that are not appropriate (i.e. shared toilets).

Table 21: Facilities to be present on a transit site in order of preference

Type of facility	No.	%
Hard standing	62	100
Water supply	60	97
Electricity supply	58	94
Individual plots	56	90
Individual toilets	54	87
Shared toilets	13	21
Chemical disposal	3	5

**4.189.** The length of time that a transit site would be used also varied (see Table 22 below), but a large number of households would find a slightly extended period of time useful, with only 15% saying that they would use such a site for short periods. This perhaps reflects seasonal working opportunities in certain areas of Suffolk, and the desire for guaranteed stability at present.

Table 22: Expected length of stay on a transit site

Length of stay	No.	%
Up to 2 weeks	3	6
Up to 4 weeks	5	9
Up to 8 weeks	6	11
Up to 3 months	12	22
Up to 6 months	8	15
Don't know	20	37

## Residential sites

**4.190.** Only 12 households (9%) were interested in the development of a long-stay residential site in the area. No one on the unauthorised development was interested in additional provision and residents commented that they simply required planning permission for their site. Five households, currently in bricks and mortar housing, would be interested in using a long-stay residential site. In terms of ownership of residential sites, similar to transit sites, the preferred owner would be the Gypsy or Traveller themselves followed, in much smaller numbers, by the council and followed in turn by a site owned by another Traveller or Gypsy.

Table 23: Preference in ownership of residential sites

Type of residential site preferred	No.	%
Owned by you	17	33
Owned by the Council	7	13
Owned by another Gypsy/Traveller	5	10
Other	5	10
Don't know	18	34

**4.191.** Again, similar to transit sites, there was a mixture in preferred site size, with people requesting small sites varying from no other residents apart from their household, up to 5 pitches, 6-10 pitches or 11-20 pitches. Generally, large sites were the least favourable option, except for those households currently on unauthorised encampments. Once again it was noted that pitches would need to be large to account for a variation in

numbers of trailers, including space for travelling guests. Furthermore, some people spoke about the need to provide chalets/bungalows for those people who wanted a more settled way of life but still wanted to be near other Gypsies and Travellers.

**4.192.** We took suggestions for potential locations for residential sites. Again a wide variety of responses were generated but few were location specific apart from the mention of both Ipswich and Felixstowe. Areas on the outskirts of towns and particularly villages were mentioned most frequently. Just under a fifth of respondents would be interested in developing their own site but only 7% of respondents felt that they had the financial capacity to do so.

### **Accommodation preferences**

**4.193.** We asked all the respondents to comment on a number of scenarios which described certain accommodation types, which included:

- A private site owned by them or their family.
- A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller.
- A site owned by the local council.
- A family owned house.
- A local authority or housing association owned house.
- Travelling around and staying on authorised transit sites.
- A 'group housing' type site (mixture of transit/residential/chalet/trailer accommodation).

**4.194.** As Table 24 below shows, by far the most preferred form of accommodation is a private site owned either by themselves or their family. This is followed by a family owned house and followed then by the maintenance of a true travelling way of life, where people move from site to site. Living on a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller was seen as fairly positive, with some people ambivalent about this. Living on a site owned by the council appeared to divide the respondents with around a third saying that this would be either a good or an OK option, whilst a similar proportion said that this was a very poor option for them.

Table 24: Views on type of accommodation preferred

Type of site	%					
	Very Good	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
A private site owned by them or their family	66	17	6	2	2	7
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller	5	26	34	16	9	10
A site owned by the local council	5	28	8	13	38	8
A family owned house	17	34	20	7	15	10
A local authority or housing association owned house	5	7	22	8	52	6
Travelling around on authorised transit sites	26	16	7	8	34	9
'Group housing'	9	13	14	7	38	19

**4.195.** 'Group housing', possibly because few people had actually experienced this, was judged quite negatively and raised quite a few comments including:

*"A lot of travelling families don't get on, they're going to meet on this kind of site and there will be trouble all the time. I wouldn't risk it."*

*"What a stupid idea, you might as well stick us in houses and let us keep our trailers in the gardens."*

*"A mixture of travellers coming and going all the time is not a good idea."*

*"I don't like the idea of it, I wouldn't want my children there."*

## **5. ASSESSMENT OF ACCOMMODATION NEED**

**5.1.** This section summarises the key findings of the research with particular attention given to the issues arising concerning accommodation supply and need across the Study Area as outlined in Chapter 4.

### **Accommodation need and supply**

**5.2.** Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Even though the supply of authorised accommodation has declined since 1994, the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Instead, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, with increases in unauthorised accommodation, innovative house dwelling arrangements (living in trailers in the grounds of houses), overcrowding on sites and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).

**5.3.** There is every indication that the Study Area will share in this national growth as a result of its long-standing Gypsy and Traveller community, its proximity to key transport links and attractive urban and rural localities. The survey of Gypsy and Traveller families has indicated that older Gypsy and Traveller families already in the area will want to form new households, preferably near their families already across the Study Area.

### **The supply of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation**

**5.4.** Chapter 4 looked at the likely supply of accommodation. This includes accommodation options likely to become available through current pitch vacancies, pitch turnover and currently committed developments.

**5.5.** All sites which are known to be open, to the best of our knowledge, are understood as being at a consistent 100% occupancy. The West Meadows site has a turn over rate which equates to around 5 pitches each year becoming vacant. Currently all these are re-let by offering pitches to households on the waiting list.

### **A note on pitch turnover**

**5.6.** Although the local authority site has an estimated annual pitch turn-over of around 5 pitches a year, this should not be relied upon as a way in which identified need can be accommodated over the coming years. It was suggested by a number of respondents that some people on the unauthorised development, in bricks and mortar accommodation, on private sites, and on unauthorised encampments have chosen to leave the local authority site (for whatever reason), but remain within the local authority, sub-region or regional boundaries. Therefore, relying upon pitch vacancies of local authorities as a source of pitch availability will only entail a cycle of accommodation need, as those vacating the site continue to live within the Study Area on/in another

form of accommodation. In addition, in the climate of current under-provision it is important to continue investment into existing local authority sites in order to provide more Gypsies and Travellers with financially viable accommodation options.

### **The need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision**

**5.7.** Given present trends, behaviour of Gypsies and Travellers, and local policies, supply of appropriate accommodation appears to be significantly less than the 'need' identified. It is the conclusion of the project team that this suggests a requirement for more accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers across the Suffolk Study Area. The section below looks in depth at this and considers both residential and transient need, firstly at a Suffolk Study Area level and then at a district level.

**5.8.** As the Gypsy and Traveller survey was conducted between August 2006 and January 2007, we believe that we were fortunate enough to consult both traditional 'Summer' and 'Winter' travelling patterns.

**5.9.** Chapter 4 looked at the main drivers of 'need/demand' across the Study Area against a number of factors:

- current shortfall of pitches represented by families on authorised sites who are over-crowded and/or doubled up. These equate with 'concealed' households or 'involuntary sharers' in mainstream housing assessments;
- need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments;
- need for authorised residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments;
- allowance for family growth over the assessment period (2006-2011) among Gypsies and Travellers on authorised sites;
- allowance for net movement over the assessment period between sites and housing (could be negative or positive);
- allowance for net movement over the assessment period between the Study Area and elsewhere (could be negative or positive);
- allowance for potential closure of existing sites;
- need/demand as shown by current site waiting lists;
- need for accommodation from new household formation over the next period (2011-2016); and

- need for authorised transit accommodation from unauthorised encampments.

**5.10.** The following break-down of need is done descriptively and illustratively at a Suffolk Study Area level initially. Actual numbers of net residential need from 2006 – 2011 can be seen in Table 25; actual numbers of net transit need from 2006-2011 can be found in Table 26. Estimations of future residential need between 2011-2016, applied at a Suffolk Study Area only, can be found in Table 27.

***Need from over-crowded, doubled up/concealed households***

**5.11.** The analysis of the survey findings indicate that there is a backlog of current need due to households that are over-crowded and the presence of doubled up or concealed households. From the LA survey and the Gypsy and Traveller survey this equates to a minimum of 5 pitches from West Meadows and 8 from households on the unauthorised development (Mid Suffolk). **Total need equals 13 pitches.**

***Need for authorised pitches from unauthorised developments***

**5.12.** In general terms, the survey suggests that the number of private sites has increased since 2000 across the Study Area through the operation of the planning system. However, the majority of planning applications are refused or are not granted on appeal, suggesting some unsatisfied demand for site development.

**5.13.** Households who were interviewed on the unauthorised development wanted to remain where they were. These respondents preferred family-run sites and wanted to stay in the area where they currently lived. It is considered that the presence of unauthorised developments demonstrates a commitment to remain in a particular area, thus demonstrating the need for authorised residential provision. At the time of the survey there was 1 unauthorised development (in Mid Suffolk) comprising of approximately 19 pitches. Therefore, total need for authorised pitches from unauthorised developments is **19 pitches.**

***Need for authorised residential accommodation from unauthorised encampments***

**5.14.** Guidance from CLG indicates that those households classified as unauthorised encampments should be regarded as being in housing need. However, it is possible that as well as some households being effectively 'homeless on wheels', some households are merely passing through (i.e. cultural tradition or stop-over) or visiting the area for a particular period of time for a particular reason (i.e. work, holiday, or family event). In these cases the households concerned may have other accommodation either inside or outside the Study Area, or have a need for residential accommodation outside the Study Area. In terms of this latter group these are considered below for need for transient accommodation.

