

Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

Final report

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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 stakeholders and agencies. The authors take responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions in the report.

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 (GTAAAs) are now being undertaken across the UK, as local authorities respond to these new obligations and requirements.
2. A number of local authorities across the Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire area (Rugby Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Tamworth Borough Council¹) commissioned this assessment in May 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford and assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise provided by members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a Steering Group composed of officers representing the Partner 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;
 - Consultations with key stakeholders; and
 - A total of 133 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers from a range of tenures and community groups.

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

¹ For ease, these are referred to only by the borough, district or city name throughout this document.

Strategy (RHS). 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 have 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 West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). 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.

Main Findings

Local Gypsies and Travellers and accommodation provision

5. There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area. Our best estimate is that there are at least 1410 local Gypsies and Travellers.
6. There are **2 socially rented sites** in the Study Area (North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth) together providing 38 pitches. These sites accommodate 103 individuals. All residents have access to amenity blocks, WC and a water supply. Having taken over management of the site in Nuneaton & Bedworth, Warwickshire County Council now manages both sites. Very few of the residents had positive views about these sites, with site facilities and design viewed particularly negatively. Both Rugby and Nuneaton & Bedworth have plans to increase the number of socially rented pitches within their districts.
7. There are **34 authorised private sites** in the Study Area, together providing an estimated 214 pitches. The provision of authorised pitches is scattered throughout all local authorities (with the exception of Tamworth) with particular concentrations in South Staffordshire, Rugby and Nuneaton & Bedworth. It is estimated that around two-thirds of these pitches (68%) are rented. Most respondents on private sites reported access to WC, postal service, rubbish collection, a water supply and an electric supply. Respondents on private sites had, on average, 1.3 caravans per household with the vast majority commenting that this gave them enough space. Respondents on private sites were generally much more satisfied with their accommodation than were households on socially rented sites. However, it was noted that there may be some overcrowding on private sites, i.e. too many trailers for the space allowed.

8. There are **9 unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area. These developments accommodated approximately 39 separate households. Due to their undeveloped nature, access to facilities on these sites was poorer than on authorised sites. However, most households that were consulted with as part of the assessment had access to WC, rubbish collection, water and a postal service. Most households also had access to an amenity block. The tenure arrangements on these sites were unclear.
9. There are **4 Travelling Showpeople Yards** which are all privately owned or privately rented and all were used for residential purposes. Interviews took place on three out of the four yards. It was clear that some of these yards required regularisation and permanency. There was also a need for more accommodation for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area.

Unauthorised encampments

10. The Caravan Count in January 2007 recorded 21 caravans on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers). Records kept by the local authorities show that the Study Area experienced around 47 encampments over the previous full calendar year (2006) which was seen by the local authorities as a similar level for previous years, and 26 encampments over the period of assessment (June–October 2007). The average encampment size was just over 5 caravans. Most encampments stayed for a relatively short period of time with the average duration being just under 3 weeks. Most of the encampments occurred in Rugby, Cannock Chase and Nuneaton & Bedworth.
11. A total of 9 interviews were carried out with people on unauthorised encampments. The average number of caravans owned by households on unauthorised encampments was 1.3, with around 3.5 people living in each caravan. Most households felt that they had enough living space for their needs although for some, affordability provided a major barrier to achieving more space.
12. Access to facilities was largely restricted for households on unauthorised encampments with just one respondent able to access basic facilities such as water and WC.
13. No respondents on unauthorised encampments had a base elsewhere.

Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing

14. All authorities with the exception of South Staffordshire and Rugby make specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers in their local authority housing strategies. The inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in homelessness and BME housing strategies is less consistent. No local

authority was able to quantify the number of Gypsies and Travellers in social or private bricks and mortar housing. From information gathered via Warwickshire County Council and from fieldwork experience it is estimated that there are at least 47 families in housing within the Study Area – however, it is acknowledged that this is probably a significant underestimate.

15. We interviewed 23 households living in bricks and mortar housing across the Study Area. Around two-thirds of Gypsies and Travellers were tenants of some kind (both council and private), the remaining households being owner-occupiers. Almost a fifth of households still retained a trailer. The vast majority of respondents viewed their house positively. Two-thirds of respondents had lived in their accommodation for a number of years – a fifth for 5 years and over. Just 2 respondents were planning to leave the house in the near future. A third of households thought they would remain in the house indefinitely. The remainder did not know.
16. Family reasons, health, education and a lack of sites were all given as major reasons which stimulated a move into housing.
17. A quarter of all respondents had lived in a house at some point in the past. Just over a third of these viewed it as a positive experience, with nearly half viewing bricks and mortar living in a negative light. Respondents tended to cite marriage, cultural reasons or feelings of being enclosed and constrained as reasons for leaving bricks and mortar housing.

Characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers

18. The survey of Gypsies and Travellers identified some of the important characteristics of the local population.

Household size is significantly larger than in the settled/non-Traveller population at 3.6 persons across the whole sample.

A significant minority of the sample (12%) were households over 60 years of age.

Young families are the predominant household type in the Study Area as a whole. However, there are a significant number of single households on the socially rented sites.

The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in trailers and in housing can be seen to belong, in some way, to the Study Area.

The majority of respondents, nearly three-quarters, felt they were 'local' to the area they were residing in. 'Family connections' was the main reason given when respondents were asked why they were living where they were.

The local population includes diverse ethnic groups. Romany Gypsy is the largest ethnic group (68%), followed by Irish Travellers (18%), with much smaller numbers of others who described themselves as Showpeople, Welsh Gypsy or Traveller.

A third of school-age children do not regularly attend school or receive home education. Children on unauthorised encampments and socially rented sites had the poorest attendance levels.

The Gypsy and Traveller population was largely sedentary. However, around half of settled or authorised households still travelled seasonally – with some travelling more often than this. Feeling settled and poor health were the main reasons that were cited for not travelling.

Of those households who still travelled, around a quarter of respondents intended to engage in quite local travelling (within the local area, Study Area or West Midlands region) with a third planning to travel to other parts of the UK.

Self-employment was a major source of income for respondents with the type of work people engaged in including gardening/tree work, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering and scrap.

Gypsies and Travellers and housing-related support

19. There were no Supporting People funded services targeted specifically for Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.
20. The kind of housing-related services Gypsies and Travellers expressed an interest in receiving assistance with included: accessing health care, claiming benefits, harassment issues, finding accommodation, support with planning and accessing legal services.
21. Over a third of respondents felt that they had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination as a result of being a Gypsy or a Traveller.

Accommodation preferences and aspirations

22. All households were asked whether there was anyone living with them who were likely to want their own accommodation over the next 5 years. Overall, 20 households reported that there was, which equated to 24 individuals who will require their own accommodation by 2012.
23. There was support for the creation of additional long-stay residential sites within the Study Area with a quarter of respondents interested in moving to a new residential site/pitch – this included households who were currently accommodated on sites within the Study Area.

Respondents voiced a preference for residential sites with pitch capacities of between 10 and 15 pitches.

24. Nearly a fifth of respondents wanted to see the development of more transit/short-stay sites in the Study Area. Interest in such sites was shown from households from all accommodation types. For households on authorised/settled accommodation the creation of more authorised short-stay accommodation would enable an increase in family visits and help to maintain the tradition of travelling. According to the views of Gypsies and Travellers who would use such sites, these should be around 10 pitches in size with a large number of people expecting to use the site for between 1 and 4 weeks.
25. Respondents were asked to comment on a range of differing accommodation types in order to ascertain their preferences. The clear preference was for a small private site which they/their family owned, followed by travelling around on authorised transit sites, followed by a site owned by the local authority. Living in a local authority or RSL house was the least favoured option.

Accommodation need and supply

26. Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. The supply of additional authorised accommodation has slowed since 1994, but 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.). In order to respond effectively and appropriately to the lack of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, the regional planning body (West Midlands Regional Assembly) has the role of ensuring that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network.
27. The 'models' for assessing the numerical requirement for additional residential pitches have developed significantly over the past few years. The calculation used here is an adaptation of the example provided by the CLG.² The calculation for years 1–5 (2007–2012) takes account of need arising from the following indicators: expiry of temporary planning permissions, household growth, need from unauthorised developments, movement between sites and housing,

² CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments* – Guidance. London: HMSO.

need from closing sites, and need from households on unauthorised encampments. On the supply side, the calculation takes account of: pitch vacancies on socially rented sites, unused pitches and known/planned developments of sites/pitches. These calculations are estimates based on information drawn from: local authority information, knowledge of key stakeholders, survey findings and assumptions based on the professional experience of the study team.

28. Additional requirements beyond 2012 are based on estimated household growth. Following the principles used in the West Midlands Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy this is assumed to be a 3% increase between 2012 and 2016, 2.5% each year between 2016 and 2021, and 2% each year between 2021 and 2026. This follows commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.³
29. Transit requirements (2007–2012) are calculated by the average number of households on unauthorised encampments seeking a transit/short-stay pitch in the area; an allowance for vacancies is included in order to manage their operation effectively. No further transit provision is estimated to be required beyond 2012 on the assumption that the level of travelling will not increase in the foreseeable future and other surrounding local authorities will also have developed appropriate transit options.
30. Requirements for the additional residential provision for Travelling Showpeople are estimated on the basis of survey findings and local authority information.
31. Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling community are generally much wider, as there is social housing available in every authority in the country, there are no local authority sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England, and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Some authorities have no authorised private sites. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances, for example: an authority which provides a site; 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, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed, for the needs assessment to

³ Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM. A 3% growth rate was also used in the recent report from Communities and Local Government (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers* by regional planning bodies, HMSO. For more information see West Midlands: Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>.

further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).

32. As requested in the research brief, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs have been identified at a sub-regional and a local level. This has been done on a **'need where it is seen to arise'** basis. However, the results of this apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should be actually met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area. Decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities, the County Councils and the West Midlands Regional Assembly – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability.

Table i below presents the 'needs where they arise' requirements.

Table i: Accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople populations

	Study Area Total	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	North Warks	Nun & Bed	Rugby	S Staffs	Tamworth
Current authorised residential provision⁴ (pitches)	261	44	2	24	37	66	88	0
Additional residential need 2007–2012 (pitches)	171	26	9	12	21	48	45	6
Additional residential need 2012–2016 (pitches)	53	9	1	5	7	14	16	1
Additional residential need 2016–2021 (pitches)	64	11	2	5	9	17	19	1
Additional residential need 2021–2026 (pitches)	57	10	2	5	7	15	17	1
Additional suggested transit need 2007–2026 (pitches)⁵	35	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Estimated total additional residential pitch need 2007–2026	345	60	14	27	44	94	97	9

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

⁴ These are approximations of the provision (public and private) based on information obtained from the authorities during the course of the assessment. This includes Travelling Showpeople sites.

⁵ This is an illustration of the equitable split of the identified need. Transit requirements are particularly difficult to quantify with any accuracy. Consideration will need to be given to the appropriate number, size and distribution of transit pitches in each authority.

Recommendations

33. The overarching recommendation resulting from this assessment is that the authorities across the Study Area engage proactively to meet the accommodation needs that have been identified as a result of this assessment and that a strategic joined-up approach is taken. More specifically a number of recommendations have been made for the Partner Authorities – these can be found in the main report.

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Glossary

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

Term	Explanation
Amenity block/shed	On most residential Gypsy/Traveller sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
Authorised local authority site/ Registered Social Landlord site	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Social Landlord.
Authorised Private site	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
Bricks and mortar	Permanent mainstream housing.
Caravan	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers
Chalet	In the absence of a specific definition the term 'chalet' is used here to refer to single storey residential units which resemble mobile homes but can be dismantled.
Country People/Buffers	Term used by Irish Travellers to refer to settled people/non-Travellers.
Development Plan Documents (DPDs)	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.
Doubling-up	To share a pitch on an authorised site.
Gaujo/Gorger	Literal translation that indicates someone who is not of the Romany Gypsy race. Romany word used mainly, but not exclusively, by Romany Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community/non-Gypsy/Travellers.
Green Belt	A policy or land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas.
Gypsy	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
Gypsies and Travellers (as used in this assessment)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Showpeople, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation. Can also include Roma and boat dwellers if there is evidence of a need, suppressed or otherwise, for pitch accommodation.

Local Plan/Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
Mobile home	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling/or lorry.
Pitch/plot	Area of land on a site/development generally home to one household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Referred to as a plot particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch.
Pulling-up	To park a trailer/caravan .
Settled community/people	Reference to non-Travellers (those that live in houses)
Site	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers, chalets or vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
Static caravan	Larger caravan rather than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.
Stopping place	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
Supporting People	A funding programme which provides grants in order to assist in the provision of housing-related support to develop and sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in their accommodation.
Suppressed/concealed household	Households, living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units and who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.
Trailer	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan.
Transit site	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
Travelling Showpeople	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.
Unauthorised Development	This refers to a caravan or trailer or group of caravans or trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
Unauthorised Encampment	Stopping on private/public land without permission (e.g. at the side of the road).
Yard	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

List of Acronyms

CLG	Communities and Local Government
CJPOA	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DPD	Development Plan Document
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
HB	Housing Benefit
LDF	Local Development Framework
LGA	Local Government Association
LPA	Local Planning Authority
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RHB	Regional Housing Board
RHS	Regional Housing Strategy
RPB	Regional Planning Body
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SHUSU	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
TES	Traveller Education Service
WCC	Warwickshire County Council
WMRA	West Midlands Regional Assembly

Note: Over the last few years the main Governmental department largely responsible for Gypsy and Traveller related issues (in particular regarding housing and planning) has been subject to a certain degree of reform. This can cause confusion. The main changes are summarised below.

Until 2001 the **Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)** was the responsible department for these issues. In 2001 responsibility was 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 (CLG)** in 2006.

1. Overview

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire area. The research and report were commissioned by a number of partner authorities (Rugby Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Tamworth Borough Council⁶) in May 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford and assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by a Steering Group composed of officers representing the Partner Authorities.

Background and 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 the subsequent years, coupled with continued migration, travelling patterns and household formation, this has meant that the number of Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to live/stop far outweighs 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 pitch 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 and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and guidance (Circular 01/2006;04/2007) 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

⁶ For ease, these are referred to only by the borough, district or city name throughout this document.

appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.

- 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 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 West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs produced, 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.
- 1.5 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 GTAAs are fundamental in providing such an evidence base for the RHSs and RSSs.
- 1.6 The regional dimension is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network. Such a strategic approach will contribute to meeting the Government's objective⁷ that 'Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully', and to the greater social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers, who are among the most deprived groups in the population.
- 1.7 The vast majority of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) across England are either completed or in progress. Guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) required that all GTAAs were completed by the end of 2007.
- 1.8 In order to comply with the CLGs' increasing emphasis on taking regional strategic approaches, and also recognising the diverse characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller populations, it is considered

⁷ ODPM (2006) *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: Guide to responsibilities and powers*, ODPM, p. 5.
http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/400/LocalAuthoritiesandGypsiesandTravellersGuidetoresponsibilitiesandpowersPDF223KB_id1163400.pdf

good practice for several authorities to commission such work jointly. Thus, for the Partner Authorities this study aims to generate a robust sub-regional understanding of the current provision, gaps and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

Aims of the assessment

1.9 The broad aims and objectives of the study were to:

- Produce detailed information about local Gypsies and Travellers in relation to their demographic profile, household formation, current accommodation needs, accommodation related service and support needs, routes into accommodation and barriers to accessing services.
- Assess the current and future need within the Travelling Communities in the Study area for learning, health services and other services provided by local authorities and their partner organisations.
- Increase understanding of the current level of access to services and identify any barriers to access and then consider how services may best be provided to meet Gypsies' and Travellers' needs.
- Generate reliable estimates of future accommodation need.
- Assess the relevance of the policies and strategies in relation to Gypsies and Travellers used by the Partner authorities.

A note on terminology

Gypsies and Travellers

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

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

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

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

- 1.12 There is a separate definition for planning purposes as specified in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.13 This assessment has adopted the Housing Act 2004 definition and has sought to be inclusive in the Gypsy and Traveller groupings. More specifically we sought to include all Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) living in caravan-based accommodation or bricks and mortar housing. As the Housing Act 2004 definition indicates, we have also sought to include Travelling Showpeople living on their permanent base within the Study Area.

Housing/accommodation need

- 1.14 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.”⁸
- 1.15 In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments refers to distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing. For caravan-dwelling households, need may take the form of those:⁹
- who have no authorised site on which to reside;
 - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation; and,

⁸ODPM (2006) Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004. Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

⁹ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

- 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.
- 1.16 In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households, need may take the form of:
- those whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable (including unsuitability by virtue of psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation).
- 1.17 This assessment has used a definition of accommodation need which encompasses all the circumstances detailed above.

Outline of the report

- 1.18 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments are a relatively new tool to assist in the efforts made by local authorities and stakeholders to understand and gain knowledge on the needs, experiences and context of a collection of individuals who have often featured rarely in, or on the margins of, other similar assessments. The information available pertaining to Gypsies and Travellers is often spread across a wide range of issues and held by a diverse group of departments and agencies. Thus, the collection and collation of this information entails a systematic process and this is reflected in the structure of this report.

Chapter 1 sets the background to the needs assessment, the aims of the assessment and a comment on the terms 'Gypsy and Traveller' and 'Housing/accommodation need'.

Chapter 2 presents details of the methodological process and research methods involved in the assessment as well as a commentary on the sampling strategy and sampling issues.

Chapter 3 sets the legislative and policy context for the assessment at a national, regional and local level.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide some detailed analysis of the local Gypsy and Traveller population by looking at the bi-annual Caravan Count for the area and the characteristics of the sample involved in the assessment.

Chapter 6 looks at the findings relating to authorised social and private Gypsy and Traveller sites in relation to management information, geographical location and resident views.

Chapter 7 examines the findings relating to planning and the unauthorised development of Gypsy and Travellers sites.

Chapter 8 provides an analysis of unauthorised encampments including a detailed exploration of the views of households on unauthorised encampments.

Chapter 9 looks at Gypsies and Travellers in private and social bricks and mortar housing with particular attention to local authority policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers in housing, numbers in housing and views from the housed Gypsy and Traveller population about their accommodation.

Chapter 10 brings together a range of findings to explore housing/related services and how they are provided for, experienced and viewed by Gypsies and Travellers, with chapter 11 exploring education, employment and health issues.

Chapters 12 and 13 examine the accommodation histories and aspirations of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Chapter 14 looks at the specific findings in relation to Travelling Showpeople.

Chapters 15–17 bring together data on the supply of and need for Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit pitches and pitches for Travelling Showpeople. These chapters comment on the type, level and broad location of the accommodation needed.

Finally, Chapter 18 sets out some recommendations based on the assessment for future work on site provision, housing policy and other policy and practice areas.

2. The assessment methodology

2.1 Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the ODPM (now CLG) in February 2006, with final guidance provided in late 2007. Specialised guidance and assessments were felt to be required as many local authority housing needs assessments were previously failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about conducting an assessment and issues to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive in terms of methods but suggests that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments incorporate a number of components. Such components include analysing existing data sources, the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders, and the living conditions and views of Gypsies and Travellers.

2.2 This assessment was undertaken in three distinct stages:

- Stage one – collation and review of existing secondary information
- Stage two – consultation with service providers and other stakeholders
- Stage three – survey with Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

2.3 Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

Stage one: Collation and review of existing secondary information

2.4 This first stage comprised a review of the available literature and secondary sources obtained from government (central and local) and regional, community and academic bodies. This provided an historical, social and political overview to the situation of Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. More specifically this included the collection, review and synthesis of:

- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans.
- Local plans, Regional and Core Strategy documents and other literature relevant to Local Development Frameworks. Housing Strategies, Homelessness Strategies and Supporting People strategies were analysed as were local authority allocation and monitoring procedures.
- Various records and data maintained and provided by the local authorities. Information was obtained on: socially rented sites; private sites; resident demographics; waiting lists; unauthorised sites (developments and encampments); housing; and planning applications.

- 2.5 Much of this information was collected via an extensive self-completion questionnaire aimed at each authority, and joint-working between housing, planning, health and education was required in order to provide a completed questionnaire. Two versions of the questionnaire were developed. Version A was sent to authorities thought not to have a local authority site (from information from the bi-annual Caravan Counts). Version B went to authorities with a local authority site, and additionally asked for information about the nature of the site and its management. All local authorities completed this questionnaire.

Stage two: Consultation with service providers and other stakeholders

- 2.6 The second stage involved gathering the views of various service providers and other stakeholders and drew on their experience and perceptions of the main issues for Gypsies and Travellers. This stage was a vital way in which initial findings could be checked and set in context by the qualitative experience of stakeholders.
- 2.7 A number of one-to-one consultations were held with a variety of other stakeholders, most of whom were recommended to the research team by either the Steering Group or by key stakeholders we came into contact with during the course of the assessment.
- 2.8 These discussions were largely structured around three broad issues:
- The particular experiences that certain professionals have in relation to the accommodation and related needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area;
 - The current working practices of different professionals in relation to Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area; and
 - Stakeholder perspectives on what the priority needs are for Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.
- 2.9 Where required, these discussions were more focused upon clarifying information provided during stage one.

Stage three: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers.

- 2.10 One of the most important aspects of the assessment involved consulting with local Gypsies and Travellers. This took place between June and October 2007. These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews and focus groups in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey with Gypsies and Travellers is discussed below under three sections: sampling strategy and response rates; questionnaire design; and fieldwork and interviewers.

Sampling and response rates

2.11 Sampling Gypsy and Traveller households for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is always problematic given the absence of accurate information concerning the size and location of the Travelling communities. As such the sampling technique for the assessment was purposive rather than purely random. The sampling strategy for the assessment differed depending upon the particular accommodation type currently inhabited by Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area.

- For households on socially rented sites, authorised private sites and unauthorised developments we compiled a sample frame from information provided by the local authorities about all known sites within the Study Area. We endeavoured to interview at least one household on all these sites. Where there was more than one pitch on a site a quota for the interviews was set. The quota set was to complete interviews with at least 50% of the occupied pitches on such sites. Repeat visits were made to locations in order to achieve interviews if households were away from the site, if it was not convenient for the household in question or if the fieldworkers ran out of time. Households on private sites were particularly difficult to engage with however because of the large number of private sites within the Study Area; repeated visits were made to sites by both members of the core team and Community Interviewers to attract participation in the study.
- For households on unauthorised encampments, local authority officers from all boroughs were encouraged to inform the fieldwork team when and where encampments occurred during the fieldwork period. Visits were made to all sites of which the team was notified. Although the fieldwork team generally arrived at an encampment site within 24 hours after notification, the fieldwork team had varied success in securing interviews with households on encampments. There were two main reasons for this: a number of households were reluctant to be interviewed and sites were often vacated before the interviewers arrived.
- As the population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing is relatively hidden from official records, there was no sample frame from which to identify people. Therefore, in order to engage with housed Gypsies and Travellers the fieldwork team relied on two main methods: contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had already been interviewed as part of the assessment; and the contacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team.
- Contact with Travelling Showpeople was made possible by links provided by the local section of the Showmen's Guild.

- 2.12 A total of 133 Gypsy and Traveller households were involved in the assessment within the boundaries of the authorities comprising the Study Area.
- 2.13 Table 1 below shows the target and achieved number of household interviews by each accommodation type. The targets were devised from information supplied by the authorities and informed by local knowledge as to actual pitches/households in the area. As can be seen, three of the targets for accommodation type were achieved and exceeded. In spite of the general apathy towards involvement, a response rate of 85% was received from households on private sites. In general, the exceeding or otherwise of targets tends to be a reflection of the difficulty in setting initial quotas for interviews in the current climate of information paucity on Gypsies and Travellers rather than a lack of willingness to be involved. This is particularly the case for households on unauthorised developments where our target number of interviews was based on information provided by the local authority as to the size of the site, which did not reflect the actual number of households living on the site due to problems relating to the difficulty of defining a pitch on an undeveloped site. Similarly, the aspirational target of 50 interviews with households in bricks and mortar housing reflects the pre-fieldwork belief of the authors that the Study Area had a significant number of Gypsies and Travellers in housing in the Study Area. Whilst this may still be the case, this was not reflected in operational experiences possibly due to problems of accessing this often hidden section of the population.

Table 1: Achieved household interviews by target

Type of accommodation	Target (No.)	Achieved (No.)	%
Socially rented sites	15	17	113
Private authorised sites	84	71 ¹⁰	85
Unauthorised developments	20	8	40
Unauthorised encampments	9	9	100
Housed	50	23	46
Travelling Showpeople	4	5	125
Total	182	133	73

- 2.14 Table 2 below illustrates how the assessment sample relates to the known number of pitches and estimated population by accommodation type. As can be seen, the majority of known sites are represented. Although we endeavoured to include all known sites during the survey a number of private sites are not represented. The reasons for this include an inability to locate the site, an inability to access the site (in terms of physical barriers) or the resident simply declining to be involved in the study. Although we achieved a high response rate on unauthorised developments, the low number of achieved household interviews reflects the finding that in general, on unauthorised

¹⁰ This includes one household who did not own or rent a pitch but who were visiting family on a private site but had accommodation elsewhere.

developments the one household whom the fieldwork team managed to consult with acted as a gatekeeper/spokesperson to the rest of the site residents, thus prohibiting further access to all households on the site.

Table 2: Sample in relation to local Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	Number of sites			Number of pitches/households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Socially rented sites	3 ¹¹	2	67	28 ¹²	17	61
Private authorised sites	33	27	82	210	71	34
Unauthorised developments	9	7	78	40 ¹³	8	20
Unauthorised encampments	NA	NA	NA	9 ¹⁴	9	100
Housed	NA	NA	NA	50 ¹⁵	23	46
Travelling Showpeople	4	3	75	10 ¹⁶	5	50

2.15 Table 3 shows this response rate by local authority area. The distribution of the sample appears to reflect the anticipated known location of concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers by accommodation types with most interviews being carried out in Rugby and South Staffordshire followed by Cannock Chase and Nuneaton & Bedworth. No interviews were achieved with Gypsies and Travellers living within Tamworth – however, this is not the same as saying that no Gypsies and Travellers live in the district. It should be noted that 3 interviews were conducted with households on private sites in one local authority area; however, the Community Interviewers who conducted these interviews were unclear about which administration these households fell under.

¹¹ One site was not occupied at the time of the assessment.

¹² This represents pitches which were open at the time of the assessment; a total of 10 pitches were closed.

¹³ This is an estimate based on the information provided by the local authority about the size of the sites. Near the end of the assessment one of the unauthorised developments in South Staffordshire was granted temporary permission for 4 years, becoming an authorised private site. Information relating to unauthorised developments, planning, private sites and additional requirements is based on this up-to-date information. However, the figure in this chapter remains unchanged in order to accurately reflect the status quo during fieldwork.

¹⁴ This estimate is based on the average number of encampments in the area over five periods of the Caravan Count and divided by a 1.7 caravan to household ratio. The local authorities and Warwickshire County council reported a combined total of 26 encampments during the period of assessment.

¹⁵ This figure was an estimate based on pre-fieldwork understanding of the Study Area.

¹⁶ This figure is estimated from the information provided by local authorities.

Table 3: Number of achieved interviews by local authority area

Accommodation Type	Local authority area								Total
	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	N War	Nun & Bed	Rugby	S Staffs	Tamworth	Unknown	
Socially rented sites	-	-	6	11	-	-	-	-	17
Private authorised sites	10	1	-	-	29	28	-	3	71
Unauthorised developments	-	1	1	1	2	3	-	-	8
Unauthorised encampments	4	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	9
Housed	7	-	1	8	5	2	-	-	23
Travelling Showpeople	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-
Total	23	2	8	22	41	34	-	3	133

2.16 In terms of the gender split between interviewees, we spoke to 109 women (82%) and 24 men (18%). The greater presence of women in the sample reflects a general finding from Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments which seems to show that women are most likely to speak to researchers/interviewers. In recognising this, however, we endeavoured to undertake fieldwork outside of normal working hours, which assisted in engaging with a small number of male respondents as well.

2.17 Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable and reflective response rates from accommodation types and geographical areas within the Study Area with some potential gender bias in the responses. We consulted with around 38% of the known Gypsy and Traveller community across the Study Area.

Questionnaire design

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

- Current accommodation/site/encampment;
- Experience of travelling;
- Housing and site experiences;
- Household details;

- Services; and
 - Future accommodation preferences/aspirations.
- 2.19 Following consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, questions around income and benefits were excluded as these were seen to potentially jeopardise the ability to achieve interviews in the Study Area due to alienation that such questions can cause within the communities.
- 2.20 The questionnaires used in the assessment are available in a separate document entitled 'Survey Instruments'.

Fieldwork and interviewers

- 2.21 In addition to the involvement of SHUSU fieldwork staff was that of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers, from both inside and outside the Study Area; this was of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the Gypsy and Traveller population. A small number of Gypsies and Travellers were recommended to us and these volunteered to become Community Interviewers. In total, three members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers.
- 2.22 In order to standardise our fieldwork approach, each interviewer was required to undergo an intensive training course on interviewer skills applicable to this particular study and was provided with support from the core study team members during their interviewing activity. Each questionnaire which was returned to us was subject to quality control, and appropriate feedback was given to the interviewers as required. By taking this approach we found we were able to access a range of people that would otherwise have not 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.
- 2.23 Broadly speaking, SHUSU staff had particular success interviewing people on local authority sites and unauthorised encampments, whereas the Community Interviewers had much better responses with households on unauthorised developments, private sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 2.24 Where possible, on local authority sites, interviewers were introduced on site by local authority officers who work with Gypsies and Travellers in the area. However, this tended not to be possible on other types of sites/accommodation.
- 2.25 It must be noted that the Study Area and areas immediately surrounding the Study Area experienced significant flooding during the summer of 2007. This may have affected the fieldwork in two main ways. Firstly, it affected the ability of interviewers to travel to, and within, the Study Area. Secondly, it is impossible to know if the weather

increased or decreased the number of encampments likely to feature. It may be that the Study Area experienced fewer encampments than usual or, instead, saw deflected unauthorised encampments arriving within the Study Area. However, we do not feel that either of these two aspects has affected the reliability of the fieldwork.

3. National, regional and local policy context

3.1 For the most part Gypsies and Travellers are affected by legislation in much the same way as members of the non-Travelling communities. However, it is the policy areas of housing and planning that have particular implications for Gypsies and Travellers. In recognising that there is a significant lack of accommodation options for the various Gypsy and Traveller groups, a plethora of documents have been published over the last 18 months, which directly affect specific policies towards Gypsies and Travellers. This section looks at the relevant national, regional and local planning policies affecting Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.

National policy

3.2 The main document detailing the broad aims of the current policy towards the accommodation and planning objectives for Gypsies and Travellers is Circular 01/06. In particular, this specifies that the aims of the legislation and policy developments are to:

- ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision;
- reduce the number of unauthorised encampments;
- increase the number of sites and address under-provision over the next 3–5 years;
- protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers;
- underline the importance of assessing accommodation need at different geographical scales;
- promote private site provision; and
- prevent Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless, where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

3.3 An overview of the process and system for ensuring adequate provision is implemented for Gypsies and Travellers was detailed in Chapter 1 of this report.

3.4 In September 2007, revised planning guidance in relation to the specific planning requirements of Travelling Showpeople was released in Circular 04/07. This replaces Circular 22/91 and aims to ensure that the system for pitch assessment, identification and allocation as

introduced for Gypsies and Travellers is also applied to Travelling Showpeople.

- 3.5 The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant provides capital funding for improving and increasing Gypsy and Traveller site/pitch provision by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. From 2006–08 a national total of £56m has been made available, managed by the Regional Housing Boards or equivalents. In the West Midlands, a total of £4m has been agreed over the 2006–08 period. A total of £7.5m has been made available over the 2008–11 period for the West Midlands. Since 2006, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have been able to set up and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.
- 3.6 Since the introduction of the Housing Act 2004, it has been made clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and requirements should feature in local authority Housing and Homelessness¹⁷ Strategies. Authorities have been informed that, in line with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the needs and way of life of Gypsies and Travellers must be taken into account when considering accommodation applications.

Regional policy

- 3.7 In terms of regional planning policy, policy CF5 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (June 2004) deals with ‘Delivering affordable housing and mixed communities’. Section F reads:

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

- 3.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently being revised. It is intended that Gypsy and Traveller issues will be part of Phase 3 of the RSS Revision process, which has a timetable culminating in submission of preferred options to the Secretary of State in summer 2009. Because of the time lag, the Regional Assembly has produced an Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy,¹⁸ pending the completion of all GTAAs across the West Midlands region. The Interim Statement estimated requirements for additional pitches across the region divided by GTAA partnerships. Table 4 below shows the estimated sub-regional pitch requirements.

¹⁷ See Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, CLG.

¹⁸ See <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>.

Table 4: Summary of Residential Pitch Requirements: West Midlands Region and Sub-regions: 2006 to 2011 Area Estimated requirement¹⁹

Area	Estimated pitch requirement
Shropshire & Herefordshire (and Powys) GTAA (Herefordshire, Bridgnorth, North Shropshire, Oswestry, Shrewsbury & Atcham, South Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)	120
South Housing Market Area GTAA (Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon, Wyre Forest)	170
North Staffordshire GTAA (North Housing Market Area) (East Staffordshire, Newcastle under Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke on Trent)	55
Central Housing Market Area (part) GTAA (Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby)	100
Black Country GTAA (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)	40
Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull GTAA	20
West Midlands Region	510

3.9 Table 5 shows the pitch requirements across the timeline of the RSS (2006–2026) with specific reference to the Partner Authorities.

Table 5: Regional and Central Housing Market Area pitch need by RSS period

Residential pitch need period	Regional pitch need	Partner authorities pitch allocation
2006–2011	510	100
2011–2016	220	No sub-regional split
2016–2021	210	No sub-regional split
2021–2026	190	No sub-regional split

3.10 The estimated regional requirement for transit pitches (undated) was 120; this had no sub-regional split.

3.11 It is understood that once all the GTAAs are completed within the West Midlands there will be an attempt by the WMRA to bring the findings and requirements together into one regional overview document in order to gain more clarity as to the regional picture of need.

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

¹⁹ The calculation for the estimated pitch requirements contained in the Interim Statement is based on the known (trailer-based) population. For more information see West Midlands: Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>.

Structure Plans

- 3.13 The Study Area is covered by two Structure Plans – the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996–2011 (saved policies version) and the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) 1996–2011. Policy H12 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996–2011 was not saved.
- 3.14 The Warwickshire Structure Plan (1996–2011) will be saved for a period of 3 years post-commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is until September 2007. There is no mention of Gypsies or Travellers within the Plan.

Local Policies, Plans and Strategies

- 3.15 Local Plan policies have been saved beyond September 2007 in Tamworth, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby and the relevant extracts are shown in detail in Appendix 1. None of these local plans is pro-active and most leave considerable discretion in their implementation. Local Plan policies were not saved in Cannock Chase, Lichfield and South Staffordshire.
- 3.16 Constituent LPAs are at different stages in developing Core Strategies within the new Local Development Framework system. Gypsies and Travellers are referred to in most Statements of Community Involvement. There are currently no relevant policies for Gypsy and Traveller sites in emerging Core Strategies or Development Plan Documents in Tamworth and North Warwickshire – it is noted, however, that these authorities are at the early stages of policy development and it is expected that policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers will be incorporated in future documents. Local Plan policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers will be saved beyond 2006 or 2007 in Cannock Chase, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby and will be incorporated/revised in the Core Strategy.
- 3.17 The South Staffordshire Development Plan Document Issues and Options Paper (October 2006) notes that the LDF will need to consider the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Core Strategy will need to set out the criteria for the allocation of Gypsy and Traveller sites to guide the allocation of new sites should they be required.
- 3.18 Lichfield had progressed a number of DPDs to include a Core Strategy. Core Policy 4 stated that *'the need to provide gypsy accommodation will be informed by a local assessment for Southern Staffordshire. If a need for a site is identified within the District then it will be provided for within the LDF period.'* The Core Strategy submission was found to be unsound and has subsequently been withdrawn.
- 3.19 Cannock Chase Core Strategy LDF Issues and Options (October 2005) notes that strategic objectives include social progress which meets the

needs of everyone, and refers to providing a range of house types and tenures to meet the diverse needs of the community including affordable housing for those on low incomes and provision for Gypsies. LDF Site Allocations Development Plan Document Issues and Options (May 2007) reads:

Gypsy site provision will be considered in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council, neighbouring District Councils and gypsy Liaison Officers, with regard to the following criteria:

- the site does not lie within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, special landscape areas, the Green Belt, a site of Specific Scientific Interest, within or adjacent to a conservation area or any other protected site.*
- the site would not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area*
- the site does not conflict with, or cause nuisance to, other users in the vicinity*
- detailed highway and design criteria*
- the site is within a reasonable distance of local facilities*

Proposals for accommodation seasonal or otherwise for travelling showpeople shall be considered on their merits. There will be a need to assess the local need for travelling showpeople with appropriate sites located primarily in areas where there is a mix of residential commercial and industrial uses.

- 3.20 There are no specific site allocations yet. On the basis of current information the district council does not believe there is a need to allocate land for additional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
- 3.21 No LPA is currently considering specific locations as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site development. When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, most LPAs referred to the criteria set out in their local plan. South Staffordshire commented that areas deemed suitable would probably be Brownfield sites. The over-riding significance of preserving Green Belt land is apparent in several answers.

4. Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area: the current picture

- 4.1 This chapter looks at the Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans in order to present what is known about Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area. In particular, this section presents information on the size and spatial distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

Caravan Numbers and Trends from the Caravan Count

- 4.2 The Caravan Count is far from perfect, but at present it remains the only official source of information on the size and distribution of a population that remains relatively unknown. Although a number of local authorities are able to provide very accurate information for the Count, generally speaking the Count needs to be treated with caution. Nationally speaking, a number of authorities occasionally report problems of access to the recording system, technical issues around submitting the information or failures in reporting caravan numbers in time. As a result, the information provided by the Caravan Count may not always accurately reflect the actual numbers of caravans and sites in the area at that time; however, 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.
- 4.3 According to the most recent Caravan Count there were a reported total of 370 caravans across the Study Area. The returns for the last five Caravan Counts across the Study Area are presented in Table A1 in appendix 1. What stands out from these figures is that the vast majority of Gypsy and Traveller caravans are accommodated on some form of authorised provision (70% of all caravans) with authorised private sites accommodating the bulk of this provision (96% of all authorised provision). According to the Caravan Count, all authorities, with the exception of Tamworth, had caravans present in some form with Rugby (154) and South Staffordshire (104) seeing the highest numbers of caravans. Unauthorised developments feature in most authorities with Rugby accommodating the largest number of caravans on unauthorised developments with 52 caravans at the last count (January 2007).
- 4.4 Table 6 shows the distribution of caravans in the Study Area by type of site at January 2007. The proportions are compared with the West Midlands Region and England. The Study Area has a very distinctive distribution. Over 90% of caravans are either on private sites (68%) or on unauthorised sites on Gypsy-owned land (24%) where private sites

have been set up without planning permission. Both proportions are significantly higher than the regional and national averages.²⁰

Table 6: Caravans by Type of Site January 2007

Type of site	Study Area		West Midlands	England
	Number	%	%	%
Social rented	10*	3	38	40
Private	250	68	42	39
Unauthorised Developments	89	24	11	14
Unauthorised Encampments	21	6	8	8
Total	370	100	100	100

*Caravans on the Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth were returned as 'private' rather than 'social rented', as the site was managed by a private individual who had leased the site from the County Council. Future counts, however, will show this as a socially rented site, as it is now managed by the County Council.

4.5 Table 7 summarises caravan numbers for the Study Area by type of site for January 1994 and 2007, and July in 1994 and 2006. The types of unauthorised sites were not distinguished in 1994 and 'unauthorised site' includes both Gypsy-owned and other land.

Table 7: Summary of Caravan Numbers 1994 and 2007

Type of site	January			July		
	1994	2007	% change	1994	2006	% change
Social rented	53	10*	-81%	41	12*	-71%
Private	101	250	+148%	107	170	+59%
Unauthorised	131	110	-16%	151	78	-48%
Total	285	370	+30%	299	260	-13%

*Caravans on the Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth were returned as 'private' rather than 'social rented', as the site was managed by a private individual who had leased the site from the County Council. Future counts, however, will show this as a socially rented site, as it is now managed by the County Council.

4.6 In terms of the Caravan Count comparison over time, there is an indication that:

- Overall caravan numbers have either increased by about a third (January to January) or decreased slightly (July to July). This illustrates the problems in comparing point-in-time figures to check trends. The graphs below suggest that the July 2006 figures look unusually low, while the January 2007 figures were the highest recorded since 1994.
- A significant increase in caravans on authorised private sites is shown in both January/January (+148%) and July/July (+59%). This increase more than offsets the decrease in caravans on both socially rented and unauthorised sites when measured January to January.

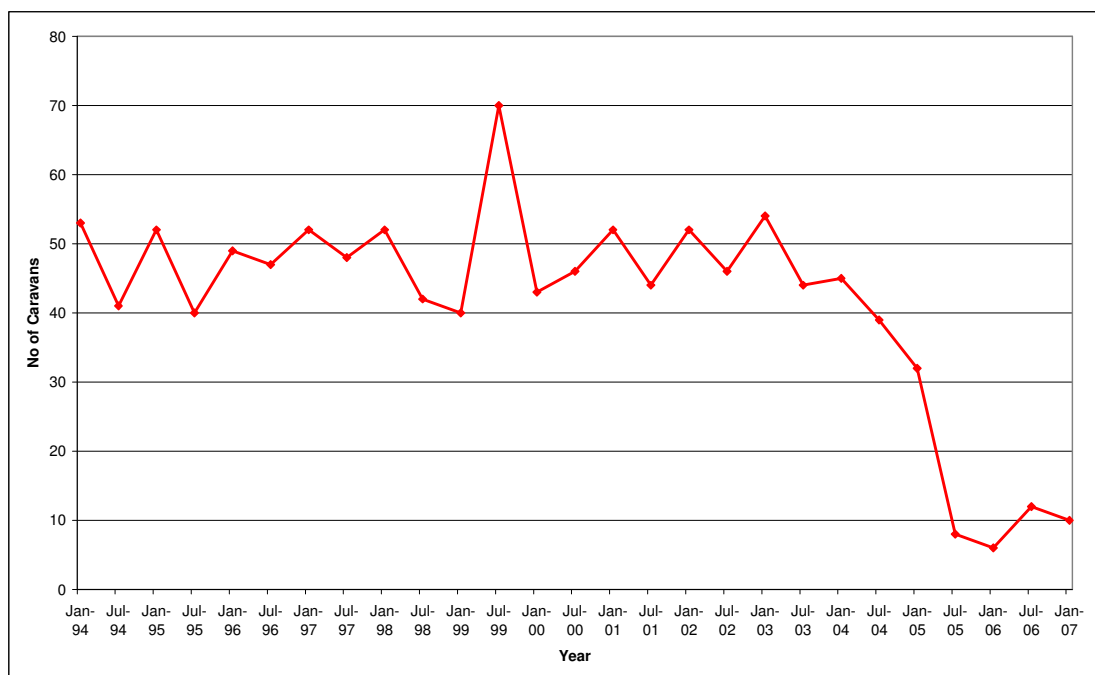
²⁰ Transferring caravans on Griff from private to social rented categories would not materially affect the picture.

- The number of caravans on social rented sites has decreased significantly. This reflects the omission of the Griff site from the category while it was managed privately and, to a lesser extent, the closure/reduced occupancy of the Alvecote site in North Warwickshire.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised sites has approximately halved if measured from July 1994 to 2006, but has decreased to a lesser extent from January 1994 to 2007.

4.7 The charts on the following pages illustrate Study Area changes in caravan numbers by type of site over time, which amplifies the apparent trends revealed in the table above.

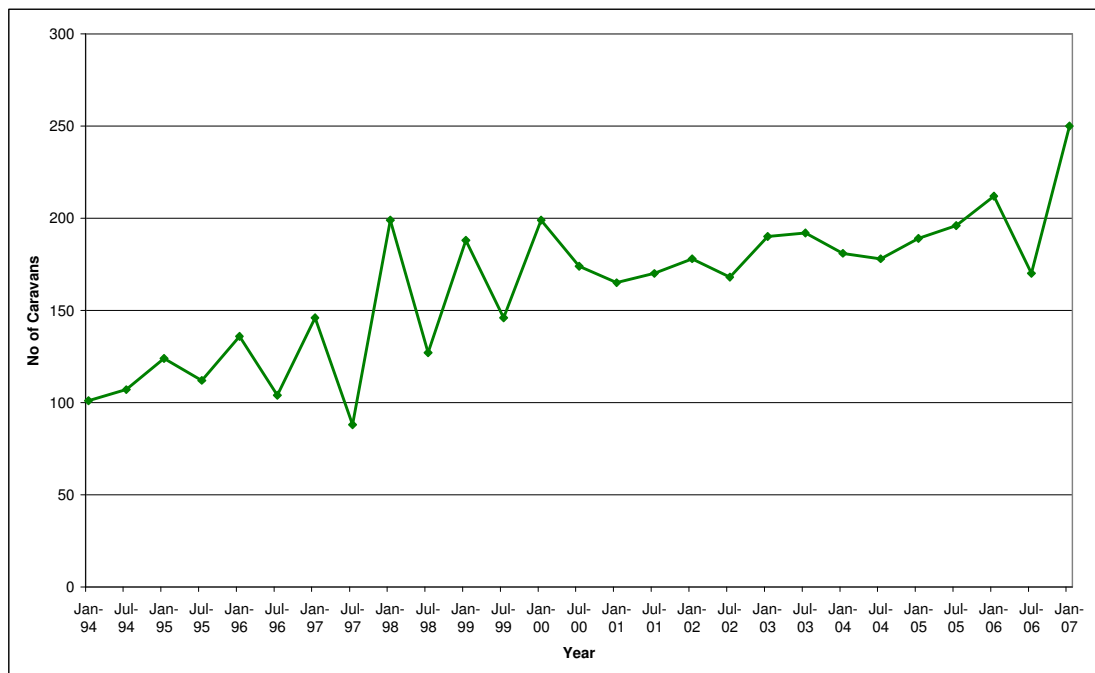
4.8 Figure 1 shows caravans on social rented sites. Numbers fluctuated seasonally (apart from an apparent big increase in July 1999) but were fairly static until January 2004 when the major decrease began, with a new stability at a lower level established since July 2005. As noted above, this reflects changed management arrangements as well as reduced occupancy.

Figure 1: Caravans on Social Rented Sites: January 1994 to 2007



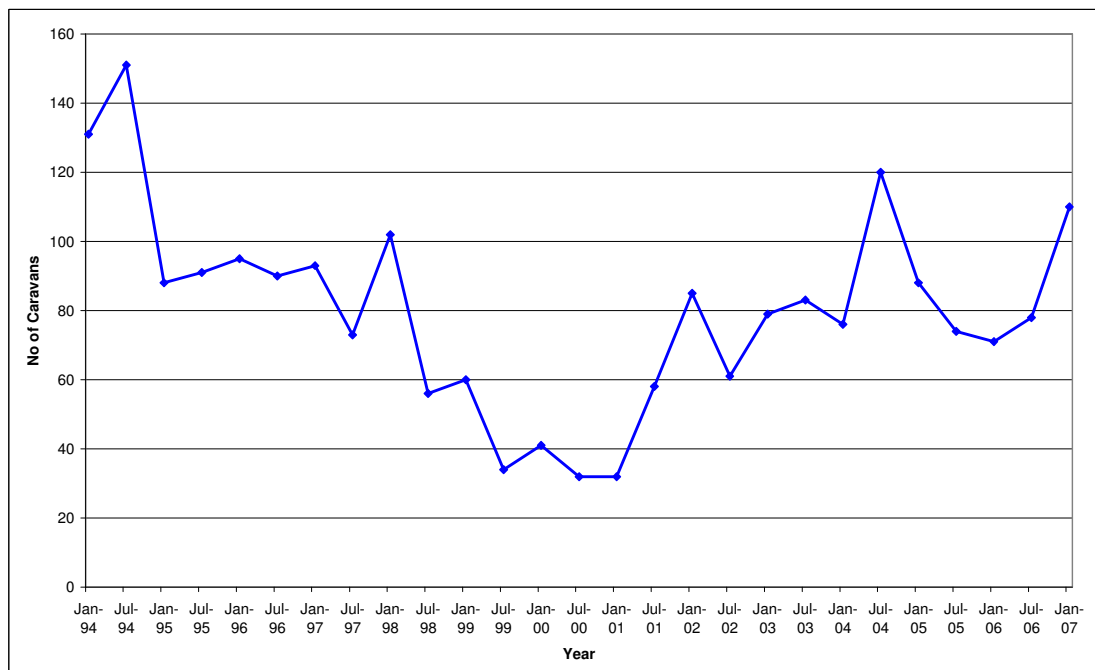
4.9 Figure 2 shows that numbers of caravans on authorised private sites have increased fairly steadily over the period albeit with some marked seasonal fluctuations at times. The July 2006 figure is unusually low because lower numbers were recorded in Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth.

Figure 2: Caravans on Private Authorised Sites: January 1994 to 2007



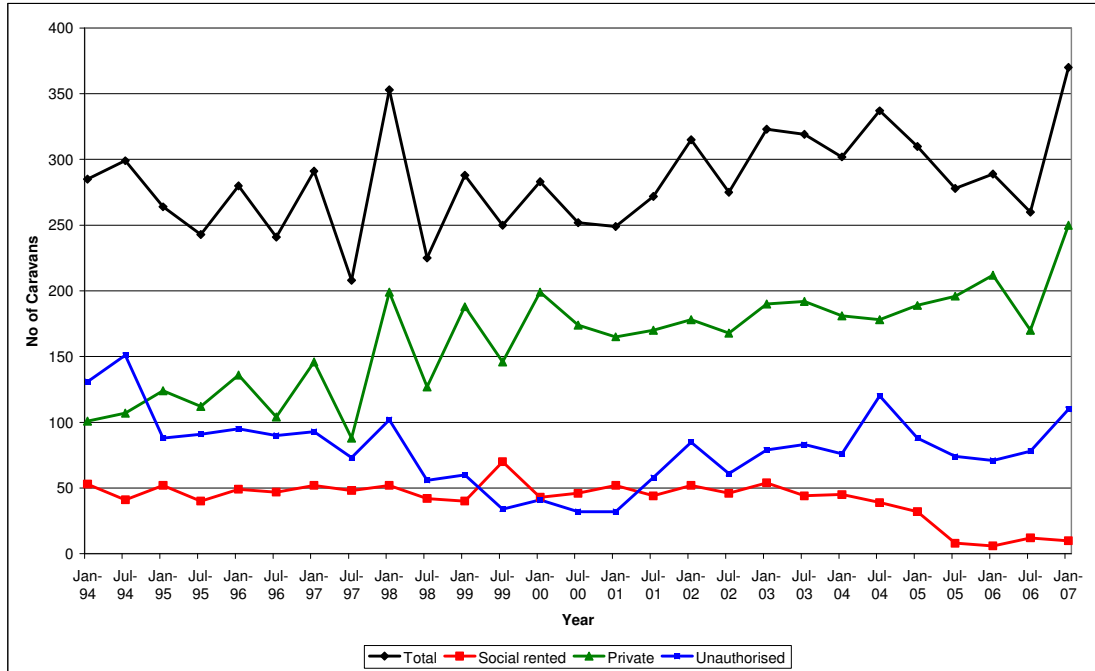
4.10 Figure 3 for caravans on unauthorised sites shows a broadly U-shaped curve with the trough around 2000.

Figure 3: Caravans on Unauthorised Sites: January 1994 to 2007



4.11 Figure 4 brings the figures together and adds a total line. It shows how the changes on different sorts of site contribute to marked short-term fluctuations obscuring any clear overall trend.

Figure 4 Caravans by Type of Site: January 1994 to 2007



Unauthorised Sites

4.12 Because unauthorised sites include both unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments, overall trends can hide significant shifts between the two forms of unauthorised site. Table 8 presents the breakdown of caravan numbers on different types of unauthorised sites in 1998 (when the figures were first available) and 2006/07. Because some numbers are small, the change calculations often seem dramatic. Caravans on Gypsy-owned land usually equate with unauthorised development of sites, those on other land with unauthorised encampments.

Table 8: Summary of Caravan Numbers on Unauthorised Site: 1998 and 2007

Type of site	January			July		
	1998	2007	% change	1998	2006	% change
Gypsy land: tolerated	0	14	Infinite increase	0	17	Infinite increase
Gypsy land: not tolerated	15	75	+400%	3	56	+1767%
<i>Gypsy land: total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>+493%</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>+2333%</i>
Other land: tolerated	20	3	-85%	1	0	Infinite decrease
Other land: not tolerated	67	18	-73%	51	5	-90%
<i>Other land: total</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>-76%</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>-92%</i>
Total	102	110	+8%	55	78	+42%

4.13 The table shows:

- In both January 2007 and July 2006 there were many more caravans on unauthorised developments than on encampments. The reverse was true in 1998. Fewer caravans were tolerated than not tolerated on both Gypsy-owned and other land in 2006/07.
- It is clear that the major changes taking place since 1998 are a significant increase in caravans on Gypsy-owned land (unauthorised development) and a decrease in caravans on other land (unauthorised encampment).

4.14 Other things being equal, the figures suggest that the unauthorised development of sites contributes more to needs in the Study Area than do unauthorised encampments.

Geographical Patterns

4.15 Table 9 shows the distribution of caravans between local authorities by type of site at January 1994.

Table 9: Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority: January 1994

Type of site	Study Area	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	South Staffordshire	Tamworth	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Rugby
Social rented sites	53	0	0	0	0	23	30	0
Private sites	101	0	0	78	0	0	0	23
Unauthorised sites (all)	131	15	41	24	16	0	5	30
Total	285	15	41	102	16	23	35	53

4.16 Table 10 shows the distribution of caravans between local authorities by type of site at January 2007. Rugby and South Staffordshire have the highest caravan numbers, followed by Nuneaton & Bedworth and Cannock Chase. There are no caravans reported on authorised sites in Lichfield (despite a small private site shown in Table 3) or Tamworth. Numbers of caravans on unauthorised sites, both on Gypsy-owned and other land, are highest in Rugby.

Table 10: Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority: January 2007

Type of site	Study Area	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	South Staffordshire	Tamworth	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Rugby
Social rented sites	10*	0	0	0	0	10	0*	0
Private sites	250	32	0	96	0	0	35*	87
Unauthorised – Gypsy-owned land	89	0	11	8	0	7	11	52
Unauthorised – other land	21	3	3	0	0	0	0	15
Total	370	35	14	104	0	17	46	154

*See earlier note around the returns for the Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth.

4.17 Comparing 1994 and 2007 shows that caravan numbers have decreased in Lichfield, Tamworth and North Warwickshire, been broadly stable in South Staffordshire and have increased elsewhere and especially in Rugby. The growth has been mainly in private authorised sites.

5. Size and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population

5.1 This chapter aims to provide some information on the demographics of the sample involved in this accommodation assessment, and uses this to give some indication of the overall size and composition of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area.

Demographic and household characteristics

5.2 Characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller communities are often hidden or not widely known. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments present an ideal opportunity to get to know more about the community at large, particularly in terms of living circumstances, age, Gypsy and Traveller groups and household composition. The following aims to provide some information about the composition of Gypsy and Traveller households in the sample.

Age of interviewees

5.3 The age profile of the sample can be seen from Table 11. The 25–39 age group was the most consulted during the assessment, forming 38% of the total sample. This was followed by the 40–49 age group (20%) and then the 16–24 age group (19%).