**5.15.** The survey of Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments at the time of survey indicated that 25% of the households interviewed were actively looking for residential accommodation across the Study Area. In order to be as clear as possible when calculating the need for residential sites from unauthorised encampments, due to the lack of reliable data, we have provided an indication of the potential range of need. Therefore, we have provided a base range figure (derived from the Caravan Count<sup>30</sup> and divided by a 1.7 caravans to household ratio) and an upper figure (derived from the Gypsy and Traveller survey). These calculations indicate a **need for between 3 - 7 authorised residential pitches** for households who would otherwise be on unauthorised encampments.

**5.16.** It must be noted that 11% of households were unsure as to whether they would like residential accommodation across the Study Area. If these households decided to seek accommodation across the Study Area the households in need of residential accommodation could increase by around 1-3 additional pitches.

**5.17.** New Travellers have been excluded from this assessment of pitch provision largely because of the small sample size and, therefore, the lack of robust information about this group. However, because New Travellers are a significant presence in certain areas, particularly Suffolk Coastal, it is important to provide a broad indication as to the level of residential need from this group. It must be noted that in highlighting New Travellers here it is not the intention that this group be provided preferential treatment. Rather, this distinction has been drawn because New Travellers have been counted separately from other Gypsy and Traveller groups in the past and underlining their needs and the size of the population aims to provide even greater accuracy and transparency as to the level of accommodation needed.

**5.18.** Similar to other Gypsy and Traveller groups, the numbers of New Travellers across the Study Area increases in the Summer months. However, in the Winter months there remains a significant presence of New Travellers within the area. The 'known' numbers of New Traveller accommodation (caravans, vans, buses, etc.) is estimated to be, on average, around 45 (01/2005 = 51; 01/2006 = 28; 01/2007 = 56) which equates to roughly 26 households<sup>31</sup>. From information we received from key stakeholders and New Travellers this population can be seen as very sedentary when compared to other Gypsy or Traveller groups. It therefore seems sensible to suggest that an **additional 26 pitches** should be developed in order to accommodate this resident New Traveller population.

**5.19.** Therefore, at a Suffolk Study Area level, there is a need for around **29 – 34 pitches from households currently on unauthorised encampments**. Due to concerns about the Caravan Count noted earlier in Chapter 2 these calculations must be regarded as a minimum indication of provision and in practice this number is expected to increase.

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<sup>30</sup> Excluding the 'known' number of New Traveller caravans/households.

<sup>31</sup> Based entirely upon information received from Suffolk Coastal.

***Need for accommodation from new household formation over the next five years (2006-2011)***

**5.20.** From the survey there was at least 20 new households identified who will require independent accommodation by 2011. In addition, the LA survey indicated that there were at least 20 children who will have reached and passed the approximate household formation age (around 18 years) by 2011. Accounting for the possibility that the Gypsy and Traveller survey has identified 10 such children, the total estimated need for accommodation from new household formation between 2006-2011 is **30 pitches**.

***Need from net movement between sites and bricks and mortar housing***

**5.21.** Some Gypsies and Travellers on authorised sites would prefer to live in bricks and mortar housing. At the same time, some Gypsies and Travellers desire to move in the other direction, from houses to sites.

**5.22.** The movement between bricks and mortar housing and site accommodation is incredibly difficult to provide a figure for, due to a number of reasons:

- Future improvements in housing services, referrals, housing policies and practices may show bricks and mortar accommodation, in particular social housing, to be a more attractive option for some current caravan dwellers;
- If bricks and mortar housing is designed more appropriately to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers (i.e. 'group housing' schemes, houses with space for caravans and facilities) housing may be a more viable alternative;
- An increase in options to live on sites may provide increased opportunities for current house dwellers to leave their house and return to site accommodation (either for residential or travelling purposes); and
- Improvements in site conditions and management may also serve to encourage people to return to site accommodation (either for residential or travelling purposes).

**5.23.** As some indication of numbers is requested, the following aims to provide authorities with some indication as to possible movement between bricks and mortar and site accommodation.

**5.24.** From the findings in the current climate of site provision 31% of households had plans to leave their bricks and mortar accommodation and return to site accommodation in the next 5 years. In addition, a further 32% of people were unsure about whether they would remain in their accommodation if there were opportunities to move onto new, improved and appropriate site

accommodation. In the absence of more robust data as to the current 'known' population of Gypsies and Travellers we have used our survey data to indicate that there are at least 23 bricks and mortar dwelling households across the Study Area. Although we presume this to be a significant underestimate.<sup>32</sup> However, this indicates that at least 7 households, currently in bricks and mortar accommodation, intend to return to site accommodation in the near future with a further 6 choosing to move into site accommodation if space became available.

**5.25.** In addition, the survey found a number of people who were currently on site accommodation who would be interested in living in bricks and mortar dwelling if houses were appropriate to their needs. This equates to 19 households. Because of the hypothetical nature of these movements (if site accommodation becomes available and if housing is more appropriate) we have only taken into consideration those households who had plans to move out of their accommodation within the next five years. It is estimated therefore that **7 households from bricks and mortar accommodation will require residential site provision.**

#### ***Allowance for movement between the Suffolk Study Area and elsewhere***

**5.26.** It remains unclear from the findings if movement from areas other than the Suffolk Study Area will affect the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring residential accommodation across the Study Area. Although a number of households indicated a desire to live elsewhere in the UK, these families tended to currently be those on unauthorised encampments who intended to maintain a travelling way of life.

**5.27.** In terms of the immediate future it is estimated that there will be negligible requirement for Gypsies and Travellers from elsewhere requiring residential accommodation in the area. It is also felt that those Gypsies and Travellers who are currently in Suffolk will travel to other areas for short periods only. It must be highlighted however, that the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) will be better placed to consider movement between areas when a strategic view of accommodation options across the region is taken.

#### ***Allowance for potential closure of public and private sites***

**5.28.** Plans to close existing sites which have been calculated within the supply of site accommodation will ultimately displace a number of Gypsies and Travellers and this will mean an increased number of households in housing need.

**5.29.** One of the private sites is currently closed and this may have already had an impact on the displacement of households across the Study Area and beyond. Clearly the re-opening of this site would assist the authority (Mid Suffolk) in helping to meet accommodation need within their locality.

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<sup>32</sup> From indications by Traveller Education Support Services

However, as the authority has no ownership over this land this cannot be seen as a source of potential supply.

### ***Need as determined by site waiting lists***

**5.30.** There are currently 25 known applicants registered for the West Meadows site. As a result of the factors already included in the assessment (concealed households, unauthorised developments and encampments), and as Gypsies and Travellers often feature on multiple waiting lists, this has not been used as an indicator of need. Because we have managed to consult with a significant proportion of the resident Gypsy and Traveller population using this waiting list to demonstrate additional need makes it likely that need would be double counted as a number of people have already been assessed.

### ***Need for accommodation from new household formation over the next period (2011-2016)***

**5.31.** Given the current national shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, it is difficult to accurately predict trends in Gypsy and Traveller living arrangements once GTAAs across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site provision. There is no way 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 and/or household formation may happen at a later age. However, in order to take a strategic view it is important to be able to plan for the longer-term. At present, the best assumption to be made for a period when the current backlog of site need has been cleared, is a household growth rate of 3% a year compound<sup>33</sup>.

**5.32.** By taking this measure this indicates that there will be approximately **34 households requiring residential pitches between 2011-2016.**

### ***Need for authorised transit accommodation from unauthorised encampments***

**5.33.** Establishing need for transit accommodation is notoriously difficult given the unpredictable and volatile nature, coupled with the difficulties in achieving an accurate picture as to the extent of encampments across the Study Area. This study however attempts to quantify the need for transit accommodation in the Study Area.

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<sup>33</sup> Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. In the Republic of Ireland a report noted that the 4% family growth rate assumed by the Task Force on the Travelling Community had proved very accurate between 1997 and 2004 (*Review of the Operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998*. Report by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, (2004).

**5.34.** However, similar to residential need, the survey of Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments indicated that 64% of the households would choose to retain a travelling way of life in some form, with the majority of these households choosing to stay in the Study Area if provided with the opportunity.

**5.35.** In order to be as clear as possible when calculating the need for transit sites from unauthorised encampments, we have provided an indication of the potential range of need. As before, we provide a base range figure (derived from the Caravan Count<sup>34</sup> and divided by a 1.7 caravans to household ratio) and an upper figure (derived from the Gypsy and Traveller survey). These calculations indicate, therefore, that at a Suffolk Study Area level there is a need for between **7-19 authorised transit pitches** for households who would otherwise be on unauthorised encampments.

Although there is some suggestion that there are more New Travellers travelling to the Study Area during the Summer months there is a lack of robust data available to provide any reliable estimation. It is therefore difficult to provide any indication as to the numbers of New Travellers who require some form of short-stay accommodation however; authorities will need to take this into consideration in developing accommodation options.

**5.36.** These numbers relate only to the provision of pitches on a single short-stay, time-limited, site. Clearly the provision of a single transit site makes little sense in order to accommodate the diverse needs and characteristics of a diverse population.

**5.37.** As a result of time-limits on site occupants which will need to be enforced, it will be necessary to provide a network of pitches across the Study Area which people could use, thus providing a new range of travelling options for potential users. For example, if one site has an upper time limit of 4 consecutive weeks per stay, as the travelling patterns indicate from the survey of Gypsies and Travellers, it may be necessary to develop a variety of transit sites across the Study Area in order to cover the main travelling months of April-October<sup>35</sup>. The suggestion, therefore, is that 5 sites of between 8-12 pitches each are developed; equalling **between 42-60 transit pitches**.