Table 11: Age of interviewees

Age Group	No.	%
16–24	25	19
25–39	51	38
40–49	26	20
50–59	13	10
60–74	15	11
75–84	1	1
Not available	2	2
Total	133	

Household size

5.4 In total, the survey sample accounts for 476 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the Study Area. The average household size for the whole sample is 3.6 persons – larger than the household size of the non-Traveller population. However, this hides a range in household sizes as indicated in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Household size distribution

Household Size	No.	%
1 Person	17	13
2 Persons	34	26
3 Persons	20	15
4 Persons	19	14
5 Persons	21	16
6 Persons	10	8
7 Persons	4	3
8 Persons	3	2
9 Persons	3	2
10 Persons	0	0
11 Persons	1	1
Missing	1	1
Total	133	

5.5 There was significant variation in the size of households in relation to their current accommodation type as well. As can be seen from Table 13, respondents from unauthorised sites tended to have larger households than those who were living in authorised accommodation. Households on unauthorised developments had largest households (5.4 persons) with respondents on the socially rented sites having the smallest (2.3 persons).

Table 13: Average household size by accommodation type

Accommodation type	Average household size
Socially rented sites	2.3
Private sites	3.8
Unauthorised encampments	4.6
Bricks and Mortar	4.8
Unauthorised developments	5.4

Household type

5.6 Table 14 shows the household type by type of accommodation. Families have been classified as follows:

Family type	Definition
Single person –	1 adult
Couple –	2 adults, no children or young adults
Young family –	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more children aged up to 16 years; no young adults
Older family –	All adult family with 1 or more children classified as ‘young adults’ (over 16 years but living within another household)
Mixed family –	Family with children under and over 16 years
Other –	3 or more adults, none classified as young adults

Table 14: Household type by type of accommodation

Household type	Socially rented sites	Private sites	Bricks and mortar	Unauthorised sites ²¹	Total
Number in sample	17	72	23	16	128
Percentage	%	%	%	%	%
Single	35	7	4	—	13
Couple	24	25	—	19	20
Young family	41	46	83	69	55
Older family	—	6	—	—	3
Mixed family	—	10	4	6	7
Other	—	1	9	6	3

5.7 Table 14 shows that:

- Young families are currently the predominant household type in the Study Area.
- There are a large number of small households on the socially rented sites in the Study Area.
- Authorised private sites accommodate a diverse spread of household types.
- There are more young families in bricks and mortar housing than any other accommodation type.

5.8 In addition, two of the site-based Travelling Showpeople respondents were in mixed families, two were young families and one was a single person household.

Marital status

5.9 In total, 71% of the interviewees were married with a further 1% (1 person) living with their partner. The remainder described their marital status as either single (14%), divorced (8%) or widowed (5%).

Table 15: Marital status of the interview sample

Marital status	No.	%
Married	94	71
Single	18	14
Divorced	10	8
Widowed	7	5
Missing information	3	2
Living with partner	1	1
Total	133	

²¹ The data for unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments has been combined as a result of the comparably smaller number of interviews conducted on each type of accommodation.

Local connections to the Study Area

5.10 When asked, the majority of households felt that they were local to the area where they were currently accommodated (77%). See Table 16 for a breakdown by current accommodation type.

Table 16: Local to the area?

Accommodation type	No. households local	% of total sample
Socially rented sites	17	100
Bricks and Mortar	20	87
Private sites	51	73
Unauthorised developments	5	71
Unauthorised encampments	5	56

5.11 As Table 16 shows, the majority of all households consider their current area of residence their 'local' area. This is particularly the case for households on socially rented sites and bricks and mortar housing. Interestingly, households on private sites and unauthorised sites all report similar levels of local connection to the area. Table 17 below looks in further detail at households' claims as to why they were in the Study Area.

Table 17: Reasons for residing in the Study Area (figures in % of sample)

Reason	Current accommodation type					Total
	Bricks and mortar	Unauthorised encampment	Unauthorised development	Socially rented site	Private site	
Family lives here	83	78	86	71	76	78
Work	44	22	29	18	42	37
Schooling	55	11	43	18	24	29
Place of birth	26	22	43	12	26	25
Only place available	9	67	43	18	22	24
Other	5	34	—	39	10	14
Family/community event	35	—	14	—	1	8
Holiday	—	—	—	—	—	—

5.12 The presence of family in the Study Area was a major reason why households were residing where they were. This was particularly the case on unauthorised developments (although the small sample size needs to be considered), and is broadly consistent with findings from other GTAs and households in bricks and mortar housing. Households on unauthorised encampments cited both family presence and 'the only place available' as major reasons for being where they were. Family connection was also a significant factor for households on socially rented sites and private sites. Interestingly, no households said they were in the area due to a holiday. In terms of 'other' reasons provided, these included:

“Been here all my life”

“It’s a peaceful place”

“Wanted a change”

“I needed a stable place because my son is ill”

5.13 Thus, from these findings the majority of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing can be seen to ‘belong’, in some way, to the Study Area.

Gypsy and Traveller groups

5.14 The largest single group was from the Romany/Gypsy (English) community (71%), followed by Irish Travellers (19%), followed by Showpeople/Circus People, and then smaller comparable numbers of Welsh Gypsies/Travellers (3%) and Traveller (not specified) (2%).

Table 18: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

Gypsy and Traveller groups	No. of households	%
Romany/Gypsy (English)	91	68
Irish Traveller	24	18
Showperson/Circus person	6	5
Welsh Gypsy/Traveller	4	3
Traveller (not specified)	3	2
Missing information	3	2
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	1	1
Don’t know	1	1
Total	133	

The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community

5.15 For most minority ethnic communities, presenting data about the size of the community in question is usually relatively straightforward (with the exception of communities who have large numbers of irregular migrants and migrant workers etc. amongst them). However, for Gypsies and Travellers, one of the most difficult issues is providing accurate information on the size of the population (see Chapter 4). As a result, we have used information provided by the local authorities and key stakeholders, together with our survey findings, in order to provide a best estimate as to the size of the local Gypsy and Traveller population (see Table 19) at the time of the assessment. Due to their mobility levels this estimate does not include households on unauthorised encampments.

Table 19: Estimated Study Area Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	Families/Households (based on 1 pitch = 1 household)	Individuals	Derivation
Socially rented sites	37	103	Based on occupied pitches at the time of the assessment and the actual number from local authority records.
Private sites	214	813	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.8)
Unauthorised developments	37	200	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (5.4)
Housing	47 ²²	226	Number of families estimated to live in the area multiplied by average household size from the survey (4.8)
Travelling Showpeople	20	68	Number of yards known to the research team multiplied by the average household size for Travelling Showpeople (3.4)
Total	355	1410	

5.16 We estimate that there are at least 1410 Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area, although the estimate for housed Gypsies and Travellers is likely to be a significant under-estimate.

²² This is an estimate based on the number of interviews achieved during the course of the GTAA, coupled with information obtained from Warwickshire County Council Gypsy Services (38 known households in Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire) – excludes double counting. This is likely to be a significant underestimate.

6. Authorised site provision – findings

6.1 A certain degree of caution needs to be taken when extrapolating the characteristics, trends and needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population from the Caravan Counts and other such data alone. In order to provide more specific information on the local Gypsy and Traveller population, this chapter draws upon the survey completed by local authorities on site provision, stakeholder views and knowledge, and the views of Gypsies and Travellers who occupy these sites. The chapter deals first with socially rented accommodation and then authorised private sites.

Socially rented sites

6.2 There are 3 local authority sites, 2 (Alvecote in North Warwickshire and the Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth) owned by Warwickshire County Council and 1 (Stoney Road, Nuneaton) owned by Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council. There are no local authority sites in the Staffordshire part of the Study Area. The Stoney Road site was developed recently using a Government grant and was intended to provide accommodation to meet the Council's duty to a Gypsy family accepted as homeless. Legal issues between the Council and the family have not yet been resolved and the site remains unoccupied; as a result this is excluded from the information that follows.

6.3 Pitch numbers at the Warwickshire County Council (WCC) sites are summarised in Table 20.

Table 20: Occupancy of socially rented Gypsy and Traveller Sites

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Total pitches	17	21
Residential: <i>All</i>	17	21
<i>Occupied</i>	17	20
<i>Closed</i>	0	1
Transit: <i>All</i>	0	0
<i>Occupied</i>	0	0
<i>Vacant</i>	0	0

6.4 There are a total of 38 pitches, all residential. No pitches were identified as 'vacant' (empty but available for letting), but 1 was 'closed' (not currently in use and not available for letting). The single closed pitch at the Griff site is the result of vandalism and is expected to be back in use in 6–12 months' time (spring/summer 2008). Alvecote has recently re-opened a number of pitches following refurbishment, having been closed for several years, with all the pitches now re-let.

6.5 Table 21 below summarises the details of the site residents on the three sites.

Table 21: Details of Site Residents

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Site population	46	57
Number of children	19	18
% children	41	32
Average persons per occupied pitch	2.7	2.9
Doubled-up pitches	0	0
Number of living units	0 chalets 0 static caravans 22 trailers/tourers	4 chalets 3 static caravans 14 trailers/tourers
Ethnic groups among site residents	English Gypsy (15 pitches) Irish Traveller (2 pitches)	English Gypsy or Traveller Irish Traveller
Pitch occupancy in year	100% since site re-opened fully	100% most of year
% of site residents lived on site 5+ years	NA as site recently re-opened	60% to 90%

6.6 The total site population across the sites is 103 people, of whom 37 (36%) are children aged up to 16. Significant points from the table are:

- The average number of persons per occupied pitch is similar across the two sites at around 2.7 and 2.9 persons.
- Both sites are ethnically mixed.
- There is no evidence of need from ‘doubled up’ households who would ideally like a separate pitch or house of their own on either site.

Residents’ views²³

6.7 All respondents on the socially rented sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Eleven respondents (65%) had 1 trailer and 6 respondents (35%) had 2 trailers. The proportion of respondents on the Griff site with 2 trailers was higher than that from the Alvecote site.

6.8 The average number of living units (trailers) was 1.4 per household. Just over half of respondents felt they had enough space (56%) for their needs. Those households that felt that this did not give them enough space told us that this was due either to the size of the pitch that they had or the number or size of caravans that they owned.

6.9 When asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, how they viewed their neighbours on the sites the vast majority (94%)

²³ Throughout this section please note that the sample size on the two sites was 6 households on Alvecote and 11 on the Griff site which equates to approximately half the population from each site.

thought their relationships with neighbours were either very good or good; just 6% (1 respondent) had ambivalent views; no respondents viewed their neighbours in a negative light.

6.10 Over half of the households we spoke to on the socially rented sites had been on the site for significant periods of time: 59% for five or more years, 6% for between 1 and 5 years. However, a sizeable number (35%) had been on the site for less than 12 months.

6.11 No households on socially rented sites had bases elsewhere.

Site ownership and management

6.12 Both sites are managed by WCC, who took over management of the Griff site in February 2007.

6.13 The County Council was asked to provide details of any aspects of site provision, design or management which works well and is worth sharing with others. Nuneaton & Bedworth referred to an event at the Griff site as good practice:

The Inter Agency Group for Travellers recently held an event day on the Griff site. This involved PCT, Police, Education, Fire Service, Local Authority, Healthy Living Network and Sure Start. Each participating organisation brought something to the event (healthy food, energy-saving light bulbs, smoke alarms fitted into caravans etc.). In particular, health checks were available on site with ill health conditions being identified.

Residents' views

6.14 We asked respondents to comment, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, on the site management of the sites. The response was generally positive with 65% viewing management as either very good or good, 29% being ambivalent and just 1 respondent (6%) regarding site management as poor.

6.15 Residents on the Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth were more likely to view the site management as ambivalent or poor. However, it is thought that this reflected the general poor condition of the site rather than a comment on the site manager.

6.16 We received a handful of general comments from respondents about the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites. These tended to indicate that the management of sites should not rest with Gypsies and Travellers themselves:

"We'll never live on a council site again. When Gypsies run them they think they own them and give the other Gypsies a hard time."

Site facilities and quality

6.17 In order to gather information on what was provided on each local authority site and the general quality of the site, a series of questions were asked about site facilities and the local area (see Table 21 below).

Table 21: Facilities on local authority sites and assessment of quality by WCC

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Site facilities	Amenity units for each pitch Designated work areas	Amenity units for each pitch
Facilities in amenity units	Bath (no shower) WC with direct access from outside Space/provision for cooking Space/plumbing/provision for laundry Effective heating	Bath (no shower) WC with direct access from outside
Quality of surroundings/ environment	Good	Very poor
Location and access to schools/shops	Average	Average
Site condition and maintenance	Good	Very poor
Any known disputes etc. over last year?	No	Disputes between residents Other anti-social behaviour

6.18 As might be expected, facilities and conditions are assessed, by officers, as better at the refurbished Alvecote than at the Griff. According to the local authority officer, the instances of dispute between residents and other Anti Social Behaviour at the Griff site were discussed with residents and the situation went away.

6.19 Consultation with an officer revealed that 8 of the sheds on the Griff site have been condemned as unsafe and temporary accommodation was set up to respond to residents' needs. The site is adjacent to an old landfill site.

Residents' views

6.20 Site residents were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their site including: size of pitch; design of site; location; and facilities on site. The majority of respondents on the sites viewed the location of the sites as positive (Table 22). Both the design of the sites and the facilities available were viewed as being quite poor. There were mixed views as to the size of pitches on the sites.

Table 22: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	6	41	6	29	18
Design of site	0	18	24	35	24
Location of site	18	53	12	12	6
Facilities on site	0	29	6	0	65

6.21 On each issue it was more common for residents on the Griff site to have a negative view than residents of the Alvecote site – this correlates with the perception from Warwickshire County Council.

6.22 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those we spoke to on the two sites (see Table 23 below). As can be seen, access was varied across the sites. Most facilities on Alvecote were accessible; however, there was a significant lack of access to a postal service, fire precautions or a children’s play area. Respondents on the Alvecote site reported significantly better access to facilities than their counterparts on the Griff site. In terms of the Griff site a number of respondents reported not being able to access a water supply – although it is unclear from the findings whether this related to an actual lack of water or sporadic loss of hot water by certain residents. We asked people who could not access water how they were overcoming this; one person commented:

“I’ve been getting hot water from my neighbour but I have to use showers at the leisure centre because of no hot water here.”

6.23 On the Griff site a number of people talked about how they got water from neighbours and used showers at the local leisure centre as a significant number did not have access to either a bath or a shower with evidence of low accessibility on a range of other facilities (kitchen, WC, laundry, eating space, children’s play area). However, access to fire precautions and a postal service was better on the Griff site than on Alvecote.

Table 23: Access to facilities on socially rented sites (% of sample that have access)

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Water	100	36
Electricity supply	100	100
Rubbish collection	100	100
Shed (% heated)	100 (100)	100 (27)
Shower	17	9
Bath	83	45
Kitchen facilities	100	64
WC	100	64
Laundry	83	45
Eating/sitting space	100	36
Postal service	33	91
Fire precautions	33	82
Children's play area	17	0

6.24 All residents were asked to comment on whether they had any concerns around health and safety on the sites. Just 2 residents on the Alvecote site had such concerns, while all respondents on the Griff site had concerns. When asked, a few people expanded upon the concerns they had. On the Alvecote site, because we interviewed before the site was fully re-opened the two respondents we spoke to were concerned about the implications more/new families could have on the existing site residents:

"A day warden will be needed when more people move onto the site."

"Would be nice to have a day warden to protect it when people move on. We need more peace of mind, especially at night."

6.25 In terms of concerns over the Griff site we received many comments which tended to revolve around the presence of pests:

"There are lots of rats around and there's rubbish at the back of field. It needs sorting."

"Lots of rats running around. Lots of rubbish. It's a problem for the kids playing out. There's also a broken up caravan near the entrance and gas bottles left."

"We need street lighting and rats are a big problem."

"Rats but I'm also worried about fires as caravans are too close together."

Travelling and Visitors

- 6.26 One of the ways in which site rules can help or hinder Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles is restrictions placed upon absence for travelling and ability to accommodate visitors on site in caravans. Table 24 summarises the authorities' approach to this.

Table 24: Permitted absence and visitors

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Normal maximum absence allowed in a year	8	8
Rent payable during absence?	Full rent/licence fee	Full rent/licence fee
Can licensees have visitors with caravans?	Yes	Yes
Circumstances	For 28 days, further stays will require permission of site manager	Visitor can only stay for 14 days unless permission has been given by the site manager

- 6.27 Thus absence is permitted for periods up to 8 weeks in a year. Visitors are permitted for a period on both sites with the possibility of this being extended with the permission of the site manager.

Residents' views

- 6.28 The vast majority of residents on socially rented sites reported that they no longer travelled (75%). The remainder travelled either once every year (13%), seasonally (6%) or every couple of months (6%). Just under half of respondents on these sites thought that travelling for them had changed in the last few years.

- 6.29 When asked to comment on why they had not travelled recently, the vast majority of those who responded talked about no longer being able to travel either because of health reasons, caring responsibilities, for example:

"Because I've got a little boy who needs carers."

"I look after my mother on a full time basis."

"My dad's very ill so I don't want to go."

"I'm not very well but I would love a holiday."

- 6.30 Another respondent commented on the lack of safe places to stay:

“I’ve not travelled since coming on here and that’s 24 years ago. It isn’t safe to travel anymore. Just at the back of here, on the golf course, Irish Travellers pulled on and started arguments and hassle. Some locals smashed up the caravans and blew one up.”

Waiting lists and pitch allocation

6.31 Pitch allocation policies, waiting lists and numbers of pitches allocated are all relevant factors in understanding both demand for and access to existing local authority sites. Table 25 summarises the status quo on the two socially rented sites. However, because of circumstances – one site having been closed for some years and the other having been leased until very recently – there is little quantitative information available on either demand or supply of pitches.

Table 25: Waiting lists and allocation policies

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Waiting list?	Yes	Yes – formal
Numbers on list	3	Not given
Trends in numbers	NA	Increased
Pitches vacated 2004–2005	NA	Not known (site previously leased)
Formal allocation policy?	Yes (draft)	Yes (draft)
Most important factors taken into account	Medical/special health needs Need for accommodation Family size/composition Family or personal compatibility Known previous behaviour/ references	Medical/special health needs Need for accommodation Family size/composition Known previous behaviour/ references Time on waiting list

6.32 One of the comments we received about the waiting list on the Alvecote site referred to the presence of a broader waiting list to that which is included above, which tended to consist of applicants who do not meet the criteria of the more narrow list/allocation policy. It was also discussed that many ‘potential’ applicants do not appear to register for a pitch on the site when there is no pitch available with immediate effect.

6.33 None of the respondents on these sites was on a waiting list for a site elsewhere.

Financial issues

6.34 Technically, the charges paid by site residents are licence fees, but they are commonly referred to as rents, and this term is used below. Table 26 shows, where possible, rents charged, damage deposits

charged, proportion of residents receiving housing benefit (HB) and any Supporting People payments received.

Table 26: Pitch rent and other financial matters

	Alvecote (North Warwickshire)	Griff (Nuneaton & Bedworth)
Pitch rent (residential)	Will be £60 p/w	Different rates for each pitch 4 weekly rent roll £2,415.16 (average around £30 p/w)
Damage deposit?	£100	£100
% of residents receiving HB	All/almost all (over 90%)	All/almost all (over 90%)
Supporting People payments?	No	No

6.35 Rents are higher at the refurbished Alvecote site (£60 p/w) than at the Griff site (av. £30 p/w). An initial damage deposit of £100 is charged at both sites.

6.36 No Supporting People payments are received for any site residents. Almost all (over 90%) residents receive housing benefit towards their rent; clearly HB is important in making site places affordable.

Plans for existing and new sites

6.37 Warwickshire County Council were asked whether certain specified changes were planned during the next 3 years. There was no response concerning Alvecote. However, at the Griff site there are plans to increase pitch numbers, undertake major repairs and improvements and to change arrangements for site management.

6.38 All 7 authorities, including those currently without a site, were asked if they had any current plans to provide additional local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in their area over the next 5 years. Rugby plans to provide 12 residential pitches at Woodside Park which is a private site in the Study Area. The development is the result of a bid to the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant and entails the creation of 12 new pitches in the centre of the existing site together with the provision of facilities (electricity, water, sheds, sewage system, etc.)

6.39 Rugby have also indicated their plans to develop 10–15 transit pitches at a location not yet determined. No other plans were reported.

Private Gypsy and Traveller sites

6.40 This section looks at private sites across the Study Area. Table 27 summarises reported private sites either with planning permission or tolerated and in existence. There are a total of 34 sites providing 214 pitches.

Table 27: Private sites and pitches by local authority

Local Authority	Sites	Pitches	Comments
Cannock Chase	3 ²⁴	41	Mostly rented pitches
Lichfield	1	2	Owner-occupied + rented
South Staffordshire	12	83	17 owner-occupied pitches, 66 rented
Tamworth	—	—	
North Warwickshire	1	7	Owner-occupied, temporary consent
Nuneaton & Bedworth	7 ²⁵	15	Mostly owner-occupied
Rugby	10 ²⁶	66	Unknown mix of rented and owner-occupied pitches. Includes 3 family sites (3 pitches) with temporary 3–4-year personal consents following appeal
Study Area	34	214	

6.41 Features of this provision include:

- Most sites and pitches are in South Staffordshire and Rugby, and to a lesser extent in Cannock Chase and Nuneaton & Bedworth. There is no authorised private site in Tamworth (meaning that there is no authorised provision of any type there).
- A significant number of rented private pitches are provided in Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Rugby. Rented sites are significantly larger than owner-occupied sites, and are likely to function in a very different way and provide different accommodation opportunities. The existence of private rented pitches in the Staffordshire part of the Study Area puts the lack of social rented sites/pitches in context.

6.42 Each local authority was asked how the number of private sites/pitches had changed since 2001. In South Staffordshire, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby the number of both sites and pitches has increased. In Cannock Chase the number of sites remains static but the number of pitches had increased. In Lichfield the number of sites has remained static but pitch numbers have decreased.

6.43 When asked, all authorities, other than Cannock Chase and Tamworth, expected the number of authorised private sites in their area to increase over the next 5 years.

6.44 It proved difficult to accurately establish the pitch capacity of all private sites. The pitch capacity, which is stated in Table 27 above, is drawn from information held by local authority officers where planning permissions are often based on maximum caravan occupancy rather

²⁴ Includes one long-standing unauthorised site with 8 pitches, which is tolerated.

²⁵ Includes 3 sites in Bulkington which straddle the boundary between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby. The sites are counted in both areas; pitches refer to each local authority and have not been double counted.

²⁶ See above.

than clearly defined pitches. Where pitch numbers are not defined, we have used a 1.7 caravan to pitch ratio to ascertain the approximate number of pitches. However, it must be noted that such ratios can and do change over time and this is merely indicative.

- 6.45 In addition, in comparison to socially rented sites where there is good access to management information via local authority records, it proved difficult to gain any clear idea about occupancy levels and vacancies on private sites. As a result we have assumed all developed sites were at 100% occupancy during the assessment period. Therefore the base figure used in the assessment for private sites is 214.
- 6.46 Although it is difficult to provide accurate information on the division of owner-occupier and rented pitches, from our sample, we estimate that 68% (146/214) of pitches are rented and 32% (68/214) are owned by their occupier. Clearly this tenure split is significant for the sorts of families accommodated and their likely duration of stay. Given the low level of socially rented accommodation in the Study Area, pitches on private sites may be filling a gap in affordable accommodation and/or performing a role similar to that served by transit sites.

Residents' views

- 6.47 All respondents on the private sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Fifty-one respondents (71%) had 1 trailer, 16 respondents (22%) had 2 trailers, 1 respondent had 3 trailers and 1 respondent had 5 trailers. The average number of living units per household was 1.3 trailers, which is just less than households on socially rented sites.
- 6.48 The vast majority of households (79%) thought they had enough space for their needs. Those households who felt that they did not have enough space attributed this to either an inability to afford another trailer (4 households) or being constrained by the size of their pitch (4 households). Broadly speaking, households on rented pitches were more likely to require more space than households who were owner-occupiers.
- 6.49 There was some concern expressed by an officer from one of the local authorities that it is not unusual for private owners/landlords to allow more caravans/households on a site than would usually be practicable. This often results in households living in more cramped conditions, i.e. overcrowding on sites, but who are wary of complaining to the owner/landlord due to potential repercussions such as eviction. It is possible that this is reflected in the responses which respondents provided during the interviews, however, the interviewers did not recall significant 'site overcrowding' when on the sites.
- 6.50 Site residents of private sites were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects

of their site including: size of pitch; design of site; neighbours on site; location; facilities on site; and management. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues positively (see Table 28). Owner-occupiers were more likely to view these issues as very good, whereas residents who rented pitches were likely to provide 'good' comments.

Table 28: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	42	43	11	4	0
Design of site	42	50	8	0	0
Neighbours on site	46	51	1	1	0
Location of site	42	51	2	2	0
Facilities on site	39	39	18	2	1
Management	46	46	4	1	0

6.51 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those we spoke to on all private sites (see Table 29 below). As can be seen, most households had access to the services we enquired about. Access to services was similar across the different tenures although, as might be expected, households on rented pitches tended to have less access to facilities than owner-occupiers. For those households who couldn't access water or washing facilities on the site, individuals tended to visit the local leisure centre or rely on neighbours.

Table 29: Access to facilities on private sites

	% of sample have access
WC	99
Postal service	99
Rubbish collection	99
Water	97
Electricity supply	97
Fire precautions	89
Children's play area	74
Shed (%heated)	72 (12)
Shower	63
Laundry	56
Kitchen facilities	49
Eating/sitting space	49
Bath	39

6.52 Nine households on private sites (12%) mentioned concerns they had around health and safety on their sites. These tended to be tenants (6 households). One respondent talked about issues related to fire risk:

"The trailers are too close to one another."

6.53 Others spoke about issues related to vehicles and children:

“Sometimes there are a lot of trailers and motors on here so we have to watch the children.”

“You have to watch the children all the time because of the number of motors.”

- 6.54 A number of other respondents talked about the busy road to which the site was adjacent:

“The road is too fast; 30–40 miles an hour would be better.”

“The road is way too busy, it’s a dual carriageway, and it’s not exactly safe.”

- 6.55 Just 6 households on private sites (8%) said that they had an additional base elsewhere. All 6 were on rented pitches. All but one said the base was another private site; the remaining respondent had a house somewhere. The alternative bases were in various areas, including Essex (2), Hertfordshire, Southampton, Swansea and Telford.

7. Planning and the unauthorised development of sites – findings

7.1 Unauthorised developments are a major source of tension between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. The new planning system is intended to create conditions where there is no need for unauthorised developments because land will be allocated for authorised site development. This chapter looks in depth at the experience of local authorities of receiving planning applications to develop Gypsy and Traveller sites and of Gypsies and Travellers making applications to develop such sites. In addition, this chapter focuses upon the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission.

Planning applications

7.2 Following on from the previous chapter, indications of increasing number of private sites are linked with the recent pattern of planning applications. The local authority survey asked how many planning applications had been received, granted, refused and granted on appeal since 2001. Table 30 summarises these responses.

Table 30: Summary of planning applications and outcomes since 2001

Year	Address	Pitches/caravans	Outcome
Cannock Chase			
2004	Lichfield Road, Cannock	Increase in number of caravans from 4 to 7	Approved
Lichfield			
2007	Coleshill Street	Increase in number of pitches/caravans from 2 to 8	In progress
South Staffordshire			
2001	Ball Lane, Coven	2 caravans	Withdrawn
2002	Poplar Lane, Hatherton	2 caravans	Allowed on appeal
2002	Poplar Lane, Hatherton	6 pitches	Dismissed on appeal
2002	Stafford Road, Coven Heath*	2 caravans	Refused
2003	Stafford Road, Coven Heath*	1 family	Refused
2005	Stafford Road, Coven Heath*	Not known	Withdrawn
2005	Hospital Lane, Cheslyn Hay [#]	6 families	Refused
2006	Hospital Lane, Cheslyn Hay [#]	6 families/8 caravans	Allowed temporary permission on appeal for 4 years (until 2011)
2006	Stafford Road, Coven Heath*	Not known	Current appeal
Tamworth			
	None		

North Warwickshire			
2004	Pine Grove	1 family/3 caravans	Refused and dismissed on appeal
2004	Atherstone Road, Hartshill	7 pitches	Granted temporary permission until 2006 – reapplication in progress
2007	Quary Lane, Mancetter	1 family	In progress
Nuneaton & Bedworth			
2001	21 Applications from unauthorised development Bulkington*	21	Refused
2005	Parrots Grove, Coventry#	1	Granted on appeal
2005	Withybrook Road, Bulkington*	1	In progress
2007	Parrots Grove, Coventry#	1	In progress
2007	Coventry Road, Bulkington	1	In progress
2007	Coventry Road, Bulkington	3	Approved
Rugby			
2002	Cathiron Lane, Harborough Magna	4 caravans	Refused; temporary 3 year personal consent granted on appeal
2003	Brandon Lane, Coventry	6 pitches	Refused
2003	Top Road, Barnacle, Coventry*	10 families	Refused
2003	Brandon Lane, Coventry	Gypsy site	Refused
2005	Top Road, Barnacle, Coventry*	10 families (2 year permission)	Refused
2007	Woodside Park, Ryton	Not known	In progress

Note: * or # signify applications referring to the same land

7.3 A total of 26 applications were received in 6 out of 7 LPAs. Two applications involved additional caravans on existing sites. A total of sixteen different locations were involved.

7.4 In summary the outcomes were:

- Approved 2 applications, 6 additional caravans
- Allowed on appeal 3 applications, 11 caravans
- Refused 9 applications
- Current appeal 2 applications
- Dismissed on appeal 2 applications
- Withdrawn 2 applications

- In progress 6 applications

7.5 It is clear that less than half of the applications were approved directly or on appeal.

7.6 Reasons given for refusal all related to the application being an inappropriate development in the Green Belt, visual intrusion and insufficient very special circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt. Some refusals also cited highway issues or specific landscape conservation issues.

Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites

7.7 Overall, 5 authorities had some experience of unauthorised development of sites by Gypsies and Travellers since 2001:

- Rugby: 7 sites
- South Staffordshire: 3 sites
- Lichfield: 1 site
- North Warwickshire: 1 site
- Nuneaton & Bedworth: 1 site

7.8 All the authorities affected had taken enforcement action against at least one unauthorised development since 2001, including the high-profile case at Bulkington in Nuneaton & Bedworth.

7.9 At the time of the assessment the local authorities reported that there were 9 unauthorised developments in all, involving approximately 37 pitches, in 5 authorities (Lichfield 1 site, South Staffordshire 2 sites, North Warwickshire 1 site, Nuneaton & Bedworth 1 site and Rugby 3 sites) (see Table 31 below).

Table 31: Current Unauthorised Developments

Site	Pitches/caravans	Comments
Cannock Chase		
Nil	—	One tolerated site
Lichfield		
Bonehill Road, Mile Oak	3 or 4 pitches	Enforcement notice, appeal dismissed. Compliance period ends 30/9/2007.
South Staffordshire		
Ball Lane, Coven Heath	14 caravans (Jan '07) approx. 8 pitches	No action at present
Stafford Road, Coven Heath	3 caravans (Jan '07) approx. 2 pitches	Enforcement appeal due to be heard June 2007
Tamworth		
Nil	—	
North Warwickshire		
Atherstone Road, Hartshill	Approx. 4 pitches	Unknown action
Nuneaton & Bedworth		
Withybrook Road, Bulkington	1 pitch	Enforcement action current
Rugby		
Top Road, Barnacle	10 pitches	Extensive planning history. Public Inquiry on appeal against refusal of planning permission opened May 2007 and adjourned to allow negotiation over temporary consent.
Brandon Lane, Coventry	6 pitches	None at present
Wood Lane, Shilton	2 pitches	None at present

7.10 Views from the local authorities differed as to whether the number of unauthorised developments would increase over the next 5 years; 5 thought they would not and 2 (Lichfield and North Warwickshire) thought that they would if there is no policy development.

Residents' views

7.11 During our fieldwork we managed to consult with households on seven of the developments; however, this only meant consultations with 8 households. As a result, the views of residents are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages. It must also be noted that these views reflect 7 sites rather than all 9 unauthorised developments present at the time of the study.

7.12 Five households on the unauthorised developments provided details about how many living units they had: 1 household had 1 unit; 5 households had 2 units; 1 household had 3 units; and 1 household had 4 units. The average number of living units per household was 2.3 – larger than the number for both private and socially rented sites.

- 7.13 Only 1 respondent thought that this did not give them enough space, with this respondent requiring larger accommodation than they currently had.
- 7.14 Residents of the developments were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their site including: size of pitch; design of site; neighbours on site; location; facilities on site; and management. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the design of the site and the facilities available to use.
- 7.15 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those on the developments (see Table 32 below). Generally speaking, access to facilities on developments was reasonably good. Most respondents had access to important facilities such as water, WC and electricity. Access to facilities was most problematic on the developments in Rugby. However, all respondents reported having access to somewhere safe for children to play.

Table 32: Access to facilities on unauthorised developments

	No. have access	No. have no access
Children's play area	8	—
WC	7	1
Rubbish collection	7	1
Water	7	1
Postal service	7	1
Fire precautions	7	1
Eating/sitting space	6	2
Shed (heated)	6 (3)	2
Kitchen facilities	6	2
Electricity supply	6	2
Laundry	4	4
Shower	4	4
Bath	3	5

- 7.16 Just 2 of the respondents on the unauthorised development had concerns about health and safety. One reason surrounded issues of community safety:

"If something happens to us the police take a long time to come out. A couple of months ago we were threatened but the police wouldn't come out."

- 7.17 Another respondent commented on how a lack of access to a power supply affected the health of family members:

"We need electricity as my little boy is disabled and we're always up with him."

- 7.18 It should be noted that although a large number of the households we spoke to felt they had adequate fire precautions, this is entirely subjective and their view of adequate fire precautions may differ from the precautions required by a licence if the site was authorised.

Planning issues

- 7.19 Local authority officers were asked if they could volunteer an example of good practice in relation to the planning approach to engagement with Gypsies and Travellers, or suggest ways forward. Only Lichfield volunteered an example of good practice in relation to the planning approach. They drew attention to the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, which can advise families as to whether land up for sale has potential for getting planning permission, and can assist families through the application process.

Residents' views

- 7.20 We were also keen to explore with Gypsies and Travellers their experience of buying land and/or going through the planning process.
- 7.21 We asked all respondents if they had ever purchased their own land; a total of 34 respondents had. This included 5 of the households on the unauthorised developments and a significant number of households on private sites (22). No households on unauthorised encampments had bought land but 6 households currently in bricks and mortar housing had bought their own land at some time in the past. A total of 22 respondents had applied for planning permission – 65% of the households who had purchased land.
- 7.22 We asked respondents to elaborate on their experiences of the planning system in order to gain some insight into the process from their perspective. Most of the comments received alluded to how difficult they found gaining permission to develop and particularly in relation to the emotional stress caused and money spent:

“It took 2 or 3 years to get it passed and it already had mobile homes on here which had been on here since the 1970s.”

“It’s a continuing battle with council authorities.”

“We didn’t know how to go about it at first so we had help from a friend. He failed a couple of times because they wanted a bungalow but he got permission for caravans in the end.”

“It got passed after going up two times and a lot of money.”

“It was a lot of trouble. I think it was that that made my husband badly but we got it passed in the end.”

“It was hell. It took so long and cost a lot of money.”

- 7.23 A small number of other respondents seeking to develop their land suggested that they were discriminated against due to their being Gypsies and Travellers:

“We all got turned down and got pulled off because we are Travellers.”

8. Unauthorised encampments – findings

- 8.1 The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments is a significant issue impacting upon local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers, the settled population and the public purse. Just as unauthorised developments are often cited as a major source tension, unauthorised encampments are often the type of accommodation which has become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers and is often a further source of tension with the wider community.
- 8.2 Due to the nature of unauthorised encampments (i.e. unpredictability, seasonal fluctuations etc.), it is very difficult to grasp a comprehensive picture of need for residential and/or transit accommodation without considering a range of interconnected issues. This section, however, seeks to look at the 'known' prevalence of unauthorised encampments and views of households on such encampments in order to draw some tentative indication as to the level and nature of need for authorised provision.

Policies on managing unauthorised encampments

- 8.3 For the authorities within Warwickshire there is a draft Protocol (*Firm but Fair: Managing Unauthorised Encampments – the Warwickshire Way*) being developed by the Warwickshire Gypsy and Traveller Special Interest Panel, which is a Forum of professionals working with Gypsies and Travellers in Warwickshire. This forum comprises officers from the councils, the Police, Health PCT, Traveller Education and Welfare Service and the Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership. The draft Protocol is intended to ensure a positive and informed approach to enforcement taking account of human rights, race relations and all other relevant legislation and guidance.
- 8.4 The survey of local authorities showed that Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby have written policies for managing unauthorised encampments. Local authorities are party to joint agreements or protocols with other agencies for managing unauthorised encampments as follows:
- Cannock Chase Police
 - Lichfield Other LAs
 - South Staffordshire No
 - Tamworth Police and other agencies
 - North Warwickshire Police
 - Nuneaton & Bedworth Police and other LAs
 - Rugby Police, other LAs and other agencies
- 8.5 In terms of the procedure for contacting Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments, first contact is normally made by the authorities as follows:

- Cannock Chase LA officer or police
- Lichfield Local authority or police
- South Staffordshire No one, LA officer or police
- Tamworth LA officer
- North Warwickshire LA officer, police or Traveller Education
- Nuneaton & Bedworth LA officer
- Rugby LA officer or police

8.7 No authority uses a bailiff as the first contact on an unauthorised encampment.

Good practice on managing unauthorised encampments

8.8 Good practice on managing unauthorised encampments was identified by Lichfield, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby:

- **Lichfield** and **Nuneaton & Bedworth** both stated that they visit new encampments to see if there are any welfare or education needs, and refer to the appropriate services. It was suggested that each of the Partner Authorities take this approach, although we did not receive confirmation of this.
- **Rugby** has been working with Warwickshire Police, the County Council and other councils and agencies to develop a common assessment and consistent enforcement approach to encampments while balancing individual and community welfare issues (see the draft Protocol referred to above). Refuse collection is also arranged for households on unauthorised encampments.

Geographical patterns and incidence of unauthorised encampments

8.9 All the authorities keep a log of unauthorised encampments: Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby log all known encampments, while Cannock Chase and North Warwickshire log some.

8.10 The authorities were asked about the nature of encampments experienced during 2006. The number of separate encampments experienced during 2006 can be seen in Table 13, which also reports on the typical nature of encampments.

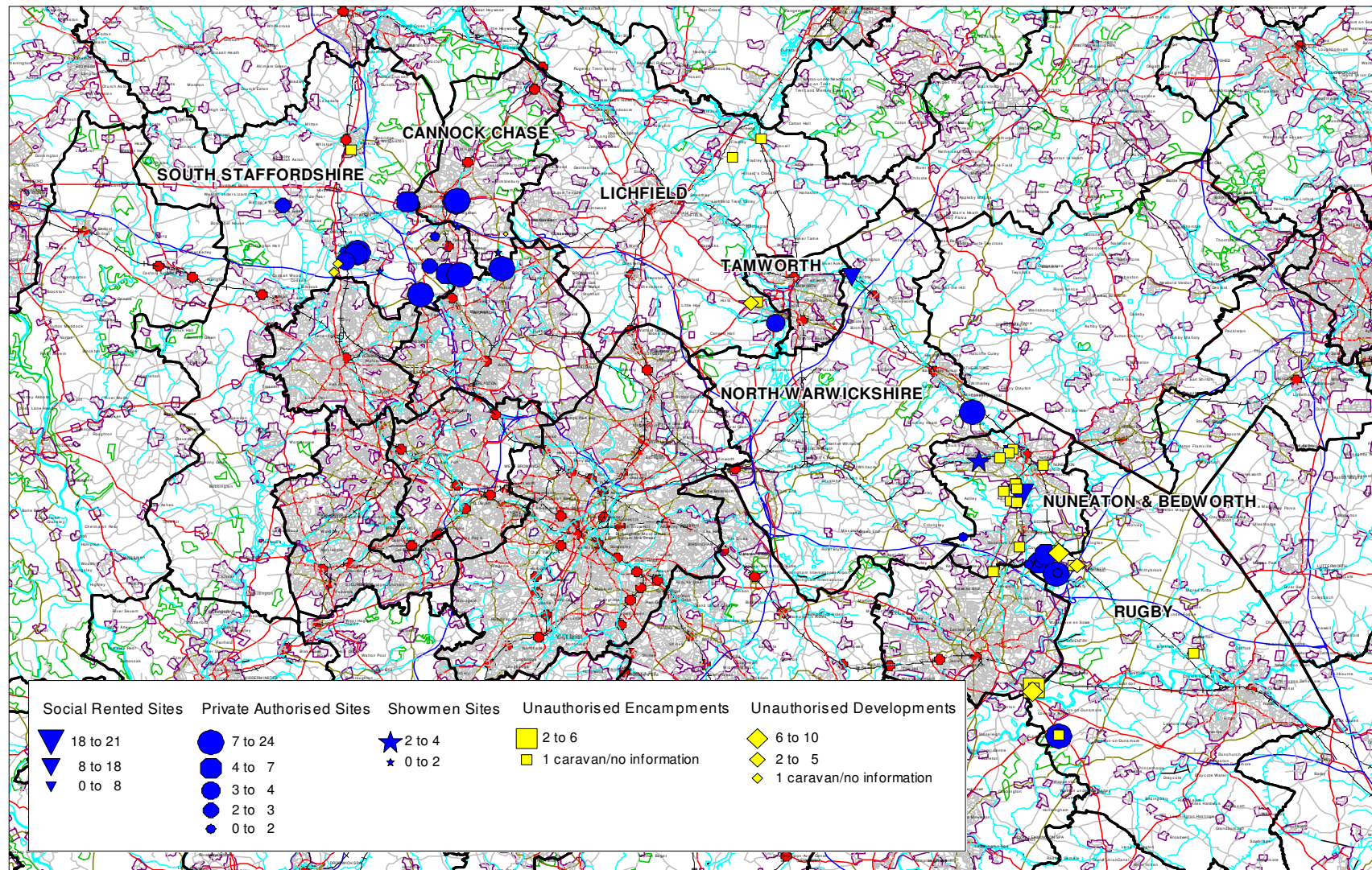
Table 13: Incidence of unauthorised camping by local authority area

Local authority	Number of separate encampments during 2006	Comments
Cannock Chase	11–15	Normally none in area
Lichfield	3	Normally none in area
South Staffordshire	1	Normally 1 in area at any time
Tamworth	4	Normally none in area
North Warwickshire	0	Normally none in area
Nuneaton & Bedworth	12	Normally 1 in area at any time
Rugby	16	Normally 1 in area at any time

- 8.11 As can be seen, the distribution is uneven with most encampments occurring in Cannock Chase, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby at the north and south east extremes of the Study Area (see Map 1).
- 8.12 Authorities were also asked to provide details of the location, number of caravans, duration and action taken with the encampments during 2006. These were provided for 36 encampments (only those in Cannock Chase were omitted; Rugby could not provide information on numbers of caravans and only included encampments on council-owned land, which will probably underestimate the actual number of encampments overall).
- 8.13 The average encampment size (in areas excluding Cannock Chase and Rugby) was just over 5 caravans (range 1 to 12). Most encampments are small – 11 of the 19 (58%) encampments where size is known involved 3 caravans or fewer.
- 8.14 The duration was given for 32 encampments. The average was just under 3 weeks, but this is skewed by a few longer-lasting encampments. Only 6 encampments (19%) lasted longer than 3 weeks. Information was given on sufficient numbers of encampments in Nuneaton & Bedworth (10) and Rugby (14) to show the respective average encampment durations as just less than 5 weeks and 1.7 weeks. Nuneaton & Bedworth figures include encampments on public and private land, those from Rugby include only council-owned land. The Nuneaton & Bedworth policy specifically notes the possibility of tolerating an encampment where deemed appropriate.
- 8.15 Looking at encampment locations suggests other differences between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby. Nuneaton & Bedworth shows a range of addresses with only one location mentioned twice; most encampments are said to occur on industrial estates. By contrast, most encampment locations in Rugby are described as car parks or recreation grounds. Three car parks account for 10 out of 16 encampments on council-owned land in 2006.

- 8.16 We asked the authorities and Warwickshire County Council for the number of separate encampments they had recorded during the period of fieldwork for this assessment (June – October 2007). There were a total of 26 encampments recorded over this period. Nuneaton & Bedworth experienced 10 encampments (the vast majority of which were calling upon residents at the Griff site), Cannock Chase and Rugby both had 6 encampments, North Warwickshire had 3 encampments, and Lichfield had a single encampment which stayed for a short period of time.
- 8.17 It is clear that land ownership obviously affects action taken by the local authority. Answers suggest that where council-owned land is concerned, it is the norm for local authorities to take court action rather than rely on negotiation. Rugby incurred costs of almost £4,600 on process server fees and court costs in connection with the 16 encampments in 2006. In answer to more general questions asked of the local authorities in relation to unauthorised encampments:
- South Staffordshire, Tamworth and Rugby experience more encampments in summer; the other areas note no clear variation over the year.
 - The majority of authorities commented that most of the families involved in unauthorised encampments are thought to be 'in transit'. South Staffordshire and Rugby commented that the unauthorised encampments in their areas belonged to both groups who were 'in transit' and 'local' Gypsies and Travellers.
- 8.18 One of the general comments from the consultations with a number of officers revolved around the view that Tamworth had recently become unsafe or unattractive for families who would have featured as unauthorised encampments as a result of an arson attack on a trailer. There was said to be significant hostility directed at Gypsies and Travellers within the borough.

Map1: Unauthorised encampments within the Study Area relative to authorised site provision (numbers shown in caravans)



Trends in unauthorised encampments

- 8.19 Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments had changed over the past 5 years. Experience of the authorities seems to have varied: numbers have increased in Rugby, decreased in Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Nuneaton & Bedworth, and remained broadly the same elsewhere.
- 8.20 In terms of size of group, most said that encampments had remained broadly the same size over the past 5 years; Rugby said that they had increased and Lichfield that they had decreased.
- 8.21 Other changes over time noted were:
- **Lichfield:** mostly the same groups are involved. There was a temporary increase in numbers for about 12 months when site spaces in North Warwickshire were lost (this suggests a link to the Alvecote site).
 - **Rugby:** there has been an increase in the number of repeat visits by groups, and more use of sites close to housing areas.
- 8.22 When asked how they expect the number of encampments to change over the next 5 years, North Warwickshire and Rugby expected an increase and Lichfield a decrease. Other authorities either did not know or expected no significant change. One of the consultations with officers indicated that overall unauthorised encampments had increased in the area with a perception that around 50% of the families on encampments wanted to remain permanently in the area.
- 8.23 From reviewing the available information, general trends are unclear for unauthorised encampments except to say that if no more provision is made, the numbers and nature of encampments is likely to persist. Generally speaking, encampments appear to occur where there is existing provision – this suggests that those households on unauthorised encampments may have family links in these areas.

Living on unauthorised encampments – views from Gypsies and Travellers

- 8.24 During our fieldwork the number of unauthorised encampments we managed to consult with was at quite a low level; although we managed to interview our target number of households, we consulted with 9 households only. As a result, similar to the section on unauthorised developments, the views of households on unauthorised encampments are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages.
- 8.25 Six of the nine encampments involved Romany Gypsies with 3 encampments involving Irish Traveller families.

- 8.26 All households interviewed on unauthorised encampments provided details about how many living units they had; 6 households had 1 trailer and 3 households had 2 trailers. No households had more than 2 trailers. The average number of living units was 1.3 trailers per household.
- 8.27 When the average household size for encampments (4.6) is divided by the average number of trailers households possess, this provides us with an average of 3.5 people in each trailer on unauthorised encampments.
- 8.28 In terms of space their accommodation provided them with, six in nine households felt that their trailers provided them with enough space, 2 felt that more space was needed and 1 household did not know. A lack of space was attributed to both an inability to afford additional accommodation (trailers) as well as staying on a small piece of land.
- 8.29 The majority of those interviewed had been on the encampment for a short period of time. Eight had been there for less than 1 week and just 1 had been there for between 2 weeks and one month.
- 8.30 With regard to how long they anticipated staying on the encampment, 7 respondents were intending to stay for up to 1 week, the remainder (2 respondents) did not know.
- 8.31 Respondents were asked the reasons why they were leaving the encampment. The reason given in each case related to the actions of the local authority or Police rather than a desire for a short stay in the area; for example, *"Police have said we must move by 10am tomorrow"* or *"The police and the council want us to move"*.
- 8.32 Out of those respondents who were leaving the area 6 (67%) would have liked to stay in the area, 2 were happy to leave and 1 household did not know whether they would like to stay. In terms of the accommodation they were looking for, 6 households wanted a pitch on an authorised local authority site. Two respondents said that they wanted their own site. Two respondents would be interested in a house. No respondents wanted to move onto a private site owned by someone else.
- 8.33 For those households currently living on unauthorised encampments, access to facilities was a major issue (see Table 34 below). Most of the very basic facilities were inaccessible to Gypsies and Travellers. The only encampments whose households had access to anything were located in Rugby, and these had access to facilities provided by a friend who lived in a house. The following comments are representative of views from respondents on unauthorised encampments on accessing basic services:

“Electric is supplied by our own generators. We get water from garages and we go to the toilet there too.”

“We go to a friend's house to get water and use the pub toilets.”

“We use the side of the road, use generators for electric and get water from garages.”

Table 34: Access to basic facilities on unauthorised encampments

Type of facility	Have access?	
	Yes	No
Electricity supply	2	7
Water	1	8
WC/Toilet	1	8
Showers	1	8
Waste disposal/collection	1	8

- 8.34 All but one household on an unauthorised encampment reported that they could not access waste disposal facilities. From consultations undertaken 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, as many Gypsies' and Travellers' only means of transport are vans, their access to local tips is restricted by the exclusion of 'business' disposals, unless a charge is paid, at local authority recycling centres. At the same time, it is also possible that non-Travellers will fly-tip in areas where Gypsies and Travellers are known to reside in an effort to shift blame and responsibility. This is not to say that no Gypsies and Travellers do fly-tip but this may be a more complex issue than it first appears.
- 8.35 No household on unauthorised encampments reported having a base elsewhere.

9. Gypsies and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation – findings

- 9.1 The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within bricks and mortar accommodation are unknown but potentially large. Movement to and from housing is a major concern for the strategic approach, policies and working practices of local authorities. One of the main issues of the consultation revolved around the role that housing services do, should and could play in the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area.
- 9.2 This chapter looks at the information held by the authorities around Gypsies and Travellers and housing and looks at the approaches these authorities take. The chapter then continues with analysing the responses of housed Gypsies and Travellers who took part in the assessment.

Housing policies

- 9.3 Authorities were asked whether specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers in various housing strategies:

Current housing strategy: All authorities except South Staffordshire and Rugby said specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers. In North Warwickshire the reference is to the need to gather more information about Gypsies and Travellers. The latest Housing Strategies of Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Tamworth all refer to the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, stressing both the need for better information and increased collaborative working. Lichfield's action point further refers to ensuring that the LDF reflects the future housing needs of the District's Gypsies and Travellers. The Nuneaton & Bedworth Housing Strategy 2006–2008 (May 2006) has the fullest reference and reads:

'The authority has been involved with a number of issues relating to the housing needs of gypsies and travellers, and recognises the legitimate, varying and often distinct housing needs. The district does have a county council owned site, as well as private travellers' sites. A number of other travellers have approached the Council seeking conventional housing, and such applicants are given appropriate priority on the housing register and rehousing has taken place. The itinerant nature of the community makes assessment of need within any specific area problematic and at the start of 2005–06, there was only one family within the borough seeking a permanent site. The authority is actively seeking to assist this family, but unless and until wider regional research demonstrates

otherwise, no further sites are currently required within the borough.

The Council is awaiting the results of a regional research exercise, currently being carried out by the University of Birmingham, before making further plans for this client group. If the need for any further sites arises it will be considered against the policy in the Local Plan.

The draft RHS also identifies a number of specific policy areas which are particularly relevant to Nuneaton and Bedworth, including the need to identify more locations in which sites can be developed for gypsies and travellers.'

Current homelessness strategy: There is no mention of Gypsies and Travellers in homelessness strategies in Cannock Chase, North Warwickshire, and Rugby. In Tamworth there are references to contributing to Local Development Plan in relation to older Gypsies and Travellers. In Lichfield there is brief reference:

'C5 Gather needs information regarding specific client groups, e.g. Gypsies, asylum seekers and BME applicants.' (Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2003: Objective C – Access and Choice)

The South Staffordshire Draft Homelessness Strategy 2007–2012 also refers to lack of information about the group and specifically to the sub-regional GTAA in the Action Plan. The Nuneaton & Bedworth Homelessness Strategy Review 2006–2008 includes a similar passage to that already quoted from the Housing Strategy. Under Strategic Aim 3 (having a pro-active approach which focuses on early intervention and preventative measures):

'Task 3.9 – county-wide assessment of need to refurbish formal sites'

Current BME housing strategy: Only Cannock Chase and Rugby have BME Housing Strategies, and neither refers specifically to Gypsies and Travellers. The BME Housing Needs Study in Warwickshire included consideration of Gypsies and Travellers with the aim of identifying the accommodation needs of those seeking to live in settled housing. Identification of Travellers proved particularly difficult and none was identified within the Study Area (6 Gypsies and Travellers were interviewed in Stratford-on-Avon).

Problems associated with the identifying respondents in the Warwickshire study stemmed in part from lack of ethnic records

on social housing applicants and tenants. Only Lichfield and North Warwickshire commented that Gypsies and Travellers are identified in ethnic records and monitoring of social housing applications and/or allocations.

- 9.4 During the survey of local authorities, authorities were asked to provide details of how homeless Gypsies and Travellers are supported through the homelessness process. Rugby made no comments. Cannock Chase commented that they were not aware of any Gypsy or Traveller approaching the authority as homeless. Lichfield, South Staffordshire, North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth said that Gypsies and Travellers would receive similar support to any other applicants. Tamworth noted that Gypsies and Travellers would receive the same support as other applicants but also referred to telephone calls about site availability.
- 9.5 There were two positive answers to a question about steps taken to provide Gypsies and Travellers with housing advice and assistance or to help them access social housing:
- South Staffordshire referred to a specific application where advice and assistance had been offered, but the family made their own arrangements and left temporary accommodation.
 - Nuneaton & Bedworth noted that they had undertaken a comprehensive survey of the borough to identify any council-owned land which might provide a suitable site. This was in response to a homelessness application, and led to the Stoney Road site being developed with Government funding.

Gypsies and Travellers in social housing

- 9.6 Each authority was asked a sequence of questions about Gypsies and Travellers in social housing, applicants and allocations. Most authorities were unable to provide any information.
- Only North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth were able to give the number of Gypsies and Travellers currently registered for social housing. These numbers were 3 and 6 respectively.
 - North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth were also able to say how many Gypsies and Travellers were housed in 2006. In both instances it was zero.
 - Lichfield was unable to say how many homeless presentations had been made by Gypsies and Travellers in the previous 12 months. Cannock Chase, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby said there had been none. South Staffordshire and Tamworth said that there had been 1 (of which they were aware), and North Warwickshire had had 2. In South Staffordshire and Tamworth the main reason for

homelessness was domestic violence. In North Warwickshire it was families having to leave the Alvecote site because of refurbishment.

- Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby said that the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social rented housing had remained broadly the same over the past 5 years. Rugby expected numbers to remain broadly the same over the next 5 years, while Nuneaton & Bedworth expected them to decrease. Other authorities were unable to say.

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

- Health reasons: North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Want to 'settle': North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Want to move nearer to family/friends: South Staffordshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Harassment or other problems on a site: North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Want a permanent house or flat: Lichfield
- Unable to find stopping places while travelling: North Warwickshire
- Unable to get a place on a site: No authority

9.8 North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby estimated that fewer than 10 Gypsy and Traveller families live in social housing in their areas. Other authorities were unable to estimate the number.

Gypsies and Travellers in private housing

9.9 Answers to questions about Gypsies and Travellers in other forms of housing were largely uninformative:

- Lichfield said there were no significant numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing. Other authorities did not know.
- Cannock Chase, Lichfield, North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth were not aware of any issues arising in relation to Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing in their area; other authorities did not comment.
- Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby said Gypsies and Travellers do not live on caravan or mobile home parks not specifically designed for them; others said there was no information or did not comment.