**5.38.** However, as the reasons for travelling are diverse so too must methods be developed to accommodate these. In order to accommodate some of these short-term visitors to residential sites, consideration should be given to developing larger pitches on sites and/or developing a small transit area on residential sites for short-term use by family and friends of site residents. It is also suggested that authorities consider that some Gypsies and Travellers will be 'holidaying' or visiting and only wish to remain 'in transit' for up to 3 or 4 weeks. Others may be 'in transit' for much longer (6 months) because of work and employment opportunities in the area. Mechanisms will be needed to

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<sup>34</sup> Excluding the known number of New Traveller caravans/households as the 'known' population of New Travellers have been accounted for with need for residential accommodation.

<sup>35</sup> Although sites (some or all) would remain open all year round but would accommodate smaller numbers of Gypsies and Travellers.

accommodate this. Clearly, if a range of options are developed to meet the various needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community, there will be less need for tangible ‘transit sites’.

**5.39.** In addition, as the survey showed it is not uncommon for there to be sporadic large encampments travelling at any one time. It is suggested that authorities should develop a range of options to meet the needs for such eventualities (i.e. designated stopping places on private or public land). Importance here should also be on accountability, both of the user to show conduct of an appropriate and ‘respectful’ manner and the authority/land owner for ‘respectful’ and considerate management (i.e. meeting basic needs for Gypsies and Travellers – water, power, WC facilities).

**5.40.** Importantly, more Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. As we don’t yet have a clear idea as to how increased levels of provision, as indicated by GTAAs nationally, will impact on travelling patterns, this must be kept under constant review and transit sites/pitches be introduced incrementally and their use evaluated.

Table 25: Need for residential pitches at a Suffolk Study Area level 2006-2011

<b>Driver of residential site need/demand</b>	<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>
Concealed/doubled-up household	13
Unauthorised developments	19
Unauthorised encampments	29-34
Household formation	30
Movement from bricks and mortar housing	7
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>98-103</b>
<b>Supply of residential pitches</b>	
	<b>No. of pitches 2006-2011</b>
Current pitch turnover (5 pitches per year)	25
<b>Need/demand less supply</b>	<b>73 - 78</b>

Table 26: Need for transit site pitches at a Suffolk Study Area level 2006-2011<sup>36</sup>

<b>Driver of transit site need/demand</b>	<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>
Unauthorised encampments	42-60
<b>Total transit pitches required</b>	<b>42-60</b>

<sup>36</sup> Figures for transit site provision have only been given for the period 2006-2011 as a result of the currently unpredictable, volatile and presently hypothetical use of transit provision. Any estimation in the growth of transit site/pitch usage beyond this date would not be based on reliable evidence.

Table 27: Estimated residential need from future population growth 2011-2016 across the Suffolk Study Area

Estimated (minimum) residential Gypsy and Traveller Household population on pitches as of 2011	<b>211-216<sup>37</sup></b>
Increase in household population 3% pa 2011 -2016	<b>34</b>
Estimated pitch occupying household population for the Study Area by 2016	<b>245-250</b>
Estimated new residential pitches required 2011-2016	<b>34</b>

### **Suffolk Study Area district level need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision**

**5.41.** The following outlines the need for site provision arising at the district or unitary authority level between 2006-2016. Firstly, by simply interpreting survey findings into pitch numbers on a district by district basis and then by offering some interpretation based upon a strategic view of accommodation provision.

**5.42.** For this approach, given the relatively small sample sizes in some of these districts and the greater reliability of the broader sample for the entire Suffolk Study Area, the assumptions developed at a broader level have been applied to calculate more local need. This is particularly the case for unauthorised encampments and bricks and mortar movement. For example, where 25% of unauthorised encampments have indicated a desire to remain in the area in the larger sample (rather than a percentage derived from much lower, or non-existent, numbers of interviews with households in that district), this percentage has been used to determine local need.

**5.43.** Table 28 provides the distribution of extra pitch provision as identified by the assessment across the Suffolk Study Area for the period 2006-2011. As can be seen, authorities present some varied patterns of need.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Comprised of: 41 Households on council sites; 72 Households – Private sites; 19 – Unauthorised developments; 29-34 – Unauthorised encampments; 7 – Bricks and mortar; 30 – Household formation; 13 – concealed households.

<sup>38</sup> The reasoning behind these allocations is presented in more depth in Appendix 3 where, in order to be as transparent as possible when making these calculations, pitch numbers have been presented to the decimal place. However in Table 28, in order to see how these estimations manifest themselves in practical terms, these numbers have been rounded up to whole pitches.

Table 28: Residential and transit accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller populations 2006-2011

Authority	Total residential need in pitches (1)	Supply of pitches (turnover) (2)	Total residential need (3) = (1) – (2)	Estimated transit pitch need (+/- 2) (4)	Total pitch need (3) + (4)
Babergh	1	Nil	1	10	11
Ipswich	26 – 28	25	1-3	10	11-13
Mid-Suffolk	41 - 43	Information not available	41-43	10	51-53
Suffolk Coastal	30-32	Nil	30-32	10	40-42
Waveney	1	Information not available	1	10	11
<b>Total<sup>39</sup></b>	<b>99-105</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>74-80</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>124-130</b>

5.44. Table 29 provides the distribution of extra pitch provision as identified by the assessment across the Suffolk Study Area for the period 2011-2016.

Table 29: Residential accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller populations 2011-2016<sup>40</sup>

Authority	Total residential need in pitches (1)	Supply of pitches (turnover) (2) <sup>41</sup>	Total residential need (3) = (1) – (2)
Babergh	Nil	Information not available	Nil
Ipswich	11	Information not available	11
Mid-Suffolk	14-15	Information not available	14-15
Suffolk Coastal	5	Information not available	5
Waveney	3	Information not available	3

### A cautionary note on local pitch allocation

5.45. The Suffolk Study Area assessment of additional need has been calculated as accurately as possible based upon the information available at the time of the assessment. We are confident that this assessment of need reflects the minimum requirement for additional permanent pitch provision for the entire area. However, there remains a deeper discussion in terms of identifying need at a more local level.

<sup>39</sup> Rounding numbers up/down to meet the smaller populations means that there is some inevitable discrepancy (1-2 units) between the broader sample and the local sample.

<sup>40</sup> Rounding numbers up/down to meet the smaller populations means that there is some inevitable discrepancy between the broader sample and the local sample.

<sup>41</sup> As a result of the potential changing pattern of provision over the 2006-2011 period, estimating the potential supply of pitches (based on pitch turnover) beyond this point (2011 onwards) may present an inaccurate (under/over) assessment; for this reason past supply is not taken as a guide for possible future supply.

**5.47.** 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 local authority in the country, there are no socially rented sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Over time this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see offering the best life chances, i.e. an authority which provides a site or an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others, or an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friend and family resident etc.).

**5.48.** Therefore, there is a tendency when the need for additional accommodation is assessed for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision i.e. authorities which are already providing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed to have a greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities which have little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer the term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016). As a result, need where it is seen to arise is not necessarily a sustainable indicator of where the need for sites actually is.

**5.49.** Therefore although, as requested in the research brief we have identified Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs by local authority areas, should the authorities take a more strategic view the results of this apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to be an assessment that those needs be actually met in that form in that specific locality.

**5.50.** Although for some authorities meeting need where it appears to arise sounds the most equitable, this may lead to unsustainable development (as a result of land availability, changing Gypsy and Traveller preferences, community tension). As a result, sites currently in high demand will remain over subscribed, while new sites may lay empty and unauthorised encampments and developments may continue at similar levels.

**5.51.** These issues are discussed along with recommendations for the authorities in the next chapter.

## **6. OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1.** The following chapter is divided into two main sections. The first looks at site provision and looks at the implications of two broad options; option 1 - a continuation of the status quo and option 2, in line with other recommendations from neighbouring GTAAs, a more pro-active approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision. The second section presents a number of recommendations based upon the findings. The chapter then closes with some brief concluding remarks.

### **Options for site provision**

#### **Option 1: the status quo**

**6.2.** The first option for the authorities to consider would be to maintain the status quo. In terms of accommodation available this would broadly involve:

- No additional public site/pitch provision. Pitches on the current site in Ipswich would come available through current natural turnover and these would then be let according to current allocation policies and practices;
- Receiving applications for the development of private Gypsy or Traveller sites. Past records suggest that these will often be unsuccessful as they will be in locations deemed inappropriate for site development. It is likely that these will stimulate long processes of refusals, enforcement, appeals and inquiries;
- A continuation, and possible increase, in the number of unauthorised developments occurring across the Study Area; and
- The continuation and eventual increase in the number of unauthorised encampments across the Study Area.

**6.3.** The implications of such an option include:

- The various needs that have been identified during the course of this assessment will not be met;
- Households which are currently suppressed and new households which are forming will not be able to locate appropriate accommodation across the Study Area;
- Families living on unauthorised encampments will continue to experience poor living conditions and poor access to basic services;

- The legal and other costs of accommodating unauthorised sites continue and may increase;<sup>42</sup>
- Any current community cohesion between members of the non-Traveller community and Travelling communities may be put under pressure as unauthorised developments and encampments occur repeatedly across the Study Area;
- The authorities fail to promote equality and good race relations; and
- The authorities fail to meet the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; which outlines the requirement for plans to be developed in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

### **Option 2: an increase in pitch/site provision**

**6.4.** The recommendation from this assessment is that the authorities' concerned aim to work in a pro-active fashion to meet the accommodation needs which have been identified as a result of this assessment. Before 2011 there is a need for between 73 – 78 new residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and somewhere between 42 – 60 pitches in order to accommodate more transient Gypsies and Travellers.

**6.5.** The following aims to offer the authorities concerned a number of recommendations emerging during the course of this assessment as to how the need identified can be best met. This looks firstly at the broader regional/County level, then moves onto looking at some of the overarching recommendations grounded in the assessment analysis and findings. Finally, a brief commentary and recommendations are offered at a more locally specific level for each authority.