Living in bricks and mortar housing – views from Gypsies and Travellers

- 9.10 Among the 23 respondents whom we consulted who lived in bricks and mortar accommodation, 19 (83%) lived in a house and 4 (17%) lived in a bungalow.
- 9.11 In total, 35% of bricks and mortar dwellers were owner-occupiers, 48% were council tenants and 17% were private tenants.
- 9.12 In terms of the size of the dwelling, 23% had 2 bedrooms, 68% had 3 bedrooms and two households (9%) had 4 or more bedrooms. All but 4 respondents thought that their property gave them enough space. The respondents who commented on needing more space raised concerns about how their household was growing:

“I’d like a 3 bedroom house because I’m expecting a new baby.”

“I have three boys, one 12, one 10 and one 4. They share a bedroom but I think they need their own space.”

“There’s just not enough rooms for 5 people.”

- 9.13 In total, just 4 households (17%) in bricks and mortar accommodation still owned trailers. Three of these households had just 1 trailer – just 1 household had 2 trailers.
- 9.14 Residents in bricks and mortar accommodation were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their accommodation including: size of house; design of house; neighbours; location; facilities; and condition/state of repair. The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the facilities of the house. Neighbours was the issue which generated the most ambivalence from respondents, but only 1 household viewed their neighbours in a negative light.

Table 35: Views on the house (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of house	35	39	4	17	4
Design of house	35	48	13	—	4
Neighbours	32	41	23	—	4
Location	39	52	4	—	4
Facilities	52	44	4	—	—
Condition/state of repair	39	52	4	4	—

- 9.15 All respondents had access to all basic facilities we enquired about, with the exception of 4 respondents who did not have a shower and 1 respondent who did not have a bath. Three respondents commented

that they did not have access to somewhere safe for their children to play.

9.16 Most respondents had lived in their accommodation for a significant period of time – 22% for 5 years or more and 70% had been there for between 1 and 5 years, with the remainder (9%, 2 households) there for less than a year. No respondent had been in accommodation for less than 3 months.

9.17 Generally speaking, when asked how long they were likely to remain in their house the vast majority said they did not know (57%); 35% thought they would remain indefinitely; and 2 respondents (9%) were planning to leave within the next 6 months. When asked their reasons for leaving one respondent said it was to a bigger property:

“I’m moving to a bigger and better house.”

9.18 With the other respondent looking to move back onto site accommodation:

“I want to go back on to a site.”

9.19 We asked all Gypsies and Travellers about their experience of living in bricks and mortar accommodation. A total of 32 households (25% of the overall sample) had experience of bricks and mortar housing. If we remove the households who are now in bricks and mortar housing from this, this indicates that 21% of the Gypsy and Traveller sample had been in bricks and mortar accommodation at some time in the past, but had since left. This is particularly interesting as 4 out of the 9 households who are currently living on unauthorised encampments have had experience of bricks and mortar living.

Table 36: Previous experience of bricks and mortar housing by accommodation type

Current accommodation type	No. lived in a house	% sample lived in a house
Unauthorised encampments	4	44
Unauthorised developments	3	43
Socially rented sites	6	35
Private sites	12	17
Bricks and mortar	6	27
Total	32	25

9.20 The majority of these households (62%) had lived in a house which they had rented from the local authority; (21%) had owned their own property; and 18% had rented their property from either a private landlord or RSL. Most of these had moved into this property with their family when younger.

9.21 As many people left bricks and mortar accommodation, we were keen to ascertain people’s views and experiences of living in houses, flats,

etc. and why they had left. We asked people on a five-point scale, very good to very poor, to rate their experience. Quite surprisingly, a large number of people (39%) thought that living in bricks and mortar accommodation was either a very good or good experience; 12% had indifferent views; and 45% thought it was a poor or very poor experience. One respondent could not comment.

- 9.22 Of particular interest were the reasons given for leaving this accommodation. There were a whole range of different responses, perhaps reflecting some of the difficulties faced by Gypsies and Travellers in adjusting to a different way of living. We received a number of comments which tended to talk about it being better for children, an aversion to living in bricks and mortar, marriage or more cultural explanations:

“My 16 year old, who was 14 at the time, was getting into trouble. In with the wrong crowd, all older boys. He were into drugs and I didn't want that for him.”

“Moved back to the caravan. I just didn't like it. I couldn't sleep.”

“I got married and moved to a site with my husband.”

“It was years ago and we just wanted to move.”

“I like to see people around me. It's more sociable. We're a very close community, and we like our family to be together.”

- 9.23 Out of all the people who had previously lived in a house, just 17% would consider doing so again. We asked respondents what the main reasons would be for considering living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The top 4 reasons were: a lack of sites, desire for a change, children's education and stability.

- 9.24 Just one respondent was on a waiting list for a house with Walsall council; this respondent was already in bricks and mortar housing.

10. Housing-related support service and general services – findings

- 10.1 The questionnaire to local authority officers also sought to ascertain and collate the recognition of Gypsies and Travellers in relation to housing-related support services – many of which come under the umbrella of the Supporting People programme.

Housing-related support

- 10.2 Gypsies and Travellers are mentioned in the *Staffordshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy 2005–2010* (affecting Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Tamworth). The strategy states that there were no Supporting People funded services specifically for Travellers at the time. Staffordshire County was planning research into the needs of Gypsies and Travellers for services.
- 10.3 The *Warwickshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy 2005/06–2009/10* again notes that there is no Supporting People funded provision for the group in Warwickshire: *‘However, we are supportive in principle of making funds available to support this group and will be consulting on how this might be done in future.’* In a section on reaching out to excluded groups, the Strategy notes an intention for Supporting People team attendance at existing forums such as Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Meetings.
- 10.4 Most of the Study Area authorities were unaware of any housing-related support services for Gypsies and Travellers in their area. South Staffordshire noted that there are no specific services directed at Gypsies and Travellers but gave details of potentially relevant generic services being offered to homeless families (provided by Carr-Gomm with Supporting People and Prevention of Homelessness grant funding) and floating support for victims of domestic violence (provided by Stafford Women’s Aid with Supporting People funding).
- 10.5 When asked which services Gypsies and Travellers most frequently approach the Council about (with a list of general housing-related support categories provided), Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Tamworth either said that they did not know or that Gypsies and Travellers do not commonly approach the Council (Rugby did not reply). There were 3 positive answers:
- Lichfield: planning applications and site development, housing advice, applying for social housing, discrimination or harassment, site licensing issues and Home Repair Grants.
 - North Warwickshire: planning applications and site development, housing advice, Housing Benefit and environmental issues.
 - Nuneaton & Bedworth: planning applications and site development and Housing Benefit.

Views from Gypsies and Travellers on housing-related support services

- 10.6 It proved extremely difficult to find a suitable method to gain a clear perception as to the level of experience/need within the Gypsy and Traveller community for housing-related services. The very concept of an outside agency providing services such as support for settling into new accommodation or childcare was often seen as nonsensical because of the reliance upon strong family networks and the support that the extended family have historically provided within Gypsy and Traveller communities for this kind of issue. However, we were keen to attempt to gain some idea about the levels of need for a number of services. We consulted with key stakeholders and reviewed key documents²⁷ from elsewhere to produce a list of the kind of services to gain views on.
- 10.7 We asked all Gypsy and Traveller respondents to comment on the likelihood of using a number of services on a scale which covered: 'would never use', 'might use', 'would definitely use' and 'don't know' (see Table 37).

Table 37: Likelihood of using housing-related support services (in %)

Support need	Would never use	Might use	Would definitely use	Don't know
Finding accommodation	51	19	16	10
Settling into new accommodation	63	11	13	11
Budgeting	64	8	11	13
Meeting people	75	9	6	6
Accessing a GP	13	41	40	3
Accessing legal services	34	32	23	8
Harassment	38	32	16	9
Claiming benefits	49	22	16	9
Finding a job	59	15	13	8
Accessing training (for adults)	59	15	12	12
Pregnancy	58	14	10	13
Parenting	82	4	6	5
Filling in forms	27	41	23	6
Support with planning	30	34	20	11

- 10.8 As can be seen, the majority of respondents were not interested in receiving support with many of the services highlighted above. This might be explained by a general perception from respondents that

²⁷ See Supporting People Eastern Regional Cross Authority Group – Gypsy and Traveller Conference, 27th April 2005 <http://www.spkweb.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6DA547AB-FCBB-4B4F-AE12-A5DD282B4C34/7895/FinalReportofGypsyandtravellerWorkshopApril2006.doc> and The Housing Support Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and York, December 2006, <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/consultations/engage/downloaddoc.jsp?id=941>.

many are not applicable to Gypsies and Travellers. Therefore these findings cannot be seen to provide an illustration as to the definitive need for such services. However, the results do seem to indicate where the current main concerns about service areas are. The services which elicited most interest, albeit still small, were (in order of interest): accessing a GP, filling in forms, accessing legal services, support with planning, harassment and claiming benefits. As can be seen, the majority of people require quite practical assistance, particularly around planning and gaining secure accommodation.

- 10.9 We asked respondents if they felt that they had ever experienced harassment or discrimination because they were a Gypsy or a Traveller. A total of 37% of respondents thought that they had. We asked people to expand on the nature of the discrimination/harassment and we received a variety of responses including:

"The bowling alley turned us away from the door as they didn't like Gypsies."

"We feel looked down upon. People look at you weird which makes you feel alone."

"I got chucked out of a cinema once but I took it to court and got free cinema passes for a year."

"In a shop in town they said 'the Gypsies are in again' so they watched every step we took. I told them I had the money to get what I want."

"The local pub had a 'No Travellers' sign up for a while. It was in the paper."

"My children get called Gypsy by an old man who lives across the road. He watches them and when they go out he comes out shouting and calls them names."

- 10.10 Interestingly one respondent talked about how she experienced harassment from other Gypsies and Travellers:

"I get harassed from my own people for being a single parent."

- 10.11 This perhaps serves to demonstrate that harassment and discrimination cannot be viewed in simplistic Gypsy/Traveller vs. non-Gypsy/Traveller terms.

General services

10.12 In order to gain some idea as to the interaction that the Gypsies and Travellers have with various local services, we asked people if they felt that they or their family had sufficient access to certain services and how important these services were to them (see Table 38). As can be seen, for the most part the services that are most important to people seem to be the ones to which Gypsies and Travellers had access to.

Table 38: Access to services and importance of service

Service	Have access (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)	Not so important (%)	Not important at all (%)	Don't know (%)
Post office	93	51	34	6	1	3
Local shops	92	58	31	4	—	2
Banks	91	45	31	10	6	2
Accident and Emergency	88	51	31	4	6	2
GP/health centre	81	75	18	2	—	2
Dentist	70	44	28	15	4	3
Public transport	70	21	14	21	32	5
Sports & leisure services	70	16	27	17	24	8
Nursery schools and children's services	54	20	17	11	31	13
Health visitor	41	16	13	25	27	9
Maternity care	36	9	8	19	42	12
Social worker	26	3	2	18	53	14
Services for older people	23	5	4	7	48	27
Youth clubs	23	2	5	8	48	26

10.13 Around 14% of those we asked about accessing the above services felt that there were barriers to access. When asked to comment further on what prevented them accessing such services we received a mixture of responses:

"All the services I access are near the site. My son had to change schools, he's got special needs, as they wouldn't pay for a taxi for him to go to school with all the other travelling children."

10.14 Quite a large number of people felt that their literacy level was one of the main barriers to accessing services, with people often stating, *"I can't read or write."* Other people spoke about where they live, particularly if it can be identified as a Gypsy or Traveller site, as a major barrier to accessing all kinds of services:

"There's loads of problems. You can't have store cards, can't get catalogues, even taxis that we used for years have stopped coming down and they take the children to school."

10.15 For households who did not have an authorised pitch to stay on it was the lack of a fixed address which was seen as the major problem:

“We don't stay in places long enough to get the services.”

“We haven't got a permanent address so can't get children in to school or get to the doctors.”

10.16 We also asked whether people who worked in the local authority, health service, education and other services should be more aware of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers. Around a fifth of people (34%) felt that more awareness was required, nearly half (33%) felt that awareness was not needed and the remainder (26%) did not know. When asked to expand on their views, the majority of people spoke about the need to treat Gypsies and Travellers equally:

“Our people have rights like any other race and we should be entitled to live the way our fathers lived.”

“Public services should be aware that settled travellers' needs are the same as everyone else's; no one bothers, no one wants to know. We need help to know where we need to go for help and we need trustworthy people Travellers don't trust easily as we've been let down a lot.”

“We are human beings, not aliens. People pull fast ones on you because you can't read or write.”

“We're not all animals – there's good and bad in everyone.”

11. Employment, education and health – findings

- 11.1 This section presents findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the three main service areas of employment, education and health.
- 11.2 There are various agencies and organisations in the Study Area which work with Gypsies and Travellers in the areas of employment, education and health. However, apart from West Midlands Education Consortium, none of these appeared to have a service specifically for Gypsies and Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers and work, employment and training

- 11.3 For this section the survey started with a general question about the kind of work undertaken by respondents and their families. Answers were extremely varied with the most popular broad areas being gardening/tree work, carpet related trades, uPVC, guttering and scrap. It was clear that many of these trades were practical and manual and it was not uncommon to find families engaged in multiple trades.
- 11.4 We also asked how many people were self-employed and employed in the households. Out of the sample of 80 respondents who volunteered information, 78 had self-employed family members and just 3 households had people who were employed by someone else. Clearly self-employment is a major mode of employment for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 11.5 Only 3 households who currently travelled felt that travelling had an impact on their work. Just one respondent expanded on why this was the case:

“Sometimes just as you get work you then have to move; we often have to leave the work to move.”

- 11.6 The survey also asked whether or not households had any particular ‘site needs’ in relation to their work (i.e. the storage of equipment, etc.). Just 7 households said they did; these respondents all wanted either more room to park vehicles or more room to store tools:

“I like it here but I wish we had a bit more room for our stock.”

“Need more room for vehicles for our work and lifestyle.”

“Need space for van parking and tool storage.”

- 11.7 In terms of training for work, only 6% of the sample (7 respondents) had been on some form of training, either formal through the colleges or work (5 people) or informal through friends, family and social networks (2 people). An additional 7 respondents (6%) wanted to take

part in training at some point in the future – all were women. These respondents commented further by saying:

“I would like to but can't as I'm looking after mother.”

“I'd like to learn the internet or I'd like to do beauty therapy. I want qualifications so I can make something of myself as I'll never get married again. I used to work in a motor parts company cleaning.”

“I'd like to learn flower arranging.”

“Would like to learn to read properly.”

“Something in childcare or catering would be good.”

- 11.8 We asked each respondent to comment on the level/standard of education that they themselves had obtained. A large number of people chose not to answer the question or simply stated “*none*” or “*didn't go to school*”. For those respondents that did comment, generally speaking there were very low levels of educational attainment, with only 5 respondents reporting having sat some form of examination. At least 40 respondents (around a third of the sample) reported problems reading and writing (31%) and around 30 respondents said they had had no education. It was common to find women reporting poorer levels of literacy than men or their husbands and also common to find that people had left formal education at around 11 years of age.

Gypsies and Travellers and education

- 11.9 A total of 68 households had school-age children (between 5 yrs and 16 yrs). A total of 43 households said their children regularly attend school (63% of households with school-age children) with just 2 additional households reporting that their children receive home education. Twenty-four respondents said their children did not attend school regularly, and 1 respondent said they did not know if their children went to school regularly.
- 11.10 In terms of differences in attendance levels, children were most likely to attend school regularly if they were in bricks and mortar accommodation or on owner-occupied private sites. Almost two-thirds of households on private rented sites reported regular school attendance. The majority of respondents on socially rented sites reported poor school attendance. Respondents on unauthorised encampments reported the lowest levels of regular attendance in comparison to other accommodation types, with no one reporting regular attendance at school.

11.11 We asked those respondents with school-age children to rate their children's schools. The majority of people viewed the school positively as either very good or good (84%), 8% felt the schools were neither good nor poor, while just 2 respondents (4%) viewed the schools in a negative light. We asked respondents to expand on why they had given this rating. All the comments we received expanded upon their positive rating:

"They are really good because the teachers are very understanding of our ways."

"He's learning loads but the school is still quite rough. I want him moving to a Catholic school."

"My children have a good education and don't get treated differently than anyone else."

"My sons all have loads of friends there and the teachers seem really interested in our culture."

"The school are very good here with the children. If we want to move away for a week or two we just let them know."

11.12 We also asked people how easy or difficult they thought accessing children's education/schools was in the local area. Although most said they did not know (36%), 50% felt that access was either easy or very easy. Only 9 respondents (7%) thought access was difficult or very difficult.

11.13 Just 19 respondents (28%) with school age children had contact with the local Traveller Education Service (TES). Fourteen respondents (74%) thought the service was either very good or good, 2 respondents thought the service was either poor or very poor (11%) whilst the remainder did not know. We asked people to expand on what they thought was good or bad about the service; positive comments received included:

"They help the children a lot."

"There's one to one education if needed."

"[name of worker] is doing some stuff with the eldest at school and a lady helps us get the uniforms."

"They are good because they would come onto the site with a bus and show us how to use computers."

11.14 A more negative comment stated:

“The West Midlands Consortium education for Travellers never came back when they said they would.”

Gypsies’ and Travellers’ and health

11.15 One of the consultations involved a health worker in Nuneaton & Bedworth who spoke about work they had been pursuing with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. This worker reported that after recognition that there were difficulties with Gypsies and Travellers accessing health services a number of steps were taken, including:

- All families on unauthorised encampments are registered with GPs
- A ‘health bus’ was provided to go on to sites
- The health worker liaises with the relevant LA officer to access families on encampments.

11.16 Identifying households where members have particular health needs for special or adapted accommodation is an important component of housing needs surveys. A growing number of studies show that Gypsies and Travellers experience higher levels of health problems than members of the non-travelling population.

11.17 We asked whether respondents had members of their households who experienced some specific conditions (mobility problems, visual impairment, hearing impairments, mental health problems, learning disabilities or communication problems). As can be seen from Table 39, the vast majority of households do not have members with any of these specific conditions. However, a small but significant number of households do have members with these health problems, particularly mobility issues and visual impairments. A total of 7 households reported living with someone who had some sort of mental health problem.

Table 39: % households with family members with specific health problems

Type of condition	No one in household	One person in household	Two people in household	Three people in household
Mobility problems	80	13	1	—
Visual impairment	74	13	6	1
Hearing impairment	86	8	—	—
Mental health problems	88	6	—	—
Learning disability	93	1	—	—
Communication problems	90	3	1	—

11.18 A further 52 households (41% of the sample) had someone in their family who experienced some other kind of health problem. Conditions reported included (in most prevalent order) arthritis, asthma, diabetes, heart problems, blood pressure, kidney problems and back problems. One person mentioned that their son had behavioural problems and another reported experiencing panic attacks. Although not specifically a 'health problem', one woman reported a previous experience of domestic violence.

12. Accommodation histories, intentions and travelling – findings

12.1 This section looks at some of the ways the Gypsies and Travellers we spoke to during the course of the study have lived in the past and how they would like to live in the future.

Accommodation histories

12.2 In order to gain some idea as to the movement between different types of accommodation, this section of the survey looked at a range of different issues including: the sort of accommodation they had immediately prior to their current accommodation; the general location of prior accommodation; reasons for leaving this accommodation; and the reasons for living in their current accommodation.

12.3 The majority of Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised sites in the Study Area had been on their current site for lengthy periods (Table 40). However 31% of the sample had been on the site for less than one year, with 17% being there for less than 6 months. Broadly speaking, 1 in every 5 households occupying a private rented pitch was relatively new to the site, having been there for no more than 6 months. Private rented sites are clearly acting as a form of transit provision in the Study Area.

Table 40: Duration of residence on current site

Duration of residence	% of respondents
Less than 6 months	17
6–12 months	14
12 months–3 years	18
3 years–5 years	11
Over 5 years	40

12.4 The previous accommodation of those on authorised sites, in order of significance, is shown in Table 41. As can be seen, the main form of accommodation that households on authorised sites had prior to their current site was a privately rented pitch followed by the roadside (unauthorised encampments), and then by a socially rented site and private transit site.

Table 41: Prior accommodation of households on authorised sites (private and socially rented)

Type of prior accommodation	% of respondents
Private rented pitch	38
Roadside	16
Socially rented site	15
Private transit site	15
Own land	7
Bricks and mortar housing	2
Other	2
Socially rented transit site	1
Caravan Park	1
Farm land	1

12.5 Households from unauthorised sites came mostly from unauthorised encampments. Other previous accommodation types include: private rented site (1 respondent), council site (1 respondent), bricks and mortar (2 respondents) and farm land (2 respondents).

12.6 We asked people to tell us what precipitated their move from their previous accommodation (respondents could choose from a list of different reasons). The three most common responses were: no particular reason; work; and children's schooling. Households on unauthorised encampments, however, cited eviction as being the main reason they had left their previous accommodation.

Travelling patterns and experiences

12.7 In order to shed some light on the travelling patterns and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers throughout the Study Area, respondents were asked about a range of issues associated with travelling.

12.8 One of the most important issues to gain some information on was the frequency that households travelled. The vast majority of people reported that they never travelled or travelled seasonally, which generally means for short periods during the summer months. Table 42 breaks this down by accommodation type.

Table 42: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type

How often travelled?	Current accommodation type				
	Unauthorised encampment (%)	Unauthorised development (%)	Socially rented sites (%)	Private sites (%)	Bricks and mortar (%)
Every week	89	—	—	—	—
Every month	—	—	—	1	—
Every couple of months	—	14	6	17	—
Seasonally	—	29	6	40	22
Once per year	—	—	13	9	17
Never	11	57	75	33	61

- 12.9 Unsurprisingly, unauthorised encampments are the most mobile, followed, a long way behind, by people in authorised accommodation.
- 12.10 We asked those who said they never travelled to tell us why. Again, we received diverse replies. Some common themes were around being less physically mobile or disabled, being too old or general health reasons. Others talked about how they were *'settled'* or how they liked the place they were now living.
- 12.11 The majority of respondents felt that this was typical (67%) with the remainder commenting that this had changed over the past few years. When asked in what ways it had changed we received a variety of responses including:
- "It's changed for the worst. The sites are too full to pull onto."*
- "Our children are older and we feel it's time to settle down in one place."*
- "We don't go away for summer now as we're too old for travelling now."*
- "I've bought my own land now so I don't have to keep moving."*
- "There's not enough places to stop anymore – you get moved on and end up going from town to town."*
- "Years ago we used to travel often, on back lanes, moving every fortnight, went to fairs and things but it's too dangerous now."*
- 12.12 For those who did travel, however, we asked them where they liked to go. This was an open question designed to allow respondents to mention three of the places they visit most frequently. The most common answer consisted of areas within the Study Area, particularly Cannock and Staffordshire in general. The second most common destination seemed to be Appleby Fair. Although people mentioned preferences for travelling to Manchester, Doncaster, Liverpool, Morecambe and Newcastle, there was a general 'Southwards' theme in travelling patterns with people mentioning areas such as Birmingham, London, Cardiff, Telford, Essex and Southampton. One of the most common responses, however, was, *'anywhere'* or *'anywhere I can get work'*.
- 12.13 For those people who still travelled, there was a wide variation in how many caravans/trailers they travelled with from 1 to 8, with most people travelling with between 1 and 3 caravans.
- 12.14 People tended to travel in significant numbers with a number of respondents travelling with 10–15 people. It was not uncommon for people to travel in groups of more than 5 people.

12.15 In total, approximately a third of the sample had travelled to some extent over the past 12 months. It was clear from the responses that attendance at Appleby Fair or other fairs was the main reason Gypsies and Travellers chose to travel. However, during this 12-month period households travelled for a number of other reasons. In order of popularity, after Appleby Fair, people tended to travel for work, for a holiday and to see and visit relatives. Other comments about why people had travelled included:

“We just go to conventions or missions, or the fairs and shows.”

“We move a lot because we can't find a good site to stay on.”

12.16 With regard to what type of accommodation people had used while travelling during the last 12 months, by far the most common was staying with family or relatives on private sites, followed by public or private transit sites, and then by pulling up at the ‘roadside’, which as a general rule would indicate unauthorised encampments. It was more common for families to use the ‘roadside’ in the countryside than in more residential town/city environments.

12.17 Out of the people who had travelled in the last 12-month period, 10% had been forced to leave where they were staying, largely as a result of evictions and harassment issues. Some respondents reported having to leave sites as a result of fears over personal safety.

12.18 In order to further understand people’s travelling patterns, we asked everyone where they thought they might travel in the next 12-month period (summer 2007–summer 2008). Interestingly, there was a significant amount of travelling anticipated in areas local to where they were based now. This was particularly the case for households on unauthorised encampments, where 100% of households on unauthorised encampments intend to return to the same local area and areas surrounding it (Table 43).

Table 43: Anticipated areas to travel to over the next 12 months

Travel in the next 12 months?	% of travelling respondents
Within same local area	26
Within the Study Area ²⁸	22
Within the West Midlands	23
Other parts of the UK	39
Abroad	13

12.19 In terms of preference for accommodation when travelling, people were asked about the sort of sites/land they would like to use in future (Table 44).

²⁸ The particular geographical areas concerned were explained to respondents as fully as was possible.

Table 44: Popularity of preferred accommodation

Type preferred accommodation	% of respondents
With family on private sites	57
Caravan park	32
Public/private transit sites	27
With family on socially rented sites	26
Farmers' fields	16
Roadside	12
Other	6
Hotels	2

12.20 As Table 44 shows, when travelling, people would rather stay with family on private sites, followed by staying on more mainstream caravan parks. More people wanted to stay on mainstream caravan parks than actually used them in the last 12-month period. Staying on transit sites and council sites were viewed at about the same level of popularity. Anecdotal evidence from fieldwork in other local authority areas indicates that there is a general negative view of transit site provision amongst Gypsies and Travellers. However, this may reflect the perceived current standard, management and availability of such sites, which is generally seen as quite poor, rather than a comment on the nature of transit accommodation itself. Staying on the roadside was slightly more preferable to staying in hotels when travelling.

12.21 More than half of respondents (57%) thought that their last 12 months' travelling patterns were likely to remain similar for the foreseeable future.

13. Household formation and accommodation preferences and aspirations

Household formation

- 13.1 A total of 4 households (4% of the sample) reported concealed households (i.e. that there were separate households currently living with them in need of accommodation), which equates to a total of 4 separate households. These included children who required their own accommodation, but in some cases they were described as being extended family members (i.e. sister-in-law, parents, brother etc.). All of these new households were expected to want to settle in the area where they currently lived. All wanted trailer-based accommodation.
- 13.2 Respondents were also asked whether there were people living with them who were likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next five years (2007–2012). A total of 16 households said that there were people living with them who would require independent accommodation within the next five-year period. This amounted to 20 separate households (15 of which were on authorised site-based accommodation). We are confident there was no double counting between these different time periods.
- 13.3 The vast majority were thought to want trailer-based accommodation (including those households currently in bricks and mortar housing) or said that *'it was up to them how they lived'*. One future household was expected to request bricks and mortar accommodation. All but one respondent thought that these households would be likely to continue living near where they currently live.

Accommodation preferences and aspirations

- 13.4 The final section of the survey with Gypsies and Travellers looked at some of the ways in which they would like to see accommodation options change and what some of their preferences were around accommodation.

Long-stay residential sites

- 13.5 A total of 34 respondents (28% of the sample) said that they would like to move to either a long-stay residential site or a different residential site. All but one unauthorised encampment household were interested in this. No respondent on the unauthorised developments was interested, as they said they were happy where they currently were. A total of 4 households from socially rented sites would consider moving to another site (25% of the sample from socially rented sites); 3 of these households were from the Alvecote site in North Warwickshire.²⁹

²⁹ Although this is based on a low sample size.

Seventeen households from private sites expressed an interest in moving to a different site (22% of the sample from private sites in the Study Area). In addition, five households from bricks and mortar accommodation (2 from Cannock Chase, 2 from Nuneaton & Bedworth and 1 from South Staffordshire) reported a desire to move to site-based accommodation (24% of the bricks and mortar sample).

- 13.6 The vast majority of those respondents who reported a desire to move to a long-stay residential site all wanted to remain within the same local area (local authority) in which they were currently accommodated. Just 17% of respondents would look to move to another area. It was not specified which areas these would be.
- 13.7 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in long-stay sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. The majority of people could not indicate a time and simply answered 'don't know' (68%); 22% thought they would stay on a site for 5 years and over; the remainder of the sample stated times of 5 years and less.
- 13.8 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in moving to a long-term residential site to indicate the area where they would like a site to be. The vast majority wanted the site within the Study Area (83%). 43% indicated the West Midlands generally, with almost half of the sample indicating anywhere in the UK (49%).
- 13.9 We enquired about views as to the maximum size of a residential site. The vast majority of respondents said that a site should not be any larger than 20 pitches, with a significant number of respondents preferring sites of between 10 and 15 pitches.

Transit/short-stay sites

- 13.10 A total of 21 respondents said that they would be interested in stopping at a short-stay or transit site (18% of the sample). This comprised: 3 households on unauthorised encampments; 1 household on a socially rented site; 15 households from private sites (mainly from private rented pitches); and 1 household from bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 13.11 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in short-stay sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. A large number of people could not indicate a time and simply answered 'don't know' (48%); 17% felt they would stay for a very short time (1–4 weeks); 22% thought they would stay for between 1 month and 3 months; 13% thought they would stay for between 3 months and 6 months.
- 13.12 There were mixed views on the preferred size a site should be. A small number of people thought a site should be around 1–5 pitches in size, with a few indicating that 20–22 pitches was the maximum number of pitches for short-stay accommodation. There seemed to be a general

consensus, however, that a site containing around 10 pitches would be their preference.

Incorporated long-stay and short-stay sites

13.13 We also asked people what their thoughts were about sites that incorporated both long-stay pitches and short-stay pitches. Most respondents said they did not know (57%), 27% thought it was a good idea and around 16% viewed it as a bad idea. We asked people to comment on their answer. Comments in favour of such a site included:

"It's alright as long as it's run right. The Scunthorpe site was like that."

"That'd be good because family can then stay for a time."

"I think it's good. They can come and go but if they want, they can stay and their families can pull on with them."

"We have a friend that stays on one and they say it's very good because if your children want to have a week with you they can."

13.14 More tentative comments included:

"OK, but the council should run transit bit to check who goes on. You'd need wardens on the transit bit."

13.15 Views against such a site included:

"It's a bad idea. Permanent people build good relationships but comers and goers don't mix the same."

"It would be a blood bath. You don't know who's moving on."

13.16 Overall, it was clear from the people we spoke to that there was a split in views between those people who thought that a mix was a good idea and those that thought it was a bad idea. It was evident that people did not want to open their residential site up to just anyone and that the use of a more short-stay area should be restricted to the families of residential site residents. Therefore, where short-stay pitches are made available, on residential sites, some control over transit users may be necessary in order to ensure and maintain feelings of safety and cohesion for the more permanent residents.

Accommodation preferences

13.17 We asked all respondents to comment on their preferences for the following different forms of accommodation:

- A private site owned and lived on 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)

13.18 The answers were ranked on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the worst option for them and 10 being the best option. The mean (average) answer for each scenario is presented in preference order in Table 45 below. This shows that by far the most preferred form of accommodation is a private site owned either by themselves or their family. This is followed by the maintenance of a travelling way of life where people move from site to site, and then a site owned by the local council (but could be extended to RSL as well). Living on a site owned by a private landlord was seen relatively ambivalently. Living in a privately owned house was seen reasonably favourably. Living in a local authority or housing association house was regarded as the least favoured option, followed closely by living on a form of group housing.

Table 45: Views on the type of accommodation preferred

Type of site	Mean answer
A private site owned by them or their family	9.3
Travelling around on authorised transit sites	6.2
A site owned by the local council	6.0
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller	5.8
A family-owned house	5.3
A site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller)	5.3
'Group housing' ³⁰	4.7
A local authority or housing association owned house	3.4

13.19 This final section looks at some of the qualitative information we obtained about the kinds of places people prefer and aspire to live in. We asked all respondents to talk openly about both the best place they had ever lived and the worst place. In terms of the worst place people lived, we received a variety of responses. Many people talked about how living on the roadside was the worst place for them:

"Anywhere on the roadside. There's no toilets, baths, water and I couldn't get the children into school."

"I don't like sleeping on the roadside – it's too dangerous now."

"Oxford. You can't stop on the side of the road over there because they move you on all the time."

³⁰ On the questionnaire this was phrased as 'A site incorporating long stay/permanent plots/housing with short stay/transit facilities'.

13.20 Others tended to mention the reaction of the non-Traveller community:

“It was at Derby on a piece of waste ground. During the night someone kept throwing stones at our caravan.”

“In Colchester as the site was no good and it wasn't that good for work but there was too many travellers there and the gorgers don't like it.”

13.21 A number of people commented that their time living in a house was a particularly unpleasant time:

“In Birmingham we lived in a house but the neighbours were rude.”

“A house. The children were behaving badly and the eldest got expelled. Didn't like the house, as I was frightened to go upstairs at night. Everyone looked down on you and called you racist names. I daren't look out of the kitchen window at night. Hated it so much.”

13.22 Others were more specific about their experiences at particular places:

“Bournemouth, the site had just opened and the toilets and shower were in a very small block and the site was too close to the road.”

“On the Chesterfield council site. My partner's family are all there but they are very bossy and like to tell you what to do all the time.”

“A council site 30 years ago. There was nowhere for the children to play and it was very badly run.”

“Ireland. I went there about three years ago for a holiday but there was too much gossiping and back biting from other people.”

“Lincoln on a council site. It was no good, all the sheds were broken up and it was very dirty. I didn't let my children play out there.”

13.23 Similarly, in terms of the best places people had lived we received a variety of comments – some which were quite general about the things they required:

“Anywhere you can stay without being moved all the time.”

"The best place I lived on was a council run site. Everyone was friendly and looked out for one another. You weren't afraid to go out because everyone played out for ages and you were safe."

13.24 Others provided more specific examples:

"The Birmingham site, it was near to town and had good pubs."

"I think it was Blackpool on a private site. It was very nice, we were there for years but we had to move for family reasons."

"Cambridge, it was our own land. We got it passed and some of our family were on there with us but then some bad travelling family pulled on so we sold up and left."

"Cannock near the Chase – the people are really nice and friendly."

"Years and years ago we all pulled onto Wisbech for fruit picking. We'd pull onto the farmer's fields and go to work all day. There was little children playing in the fields and the older ones helping. Then at night all sit around the fire. Good old days."

"The Linehouses Caravan Park (Stoke-on-Trent). It was a great place to live and socialise."

"Scotland because a lot of Gypsies travel there in the summer. There's lots to do and lots of friends."

13.25 It was clear, though, that the presence and proximity to family and friends was a major reason why certain areas and experiences were viewed as positive:

"A private site in Gloucester. I have a lot of family up there and a lot of friends on the site. I would like to go back and stay but my husband likes travelling around."

"On the Griff site. I Loved it. I was there for years before the trouble. All my people are on there. I feel happy there."

"I like staying at Norwich with my older sister and her family on a council site. I liked the people and my children were really happy there."

"Near Leicester on my brother's private plot of land. It was very nice but we moved to give him more room."

"On my Dad's ground at Telford because I like being with my parents."

13.26 However, the place where the vast majority of people talked about as being the best was where they were currently living – particularly if it was a private site they owned themselves:

“Here all the family's here.”

“Here because I have all the facilities I need. The kids are in school and I don't have to move every week. What more could I want? All travellers need their own land.”

“This is the best place. When you're on roads you get moved on, tormented to death and plagued alive. This is a good place; it has peace for me and I ain't going to lose it.”

14. Travelling Showpeople

- 14.1 Travelling Showpeople occupy an unusual position in planning terms and a separate planning Circular, detailing the particular planning needs of Travelling Showpeople, has recently been produced – Circular 04/07. As well as detailing the requirements for pitch identification and allocation for Travelling Showpeople, Circular 04/07 also requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAAs.

Information from local authorities

- 14.2 Just two of the authorities' current development plans include policies towards sites for Travelling Showpeople (Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire), details of which can be found in Appendix 1.
- 14.3 The level of provision of sites for Showpeople has been static across the Study Area since 2001. Only South Staffordshire expects the number of sites to increase in the next 5 years.
- 14.4 Recent planning applications for Showmen's sites had been received by:
- Cannock Chase: applications for renewal of temporary permissions on an existing site in 2002 and 2005
 - South Staffordshire: 2 applications in 2006 – 1 withdrawn and 1 refused. The refusal was on an application to improve an existing site. It was deemed unacceptable because it did not include any provision for off-street parking/storage.
- 14.5 There have been no incidents of unauthorised development of sites for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area since 2001.
- 14.6 Table 46 summarises details of the 4 sites currently provided in the Study Area. The level of provision is relatively small and mostly in the north-western part of the Study Area. These sites accommodate an estimated 20 households.

Table 46: Sites for Travelling Showpeople from information provided by local authorities and the Showmen's Guild

Site	Plots	Comments
Cannock Chase		
Grove Colliery, Norton Canes	3	Temporary planning permission renewed on several occasions. Provides rented plots.
Lichfield		
Nil	—	
South Staffordshire		
Kingswood Colliery, Churchbridge	Approx. 5	Ongoing issues re Certificate of Lawful Use or Development. Provides rented plots.
Dobson's Yard, Featherstone	Approx. 10	No planning permission. Provides rented plots
Tamworth		
Nil	—	
North Warwickshire		
Nil	—	
Nuneaton & Bedworth		
Old Station Yard, Nuneaton	2	Established use. Owner-occupier pitches
Rugby		
Nil	—	

Views from Travelling Showpeople

- 14.7 In total, five interviews were achieved with site (yard) based Travelling Showpeople. Once again, as a result of the relatively low number of interviews, the views of residents are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages. It must also be noted that these views reflect 3 of the yards rather than all 4 known yards present at the time of the study. This is due to an inability to access the remaining yard.
- 14.8 All households provided details about how many living units and vehicles they possessed. Two households had 4 living units, one household had 2, and two households had 1 living unit. The average number of living units was 2.4 units per household. These tended to be larger static units rather than smaller trailers/tourers. Most households had a significant number of vehicles (including vans and lorries) with the average number being 6. All but one household was currently operating as a Travelling Showperson – one was retired. Two out of the five households reported not having sufficient room for their living quarters. The lack of room was anticipatory as they had children who were older and who are looking to start families soon. In addition, three of the households reported not having enough room for vehicles – in each case this related to a lack of work space to maintain and build their equipment. Generally speaking, across all the households

interviewed, space on the yards was at a premium, with one household commenting:

“There’s only enough space for us; we can’t let anyone else on. We’re always getting people asking if they can stay with us but there’s no room.”

- 14.9 Generally speaking the households on the owner-occupier yards viewed their yard in a positive light. The households on the rented yards viewed a number of factors quite negatively – particularly the size of plot, design of yard and facilities available. One of the households also commented that the management of the yard was very poor: *“they don’t provide anything”*.
- 14.10 All households had access to most of the facilities we enquired about (including water and electric supply, WC and rubbish collection) although all households lacked somewhere safe for children to play and a bath. Although all households had access to electricity and water supplies, this was described as sub-standard as the water pressure was low and their electricity supply was intermittent. WC facilities were provided by chemical toilets.
- 14.11 All but one household had concerns about health and safety on their yard. One such concern was around security and they had recently installed CCTV to assist with this, the others’ concerns related to potholes in the roads.
- 14.12 We asked all households to comment upon what improvements they would like to see made to their yard. These included:
- Space for children to play
 - Tarmac
 - Lighting
 - Improved sewage
- 14.13 All households had lived on the yards for 5 years or more. Three households thought they would remain on the yard indefinitely; the remaining 2 expected to leave with 6 to 12 months. We asked the 2 respondents who were planning to leave why this was. One respondent was leaving because the owner was closing the site due to the requirements the yard needed (South Staffordshire). The other respondent was leaving because they wanted to own their own yard – but did not have a yard to go to (Cannock Chase). Both respondents wanted to stay within the area and owner-occupation was the goal.
- 14.14 All households were local to the area in some way and those that still worked fairs travelled a significant amount from once or twice every week to 8 months a year. Birmingham was the main venue for fairs but respondents also worked in Wolverhampton, Cannock, Warwickshire and Leicestershire.

- 14.15 There was a mixture in preferences for how people preferred to live when working; two households commuted from their residential yard to their workplace, two respondents preferred to stay on 'Fairland' in order to *"keep an eye on the equipment"*.
- 14.16 A total of 3 additional households were thought to require independent accommodation over the next 5-year period (2 in South Staffordshire and 1 in Cannock Chase). All were the children of the respondent's and all were thought to want to live near to their families.
- 14.17 Because so little is known about how Travelling Showpeople live and want to live, rather than confine respondents to tick-box answers, we wanted to provide respondents with as much chance to talk to us about their needs as was possible. It was clear that Travelling Showpeople were keen for the local authorities to offer them greater acknowledgement and recognition in planning for yards. Broadly speaking there were two main messages: firstly, respondents wanted more land available that they could purchase and develop for their own needs; secondly, respondents were keen to stress that such land needed to be large enough to be able to accommodate the number of living units and vehicles that Travelling Showpeople require.

15. An assessment of need for residential pitches

- 15.1 Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Indeed, population characteristics emerging from research around Gypsy and Traveller accommodation agree that the formation of new households is inevitable.³¹ Although 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. Rather, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, including an increase in the use of unauthorised sites; innovative house dwelling arrangements (i.e. living in trailers in the grounds of houses); overcrowding on sites; and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).
- 15.2 From an analysis of the data presented throughout this report 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, key transport links and attractive urban and rural localities. In turn, this survey has indicated that in many Gypsy and Traveller families, older children will want to form new households, preferably near their families across the Study Area.
- 15.3 Given the presence of unauthorised encampments, household concealment and future household formation, the current supply of appropriate accommodation appears to be significantly less than the 'need' identified. It is the conclusion of the project team that there is a need for more pitch-based accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area. The following chapters look in depth at this issue, considering residential and transit pitch need for Gypsies and Travellers, specific pitch needs for Travelling Showpeople and needs relating to bricks and mortar accommodation.

Calculating accommodation supply and need

- 15.4 The methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. In 2003 a crude estimation of additional pitch provision was made at a national level based predominantly on information contained within the Caravan Count.³² The Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments also contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.³³ In addition, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for helping to ensure that GTAAs are accurate in their estimation of accommodation need based upon a

³¹ Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

³² Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

³³ CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Guidance*, London: HMSO.

range of factors.³⁴ It is from this latter guide that our estimation of supply and need is drawn. In particular, residential accommodation need is considered by carefully exploring the following factors:

Current residential supply

- Socially rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

Residential need 2007–2012

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

Pitch supply 2007–2012

- Vacant pitches over the assessment period.
- Unused pitches, which are to be brought back into use over the assessment period.
- Known planned site developments.

15.5 Within the guidance for producing GTAAs there is also the consideration of ‘new households likely to arrive from elsewhere’. It remains unclear from the findings if movement between the Study Area and elsewhere 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 be those on unauthorised encampments who intended to maintain a travelling lifestyle or a return to their permanent base.

15.6 It is understood that generally speaking, the Study Area is a popular area for Gypsies and Travellers looking for both residential and short-stay/transit accommodation. Gypsies and Travellers spoke about the ‘draw’ of major urban areas such as Manchester, Birmingham and London; the possibility of short-term employment opportunities in the area; family links in the area; and, as all local authority areas within the Study Area are noted, for its links to the main transport network (especially its heavily used main roads).

³⁴http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf

- 15.7 As this accommodation assessment (in line with other accommodation assessments) included Gypsies and Travellers within the boundaries of the Study Area, it is impossible to present a reliable estimation on the need for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers currently living elsewhere. In considering the large number of rented pitches available in the area it is felt that those Gypsies and Travellers who arrive from elsewhere will probably be balanced by those Gypsies and Travellers who move on from the area and leave vacancies. For simplicity, both elements (new households and private site vacancies) are omitted.
- 15.8 Although we are able to account for overcrowding on pitches in the Study Area (see requirements below) during the drafting of this report one of the local authorities expressed some concern about the possible effect of site overcrowding occurring on some of the private sites in the Study Area.³⁵ If overcrowding is a reality on these sites this could significantly hide need/demand for further pitch provision in the area. It is particularly difficult to quantify overcrowding on private sites due to a lack of information about occupancy and capacity available from owners of private sites. We considered this issue and attempted to retrace the number of caravans the fieldwork team observed (albeit casually at the time) with the approximate number of pitches/caravans the private site had permission for. We concluded that we had no evidence to assume site overcrowding was an issue as most sites were on a 1 or 2 caravan to 1 pitch basis. As a result, we have not provided an allowance for site overcrowding on private sites. However, we also acknowledge that our fieldwork experiences are a snapshot of particular days and that a certain degree of overcrowding may be occurring in the Study Area (see comments by residents around space on some sites in Chapter 6).
- 15.9 The assessment period referred to above relates to the 2007–2012 period with an alternative approach, based on household formation rates, taken to make estimates beyond this point for 2012–2016 and 2016–2021. As a result of the impact that the creation of more authorised pitches may have on the Gypsy and Traveller community (in terms of household characteristics, travelling patterns and settlement patterns) it is unwise to consider each of the above factors beyond the initial assessment period. Instead we use a simple estimate of family/household growth to illustrate likely natural increase in the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is applied to both a Study Area and local authority level.
- 15.10 Each one of these factors outlined in paragraph 15.4 is taken in turn, and illustrated at both a Study Area level and local authority level.

³⁵ Site overcrowding in this instance is seen as more caravans being present on the site as a whole than the site owner has permission for.

A cautionary note on local authority pitch allocation

- 15.11 Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling community are generally much wider, as there is social housing available in every authority in the country, there are no local authority sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England, and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Some authorities have no authorised private sites. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances, for example, an authority which provides a site, 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, friends and family resident, etc.). 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. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).
- 15.12 As requested in the research brief, we have identified Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs at a sub-regional and a local level. This has been done on a **'need where it is seen to arise'** basis. However, the results of this apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should be actually met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area. Decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities, the County Councils and the West Midlands Regional Assembly – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability.

Additional residential pitch requirements

- 15.13 Table 47 on the following pages presents the Study Area requirement of need and the local authority apportionment based on the 'need where it arises' approach.
- 15.14 The following section looks at Table 47 and provides a more detailed explanation relating to the element of need and supply and its resulting requirement.

Current residential supply

Row 1: The number of pitches on socially rented sites provided by local authority information – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

Row 2: The number of pitches on private authorised sites provided by local authority information – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

Row 3: The total number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches (sum of 1 + 2) – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

Row 4: The total number of authorised plots provided for Travelling Showpeople.

Table 47: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople requirements by local authority area (2007-2026)

Element of supply and need		Study Area Total	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	North Warks	Nun & Bed	Rugby	South Staffs	Tamworth
	Current residential supply								
1	Socially rented pitches	37	0	0	17	20	0	0	0
2	Private authorised pitches	214	41	2	7	15	66	83	0
3	Total authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches	251	41	2	24	35	66	83	0
4	Total Travelling Showpeople plots	10	3	0	0	2	0	5	0
	Residential pitch need 2007–2012								
5	End of temporary planning permissions	15	0	0	7	0	3	5	0
6	New household formation	59	10	0	6	9	16	18	0
7	Unauthorised developments	39	0	4	4	1	19	11	0
8a	<i>Movement from sites to housing</i>	12	2	0	1	2	3	4	0
8b	<i>Movement from housing to sites</i>	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
8c	Net house-site movement	-9	-2	0	0	-1	-2	-4	0
9	Closure of sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Unauthorised encampments	72	17	5	0	18	24	2	6
11	Additional residential need	176	25	9	17	27	60	32	6
	Additional supply 2007–2012								
12	Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
13	Pitches with permission but not developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	New sites planned	13	0	0	0	1	12	0	0
15	Vacancies on socially rented sites	10	0	0	5	5	0	0	0
16	Supply 2007–2012	24	0	0	5	7	12	0	0

Element of supply and need		Study Area Total	Cannock Chase	Lichfield	North Warks	Nun & Bed	Rugby	South Staffs	Tamworth
17	Requirement for extra residential pitches (2007–2012)	152	25	9	12	20	48	32	6
18	Requirement for extra residential pitches (2012–2016)	51	8	1	5	7	14	15	1
19	Requirement for extra residential pitches (2016–2021)	60	10	2	5	8	17	17	1
20	Requirement for extra residential pitches (2021–2026)	54	9	2	5	7	15	15	1
21	Total requirement for extra residential pitches (2007–2026)	317	52	14	27	42	94	79	9
22.	Suggested requirement for extra transit pitches (2007–2012)	35	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
23.	Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2007–2012)	19	5	0	0	1	0	13	0
24	Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2012–2016)	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
25	Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2016–2021)	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
26	Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2021–2026)	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
27	Total requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2007–2026)	28	8	0	0	2	0	18	0

Residential pitch need 2007–2012

Row 5: The number of pitches affected by temporary planning permissions ending within the assessment period 2007–2012. These are assumed to all count towards estimated need.

- Rugby – 3 sites = 3 pitches
- North Warwickshire – 1 site = 7 pitches
- South Staffordshire – 1 site = 5 pitches

Establishing the permanency of these sites would count towards additional pitch provision.

Row 6: This is the number of new pitches required from new household formation. This requires estimates of:

1. The number of new households likely to form;
2. The proportion likely to require a pitch; and
3. The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area.

For clarity purposes, household formation findings from sites and houses are calculated and explained separately. These figures are then combined within Row 6.

New households forming on sites

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from authorised sites was the equivalent of 22% of respondents.

Assumptions:

- Treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation may usually over-state need as there may be some inter-marrying within the Study Area of individuals.
- As the Study Area has a large proportion of private pitches, this often enables the flexibility of land families often require in order to accommodate any future household growth. Therefore, when households were asked about their views on future household formation (see Chapter 13), particularly when we considered that there is a large number of young families and a small number of older families on private sites (see Chapter 5), we believe there was a certain level of under-claiming from households on private sites.
- In balancing these two factors no adjustment has been made to the figures (upwards or downwards).

Calculation: 22% grossed to total current population on sites = 22% of site based population = 55 households across the Study Area.

New households forming in housing

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from bricks and mortar accommodation was the equivalent of 9% of respondents.

Assumptions:

- Treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will probably over-state need as there may be some inter-marrying within the Study Area of individuals.
- There may have been some over claiming of need.
- New households will be equivalent to 90% of such individuals.

Calculation: 9% of known housed population (47 households) = 9% of 47 minus 10% = 4 households. These households represent a small proportion of housed Gypsies and Travellers. As a result this figure is likely to under-state. From the information provided via the survey we assume that these households require their own accommodation and need a pitch; all are assumed to want to stay in the Study Area.

Total pitch need from household formation on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing = **59 pitches across the Study Area.**

Row 7: The level of need arising from current unauthorised developments. According to our survey there were 8 unauthorised developments at the time of the assessment comprising of approximately 37 pitches. Since these sites are, by definition, unauthorised, these households are in need of authorised, legal accommodation, whether through the granting of planning permission on their own site or pitch provision elsewhere. However, we found that these unauthorised developments also had a high level of overcrowding on them with potential household formation over the assessment period. We found that there was the equivalent of 2 additional households living on these pitches which required separate accommodation over the assessment period.

It is estimated that there is a need for approximately **39 pitches across the Study Area** to accommodate these households. This need is for permanent residential pitches, as those households who were interviewed on unauthorised developments wanted to stay in the area where they were currently living.

If authorities regularise these developments this would count towards additional pitch provision, but permissions would need to take account of current levels of overcrowding on these sites.

Rows 8a, 8b and 8c: this is the estimation of the flow from sites to houses and vice versa.

Row 8a: This is the estimation of the number of households currently on site accommodation who would move into bricks and mortar housing during the 2007–2012 period.

Finding: No respondents on authorised sites expressed an interest in moving to a house in the Study Area.

Assumptions: Zero movement from sites to housing would probably understate need as a result of the following:

- The number of qualitative comments we received demonstrated some desire for bricks and mortar housing
- The finding that households are known to move into housing as young families and as older people
- Suggestions that a nominal 5% of authorised site residents would move from sites to housing over the assessment period.

Calculation: 5% grossed to site based population = 5% of site based population = 12 households over the Study Area.

Row 8b: This is the estimation of the number of households currently in bricks and mortar accommodation who require site based accommodation and who would move onto sites during the 2007-2012 period.

Finding: 4% of families/households in bricks and mortar families expressed an interest in a site place in the Study Area.

Assumption: All will move from housing to sites if pitches are available.

Calculation: 4% of known bricks and mortar population = 3 families/households over the Study Area.

Row 8c: This is the net movement from housing to sites and sites to housing. This indicates that **9 households** would require housed accommodation over the assessment period.

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

Row 10: This provides an estimation of the need arising from households on unauthorised encampments. This factor takes into account households involved in unauthorised encampments that require a residential pitch in the Study Area. The need for transit accommodation from unauthorised encampments is considered in Chapter 16. The calculation of need for residential accommodation requires estimates of the number of households

involved in unauthorised encampments, and of how many of these need a residential pitch in the Study Area.

Families involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings: The Caravan Count shows potentially low numbers of unauthorised encampments for the Study Area as a whole. Survey information from the local authorities indicates that in 2006 there were an estimated 47 separate encampments. It is believed that from the Study Area as a whole this is broadly reflective of previous years (although it is noted that authorities within the Study Area have experienced both higher and lower numbers of encampments).

Assumptions:

- The average encampment size during 2006 was 5 caravans. The survey showed an average of 1.3 caravans per household. There was an average of 4 families on each encampment.
- It is reasonable to assume that a number of families who feature on unauthorised encampments are repeat encampments over the study period (i.e. the local authority would be visited a number of times during the calendar year by the same family); we assume this to be the case in 25% of encampments.

Calculation: Number of encampments during 2006 multiplied by average encampment size minus 25% = 141 separate households.

Need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments

Finding: 89% of households on unauthorised encampments were interested in moving to a residential pitch in the Study Area. It must be noted that this is based on a very small sample size (9 interviews) and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments.

Assumptions:

- 89% is likely to be high because of the small sample size this is drawn from, over-claiming, likelihood of interest in other areas outside of the Study Area and from what seems reasonable.
- LA officers reported that few encampments they encountered were looking for residential accommodation in the area. It was suggested that 10% of encampments would require residential accommodation.
- A reduction from 89% to 10% is a significant shift downwards and it is acknowledged that the potentially competing agendas of each party may have influenced the claims/beliefs.
- Suggest a median is used between the two proportions which gives a need for residential accommodation from unauthorised encampments of 50%.
- This is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families each year. Other households on unauthorised encampments

should be incorporated into other GTAAs.

Calculation: 50% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 50% of 141 = **72 households/pitches across the Study Area.**³⁶

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

Additional supply 2007–2012

Row 12: These are the pitches which are closed but could be re-opened for re-use = 1 pitch on the Griff site (Nuneaton & Bedworth).

Row 13: These are the pitches for which planning permissions have been granted but which are not yet developed.

Row 14: This is the number of pitches on sites which are planned to be delivered within the assessment period (1 pitch on the Stoney Road site in Nuneaton & Bedworth and 12 pitches on the Woodside Park site, Rugby).

Row 15: This is the number of pitches likely to become vacant over the 2007–2012 period. Vacancy rates on authorised private sites are impossible to quantify due to a lack of information and therefore have been excluded. The authorities did not identify a vacancy rate for the socially rented sites as a result of many of the pitches only recently being re-opened. However, it seems reasonable to assume a baseline vacancy rate at an average of 1 pitch being re-let in each year on each site: 2 times 5 = 10 pitches.