### **Recommendations at a regional/County level**

**6.6.** Clearly each of the authorities need to develop their own responses to this need in order to provide locally intelligent accommodation options for resident Gypsy and Traveller households; however, the Region, Sub-Region and County have important, strategic and facilitating roles to play in order to support local authorities in creating pitch provision.

***Recommendation 1:*** The authorities, which comprise the Study Area, should seek to address the under provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation by working across administrative boundaries both sub-regionally and across regional boundaries.

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<sup>42</sup> Bristol City Council used to spend £200,000 a year on enforcing against unauthorised encampments. Since spending £425,000 on providing a site, they have seen these costs drop to just £5000 a year, meaning that in less than three years this site paid for itself. Meg Munn (1 March 2007) Planning for Gypsies and Travellers. Royal Town and Planning Institute Conference.

**Recommendation 2:** It is important that the sub-regional housing boards and the County-wide Gypsy and Traveller Working Group are utilised effectively in order to provide support to each authority with pitch provision.

## General recommendations

**6.7.** There are a number of general issues that apply to all local authority areas. These recommendations are divided into 5 themes; communication, dialogue and engagement; developing accommodation; accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers; strategies, policies and systems; and related service issues.

### Communication and engagement

#### *With the Gypsy and Traveller community*

**6.8.** Communication with local Gypsy and Traveller households will be imperative during the coming years of change and upheaval caused by an increase in accommodation provision (both locally and nationally). Such communication will require co-ordination and sensitivity.

**6.9.** The experience and contacts achieved by the Community Interviewers who were involved in this study may provide excellent opportunities for the authorities to begin such dialogue and exchanges.

**6.10.** A number of stakeholders commented that the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller led engagement group, which could link into existing structures such as community engagement networks and the local strategic partnership, would be a useful way forward for both the authorities and Gypsy and Traveller community in order to formalise consultation and engagement processes.

**Recommendation 3:** Authorities should develop their communication and engagement strategies already in place for consultation with non-Travelling communities and apply these in an appropriate manner to Gypsy and Traveller community members.

**6.11.** There is a need to develop a more constructive dialogue between Gypsies and Travellers seeking to develop private sites and planning authorities. Initial and appropriate discussions with the planning authority could avoid the economic fallout which occurs when land is developed and planning permission is later refused.

**Recommendation 4:** Planning departments should offer appropriate advice and support to Gypsies and Travellers on the workings of the planning system, and the criteria to be considered in applications.

### ***With the 'settled' community***

**6.12.** The process of developing sites for Gypsies and Travellers provides an opportunity to begin a clear and transparent dialogue with members of the 'settled community' including local residents and parish and district councillors.

***Recommendation 5:*** There is a need to engage in efforts to raise cultural awareness issues and dispel some of the persistent myths around Gypsies and Travellers.

### ***Within and across districts and counties***

**6.13.** Our experience of collecting data about the Gypsy and Traveller community across each authority has highlighted that certain integral sections of some local authorities are more involved in Gypsy and Traveller issues than others.

***Recommendation 6:*** Each authority should develop communication networks within the authority involving all key partners, in order to remain updated as to key issues. For instance, housing colleagues should be fully involved in all decisions relating to planning and site provision.

**6.14.** Crucially there is a need for communication across districts, Counties and sub-regions in order to develop joined-up and sustainable options for accommodation provision.

***Recommendation 7:*** The Suffolk Study Area authorities need to engage in communication within the Study Area, as well as with the remaining Suffolk authorities and the authorities in Essex and Norfolk, in particular, which border their districts.

### ***Accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers***

**6.15.** Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life - even if only to fairs or to 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.

**6.16.** Currently 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 as well as difficulties in accessing education and health services.

**6.17.** It is clear, however, that travelling and resulting unauthorised encampment are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and

Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices the development of sites need to accommodate the diversity of travelling. Provision of an inappropriate form of transit/transient accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampment (i.e. a mixture of residential and transit provision may not work in all cases because of possible community tension between 'settled' and 'highly mobile' Gypsies and Travellers, or varying reasons for travelling).

**6.18.** In addition, the authorities that make up the Study Area appear to be attractive areas for seasonal/short stay travelling. Although calculations have been produced such seasonal travelling is difficult to quantify need in terms of pitch provision, so the authorities of Suffolk will need to develop a range of appropriate strategies to meet this unpredictable need. It is, therefore, important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. Gypsies and Travellers in transit can be accommodated in a variety of ways depending upon the size of the travelling population, their desired geographical location, motivation for travelling and expected duration of stay.

***Recommendation 8:*** There needs to be a variety in transit/transient provision in order to cater for the variety of needs. This might range from formal transit sites, through less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis to temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year. Authorities might also consider the use of a combination of measures including designated stopping places, areas on private, public and industrial land with transit facilities, rural locations etc. as well as other innovative possibilities.

***Recommendation 9:*** In some cases it may be appropriate to develop larger pitches on residential sites to provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term friends and family of site residents. This should be done with close consultation of the site residents as visitors to any residential accommodation can seriously impact upon the community equilibrium.

***Recommendation 10:*** At least one new transit site should be developed as a pilot scheme, across the Study Area, in the near future and the authorities should monitor its usage and management in order to learn lessons for further provision in each district.

***Recommendation 11:*** Mass gatherings can pose significant issues for authorities because of their size and often their short-notice characteristics. There is a need to work across districts, with private landowners and key Gypsy and Traveller groups in order to provide feasible and appropriate options.

**6.19.** Moreover, the provision of transit/short-stay accommodation needs careful 'joined-up' planning. As the assessment has shown, travelling occurs at various scales, sub-regionally, regional and internationally. County Councils and RPBs such as the East of England Regional Assembly are in a unique position in order to plan, devise and implement a network of transit accommodation between the local authorities across the region. In addition,

the provision of transit/transient accommodation is an area of opportunity where RPBs can work with adjoining regions to pool information and to ensure that proposals make sense in the wider context.

### **Developing accommodation**

**6.20.** This research has made estimates of need for additional permanent accommodation provision over the next five and ten year period, in order to address current shortfalls and family growth. Clearly the process of developing the accommodation to meet this need will require significant funding, much of which will be directed at the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant held by Communities and Local Government. In terms of the process of developing extra accommodation provision across the Study Area, the view received from all groups emphasised the need to create permanent residential accommodation as a priority. A number of stakeholders noted that until the need for residential accommodation was satisfied it will be challenging to develop transit accommodation/sites/places without them turning into residential sites by default.

**6.21.** It is crucial that the Gypsy and Traveller population are provided with choice and a range of options for future accommodation. Authorities should not solely rely on the planning system in order to meet their identified pitch need as this may serve to exclude those less economically active/mobile households.

***Recommendation 12:*** The tenure aspirations and preferences of Gypsies and Travellers need to be understood and policies and practices developed to work with these. Many households wanted to be owner-occupiers but few households could actually afford to do this. Discounted for sale and shared ownership practices are methods which may help increase the economic mobility and engender a sense of belonging of Gypsy and Traveller households.

***Recommendation 13:*** The principles and methods used by authorities and RSLs of promoting affordable accommodation to members of the non-Traveller communities should be adapted to the accommodation used by members of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

**6.22.** As this study and others have shown, sites are often situated in poor environments with poor amenities and access to services and facilities. If a site is developed inappropriately this may only serve to maintain incidences of unauthorised encampments.

***Recommendation 14:*** It is important that those involved in the planning, design and development of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation involve the target Gypsy and Traveller population in all stages. This is particularly in relation to the identification of suitable site locations and design of the site/accommodation itself.

**Recommendation 15:** There is a need for those involved in site design (both residential and transit) and bricks and mortar design to approach this in a creative and innovative manner. It is clear that Gypsy and Traveller sites and houses need to be able to meet the needs of their potential residents. Information has been collected as to the preferences of Gypsies and Travellers in relation to site accommodation during this survey and site developers should take these factors into consideration. Important things to consider include:

- Location to local services and transport networks;
- Pitch size;
- Amenities;
- Sheds;
- Management;
- Mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer etc.);
- Utility of outside space (driveways, gardens etc.);
- Homes for life principles;
- Health and safety
- Mobility and health issues; and
- Tenure mix.

**6.23.** Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most diverse groupings in UK society. This diversity can at times lead to potential conflict.

**Recommendation 16:** Authorities need to understand the diversity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities and embrace this diversity when developing accommodation and allocating pitches.

### **Strategies, policies and systems**

**6.24.** There is both a short-term and a longer-term need to ensure that the various applicable strategies, policies and systems are complimentary and meet the requirements of the various legislation and the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. There are a number of recommendations around developing such strategies, policies and systems.

**Recommendation 17:** There is a need for a standardised and centralised method of recording occurrences of unauthorised encampments and the needs of those households on these encampments. Authorities need to take a pro-active approach and should not be prompted by either the Caravan Count submission or complaints from the settled community.

**Recommendation 18:** The role of enforcement and liaison between the authority and members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities needs to be separated in order for there to be clear and trusted channels of communication available.

**Recommendation 19:** Authorities need to ensure that each district has at least one dedicated officer who co-ordinates the various duties of the authority and responsibilities in Gypsy and Traveller issues.

**6.25.** A number of stakeholders thought that there should be a district level liaison worker, separate from enforcement and management, who would be able to represent Gypsy and Traveller views to the authorities and offer advice on planning, housing and welfare issues to Gypsies and Travellers. Each liaison worker would work in partnership with the broader County role.

**6.26.** The process of gaining access to accommodation needs to be as transparent as possible in order to avoid bias or the perception of bias in order to retain positive social cohesion and partnership working on sites. In addition, the specific needs of Black and Minority ethnic sections of the Gypsy and Traveller Community should also be acknowledged and addressed.

**Recommendation 20:** Accessibility of site accommodation waiting lists needs to be improved and disseminated to all Gypsies and Travellers resident across the Study Area.

**Recommendation 21:** Site waiting lists should be formalised, standardised and held in a central location in order to monitor fluctuations in need/demand for accommodation and deal equitably with potential future residents.

**Recommendation 22:** Site waiting lists (for both residential and transit) should make good use of ICT systems. For example, an online or telephone system of booking pitches prior to travelling which is accessible for Gypsies and Travellers.

**Recommendation 23:** Housing officers, site managers and other relevant personnel should liaise to ensure that advice on allocation policies and procedures is always up-to-date and that site managers or other liaison staff can assist people through the system.

**6.27.** Similarly, although many households reported a desire to maintain or return to a caravan/site based way of life there will be a number of households for whom bricks and mortar housing is the preference. The consultation with Gypsies and Travellers revealed a number of issues in relation to gaining access to appropriate accommodation. In turn there are a number of recommendations relating to this.

**Recommendation 24:** Allocation policies should be sensitive to the cultural needs of Gypsies and Travellers when making offers of accommodation.

**6.28.** Gypsies and Travellers often experience disbenefits when attempting to access bricks and mortar accommodation due to problems they have with reregistering for housing and the requirements for prospective tenants to demonstrate local connections.

**Recommendation 25:** Each authority needs to ensure that their allocation policy, housing register and emerging Choice Based Lettings systems do not unwittingly discriminate against Gypsies and Travellers accessing bricks and mortar housing. Such policies should be reviewed with this in mind.

**6.29.** Authorities will need to recognise that a homogenous approach to homeless presentations may mean that Gypsies and Travellers are unintentionally provided with a disincentive to declare themselves as homeless. Findings from the Gypsy and Traveller survey suggest that the authorities may be less approachable than they could be.

**Recommendation 26:** Authorities need to be sensitive to the different cultural and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers who may present as homeless.

**Recommendation 27:** Authorities should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are recognised in all of their ethnic monitoring forms, most urgently in relation to housing and planning.

**Recommendation 28:** Authorities should adapt and, where possible, assimilate their housing policies with the needs and living arrangements of Gypsy and Traveller households.

**Recommendation 29:** All racial harassment policies should explicitly recognise the potential needs of Gypsies and Travellers and all policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers need to ensure they comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

**Recommendation 30:** Authorities should ensure that socially rented accommodation remain affordable. Rent levels and size of a damage deposit will need to be considered in order to provide realistic, financially viable, accommodation options.

### **Related service issues**

**6.30.** The indications are that although the sample for this study generally experienced few incidences of ill health and disability, when this was not the case the suggestions are that health needs are a significant factor in influencing accommodation need. This affects decisions to continue to reside on 'sites', which without support were seen as difficult to do so, or houses where adaptations were easier to accommodate. There were a number of issues which emerged during the assessment which would improve the life of a number of Gypsies and Travellers and provide different sections of the communities with independence. There are a number of recommendations here.

**Recommendation 31:** It will be an important component, in order to produce sustainable solutions for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision that all relevant statutory departments engage with Gypsy and Traveller needs. This is particularly the case for Supporting People teams who should be embedded in the strategic planning and delivery of services.

**6.31.** Although this study has sought to involve as many Gypsies and Travellers as possible living in bricks and mortar accommodation, there is still a need for a better understanding of the situations and preferences of this often hidden section of the Gypsy and Travelling population.

**Recommendation 32:** Authorities should work with Supporting People to create additional floating Gypsy and Traveller housing support workers. Such officers could offer support and assistance to enable those people wishing to remain in bricks and mortar accommodation or live on sites, to do so.

**Recommendation 33:** Supporting People teams should network with Supporting People teams locally, regionally and nationally in order to share and disseminate good practice on meeting the housing-related support needs of Gypsy and Traveller community members.

**Recommendation 34:** Care needs to be taken to ensure sites are accessible to transport links and local services. This does not mean they have to be in towns or at the side of major roads, but thought must be given to ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller residents are enabled to access local services and communities. The provision of accessible public transport might assist this.

**Recommendation 35:** It is important that planners take account of the strong links that families and clans have for Gypsy and Traveller households when developing accommodation in the future. A degree of detachment and familial isolation may occur if families are, in effect, forcibly dispersed; this may be particularly acute for vulnerable sections of the communities such as older people, people with disabilities and those with ill-health. The provision of short-stay sites near to residential accommodation could be used as a way to keep families together for the short-term for support if permanency is not possible on residential sites.

**6.32.** With regards to literacy specifically, many Gypsy and Traveller households reported that adult Gypsies and Travellers had poor literacy levels. Although educational engagement is generally improving for Gypsies and Travellers, there is a real need to ensure that adult Gypsies and Travellers are offered appropriate and relevant opportunities to improve their literacy abilities.

**6.33.** Although this study has sought to involve as many Gypsies and Travellers as possible living in bricks and mortar accommodation, there is still a need for a better understanding of the situations and preferences of this often hidden section of the Gypsy and Travelling population.

***Recommendation 36:*** There is a need to explore the possibility of authorities providing a dedicated Gypsy and Traveller housing support role. Such an officer could offer support and assistance to enable those people wishing to remain on sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation, to do so.

***Recommendation 37:*** Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) such as Care and Repair will be able to offer Gypsies and Travellers assistance in remaining in their own homes through their repairs service. It is important that such agencies are able to engage with people living on private sites as well as those living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

## **Recommendations at a local level**

**6.34.** Each authority across the Suffolk Study Area should enable Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision in some form. Crucially, there are a number of issues that are unique to each local authority that require some brief commentary. These are those issues that are particularly striking within the district concerned.

### **Babergh**

**6.35.** It is clear that Babergh appears to accommodate the smallest number of Gypsies and Travellers from across the Study Area. There are no council sites, no private sites and no unauthorised developments. During the course of the assessment we consulted with just 1 household who were currently living in bricks and mortar accommodation. From the principles used to calculate residential pitch need there appears a need for at least 1 residential pitch to be developed from households on unauthorised encampments, although this need might more effectively be met in an adjoining district. However, it is the trend for unauthorised encampments where Babergh experiences a Gypsy and Traveller population, albeit a seemingly small and infrequent one. These encampments could be addressed quite straightforwardly by the creation of some form of transit provision.

### **Ipswich**

**6.36.** As Ipswich currently has the only council provision for Gypsies and Travellers, this inevitably produces a significant level of need from families currently living on the site. The site is already of significant size (41 pitches) and it may not be sustainable, or appropriate, to extend this site further. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this assessment that further site provision (public and/or private) is identified and provided in order to meet the need identified. In addition, the small and infrequent unauthorised

encampments that currently occur across Ipswich could be addressed by the creation of some form of transit provision.

**6.37.** It is also important that the needs of current population of Travelling Showmen are kept in mind as similar to other travelling groups the needs of Showmen are not static and households grow and change over time. As time passes there may be a need for an increase in pitch provision from those Showmen families currently resident.

### **Mid Suffolk**

**6.38.** Mid Suffolk is home to the largest number of households who require some form of site accommodation. A bulk of this need emanates from the unauthorised development. The respondents on this development were clearly the most contented respondents who took part in the study when discussing their current accommodation. The majority of these residents had previously been residents on other forms of accommodation across the Study Area and had chosen to move onto the development as a positive move after prior negative experiences. It is important that the need for extra residential pitch provision generated by this site (19 pitches) is addressed by accommodating all households currently on this site together where that is desired by the residents. There are also a number of pitches on this site currently doubled-up and a number of households who will require independent accommodation by 2011.

**6.39.** There are also a large number of households in bricks and mortar housing who have intentions of moving out of their accommodation and returning to living in trailer accommodation.

**6.40.** Similar to other districts, unauthorised encampments are a key feature in the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in the area. The encampments which occur across Mid Suffolk could be addressed by the creation of some form of transit provision.

### **Suffolk Coastal**

**6.41.** The main form of accommodation required in the Suffolk Coastal area relates to the significant population of New Travellers currently living within the district. New Travellers most commonly wish to live in rural areas, as exemplified by the South of Suffolk Coastal, and wish to remain in green areas, woods and parks. Encapsulating New Travellers into the projection of accommodation need is incredibly problematic as many will not respond to the attempts of the authorities to 'normalise' New Travellers in line with either other Gypsy and Travelling groups or the settled community. It must also be remembered that New Travellers are extremely heterogeneous and will have entered a travelling way of life for many reasons (including family tradition, housing problems, etc.).

**6.42.** It appears from this assessment that the New Travellers currently living in the Suffolk Coastal area are 'local' to the area and, therefore, have accommodation requirements within that particular locality.

**6.43.** A version of transit provision may accommodate some of the needs of the community as will some form of residential accommodation. It is integral that in developing accommodation options for New Travellers, innovation and creativity are utilised at the same time as effective liaison between the New Traveller community and other key stakeholders. From the survey data it is unlikely that a significant section of New Travellers will remain on sites that are organised, official and have multiple facilities. Accommodation options need to be developed, in consultation with New Travellers, which prove to be sustainable. Further in-depth research and consultation is needed which will focus upon this particular unique and diverse sector of the Gypsy and Traveller community in Suffolk.

**6.44.** Similar to Ipswich it is important that the needs of the current population of Travelling Showmen are kept in mind as similar to other travelling groups the needs of Showmen are not static and households grow and change over time. As time passes there may be a need for an increase in pitch provision from those Showmen families currently resident.