Row 16: Sum of rows 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Row 17: This is the total requirement for additional residential pitches over the 2007–2012 period. Row 11 minus Row 16 = total residential pitches required: **152 pitches over the Study Area.**

Permanent residential accommodation need over the next periods 2012–2016, 2016–2021 and 2021–2026

The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements once GTAAs across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site/pitch provision. There is no means of knowing how Gypsies and Travellers will decide to live in the next decade. There may be an increase in smaller households, moves into bricks and mortar housing may be more common or household formation may happen at a later age. However, in order to take a strategic view, it is important to be able to plan for the longer term. Therefore, in order to balance the complexity of issues with a need to plan for the longer term we have used an assumed rate of household growth

³⁶ Figure adjusted to account for rounding to nearest whole pitch at the local level.

rate applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2012.

Following the principles used in the West Midlands Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Policy, this is assumed to be a 3% increase between 2012 and 2016, 2.5% each year between 2016 and 2021 and 2% each year between 2021 and 2026. This follows commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.³⁷

All households on sites are assumed to require pitches. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period and that any households on unauthorised encampments will not require permanent residential accommodation in the Study Area.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2012–2016** is an additional **51 residential pitches**.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2016–2021** is an additional **60 residential pitches**.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2021–2026** is additional **54 residential pitches**.

Total additional residential pitch need 2007–2026 = 317 pitches. The precise local authority breakdown for how these pitches would need to be created is based on the 'needs where it arises' approach and is shown in Table 47.

³⁷ 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. A 3% growth rate was also used in the recent report from Communities and Local Government (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers* by regional planning bodies. HMSO. For more information see West Midlands: Interim Regional Statement on Gypsy & Traveller Policy <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=303>.

16. An assessment of need for transit pitches

16.1 Although nomadism and travelling are currently restricted to a certain extent, they remain important features of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or visit family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. 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.

16.2 National policy is clear that there should be provision in order that Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel can do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately. During the course of this assessment we have found clear evidence as to the need for authorities to make provision for Gypsies and Travellers in transit. This is shown by:

- The records of local authorities and the information in Caravan Counts, both of which show a number of encampments within the Study Area;
- The views of stakeholders, particularly enforcement officers, who have regular contact with more transitory Gypsies and Travellers;
- The fieldwork experiences of the study team who found a number of unauthorised encampments who declined participation in the assessment on the grounds that they 'were just passing through';
- The number of people who took part in the assessment who indicated they often travel to the area but who do not want residential accommodation; and
- The level of interest in the provision of transit sites/stopping places in the area.

Assessing the need for transit pitches

16.3 The assessment of need for transit provision uses the need for regularisation as evidenced by unauthorised encampments; as a result, the methodology for calculating the need for transit provision is similar to that for calculating the need for residential provision from unauthorised encampments.

Households involved in unauthorised encampments

Findings: The Caravan Count shows potentially low numbers of unauthorised encampments for the Study Area. Survey information from the local authorities indicates that in 2006 there were an estimated 47 separate encampments. This is seen as broadly reflective of previous years although

authorities within the Study Area have experienced both higher and lower numbers of encampments.

Assumptions:

- The average encampment size during 2006 was 5 caravans. The survey showed an average of 1.3 caravans per household. There was an average of 4 families on each encampment.
- It is reasonable to assume that a number of families who feature on unauthorised encampments are repeat encampments over the study period (i.e. the local authority would be visited a number of times during the calendar year by the same family); we assume this to be the case in 25% of encampments.

Calculation: Number of encampments during 2006 multiplied by average encampment size minus 25% = 141 separate households.

Need for transit provision

Finding: 33% of households on unauthorised encampments were interested in using a transit pitch/authorised stopping place in the Study Area. It must be noted that this is based on a very small sample size (9 interviews) and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments.

Assumptions:

- 33% is assumed to be about accurate as a result of professional judgement and GTAAs elsewhere.

Calculation: 33% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 33% of 141 = 47 households/pitches.

16.4 This indicates that the authorities can expect to see an estimated 47 additional households require short-stay accommodation during one calendar year.

16.5 By taking into account that the main travelling months are, generally speaking, between April and October, it seems reasonable to assume that the vast majority of this travelling will be done within this 6-month period. If a transit pitch has an upper time limit of stay of 4 weeks, this means that one 10-pitch transit site during the summer will have the capacity to cater for around 60 households.

16.6 Although the development of one 10-pitch transit site should offer the level of vacancies required, it is unlikely that the creation of one transit site across the Study Area would meet the needs of those households requiring short-stay accommodation. The reasons are:

- the nature of the Study Area – most of the current encampments occur in the Northern Warwickshire local authorities (Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire) but there are a small number of encampments in other authorities; the provision of one transit site would not provide for the apparent geographic need.
- a single transit site would force the mixing of differing groups (family and ethnic) and could lead to potential tensions.
- the needs of the groups for travelling is often a mixture of motivations, e.g. work, family and holiday. A uniform transit site may not meet the differing requirements.

16.7 Therefore, in practice it is estimated that the equitable provision of **at least 5 transit pitches in each authority** would provide the capacity required to cater for the households identified as in need of transit accommodation. However, it is acknowledged that **some local authorities would need to provide a larger number of transit pitches than would others**. It is also noted that the size of transit pitches should be larger than standard (2 caravan to a pitch) residential pitches and that **transit pitches should be able to accommodate at least 3 caravans per pitch**. These pitches should be distributed across the Study Area, most urgently in those authorities which experience the greatest number of encampments – Cannock Chase, Rugby and Nuneaton & Bedworth.

16.8 Although transit need could be met by the creation of ‘hard’ purpose-made pitches/sites it is also recommended that the authorities balance the need for the development of such ‘hard’ pitches with the possibility of ‘soft’ transit pitches, i.e. designated stopping places. Such ‘softer’ options would provide Gypsies and Travellers with somewhere authorised and more secure to stop whilst creating a minimal environmental impact.

The effective total additional need for transit pitches = 35 pitches.³⁸

A note on the provision of transit pitches

16.9 It is clear that travelling and resulting unauthorised encampments are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites needs to accommodate the diversity of travelling. It is important to note that the provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampment. In addition, as with all Gypsy and Traveller pitch accommodation, the location, design and facilities of a site need to go hand in hand with appropriate management arrangements. It is clear from the experience of many local authorities

³⁸ The planned provision of 10–15 transit pitches in Rugby would be a significant step in meeting this need.

that if a transit site is not managed or used appropriately it will not be used effectively.

16.10 It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. There are two fundamental aspects here:

1. Larger pitches on residential sites provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term visitors.
2. Variety in transit provision is needed to cater for the variety of needs. This might include formal transit sites, less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis or temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year.

16.11 At a partnership level, a single transit site makes little sense. Travelling occurs at various scales. The partner authorities are in an ideal position in order to plan, devise and implement a network of transit accommodation between the local authorities. In addition, the provision of transit accommodation is an area of opportunity where local and county authorities can work with adjoining regions, counties and authorities to pool information and to ensure that proposals make sense in the wider context.

17. An assessment of need for Travelling Showpeople pitches

17.1 Circular 04/07 requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAAs; as such, because of the separate planning issues for Travelling Showpeople and their differing accommodation needs, we have produced a separate calculation of residential need. It must be noted that pitches for Travelling Showpeople (commonly referred to as 'yards') are significantly larger than those required for other groups of Travellers.

Travelling Showpeople accommodation need

17.2 As discussed earlier, the fieldwork with Gypsies and Travellers and surveys of local authority information revealed that the population of Travelling Showpeople within the Study Area was relatively small compared to other Gypsy and Traveller groups.

17.3 All of the factors that are used to determine Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need are considered in order to calculate need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople (see Chapter 15); however, a number of these are significantly different for Travelling Showpeople. In particular, this includes:

- *Unauthorised sites* – Travelling Showpeople tend not to camp illegally on land which they do not have permission for to the same extent as is experienced by other Travelling groups. Consultations with the Showmen's Guild indicated that the maintenance of good working relationships with local authorities is important to their businesses; therefore any illegal activity by Travelling Showpeople, whose occupation relies on having permission by an authority to operate, potentially risks their ability to work. As a result, Travelling Showpeople will rarely appear as unauthorised encampments, preferring instead, during the fair season, to double up on authorised sites, use an unauthorised stopping place (often with agreement with the land owner) or travel back to their authorised pitch.
- *Movement from other areas* – The areas in which Travelling Showpeople live are heavily influenced by the circuit of fairs that each household attends. As a result, there is a tendency to want/need to live within 'their patch' of preferred fairs, which in turn means that Travelling Showpeople will move to other areas for short periods only rather than to seek permanent accommodation.

Additional residential plot requirements for Travelling Showpeople

17.4 Table 48 below summarises the model for residential plot requirements in the Study Area between 2007 and 2012; local authority requirements for these plots can be found in Table 47 (Chapter 15). However, for the purposes of further clarity, each requirement is expanded upon below.

Table 48: Summary of estimated need for residential plots for Travelling Showpeople at a Study Area level 2007–2012

Element of supply and need		Plots
	Current residential supply	
1	Socially rented plots	0
2	Private authorised plots	10
3	Total authorised plots	10
	Residential plot need 2007–2012	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	3
5	New household formation	6
6	Unauthorised developments	10
7	Closure of yards	0
8	Additional residential need	19
9	Additional supply 2007–2012	0
13	Requirement for extra plots	19

Element of supply and need 1–16

Current residential supply

Row 1: The number of plots on residential socially rented yards provided by local authority information.

Row 2: The number of occupied residential pitches on private authorised yards provided by local authority information.

Row 3: Sum of 1 + 2

Residential plot need 2007–2012

Row 4: The number of temporary planning permissions due to end over the assessment. The occupants of these plots would require residential accommodation within the 2007–2012 period. This is the case on one site in Cannock Chase and this provides a need for 3 plots.

Row 5: The number of new pitches required from new household formation. This requires estimates of:

- a. The number of new households likely to form;

- b. The proportion likely to require a pitch; and
- c. The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area.

Finding: The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from authorised yards was the equivalent to 60% of respondents.

Assumptions: 60% of additional need may over-state need as there are retired people on yards as well as people with very young children. From what seems reasonable we assume that need will be equal to 50% of the existing population. All are assumed to require their own accommodation (own plot), and all are assumed to want to stay in the Study Area.

Calculation: 50% grossed to total current population on sites = 50% of 10³⁹ = 5 households/plots.

Row 6: According to the information received from the local authorities there was one unauthorised development at the time of the assessment comprising of approximately 10 plots. Since this yard is, by definition, unauthorised, these households are in need of authorised, legal accommodation, whether through the granting of planning permission on their own yard or pitch provision elsewhere.

It is estimated that there is a need for approximately **10 plots** to accommodate these households. This need is for permanent residential plots. If authorities regularise these developments this would count towards additional plot provision.

Row 7: The research team understood that there was the possible intention for one yard within the Study Area (South Staffordshire) to close. Although we did not receive official confirmation of this, if this yard closed there would be an additional need for approximately 5 families. **This has not been included in the element of need above.**

Row 8: Sum of rows 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Row 9: There was no evidence of supply of plots within the Study Area.

Row 10: Sum of row 8 minus row 9 provides the net need for residential plots. There is a need for **19 residential permanent plots** for Travelling Showpeople.

³⁹ This includes a 3-plot site with temporary permission in Cannock Chase but excludes the unauthorised development in South Staffordshire.

Permanent residential accommodation need over the next periods 2012–2016, 2016–2021 and 2021–2026

In a situation similar to that of Gypsies and Travellers, the current shortage of sites and pitches for Travelling Showpeople means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements once GTAA's across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site/pitch provision. However, in order to take a strategic view, it is important to be able to plan for the longer term. Therefore, in order to balance the complexity of issues with a need to plan for the longer term we have used an assumed rate of household growth of 2% a year compound as applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2012.⁴⁰ All households on yards are assumed to require plots. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period.

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2012–2016** is an additional **2 residential plots** (see Table 47, row 24).

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2016–2021** is an additional **4 residential plots** (see Table 47, row 25).

The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2021–2026** is an additional **3 residential plots** (see Table 47, row 26).

Total additional residential pitch need 2007–2026 = 28 plots (see Table 47, row 27).

⁴⁰ Although household growth rates of 3% a year are typically used for Gypsies and Travellers, 2% has been used here to account for the smaller families of Travelling Showpeople in comparison to Gypsies and Travellers.

18. Recommendations

- 18.1 This final chapter provides some recommendations, based on the findings of the study, for the Partner Authorities, as well as stakeholders, for how a number of areas might progress.
- 18.2 Each of the local authorities, in partnership with key agencies, should take a proactive approach to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in order to meet the accommodation need identified in this assessment. The overarching recommendation from the study is that the authorities involved aim to work in a proactive fashion to meet the accommodation needs which have been identified as a result of this assessment.
- 18.3 Each authority has a significant amount of work to do in order to create greater synergy between the current situation of the Gypsy and Traveller population and the situation enjoyed by the vast majority of the non-Traveller communities. The following aims to provide the authorities concerned with conclusions and recommendations, emerging during the course of this assessment, as to how the need identified can best be met. There are six broad headings: overall strategy, systems and policy framework; accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers; communication and engagement; developing accommodation; Travelling Showpeople accommodation; and health- and housing-related support issues.
- 18.4 Although there is a general theme of joined-up working in these recommendations, it must be remembered that each of the authorities will need to develop their own responses to this need in order to provide locally intelligent accommodation options for resident Gypsy and Traveller households. A number of the recommendations, and variations thereof, have been made within other GTAAs that the authors have been involved in within the West Midlands region. We have brought our experience of practice (both good and bad) to this assessment in order to make these recommendations. We believe it is important that all local authorities begin to take a common approach to embedding Gypsy and Traveller issues into their plans and good practice sharing – this should happen both within and across GTAA Study Areas. Following on from this, it is acknowledged that some of these recommendations are quite generic; therefore, those authorities who are not already implementing these recommendations should begin to do so, and those authorities already engaged in such work should continue to do so.

Strategy, systems and policy framework

- 18.5 The Study Area, authorities have important, strategic and facilitating roles to play in order to support one another in developing pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers. It is important that partnerships

between the authorities are maintained after the assessment of need and this is linked into work of neighbouring authorities.

Recommendation 1: A Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire co-ordination group on Gypsy and Traveller issues comprised of local authorities and sub-regional partners should be established to assist the authorities in developing a meaningful and co-ordinated approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and related issues. The Steering Group for this GTAA would provide an excellent foundation for such a group.

Recommendation 2: All authorities should ensure an internal working group exists within each authority, which cuts across service areas, in order to better co-ordinate the response and approach on Gypsy and Traveller issues and avoid potential duplication of work.

Recommendation 3: Each authority should identify a clear lead officer who manages each authority's response to Gypsies and Traveller issues.

- 18.6 Developing appropriate sites and allocating appropriate land for the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites is key in order to achieve the increase in provision required by this assessment. In order to do this sustainably and equitably, each LPA needs to have a shared vision.

Recommendation 4: The authorities should develop a joint planning policy for the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Authorities should also seek to network with LPAs outside of the GTAA partnership.

- 18.7 There is also a need to improve the quality of the information collected about Gypsies and Travellers. Within the Study Area the Warwickshire authorities appeared slightly better on this issue than the Staffordshire authorities.

Recommendation 5: Each authority needs to ensure that there is a standardised and centralised method of recording occurrences of unauthorised encampments and the needs of households on these encampments. Each authority should be party to joint protocols in order to respond effectively and fairly towards unauthorised encampments.

Recommendation 6: In order to adhere to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and to ensure the high quality of ongoing monitoring, authorities should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are recognised in all their ethnic monitoring forms, most urgently in relation to housing and planning.

18.8 With an increase in the provision of pitches and sites for Gypsies and Travellers, there will be a need to ensure that access to these sites embraces transparency and equality. It should be noted that Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most diverse groupings in UK society. This diversity can at times lead to potential conflict.

Recommendation 7: Residential and transit site waiting lists should be:

- Accessible to all resident Gypsies and Travellers in the area
- Available to be accessed in advance and outside the area via telephone or ICT systems
- Clear and transparent in terms of allocation policies
- Formalised
- Centralised
- Standardised

Recommendation 8: Authorities should ensure that principles of equality, in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, are embedded in the wide range of services provided. In particular this includes:

- Housing policies
- Homelessness policies
- Harassment
- Communication and engagement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Site management
- Housing-related support
- Choice-Based Lettings
- Allocation policies
- Planning policies
- Absence policies

Recommendation 9: Authorities should be sensitive to the different cultural and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers who may present as homeless and those who may require local authority accommodation.

Recommendation 10: All authorities should ensure they take a common approach to the Welfare Needs Assessment. This should be grounded in good practice and be proactive in meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 11: 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.

- 18.9 Although the existing management of the two socially rented sites was seen as good, the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites require careful attention. Inappropriate management can foster and encourage a perception of partisanship and divisiveness, and does little to build social cohesion on the sites and lessen social exclusion for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Recommendation 12: Authorities should implement the principles contained within the emerging guidance for site management published by the CLG.

Recommendation 13: The management of sites needs to be evaluated at regular intervals.

Accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers

- 18.10 It is clear that travelling and any resulting unauthorised encampment are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites needs to accommodate the diversity of travelling. Provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampments (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).

- 18.11 In addition, the authorities that make up the Study Area appear to be attractive areas for seasonal, short stay or stop-over travelling. Although calculations have been produced, such travelling is difficult to quantify as need in terms of pitch provision, so the authorities will need to develop a range of appropriate strategies to meet this often unpredictable need.

- 18.12 It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. There are three fundamental recommendations here:

Recommendation 14: There needs to be variety in transit provision in order to cater for the variety of needs. This might range from formal transit pitches, 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.

Recommendation 15: 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 for mass gatherings, should they occur.

Recommendation 16: The level of accommodation provision across the Study Area should remain under constant review.

Communication and engagement

18.13 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. The process of developing pitches 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, local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 17: The authorities should engage in efforts to raise cultural awareness issues and dispel some of the persistent myths around Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 18: Authorities should develop their communication and engagement strategies already in place for consultation with non-Travelling communities and tailor these, in an appropriate manner, to Gypsy and Traveller community members.

18.14 As not all pitches identified here need to be met through socially rented provision, and the overwhelming aspiration of the community is to be owner-occupiers, there is a need to develop a constructive dialogue between planning authorities and Gypsies and Travellers seeking to develop private sites. 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 19: 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. This advice may require some tailoring for this particular client group.

Developing accommodation

18.15 Clearly, the process of developing accommodation to meet the need identified here will require significant funding, much of which will be directed at the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant held by Communities and Local Government.

Recommendation 20: Those officers and agencies leading the planning, design and development of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should involve the target Gypsy and Traveller population in all stages. In turn, site (both residential and transit)

and design should be approached in a creative and innovative manner. Preferences and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers should be taken into consideration. Important things to consider include:

- Proximity 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 related support issues
- Tenure Mix
- Space for short-term visitors

Recommendation 21: Authorities should ensure that existing statutory guidelines and emerging good practice are used in relation to residential and transit site design, management and health and safety issues.

18.16 Although we did not monitor fiscal levels during the study, households clearly had varying income levels. Discounted for sale, shared ownership and trailer rental are just three of the methods which may help increase the economic mobility and engender a greater sense of belonging for Gypsy and Traveller households. Although the preference is for owner-occupied pitches, there will still be a significant role for socially rented site provision to cater for those households who are not currently economically mobile.

Recommendation 22: 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.

18.17 At the same time as new sites are being developed, the authorities still have an obligation to ensure that the supply of accommodation currently in place for Gypsies and Travellers continues to meet their needs and aspirations. If new sites are developed which are seen as having a higher standard than existing sites, residents of current authorised accommodation are likely to request a pitch on the new site. It is important that the accommodation options provided to the community embrace an equal (high) standard of facility and finish.

Recommendation 23: The Griff site in Nuneaton & Bedworth should be significantly refurbished in order to improve the living situation of resident Gypsies and Travellers.

Health and housing-related support Issues

18.18 There were a number of issues which emerged during the assessment that would improve the lives of a number of Gypsies and Travellers and provide different sections of the communities with independence.

Recommendation 24: It will be an important component, in order to produce sustainable solutions for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision, for all relevant departments to engage with Gypsy and Traveller needs. Supporting People teams should be embedded in the strategic planning and delivery of services and work closely with colleagues on Gypsy and Traveller service provision.

Recommendation 25: Authorities should work with Supporting People to create 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 26: Supporting People teams should network with other 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 27: The profile of Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) should be raised in relation to Gypsies and Travellers who wish to remain in their own homes. 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.

Recommendation 28: Housing-related support should be flexible in order to offer support when it is needed (i.e. settlement on a site/in a house), with scope to withdraw it on a phased basis or continue as required.

Recommendation 29: Housing-related support should be developed in order to produce appropriate strategies to respond to the key areas of support required, identified in this study.

Travelling Showpeople accommodation

18.19 Authorities should consider the above recommendations as applying to all Gypsy and Traveller groups, inclusive of Travelling Showpeople. However, because of the unique position afforded to Travelling Showpeople in the planning guidance, coupled with a changing labour market and living arrangements for Travelling Showpeople households, accommodating Travelling Showpeople poses particular challenges.

Recommendation 30: Authorities should consult with the local branch of the Showmen's Guild to discuss plans to increase and develop the accommodation provision for Travelling Showpeople.

Recommendation 31: Authorities should be aware of and implement the guidance issued by the CLG around planning and Travelling Showpeople sites.

Recommendation 32: Authorities are encouraged to identify specific pieces of land that could be used by Travelling Showpeople in the future.

Appendix 1: Local Plan Policies on Gypsy Site Provision

Box 1 : Local Plan Policies on Gypsy Site Provision	
Tamworth Local Plan, 2001–2011 written statement. Adopted 6th July 2006	
	<p>Policy HSG16: Provision of Accommodation for Gypsies/ Travellers</p> <p><i>It is important that the Borough Council considers the needs of travelling people for the development of appropriate Gypsy sites as required. In seeking any possible Gypsy/Traveller sites, or in determining any planning applications for Gypsy/Traveller sites, the Borough Council will have regard to the following factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. The impact of the proposals on the adjacent land uses and the amenity of any neighbouring residents;</i> <i>ii. The visual impact of the proposal, landscaping and screening. Some sites may require substantial landscaping in order that they can be well screened from all sides;</i> <i>iii. The provision of satisfactory vehicle access to the road network and the ability of the local road network to accommodate safely any traffic generated;</i> <i>iv. The provision of adequate parking, turning and servicing facilities within the site;</i> <i>v. The consistency of the proposal with agricultural, archaeological, environmental, green network and Green Belt policies.</i>
North Warwickshire Local Plan, May 1995	
	<p>North Warwickshire Local Plan Adopted July 2006</p> <p>[An application has been made to the High Court under Section 287 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to challenge the validity of the Adopted Local Plan in respect of the reference to the timing of the Housing Development Plan Document. The challenge relates solely to that part of the Plan that refers to the Housing DPD. A date for the High Court Hearing has yet to be set. The remainder of the Local Plan is unaffected by this challenge.]</p> <p>There is no specific policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites. The document reads:</p> <p><i>Other needs: Travellers</i></p> <p><i>There is a site for travellers at Alvecote with 17 pitches. Approximately 60% of the travellers on this site have not moved for a number of years, whilst 40% move on a regular basis. There are no unauthorised encampments in the borough. Regionally a shortfall has been identified; however there is no call for more pitches within North Warwickshire in the life of this Local Plan.</i></p>

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Local Plan, June 2006

Policy H13.

Proposals for additional traveller sites must meet the following criteria:

- A) Demonstrable need cannot be met on present sites.*
- B) Compatibility with other Plan policies – sites for travellers will not normally be appropriate in the Green Belt.*
- C) Acceptable impact on the environmental quality of the surrounding area.*
- D) Compatibility with nearby land uses.*
- E) Good access to the public highway and sufficient area on site for vehicle movements.*
- F) Good access to local services and facilities – schools, shops and medical practitioners.*
- G) Defined boundaries with embankments and/or extensive landscaping and planting.*

Rugby Local Plan 2006

Policy H13 Gypsy sites

Proposals for the provision of permanent Gypsy sites will only be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- 1. There is a significant unmet need for further provision within the Borough which cannot be met from suitable alternative sites; and*
- 2. The site would have convenient access to schools, medical facilities, public transport routes and other local services; and*
- 3. The proposed site is outside the Green Belt and would not cause harm to the character of the area or adversely affect any neighbouring properties or activities; and*
- 4. Appropriate facilities are provided to meet the requirements of people living on the site.*

Appendix 2

Table A1: CLG Caravan Count results for the Study Area by local authority between January 2005 and January 2007

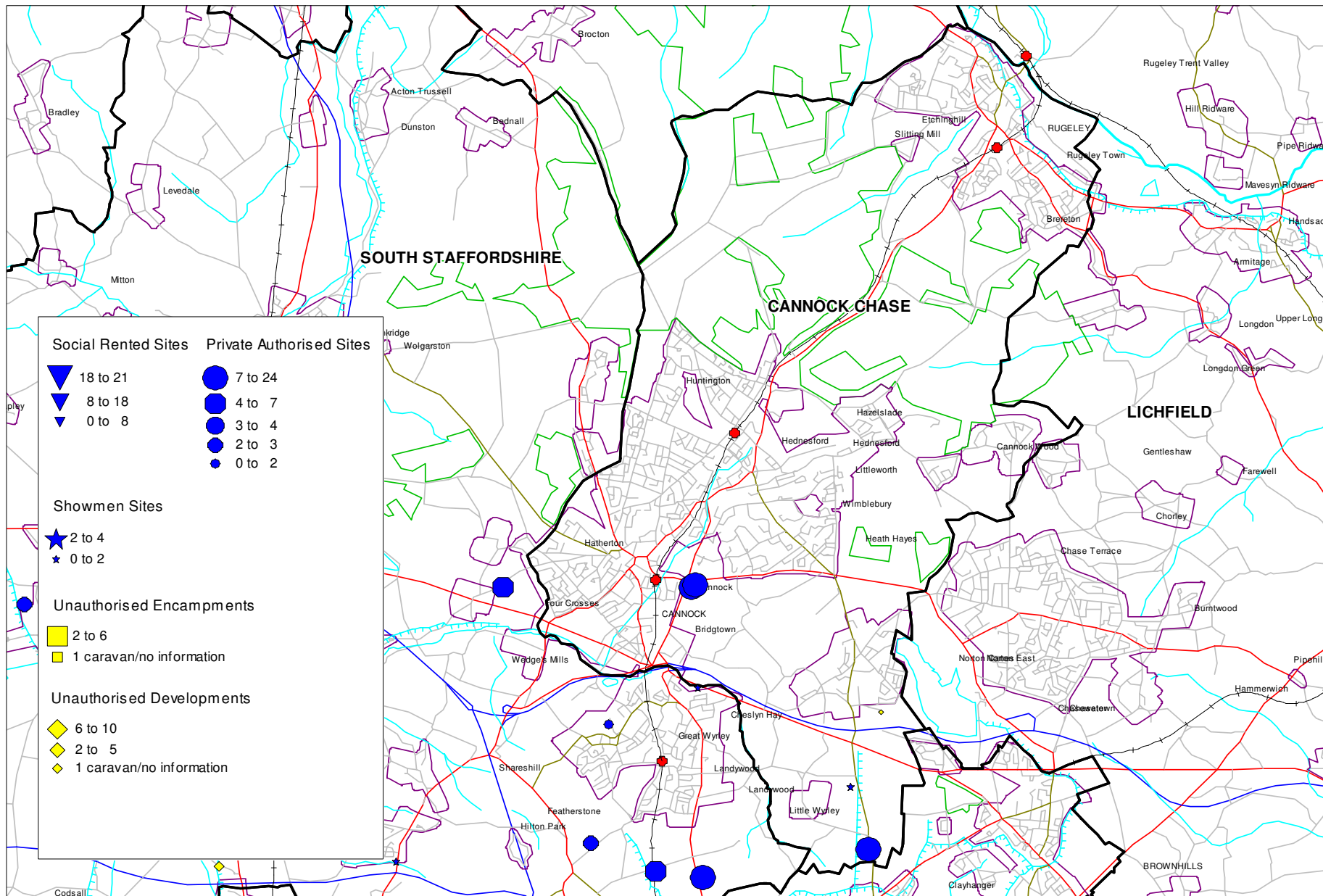
Authority area	Count	Authorised Socially Rented Sites	Authorised Private Sites	Unauthorised Developments	Unauthorised Encampments	Total Caravans
Total for the Study Area	Jan 2007	10	250	89	21	370
	July 2006	12	170	73	5	260
	Jan 2006	6	212	66	5	289
	July 2005	8	196	53	21	278
	Jan 2005	22	189	65	24	300
Cannock Chase	Jan 2007	0	32	0	3	35
	July 2006	0	25	0	0	25
	Jan 2006	0	36	0	5	41
	July 2005	0	39	0	4	43
	Jan 2005	0	39	0	3	42
Lichfield	Jan 2007	0	0	11	3	14
	July 2006	0	0	9	0	9
	Jan 2006	0	0	8	0	8
	July 2005	0	0	7	0	7
	Jan 2005	0	0	4	0	4
South Staffordshire	Jan 2007	0	96	8	0	104
	July 2006	0	38	6	0	44
	Jan 2006	0	78	11	0	89
	July 2005	0	70	9	0	79
	Jan 2005	0	81	7	0	88
Tamworth	Jan 2007	0	0	0	0	0
	July 2006	0	0	0	0	0
	Jan 2006	0	0	0	0	0
	July 2005	0	0	0	0	0
	Jan 2005	0	0	0	6	6
North Warwickshire	Jan 2007	10	0	7	0	17
	July 2006	12	0	7	0	19
	Jan 2006	6	0	7	0	13
	July 2005	8	0	4	0	12
	Jan 2005	9	0	9	2	20
Nuneaton & Bedworth	Jan 2007	0	35	11	0	46
	July 2006	0	19	9	0	28
	Jan 2006	0	37	8	0	45
	July 2005	0	27	5	0	32
	Jan 2005	23	4	7	13	47

Rugby	Jan 2007	0	87	52	15	154
	July 2006	0	88	42	5	135
	Jan 2006	0	61	32	0	93
	July 2005	0	60	28	17	105
	Jan 2005	0	65	38	0	103

Appendix 3: District summaries

This appendix to the report includes summaries for the seven local authorities within the Study Area. This shows the map of each authority showing existing site provision (where there is provision), and a summary table of provision and of estimates of additional requirements for residential pitches and transit site pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and pitches for Travelling Showpeople families. The explanation of how these figures have been derived is described in Chapters 15, 16 and 17 of the main report. Rounding these numbers of pitches to the nearest whole number means that there is inevitably some slight discrepancy between the need identified at the broader Study Area level and the need identified more locally.