## **Waveney**

**6.45.** The private site at Kessingland is the main form of accommodation in the district. The site has a total of 20 pitches on the site and is thought to be at a constant full occupancy. All of those consulted were happy with their accommodation on this site. There were a number of comments provided around improvements that could be made to the site. Where there are significant improvements the Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant Scheme could provide a source of funding to meet the needs of site residents. In addition, although unauthorised camping within the district is at quite a low level there may be a need for extra residential pitches to be provided on this site for unauthorised campers looking for residential accommodation in the area.<sup>43</sup>

**6.46.** In addition, the small and infrequent unauthorised encampments that currently occur within the district could be addressed by the creation of some form of transit provision.

## **Concluding remarks**

**6.47.** It is clear from legislation, guidance and general good practice that the continuation of unauthorised encampments is not sustainable. The current lack of provision, of both residential and transit sites, is part of a continuation of a cycle of unauthorised encampments across the Suffolk Study Area.

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<sup>43</sup> It is acknowledged that consent was granted for 4 extra pitches for the site in 2004 and if these pitches were developed this would assist in meeting the identified accommodation need seen to arise in the area.

Unauthorised encampments rarely benefit any single party. The costs of removing unauthorised encampments can be significant and can result in the displacement of the encampment to another district, with the added potential of a return of the encampment in the future.

**6.48.** Unauthorised encampments are far from ideal for Gypsies and Travellers as living conditions are extremely poor and enforcement action causes distress to those being constantly moved on and criminalised. This in turn, perpetuates a sense of injustice and mistrust amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities towards authority as dealings with local authority, 'officials' and the Police are, more often than not, perceived as negative. We must remember that for some Gypsies and Travellers frequent travelling is their way of life and, as such, they will always want to live that way. However, a range of flexible 'authorised' options should be made for those who choose this way of life.

**6.49.** The main purpose of this assessment has been to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and to present evidence which indicates the types of provision required. The governmental guidance acknowledges that different approaches may be required in different local contexts and at different times. There are obvious difficulties in assessing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers around timing, geographical scope and seasonal fluctuations. Although this assessment has been the most far-reaching assessment of accommodation needs in many years across the Suffolk Study Area, it is a snapshot of a particular time across a large geographical area. It is, therefore, important to regularly update this assessment, where they are less precise for certain groups and where particular areas need further exploration.

**6.50.** It is important that this assessment is not seen as an end-point in itself. Rather, the process and results of this assessment should be seen as a stimulant for further work with the local Gypsy and Traveller communities and between the districts and key stakeholders concerned. This assessment is a first step to resolving some of the long-standing issues experienced by the Travelling communities and consistent attention is crucial if accommodation needs are to be met in a coherent, sustainable and appropriate manner.

## Appendix 1: Caravan Count data for the local authorities

### Babergh

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	0	0	0	0	7	15	7	15
1995	0	0	0	0	8	7	8	7
1996	0	0	2	0	3	4	5	4
1997	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
1998	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0
1999	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1
2000	0	0	0	0	8	11	8	11
2001	0	0	0	0	18	23	18	23
2002	0	0	0	0	10	13	10	13
2003	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
2006	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3

### Ipswich

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	66	83	3	3	6	0	75	86
1995	69	72	3	3	0	0	72	75
1996	82	68	3	3	0	0	85	71
1997	78	74	2	2	0	0	80	76
1998	75	76	2	3	0	0	77	79
1999	71	73	2	2	0	0	73	75
2000	79	73	2	0	0	2	81	75
2001	70	63	0	2	2	0	72	65
2002	69	71	2	2	0	0	71	73
2003	82	66	2	2	0	0	84	68
2004	70	58	2	2	0	0	72	60
2005	70	73	0	2	0	0	70	75
2006	85	78	2	2	0	0	87	80

### Mid Suffolk

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	0	0	60	59	1	1	61	60
1995	0	0	60	59	1	1	61	60
1996	0	0	60	61	2	2	62	63
1997	0	0	60	60	4	2	64	62
1998	0	0	60	60	7	4	67	64
1999	0	0	88	61	6	14	94	75
2000	0	0	60	55	1	3	61	58
2001	0	0	65	47	1	1	66	48
2002	0	0	52	48	1	7	53	55
2003	0	0	56	58	0	3	56	61
2004	0	0	51	50	0	0	51	50
2005	0	0	72	72	24	32	96	104
2006	0	0	72	78	41	48	113	126

### Suffolk Coastal

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	0	0	0	0	27	0	27	0
1995	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1996	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1997	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
1998	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
1999	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	11
2000	0	0	0	0	2	30	2	30
2001	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	6
2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
2006	0	0	0	0	2	12	2	12

### Waveney

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	0	9	2	0	3	0	5	9
1995	23	23	0	0	0	8	23	31
1996	20	26	0	0	4	3	24	29
1997	33	21	0	0	1	6	34	27
1998	27	14	0	0	6	15	33	29
1999	44	25	0	0	0	19	44	44
2000	12	7	0	0	2	0	14	7
2001	10	17	0	0	2	3	12	20
2002	14	20	0	0	2	5	16	25
2003	26	32	0	0	0	15	26	47
2004	23	26	0	0	0	15	23	41
2005	0	0	30	26	6	15	36	41
2006	0	0	33	30	0	8	33	38

### Suffolk Study Area

	Council Jan	Council July	Private Jan	Private July	Unauthorised Jan	Unauthorised July	Total Jan	Total July
1994	66	92	65	62	44	16	175	170
1995	92	95	63	62	9	16	164	173
1996	102	94	65	64	9	9	176	167
1997	111	88	62	62	5	29	178	179
1998	102	90	62	63	17	21	1181	174
1999	115	98	90	63	9	37	214	198
2000	91	80	62	55	13	46	166	181
2001	80	80	65	49	25	33	170	162
2002	83	91	54	50	13	25	150	166
2003	108	99	58	60	0	20	166	179
2004	93	84	53	52	0	15	146	151
2005	70	73	102	100	31	49	203	222
2006	85	78	107	110	43	71	235	259

## Appendix 2: Current Gypsy and Traveller site provision in the Study Area

Table A1: Current authorised Gypsy and Traveller site provision (public and private) by local authority area

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Council owned/managed sites (nos. of pitches)</b>	<b>Authorised Private sites</b>
Babergh	0	0
Ipswich	1 site (41)	1 site (2)
Mid Suffolk	0	13 sites (69)
Suffolk Coastal	0	0
Waveney	0	1 site (20)
<b>Total</b>	1 site (41)	15 sites (91)



### Appendix 3: Methodology for the calculation of pitch need by district

#### Key

**HH** – Household; **UD** – Need from unauthorised development; **UE** – Need from unauthorised encampment; **NTUE** – Need from New Traveller unauthorised encampments; **BM** – Need from bricks and mortar movement; **HF** – Need from household formation (2006-2011); **CON** – Need from concealed households

Authority	Current authorised provision <sup>44</sup>	Driver of additional need	Total residential need 2006-2011	Supply of pitches 2006-2011 <sup>45</sup>	Total residential need 2011-2016 <sup>46</sup>	Total residential need – supply 2006-2016	Estimated transit need (+/- 2 pitches) <sup>47</sup>	Total pitch need 2006-2016 (+/- 2 pitches)
<b>Babergh</b>	0 pitches	0.22 HH UE	0.22 pitches	Nil	0 pitches	0.22 pitches	10 pitches	10.22 pitches
<b>Ipswich</b>	43 pitches	5 HH CON 0 – 1.5 HH UE 20 HH HF 1 HH BM	26 – 27.5 pitches	25 pitches	11 pitches	12-13.5 pitches	10 pitches	22-23.5 pitches
<b>Mid-Suffolk</b>	69 pitches(1 site of 19 pitches closed)	8 HH CON 19 HH UD 0.96 – 2.5 HH UE 8 HH HF 5 HH BM	41 – 42.5 pitches	Information not available	14 - 15 pitches	55 – 57.4 pitches	10 pitches	65 – 67.4 pitches

<sup>44</sup> These are approximations of the provision (public and private) based on information obtained from the authorities during the course of the assessment.

<sup>45</sup> Supply is presented for the period 2006-2011 only. This is based on pitch turnover during the 2000-2005 period; as a result of the potential changing pattern of provision, over the 2006-2011 period, including the supply of pitches (based on pitch turnover) beyond this point may present an inaccurate (under/over) assessment.

<sup>46</sup> Based on the 3% per year household growth rate and applied to households on existing authorised provision and new households forming in the areas between 2006-2011.

<sup>47</sup> Transit need given to cover the period 2006-2011 only

Authority	Current authorised provision <sup>48</sup>	Driver of additional need	Total residential need 2006-2011	Supply of pitches 2006-2011 <sup>49</sup>	Total residential need 2011-2016 <sup>50</sup>	Total residential need – supply 2006-2016	Estimated transit need (+/- 2 pitches) <sup>51</sup>	Total pitch need 2006-2016 (+/- 2 pitches)
<b>Suffolk Coastal</b>	0 pitches	1.03 – 3.25 HH UE 26 HH NTUE 2 HH HF 1 HH BM	30 – 32.3 pitches	Nil	5 pitches	35 – 37.3 pitches	10 pitches	45 – 47.3 pitches
<b>Waveney</b>	20 pitches	0.59 HH UE	0.6 pitches	Information not available	3 pitches	3.6 pitches	10 pitches	13.6 pitches

<sup>48</sup> These are approximations of the provision (public and private) based on information obtained from the authorities during the course of the assessment.

<sup>49</sup> Supply is presented for the period 2006-2011 only. This is based on pitch turnover during the 2000-2005 period; as a result of the potential changing pattern of provision, over the 2006-2011 period, including the supply of pitches (based on pitch turnover) beyond this point may present an inaccurate (under/over) assessment.

<sup>50</sup> Based on the 3% per year household growth rate and applied to households on existing authorised provision and new households forming in the areas between 2006-2011.

<sup>51</sup> Transit need given to cover the period 2006-2011 only.

The following aims to provide a clear guide as to how the calculation for pitch provision has been performed.

## **Babergh**

<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>0.22 pitches</b>
<b>Residential pitch need 2011-2016</b>	<b>0 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Supply 2011-2016</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>10 pitches</b>
<b>Total pitch need 2006-2016</b>	<b>10.22 pitches</b>

1. During the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 1 household on an unauthorised encampment. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this household indicates that there needs to be provision for 0.22 pitches within the district.
2. In order to facilitate a range of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers it is suggested that around 10 transit pitches (+/- 2 pitches) are created within the district.
3. In order to illustrate the need for accommodation between 2011-2016 a 3% per annum increase has been calculated based upon the current provision together with the expected provision between 2006-2011.

## **Ipswich**

<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>26 – 27.5 pitches</b>
<b>Residential pitch need 2011-2016</b>	<b>11 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>25 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2011-2016</b>	<b>Information not available</b>
<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>10 pitches</b>
<b>Total pitch need 2006-2016</b>	<b>22 – 23.5 pitches</b>

1. As identified in the questionnaire completed by the local authority, there are currently 5 concealed households on West Meadows.
2. During the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 6 households on unauthorised encampments. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this household indicates that there needs to be provision for 1.5 pitches within the district.
3. From both the LA questionnaire and the information collected from the Gypsy and Traveller survey across Ipswich, it is indicated that by 2011 there will be approximately 20 young people who will have reached the

traditional age where households are formed within the Gypsy and Traveller community (18 years).

4. During the course of our fieldwork we interviewed 1 household in bricks and mortar accommodation who intended to return to site accommodation in the near future.
5. If the trend for pitch turn-over on West Meadows is continued between 25 pitches will come available during 2006-2011. This has been subtracted from the overall pitch need.
6. In order to facilitate a range of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers it is suggested that around 10 transit pitches (+/- 2 pitches) are created within the district.
7. In order to illustrate the need for accommodation between 2011-2016 a 3% per annum increase has been calculated based upon the current provision together with the expected provision between 2006-2011.

## Mid Suffolk

<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>40.96 – 42.5 pitches</b>
<b>Residential pitch need 2011-2016</b>	<b>14 - 15 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>Information not available</b>
<b>Supply 2011-2016</b>	<b>Information not available</b>
<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>10 pitches</b>
<b>Total pitch need 2006-2016</b>	<b>65 – 67.4 pitches</b>

1. As identified by the questionnaire of Gypsy and Traveller households there is currently 8 concealed households on authorised accommodation within the district.
2. There are approximately 19 pitches on an unauthorised development whose occupants require authorised residential accommodation.
3. The lower figure for need from unauthorised encampments was derived by taking an average of the number of caravans over the survey year, as shown by the Caravan Count (6.5 caravans) and arriving at the approximate number of households this refers to by using a standard 1.7 caravan to household ratio to indicate that there are approximately 3.8 households on unauthorised encampments present in the area at any one time. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this figure indicates that there needs to be provision for 0.96 pitches within the district. In order to provide the upper figure, during the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 10 households on unauthorised encampments. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in

the area) to this figure indicates that there needs to be provision for 2.5 pitches within the district.

4. From the information collected with Gypsies and Travellers across Mid Suffolk, it is indicated that by 2011 there will be approximately 8 young people who will have reached the traditional age where households are formed within the Gypsy and Traveller community (18 years).
5. During the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 5 households in bricks and mortar accommodation who intended to return to site accommodation in the near future.
6. In order to facilitate a range of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers it is suggested that around 10 transit pitches (+/- 2 pitches) are created within the district.
7. In order to illustrate the need for accommodation between 2011-2016 a 3% per annum increase has been calculated based upon the current provision together with the expected provision between 2006-2011.

## Suffolk Coastal

<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>30 – 32.3 pitches</b>
<b>Residential pitch need 2011-2016</b>	<b>5 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Supply 2011-2016</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>10 pitches</b>
<b>Total pitch need 2006-2016</b>	<b>45 – 47.3 pitches</b>

1. The lower figure for need from unauthorised encampments was derived by taking an average of the number of caravans over the survey year, as shown by the Caravan Count (7 caravans) and arriving at the approximate number of households this refers to by using a standard 1.7 caravan to household ratio to indicate that there are approximately 4.1 households on unauthorised encampments present in the area at any one time. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this figure indicates that there needs to be provision for 1.03 pitches within the district. In order to provide the upper figure; during the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 13 households on unauthorised encampments. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this figure indicates that there needs to be provision for 3.25 pitches within the district.
2. In addition, regarding the 'known' numbers of New Traveller accommodation (caravans, vans, buses etc.), it is estimated that there are, on average, around 45 caravans (01/2005 = 51; 01/2006 = 28;

01/2007 = 56) which equates to roughly 26 households (by dividing this figure by 1.7). Therefore there is a need for 26 pitches for this resident New Traveller population.

3. From the information collected during the Gypsy and Traveller survey across Suffolk Coastal, it is indicated that by 2011 there will be approximately 2 young people who will have reached the traditional age where households are formed within the Gypsy and Traveller community (18 years).
4. During the course of our fieldwork for the assessment we interviewed 1 household in bricks and mortar accommodation who intended to return to site accommodation in the near future.
5. In order to facilitate a range of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers it is suggested that around 10 transit pitches (+/- 2 pitches) are created within the district.
6. In order to illustrate the need for accommodation between 2011-2016 a 3% per annum increase has been calculated based upon the current provision together with the expected provision between 2006-2011.

## Waveney

<b>Residential pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>0.6 pitches</b>
<b>Residential pitch need 2011-2016</b>	<b>3 pitches</b>
<b>Supply 2006-2011</b>	<b>Information not available</b>
<b>Supply 2011-2016</b>	<b>Information not available</b>
<b>Transit pitch need 2006-2011</b>	<b>10 pitches</b>
<b>Total pitch need 2006-2016</b>	<b>13.6 pitches</b>

1. The need for accommodation from unauthorised encampments was derived by taking an average of the number of caravans over the survey year, as shown by the Caravan Count (4 caravans) and arriving at the approximate number of households this refers to by using a standard 1.7 caravan to household ratio to indicate that there are approximately 2.35 households on unauthorised encampments present in the area at any one time. Applying the multiplier of 25% (derived from the aggregate responses of the households on unauthorised encampments who reported they were looking for accommodation in the area) to this figure indicates that there needs to be provision for 0.59 pitches within the district. No interviews with households on unauthorised encampments in the district were conducted.
2. In order to facilitate a range of accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers it is suggested that around 10 transit pitches (+/- 2 pitches) are created within the district.

3. In order to illustrate the need for accommodation between 2011-2016 a 3% per annum increase has been calculated based upon the current provision together with the expected provision between 2006-2011.



Appendix 4: Consultation event: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2007

**Suffolk 5 District Gypsy and  
Traveller Accommodation  
Assessment 2007**

**Consultation Seminar on Research  
Outcomes to be held on**

**Monday 19 March 2007**

**At Ipswich Borough Council  
Grafton House  
15-17 Russell Road  
Ipswich, IP1 2DE**



**To book your place contact**

Emma Richardson

Tel: 01473 433315

Email [emma.richardson@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:emma.richardson@ipswich.gov.uk)

## Context

The assessment of accommodation and related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers has become an important focus in the Government's attempts to foster, build and maintain sustainable and inclusive communities. Under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 introduced a specific duty for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their localities.

Up until the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 local authorities had a legal duty to provide sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers. This Act removed the obligation for site provision and, as a result, there are now too few sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers. This has forced Gypsies and Travellers to camp wherever they can, leading to community tensions and inappropriate accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) seek to explore the accommodation options that are available to these vulnerable groups and look at what current needs there are for different types of accommodation and site provision. They should take account of preferences and aspirations of the Gypsies and Travellers residing in, travelling to and travelling through local areas both now and in the future. GTAA's should provide an initial benchmark from which Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues can be understood and incorporated into the local development framework (LDF) process and service provision strategies.

### **Are local authorities in Suffolk involved in a GTAA?**

Yes. The Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford has been commissioned by 5 Suffolk authorities, Mid Suffolk District Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waveney District Council and Ipswich Borough Council, to undertake their GTAA. A consultation draft report has recently been completed as a result of extensive research over the last six months. The report suggests a number of recommendations for policy makers, practitioners and elected members across Suffolk.

Both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have already been involved in a GTAA as part of a Cambridgeshire study. Their report and findings are available at:

[http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E4504D9E-D264-4B98-8967-75F0A1A1B5F0/TravellersSurveyFinalReport\\_May06.pdf](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E4504D9E-D264-4B98-8967-75F0A1A1B5F0/TravellersSurveyFinalReport_May06.pdf)

### **What are the implications of GTAA's?**

Due to a significant lack of suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers nationally and in the Eastern Region, most GTAA's have highlighted the need for an increase in site provision for Gypsies and Travellers. The Suffolk 5 district GTAA is no exception.

### **The Suffolk 5 District GTAA research outcomes include:**

- The types of accommodation Gypsies and Travellers want and need, and the supply of permanent and transit sites, as well as bricks and mortar accommodation.

- An overview of how much accommodation is needed and where needs arise.
- Wider issues affecting where Gypsies and Travellers live such as; travel and employment patterns, health care and support needs, disability and the need for aids and adaptations, children's schooling etc and how these should be addressed.