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL



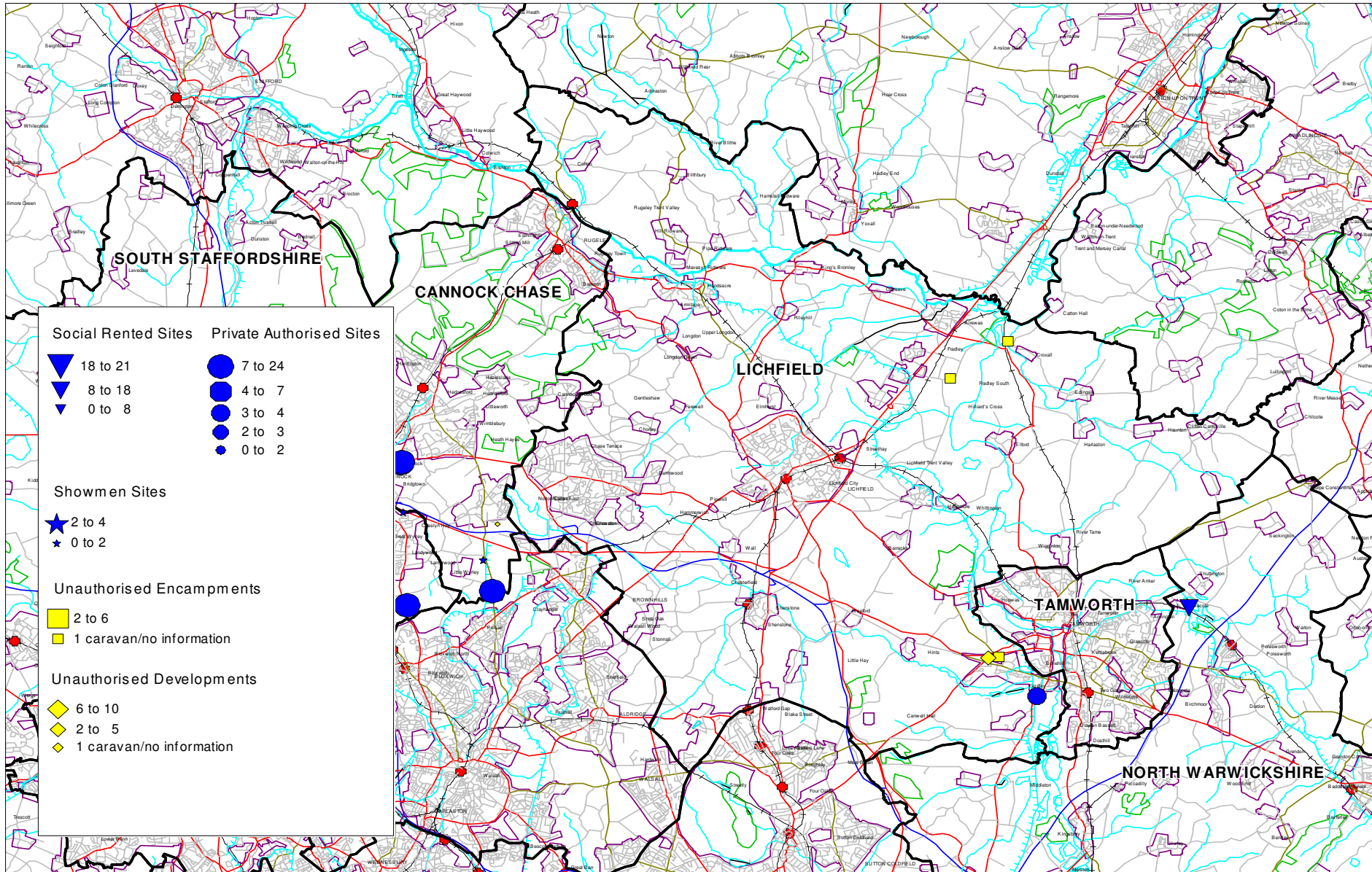
SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	—	—
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	3	41
Unauthorised developments	—	—
No. of encampments in 2006	11–15	—
Showpeople sites	1	3
Housing	—	7 ⁴¹

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	25	8	10	9
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	5	1	1	1

⁴¹ This is an estimate based on the number of interviews achieved in the area. This is likely to be a significant underestimate.

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

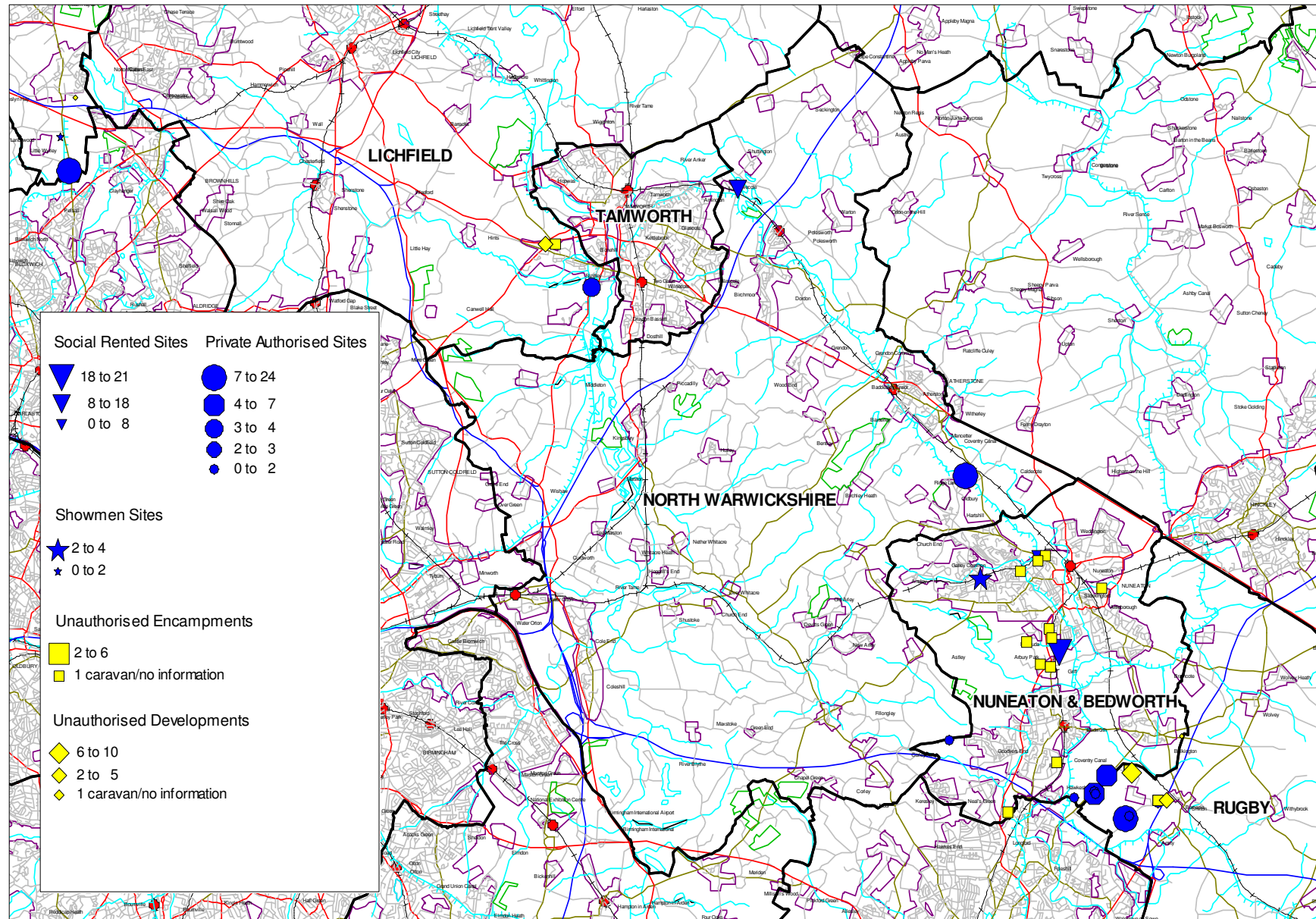


SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	—	—
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	1	2
Unauthorised developments	1	3/4
No. of encampments in 2006	3	—
Showpeople sites	—	—
Housing	—	—

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	9	1	2	2
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	0	0	0	0

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL



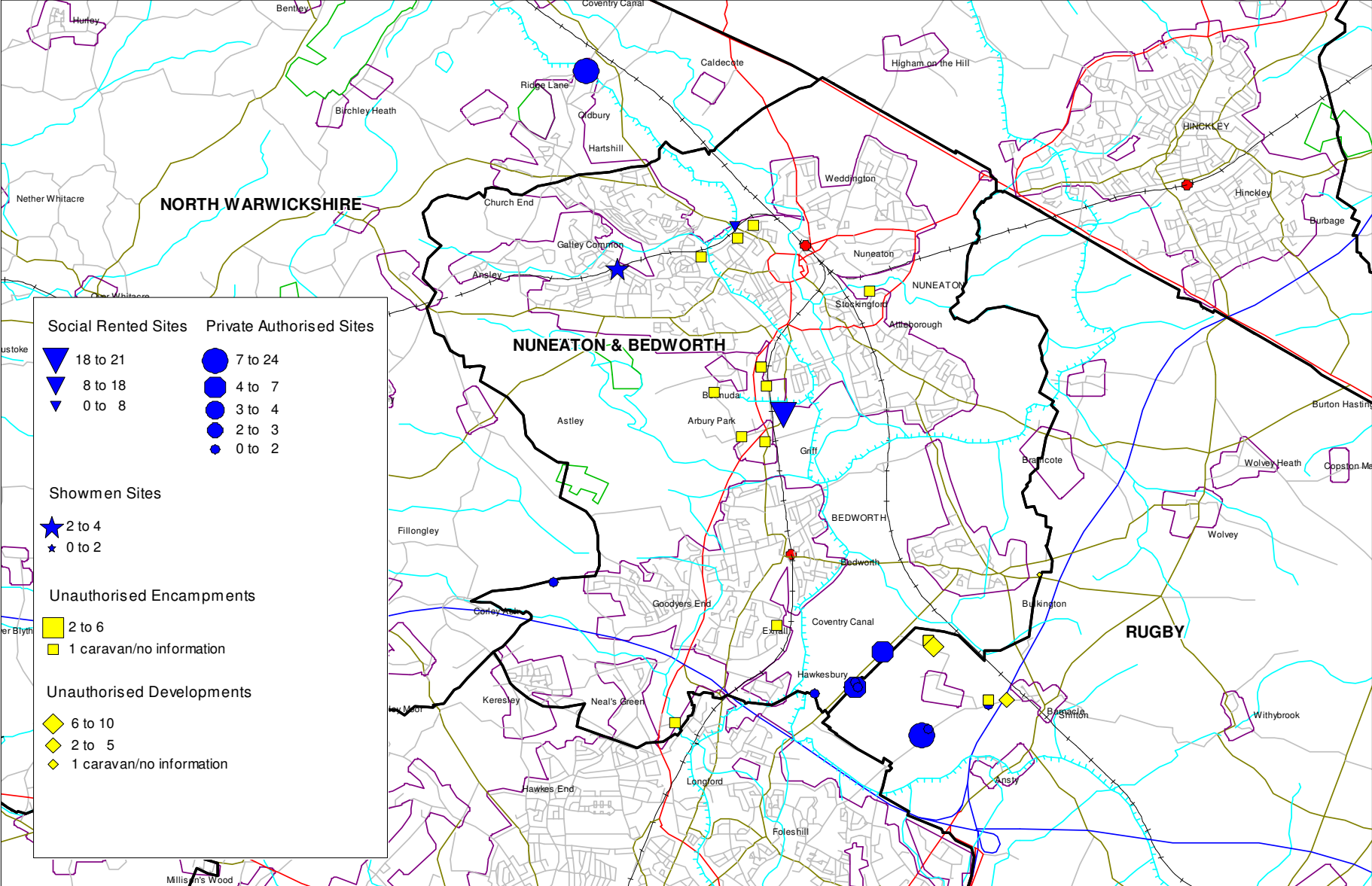
SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	1	17
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	1	7
Unauthorised developments	1	4
No. of encampments in 2006	0	—
Showpeople sites	—	—
Housing	—	13 ⁴²

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	12	5	5	5
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	0	0	0	0

⁴² This is based on information provided by Warwickshire County Council Gypsy Services who reported 38 housed families between the authorities of Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire. As this was not specific to one authority, this is divided equally between all three.

NUNEATON & BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	1	21 ⁴³
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	7 ⁴⁴	15
Unauthorised developments	1	1
No. of encampments in 2006	12	—
Showpeople sites	1	2
Housing	—	13 ⁴⁵

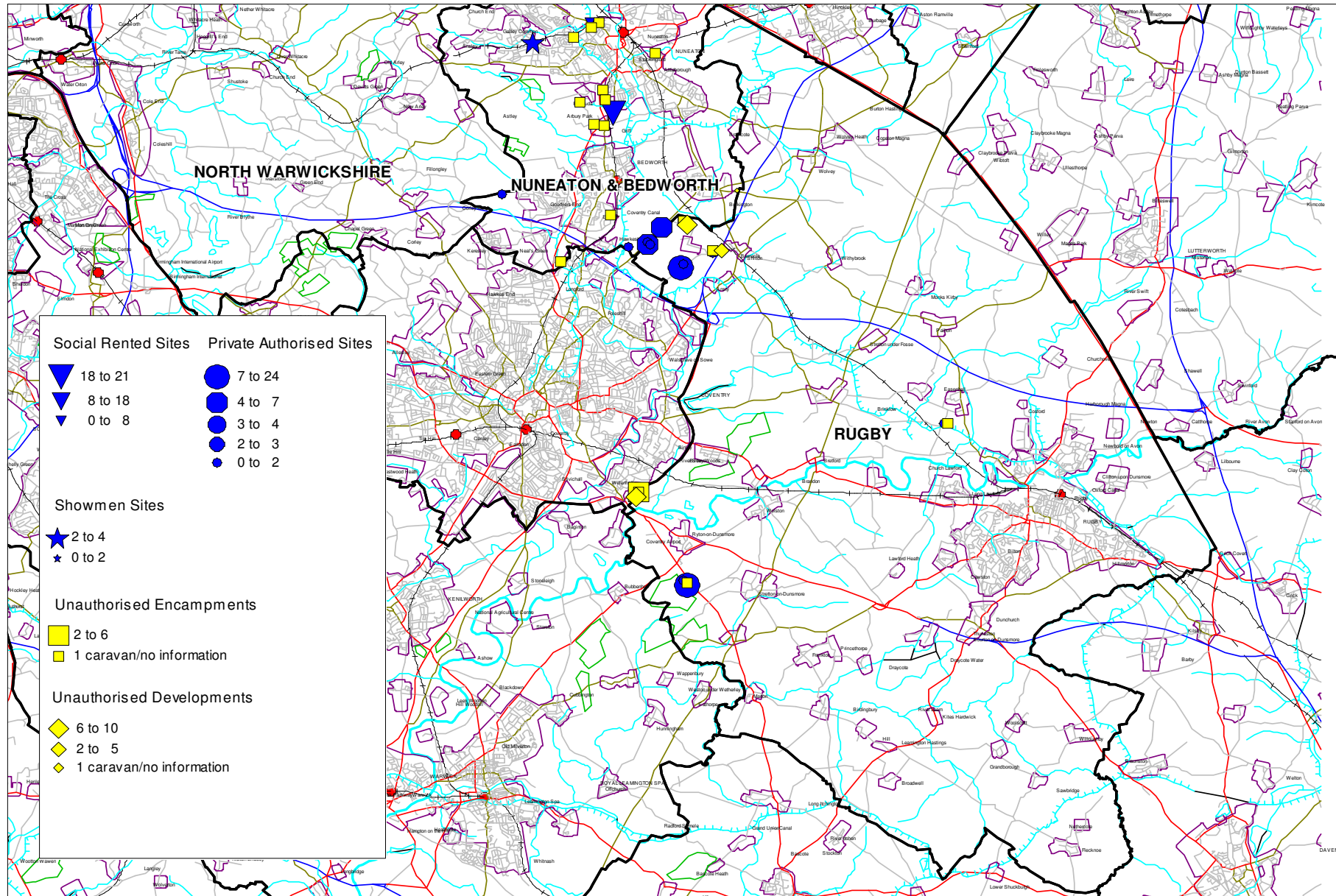
Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	20	7	8	7
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	1	0	1	0

⁴³ This is the number of pitches currently provided; it should be noted that just 20 are currently occupied/available.

⁴⁴ Includes 3 sites in Bulkington which straddle the boundary between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby. The sites are counted in both areas; pitches refer to each local authority and have not been double counted.

⁴⁵ This is based on information provided by Warwickshire County Council Gypsy Services who reported 38 housed families between the authorities of Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire. As this was not specific to one authority, this is divided equally between all three.

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

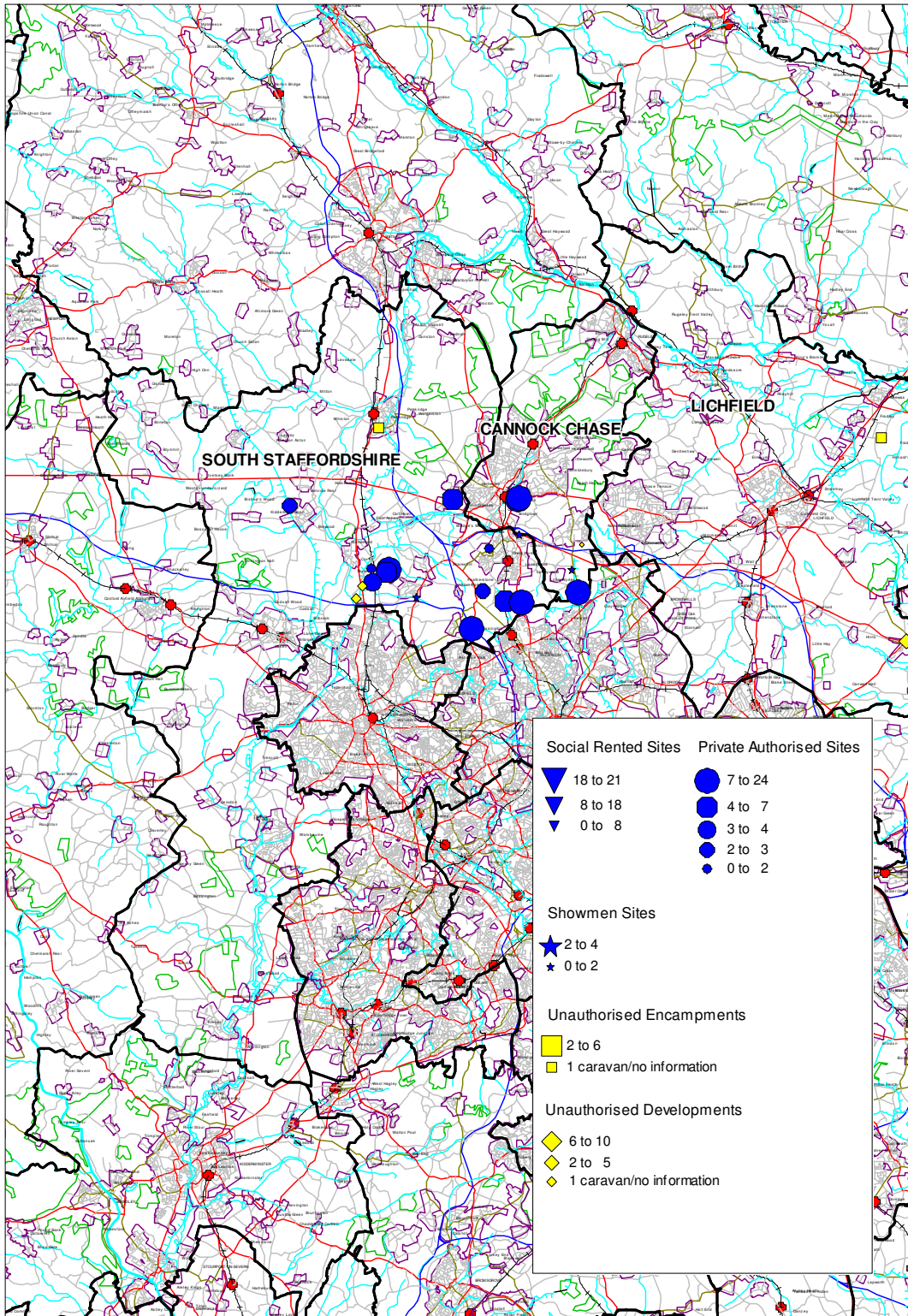
Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	—	—
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	10 ⁴⁶	66
Unauthorised developments	3	18
No. of encampments in 2006	16	—
Showpeople sites	—	—
Housing	—	13 ⁴⁷

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	48	14	17	15
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	0	0	0	0

⁴⁶ Includes 3 sites in Bulkington which straddle the boundary between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby. The sites are counted in both areas; pitches refer to each local authority and have not been double counted.

⁴⁷ This is based on information provided by Warwickshire County Council Gypsy Services who reported 38 housed families between the authorities of Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire. As this was not specific to one authority, this is divided equally between all three.

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL



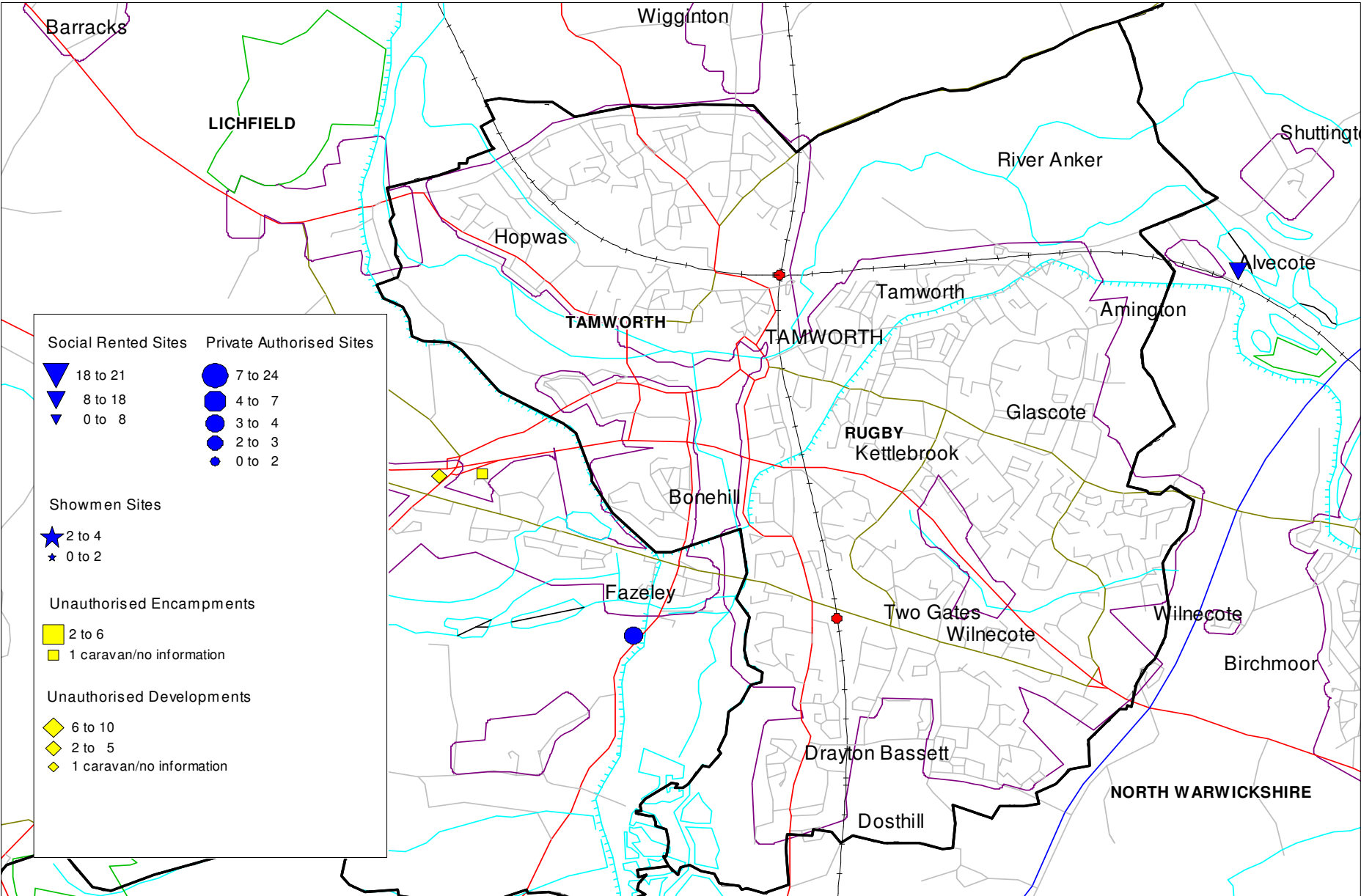
SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented residential pitches	—	—
Socially rented transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	12	83
Unauthorised developments	2	10
No. of encampments in 2006	1	—
Showpeople sites	1	5
Housing	—	2 ⁴⁸

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	32	15	17	15
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	13	1	2	2

⁴⁸ This is an estimate based on the number of interviews achieved in the area. This is likely to be a significant underestimate.

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/households
Socially rented	—	—
Transit pitches	—	—
Private sites	—	—
Unauthorised developments	—	—
No. of encampments in 2006	4	—
Showpeople sites	—	—
Housing	—	—

Accommodation	Estimated requirements			
	2007–2012	2012–2016	2016–2021	2021–2026
Residential pitches	6	1	1	1
Transit pitches	5	NA	NA	NA
Travelling Showpeople plots	0	0	0	0