**There will be 2 seminars on Monday 19 March 2007 to discuss the research with you.**

**Seminar 1            9.30am -12.30pm - registration and coffee  
from 9 am**

**Seminar 2            1.30pm – 4.30pm - registration and coffee  
from 1 pm**

The University of Salford will explain their research findings and allow you the chance to discuss how these should be taken forward in Suffolk. The executive summary of the consultation report will be provided at the seminar and a link to the full report will be emailed to you when you book your place. There will be opportunities to ask questions and explore key issues in smaller groups.

Please feel free to attend either Seminar.

### **Who should attend?**

- Councillors
- Gypsy and Travellers
- Stakeholders

### **How can I find out more about the GTAA?**

You can contact your authority's lead officer for the study

**Mid-Suffolk District Council**            Tracey Brinkley on  
[Tracey.Brinkley@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Tracey.Brinkley@midsuffolk.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01449 727312

**Babergh District Council**            David Clarke on  
[david.clarke@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:david.clarke@babergh.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01473 825761

**Suffolk Coastal District Council**        Nicola Clarke on  
[nicola.clarke@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.clarke@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)  
Tel 01394 444214

**Waveney District Council**            Dawn Pointon on  
[dawn.pointon@waveney.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.pointon@waveney.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01502 523147

**Ipswich Borough Council.**

Jenny Morcom on

[jennifer.morcom@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.morcom@ipswich.gov.uk)

Tel: 01473 433216

Jarek Kopec on [jarek.kopec@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:jarek.kopec@ipswich.gov.uk)

Tel 01473 433275

# Consultation Event

## Background

Until the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 local Councils had a legal duty to provide sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The 1994 Act removed that duty with the result that there are now fewer authorised permanent, transit or stopping sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities up and down the country.

In recognition of the implications of removing this duty the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has reinstated the obligation on local Councils to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their localities.

Key to the assessment of needs are the introduction of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. As well as the obligations under the recent legislation the assessment of accommodation, and related support needs, for Gypsies and Travellers has become an important focus in the Governments attempts to foster, build and maintain sustainable and inclusive communities.

## What do GTAA's seek to do?

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments seek to explore accommodation options that are available to these vulnerable groups and:

- Look at current and future preferences and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers residing in, travelling to and through local areas;
- Provide an understanding of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues;
- Set out the level of need in terms of pitch/site provision in local areas;
- Seek to inform planning processes on a regional and local level; and
- Seek to inform service planning and provision.

The following Councils commissioned the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit based at the University of Salford, to undertake its GTAA:

- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Babergh District Council
- Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Waveney District Council
- Ipswich Borough Council

The research study is nearing completion and the findings and recommendations are now subject to consultation before the final report is finalised and produced.

This is an opportunity for the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit to share the findings of the research with you and provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the findings, how these are to be taken forward and allow you the opportunity to comment and make your views known.

# Consultation event attendees

## Attendees

Cllr	Evelyn	Adey	Mid Suffolk District Council
	Sarah	Barker	Ipswich Borough Council
	Dean	Barham	Gypsy/Traveller
	Tracey	Brinkley	Mid Suffolk District Council
Dr	Philip	Brown	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
	Albert	Calladine	Gypsy/Traveller
PC	Andrew	Catton	Suffolk Constabulary
	Nicola	Clarke	Suffolk Coastal District Council
	Sheila	Clarke	Go East
	Tony	Cooke	South Norfolk Council
	Sandra	Day	Gypsy/Traveller
	Tim	Everson	Suffolk County Council
Ms	K	Flaherty	Gypsy/Traveller
	John	Forbes	Martlesham Parish Council
	Emma	Foster	Gypsy/Traveller
	Chris	Foti	Babergh District Council
Mr	Y	Gaskin	Gypsy/Traveller
	Sandy	Griffiths	Waveney Primary Care Trust
	Hilary	Hanslip	Suffolk Coastal District Council
Insp.	Peter	Haystead	Suffolk Constabulary
	Niki	Hollingworth	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
	Kelly	Hopkins	Gypsy/Traveller
	Imogen	Isern	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr	Dali	Jabber	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr	Tony	James	Ipswich Borough Council
	Peter	Kerridge	Suffolk Coastal District Council
	John	Kilgannon	Babergh District Council
Insp.	Les	King	Local Inspector for Stowmarket
	Jarek	Kopec	Ipswich Borough Council
	Letty	Lee	Gypsy/Traveller
	John	Lowe	Children and Young People Services
	Audrey	Ludwig	ISCRE
	David	McHardy	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr	Sara	Michell	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr	Carol	Milward	Mid Suffolk District Council
	Jenny	Morcom	Ipswich Borough Council
	Graham	Nelson	EERA
	Robert	Paddison	Babergh District Council
Ms	S	Parker	Gypsy/Traveller
	Richard	Plowman	Forest Heath District Council
	Charles	Randall	Gypsy/Traveller
Cllr	Doug	Reed	Mid Suffolk District Council
	Lesley	Reed	Elmswell Parish Council
	Emma	Richardson	Ipswich Borough Council
	David	Riches	Supporting People
	Mell	Robinson	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr	Alec	Russell	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr	Chris	Slemmings	Suffolk Coastal District Council
	William	Shoote	Waveney District Council

Cllr	Eileen	Smith	Ipswich Borough Council
	Laura	Smith	Gypsy/Traveller
	Tracy	Smith	Gypsy/Traveller
	Steve	Staines	Friends, Families & Travellers Planning
Prof	Andy	Steele	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
Cllr	Andrew	Stringer	Mid Suffolk District Council
	Joanne	Thain	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr	Steven	Wells	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr	Paul	West	Ipswich Borough Council
	Sue	Wigglesworth	Babergh District Council
	Bob	Williamson	Ipswich Borough Council
	Robert	Willis	Ipswich Borough Council
	Bryan	Wright	Elmswell Neighbourhood Watch
	Sheila	Wright	Elmswell Neighbourhood Watch
	Keren	Wright	Suffolk County Council

## **Consultation event feedback**

One of the main priorities for the event, apart from information sharing, was to provide different sections of the communities within the Study Areas an opportunity to feedback upon the reports findings. At the event there was three main ways to do this; by placing anonymous notes for the attention of the steering group and the project team, by contributing to a workshop where issues could be raised and discussed amongst group members, or by submitting comments to the steering group after the event.

The following bullet points cover some of the main issues that emerged from these methods of providing feedback. For ease of read-across to the main report these points have been grouped according to the over-arching themes pertaining to the recommendations for the overall study.

### **Communication and engagement**

- There is a need to keep dialogue and communication going with Gypsies and Travellers. There should be a key Gypsy and Traveller representative on each site and the local authorities should work together with these contacts. GTAAs are a positive step towards creating dialogue between Gypsies and Travellers and the local authorities some outreach will need to be done by authorities.
- Community engagement should be increased, particularly with people with disabilities/long-term illnesses who may feel isolated.
- More communication/information is needed with regards to planning and land use/availability issues. There is sometimes the perception that Gypsies and Travellers are treated differently with regards to planning. There is a need for transparency with regards to what types of land is available.
- There is a need for dialogue between Gypsies and Travellers and the 'settled' community, with greater understanding on both sides. It is important to dispel some of the myths about Gypsies and Travellers and address negative representation. Local Parish Councils could provide a forum for engagement.

### **Accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers**

- Careful consideration should be given to pros and cons of using sites which incorporate a mixture of residential and transit pitches. People are sometimes wary of strangers coming onto sites, and people leaving a mess behind; however, if properly managed it can work.
- Transit sites need careful consideration as they have a poor reputation amongst Travellers who have used them and councils who attempt to run them. Too many transit sites turn into residential sites, attention

needs to be upon the development of residential sites before residential sites are developed.

### **Developing accommodation**

- There is a need to think clearly about pitch design and location. Sites should be able to integrate into the local communities, and there is a preference for smaller sites.
- Many people see Suffolk as their home and wish to stay here, and just like the 'settled' community, Gypsies and Travellers would like to feel a sense of ownership of their accommodation.
- There are concerns about the ability of GTAAs to actually lead to increased provision.
- One type of site will not be able to encompass all needs. Sites will need to be creative in responding to individual needs. North Wiltshire have responded innovatively in setting up a trust to own land for sites. The Housing Corporation have been approached by Friends, Families and Travellers in the South West to pursue creative self-build schemes with Gypsies and Travellers. The authorities should consider any good practice undertaken in other areas of the country.
- Consideration should be given to group housing schemes which have been developed in Ireland.
- According to the DCLG it costs somewhere in the region of £90-100k to develop a single pitch. This cost could be dramatically reduced by more creative methods which have significant Traveller involvement in design and build. Affordability will undoubtedly be an issue.

### **Strategies, policies and systems**

- Gypsies and Travellers want to be full and equal members of society. Their needs should be assessed in the same way as other communities.
- There is a clear importance for cross-boundary working between authorities to find appropriate and sustainable solutions.
- There is a need for accurate recording of unauthorised encampments.
- There should be a clear division between enforcement and support services.
- There needs to be accurate records relating to the need for accommodation from unauthorised sites. Some unauthorised sites are unobtrusive and may not appear in the Caravan Count. However, the householders will still require accommodation and this is an element of

need that may be ignored if there is no systematic and holistic approach to counting.

- There needs to be a revision as to how the Caravan Counts are carried out in the future.
- The timescales are of concern; authorities need to give the provision of additional accommodation immediate and urgent attention.

### **Related service issues**

- A Traveller Education helpline would be a positive development.
- Cultural awareness training would be a positive step for local authorities and other stakeholder.
- The authorities should take a positive lead in combating prejudice and reducing community tension which seems to accompany any application for sites. Authorities need to consider the work of the CRE, Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the RTPI around this issue.